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Ogagaoghene Uzezi Idhalama, Kingsley Efe Osawaru, Magnus Osahon Igbinovia, Prisca Iheoma Nwachukwu

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Scholarly research outputs and vulnerability of Nigerian lecturers to predatory journals

Ogagaoghene Uzezi Idhalama*

Department of Library and Information Science,
Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma-Edo State, Nigeria
Email: idhalamao@gmail.com
*Corresponding author

Kingsley Efe Osawaru

College of Education Library,
Ekiadolor, Benin-City,
Edo State, Nigeria
Email: osawarukingsleyef@gmail.com

Magnus Osahon Igbinovia

University Library,
Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria
Email: Infor.migbinovia@gmail.com

Prisca Iheoma Nwachukwu

University Main Library,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria
Email: iheomapi@gmail.com

Abstract: This study investigated scholarly research outputs and vulnerability of Nigerian lecturers to predatory journals. Five objectives were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted using the online Google form to collect data/responses from lecturers across board in Nigeria. The population of the study comprised lecturers in Nigeria. The sampling technique used for the study was the total enumeration sampling technique (107) as the whole responses were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation for easy appreciation and comprehension, with the aid of SPSS Version 23. It was found that: the research outputs by Nigerian lecturers appear to be a little bit low; Nigerian lecturers obviously know the reputable journals that are available; and many Nigerian authors and writers do not publish in high reputable journals. Some of the challenges recorded are high cost/finance, problem of delayed review process, high rejection rate by reputable journal and rigorous online submission process. Also, the idea of compulsorily publishing in high impact journals

rather than focus on the quality of the research output, before promoting lecturers is misplaced and should be reviewed. Recommendations were made in line with the findings of the study.

Keywords: research outputs; lecturers research outputs; lecturers and predatory journals; Nigerian lecturers research outputs; lecturers scholarly research.

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Biographical notes: Ogagaoghene Uzezi Idhalama is a library and information scientist and Lecturer at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State of Nigeria. He is currently on his PhD studies at the University of Nairobi, Kenya.

Kingsley Efe Osawaru is a teaching staff at Ekiadolor College of Education in Edo State. He is a prolific writer with a reasonable number of both national and international articles to his credit.

Magnus Osahon Igbinoia is a library and information scientist and Lecturer at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State of Nigeria. He is currently on his PhD studies at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Prisca Iheoma Nwachukwu is a well published librarian who works as an academic librarian at the university main library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria.

1 Introduction

Educational research entails the process of conducting scientific research in order to solve problems in a country's educational system. These problems include theoretical development, quality improvement issues, policy draft and implications, classroom dimension, and so on. It entails a never-ending quest for knowledge, progress, problem-solving methodologies, and an endeavour to comprehend the truth from an objective standpoint based on factual comprehension and systematic study (Rafeedalie, 2020). Educational research must become a priority in order to broaden the boundaries of knowledge, as education is a vital part of any civilisation. Educational research is critical to the advancement of pedagogy, learning programs, and policy formulation. Educational research is a broad term that encompasses a variety of topics of study, implying that it draws on a variety of disciplines. As a result, the research findings are multi-dimensional and can be limited by the research participants' and research environment's characteristics. Educational research is a sort of systematic examination that uses empirical approaches to address educational problems. In order to collect and evaluate data for problem-solving and knowledge growth, it uses rigorous and well-defined scientific techniques. The ultimate purpose of such a science is to produce knowledge that allows educators to achieve their objectives using the most efficient techniques possible. The main goal of educational research is to add to the current body of knowledge by addressing various pedagogical issues and enhancing teaching and learning

practices. Researchers in education are also looking for answers to concerns like learner motivation, development, and classroom management.

According to Simisaye (2019), research output is critical in the appointment and promotion of academic personnel, also known as faculty members, as stated in the service schemes that govern their appointments and promotions. Aside from educational qualifications and relevant experience, they are expected to obtain appointments and promotions based on satisfactory research publications in renowned journals, conference proceedings, and seminar papers as a condition for jobs and positions. The value of research output in terms of academic career progression and status is well understood, and academic staff and employers do not take it lightly. As a result, the widespread adage ‘publish or perish’ that is used in academic circles in Nigeria is a serious worry. Academic staff can develop into effective academics by conducting research. This is due to the fact that research advances academic knowledge while also reinforcing the abilities required for successful knowledge acquisition. However, according to Yusuf (2012), the amount and quality of research output from institutions in Nigeria is often insufficient to have the intended impact on national development. Also, the higher education sector has a general lack of research focus with regard to Nigeria’s national research and development needs.

Whether peer, editorial, or institutional review, a renowned scholarly journal delivers some sort of adequate and qualified evaluation. If a journal does not provide such a review, then submitting an article to it is no different than submitting a paper to your own website, a pre-print server, or a general magazine. Of course, not all works are meant for peer review, and expository articles, textbooks, monographs, and other explanatory resources have their place, but they serve a different function. A scholarly journal is one that has undergone some type of appropriate and qualified evaluation for quality assurance.

Peer review is a time-honoured method that has been a component of scientific communication for more than 300 years. Musick (2020) believes that academic publishing has altered dramatically as a result of the proliferation of open access journals and the transition to online publishing. There are currently more journals than ever before where authors can publish their work. This benefits writers by expanding their publishing options, but it also increases their risk of publishing in a predatory journal. Predatory journals seek money from authors [typically through article processing charges (APCs) in exchange for publishing their articles (generally open access)], but they do not follow the same editorial, peer review, or other ethical publishing processes/standards as respected journals. They usually keep information regarding fees and the publishing procedure hidden, lie about it, or mislead authors.

According to Christiaan (2020), a journal publication indicated that more than a third of Nigeria’s education research output was published in predatory journals between 2010 and 2018, which charge authors to publish and provide little quality control such as peer review. The report was published in the August issue of *Comparative Education Review* by three scholars from the UK. A bibliometric analysis of papers and interviews with African researchers were part of the study. In the years studied, a third of the more than 700 education research papers published by Nigerian writers appeared in journals that ‘lack conventional peer review, with some containing spelling and grammatical problems’, according to the paper. The ratio was much greater than in any other country studied in Sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of the countries studied published at least 90% of their publications in recognised journals. Setting up screening systems at African

universities, the authors believe, could ‘incentivise concern for quality above quantity of publications.’ According to the authors, South Africa was left out of the study because its academic sector is significantly more established, and hence it is not affected by the same difficulties as the rest of the continent. In order to unravel more facts about lecturers’ research endeavours, this study has concentrated on scholarly research outputs and lecturers’ vulnerability to predatory publications in Nigeria.

2 Statement of problem

Over the years, research has come to form a corner stone of every economy which by extension leads to national development. The primary citadel of this kind of research is the tertiary institution where scholars and intellectuals reside. Of note is the fact that the major assignments of a University Don for instance are to teach, research and develop his/her community. In the area of research, it is important therefore to break new grounds instead of literally reinventing the wheel. As such, scholarly researches should be carried out in order to find remedies to disturbing issues. A very good criterion for measuring merit in research is to put standards in place that will assess and evaluate researches that are being published by authors. This may be very important as many advocates have criticised African authors by submitting that their researches are of low value and standard, as they are published in low ranking journals. Other advocates feel that African authors seldom embark on educational researches that will lead to great discoveries. These views are not just surprising to the authors of this article but also to some other Nigerian authors who opined that Nigeria tertiary institutions have some of the best brains and researchers in the whole world. It is based on these divided opinions that the writers of this article have come up with this study in order to examine research outputs and vulnerability to predatory journals by lecturers in Nigeria.

3 Objectives

In a bid to achieve its aim of investigating the scholarly research outputs and vulnerability of lecturers to predatory journals in Nigeria, the following objectives will be x-rayed:

- 1 To find out the number of articles already published by lecturers in Nigeria.
- 2 To determine if Nigerian lecturers are aware of reputable journals to publish in.
- 3 To ascertain the reputable journals in which these lecturers have published.
- 4 To establish obstacles encountered by Nigerian lecturers in publishing with reputable journals.
- 5 To assess the perception of Nigerian authors/lecturers in publishing with international reputable journals as a major criterion for promotion

4 Literature review

This section of the study will review related literature with the aim of exploring previous documentation of scholars in this research area, consequently providing the basis of establishing new facts in the current study. The literature review is divided into four manageable subsections as follows:

- a Frequency at which lecturers publish their researches.
- b Searching for reputable journals to publish in.
- c Obstacles encountered by Nigerian lecturers in publishing with reputable journals.
- d Publishing in reputable journals as a major criterion for promotion.

4.1 *Frequency at which lecturers publish their researches*

According to Rawat and Meena (2014), frequent publication is one of the few effective ways for scholars to display their academic ability. Successful research publication draws attention to academics and their institutions. This may result in additional financing for the institution as well as an individual's advancement in the research area. The number of publications to an individual's credit is widely used by academic institutions and universities as a measure of research proficiency. During recruitment, administrators increasingly adopt this as a criterion. Scholars who publish infrequently or who devote their time to pursuits that do not result in publications, such as teaching undergraduates, may find themselves out of contention for numerous teaching posts. Because of these factors, there is a great deal of pressure to publish. The term 'publish or perish', first popularised by Coolidge in 1932, is now a brutal reality. The emphasis on publication has reduced the value of the resulting study since scientists must spend more time scrambling to publish whatever they can rather than building a meaningful research plan. Professors' ability to dedicate time and effort to teaching undergraduates and post-graduates is also hampered by the pressure to publish or perish. When the benefits for outstanding teaching and exceptional research are not equal, faculty members are more likely to prioritise the latter. When hiring new academics, many universities do not consider teaching competence and instead look at the publications list (Idhalama, 2014). This singular concentration on the professor as a researcher may cause academics to overlook or fail to fulfil other academic tasks. Due to the increased quantity of publications, unethical research techniques such as salami slicing, plagiarism, duplicate publication, ghost authorship and other fraudulent practices have increased. Fraud is described as the fabrication or falsification of research results performed or reported.

The frequency with which lecturers undertake scholarly researches and make the outcomes available to the public is determined by some factors. These factors predict the frequency at which lecturers publish their research. According to Adjei and Owusu-Ansah (2016), such frequency is motivated by the quest to contribute to scholarship, job promotion, marketability and sometimes prestige. Starovoytova (2017) investigated the research productivity of an engineering school based on the number of publications per faculty member. The study revealed that an average of 2.1 publications is made by faculty members per year and that the faculty sampled published a cumulative of 230 papers across their productive publishing career. In the Nigerian context, Okonedo (2015) examined the research productivity of academic librarians in public universities in

South-west of Nigeria. The study revealed that the cumulative number of publications by the region's librarians in learned journals was 726, revealing that librarians publish frequently more in journal outlets.

4.2 Searching for reputable journals to publish in

It might be difficult for authors to discern whether a journal is credible, given the abundance of journal titles and numerous e-mail solicitations for papers. Many resources exist to help a researcher choose appropriate journals to submit his or her work to, according to University of Washington Libraries (2020). For instance, the following are expected to be considered while evaluating journals: avoid publications that have characteristics described by the World Association of Medical Editors or identified by Shamseer et al. (2017). These characteristics include e-mail solicitation with grammatical flaws, unprofessional and promising immediate publications; absence of genuine metrics (Index Copernicus Value, Systematic Impact Factor, or CiteFactor) in the journal's website; assertion of being indexed by Google, Google Scholar or ResearchGate; and the presence of hazy or distorted photographs on the journal's website that may have been used without permission.

Most journals that are not reputable or do not keep to standard/best practices are known by lack of or at best ineffective peer review process, questionable editorial board members (some of which are listed without their knowledge), information with regards to article processing/publication fee may be hidden or deceptive and the journal's website adopts non-standard impact factors. Also to note that well-established scholarly journals are indexed by bodies like PubMed, PsycInfo, Web of Science, Scopus, CINAHL and EbscoHost.

When contemplating a journal as a possible venue to publish, Schuler (2020) suggests asking questions that include: does the subject area of the journal correspond with the subject of your research?, does the journal type and instructions for authors including rules for article length fit the article you want to submit?, is your research aimed at the journal's target audience? and is this a standard/reputable journal?. Prospective authors need to find journals they can be affirmative about the following questions: do you know the publisher?, are you familiar with any group the journal is connected with?, does the journal have specific contact details?, are the affiliations and background of the editorial board members and that of previous authors, relevant to the publication's subject matter?, are manuscripts subjected to peer review?, are articles allocated digital object identifiers (DOIs)?, is the journal's copyright policies and article publishing fees well-defined?, does the journal have index in any database you are familiar with?

4.3 Obstacles encountered by Nigerian lecturers in publishing with reputable journals

Tarkang and Bain (2019) published a commentary on the difficulties of African scholars publishing research articles in international journals, the peer-review process, and the contentious topic of predatory publications. The following issues were cited as challenges faced by Nigerian authors in their attempts to publish in respected journals that are generally international in scope.

4.3.1 Manuscripts from Africa have a high rejection rate

Foreign editors relegate Nigerian and other African authors: it has been noted that most papers submitted by Nigerian and sister African countries are flatly rejected by foreign journals. When they send something out for peer review, the decision of the reviewers is not always favourable. This can be aggravating and upsetting, deterring Nigerian authors and potentially leading to publication in predatory journals.

- *Financial constraints*: journals can be closed-access or open-access, but the peer-review process is the same in both cases. The majority of open-access journals charge publishing costs, which are paid by the manuscript's author(s), while research consumers have free access to the journals. In most closed-access journals, however, accepted articles are published for free, and users must pay a price to view the articles. In today's quickly evolving scientific world, as well as the internet age in which we are, most research consumers opt for open-access journals, which allow them to access information for free, even on their mobile electronic devices. As a result, most African scientists and researchers have little choice except to publish in open-access journals, where they must pay publishing fees. Because most African scientists cannot afford to publish in several international peer-reviewed open-access journals due to the high financial cost, most of the research done in Africa remains unnoticed by the rest of the world.
- *Peer-review turnaround time in high-quality journals*: the peer-review process for most reputable and high-impact factor journals that are indexed in databases like Medline, PubMed, and Scopus takes a long time to complete, sometimes as long as two years. The information in a paper could therefore become obsolete or redundant before it is ever published. In light of this, the majority of African academics and scientists prefer to publish their findings in low-impact journals or sometimes predatory journals.
- *The publish or perish syndrome*: the 'publish or perish' conundrum has led many African researchers to publish their work in low-quality journals, often without a rigorous peer-review process, because they are under enormous pressure to publish in order to advance their careers, particularly in the academia, where publication is frequently regarded as the sole criterion for career advancement.

4.4 Publishing in reputable journals as a major criterion for promotion

According to Schimanski and Alperin (2018), there appears to be widespread agreement that scientific content and quality should take precedence over the number of articles being examined. However, it is not always apparent what defines a high-quality publication, and there is evidence that individual who analyse review, promotion and tenure (RPT) applications do not always assess each article's scientific merits. It is typical to use the publication venue as a proxy for quality. The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA; Cagan, 2013) and the Leiden Manifesto (Hicks et al., 2015) have both critiqued this technique; yet, evidence for it can be found across the literature. Differentiating between peer-reviewed and un-reviewed publishing mediums (with peer-reviewed clearly preferred) is one approach of determining quality that has remained relatively uncontroversial and unchanged in recent decades. In a survey of

information science department chairs conducted in the late 1990s, 43.7% said that all journal publications count toward tenure and promotion decisions, while 39.2% said that only certain types of journal publications, such as those that are refereed and/or editorially reviewed, count (Whitman et al., 1999). In several subjects, including astronomy, biology, economics, business, psychology, women's studies, music, and some fields of political science, peer-reviewed journal papers are the primary focus of evaluations (Coonin and Younce, 2009; Harley et al., 2010, 2008).

Malsch and Tessier (2015) mentioned a journal rankings list as part of their institution's research incentive policy, which is utilised to determine career promotion. In this situation, the authors' topic of study prevented them from publishing in the top-ranked journals at their school, thus jeopardising their careers due to journal rankings based mostly on journal citation reports. This type of system is even generating studies of the value of publishing in specific journals for the purposes of promotion and tenure (e.g., Janvrin et al., 2015). Academics may be overworked when evaluating applications for promotion or tenure, which recommends the use of the impact factor to assess the quality of research articles as a strategy to reduce burden. As a result, the majority of professors, (e.g., 68% in medical professions) consider journal impact factor to be crucial in their performance evaluation and promotion (Walker et al., 2010).

5 Methodology

A descriptive survey research was employed for the study. The study adopted this method because it used data to investigate lecturers in the context of their research outputs in Nigeria. Participants in the study were lecturers in tertiary institutions from Nigeria that are on different social media platforms. The occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of data collection influenced the choice of this population group, imposing social separation and making data gathering physically difficult. This population group's strength is that it includes academic staff from all areas, regardless of demographics, geographic dispersion, institutional affiliation, or career level. The structured questionnaire was utilised to collect data. The respondents' demographic information, such as gender, age range, institutional affiliation, and highest educational qualification, was included in the first section. Each section's items were developed based on a survey of related literature and the researchers' prior understanding of tertiary institutions. The responses were based on a four-point Likert scale, with each concept getting points ranging from four to one. This means that the criterion mean for each notion will be ascertained by 2.5. However, the Nigerian lecturer's awareness of reputable journals to publish, as contained in objective two, will be measured using two-point Likert scale of aware and unaware, which gives a criterion mean of 1.5.

The instrument (structured questionnaire) was converted into an online survey using Google forms. The first component of the survey comprises a letter to respondents that meets the ethical criteria of informing respondents that participation in the study is voluntary and assuring them that the data would be used purely for research purposes. The website link was posted on the various social media platforms, and platform members were requested to complete the survey. After four weeks, a reminder message was sent to guarantee maximum engagement, which lasted for one week. After the five weeks given for data collection were up, the online poll was closed to fresh responses.

According to the survey answer summary, the link harnessed data from 107 academic staff. The retrieved data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation using SPSS version 23 and presented in tables for clarity. The mean was derived by summing the scores for each item and dividing by the sample size (n). The standard deviation, on the other hand, is a measure of how widely scores vary throughout the set of data.

6 Demographic distribution of the respondents

From Table 1, it is clear that of the 107 respondents, 51.40% are male while 48.59% are female, implying that male Nigerian lecturers are actively more involved in research activities than their female counterparts. Or perhaps they tend to participate more in research surveys like this one.

Table 1 Gender

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1	Female	52	48.59
2	Male	55	51.40
<i>Total</i>		<i>107</i>	<i>99.99</i>

Table 2 Age of respondents

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Age range (in years)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1	Below 30	3	2.80
2	31–40	46	42.99
3	41–50	39	36.45
4	51–60	17	15.89
5	61 and above	2	1.87
<i>Total</i>		<i>107</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents with 42.99% fall within the age range of 31–40, followed by 36.45% who fall within 41–50 and the next is 15.89% that are within the age category of 51–60, then followed closely by 2.80% who are below 30 years and finally 1.87% who are 60 years and above. The implication of this finding is that, the younger an academic, the more productive he/she is in terms of scholarly research; and the older an academic, the less productive he/she becomes in scholarly research.

Table 3 Institutional of assignment

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1	Federal (university/polytechnic/college of education)	52	48.59
2	Private (university/polytechnic/college of education)	7	6.54
3	State (university/polytechnic/college of education)	48	44.86
<i>Total</i>		<i>107</i>	<i>99.99</i>

Going by the findings in Table 3, it clear that 48.59% of respondents are from federal tertiary institutions, 44.86% are from State owned tertiary institutions, while 6.54% are from privately owned tertiary institutions. This connotes the relatively high number of academics in government owned tertiary institutions. However, the beauty of this rests in the fact that respondents cut across all the three segments.

Table 4 Educational qualification

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Qualifications</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1	MSc/its equivalent	44	41.12
2	BSc	16	14.95
3	PhD	47	43.93
<i>Total</i>		<i>107</i>	<i>100</i>

From Table 4, most of the respondents are obviously PhD holders with 43.93%, followed by MSc holders with 41.12% and lastly the BSc respondents with 14.93%. This justifies the fact that Nigerian government has emphasised and taken deliberate steps towards ensuring that PhD is the minimum benchmark for all academics/lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 5 Years of experience

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Years of experience</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1	Below 5	16	14.95
2	6–10	32	29.91
3	11–15	35	32.71
4	16–20	8	7.48
5	21–25	8	7.48
6	26 and above	8	7.48
<i>Total</i>		<i>107</i>	<i>100</i>

On years of experience, Table 5 shows that most lecturers that responded have spent between 11–15 years with 32.71% followed by 29.91% of lecturers who have spent 6–10 years on the job. This is followed by those below five years with a record of 14.95%. This implies clearly that younger lecturers appear to be more involved in research writing in order to boost their CV in their early career stage.

6.1 Section B: answers to research questions

From Table 6, most respondents (40.19%) indicated that they have published between 1–10 articles. This was followed closely by 26.17 of the respondents who indicated that they have published between 11–20 articles, and 14.01% who noted that they have published between 21–30 articles, while 10.28% stated that they have published 31–40 articles and the next is 3.78% who indicated that they published 41–50 articles. Only 2.80% noted that they have published 100 and above articles. This implies that research output in Nigeria appears to be a little bit low.

Table 6 Number of articles published to your credit?

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Number of articles published</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1	1–10	43	40.19
2	11–20	28	26.17
3	21–30	15	14.01
4	31–40	11	10.28
5	41–50	4	3.74
6	51–60	2	1.87
7	61–70	0	0
8	71–80	1	0.93
9	81–90	0	0
10	91–100	0	0
11	100 and above	3	2.80
<i>Total</i>		<i>107</i>	<i>99.99</i>

Table 7 has shown responses as per the various reputable journals outlets that lecturers are aware of. 87.25% are aware of Scopus list of journals, 85.29% of the lecturers know other critically peer reviewed journals, 69.91% are aware of Taylor and Francis journals suggester, followed by 68.63% of respondents who know JSTOR journal list. This simply confirms the fact that Nigerian lecturers obviously know the reputable journals that are available.

Table 7 Nigerian lecturer's awareness of reputable journals to publish in

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Aware</i>		<i>Not aware</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>
1	Web of science journal list	68	66.67%	34	33.33%	1.7	1.92
2	Scopus journal list	89	87.25%	18	18.63%	1.8	2.36
3	JSTOR journal list	70	68.63%	32	31.37%	1.7	1.98
4	Other critically peer reviewed journals	87	85.29%	15	14.71%	1.8	2.42
5	Scimago journal list	60	58.82%	42	41.18%	1.6	1.72
6	Elsevier journal finder	51	50%	51	50%	1.5	1.5
7	Sage journal selection	81	89.41%	21	20.59%	1.8	2.26
8	Wiley journal finder	64	62.75%	38	37.25%	1.6	1.8
9	Springer nature finder	60	58.82%	42	41.18%	1.6	1.72
10	Taylor and Francis journals suggester	71	69.61%	31	30.39%	1.7	2.00
<i>Grand mean = 1.68</i>							

Note: Std. dev. = Standard deviation.

From Table 8, only 46.08% of the respondents indicated that they have published in Scopus journals. 32.35% agreed that they have published in other critically peer reviewed journals, 28.43% stated that they have published in Elsevier journals, 22.55% have published with sage journals and only 9.80% have published with JSTOR journal list. The implication of the finding is that many Nigerian authors and writers do not publish in highly reputable journals looking at the number of respondents studied.

Table 8 Reputable journals and journal ranking bodies Nigerian lecturers have published with

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Have published</i>		<i>Not yet published</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>
1	Web of science journal list	25	24.51%	77	75.49%	1.2	0.87
2	Scopus journal list	47	46.08%	55	53.92%	1.5	1.40
3	JSTOR journal list	10	9.80%	92	90.19%	1.1	0.48
4	Other critically peer reviewed journals	33	32.35%	69	67.65%	1.3	1.06
5	Scimago journal list	22	21.57%	80	78.43%	1.2	0.79
6	Elsevier journal finder	29	28.43%	73	71.56%	1.3	0.97
7	Sage journal selection	23	22.55%	79	77.45%	1.2	0.82
8	Wiley journal finder	12	11.76%	90	88.24%	1.1	0.54
9	Springer nature finder	11	10.78%	91	89.22%	1.1	0.51
10	Taylor and Francis journals suggester	22	21.57%	80	78.43%	1.2	0.79
<i>Grand mean = 1.22</i>							

Notes: Std. dev. = Standard deviation.

From Table 9, majority of the respondents affirmed that there are challenges lecturers encounter in a bid to publish in reputable journals. 56.86% strongly agreed while 22.55% agreed that finance is a major challenge. On the other hand, 50.98% strongly agreed while 34.31% agreed that there is the problem of delayed review process. There are also 45.09% of responses strongly agreeing that there is high rejection rate by reputable journals. 43.14% noted that there is rigorous online submission process and few others. Obviously, different challenges abound.

From Table 10, there have been suggestions by respondents on the issue of academic promotion as per publications. Some of their views are: societal impact of one's scholarly works should be used for assessment instead of reputability of journals, altmetrics should be considered in assessment instead of the reputation of a particular journals (online articles), all Nigerian tertiary institutions should abolish the policy of publishing in only high impact journals, individual articles should be assessed rather than quality of journals and a few others. The implication of this finding is that the idea of compulsorily publishing in high impact journals before promoting lecturers is misplaced and should be reviewed.

Table 9 Challenges encountered in a bid to publishing in reputable/scholarly journals

S/N	Challenges	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Std. dev.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	High rejection rate	46	45.09	32	31.37	21	20.59	3	2.94	3.2	0.86
2	Editors' biased mindset against African authors	34	33.33	29	28.43	33	32.35	6	5.88	2.9	0.94
3	Financial constraints	58	56.86	23	22.55	16	15.69	5	4.90	3.3	0.91
4	Rigorous online submission process	44	43.14	33	32.35	22	21.57	3	2.94	3.2	0.86
5	Delayed review process	52	50.98	35	34.31	13	12.75	2	1.96	3.3	0.77
6	Back and forth corrections by reviewers	41	40.19	42	41.18	16	15.69	3	2.94	3.2	0.80
7	I do not have the capacity to write for reputable/scholarly journals	11	10.78	21	20.59	40	39.22	30	29.41	2.1	0.96
<i>Grand mean = 3.03</i>											

Note: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree, Std. dev = Standard deviation.

Table 10 Perception on publishing in reputable scholarly journals before promotion

S/N	Perceptions	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Std. dev.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Individual articles should be assessed rather than quality of journals	47	46.08	36	35.29	15	14.71	4	3.92	3.2	0.84
2	Lecturers should be scored for any article released without considering the publishing journal	22	21.57	27	26.47	37	36.27	16	15.69	2.5	0.99
3	Writing of articles is not the true test of lecturers' scholarship	23	22.55	37	36.27	33	32.35	9	8.82	2.7	0.91
4	All Nigerian lecturers should be made to publish in only high impact journals	15	14.71	31	30.39	42	41.18	14	13.73	2.5	0.90
5	Publishing in international journals should be more acceptable than publishing in local journals	17	16.67	13	12.75	50	49.02	22	21.57	2.3	0.97
6	Only peer reviewed journals should be accepted in academia	34	33.33	49	48.04	12	11.76	7	6.86	3.1	0.85
7	All Nigerian tertiary institutions should abolish the policy of publishing in only high impact journals	24	23.53	38	37.25	29	28.43	11	10.78	2.7	0.94
8	Almetrics should be considered in assessment instead of the reputation of a particular journals (online articles)	27	26.47	54	52.94	19	18.63	2	1.96	3.0	0.73
9	Societal impact of one's scholarly works should be used for assessment instead of reputation of journals.	34	33.33	52	50.98	14	13.73	2	1.96	3.2	0.72
<i>Grand mean = 2.80</i>											

7 Discussion of findings

The findings of this study indicate that objective one which is to know the number of articles to have been published by lecturers has shown that research outputs by Nigerian lecturers appears to be a little bit low. This finding tallies with Okafor (2011) who conducted a comparative analysis of research output of six federal universities in Southern Nigeria (University of Benin, University of Ibadan, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and University of Uyo) from 1997 to 2006. Based on both local and foreign publications, the University of Benin had the highest research output (12.17 publications per head) and the University of Uyo had the lowest (8.13 publications per head) over the ten-year period. It is worth noting that even the best-case scenario of 12.17 equates to only roughly 1 publication per academic staff every year. This is a ridiculously low.

The outcome of the research confirms that Nigerian lecturers obviously know the reputable journals that are available. This contradicts the finding of Kurt (2018) who reported that several researchers ($n = 68$, or 70.8%) were unaware that they were publishing in these 'predatory' journals. When they received an e-mail request to publish their work, they frequently expressed their gratitude. Researchers were also enticed to publish in these journals by aggressive advertising efforts. Perhaps, over time, the awareness of reputable journals by academics has greatly increased.

The third objective was to ascertain the reputable journals in which lecturers have published, and finding shows that many Nigerian authors and writers do not publish in high reputable journals looking at the number of respondents studied. This may be due to the publish-or-perish syndrome where all academic staff may want to meet up with the required number of articles. Obviously, predatory journals are fast in publications as Okafor (2011) reminded us that predatory journals lack the scholarly publishing community's standards and best practices for evaluating research and improving the quality of published work.

On the fourth objective which aimed at establishing the challenges encountered by Nigerian lecturers in publishing with reputable journals; high cost/finance, problem of delayed review process, high rejection rate by reputable journals and rigorous online submission process were some of the challenges recorded. In connection with this, Tarkang and Bain (2019) published a commentary on the difficulties of African scholars publishing research articles in international journals, the peer-review process, and the contentious topic of predatory publications. Some of the challenges cited by the authors are high cost/finance, problem of delayed review process, high rejection rate by reputable journals, rigorous online submission process and others.

On objective five which sought to assess the perception of Nigerian authors/lecturers in publishing with international reputable journals as a major criterion for promotion. The finding indicated that the idea of compulsorily publishing in high impact journals before promoting lecturers is misplaced and should be reviewed. This appears to slightly correspond with the standpoint of Grudniewicz et al. (2019) who submitted that efforts to combat predatory publishing must be continuous and flexible. The threat is unlikely to go away as long as institutions utilise a scholar's number of publications as a factor for graduation or progress. Predatory publications thrive in an environment characterised by a publish-or-perish mentality, a lack of understanding about predatory publishing, and difficulty distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate publications.

8 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this research:

- 1 Universities, polytechnics and colleges of education should list different reputable journals to publish, and lecturers should be encouraged (and not forced) to publish in those journals.
- 2 Management of tertiary institutions should encourage lecturers to carry out quality scholarly researches irrespective of where these researches are published.
- 3 Tertiary academic institutions should provide facilitating conditions that stimulate innovative research among academics as well as reward impactful scholarly research outputs.
- 4 Periodically, lecturers should assess themselves if their research works are impactful and not necessarily waiting for university assessors for.
- 5 Nigerian lecturers should not be carried away by the enticing mails from predatory journals; rather they should deliberately avoid them to ensure quality in their scholarly research outputs.

9 Conclusions

Effective teaching, learning and research are very important aspects of tertiary education without which the realisation of tertiary institutions' core objectives may be hampered. To this end, scholarly research should be encouraged in our tertiary institutions as this goes a long way in solving disturbing problems and attracting national development. But flowing from the findings of the research, there is need to critically re-evaluate the standing rule in some institutions where lecturers are made to compulsorily publish their research works in reputable journals like those indexed in Scopus, before promotion letters can be issued to them. The focus should be more on the quality of research output than the journal outlets in which journal articles are published. But this is not to say that lecturers should publish their research works in predatory journals that have no form of peer review.

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