

## **ORIGINALITY IN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING AS CORRELATE FOR RESEARCH VISIBILITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

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### **Abstract**

*The paper described the extent of originality in scholarly publishing as correlate for research visibility in the digital age. One of the major determinants of profitability of the institutional popularity is research publication. While it is true that institutions are established for research, teaching and learning, their publications or research visibility is one of the yard sticks in determining their level of relevance. The research visibility in the digital age would receive a boost if there are cordial and fruitful scholarly works. In this information driven age, scholars who are skillful in the use of information and communication technology in information handling-accessing, collating, utilising and disseminating information would definitely be visible in terms of research visibility. With the limitless opportunities that the age has made possible, scholars who are motivated and who are active in publications would definitely be visible in terms of research output or scholarly publication. The paper concluded that scholarly publication needs content creation and publication, alternative distribution models which entrance broaden access, reduce cost and enable open sharing of content. The study recommended that scholarly publication in higher institutions of learning should be renewed to elicit the best from the scholars with a view of boosting the research visibility in the digital age, developing policies and practices that all research contributions are made openly available and reusable*

**Key word:** *Research Visibility, Scholarly publication, Originality, Digital Age*

### **Introduction**

University and the state it represented is known by its research output and inventions disseminated through documentation and publications which are protected through patent copyright. Research and publications, therefore, are driven by very pervading interest of the need for scholars to be visible to own and protect their innovation; the need for the university to be visible, promote its faculty, attract the best brains and partners, and provide leadership in innovativeness and development; and the need for the state to direct research in line with its development needs. The university community is in general agreement that scholarly output should be of high quality, published through a solid peer review process in an acceptable format; accessible in the form of recorded sources in print and electronic formats such as books, chapters in books, conference papers and proceedings, articles in scholarly journals, theses and dissertations, patents and trademarks; and creative works such as performance and exhibitions of the visual arts, among others. For the cultivation of science is a highly communal undertaking, which has scholars extraordinarily dependent on informed scholars for the good opinion of their achievements. Indeed, it is only when a scientific contribution has been assessed, validated and its value confirmed by the scholarly community that it can confer on its originator a high intellectual standing *Black more et al. (2011).*



Edwards et al. (2013) asserted that the evolving intellectual frameworks and research challenges of contemporary knowledge infrastructure, education, libraries, the publishing industry, intellectual property, global flows, and knowledge politics in Ecuador with many universities transitioning from a teaching only to a research and teaching paradigm, they become increasingly pre-occupied with imperatives to improve their publication visibility *fyen et al. (2016)*. Scholarly publishers and university rankings expand, yet it has also negative impacts their personal and social lives and in the long term dilutes the quality of research and prospect at novel discoveries. Acknowledge publication visibility in Ecuador contents with multifaceted and prestige of local low, research capacity journals now scholars studying in abroad often publish into national peer reviewed journals and local internationally funded projects are sometimes excluded as co-authors. Universities vying with each other for students, star professors, funding and their share of the state's limited budget, prestige affording recognition of their scholar achievements becomes the key for winning the competition. So much so, that today the scholarly world seems to have at its heart a very elaborate prestige economy, a kind of celebrity system, (*Blackmore et al., 2018*). The purpose of scholarly publishing is to promote and support scholarship, research and academic or learning activities. A large number of scholarly publications now occur in both print and electronic formats and web-based publications are growing increasingly popular in the academic community for the rapid dissemination of research results. Scholarly publishing differs from other types of publications because of its characteristics. Most scholarly publications are conveyors of scientific research outputs and there are specific requirements for such outputs to belong to the scholarly output category, such as research quality and rigour, audience, readability and originality, and so on.

The pressure to publish not only comes from the institutions academic staff work for but also from the academic staff themselves motivated by the prospects of enhancing their professional reputation, leaving a permanent mark on their profession, and increasing their salary and job mobility (*Miller et al., 2011*). Motivation means the way and manner in which an individual or group of individuals are inspired to behave in a desired manner with a view to receiving some positive rewards or to satisfy certain human needs. To be motivated is to do something which is different; to be inspired to go beyond the call of duty. That is to do more than you have to do not because you are told to but because you want to. Scholars see the concept of motivation differently. Armstrong (2012) asserted that motivation is concerned with the strength and direction of behaviour and the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways. The concept of motivation focuses on an individual's feeling of enthusiasm and attentiveness to be able to achieve his or her goals effectively.

Motivation is a concept that has endured extensive scrutiny for several decades. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. The concept permeates numerous characterisations which the lay man, experienced professional and academic can identify with. The concept has terms such as motive, influence, inspiration, lure, and drive associated with it. While the terms associated with the concept can be loosely located within everyday use, it presents a conundrum for practitioners. The justification for this statement is found in several studies that focused on determining the best way to inspire people whether at work or in some other walks of life. Motivation is a strong force in achievement and is one of the factors that contribute to academic success; that parents and educators should strive to understand the importance of promoting and encouraging academic motivation early in life.

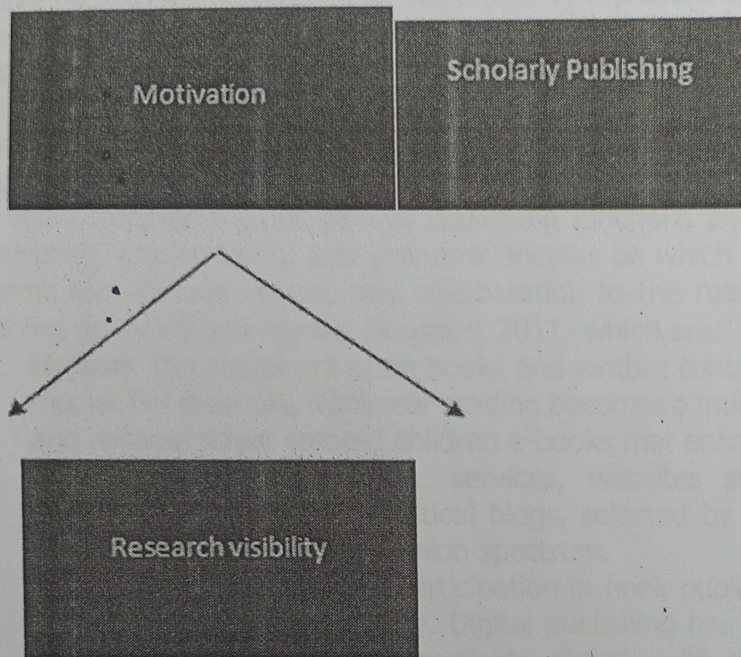
The type of motivation and quality of results depend primarily on three components such as: targeted motivation (i.e., what physical activity is directed at), perseverance (i.e., determination of an individual), and intensity (i.e., how much energy is devoted to pursuing a particular goal). Motivation can be divided into external and internal motivation. The former



is characterised by external factors (e.g., a reward in the form of recognition among peers), while the latter is the desire for self-perfection (e.g., better well-being). In addition, personality traits (e.g., conscientiousness or openness to experience), which are relatively durable characteristics, can help trigger the motivational processes associated with achieving a goal.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model for the study is an original construct of the researchers. The essence of the model is to explain how the variables are connected to each other as presented in the model in figure 1.1



### Conceptual Model of the Study (source: Authors' construct (2024))

The arrow shows a natural flow and connection among the various component parts of the model. Motivation affects the level of scholarly publication either directly or indirectly. The higher the motivation, the higher the scholarly publication and research visibility.

### Originality of Scholarly Publishing in the Digital Age

Scholarly publishing is characterised by a process of selection, editing, printing and distribution of authors' content by an intermediary (preferably one with some name recognition). Consumption patterns has changed as many scholars increasingly began to rely on resources to get information that is useful to their research and teaching transformation on the creation and scholars work. Scholarly publishing is a means of disseminating validated knowledge as a form of symbolic capital for academic for career progression and as a profitable business enterprise (Fyfe-et al., 2017). Twentieth century marked the rising professionalism and prestige of academia, with the value of editorial peer becoming more pronounced in post war decades; during the early cold war expansion of research sector, growth and funding transformed the focus towards generating income; in the 1960s and 1970s peer-review processes were adopted by commercialised publishers; while in 1980s, the mutual beneficial alliance between libraries and publishers dissipated with the university funding crisis, changing this relationship marked. In the years since, the significance of prestige has expanded as accountability demands from government and within institutions increased.



Publishers have made progress putting their legacy content online especially with journals by allowing scholars to work in deeply integrated electronic research and publishing environment that will enable real-time dissemination, collaboration, dynamically-updated content about content and usage of new media. These changes in content bring about creation and publication, alternative model. Digital technologies have also fostered changes in the way scholarship is created, disseminated and consumed, and these advances are beginning to have a transformational impact on publishing models (Brown et al., 2007). Therefore, the first stage of this transformation is to translate traditional print products into digital formats which most readers now prefer to access journals literature online, the second stage of the transformation is the creation of new product types digital technologies has just begun. New publishing models are emerging in response to demand for real time dissemination, dynamic material, more collaborative research and authority environments and usage of rich media example MIT's open access courseware (OCW) represent such an innovation where digital technologies enabled MIT to publish course materials for global distribution in a way scholarly publishing of the future will need to support content creation and publication, alternative distribution models which equally broaden access, reduce costs, and enable open sharing of content. The alternatives-repositories, pre-print and working paper services to library institutional repositories, open access journals, and author self-publishing and self-archiving tools often compete with traditional publishing functions and have the potentials to disrupt the selecting, credentialing, and economic models on which scholarly publishers rely. Digital platforms also include videos, and collaboration to the reading experience these forms of publishing go by various names (Avignon, 2011) which are:

- (1) **Hybrid:** the digital era open books and written content to cross breeding with other media. For example, Nonlinear reading becomes a multimedia experience scroll motion and sesame street created children e-books that enhance the text with audio tracks
- (2) **Non-linear:** in new press, services, websites such as memorandum compile professional articles and political blogs, selected by an algorithm from hundreds of sites from all ends of the opinion spectrum.
- (3) **Interactive:** the readers' participation in book publishing may seem incongruous in such a supply driven industry. Digital publishing has created a feedback mechanism, where by authors can communicate directly with their audience, and readers can communicate with one another. Authonomy.Com operated by Harber Colins, helps authors create their own webpage and upload their manuscript for visitors to see. Amazon recently acquired shelfari.com, which bring together a community of readers who share their favorite books through a virtual library-an initiative comparable to publisher Hachette livre's website MY Book (Avignon, 2011.)

University rankings rely heavily on metrics associated with research funding, with articles published in prestigious journals that is journals with high impact factor and with monographs published by prestigious houses. As long as the funding of universities partially rests on ranking the evaluation function of scholarly communication based on journal impact factor (and similar quantities performance measurements) is perceived as being of critical importance for the management of the institution. Publishers began to bundle digital journals into what came to be big deals these were attractive to larger publishers because smaller publishers, with fewer prospects were left with a reduced share of libraries acquisition budgets and became financially more vulnerable. Publishers offering big deal could attract journals by promising a better degree of dissemination, as measured by the numbers of institutional subscriptions. Publishers set up portals covering their full range of journals to enhance their visibility, smaller publishers and various large-scale projects portals can help users navigate contents. University presses and disciplinary associations were founded to disseminate research in the original cycle of scholarly communication the faculty produced the work to be published, non-profit publishers organized the distribution of knowledge, the university library



bought the published work at an artificially high price as a learned society; and the faculty used this literature as the foundation for further research and teaching since. Since the 1990s and early 2000s, more academic journals have offered selected content or entire issues on line and modern technologies this content can be accessed by large number of people from different location with digitisation (*Lozano et al., 2012*). As a result, readers obtain information from varieties of sources including print journals, electronic journals full text data bases, (*Ayaita et al., 2019*) find that younger researchers are more prolific in producing journal publications than older cohorts, which might be due to their need to established themselves in academic community and build a sound basis for an academic career under changed incentives. Heckman and moktan (2020) confirmed that there is a link between publishing in top journal and receiving academic tenure in academic economics department, even though they criticize that a scholar's potential can hardly be judged by only a track record of publications in journals with a high impact factor. The editors need to keep in mind that many academics seek to maximise the recognition of their research, for which they most choose a journal that is visible, easy for readers to access, and publishes articles quickly.

Publishers set up portals covering their full range of journals, to enhance their visibility. Smaller publishers, and various large-scale projects portals can help users navigate content in new ways, with a personalisation, linking and analytical tools. There are now three main publishing and business models for scholarly publications:

1. Subscription the predominant model: most subscription take the form of big deals where most of the institutions-generally libraries pay subscriptions on behalf of their staff and students to publishers to provide access to the needed literature.
2. Open access publishing (for journals and monographs) publishers make their contents accessible with clear usage terms. They fall into two categories publishers being charges when the content is accepted for publication. Authors and proxies meet these charges from a range of sources and publishers meet the cost of publishing a journal book or without a levying APCs or BPCs but rather from a range source.
3. Mixing publishing model (subscription and open access) publishers who practice subscription model offer open access with varying degree of timeliness (ranging from immediate to a delay of many years). Academic researchers are rewarded-research is funded, they receive tenure and promotion, work is demanded when they publish in high impact journals. However, they are seldom acknowledged and supported for publishing.

The digital resources such as CD-ROMs, DVDS, PDFs, are replacing traditional paper copies of books, journals, newspaper and magazines. Systems and networks that connect and circulate academic papers host data sets, measure citations and impact, utilize semantic connections to connect academics with each other and with publications relevant to their field. Braton (2016) observed that the stack illustrates how digital platforms have become infrastructure with affordance for both control and freedom, and his evolutive metaphor finds ready application in the context of academic publishing. The academic publishing market is being significantly transformed via global innovation across infrastructure, firms, strategies and actors.

### **Originality in Publishing as a Motivator for Research Visibility**

The success of an organisation greatly depends on the quality of the people who work there to achieve the organisations objectives. Staff training and development is a serious motivation strategy, participating in special educational/professional programs, conferences and other development activities help to achieve professional growth and development, acquire innovative, technical and decision-making skills. This will enhance their ability to deconstruct tasks and challenges and how to feel less intimidated by their job roles and prepares them for



challenges and of training others with art techniques and collaboration as well as career advancement. Therefore, demonstrating to staff provide opportunities for employees to develop skills expand knowledge and increase visibility within organisation; encourage healthy competition between them; let each group want to excel the other and you will see how productivity will increase as each try to do better than others.

Academics should be empowered and allowed to use their initiatives as long as it does not conflict with the objectives of the institution; let them suggest ideas. The role of higher education academic staff was primarily to transmit knowledge based on the assumption that the equator knew everything and it was his or her job to transmit that large wealth of knowledge on to students (Wa-Mbaleka, 2015). Researchers can be motivated through various means, such as payment of wages, salaries and incentives. Lack of these can have a negative effect on researchers' performance and output of the institution. An average researcher in Nigeria sees research satisfaction in terms of monetary reward and when this is lacking, their morale becomes low, which automatically affects the output of the institution. Researchers ranked monetary reward first, followed by job security, promotion and growth. Motivation can be achieved through rewarding researchers using financial or non-financial rewards (Mary et al., 2018). If researcher recognition is enhanced, their motivation to write will increase as well as their accomplishment and, consequently, the output of the institution.

Motivation is the force that energises, directs and sustains behaviour towards the realisation of stated objectives (Armstrong, 2012). Motivation is one of the factors that contribute to academic success. Motivation is of two types, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is based on the internal factors such as self-determination, effort, challenge and curiosity while extrinsic motivation incorporates external factors such as rewards and punishment (Ogbogbu, 2017). Research motivation for successful researchers and academics: manage time and work systematically, researchers must keep in mind that the main motivation in developing their research is their deep interest in the field, not because of money, every researcher must have a high degree confidence and must never give up easily even at time a research will seem to reach a dead end. However, if the research is sincere about gaining new knowledge, the research will eventually be a success. Researchers should never keep quiet about newly acquired knowledge and must always be willing to share information with their colleagues. Cooperation is an important asset for the success of a team project. There is no short cut to gain excellent research results, thus time and energy, sacrifices are essential.

Motivation include research organization and research reputation, higher visibility, opportunities for multidisciplinary research, access to research funds, and mentoring of younger researchers. Development of new methods and sharing knowledge equipment, laboratories, or (big science) infrastructures, including data, encourage researchers to collaborate, in the process extending their networks. The financial budget of universities depends often on worldwide ranking system, that uses the publication frequency of their employed academics, so academics find themselves under pressure to publish. The authors, which have published in predatory journals, did not only spend money (of the university funding agency or on their own), but end up with a published article that was not or only minimal reviewed. Publishing is not only sharing research results with the academic community, but also pursue a career and, therefore, publishing is a way to improve the individual situation and prestige (Demaria, 2018). To publish in a journal with a high journal impact factor seems to promise attention paid to the own research article i.e. the paper to be read, cited, and the own name to be named and published on the reference list of the following researchers or review articles as a contribution to science.



### **Research Visibility, Career Progression and Institutional Popularity**

Career progression which encompasses career advancement and career development as a phenomenon has been a major concern to scholars, researchers, decision makers and human resources experts. These stake holders in human capital development strive to manage issues such as recruitment, selection training and development, promotion and so on emanating from career advancement towards career progression. Academics being the key element of the institutions determines the success or failure of the institutions through their performance. The career of individuals is not only the job they have, but their training for fulfilling the expectation, goal, emotion, and desires related to their job role and as a result a progressing in that work place with the knowledge, skill, quality and desire to work. Achieving progression ability development in an institution is also an example of an advanced level of need satisfaction (Weng, 2010).

Employee career progression or growth could be captured by four factors: career goal progression, professional ability, promotion speed and remuneration growth. This multi-dimensional conceptualisation implies that career progression is both a function of the employees' own efforts in making progression toward their personal career goals and acquiring new skills and the organisations efforts in rewarding such efforts, through promotions and salary increases. Career development sits within a cluster of essential systems including recruitment and induction, performance management, reward and recognition. These cannot function without being connected to each other, yet together they will improve research visibility and ultimately rob on organisational survival and growth. Recognition is a process of gaining a researcher certain status within an institution. This is very crucial as it motivates a researcher towards greater achievements and impact on institutional progress and survival. Career development can be defined as an organised approach used to match employee goals with business needs of agency in support of work force development initiatives (Petricca-Harris & Mc Kenna, 2013).

Progression from one position or the other is attained either through long-term service or educational upgrade and scholarly publications, and even promotion depend on advancement in education. Most academics in Nigeria, publish their works because of the following reason: to gain financial reward, to gain personal prestige, to communicate their results with colleagues, and to advance in their career. However, the most important reason why academics publish is for the purpose of advancing their career (promotion), because promotion in the academic environment is tied to academic publications (Oguche, 2016). In the case of research and academic institutions in Nigeria development of institutional repositories will not only boost the global visibility and utility of their research but will also introduce a novel research culture focused on meeting international standard and values. Knowledge by a researcher that his/her research will be openly accessible by a global audience will have an impact on his/her focus and standard knowledge about career progression in terms of moving between positions within and across different types of institutions (e.g. universities, research institutes) is important for the evaluation of researchers' standard and independence.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, young researchers need to publish in prestigious journals to gain tenure, while older researchers need to do the same in order to creates a strong incentive, for researchers to publish in these journals there is a need for the university to be visible, promote its faculty, attract the best brains and partners, and provide leadership in innovativeness and development. Scholarly publishing needs content creation and publication, alternative ~~information models which would broaden access, reduce costs, and enable open sharing of~~



content, if researchers are enhanced, their motivation to write will increase as well as their accomplishment and output of the institution.

Researchers must keep in mind that the main motivation in developing their research is their deep interest in the field, not because of the money. Researchers should never keep quiet about newly acquired knowledge and must always be willing to share information with their colleagues. Cooperation is an important asset for the success of a team project. There is no short cut to gain excellent research results, thus time and energy, sacrifices are essential.

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