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Current state of African journal publishing: where are we in terms of research publications?

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Abstract

Introduction. The study examined the current situation of African journal publishing, as well as where we are when it comes to research publications.

Method. The study used a survey research design and the researcher purposively selected 15 countries whose total contribution to the entire continent's publication is approximately 80%. Data for the study was collected using a combination of webometrics techniques, document analysis, and reflective analysis.

Analysis. The researcher followed a three-step data analysis process of identifying, summarizing, and analysing information using statistical methods. The metrics were based on Scopus data (SCImago) as of 2024, data was from 1996–2023.

Results. The number of journals, research publications, citations, cited documents, and H-index of African countries was low and faced financial support (government and universities), education and advocacy challenges.

Conclusion. Despite all of the obstacles, the outcomes were positive about the future. Therefore, education and training, building strong publishing institutions, registering and starting journals, and increasing research publications yearly without compromising on quality to create higher impact journals and acceptance for appointment and promotion will change the narrative.

Introduction

There is a need for access to contextual, relevant, and high-quality research articles from Africa to find solutions to the continent's problems in health, education, and climate change to contribute to development. In recent years, there has been rising pressure on African researchers and academics to publish internationally rather than in local journals, to boost their universities' rankings (Khafaga Shehata & Eldakar, 2018). This has led to a decrease in the number of publications in local journals (Confraria & Godinho, 2015). Africa is home to just 253 (1%) of 25231 (99%) of the world's journals, as well as up to 1328791 (2.1%) for fifty-nine African countries of 64687973 (97.9%) for 240 other countries of the world's publications. Most of these international journals operate on a closed access system therefore, access to articles is either through subscription or purchase to the extent that authors have to pay to get their publications.

Researchers are hesitant to completely embrace the approach of publishing locally due to concerns about the general quality of local journals and a perceived lack of incentives to encourage them to do so, but several recommendations are in the pipeline (Moksness et al., 2020). Furthermore, researchers and academics must choose the best journal for their research while also ensuring that the quality of their work is appropriate for the chosen journal and will be accepted for appointment or promotion. There is a pressing need to change the continent's approach to journal publishing.

Journal publishing is the flow of information between the various parties involved in the journal dissemination cycle (Johnson et. al., 2018). Here, research information created by an author from a specific research community passes through the journal editorial office of the author's chosen journal to its journal publisher (institutional libraries often subscribe through subscription agent; however, the growing use of consortia licensing is reducing the need for those agents, particularly among larger publishers) before ending up in the hands of that research community's readers as a published paper in a journal. Electronic publishing is making it possible for users to get journal articles directly from the publisher in addition to going through the library, especially for open access journals.

Journals are periodicals carrying accounts of research (often scholarly articles and scientific papers) authored by the researchers themselves and published after due peer review. Journal articles are primary literature and are extensive studies presenting new work. Depending on the journal, they may be referred to as original articles, research articles, research, or even just articles. Original or research articles are usually the first thing that springs to mind when you hear the words 'journal article'. In reality, research often yields several different outcomes, and not just the final study article can be published. There are several reasons why African researchers should support local journals.

According to Tarkang and Bain (2019), the impact factor and usability of these journals will improve, lowering their mortality rates; research findings from Africa, which are often intended for a local audience because they address local issues that are of little interest to international audiences, will not be lost when the articles are published in local African journals. Articles are frequently unavailable to African audiences, because of the high cost of obtaining publications published in international journals. A survey was conducted by Smart and Murray (2014), and 330 replies were obtained from participants. Although there is no precise list of all active African-based journals, the percentage of journals represented in the answers is impossible to determine. The goal of the study is to learn more about the current situation of African journal publishing, as well as where we are when it comes to research publications. The specific objectives of the study addressed the following:

1. The current status of journal publishing in African countries

2. The challenges associated with Journal publishing in African countries

Literature review

Scholarly communication and journal publishing

Scholarly communication is the process whereby academics, scholars, and researchers share and publish their research findings so that they are available to the wider academic community and beyond. Traditionally scholarly communication has occurred in formal works such as journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters, and books. However, the landscape is changing dramatically. Conference presentations, informal seminar discussions, face-to-face or telephone conversations, official journal and book publications, and grey literature have all been part of scholarly communication in the past (Johnson et. al., 2018). New modes of communication, such as email exchanges, email listservs, preprints, and, increasingly, social media and digital objects, have gradually complemented existing forms over time. The publisher's role is frequently confused with that of the printing or manufacturer, but it is far more extensive. A significant duty for the journal publisher is to identify new, niche markets for the introduction of new journals or the expansion (or closure) of current journals. This entrepreneurial aspect aims to meet both the academic community's demand for new journals and to generate a satisfactory return on investment. It is worth noting that journal publishers have been instrumental in the birth of some disciplines through their early belief in them and support of new journals. According to Johnson et al. (2018), the journal publishers are expected to assume multiple roles, including those of manufacturer, electronic service provider, marketer, distributor, and electronic host.

Scholarly communication identifies issues and finds solutions for more effective ways of sharing the research outputs with researchers. Scholarly communication emphasizes that choosing an appropriate journal is an important step in the early stages of the research process because different journals require different article lengths, approaches, and bibliographic styles. Journals represent much more than simply a publication outlet with many considering them to be a proxy for quality. Journal credibility and predatory publishers are also considered. Again, there are many opportunities for researchers to share their research outside of the published work. There are more popular tools available such as Google scholar citations, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Publons, ORCID, and Altmetric. It is not an exhaustive list when it comes to managing the online presence of researchers.

A large proportion of the research undertaken is supported by public funds. The researchers do the research and write up their work in journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, or books. Once submitted for publication editors (other researchers) assess the work and send it out for peer review which is conducted by the academic community. Researchers do not receive payment or royalties for their published articles. Also, the tasks of peer review and editing are considered to be part of the scholarly process and are undertaken without payment. Once the work is published, institutional libraries (which are publicly funded) pay large amounts for subscriptions to journals. This means that people affiliated with these institutions can access the research but those without an affiliation cannot. Practitioners such as pharmacists, teachers, nurses, and entrepreneurs are unable to see the latest developments in their field.

Open access publishing models are now changing the narrative by enhancing the visibility and accessibility of research, increasing citation impact, promoting knowledge equity and enabling wider dissemination of scholarly work without financial barrier for readers. Peer review is the system used to assess the quality of scientific research before it is published. Independent researchers in the same field scrutinize research papers for validity, significance, and originality using peer review tools to help editors assess whether research papers should be published in their journal (Machovec, 2019). Also, it can be difficult to know where to start as copyright issues vary (Mrowinski, 2020). Copyright protection, copyright ownership, and copyright license are intended

as a guide to some of the basic issues surrounding copyright that the research community may encounter.

Journal publishing in Africa

Journals in the developing world face challenges in becoming known and respected in the international research landscape. Since 1998, the Journals Online project has established a network of local journal platforms to help African journals gain an online presence and increase their global visibility. Concerns are often raised about the perceived quality and transparency of publication processes for African journals. This, in turn, limits the perceived credibility of the research published within those journals. According to African Journals Online, (2022), the journal publishing practices and standards (JPPS) framework provides detailed assessment criteria for the quality of publishing practices of African journals and is initially being used to assess the journals hosted on African Journals Online platforms.

Journals assessed against the journal publishing practices and standards criteria are given one of six levels: inactive title, new title, no stars, one star, two stars, and three stars (African Journals Online, 2022). The assigned Journal Publishing Practices and Standards levels serve a dual purpose. One, readers are assured that the journals meet an internationally recognized set of criteria at a particular level. And two, journal editors can have detailed feedback from the JPPS assessment helps them identify ways to improve their publishing practices and standards to achieve a higher level at the next assessment. The Journal Publishing Practices and Standards framework has been established and managed by African Journals Online and International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP). Assessments of all African Journals Online partner journals were carried out in 2018 and went live on the African Journals Online website in 2019 (African Journals Online, 2022).

Over the past few years, the state of scholarly publishing particularly in terms of the publishing of journals has dramatically changed. According to the Smart and Murray (2014) survey conducted, 330 responses were received from participants. Responses represented approximately 30% of known African-based journals publishing actively, yet no definitive list of all such journals exists, making it impossible to note exactly what percentage of journals were represented in responses. Journal publishing appears to be concentrated in two African countries: South Africa and Nigeria.

Many journals are *scholar journals* that is, journals that are supported by a few individuals or small group of scholars who publish a single scholarly journal in their field of study (Smart & Murray, 2014). Consistent with this finding, the chief editor handles day-to-day journal operations. Over 60% of journals were published by a group based out of a university, scholarly society, or professional association. Only 19% of journals were published by a commercial publisher. The top 100 publishers publish 67% of all journals, and the four largest (Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, and Taylor & Francis) all publish well over 2,000 journals each (Atkinson, Valentine & Christer, 2015). African Journals are generally quite young the highest concentration of journals was founded in the early 2000s. Most entities with an online presence established it during or after the year 2000.

Most journals are available in both print and online. Unlike journals in many other parts of the world, most African journals still feel the need to offer printed versions, despite it being the biggest expense item for the majority of African journals. Some of the reasons shared for printing journals are requirements by university libraries and readers and promotion committees at universities. Concerns about accessibility for the target readership were heightened by the lack of reliable internet access.

The financial status of journals is still a bit clear, although many implied a scarcity of resources. Nearly one-third of African journals indicated that they operate in a *moneyless* environment, with

no income or revenue, instead of relying on volunteers and goods and services support from institutions. Cost recovery for all publishing models is quite difficult, direct funding from a national government was not a particularly significant source of income (Tarkang & Bain, 2019). Institutional support from universities was generally via in-kind support such as office space, office equipment, telephones, and internet access. Serious concerns are evident as well, often tied to bigger development and infrastructure issues outside of the publishing industry.

Impact factor was is an overarching but extremely difficult to attain a goal in terms of the inappropriateness of the use of impact factor as a metric of the quality of African journals (Pandita & Singh, 2021). Many raised pain points and frustrations surrounding impact factor in that their target authors (African researchers) are encouraged to publish in overseas journals. A disconnect emerged between African universities' promotion policies that reward authors for publishing overseas, high impact factor journals, and the pressures faced by African journals to publish high-quality, contextually-relevant, development-oriented research (Smart & Murray, 2014).

The context of open access is also complicated. Roughly two-thirds self-identified their journals as being open access, yet responses indicated confusion around that term (Machovec, 2019). It is more likely that most of those journals are offering their content online in full text for free, and only a small subset of those journals includes any re-use rights under Creative Commons or another open licensing scheme (Rowley, 2022). Many of the open access journals noted a loss of income they had previously received from subscription income, which is a challenge.

Despite some ambiguity in the definition of Open Access, many African journals remarked on its importance for the future of journal publishing in the region. Concerns around the complexities of Open Access in Africa were voiced, as well as frequent mention of the need for financial sustainability and additional sources of income for journal publishing (Machovec, 2019). There is a need for further professional development and capacity building, particularly related to the technical aspects of supporting journals, moving journals online, working with online submission systems, XML markup, and other related ICT skills.

African Journals Online (AJOL) is the world's largest and most authoritative portal for scholarly journals published in Africa. African Journals Online has worked to improve global and continental online awareness, access, and usage of quality and peer-reviewed published African research. African Journals Online is extensively used, this is evident by millions of monthly downloads by site users from practically every country on the planet. Africa accounts for more than half of the repeat consumers. African Journals Online has hosted 583 journals, including 306 open-access journals (African Journals Online, 2022).

The challenges associated with journal publishing in African countries

The most prevalent barriers or obstacles to worldwide publishing, according to Khafaga Shehata & Eldakar (2018), are a lack of awareness of publishing channels accessible in the field of specialty, a lack of training in publishing procedures, and the anxiety of scholars about electronic publishing.

Financial issues

The peer review process is the same whether the journal is closed-access or open-access. 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. However, in most closed-access journals accepted articles are published for free, and users must pay a price to view the articles. Most users choose open-access publications, which allow them to access content for free, even on their mobile electronic devices. Tarkang and Bain (2019) were of the view that most African scientists and researchers have no choice except to publish in open access journals, where they must pay article processing charge (APC) publishing fees. African scientist is unable to afford the

high financial costs of publishing in some international peer-reviewed open-access journals, and much of the research done in Africa stay unnoticed by the rest of the world.

Inadequate support from universities and the government

The university and government system does not foster local publishing, and all efforts to publish locally are undertaken by individual academics without the support of universities and the government. Surprisingly, universities place a strong emphasis on international publications. Scholars who publish in foreign channels are promoted, whilst their local counterparts perish since their efforts are not recognized by the promotion system.

Method

The study used a survey research design. The population of the study included all African countries. The researcher purposively selected fifteen countries whose total contribution to the entire continent's publication is approximately 80%. Each country selected contributes at least 1% to the entire continent's publications. Data for the study was collected using a combination of webometrics techniques, document analysis, and reflective analysis. The researcher followed a three-step data analysis process of identifying, summarizing, and analysing information using statistical methods. The data obtained were compiled and processed, using descriptive statistics, which was assisted by Microsoft Excel. Graphs and tables were used to present the summary of the quantitative data. The validity and reliability of data obtained in the study were improved as various approaches were used to collect and analyse data about the phenomenon. These various techniques were also key in checking biases in the work. Using various approaches in conducting research helps complement each other (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). The metrics were based on Scopus data as of April 2021, data was from 1996-2023 (SCImago, 2023). Journals that were still active as of 2023 for the fifty-nine countries were 253, taking into consideration our sample countries of fifteen, the total journal number was 248 (98%). A journal would have met a certain international inclusion set of criteria before it can be added to the Scopus data. Medicine and health sciences, sciences (general), social sciences, arts and humanities, engineering, computer science, and multidisciplinary were the various disciplines considered for the study. The study was limited to fifteen African countries because they are the only ones contributing at least one percent to the entire continent's publications from SCImago journal & country rank. The SCImago Journal & country rank is a publicly available portal that includes the journals and country scientific indicators developed from the information contained in the Scopus database. Even though African Journals Online had a lot of journals there was not much data for constructive analysis. The SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) indicator created by SCImago using the well-known algorithm Google PageRank, gives this platform its name. This indicator shows the visibility of the journals contained in the Scopus® database from 1996.

Results

The section contains the findings and discussions linked to the several topics that evolved because of the study's research objectives, namely, the current status of journal publishing in African countries and the challenges associated with journal publishing in African countries. The findings are presented in frequencies and percentages using tables.

The current status of journal publishing in African countries

The findings of the current status of journal publishing in African countries in terms of the number of journals in Africa, African countries' distribution of documents, African countries' distribution of cited documents, African countries' distribution of citations, and African countries' distribution of citations per document are evident in the section.

African countries' distribution of published documents

South Africa (28%), Egypt (22%), and Nigeria (10%) account for sixty per cent of publications (1,207,180) in African journals whereas Zimbabwe, Senegal, and Sudan contribute three percent of these publications as seen in Table 1 below. Egypt has the highest number of journals but South Africa is publishing articles more than them. When compared to other African countries, Egypt with 121 (49%) journals has the highest number of journals. South Africa and Nigeria are two more African countries having a considerable number of journals, that is eighty-six (35%) and twenty (8%) journals respectively.

On the other hand, Algeria, Cameroon, and Sudan contribute zero percent of these journals as seen in Table 1 below. Algeria had 84,192 (7%) published documents despite having no journal, ranking fifth in Africa. Egypt and South Africa appear to have a monopoly on journal publishing in Africa. Egypt has almost half of the continent's journals, while South Africa has nearly over a third of the journals. The rest of the continent accounted for only sixteen per cent of the journals. This confirms Smart and Murray's (2014) statement that journal publishing appears to be concentrated in a few African countries. Also, out of 248 journals, 201(81%) are open access journals and that means free unrestricted access to the journals and their documents. There is no doubt that the transition to full open access publication calls for institutional reforms from publishers, universities, and other research organizations, as well as changes in the academic literacies of the research communities (May, 2020). The trend is moving more in the direction of scholarly open publishing. Whether one agrees with this direction or not, doing nothing will result in larger forces defining the future (Machovec, 2019). Transitional agreements need to be thought through now as libraries seek new contracts with big publishers.

Country (journals)	Published documents	Percentage of documents
South Africa (121)	342060	28%
Egypt (86)	264543	22%
Nigeria (20)	118048	10%
Tunisia (1)	104541	9%
Algeria (0)	84192	7%
Morocco (2)	83349	7%
Kenya (5)	44575	4%
Ethiopia (4)	34552	3%
Ghana (3)	28547	2%
Uganda (1)	22379	2%
Tanzania (1)	22226	2%
Cameroon (0)	20784	2%
Zimbabwe (2)	13063	1%
Senegal (2)	12572	1%
Sudan (0)	11749	1%
TOTAL	1207180	100%

Table 1. African countries' distribution of published documents

From the diagram below, the number of documents produced by Egypt and South Africa is greater than that of Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco over a period from 2012-2021. Taking into consideration Egypt and South Africa, the documents produced by both countries are on the rise from 2012-2021, however, Egypt seems to be having a steady increase in documents throughout the period 2012-2019 with South Africa lying below it. South Africa's number of documents was more than that of Egypt after 2020. Regarding Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, the number

of documents in these countries was increasing but at a slow rate. Nigeria stood out in terms of differences after 2018 and kept on rising leaving Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

The greatest single source of research funding in South Africa is the publication incentive scheme that pays researchers when they publish articles, conference proceedings, and book chapters in reputable journals. It is estimated to be worth US\$160 million annually. This was initially implemented in 2005 to drive academic output and it is working. South Africa's overall research output rose from 8, 206 articles in 2005 to 33,019 in 2021. Again, Scholars in Kenya receive financially rewarded up to US\$ 200 by the National Council for Science and Technology for published works in internationally accredited journals. The awards are aimed at encouraging researchers to contribute to the global body of knowledge. Incentives to scholars to publish in peer-reviewed journals also promote communication between the scientific community and its audience comprising consumers of science, technology, and innovation products ([University World News, 2022](#)).

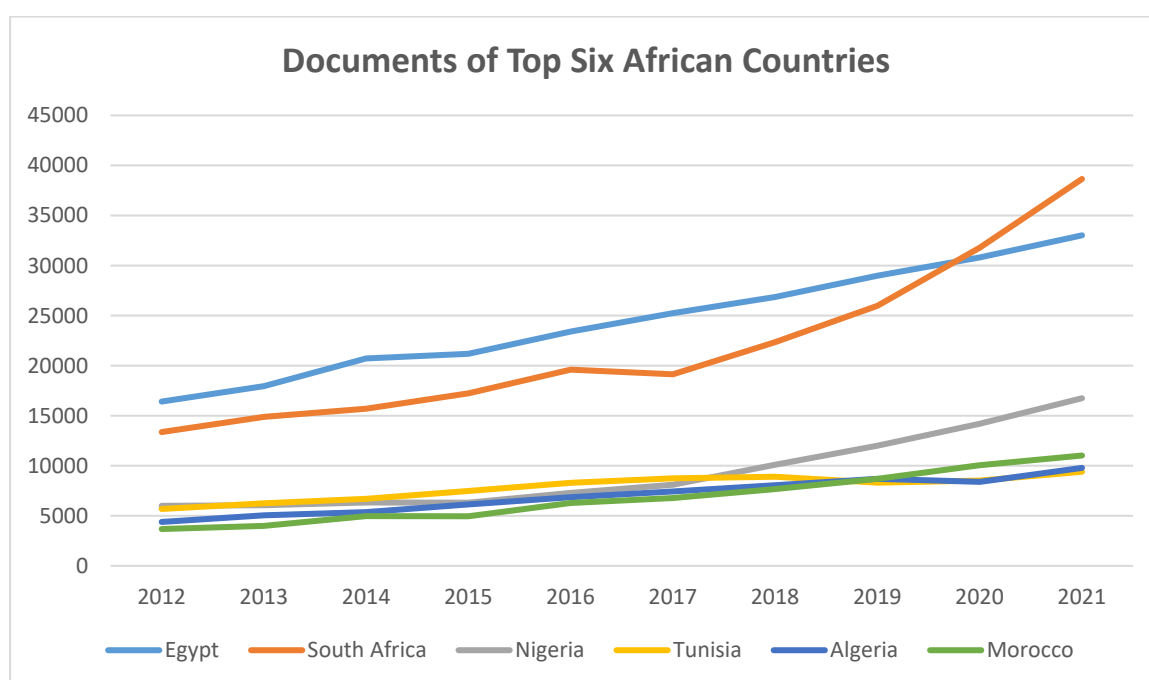


Figure 1. African countries' distribution of published documents

African countries' distribution of cited documents

However, the data revealed that sixty per cent of African countries cited documents are from South Africa (27%), Egypt (23%), and Nigeria (10%). Still, Zimbabwe, Senegal, and Sudan all produced 3 percent of the total document as shown in table 3 below. The result showed a clear correlation between several documents and cited documents of South Africa, Egypt, and Nigeria.

Country	Cited published documents	Percentage of cited documents
South Africa	305649	27%
Egypt	252794	23%
Nigeria	110600	10%
Tunisia	98601	9%
Algeria	80961	7%
Morocco	77388	7%
Kenya	39667	4%
Ethiopia	32197	3%
Ghana	26080	2%
Uganda	20064	2%
Tanzania	20295	2%
Cameroon	19201	2%
Zimbabwe	11652	1%
Senegal	11483	1%
Sudan	10858	1%
TOTAL	1117490	100%

Table 2. African countries' distribution of cited published documents

From the diagram below, the number of cited documents produced by Egypt and South Africa is greater than that of Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco over a period from 2012-2021. Taking into consideration Egypt and South Africa, the number of cited documents in both countries has been on the rise from 2012-2019, however, Egypt seems to be having a steady increase in cited documents throughout the period 2012-2019 with South Africa lying below it. South Africa's number of cited documents outnumbered that of Egypt after 2020. It is interesting to note that after 2020, although South Africa's number of cited documents outnumbered that of Egypt, the number of cited documents in both countries decreased drastically.

Regarding Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, the number of cited documents in these countries was increasing but at a slow rate. Nigeria stood out in terms of differences after 2018 and kept on rising leaving Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. It is important to note that Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco's number of cited documents also dropped massively after 2020.

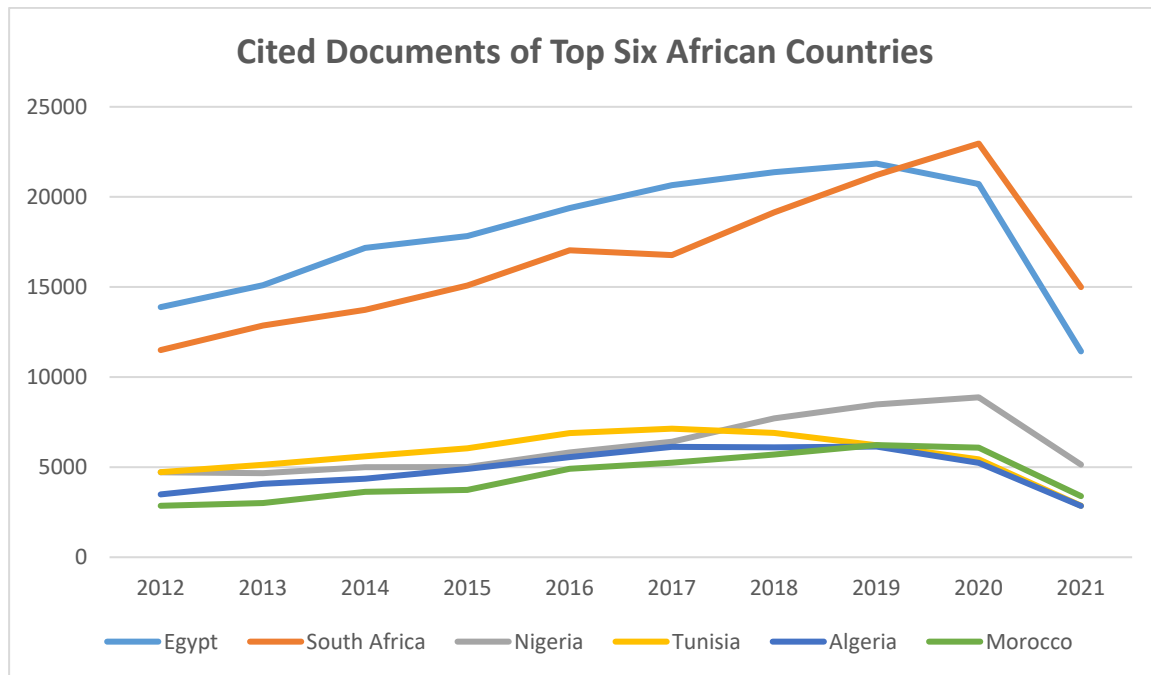


Figure 2. African countries' distribution of cited published documents

African countries' distribution of citations

The research data discovered that South Africa (35%) is the most frequently cited African country, followed by Egypt (20%) and Nigeria (7%) but Zimbabwe, Senegal, and Sudan with one percent each are the African countries with the least citations as seen in table 4 below. Again, the findings revealed a strong link between the number of documents and the number of citations of South Africa, Egypt, and Nigeria. According to Visser et. al. (2020), it is clear that the volume of citations is greater for a higher number of articles. One can see that regardless of the quality of their work, they all accrue more citations together.

Country	Citations	Percentage of citations
South Africa	5407984	35%
Egypt	3041277	20%
Nigeria	1019744	7%
Tunisia	1027585	7%
Kenya	941327	6%
Algeria	725764	5%
Morocco	794014	5%
Uganda	452993	3%
Ethiopia	438544	3%
Tanzania	436160	3%
Ghana	397279	3%
Cameroon	305879	2%
Zimbabwe	213703	1%
Senegal	168856	1%
Sudan	149167	1%
TOTAL	15520276	100%

Table 3. African countries' distribution of citations

From the diagram below, the number of citations produced by Egypt and South Africa is greater than that of Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco over a period from 2012-2021. It can also be seen that the number of citations in Egypt was decreasing slowly but it was insignificant from 2012-2016. After 2016, there was a massive drop in the number of citations which was near 50,000 in 2021. The number of citations in South Africa was rising slowly but it was insignificant from 2012-2014. From 2014-2015, there was a greater increase in the number of citations. After 2015, the number of citations started to decrease but the decrement became significant after 2017 up till 2021. Although citations in Egypt and South Africa were decreasing drastically after 2019, South Africa was positioned above Egypt. Regarding Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, the number of citations in these countries was increasing from 2012-2015 but at a slow rate. After 2015, Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco's citations began to decrease up till 2021.

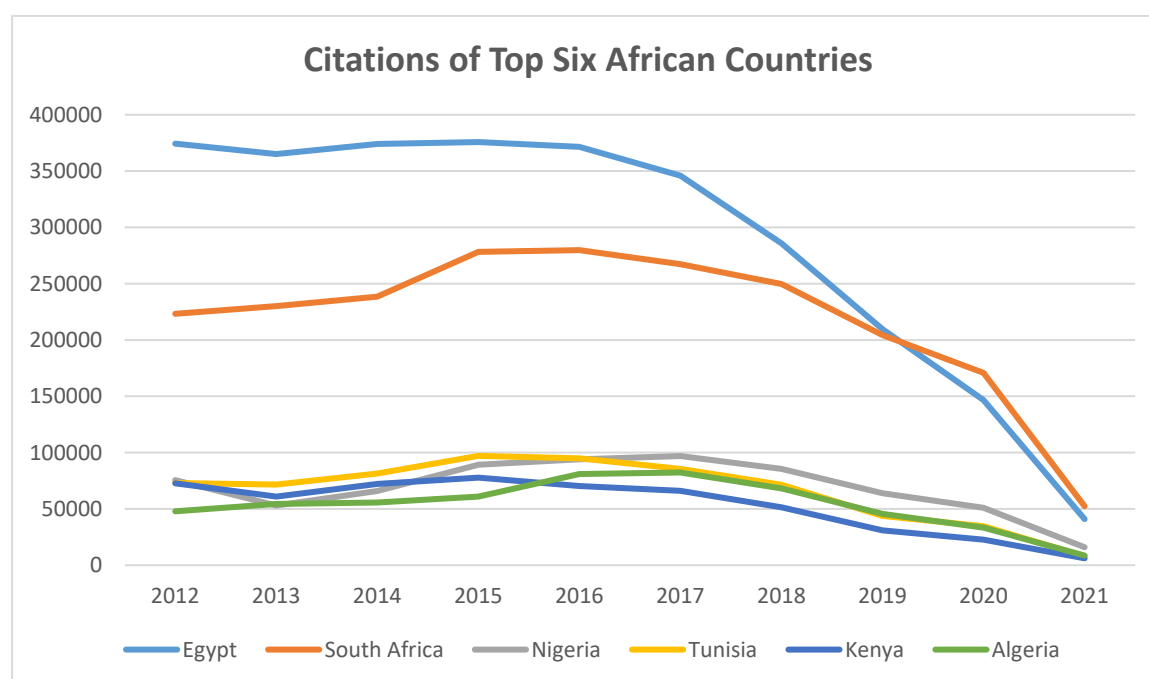


Figure 3. African countries' distribution of citations

African countries' distribution of citations per document

Kenya has the most citation per document with 21.12 (10%) of the total (208.73). Uganda and Tanzania, with 20.24 (10%) and 19.62 (9%) journals, respectively, are two additional African countries with a significant number of citations per document. Morocco with 9.53 (5%), Nigeria with 8.64 (4%), and Algeria with 8.62 (4%), on the other hand, were the countries with the lowest citation per document as seen in table 5 below. Nonetheless, the result showed a contrary relationship between the number of documents and citations per document in African countries. The observation that "regardless of the importance of output one can accumulate more citations", is different for citation per document as each article is dealt with separately. Here, the quality and importance of a document will lead to it being cited severally. Producing high-quality publications is just as crucial as conducting the study. Research journals not only assist in disseminating research findings to intended audiences but also support the process of confirming those findings through peer review and replication using the skills of experts (Pandita & Singh, 2021).

Country	Citations per document	Percentage of citations per document
Kenya	21.12	10%
Uganda	20.24	10%
Tanzania	19.62	9%
Zimbabwe	16.36	8%
South Africa	15.81	8%
Cameroon	14.72	7%
Ghana	13.92	7%
Senegal	13.43	6%
Sudan	12.7	6%
Ethiopia	12.69	6%
Egypt	11.5	6%
Tunisia	9.83	5%
Morocco	9.53	5%
Nigeria	8.64	4%
Algeria	8.62	4%
TOTAL	208.73	100%

Table 4. African countries' distribution of citations per document

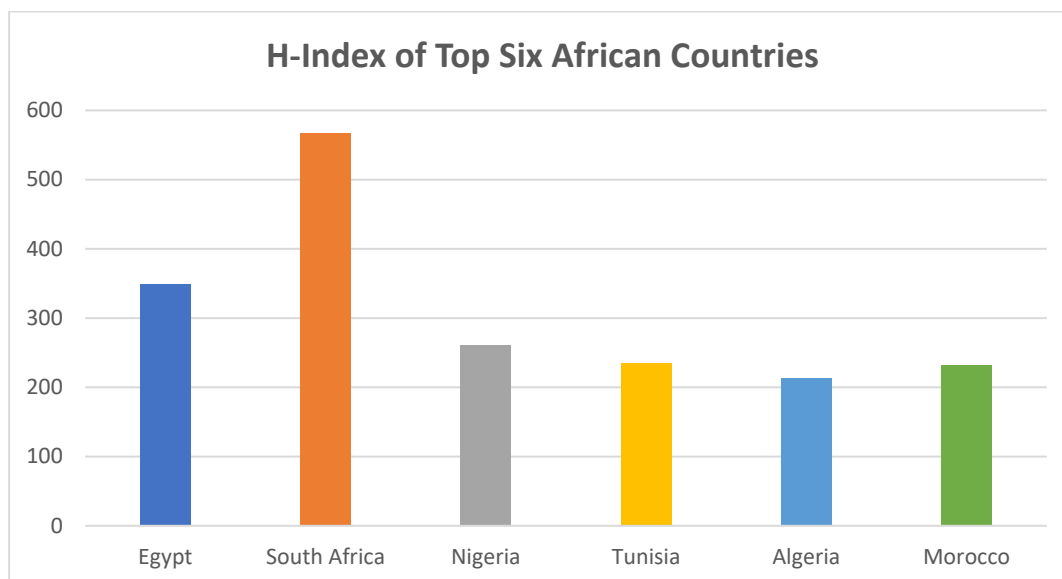


Figure 4. H-index distribution

Tarkang and Bain (2019) suggested universities and research institutions in Africa have a responsibility to annually make a list of accredited peer-reviewed journals from Africa available to researchers and academics and to encourage them to submit their work in these journals. The promotion of local content in scholarly publications in Africa is necessary. The impact factor of these journals would increase as a result, and they would gain recognition and the ability to compete with other peer-reviewed publications worldwide.

The challenges associated with journal publishing in African countries

The findings of the challenges associated with journal publishing in African countries about the high esteem with which international journals are regarded, financial constraints, Peer-review turnaround time, and Inadequate education and advocacy are as follows:

The high esteem with which international journals are regarded

Researchers in Africa have been led to believe that if their articles are published outside of the continent, they will earn worldwide recognition and repute. They have been conditioned into believing that works produced outside of Africa are superior to those published in Africa (Tarkang & Bain, 2019). Research published in international journals is frequently intended to address international issues and audiences. Some assessors likely assume that research published in these journals will automatically be of higher quality. Local journals are here to continue to consciously reflect and iterate on the culture of research through the lens of publishing (Atkinson, Valentine & Christer, 2015). The majority of research carried out in Africa is intended for local consumption. Therefore, it makes perfect sense for such works to be published in African journals for an African audience.

Financial constraints

Journals can be closed-access or open-access; most open-access journals have publishing costs, which are paid by the manuscript's author(s), while research consumers have free access to the journals. However, in most closed access journals, accepted articles are published for free, and users must pay to view the articles. African researchers struggle to pay publication fees for some local peer reviewed journals. The inability of most African scientists to pay publication fees is a result of poverty, they prefer open access journals where they can publish for free. To provide academics and researchers with a direct route to publish their research findings, universities and research institutions in Africa should be encouraged to establish their journals and publishing firms (Smart & Murray, 2014; Tarkang & Bain, 2019). Governments in Africa should engage with the research and scientific community to support local journals and publishing houses. This could help to cut the mortality rate of African journals significantly. African universities and research institutes should be encouraged to establish their journals and publishing houses so that academics and researchers can publish their discoveries directly.

Peer review turnaround time

Peer review is the system used to assess the quality of scientific research before it is published. Independent researchers in the same field scrutinize research papers for validity, significance, and originality to help editors assess whether research papers should be published in their journals. Many authors of manuscripts have expressed their frustration at having to cope with a lengthy review (or desk rejection) delays and poor reviews after submitting their work (Mrowinski, 2020). The peer-review procedure for most local journals takes a lengthy time to complete, often as long as one year. The paper can become obsolete before it is ever published. For this reason, most African academics prefer to publish their findings in high-impact international journals.

Inadequate education and advocacy

Although the act of publishing is essential to academic life, the environment in which it occurs has changed dramatically recently and undoubtedly will continue to do so. Early career researchers must continue to increase their awareness of the "changing sands" of journal publications (Rowley, 2022). Stakeholders must be given systematic instructions on processes and procedures when it comes to journal publishing. Everyone in the scholarly community should be able to speak and have their voices heard on matters that matter to them. When decisions about journal publishing are being made, stakeholders' opinions and wishes must be taken into account. Generally, their rights should be protected and promoted in all situations related to journal publishing. Education and advocacy working hand in hand enhances creativity. Scheduling workshops or seminars regularly may therefore be a way to help people form a habit of producing open access content (Moksness, Olsen & Tuu, 2020).

Conclusion

In Africa, only South Africa and Egypt have distinguished themselves, but there is hope as Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon, Zimbabwe,

Senegal, and Sudan are now contributing at least a percent to the continent's entire research publications. There is no better time than this to put more effort into building strong publishing institutions, registering and starting journals, and increasing our research publications yearly without compromising on quality to create higher-impact journals. Africa should populate its journals with world-standard scholarly works and open access so that content can easily be extracted by several databases. This will give researchers all around the world a stock shop for all African research publications. Despite all of the obstacles mentioned in the study, the findings were positive about the future and made it very clear they support publishing initiatives in Africa. Generally, Africa should create a database to connect researchers, potential collaborators, and funding organizations through the provision of quick and convenient information on each of them. The following specific suggestions were recommended:

Education and training

There should be various exciting sets of education and training programs aimed at a specific groups within the research community, including researchers, lecturers, postgraduate students, librarians, researcher administrators and policy makers. Education should focus mainly on Open Research practices and policies, the publishing landscape, and research data management. Engaging them will lead to delivering training sessions that are tailored to the needs of a specific group. This training should encourage discussion and sharing of expertise. They should be educated on various aspects of scholarly publishing and research management that is from choosing where to publish to starting peer review and promoting your research. Education and training programs should run throughout the year highlighting key issues and topics in scholarly communication. Specifically, they must continue to expand their professional skills and build their capacities, especially about the technical facets of supporting journals, bringing journals online, using online submission systems, working with open journal system (OJS) and other ICT-related abilities.

Publishing our research in high-impact factor journals

Finding an African journal with a high impact factor is difficult but not impossible, there are a lot of them. Publishing in such journals can facilitate earlier dissemination of research, while strengthening publication records and enhancing scholarly reputation. The key to a paper being accepted is knowing the appropriate scholarly outlets and knowing how to handle editorial decisions. Prior to submission, it is essential to carefully review author guidelines, as well as the goals and scope of target the journal(s), to determine whether the proposed manuscript aligns with the journal's requirement and accepted article types. Given the diversity of publication formats, some of which are specific to particular journals, available options should be evaluated before submission.

Getting our journals and registering with well-established publishers

Academic institutions most especially universities should establish scholarly communication office (SCO) to spearhead campus wide initiatives to open, share and preserve scholarship. Such an office should develop a robust and comprehensive set of evidence-based policy frameworks relating to registering institution wide journals through the provision of advice (advice unit) and administrative support.

Appointment and promotion

Senior colleagues on appointment and promotion committees should endeavour to normalize open access publication as a means of demonstrating academic accomplishment. Research centres and other prospective repositories of open access material must be far more transparent about their content quality assurance and review procedures.

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