

Enhancing Global Research Visibility of Faculty Staffs by the Academic libraries in Public Universities in South East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries are at the forefront of supporting their parent institutions in teaching and learning, research activities, and community services for the students and faculty members, but, the researchers observed that some of the research emanating from faculty members in academic institutions particularly universities remains largely unknown, unrecognized and invisible on the global scene. This present paper is therefore a modest attempt towards addressing the issue of enhancing the faculty research visibility in the institutions of higher learning by the academic libraries. It also examines the extent academic libraries in public universities in Nigeria use research visibility channels to increase the global visibility of their faculty members. Difficulties encountered by librarians and ways of tackling the visibility of the faculty were also examined. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and the population consisted of all the 162 librarians in public universities in South-East (S.E), Nigeria. Telephone calls and Online Questionnaire were used for data collection. The number of librarians was obtained through phone calls from the Heads of each of the Libraries. The Online Questionnaire was submitted to the WhatsApp platforms of librarians in Nigeria- Academic and Research Libraries (ARL) and Chartered Librarians in Nigeria Connect (CLN-Connect). The questionnaire was structured in such a way that only the Librarians in Public universities in the S.E. Nigeria will respond to it. At the end of the day only 120 librarians responded, at a response rate of 74%. The study was analysed using tables, percentages and charts. The study recommended that librarians who are unaware of RVCs and its utilization should go for training to acquire the knowledge that will enable them enhance the global visibility of faculty staff, Management of Public universities in S.E, Nigeria should in addition to addressing copyright issues by the use of disclaimer notices and creative common licensing and provision of infrastructural facilities e.g. steady power supply, High power brand Internet connectivity, establishment of an Institutional Repository, etc, also should mandate the faculty staff to release their productive work to the library for onward submission to the RVCs platforms for enhancement of their global visibility.

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1. Introduction

Academic libraries support their parent institutions in teaching, learning, research activities, and community services. Quality and quantity of research output is a key criteria to measure the academic excellence of any university. Owing to the importance attached to research, both the developed and developing countries of the world are allocating huge amount of funds for research with the hope that it would hasten the development of their economy, and strengthen the educational system and its development. Conversely, academic institutions carry out research to support government priorities, make discoveries, and add to existing or create new knowledge. Faculty members carry out research mainly for their job progression and advancement. The efforts made by the government, the institutions of higher learning, and the faculty to encourage research output would be an effort in futility if these research findings remain unrecognized, uncirculated, or invisible to the target audience. It is this that made Kupe (2019) affirms that “if research is not visible, it is not used or cited. If it is not cited, it never makes the cut in the high index list which is largely based on citations”. This reveals the need for academic libraries to disseminate the findings of research to make it discoverable or visible on the global scene because knowledge is not what is hoarded behind a paywall of publication, but it is the wisdom to apply and share the findings to enable the society gain from it (Kupe, 2019). Research visibility entails creating awareness of one’s research among the researchers or target audience so that it will be cited thereby increasing the visibility of the work. The more researchers know or hear about the result of the findings the more citations it receives and more visibility is assured (Dar-odeh, 2020).

Different channels exist for research dissemination. The research channel refers to the avenues through which scholars access research publications (Ogunleye, 2019). Research results could be disseminated through the institutional repositories, through social media platforms which include but are not limited to a blog, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Canick (2013) reported that “libraries can focus on dissemination and promotion of faculty work, especially through innovative open access projects” in addition to the roles they are known for. Libraries can improve the visibility of a published work of the faculty by uploading a published work in the institutional repository (IR), updating the researchers’ online profile, and linking it up to the IR, social media platform or social networking sites which could further be used to promote the published work.

International African Institute (2021) listed repositories in Africa owned by universities in countries like Algeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Libya, Ghana, Lesotho, Morocco, Namibia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Burundi, etc. In Nigeria with a total of 93 public universities (Federal 44, State 49) NUC (2021), International African Institute (2021) reported that Ahmadu Bello University, University of Benin, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, University of Port Harcourt, University of Ibadan, University of Jos, the University of Lagos and University of Nigeria Nsukka have not only IR but have hosted them to the global North. By implication, this showed that very few public universities in Nigeria have functional IR. Perhaps this is why Nigeria is lagging behind in global visibility. In confirmation, UNESCO (2017) reported that Nigeria has a very low percentage of its publications available online. In the African University Ranking according to Ranking Web of Universities 2021 edition, very

few universities in Nigeria secured the following positions in the world: University of Ibadan (1,219), Covenant University Ota (1,326), OAU (1,614), UNN (1,615), and the University of Lagos (1,894) respectively. Again this shows that the global visibility of Universities in Nigeria is poor. Even as academic libraries that have IR use them to disseminate the research of their local content, there is inadequate documented evidence on how they can use other channels to disseminate research results. Thus, Ezema (2011) opines that the dissemination of research findings is one of the greatest encumbrances to research visibility in Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

Both the developed and developing countries are apportioning enormous amount of funds for research with the hope that findings from the research would accelerate the growth of their economy, strengthen the process of education and also enhance development. Most research articles published in highly rated journals are usually under a heavy paywall and only those who could afford them have access to the publication. The publications in the local journals that are not published on-line, such can only be accessed by contributors or authors of the articles and those who could afford to purchase them. Also, print resources acquired by academic libraries are processed and stored on the shelves which can only be accessed by registered library users. Again the researchers have observed that publications emanating from the university like question papers, inaugural lectures, thesis and dissertations, etc are not published online and so can only be accessed by a few individuals. It is worrisome to know that most of the published research out-puts reside only on the websites of the publishers or the publishing houses for prints without getting into the hands of the right audience nationally and worldwide. It is also a source of concern that there is not much in-depth study on why academic libraries and librarians are not utilizing most of the RVCs to enhance the visibility of the research output of their faculty members in Public Universities in South East, Nigeria. This study therefore intends to fill this gap in the literature. The purpose of this study is to find out why academic libraries and librarians are not enhancing the research visibility of faculty staffs in the public universities in South East Nigeria.

Specifically this study is guided by the following research questions:

2.1 Research Questions

- 1) What is the level of awareness of research visibility channels by librarians in the academic libraries in Public Universities in South East (S.E.) Nigeria?
 - 2) Do libraries have accounts with research visibility platforms or channels?
 - 3) Do librarians in the academic library have profile account with the research visibility channels?
 - 4) What is the extent of utilization of research visibility channels by librarians to enhance the visibility of faculty members in Public Universities in S.E. Nigeria?
 - 5) What are the challenges of enhancing the research visibility of faculty members in Public Universities in S.E. Nigeria?
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- 6) In what ways can academic libraries in Public Universities in Nigeria curb the challenges of enhancing the research visibility of faculty members?

2.2 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of this study, would provide useful insights for faculty members that are unaware of the wherewithal to visibility. The findings of this study will also bring to the fore different channels by which research would be circulated.

It is also hoped that the findings of this study will awaken academic libraries to work assiduously in helping their faculty members gain visibility and thereby increase institutional visibility and ranking.

This study will also help libraries and librarians bring to the limelight publications of their faculty that reside in obscurity. The result of this study would further educate the libraries and librarians of their roles in supporting scholarship and expanding research.

3. Literature Review

Research is a careful and detailed study of a specific problem, concern, or issue using the scientific method (Kowalczyk and Scalia (2003-2021). “Visibility is defined as the extent to which one is fully regarded and recognized by others (Brighenti, 2007; Simpson & Lewis, 2005). Visibility is often considered to be a desirable state, particularly when people can control their visibility, such as garnering recognition for one’s contributions to a successful project (Lollar, 2015).” Academic institutions engage in a number of research activities through their academic staff who require them mainly for promotion and retention of tenure ship, how the findings of their research are disseminated most times is not the concern of scholars or the faculty members. The university libraries roles, some of which include as contained in the Monash University website in 2021 but not limited to: library ensuring that collections of the library are discoverable and accessible, providing stewardship for the university research output through the institutional repository; expanding, promoting and making available access to researchers collections and resources across multiple sites among others. All these roles are in an attempt to support the mission of the university and the mandate of its parent institutions.

In Nigeria with over 200 million population (Worldometer, 2021), with 12 approved Distance Learning Centres, 93 approved Public Universities and 99 approved Private Universities (NUC Monday Bulletin March 22nd, 2021), might have generated a lot of research. According to Ezema (2010), these institutions engage in many researches through their academic staff who require them for advancement and the students who must submit their thesis or dissertations as part of the requirements for the award of degrees, certificates, and diplomas. The visibility of these researches could be enhanced if they are shared. In the same way, Knowledge is the wisdom to apply what is known from a practical perspective and to share the findings to benefit society at large (Kupe, 2019). The visibility of publications is usually measured by the number of times the publication is read and cited by other scholars and how much the paper contributes to the growth of human knowledge

(Ezema, 2011). Ironically, researches generated over the years are hidden in different libraries with very few researchers and students accessing them (Christian, 2008; Ezema, 2010). Hence an indication that many of these researches are unknown and unrecognized by those who need them.

Yet the importance attached to research is so much that the government both in developed and developing countries spent so much money to support research activities in their various countries. For instance, African Union's Executive Council in 2006 established a target for all member states of 1 percent of GDP investment in Research Development in order to improve innovation, productivity, and economic growth. Owing to this target, the Federal Government of Nigeria has graciously approved an allocation of 0.5 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to research and innovation (National University Commission Bulletin, 2021). Owing to so much money invested in research, if the findings of the research are not widely circulated to increase its impact, usage, and visibility will be tantamount to making futile efforts by the sponsors.

Research could be circulated through many channels or avenues to increase its visibility. According to Steynberg (2019), these channels include but are not limited to the use of ORCID identifier to connect to the research output and linking it up to all one's social media handles and personal profiles on the web; the use of social media and networks e.g. ResearchGate, academia.edu and Twitter, these help ones' research to reach a wider audience; use of open access options offered by ones' chosen journal; choosing direct and concise title which attracts/draws attention to researchers to read the work and increase visibility; ensuring that keywords used are enshrined in the abstract and the text of the work, etc. The use of keywords and concise titles improves the visibility of research in search results (University of Leed, nd; University of OULU, 2021). Again research visibility can also be enhanced by authors collaborating with international scholars (Suarez-Balseiro, Garcia-Zorita, & Sanz-Casade, 2009). Perhaps that is why Dar-Odeh (2020) advised researchers who need visibility to form research groups from different countries to enhance citation and visibility; to write more on reviews than case studies; to always publish on journals known and read by their colleagues. In research, it might not be out of order to say that citation is synonymous with visibility, when a work is cited it means it is visible. Research Guide (2021) advocates for the use of ORCID which is an international standard that helps scholars establish and maintain their research output. Altmetrics can also be used to enhance the research visibility of researchers; it measures the immediate impact of a work in non-academic discussion venues such as social media.

Sharing outputs of research helps to increase the visibility of research and its preservation for future use (University of Pittsburgh Library System, 2021; Ebrahim, 2016). Steps to increase research visibility were demonstrated: Getting a unique author identifier ORCID to distinguish one from other researchers; Sharing all research output e.g. pre-print; conference papers, posters, presentations, etc in IR and Subject Repositories; creating and keeping up-to-date online profile (or web CV) e.g. Google Scholar, Impact Story, Kudos; engage in social networking communities e.g. ResearchGate, academia.edu, LinkedIn, Mendeley; blogging and tweeting.

Ebrahim (2016) contends that publishing a high-quality paper is only halfway to getting cited in the future, but the visibility of research is dependent on one's marketing strategies using proper research tools. Institutional Repository which is one form of Open Access archives could also be used to increase the visibility of research (Anenene, Alegbeley, & Oyewole, 2017; Ezema, 2011).

Open Access in the form of IR is one of the best avenues used by institutions to bring attention to their intellectual output to be widely available and accessible globally through WWW. IR provides OA to the intellectual output of a university, and even preserves content that may be out of publication (Nwokedi & Nwokedi, 2018). Open Access gives researchers a worldwide audience larger than any subscription-based journal, no matter how popular, and demonstrably increases the visibility and impact of the work (Willinsky & Suber, 2010). Universities also benefit from their scholars' increased visibility and impact by also being visible (Jain, 2012).

The creation of research profiles by the researcher can also improve their discoverability. Researcher profiles can be created in ORCID, Google Scholar, Scopus Author profile, Web of Science Author Record, Web of Science ResearcherID, and PIRA profiles respectively (The Hong, Kong Polytechnic University, 2021).

That social media (non-academic discussion venues) enhances research visibility, Terras (2012) tweeted and blogged on three out of four published research works, and the result showed that these three tweeted and blogged got the following downloads or citation results 297, 290, 142 while the one used as control experiment got only 12 downloads. This revealed that social media has an impact on research visibility.

- Institutional Repository (IR) can also increase research visibility. Anenene, Alegebeley, and Oyewole (2017) stated that IR has the potential to increase the visibility of both the researchers and the university ranking and prestige. Ezema (2011) opines that the building of Institutional Repositories (IR) in Nigeria perhaps will to a large extent improve the dissemination of research findings from the country. Academic libraries according to Monash University (2021) can incorporate their roles of providing high-quality research and learning environment to meet the needs of their clientele; ensuring that collections are discoverable and accessible without restriction to format or location; providing online lectures; providing university research output through the university's repository among others with channels of research visibility. In other words, any university that wants to maintain its prestige needs to work in consonance with the academic library to achieve its mandate. Similarly, any faculty staff that wants to maintain its visibility needs to work closely with the academic librarians to achieve its aim. Dannar (2007) admits that IR helps to expose the intellectual output of researchers to a worldwide audience.

There is no gainsaying that so many researches were not written or published but the problem with Africans is on making the findings of the research visible to the target audience. Hence Ezema (2011) averred that the dissemination of research findings in Nigeria is one of the greatest barriers to the global visibility of intellectual outputs in the country. Kupe (2019) affirms that the visibility of research in Africa is a vicious cycle that holds African researchers and universities to ransom.

Most of the research written found their way only to the academic library shelves most times not beyond the shores of Nigeria especially those published locally. Even papers published in high-impact journals because of access toll, most of them have a limited readership. Hence, access to both the indigenous publications and the ones published in high-impact factor journals is relatively low and this affects their visibility and the visibility of the authors as well.

Institutional policy on publication for promotion could also hinder the visibility of research. Many

scholars struggle to publish in High impact factor journals or in subscription-based journals to secure promotion based on the policy of their institution. It is ironic that most of the articles published here are only meant for the researchers who could afford to pay at the detriment of the less privileged ones, thereby keeping the articles away from teeming target audience who would have used them for research or other things. This hinders the visibility of the author and the work because the work is blocked under a heavy paywall, which either makes the work not to be read or cited by many.

Fear to violate the publisher's copyright policies could also affect the research visibility of the faculty members (Tandi Lwoga & Questier, 2014). The issue of copyright violation is very serious in the academic world and therefore academic libraries when circulating research of their scholars or the faculty members themselves (especially those in Green Open access) must abide by the restrictions before sharing in other networks. This slows the pace of visibility or hinders it entirely.

Inadequate infrastructural facilities like internet access and power can also affect research visibility. Unavailability of internet access, unsteady power supply, inadequate computers, and their accessories affect research visibility. For instance, inadequate high-speed broadband services affect research visibility (Dicovitsky, 2010).

Because most researches carried out by Nigerian Scholars are not well circulated, Nigerian universities by web metric ranking stay at the base of the ladder. For instance, research carried out by Olusegun (2019) and The Nigerian Voice (2019) placed the University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife at the 1145th, 2125th and 2244th respectively in the world ranking.

4. Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted and the population consisted of all the 162 librarians working in the public universities in South-East, Nigeria. Telephone calls and a structured online Questionnaire prepared with Google Forms was used for data collection. The Questionnaire was sent through whatsapp platforms of "Academic and Research Libraries and Certified Librarians Connect" created for all Nigerian Librarians. The quantitative data gathered were organized and analyzed with frequency tables, percentages, charts and graphs.

5. Results

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Fig. 1 shows the demographic profile of 120 respondents based on their designation. 25% and 18% of the respondents are Librarian1 and Librarian 11 respectively. This is followed by 17% of the respondents which constituted the Senior Librarians, 15% the Graduate Assistants, 9% the Deputy University Librarian (DUL), 8% the Principal Librarians, Assistant Librarians 5%, and last

but not least the University Librarian 3%.

Designation of Respondents

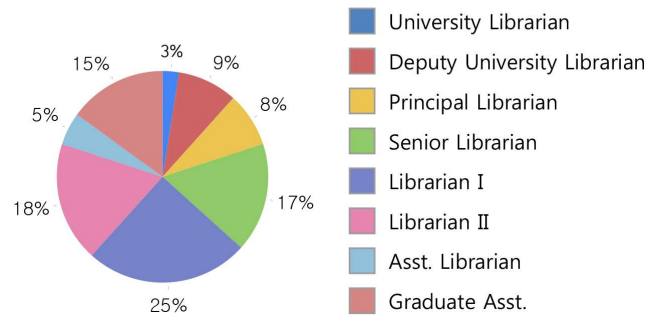


Fig. 1. Designation of the Respondents

5.2 Highest Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Fig. 2 shows the demographic profile of the 120 respondents based on their highest educational qualification. The result shows that more than 1/4 of the respondents 37.5% have a Ph.D followed by those with Masters Degree in Library Science (MLS) 30.8%; 8.3% each for MPhil, MLIS, and BLIS respectively, and 3.3% each for B.Sc. and B.A.

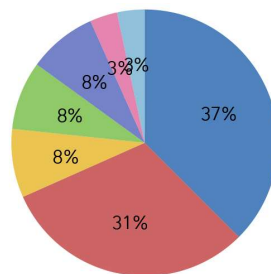


Fig. 2. Highest Educational Qualification of the Respondents

5.3 Research Question 1: What is the Level of Awareness on the Research Visibility Channels (RVCs) of Librarians?

Table 1 shows the level of awareness on research visibility channels (RVCs) of respondents in public Universities in South East, Nigeria. Out of the twelve RVCs listed, the respondents have the highest score of 110 (91.7%) each on the upper level of awareness (the summation of very high level and high level) on Twitter and Google Scholar, followed closely by ResearchGate and Institutional Repository 108 (90%) each on the upper level of awareness too. The results also show that the respondents have very high level and high level of awareness on Academia.edu 95 (79.1%); YouTube 87 (72.5%); LinkedIn 75 (62.5%) etc, while their lower level of awareness (summation

of low level and very low level) on ORCID and Mendeley were 50 (41.7) and 80 (66.6%). Besides, 50 (41.7%) and 10 (8.3%) of the respondents were completely unaware of ORCID and Mendeley as a research visibility channels.

Table 1. Awareness on Research Visibility Channels (RVCs) of Librarians

Research Visibility Channels (RVC)	VHL (5)	HL (4)	Sum (VHL HL)	LL (3)	VLL (2)	Sum (LL&VLL)	NA (1)
Institutional Repository	60 (50)	48 (40)	108 (90)	12 (10)	-	12 (10)	-
Facebook	20 (16.7)	50 (41.7)	70 (58)	48 (40)	2 (1.67)	50 (41.57)	-
Blog	28 (23.3)	40 (33.3)	68 (56.6)	50 (41.7)	1 (0.83)	51 (42.53)	1 (0.83)
Twitter	42 (35)	68 (56.7)	110 (91.7)	5 (4.2)	5 (4.2)	10 (8.3)	-
Mendeley	10 (8.3)	20 (16.7)	30 (25.0)	70 (58.3)	10 (8.3)	80 (66.6)	10 (8.3)
LinkedIn	50 (41.7)	25 (20.8)	75 (62.5)	40 (33.3)	5 (4.2)	45 (37.5)	-
Google Scholar	60 (50)	50 (41.7)	110 (91.7)	10 (8.3)	-	10 (8.3)	-
ResearchGate	65 (54.1)	45 (37.5)	108 (90)	10 (8.3)	-	10 (8.3)	-
Academia.edu	55 (45.8)	40 (33.3)	95 (79.1)	20 (16.7)	5 (4.2)	25 (20.9)	-
YouTube	67 (55.8)	20 (16.7)	87 (72.5)	23 (19.2)	10 (8.3)	33 (27.5)	-
WhatsApp	30 (25)	35 (29.2)	65 (54.2)	30 (25)	25 (20.8)	55 (45.8)	-
Telegram	22 (19.3)	40 (33.3)	62 (51.6)	53 (44.2)	5 (4.2)	58 (48.4)	-
ORCID	6 (5)	14 (11.7)	20 (16.7)	20 (16.7)	30 (25)	50 (41.7)	50 (41.7)

Note: VHL= Very High Level; HL=High Level; Sum=Summation; LL=Low Level; VLL= Very Low Level; NA= Not at All

5.4 Research Question 2: Which one of these Research Visibility Channels Does your Library has an account with?

Table 2 shows the respondents responses on the RVCs account status of the academic libraries in South East Nigeria. Out of 120 respondents and out of seven items on this table, 58.3% indicated that their academic libraries are on whatsapp followed by Facebook (50%); Blog (45.8%); Institutional Repository (IR) (44.2%); YouTube (39.2%); Telegram (37.5%), and lastly Twitter (29.2%). The result also revealed that more than half of the respondents indicated that their academic libraries do not have account with the following RVCs; Twitter 70.8%, Telegram 62.5%, YouTube 60.8% and Institutional Repository 55.8% respectively.

Table 2. Status of Account Creation of Research Visibility Channels by Academic Libraries

Items	Yes Responses		NO Responses	
	Number	%	Number	%
Institutional Repository	53	44.2	67	55.8
Facebook	60	50	60	50
Blog	55	45.8	65	54.2
Twitter	35	29.2	85	70.8
YouTube	47	39.2	73	60.8
WhatsApp	70	58.3	50	41.7
Telegram	45	37.5	75	62.5

5.5 Research Question 3: Do librarians in the academic library have profile account with the research visibility channels?

Results of the finding on Fig. 3 revealed that 118 of the respondents have Facebook account, followed by Google Scholar 90; 87 on Telegram; 85 each on WhatsApp and ResearchGate, and 80 on Academia.edu. Conversely, these numbers of respondents 90, 86, 70, and 65 do not have Blog; LinkedIn; Twitter, and YouTube accounts respectively.

Status of Librarians Account with RVCs

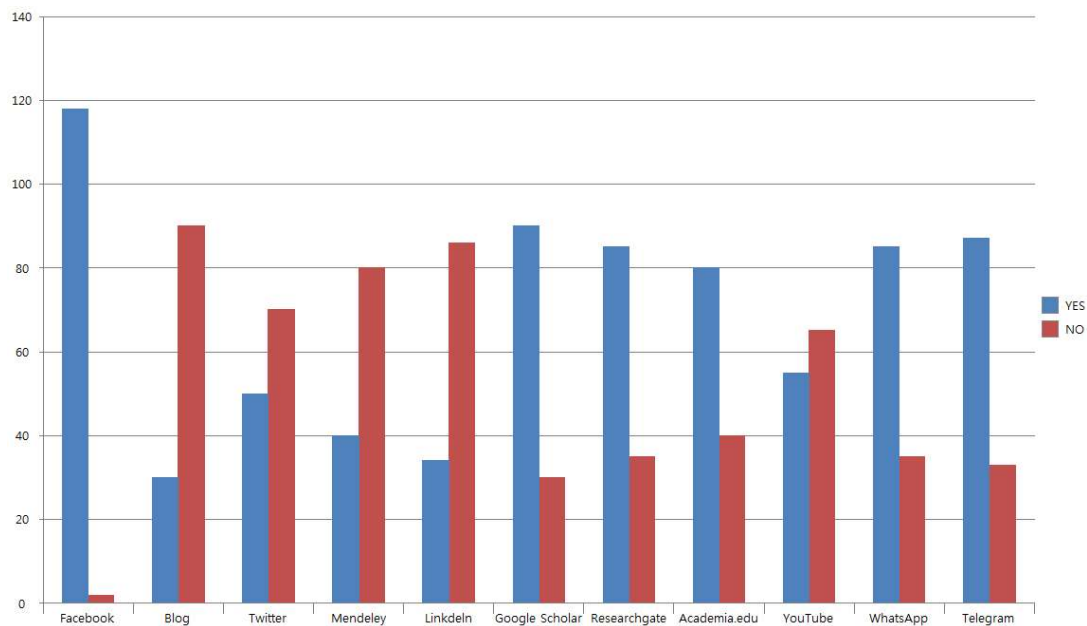


Fig. 3. Librarians Profile Account with Research Visibility Channels

5.6 Research Question 4: What is the extent of utilization of research visibility channels by librarians to enhance the visibility of faculty members in Nigeria University?

Table 3 shows that almost half of the respondents 58 (48.3%) do not utilize Institutional Repository and YouTube to enhance their faculty staff visibility. The same way, nearly ¼ of the respondents: 73 (60.8%); 76 (63.3%); 80 (66.7%); 83 (69.2%) for Telegram, LinkedIn, Mendeley and WhatsApp respectively do not also use these RVCs on their Faculty staff. On the other hand, 45 (37.5%) of the respondents utilize Facebook at upper level followed by IR at 41 (34.2%), and 40 (33.3%) on Twitter.

Table 3. Utilization of Research Visibility Channels by Librarians to Enhance the Visibility of Faculty Members in Nigeria University

Research Visibility Channels	VHE (5)	HE (4)	Sum of VHE&HE	LE (3)	VLE (2)	Sum of LE&VLE	NA (1)
Institutional Repository	20 (16.7)	21 (17.5)	41 (34.2)	2 (1.7)	19 (15.8)	21 (17.5)	58 (48.3)
Facebook	20 (16.7)	25 (20.8)	45 (37.5)	50 (41.7)	5 (4.2)	55 (45.8)	20 (16.7)
Blog	10 (8.3)	20 (16.7)	30 (25)	38 (31.7)	42 (35)	-	10 (8.3)
Twitter	25 (20.8)	15 (12.5)	40 (33.3)	20 (16.7)	27 (22.5)	47 (39.2)	33 (27.5)
Mendeley	12 (10)	20 (16.7)	32 (26.7)	8 (6.7)	-	8 (6.7)	80 (66.7)
LinkedIn	4 (3.3)	10 (8.3)	14 (11.6)	20 (16.7)	10 (8.3)	30 (25)	76 (63.3)
YouTube	20 (16.7)	21 (17.5)	41 (34.2)	2 (1.7)	19 (15.8)	21 (17.5)	58 (48.3)
WhatsApp	2 (1.7)	3 (2.5)	5 (4.2)	12 (10)	20 (16.7)	32 (26.7)	83 (69.2)
Telegram	3 (2.5)	2 (1.7)	5 (4.2)	7 (5.8)	35 (29.2)	42 (35)	73 (60.8)

Key: VHE= Very High Extent; HE=high Extent; Sum VHE & HE= summation of VHE & HE (upper level); LE=Low Extent; VLE= Very Low Extent; Sum LE & VLE=summation of LE & VLE (Lower Level); NA= Not at all

5.7 Research Question 5: What are the challenges of enhancing the research visibility of faculty Staff in Nigeria University?

Table 4 shows that almost all the respondents agreed on the items on Table 4 as challenges confronting librarians in the enhancement of RV of the faculty staff except that they have more than ¼ disagreements that librarians are unaware of the RVCs 97 (80.8%). Inadequate motivation of librarians by the university management and copyright issues have the highest score of 120 (100%) followed by Epileptic Internet connectivity 112 (93.3%), unsteady power supply 100 (83.3%), inadequate trained personnel to aid faculty gain global visibility 99 (82.5%), inadequate motivation of librarians by the library management 75 (62.5%) etc.

Table 4. Librarians Challenges in Enhancing Research Visibility of Faculty Staff

Challenges of Enhancing Research Visibility of Faculty by Librarians	SA (4)	A (3)	Sum of SA & A	D (2)	SD (1)	Sum of D & SD
Non availability or non functionality of institutional Repository	47 (39.2)	20 (16.7)	67 (55.9)	30 (25)	23 (19.2)	53 (44.2)
Librarians unawareness and use of RVCs	10 (8.3)	13 (10.8)	23 (19.1)	37 (30.8)	60 (50)	97 (80.8)
Inadequate trained personnel to aid faculty to gain global visibility	60 (50)	39 (32.5)	99 (82.5)	13 (10.8)	8 (6.7)	21 (17.5)
Unawareness of research visibility channels by the faculty	50 (41.7)	20 (16.7)	70 (58.4)	10 (8.3)	40 (33.3)	50 (41.6)
Unsteady power supply	55 (45.8)	45 (37.5)	100 (83.3)	10 (8.3)	10 (8.3)	20 (16.6)
Epileptic internet connectivity	60 (50)	52 (43.3)	112 (93.3)	5 (4.2)	3 (2.5)	8 (6.7)
Uncooperative attitude of faculty to release their work	70 (58.3)	30 (25)	100 (83.3)	12 (10)	8 (6.7)	20 (16.7)
Inadequate motivation of librarians by the university management	67 (55.8)	53 (44.2)	120 (100)	0	0	-
Inadequate motivation of librarians by the library management	37 (30.8)	38 (31.7)	75 (62.5)	20 (16.7)	25 (20.8)	45 (37.5)
Copyright issues on research visibility	68 (56.7)	52 (43.3)	-	0	0	-

Key: SA=strongly agree; Agree=A; Sum = summation; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Agree

5.8 Research Question 6: What Ways can Academic Libraries Improve Research Visibility of the faculty ?

The result of the finding shows that all the respondents agreed on the ways of solving the challenges of enhancing research visibility of the faculty staff as listed in Table 5. For instance, all the respondents 120 (100%) Strongly Agree on provision of steady power supply, followed by the provision of high broad band Internet 118 (98.3%), establishment of functional IR 100 (83.3%), training of librarians to aid faculty on RV, and the motivation of librarians by the library 92 (76.7%) each etc.

Table 5. Ways of Tackling the Challenges of Enhancing Research Visibility of Faculty by Librarians

Ways of Tackling the Challenges of Enhancing Research Visibility of Faculty by Librarians	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
Establishment of functional IR	100 (83.3)	20 (16.7)	0	0
Librarians to be aware of the channels of research visibility as well as use them on the faculty	90 (75)	30 (25)	0	0
Training of librarians on RVCs to aid faculty gain global visibility	92 (76.7)	28 (23.3)	0	0
Librarian to sensitize the faculty on the benefits of using research visibility.	90 (75)	30 (25)	0	0
Provision of steady power supply	120 (100)	-	0	0
Provision of high broad band internet	118 (98.3)	2 (1.7)	0	0
Librarians to be motivated by the university management	83 (69.2)	37 (30.8)	0	0
Librarians to be motivated by the library management	92 (76.7)	28 (23.3)	0	0
Copyright policy issues on research visibility to be addressed by the University mgt in conjunction with the library	80 (66.7)	40 (33.3)	0	0

Key: SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

6. Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this study is to find out why academic libraries and librarians were unable to enhance maximally the research visibility of faculty staffs in the public universities in South East Nigeria. The findings showed that Librarians in Public Universities in South East Nigeria are very much aware of the following research visibility channels (RVCs): Institutional Repository, Facebook (FB), Blog, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram but less aware on Mendeley and ORCID. Even though the librarians are aware of some RVCs yet the level of utilization is poor. Previous studies on RVCs; Dannar (2007) and Anenene, Alegbeley and Oyewole (2017) admit that IR exposes intellectual output of researchers as well as their visibility. But in this study, up to 44.2% of the librarians admitted non functionality of Institutional Repository in their academic libraries. Unlike the previous study by Terras (2012) where tweeting and blogging recorded high visibility of researchers and the university ranking, this present study revealed that majority of the librarians and academic libraries do not even have account with Twitter and Blog hence their level of utilizing them to improve research visibility of their faculty is very poor. To buttress this further, the result of this study revealed the level of utilization of most of the RVCs by the librarians e.g. up to 63.3%, 48.3%, 69.2, 60.8%, 48.3% etc do not use LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram and IR. This study corroborates with the study conducted by UNESCO (2017) which recorded very low percentage of Nigerian publications online and Ranking Web of Universities 2021 edition where only one Public University in the South East, Nigeria (UNN) fall within one thousand position-(1,615) in the world.

Yet one of the roles or mandate of the university is to support research by providing resources for research and its dissemination. Besides, one of the major roles of librarians in higher educational institutions is to communicate research of their parent institutions to the populace who use them for their day to day activities: educational, research, social, cultural and economic activities to address

societal problems. Going by the result of this finding on demographic characteristics of librarians, one would have concluded that librarians are performing this role perfectly well considering the high educational profile of librarians, 37.5% of librarians had Ph.D; 39.1% with Masters degree and 8.3% with MPhil, which showed that substantial number had very high degrees. But formal education may not be what is needed here but practical knowledge, which may be acquired through conferences and workshops. Again by designation, up to 20% of librarians are at the managerial level, 8% the principal librarians, 9% the DUL, and 3% the University Librarians. Even some universities include senior librarians in the management cadre. One would have thought also that this number would have at least influenced the utilization of RVCs in their institutions but opposite is the case. By implication one cannot give what one does not have. Meaning that there is need for more practical knowledge on the utilization of the RVCs to communicate or share research. From the result of the findings it can be deduced that some librarians were unable to use them because their institution do not have account with the RVCs and therefore are unable to share research outputs emanating from their institutions for visibility.

Sharing research outputs increases the visibility of research and its preservation for future use (University of Pittsburgh Library System, 2021; Ebrahim, 2016). Previous study opines that the research channel refers to the avenues through which scholars access research publications (Ogunleye, 2019). But in this present study, a good number of librarians stated that their academic libraries do not have account with most of these RVCs i.e. like a functional IR, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. Besides, the study also revealed that up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of librarians in this present study do not have blog account, 86 librarians do not have LinkedIn account, 70 and 65 of them also do not have accounts with Twitter and YouTube. Since majority of librarians do not have account with these research visibility channels, it affected the enhancement of the research visibility of their faculty staff by librarians. In other words, non creation of avenues for research sharing by academic libraries and librarians made some research outputs of the faculty in this geographic area to be in obscurity. Even though good number of librarians are aware of most of RVCs but most of them are not utilizing them to enhance research visibility of their users. This implies that there is a great difference between awareness and use. The question now is - why are they not using them. This brings to bare the challenges librarians in academic libraries encounter in sharing the intellectual output of their university/faculty.

Librarians encountered a lot of challenges in the sharing of intellectual output of the faculty staff in the public universities in S.E, Nigeria. These challenges range from uncooperative attitude of the faculty to release their work to the librarians for archiving, inadequate infrastructural facilities- unsteady power supply, Internet connectivity; inadequate trained personnel to communicate the researches of their staff, fear of violating the copyright issues among others. This study therefore aligns with the previous study conducted by (Tandi Lwoga & Questier, 2014) who reported that fear of copyright violation slows the pace of visibility or hinders it and (Dicovitsky, 2010) who opined that the unavailability of Internet access, inadequate high-speed broadband Internet services and power affect research visibility.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations were proffered for this study.

- 1) Librarians in academic libraries who are unaware of RVCs should participate in related training workshops, conferences, or learn through online tutorials. This way, they can sensitize Faculty members on the need to create their own personal online profile research accounts like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Mendeley, ORCID, Academia.edu etc. and the social media accounts for research dissemination.
- 2) Library stakeholders-the Nigerian Library Association, Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria, and the Library Managements should as a matter of urgency map out training opportunities for librarians especially those in academic institutions on the utilization of RVCs for enhancing research visibility of the faculty staff.
- 3) Management of academic libraries should ensure that their libraries in addition to the use of IR (for those that have it) also create other research visibility accounts that will enable them to promote their intellectual outputs.
- 4) Librarians in academic libraries should in addition to their formal education be sponsored by the library or university management to conferences and workshops where they will gain practical knowledge on the utilization of RVCs to enhance the global research visibility of their Faculty members and their institutions.
- 5) Management of Public universities in Nigeria should in addition to addressing copyright issues by the use of disclaimer notices and creative common licensing and provision of infrastructural facilities e.g. steady power supply, High power brand Internet connectivity, establishment of an Institutional Repository, etc, also mandate the faculty staff to release their productive work to the library for onward submission to the RVCs for enhancing their global visibility.

8. Conclusion

Previous studies showed that it is when a work is shared that it will be recognized, visible, cited, and downloaded, by researchers and this increases the visibility of that particular work. This study revealed that awareness of RVCs does not guarantee utilization. Librarians working in public university libraries should try as much as possible to utilize all the research visibility channels they know to enable them to share research of their faculty to enhance their global visibility and that of their institutions. Ignorance is a deadly disease, so librarians should carry out aggressive advocacy to explain to their faculty the need to release all their intellectual outputs: lecture notes, workshops and conferences papers, inaugural lectures, pre-prints and their already published work to them for sharing and circulating to the outside world to ensure their global visibility and that of their institution.

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