Awareness and Use of Online Platforms for Research Visibility: A Survey of Academic Librarians in Universities in the South-East and South-South, Nigeria

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Objective: The purpose of the study is to investigate the level of awareness and use of the various research visibility platforms by academic librarians in Nigeria. **Methods**: The study adopted online survey method where questionnaire was designed to collect data using Google form from 174 academic librarians in 16 universities in 8 states in South-east and South-south region of Nigeria. **Results**: The study revealed that the academic librarians are aware of some research visibility platforms like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus, and just heard about the ORCID identifier. Effort needs to be made to create awareness of the platforms that are not familiar to the academic staff members. The study revealed that majority of the academic librarians only created public profile with Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus. The study also identified the benefits of having public profile in the research visibility platforms. **Conclusion**: Findings will inform the academic community on the need to create public profile in these research visibility platforms. These platforms will no doubt enhance the academic evaluation and give additional weight to publications that are accessible globally.

Introduction

The wave of social media and social networking platforms, fueled by the advent of the Internet, have opened new lines of opportunities for researchers and scientists to reach out to the wider population in presenting their profiles, thereby making their research works more visible. Propagation and visibility of scholarly works is quite critical to how scholarly works will perform among other similar works in the body of literature by way of citation (Peroni et al., 2015). It is expected that every Nigerian librarian would make effort to increase the promotion and visibility of their scholarly works by using the available self-archiving options.

Scholarly authors are bestowed with the responsibility of enhancing the visibility of their study and as such adopt different approaches by creating profile in different platforms to enhance the visibility of their work. Some of these research visibility online platforms are Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia, LinkedIn, ORCID, Scopus, Web of Science, and many others. It therefore becomes imperative for researchers to make their research findings known to the larger society for use in human welfare activities. This can be succinctly captured as making the researcher, the institution and the accompanying works visible. Such visibility enhances the profile of researcher, recognition of the affiliated institution and assessment by different bodies and organizations (Lateef et al., 2016).

In an earlier study, Ezema (2011) reported that scholarly publications in Nigeria lack viable means of global dissemination, which has reduced the global visibility of many publications from the country. Most of the local journals in Nigeria in which the academic staff publish their papers are neither indexed or abstracted by international indexing and abstracting agencies, nor listed in any online databases. Hence, global visibility and accessibility are usually poor even when there are quality papers published in those local journals. Ezema (2011) stated that the quality papers from Nigeria lack readership and by extension low citations from colleagues in and outside the country. The visibility and research impact of a scientific publication is usually associated with the extent to which it is read and/or cited by other researchers. From a broader perspective, it also reflects how much the publication contributes to the growth of human knowledge. This means that for Nigerian publications to achieve visibility and research impact, they must be indexed by Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, and other international databases and this cannot be obtained when the papers are published in local journals that are not indexed and abstracted by these international databases. Obviously, scholarly publications by faculty members can significantly enhance the prestige of the academic institution with which they are affiliated (Lateef et al., 2016).

In the present study, we argued that while research visibility and impact are important, they are not given sufficient attention in many universities in Nigeria. The poor or low ranking of

Nigerian universities by *Webometrics Ranking of World Universities*, *QS World University Rankings*, *Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings*, and other international academic rankings is due to poor visibility of Nigerian scholarship. For example, Ati (2017) attributes poor ranking to low visibility on the Web and inactivity of scholars and researchers to contribute meaningfully to the world of knowledge. In most cases, institutional framework for effective activity is deficient and most research information does not go beyond the four walls of the university. The ranking of public universities in the country would have been better if their academic communities had impressive web presence by having Google Scholar profiles. According to Lateef et al. (2016), "*the low value of less than 100 registered users of first and second generation universities established in the range of 4-6 decades ago in Nigeria showed low-level of web presence of their scholars*" (p. 228). In September 2021, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria forwarded a memo to all universities in Nigeria encouraging all academic staff to register in databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ORCID with the aim of increasing the universities' visibility and attract university ranking both national and in the international arena. Therefore, it became imperative to investigate the extent to which academic staff in Nigeria utilize the free online research visibility platforms such as Google Scholar, ORCID, and Scopus. Hence, the present study aims to investigate the level of awareness and utilization of online platforms for research visibility by academic librarians. To achieve this, four research questions are raised to guide the study.

Research Questions

RQ1. To what extent are the academic librarians in Nigeria aware of the online platforms for research visibility?

RQ2. Which research visibility platforms do the academic librarians in Nigeria have public profile with?

RQ3. What are the perceived benefits of having active profile in the research   visibility platforms?

RQ4. What are the drawbacks associated with creating /having profile with research visibility platforms?

Literature review

Google Scholar platform

Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com) which was launched on November 18, 2004 (Jacso, 2005; Noruzi, 2005) is a database of full-text journal articles, technical reports, conference proceedings, preprints, theses, dissertations, books, and other documents, including selected web pages that are deemed to be scholarly or academic. These resources are made freely available, and even for subscription-based publications, the search for information would yield at least an

abstract of the article. Google Scholar (GS) has enjoyed patronage and commendable presence on college and university websites (Neuhaus et al., 2008) an indication of the degree of its adoption, and its coverage over wide set of disciplines has been increasing at a stable rate (Harzing, 2014), indicating its suitability for research evaluation and bibliometric research purposes than it has been in the past.

Creating a public Google Scholar profile is an easy way to increase one's findability and it also provides other benefits such as an author h-index, i10-index, citation counts, and more (Elisha, 2019). With the initial success of GS in making multidisciplinary academic information available freely on the Web, it launched the Google Scholar citations (GSC) in April 2012 (Jacso, 2012), which affords a scholar the opportunity to create editable personal profile (Verstak, 2014), to liberalize the process of evaluation of citation metrics. From institutional level, research visibility and quality research have largely been seen from the point of research publications, particularly academic journal articles, that appear in peer refereed journals indexed in reputable international databases such as Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and Google Scholar to some degree. Presently, some web tools such as Google scholar and ResearchGate are being used as an alternative to Web of Science to track and discover citations on the internet (Thelwall & Kousha, 2017). Several studies have explored the potential of Google Scholar as a tool to track citation and measure researchers' contribution to research. These studies found that Google Scholar provides users with an easy and user-friendly interface. Also, it harnesses the extolled indexing and searching capabilities of Google search engine (Noruzi, 2005; Jacobs, 2009; Howland et al., 2009; & Bar-Ilan et al., 2012).

ResearchGate.net

ResearchGate (RG) is the largest professional network for scientists. It enables researchers to connect with colleagues, build their scientific network and collaborate with one another using numerous applications that are unique to the scientific platform. After just three years, the network has attracted over 3,000,000 members and the community is continuing to grow at an incredible rate internationally (Source: https://www.researchgate.net/about). Presently, RG has almost doubled its population in just one year, it is founded in 2008 and it has more than 16 million users, over 200 million publications and over 53 million monthly visits (Source: https://www.researchgate.net/about). Every publication within ResearchGate's Literature is accompanied by a series of details and interactive features. The author's and reader's profiles are linked to the publication. Researchers can post comments or queries and share the article within their network. A list of similar publications is also provided making it easy for researchers to discover related literature. ResearchGate "About" page states, "Our mission is to connect researchers and make it easy for them to share and access scientific output, knowledge, and expertise [. . .] (Source: https://www.researchgate.net/about). RG's mission is to help scientists

connect with each other, share knowledge and expertise, while at the same time building up scientific reputation. Thelwall and Kousha (2015) and Onyancha (2015) confirms the strong influence and impact from academic social media such as ResearchGate. According to Ocholla et al. (2016: p.3), "*research quality and visibility have largely been determined by the number of citations an author accumulates.*" Yu et al. (2016) have reported that the RG score demonstrated potential as an alternative performance indicator for academic institutions, and the RG score could be "*an effective indicator for measuring an individual researcher's performance*" (p. 1005). Bradley (2017) reported that ResearchGate is now changing their policy by enabling users to upload their published research directly to their profile pages (a system called the "green route" to Open Access). He concluded that as nine out of ten journals allow self-archiving, this project could give thousands of researchers' immediate access to articles that are not yet freely available.

ORCID (*Open Researcher and Contributor ID*)

One way to increase the visibility of your work is to create an ORCID identifier. The 16-digit Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) is a persistent and unique digital identifier which enables researchers and institutions to maintain a consolidated record of all their research activities (Elisha, 2019). It has been suggested that using an author identification system such as ORCID could help aggregate all the authors' contribution to knowledge (Akidi et al., 2021). ORCID IDs are permanent identifiers for researchers, which protect the unique identity of scholars and help them to keep their publication records updated with very little effort. After creating an ORCID account, an author can link the identification to other platforms such as Google Scholar. It also facilitates eligible individuals and organizations in tracking research expertise globally, without naming ambiguity.

Creating academic profiles, especially on open platforms, will improve search results and provide access to your work. Your ORCID ID will belong to you throughout your scholarly career as a persistent identifier to distinguish you from other researchers and ensure consistent, reliable attribution of your work. Most Publishers are now making it mandatory to provide ORCID IDs during manuscript submission to make the work attributable to you and only you. Your ORCID ID is always publicly visible, and you control the visibility settings for all other content in your ORCID record. Any information added by a trusted organization will always be visible to them regardless of the visibility setting that you choose; if you have given them permission to do so, they will also be able to update the information they've added. ORCID IDs are increasingly used as a search term/method for enhanced research visibility and discoverability (Elisha, 2019).

ORCID benefits for researchers

- o Distinguish yourself from every other researcher (especially those who share your name!);

- o   Ensure all your research outputs and activities are correctly attributed to you;
- o   Ensure your contributions and affiliations are reliably and easily connected to you;
- o   Save time when filling out forms (leaving more time for research!);
- o   Improve discoverability and recognition of your research contribution;
- o   Connect your record to a growing number of institutions, funders, and publishers; and
- o   Your ORCID record is yours, for free, forever.

Scopus.com

Founded by Elsevier in 2004, Scopus has grown rapidly to become among the largest index and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books and conference proceedings (Schotten, et al, 2017). Scopus has wide global and regional coverage of scientific journals, conference proceedings, and books. The content in Scopus is sourced from over 39,100 serial titles (with the most recently published content indexed from over 24, 500 titles), 120,000 conferences, and 206,000 books from over 5,000 different publishers worldwide (www.scopus.com). Scopus is a curated database, which means that content is selected for inclusion in the database through a rigorous process by an independent Content Selection and Advisory Board (Baas, et al., 2020): Serial content (i.e., journals, conference proceedings, and book series) submitted for possible inclusion in Scopus by editors and publishers is reviewed and selected, based on criteria of scientific quality and rigor. Besides enriched metadata records of scientific articles, Scopus offers comprehensive author and institution profiles, obtained from advanced profiling algorithms and manual curation, ensuring high precision and recall. Scopus is used by more than 3,000 academic, government and corporate institutions and is the main data source that supports the Elsevier Research Intelligence (www.scopus.com). Publications in author profiles in Scopus have an average precision of 98.1% and an average recall of 94.4% (Baas, et al., 2020). The authors added that Both precision and recall are measured based on the best matching Scopus profile for a given "gold set" author. The best match is determined based on the Scopus profile containing the largest number of publications for that author (Baas, et al., 2020).

Recently, it has become more common for universities to only recognize research published in prestigiously indexed and abstracted journals. These requirements are arising because indices give specific metrics that rank the success of the journal and the citation impact of each author. High ratings help authors, and their affiliated universities gain recognition in the academic community and access to greater research funding, which in turn allows their careers and programs to flourish (Elisha, 2019). An important enrichment in the Scopus database is that of institution profiles, allowing different name variants and hierarchies of institutions to be curated in a similar fashion as authors, thereby allowing automated organizing of information where needed (via an advanced, proprietary, and highly accurate institutional profiling algorithm) and manual modification and instruction, where possible (Baas, et al., 2020).

Research visibility and citation impact

Visibility, or "impact", is in turn determined by how avidly published work is received by the academic or scientific community. Here is where indexing databases such as Google scholar, Scopus, Web of Science comes in as useful tools for recounting what peers have validated. Visibility is therefore an indirect means of appraising the quality of publications. Which leads to the matter of how to best measure visibility. Harnad (2007) states that, impact measures the extent to which the results of research findings are read, used, cited and applied in future research efforts. Along these lines, full-text access of articles is one factor influencing the odds of consultation, retrieval and citation of a document (Hajjem et al., 2005; Moed, 2007).

The importance of web presence of scholars such as possession of homepage, LinkedIn, Google Scholar Citations and Twitter accounts have been studied by previous works to establish visibility (Bar-Ilan, et al. 2012). Ranking authorities do not visit universities they rank physically, but their web presence is what counts. That implies that an institution may parade the highest number of quality academics coupled with robust infrastructure, publishing regularly and adequately in printed and non-open access journals, but what the institution has on the Web is few, the ranking will be very low (Elisha, 2019; Lateef et al., 2016). Ranking authorities are only interested in knowing how you are communicating these achievements to people all over the world and more so the impact of your achievements on peoples' lives.

In September 2021, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria circulated a memo strongly encouraging all academic researchers in Nigerian universities to create profile in databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ORCID with the aim of making research emanating from Nigerian universities to be visible and boost the universities ranking. Elisha (2019) reported that, creating profile in any of the online visibility platforms improves discoverability by associating your identity to the whole range of your research outputs (articles, citations, datasets, equipment, media stories, experiments, patents, and notebooks). The importance of web presence of scholars such as possession of homepage, LinkedIn, Google Scholar citations and Twitter accounts have been studied by previous researchers (Bar Ilan, et al 2012) to establish visibility.

From institutional/organizational level, Ocholla et al., (2016) gave reasons such as mandate – mission of a university, recognition; and visibility –university rankings, justification of existence, and accountability reason as to why research is conducted. Research visibility is essential for opportunistic/pragmatic reasons such as self-promotion for recognition and reputation/ employment/appointment; for gaining competitive advantage over peers in terms of, for example, recruitment and attraction of better staff or students and outperforming others; enabling and fostering transparency and accessibility to resources and research output; gaining credibility and respect from peers or competitors and stakeholders; supporting research development or capacity

building and knowledge sharing; enabling access to information for benchmarking, for example, for university rankings; supporting scholarly communication; and attracting funding/sponsors/ support (Ocholla et al., 2016).

Previously, the Nigerian Universities Commission (2006) pointed out that factors such as - little attention is paid to communicating research findings conducted by scholars in Nigerian universities in a web-searchable form which manifests in publishing in low impact local journals without Internet links; and non-publishing in electronic journals especially open access journals are responsible for Nigerian universities' poor performance in international rankings. Hossain and Ahmed (2020) recommended that ranking of universities should still be based on the number of scholarly papers and citation impacts of these publications using well-known citation databases such as Scopus or WoS as there is no suitable alternative to these databases when it comes to performing bibliometric analyses as one of the indicators. Bar-Ilan, et al (2012) sampled 57 presenters from the 2010 Leiden STI Conference, gathering publication and citations counts as well as data from the presenters' Web "footprints" and found the web presence is widespread and diverse: 84% of scholars had homepages, 70% were on LinkedIn, 23% had public Google Scholar profiles, and 16% were on Twitter.

Lateef et al. (2016) analyzed citation counts of top ten researchers in some selected Universities in Africa, the ranking was done on the basis of countries, and these are Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa; being the top leaders in the West, North and Southern Africa sub-regions respectively. The universities that rank top, are those that have integrated the Web into their research, teaching and learning culture. They tend to have more resources on the Web, and also tend to have more links to and from other sites and perceived it to be more globalized. This increases their perceived impact, improves their visibility and makes stakeholders perception about them positive. Thus, Lateef et al. (2016) established the relevance of Google Scholar citations (GSC) as an open-source material that can be used to evaluate and enhance productivity and visibility of African scholars. The authors added that the ranking of several other public Universities in Nigeria would have been better if their academic communities have impressive web presence by having GSC account. The low value of less than 100 registered users of first and second generation universities established in the range of 4-6 decades ago showed low-level of web presence of their scholars. Lateef et al. (2016), therefore, called for a concerted effort to popularize GSC among these scholars with definite and clear policy on web presence.

Torr, et al (2021) conducted a study of 1,500 academic researchers from Emerald's Literati database, with respondents from over 100 countries worldwide. The survey asked academics how information and research need to be presented to further real-world impact and found that academics want more open content (43%), greater accessibility to content (43%), and metrics that help to demonstrate real-world impact (41%). The impact of the research is measured and

analyzed through citation analysis. The number of citations suggests the quality of the scientific information. Google Scholar, a freely available scientometric database, indexes academic papers from open access repositories and commercial sources, and also identifies referenced citations. The primary scientific data of any scientometric investigation are represented by all the authors, their works, their bibliographical and the citations they receive. According to Harnad (2004), impact measures the extent to which the results of research findings are read, used, cited and applied in future research efforts. It is a gauge of progress and productivity that has implications for the career of the researchers in question (salary, project financing, recognition, award, promotion) and for the institutions they belong to, which will likewise benefit from financing or prestige. The funding agencies also obtain returns from such investment.

In an earlier study, Ocholla, Mostert and Rotich (2016) compared the visibility of University of Zululand and Moi University researchers in Web of Science and Scopus from 2003 to 2013 and found that some significant differences exist in the output of the two universities when considering the top twenty researchers with research publications that are visible. Moi University had a higher mean in the fields considered, except in the total records of WoS where the University of Zululand had a mean of 19.80 and Moi had a mean of 15.60. A search in Scopus and Web of Science for the researchers from the two institutions for the research period revealed that there was a significant difference in visibility. The mean from all the fields was higher in Scopus, which indicates that more research output is captured by that database. Ocholla, Mostert and Rotich (2016) recommended that, researchers also need to be encouraged to publish more in internationally visible research outlets/publications that are largely indexed either in Scopus or Web of Science, or in both, in order to demonstrate and account for quality research and increase research visibility.

The study by Lateef et al. (2016) reported that the Google Scholar Citations is a veritable tool to assess visibility and productivity of African scholars and their institutions. The study found that adoption of GSC by African scholars vary widely (0-3133) amongst the thirty countries that were considered. Consistently, South Africa and Egypt ranked the first and second among the countries in terms of all indices considered; namely total number of registered users, nC100, nC1, and h-index and i10 of the best rated researchers. The citation remains the best way of recognizing value as it represents conceptual association of scientific ideas, connections between current research and previous activity, relationships between specialized research within a certain field classic research, and maps identifying significant fields of research (Repanovici, 2010). Although the number of publications indicates a measure of productivity, this number does not say anything about the quality of the research (Repanovici, 2010). The number of citations is a better indicator of quality.

Materials and Methods

The study covered all academic librarians either practicing in university libraries or lecturing in library schools in universities in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. An online questionnaire was designed to collect data using Google Form (see Appendix A). Two (one federal and one state) universities each were purposely selected from each state of the two regions (South-East and South-South) to participate in the study. The link to the questionnaire on Google form was forwarded to e-mail addresses of academic librarians working as practicing in university libraries or lecturing in library schools in various universities in South-east and South-south, Nigeria. Their e-mail addresses were collected from the staff profile on the various university websites.

Data collection which started in October 2023 ended December 2023. In total, 219 e-mails were sent out to academic librarians practicing or lecturing in the selected universities in the South-east and South-south region. To raise the response rate, reminders were sent twice to the respondents out of which 174 academic librarians in 16 universities in 8 states responded to the survey with response rate of 79.5 per cent. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using percentages and results presented in tables and charts.

Results

Results in Table 1 showing the 16 universities in 8 states that participated in the study with a total of 174 respondents either practicing librarians or lecturing in the department of library and information science.

Table 1. Universities that responded to the study

S/N	Name of University	State	Status	No of respondents
1	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	Anambra	Federal	15
2	Chukuemeka Ojukwu Odumegwe University, Akwa	Anambra	State	8
3	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	Imo	Federal	7
4	Imo State University, Owerri	Imo	State	12
5	University of Port-Harcourt	Rivers State	Federal	10
6	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt	Rivers State	State	9
7	Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, Enugu	Enugu	State	11
8	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Enugu	Federal	14
9	Abia State University, Uturu	Abia State	State	13
10	Michael Okpara University of Technology, Umiaha	Abia State	Federal	12
11	Federal University of Technology, Otuoke	Bayelsa State	Federal	5
12	Niger Delta University, Amassoma	Bayelsa State	State	10
13	Delta State University, Abraka	Delta State	State	16
14	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurrun	Delta State	Federal	9
15	Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma	Edo State	State	11
16	University of Benin, Benin-City	Edo State	Federal	12
	Total			**174**

Staff designation

To achieve the purpose of this study, the staff position/rank is placed into two broad categories:

    1. Junior academic staff = Assistant librarian/Graduate assistant – Librarian I/Lecturer I.

    2. Senior academic staff = Senior librarian/Lecturer I – University Librarian/Professors.

Out of the 174 respondents, 97 (55.7%) are junior academic staff, whereas 77 (44.3%) are senior academic staff.

Awareness of online platforms for research visibility

Respondents were asked their level of awareness with the research visibility platforms to make their research papers visible globally. Results show that out of the 174 respondents, more than half (96: 55.2%) of the respondents indicate that they are aware of Google Scholar, followed by 60 (34.5%) respondents who indicated that they just knew about it. Concerning awareness of Scopus database, almost half (79: 45.4%) of the respondents indicated that they just knew about Scopus, followed by 61 (35.1%) respondents who indicated that they are aware of the Scopus database. Most of the respondents, that is 120 (69.0%), indicated that they are aware of the ResearchGate platform. Regarding ORCID, almost half (84: 48.3%) of the respondents indicated that they just knew about it, followed by 64 (36.8%) respondents who indicated that they are not aware of it (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of awareness with online platforms for research visibility

S/N	Research Visibility platforms	I am aware	Not aware	Just knew about it
1	Google Scholar	96 (55.2%)	18 (10.3%)	60 (34.5%)
2	Scopus	61 (35.1%)	34 (19.5%)	79 (45.4%)
3	ResearchGate	120 (69.0%)	39 (22.4%)	15 (8.6%)
4	ORCID	26 (14.9%)	64 (36.8%)	84 (48.3%)

    * n-174.

Respondents were asked to indicate the research visibility platform they have profile with and were asked to tick as many as they have profile. Results in Figure 1 show that the majority (152: 87.40%) of the respondents indicated having profile in Google scholar. Followed by 149 (85.60%) respondents who indicated having profile with ResearchGate, and 101 (58.00%) respondents indicated having profile in Scopus. Only a few (71: 40.80%) of the respondents indicated having profile in ORCID.
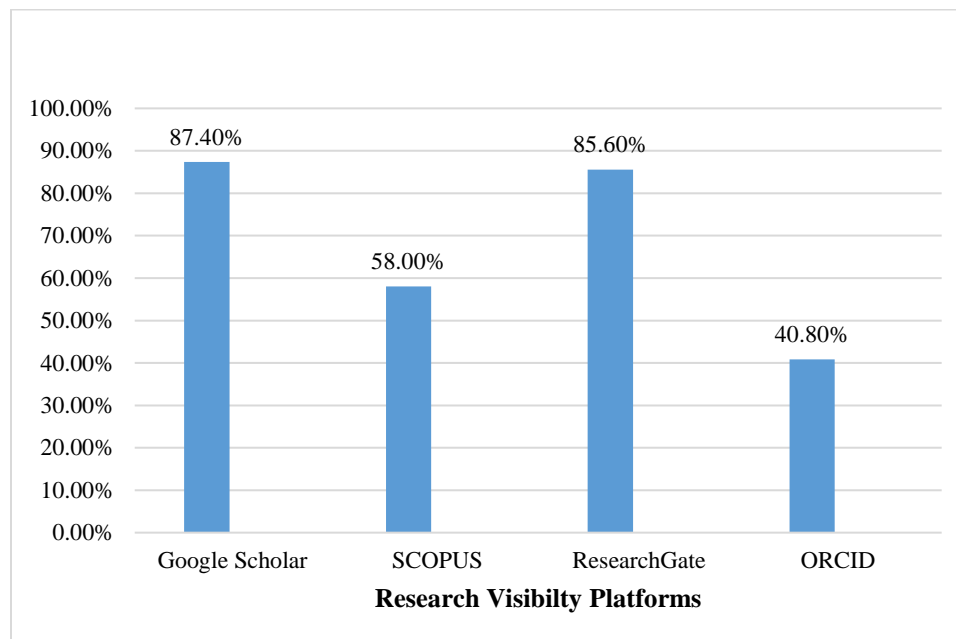
Figure 1. Research visibility platforms academic librarians have public profile with.

Table 3. Perceived benefits of having public profile in the research visibility platforms

S/N	Perceived benefits	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	It raises the profile of the author's institution	81 (46.6%)	52 (29.9%)	31 (17.8%)	10 (5.7%)
2	Brings recognition to the author.	60 (34.5%)	49 (28.2%)	44 (25.3%)	21 (12.1%)
3	It influences author's institution ranking.	115 (66.1%)	43 (24.7%)	16 (9.2%)	-
4	It increases readership of the paper (s).	152 (87.4%)	20 (11.5%)	2 (1.1%)	-
5	It attracts possible research funding.	58 (33.3%)	69 (39.7%)	47 (27.0%)	-
6	Positive implication for author's career (salary, awards).	30 (17.3%)	58 (33.3%)	50 (28.7%)	36 (20.7%)
7	Articles will reach greater audience	166 (95.4%)	8 (4.6%)	-	-

Results in Table 3 shows that 133 (76.5%) raises the profile of the author's institution. Also, 109 (42.7%) respondents strongly agree or agree that having public profile in the research visibility platforms brings recognition to the author. The study revealed that 158 (90.8%) respondents strongly agree or agree that having public profile in the research visibility platforms influences author's institution ranking. The study also revealed that 172 (98.9%) respondents strongly agree or agree that having public profile in the research visibility platforms increases readership of the paper (s). The majority (127: 73%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that having public profile in the research visibility platforms attracts possible research funding. Opinion is divided as a little above half (88: 50.6%) of the respondents are of the view that having public profile in the research visibility platforms positive implication for author's career (salary, awards). While 86 (49.4%) strongly disagree or disagree to that statement. All (174:

100%) the respondents strongly agree or agree that having public profile in the research visibility platforms will make articles reach a greater audience.

Table 4. Drawbacks associated with creating /having profile with research visibility platforms

S/N	Drawbacks	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	No institutional e-mail	38 (21.8%)	24 (13.8%)	67 (38.5%)	45 (25.9%)
2	No google e-mail	64 (36.8%)	47 (27.0%)	33 (19.0%)	30 (17.2%)
3	Some academics not interested	56 (32.2%)	39 (22.4%)	44 (25.3%)	35 (20.1%)
4	How to create profile on these platforms.	56 (32.2%)	41 (23.6%)	41(23.5%)	36 (20.7%)
5	No motivation from the institution.	78 (44.8%)	44 (25.3%)	27 (15.5%)	25 (14.4%)
6	Too busy to create my profile	17 (9.8%)	12 (6.9%)	49 (28.2%)	96 (55.2%)
7	Network challenges	77 (44.3%)	54 (31.0%)	23 (13.2%)	20 (11.5%)

Respondents were asked to indicate some drawbacks associated with creating /having profile with research visibility platforms. The study revealed that 112 (64.4%) respondents strongly agree or agree that no institutional e-mail is a drawback to having profile with research visibility platforms, 111 (63.8%) strongly agree or agree that no google e-mail is a drawback to having profile with research visibility platforms. The study also revealed that 95 (54.6%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that some academics not interested in having profile with research visibility platforms. The results also show that 97 (55.8%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that how to create profile on these platforms is a drawback. The majority (122: 70.1%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that no motivation from the institution causes drawback to having profile with research visibility platforms. The majority (145: 83.4%) strongly disagree or disagree that being too busy to create my profile is a drawback to having profile with these platforms. The majority (131: 75.3%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that network challenges cause drawback to having profile with research visibility platforms.

Discussion

Awareness of online platforms for research visibility

The results show that academic librarians are aware of Google Scholar and ResearchGate while some of the academic librarians just heard of Scopus and ORCID. The analysis shows that the academic librarians are aware of some research visibility platforms and just heard about some. This shows that awareness needs to be created to enable all academic librarians to use the various research viability platforms like Scopus and ORCID. The fact that some just heard of these platforms might be as a result of the recent circular from National Universities Commission (NUC), in Nigeria encouraging all academic staff in Nigerian universities to create their presence on the Web by creating profiles in platforms such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Scopus and ORCID.

Research visibility platforms academic librarians have public profile with

The study revealed that the academic librarians in these universities indicated to have created public profile in Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Scopus. This shows that the recent circular from NUC to all universities encouraging the academic staff to create profile in these platforms as made many to do so with the aim of making their research papers visible globally. If universities in Nigeria, or Africa can implement the policy on creating profiles on platform such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ResearchGate, it will help to make their research papers visible globally thereby creating web presence which will improve ranking positions and this way the university will become more attractive to potential entrants. Kpolovie and Obilor (2013) reported that Nigerian universities have not enjoyed good ranking whether in the World or in Africa, of which several factors have been found to be responsible such as lack of visibility. The advent of the Internet with its platforms has opened the way for researchers to reach out to the wider population in presenting their profiles, thereby making their works more visible. With the additional feature of Google Scholar, researchers can create account via logging through Google Gmail account usually linked to an academic institution, which enables calculations of citation counts and other metrics such as h-index and i10 index. The impact of having profile in platforms like Google Scholar cannot be ignored by universities. for example, Covenant University, Ota; a private university licensed on 12th February 2002 as a top-ranking university in the country probably stemmed from two unique features of the university. Firstly, it has an aggressive web-presence with an impressive number of 390 users of Google Scholar. It is the policy of the university to have profiles of staff present on the Web, including the operation of Google Scholar citations (GSC) account. Secondly, the University has become a fertile ground for the recruitment of retired and seasoned professors from both Nigeria and overseas countries, who are now having their GSC profiles associated with the university (The League of Directors of Academic Planning, 2021).

Benefits of having public profile in the research visibility platforms

The study revealed that having public profile in the research visibility platforms raises the profile of the author's institution, brings recognition to the author, influences author's institution ranking, increases readership of the paper (s), attracts possible research funding, and makes articles reach greater audience. The findings are in agreement with previous studies such as Lateef et al. (2016), Ocholla et al. (2016), and Torr, et al (2021) who in their various studies reported the numerous benefits of creating public profile in the various platforms. The studies therefore called for authors to publish more in internationally visible journals that are largely indexed and abstracted. According to Ayoub et al. (2019), publication by scholars of any institution on the internet is not only a tool for scholarly communication but also a sure way to reach larger audiences and equally represent the performance and global visibility of the institutions.

Drawbacks associated with creating /having profile with research visibility platforms

Regarding drawbacks associated with creating/having profile with research visibility platforms, the study revealed that majority of the respondents strongly agree or agree that no institutional e-mail, no google e-mail, no motivation from the institution, and network challenges are drawback to having profile with research visibility platforms. Not having institutional e-mail and google e-mail are truly drawbacks to creating profiles in platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ResearchGate, ORCID. For example, for one to create profile in Google Scholar, you need institutional e-mail to verify your institutional affiliation. Opinion is divided as a little above half of the respondents strongly agree or agree that how to create profile on these platforms and some academics not interested drawbacks associated with creating /having profile with research visibility platforms.

It is imperative at this point for faculty members, researchers, scientists and academicians to know that the worldwide web (www) has emerged as an information hub for conducting research and scientific investigations and a platform for communicating research results and scientific findings to intended audience all over the world in spite of geographic location and distance. The Web, apart from giving scholars the opportunity to reach a larger audience, institutional performance is measured by the activities of the institution that can be accessed from the Web. Thus, what an institution makes available and is accessible on the Web is what the ranking authorities consider to rank the institution. Ranking authorities do not visit universities they rank physically, but their web presence is what counts. That implies that an institution may parade the highest number of quality academicians coupled with robust infrastructure, publishing regularly and adequately in printed and non-open access journals, but what the institution has on the Web is few, the ranking will be very low. In other words, the World Wide Web is a major tool being used among scholars for enhancing online visibility and publicity of academic findings.

Conclusion

The publication of research findings in a visible and accessible journal is crucial for research visibility and impact. The study revealed that the academic librarians are aware of some research visibility platforms like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus, and just heard about ORCID identifier. Effort needs to be made to create awareness of the platforms that are not familiar to the academic staff members. Because the study revealed that the majority of the academic librarians only created public profiles with Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus, but were not familiar with the ORCID identifier.

It emerged that having public profile in the research visibility platforms raises the profile of the author's institution, brings recognition to the author, influences author's institution ranking, increases readership of the paper (s), attracts possible research funding, and makes articles reach

greater audience. This maybe the reason why, Nigerian universities are encouraging scholars affiliated to them to build their profiles on Google Scholar, Scopus, ResearchGate, and ORCID so they can increase their visibility and positively affect the universities rank.

Nigerian universities which have continued to be at the vanishing point in terms of World and African rankings of universities will begin to see light at the end of the tunnel since their publications would give them the citations needed for better ranking as they create public profiles in platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ResearchGate, etc.

Recommendations

1. The relevant authorities, such as universities and the National Universities Commission, should regularly organize workshops on creating profiles on platforms like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia, ORCID, and Scopus.

2. Making it compulsory for all staff publications and students' projects, theses, and dissertations to be included in the institution's open-access repository enhances the research visibility and impact of the university.

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Appendix A

Online questionnaire on Awareness and Use of Online Platforms for Research Visibility

1. Name of University: ------------------------------------
2. Staff designation: ------------------------------------
3. What is the level of your awareness with the online platforms for research visibility? (Tick as appropriate)

s/n	Research Visibility platforms	I am aware	Not aware	Just knew about it
1	Google Scholar			
2	Scopus			
3	ResearchGate			
4	ORCID			

4. Which among the following research visibility platforms do you have active profile? (Tick as many that apply).
1. Google Scholar-------- ----   [   ].
2. SCOPUS ----------------------[   ]
3. ResearchGate -----------------[   ]
4. ORCID -----------------------[   ]
5. To what extend do you agree or disagree with the following statements as perceived benefits of having public profile in the research visibility platforms?

s/n	Perceived benefits	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	It raises the profile of the author's institution				
2	Brings recognition to the author.				
3	It influences author's institution ranking.				
4	It increases readership of the paper (s).				
5	It attracts possible research funding.				
6	Positive implication for author's career (salary, awards).				
7	Articles will reach greater audience				

6. To what extend do you agree or disagree with the following statements as the drawbacks associated with creating /having profile with research visibility platforms?

s/n	Drawbacks	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	No institutional e-mail				
2	No google e-mail				
3	Some academics not interested				
4	Don't know how to create profile on these platforms				
5	No motivation from the institution.				
6	Too busy to create my profile				

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