

Predictors of Communicating Research Findings among Mass Communication Lecturers in Select Universities in Nigeria

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Abstract

In Nigeria, and perhaps in many countries of the world, reporting communication research results may be motivated by several factors. This makes finding answers to what determines research communication very critical. To ascertain these factors, we sampled the opinion of academics who teach communication and media related courses in select universities in Nigeria to get insight into what influences them to publish their research findings in particular journals. Findings from this study show that majority of the lecturers do not consider data analysis as a major research report writing variable that pose a challenge to them; fifty percent of the lecturers said factors such as standard indexing system, impact factor rating, local or international status of the journal and hard copy as well as online presence, influence their journal selection; and fifty-one percent of the lecturers indicated their preference for journals domiciled in a university. Majority (51%) of the lecturers also preferred journals that emphasis academic merit rather than page charges. Given these findings it is concluded that the predictors of communicating research findings are useful in the efforts at encouraging research communication among communication scholars.

Keywords: Research, Research communication, Academics, Journals, Publishing, Reporting.

Introduction

Research is an integral part of academic culture and it is very instrumental in building up the body of knowledge in every given discipline. Even more important, is the communication of research findings. Despite this, a central aspect of communication research is widely misunderstood, ignored or not known by researchers in other fields and by the public (Preston, 2009). However, if research must be impactful it must be communicated and brought to the attention of policy makers and those who need the information to improve or change their lives (Carter & Paulus, 2010). Research communication is a crucial part of ensuring that research affect society. Without effective communication of the outcome of research, the effort of fact finding is wasted. The answer to the question of why scholars in universities insist that you

either publish or perish, could be found in Newman (1852, cited in Odoemelam, 2017), “a university is a place...with students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge...a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse...”

Carter & Paulus have defined research communication as the process of interpreting or translating complex research finding into a language, format and context that non experts can understand. In media and communication studies, the research activity has several components, such as the who, the what, the where, the why, and the how component (Okoro & Ekwueme, 2013; Ezeah & Asogwa, 2013). Hence, the much touted argument that media research solves media problems (Odoemelam, 2017). It involves assessing the role of the media; the effectiveness of the communication process; the potentials of ICT; barriers to communication, the influence of media campaigns on behaviour (Wimmer and Domminick, 2011). To inform policy processes, research needs to be communicated effectively to key audiences (Von gembe, 2005).

Given the importance of research communication to diverse development efforts, there is need to incentivise researchers to communicate more widely. Some of the aspects where they need support include skill building, coalition of trust with editors and the assistance of communication professionals (Carter & Paulus, 2010). Other aspects where research communication need help include the democratisation of the whole process of reporting the research, which includes enabling environment for writing the report, journals or peer review platforms, and cost of publishing (Solomon & Bjork, 2014).

Communication scholars have two objectives with regard to research. First is to build new knowledge, and second is to disseminate that knowledge and raise awareness of its potential applications (Lang, 2003). Disseminating research findings is perhaps more important than even carrying out the research. It has been shown that knowledge created but not shared is of no value (Cavan, 1998).

Writing the report is the first of the crucial steps to communicating research outcomes. The second step is choosing the journal for the publication of the result. This second step is defined by several factors such as the status of the journal, the affiliation of the journal and the general editorial functions of the journal. The factors constitute major issues for considerations among researchers. This situation has given rise to the debate as to whether these factors predict communicating research findings among researchers. To be specific, in this study, these factors and the extent they may or may not determine communicating research findings were investigated.

Statement of the Research Problem

Research is the hub of university activities. Research is very important in solving physical and social problems in human society. For research to be relevant, the finding must be communicated effectively to key target audience. In the universities, academics are mandated to carry out research and report their findings in technical

platforms like peer reviewed journals. Especially, since the narratives on academic staff promotions, ratings and remunerations, are grounded in the theory of publish or perish.

It is important to note that by engaging in and communicating research outcomes, academics contribute to the body of knowledge in their discipline and thus the cause of teaching and research is served. Given this scenario it is right to assume that academics will be under pressure to communicate the results of their researches. The impact of this pressure is already evident. For instance, a recent study showed that Nigeria is among the top three countries globally to get low quality research published in predatory journals. According to the study, Nigeria is behind India and Pakistan that have 27 and 15 percent of such cases respectively (Punch, 2017).

However, research communication poses a form of problem to academics. For instance, they may be burden by which journals to publish in, the credibility of the journal, the cost as well as the window period for assessing manuscripts. The increase in expectations to publish, has led to an increase in the competition to publish in a finite number of available forums (Worsham, 2008). As Worsham suggests, while quality of a manuscript is a major determinant for the editors to publish articles, there are also a number of procedural 'mistakes that might make an article to be rejected. Some of them include Authors' unfamiliarity with the journals submission requirements; work ridden with grammatical and proof reading errors. Given these concerns, authors who submit manuscripts, are scared of rejection. Some go as far as developing an unhealthy attitude toward rejection (Worsham, 2008).

As important as these factors may be to researchers, there seem to be inadequate studies which have ascertained the factors that predict research communication. Hence, the question of what factors determine research communication, remain unanswered. Against this backdrop, this study assesses the determinants of research communication among communication scholars in selected universities in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which writing the research report influences communicating the findings.
2. Determine the extent to which status of the publishing platform influences the researchers' selection of the journal to communicate the findings.
3. Analyse the extent to which affiliation of the journal influence the researcher's decision to select the journal.
4. Identify the extent to which cost is an influencing factor in selecting journals to publish.
5. Ascertain the extent to which journals' editorial functions influence research communication.

Hypothesis

1. H₁: There is a significant relationship between readiness to finish writing the research report and the structural challenges that writing the report poses.

Theoretical Framework

The study uses the Shannon and Weaver's (1949) model of human communication to examine the factors that determine research communication among communication research. Shannon & Weaver cited in Lang (2003), identified three critical aspects of an effective human communication process, to include, selection of suitable communication channels; language of communication is understood by the parties and thirdly, participation in the communication come from similar environments – called terms of reference. Given these theoretical perspectives we assess how scholars relay their findings through publication in peer reviewed journals and the factors that predict their communication choices.

According to the Shannon & Weaver model the second critical prerequisite for successful human communication is the use of a commonly understood language (Lang, 2003). Studies show that writing the research report is one of the problems that researchers encounter (Lang, 2003; Ohaja 2003; Robey & Markus, 1998). For instance, a work that is highly relevant to pragmatic issues might be rejected as being irrelevant because it is presented (reported) in an inaccessible style (Robey & Markus, 1998).

Part of this challenge might be as a result of a research written in such a way that the article is littered with detailed statistics, formalised notations, jargons, prose as well as terse and complex language which may obfuscate the message (Lang, 2003). Lang has attributed this challenge to academic writing style guides (2003). While IDRC (2005) suggests developing communications strategies such as writing in clear and simple terms as the first step to effective research communication.

Literature Review

The Processes in Writing Research Reports and Publication of Research Results

The process of research is incomplete till it is published in a good quality journal (Nagoba, Selkar, Mumbre, Davane & Surya Wanshi, 2016). A major platform for the communication of research outcome is an academic journal. Academic journals are peer reviewed and selected based on the researcher meeting the guidelines or editorial instructions as stipulated by the journal editors. The process of selecting a journal to publish one's research findings as well as the challenge of meeting editorial guideline also constitutes a challenge to researchers (Nagoba *et al*, 2016).

“Publish or perish”, is a universally known parlance among academics. For instance, in most parts of the world, Nigeria inclusive, everything is linked with publication. It is a major determinant in getting a job, to getting promotion and to getting annual increment. As Nagoba *et al* (2016) suggest, the academic career depend

upon list of publications. It is therefore clear that publications have become the most important aspect of academic career (Nagoda, *et al*, 2016).

Given this scenario, it is not hidden why researchers are under pressure to publish. Hence the questions constantly on the lips of the researchers and academics include where to publish, opportunities available and the potentials for one's paper to be accepted. These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that for instance, some journals are rated more than others; thereby raising the question of if they are impact factor journals. In Nigeria, most journals are not included in standard indexing systems and publications in such journal may not fetch the author(s) worthy considerations. Some of the globally recognized indexing systems include Scopus, Thomson Reuters, EBSCO Index Copernicus (Nagoda *et al*, 2016).

IDRC (2008 cited in Datta & Pellini, 2011) suggests the development of effective communication strategy that must have the following components:

1. Objective: What do you want your communications to achieve?
2. Audience: Who is your target audience? What information do they need to act upon your message?
3. Message: What is your message? Do you have one message for multiple audiences or multiple messages for multiple audiences?
4. Tools and products: What kinds of communication products best capture and deliver your messages?
5. Channels: What channels will you use to promote and disseminate your products?
6. Resources: What kind of budget do you have for this? Will this change in future? What communications skills and hardware do you have?
7. Timing: What is your timeline? What special events or opportunities might arise? Does the work or future work of like-minded organisations or ministries, present opportunities?
8. Feedback: How will you know when your communications work is successful? What will have changed? How can you assess whether you used the right tools, were on budget and on time, and had any influence?

Status of Communication Research Journals

Journal prestige is an important consideration for an author, especially since the journal's prestige correlates with evaluating the author as a seasoned academic (Knight & Steinbach, 2008). In a study that examined the use of journal rank to evaluate faculty members, Robey, Walstrom, Adams and Swanson (1998) found that publication in highly ranked journals gained more recognition.

Cost in Research Communication

Another concern to researchers and academics is cost. It is generally known that research, especially quality research, requires some level of cost no matter the scope

and magnitude of the research project (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). In the social sciences and mass media research, factors that create cost include: sourcing for literature, data gathering which involves engaging the services of field workers and interfacing with respondents or participants both of which require stipends for field Assistants and incentives for respondents or recruited participants (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

However, despite these cost variables, sourcing for reputable journal to publish and consideration of article processing charges by journals' editors, create a challenge to researchers. As Nagoba et al (2016) found, majority of the journals published from UK do not charge article processing fee, however, most journals published from USA and Japan ask for page charges. The range is between \$50-\$100 dollars per page. Article processing charges are a central mechanism for funding open access scholarly publishing (Solomon & Bjork, 2012; 2011; 2014). Their study showed that the average APC for journals was \$906 and \$904 USD for articles. The price range varied from between \$8 to \$3,900, with the lowest prices charged by journals published in developing countries and the highest by journals with high-impact factors from major international publishers.

Given the exchange rate for countries in Africa such as Nigeria, this charge is not affordable. Hence, cost may be a crucial factor in research communication among media academics in some parts of Africa. As a result of this fact, communicating one's research findings in journals becomes a herculean task. In Nigeria for instance the salary scale for a graduate Assistant is N500, 000-N600, 000 per annum, an Assistant lecturer is N800,000-900, 000. For a lecturer II, it is N1.4-1.5Million, while a lecturer I is N1.6-1.8Million. Other categories are Senior lecturer N2.5-3Million

As an academic staff, irrespective of one's scale, publishing is a sine qua non. Though the number of publication is not statutory, depending on the job position, however, promotion from Associate professorship to full Professorship requires the most number of publications. The argument here therefore is that, with some journals in the US, where most scholars would want to publish their findings collecting article processing fee of the amounts as shown in this paper, academics may obviously prefer to perish than to publish.

Influence of Journals' editorial functions on Research Communication.

Apart from cost as a determinant in research communication, general editorial functions of a journal also constitute a source of worry to researchers. Some of the considerations in determining editorial functions of a journal include: How quick is the process of acceptance of publication? Is it an open access? Is it peer – reviewed? What is the subject area of the journal? Is it targeting the right audience?

Most journals are very slow in their process of accepting an article for publication, with some taking up to six months to a year (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Nagoda et al advice that publishing in such journal may not serve well the researcher's time bound programme. They suggest it is better not to submit one's

article to such journals. Ryan & Martinson (1999) found that journal editors, who didn't reach a decision about a manuscript in a reasonable amount of time, drew the most complaints among mass communication researchers in the mid 1990s. However, Wimmer & Dominick admonish that, "Journal editors & reviewers have ethical obligation to those who submit manuscripts for evaluation. They should not let the decision process take an inordinate amount of time;" a prompt and timely decision is owed to all contributors" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

Whether a journal is open access or not, is directly correlated with the level of its visibility among peers and hence, the possibility of it being rated as impactful (Nagobe *et al*, 2016). It is obvious this will be a crucial consideration among scholars. The research tradition is that submitted manuscript for publication considerations are evaluated by one or more persons of similar competence of the researcher or author's topic of inquiry. However, as important as this practice is, experts (APA publication Manual, 2010; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) are of the view that most journals do not subject manuscripts to this process. While among those who do, the reviewers do hatchet job on article submitted to them. Also, other reviewers unjustly give negative comments on manuscripts that argue against or contradict their own research (Wimmer & Dominick, 2016). These variables make the consideration of the peer-review status of journal an issue among researchers. Nonetheless, the peer review process is a core research communication process that helps in identifying articles that make original contribution to knowledge (APA publication Manual, 2010).

Another area of concern in editorial function consideration is the subject area of the journal. Some journals lack specificity in subject area. Hence, they receive manuscript from contributors from diverse disciplines. While Nagoba *et al* (2016) suggests economic consideration is implicated for such practices; Worsham (2008) blamed it on the pressure on academics to publish or perish which has forced journal editors to float multidisciplinary journals to meet the demand or accommodate the rush. Linked to journal's subject area is the journal target audience. Nagoba *et al*, (2016) advice that, if you want to reach the maximum number of researchers, especially, those in your core area of inquiry, you must have a target audience. Also you must ensure that the journal is that which targets your audience; else it will be a wasted effort. These factors discussed here may contribute to the difficulties associated with research communication among Communication scholars in Nigerian universities. Consequently, this study examined the extent to which these variables influence the process of communicating research outcome among mass communication Lecturers in selected Universities in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey design and evaluated the perception of communication lecturers in select universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of academic staff in select universities in South-South and

South-East Nigeria who offer communication and media courses at all levels including, sub-degree and postgraduate levels. The population of staff in this category was 150. The select universities include, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Igbinedion University, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, University of Benin and the Benson Idahosa University. Instead of selecting a sample from this population, the census method was adopted. Some studies (Ohaja, 2003; Cresswell, 2002 & Wimmer and Dominick) suggest the use of a census where the population of study is small. The census method in this study, involved including all the academic staff of the departments of the select universities. Justification for the census is because of the small number of lecturers in some universities. It would be more representative to conduct a census of each department (Wimmer and Dominic, 2011). Out of the total number of 150 academic staff in the select universities, 120 were available who participated in the survey.

The questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of structured question type with option variegated for each section of the questionnaire. Analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis suggesting relationship between researchers finishing the research report writing and the structural challenges inherent in the writing process. Undergraduate students facilitated the data gathering process. The questionnaire was adopted from reviewed literatures on similar research communication and research methodologies such as: Bryan (2006); Knight & Stenbach (2008); Data & Pellini (2011) and Preston (2009).

Data Analysis

Analysis of respondent's demographic data showed that majority of the respondents (n:73, 60%), were males. Females were 47, representing 39.2 percent. The age distribution showed that those 21-35 age category, were in the majority (n:60, 50%). Those within 36-50 age interval, were 53, which was 44 spercent. The least were those within 51-65 age categories. With regard to educational qualification, those who had Masters Degree were in the majority (n:53, 44.2%), while those with First Degree and PhD, were (n:32, 26.7%) and (n:35, 29.2%) respectively. Respondents' academic position showed the following distributions: Graduate Assistants (n:30, 25%), Assistant Lecturers (n:32, 26.7%); Lecturer II (n:25, 20.8%); Lecturer I (n:15, 12.5%). Others include: Senior Lecturer (n: 8, 6.7%); Associate Professor (n:6, 5%) and the least, professor (n:4, 3.3%). This indicates that those who were Lecturers II, were in the majority (See table 1).

Table 1: Frequency and mean distribution of Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
GENDER				
Male	73	60.0	1.3917	.49017
Female	47	39.2		
AGE				
21-35	60	50.0	1.5583	.60524
36-50	53	44.0		
51-65	7	5.8		
66-100	0	0		
EDUCATION				
First Degree	32	26.7	2.0250	.74993
Masters	53	44.2		
PhD	35	29.2		
POSITION/LEVEL				
G.A	30	25.0	2.7750	1.61642
A.L	32	26.7		
LII	25	20.8		
LI	15	12.5		
SL	8	6.7		
ASS. PROF	6	5.0		
PROFESSOR	4	3.3		

Writing the Research Report and Influence on Publishing the Research

Table 2: Showing how writing the research report influence publishing the research

S/N	ITEM	Mean	Std. Dev.
5	structural requirements pose a challenge to you	3.7333	2.56916
6	option that worries you most when you submit manuscripts	32.6083	1.18319
7	extent to which any of the challenges in question 5 and 6 could influence your readiness to finish writing the report	2.9333	1.39467

Since the process of writing the report is associated with publishing the research report, three items related to the structure of the research report were analysed. As data show in table 2, the structural requirement of the research report that is most likely to pose a challenge to respondents is: Data analysis and interpretation (n: 38, 31.7%). Importantly, 36 respondents, which is 30 percent of the respondents agree that none of the listed structural and content requirements pose a challenge to

mass media lecturers while writing the research report.

Furthermore, other structural problems that pose challenge to lecturers include: Discussion of the findings (n: 20, 16.7%); Summary and conclusions (n:7, 5.8%), Recommendations (n:, 6.7%) and Bibliography/reference page (n:10,8.3%). The aspect that formed the least challenge was, Suggestion(s) for future research (n:1, 0.8). Also, as data show, when respondents submit manuscripts to editors, among others worries, the major worry is rejection of manuscript by editors (n:40, 33.3%). The least worry is, grammatical errors (n:16, 13.3%). This shows that rejection of manuscript by editors is a factor that causes great concern among mass media lecturers. Among various options, the extent to which either structural requirements or submission worries could influence respondents' readiness to finish writing the report, was, Low (n: 37, 30.8%); High (n: 31, 25.8%); Very high (n: 24, 20%), very low (n: 17, 14.2 %) and with the least, rarely (n:11, 9.2%). The implication is that, structural requirements or submission worries, was not a major obstacle to communication researchers in their process of writing the research report (See table 2).

The Standard of the Journal and Its Influence on Communicating the Findings
Table 3: Status of the journal and the researcher's selection of the journal

S/N	ITEM	Mean	Std. Dev.
8	I will only publish in journals rated by standard indexing systems	2.0250	.99124
9	High impact factor is my major consideration	1.7583	.97011
10	I prefer local journals to international journals	3.2083	1.16602
11	I prefer hard copy only to online presence	3.1500	2.4167

The analysis as shown in table 3 shows that, in response to the statement: “I will only publish in journals rated by standard indexing system”; majority (n:60, 50%) indicated Agree; and 37, representing 30.8 percent respondents indicated “strongly agree”: other responses include: Disagree (n:11, 9.2%), Strongly disagree (n: 3, 2.5%); and undecided (n:9, 7.5%). The implication is that lecturers will mostly publish in journals rated by standard indexing systems. On the statement: “High impact factor is my major consideration” the following responses were observed: for instance those who considered high impact factors as a major determinant in choosing a journal were in the majority. On the other hand, those who did not consider journals' impact factor as a major factor were (Disagree n: 6, 5.0%; Strongly Disagree n: 3, 2.5%) Those who were undecided, (n:9, 7.5%). What this analysis show is that, high impact factor will motivate lecturers more to publish in a particular journal than in another.

With regard to preference for journals that are either international or local, analysis presented in table 3 showed that majority, indicated their preference for journals that are international, while those who preferred local papers came second: (Agree n:22, 18.3% and Strongly Disagree n:11, 9.2%). However, as was observed in the analysis, it is important to note that, a sizable number of the respondents (n: 34, 28.3%) were undecided over their preference for journals that are either local or international. The reason for such outcome is not known. It will require further investigation to ascertain this disparity. Further as the analysis show, the response to the statement: “I prefer hard copy only to online presence journals”, majority (Disagree n: 52, 43.3%, indicated that they would prefer online journals to hard copy only journals. Those who prefer hard copy journals only were (Agree n:30, 25%, and Strongly Agree n: 14, 11.7%).

Affiliation of the Journal and Influence on Researcher's Decision to Submit Manuscript

Table 4: Affiliation of the journal and the researcher's decision to submit manuscript

S/N	ITEM	Mean	Std. Dev.
12.	I prefer to publish in journals domiciled in a University	2.4167	1.04184
13.	Professional or industry hosted journals are my preference	2.1167	.96304
14	Private individual owned journals are my preference	3.0000	1.14496

As is shown in table 4, three items in the instrument were used to determine how journal's affiliation influences decision to submit manuscript. Analysis shows that: majority (n: 61, 50.8%) agree that they prefer to publish in journals domiciled in a university. The implication is that journals domiciled in relevant departments in universities have more impact on lecturers of mass media than those that do not. Those who were undecided were 13 or 10.8 percent. The analysis in the table furthers shows that, those who agree that they prefer industry or professional hosted journals were in the majority (n: 87, 91%), those who were undecided, were 21 or 17 percent. The least were those who disagreed (n: 2, 1.7%). None strongly disagreed.

The responses to the statement: private individual owned journals are my preference, include: Agree (n:36, 30%), Strongly agree (n:9, 7.5%). On the dissenting side: Disagree (n:24, 20%), and Strongly disagree (n:15, 12.5%). The undecided were 36 or 30 percent. This indicates that there was no marked difference in the responses to all the options provided (see table 4).

Cost of Publication as a Determining Factor in Communicating Research

Table 5: Cost of Publication as a determining factor

S/N	ITEM	Mean	Std. Dev.
15.	Academic merit and not commercial considerations	1.9000	1.04841
16.	Page charges is my biggest challenge	2.4833	1.06102

As analysis in table 5 showed, academic merit is a major consideration in the publication of research among communication scholars (54 or 45.0%). The implication is that academic merit of a journal influence lecturers' publication and not cost. However, few others (11, 10.1%) are of the opinion that cost is a major consideration. Those who were undecided were 15 or 12.5 percent. In the same vein, majority of the lecturers (n: 50, 41.7%) were of the view that page charges constitute a limitation to their desire to publish their researches. Twenty four or 15 percent of the respondents rejected this view. The undecided category was the least (26. 21.7%) (See table 5).

Journals' Editorial Function and Its Influence on Researcher's Decision to Report Findings

Table 6: Journal's editorial functions and Researcher's decision to report research

S/N	ITEM	Mean	Std. Dev.
17	I feel discouraged when my manuscript is rejected by editors	2.2667	1.44788
18	Quality of editorial board of the journal is a major factor I consider	1.7917	.67233
19		1.9667	.87863
20	Rigour of the peer-review process is the most important	2.3833	1.10904
21	I am not concerned when paper assessment take so much time	3.3167	1.28980

As table 6 shows, five items in the research instrument were analysed to ascertain how journals' editorial function influence respondents' intention to publish their research. First, to the statement: "I feel discouraged when my manuscript is rejected by editors", majority, 89 or 74 percent of the respondents indicated that they feel discouraged. On the contrary, 15 or 12.5 percent of the respondents indicated that they are usually not discouraged of such rejections. Those who were undecided were, 9 or 7.5% percent.

Also, those who were of the opinion that the quality of the constitution of the editorial board of the journals was their main factor for consideration were 72 or 60 percent, while those who said it was not, were 38 or 31.7 percent. This indicates that majority were of the view that the level of the editorial board of the journals was a main consideration in their decision with regard to reporting the research. Further, those who indicated that journal's editorial policy would determine if they would send in their manuscript or not, where in the majority (n: 92 or 82.5%). On the flipside, an insignificant number of respondents disagreed. Also, those who indicated that rigour of the peer review process was an important consideration in sending in their manuscript were in the majority, (Agree; n: 77, 64.3%). Those who thought that the rigour of the peer- review process was an unimportant consideration in sending in their manuscripts, were 28 or 27.3 percent. Fifteen or thirteen percent of the respondents were undecided. In the mean time, those who were not concerned when manuscript assessment took so much time were the least (28, 23%). Majority felt that when manuscript assessment took so much time, it constitutes a lot of concern. (See table 6).

Hypothesis

H₁: There is a significant relationship between readiness to finish writing the report and the structural challenges that writing the report poses.

Table 7: ANOVA of readiness to finish writing the report and the structural challenges that writing the report poses

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.860	4	3.497	.521	.720
Within Groups	62.001	115	6.708		
Total	64.861	119			

Note. (F=.521), df=119, P >.05).

This hypothesis suggests a statistical link between researchers' readiness to finish writing the research report and the structural challenges that the report poses. However, as the analysis of variance show in table 7, and contrary to our assumption there was no significant statistical support (F=.521), df=119, P >.05) associating structural challenges in the research report writing process and researchers' readiness to finish or complete the report writing (See table 7).

Discussions of Findings

Writing a research report constitutes one of the crucial components of the research process. The process of writing the reporting incorporates certain important variables.

The potentials of a researcher's manuscript to be accepted, is largely rested on how well the report is written. Some of the factors that may not be over looked in the process of writing the report fall into three main categories: (i) aptitude in handling the data, (ii) knowing the structural format in which the report should be presented. This aspect also includes knowing the content for each structure segment and (iii) having a grasp of the language of expression (in this case, English Language). These issues may be problematic to the researcher as he writes to the research report. Hence, these factors were determined in this study. With regard to how structural challenges may impact the writing process, this study found that data analysis was the major writing variable that poses a challenge to the researcher. On the other hand though, it is important to draw attention to the fact that thirty percent of the researches said that none of those structural and content requirement in the writing process pose a challenge to them.

In the same vein, one of the major concerns of researchers is the prospect of rejection of the manuscripts by editors. This agrees with Wimmer and Dominick (2011). However, despite this concern, this study found that neither structural requirements nor submission concerns, constituted a significant reason for communication researchers not to finish the report writing.

A lot of factors may be considered by researchers in selecting a journal for communicating their research. Based on the literature (Lang, 2003; COPE, 2006) some of these considerations include: standard indexing system, impact factor rating, local or international status of the journal and hard copy or online presence. As this study show, except preference for either local or international journals, these variables significantly predicted reasons why communication researchers would select a particular journal and ignore the other. With regard to preference, for either local or international journals, two-third of communications researchers did not know their preference. Perhaps a most plausible reason for this outcome could be due to the Nigerian Universities' Criteria for using research papers in promotion decisions. Literature (NUC, 2017) shows that these factors constitute what promotion panels examine in promotion exercises. What this suggests is that communication researchers and perhaps other scholars in other disciplines in the Nigerian University system would continue to make these factors their benchmark in research communication decisions. However, the question that seems not to be answered is, are these parameters enough and significant reason to adjourn a journal, high quality or low quality? Until this question is answered, researchers will continue to labour under the burden of research journals' status. Whether this scenario as discussed here, has positive or negative implications, is an issue that is yet to be adequately captured in extant literature.

Journal's affiliation, as studies suggest, is a variable that is not easily ignored when researchers think of which journals to send their manuscripts to. A journal may be domiciled in a department in a university some may belong to the industry e.g.

Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and Public Relations Council of Nigeria (PRCN) or African Council for Communication Education (ACCE). Hence this study evaluated how this might predict preference among communication lecturers. Our findings show that majority of the communication researchers indicated their preference for journals domiciled in a university. The professional industry based and individual owned journals did not receive significant preferences. However, this raises the question of which of these affiliations are most beneficial to the researcher's academic career? And again, which of these affiliations are considered acceptable to university promotion panels?

Another critical issue that was examined in this study was the issue of publication cost. Some journals charge page fees while others do not. The decision to publish would have been less contentious if the argument were just based on which journal collects page fees and not. But the argument goes beyond that and further determines how a journal is rated by the academic community, especially university promotion panels. For instance, Osaghae (2017) is of the view that quality journals do not charge page fees. In some quarters, it is argued that journals which charge page fees are predatory. Again this contention is exacerbated by the fact that there is no universal consensus as to whether collecting page fees constitute a predatory journal or not. One university may consider a journal predatory while another may not. However, this study found a majority preference for journals that emphasis academic merit rather than page charges. Also, majority said page charges constitute a limitation to the desire to publish their researches.

Editorial boards of journals perform very salient functions in the process of selecting which manuscript to accept for publication or not. This suggests that researchers would have to put into consideration, the editorial board of his/her selected journal. Given these circumstance, this study found that majority of communication lecturers are usually discouraged when their manuscripts are rejected by editors. Also, majority indicated that they put into consideration, the quality of the editorial members of the journal, with the number of professorial title among editorial board members as a key index in determining the quality of the board. Again, as this study found, the length of time that editors used in assessing manuscripts, gave majority of communication lecturers/researchers some concern. This supports the findings of Ryan and Martinson (1999) that one the biggest concern among communication scholars in the US is editors who take so much time in reaching a decision about a manuscript. Notwithstanding, previous studies (Knight & Steinbach, 2008; Worsham, 2008) contend that a rigorous and robust peer review process might take a longer time in assessing manuscripts and making decision for acceptance or rejection. However, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) are of the view that, "editors and reviewers should not let the decision process take an inordinate amount of time; a prompt and timely decision is owed to all contributors" (p.79).

Finally, the study hypothesised a statistical link between researchers'

readiness to finish writing the research report and the structural challenges that writing the report poses. But contrary to my assumption, no significant evidence existed between structural challenges in the research report writing process and researchers' readiness to finish or complete the report writing. What does this tell us? I think it tells us that, the obstacles identified in the literature that may negatively predict the tendency to complete the process of research communication, does not predict it significantly. The implication is that, despite the complexities found in the process of research findings communication, scholars in the field are not deterred from going through the publication process that culminates in the publication of their research findings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Research publication is an important academic culture. Publication affords opportunity for sharing research knowledge. As such it is important to examine factors that predict communicating research findings. To ascertain these factors, the study sampled the opinion of academics who teach communication and media related courses in selected universities in Nigeria. This study found that reporting research results is predicted by several factors, but not including readiness to complete or finish writing the manuscript or the research report. However the factors that predict communicating research findings include: (ii) the status of the journal (iii) affiliation of the journal (iv) cost or page charges as against academic merit of the manuscript, (v) journals' editorial functions (peer-review process and time, decision to accept or reject manuscript, quality of those who constitute editorial board as measured by their position and academic qualifications). These factors as the study show, constitute important considerations among majority of communication lecturers/researchers; beginning from the continuum of writing the report to the process of choosing the journal to publish the report.

Since the process of building a robust body of knowledge in the mass communication discipline is highly dependent on the frequency of research communication, the issues discussed in this study are never exhaustive but rather contribute to the overwhelming factors that influence how communication scholars publish their research results. Given the importance of this subject matter to communication scholarship, this study offers insight into what influence communication scholars to publish findings from communication research. The implications of this type of discourse are not far-fetched. For instance, for all practical purposes, the narrative on publication of research results is core in all academic disciplines and not limited to Communication and media studies; thus the study offers a new perspective on the narrative. Again, given that success in the academic profession is often tied to a successful publication record, makes this study quite germane to professional purposes. It is important to remind the reader that the subject of communication, irrespective of the type and platform, is the core of the

communication discipline; hence, the perspectives on the model of human communication as espoused by Shannon and Weaver has been enriched by the discourse on communicating research results.

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