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The Reality of the 'Publish or Perish' Concept, Perspectives from the Global South

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Abstract

Historically, educators in higher education (HE) were expected to educate, generate knowledge, and do community service. With some commentators arguing that an academic must 'publish or perish', the expectation to create knowledge through research became overemphasized. The concept is widespread in HE institutions around the world. It aids to keep staff, particularly those in universities, constantly engaged with relevant knowledge works in their fields of expertise. According to this viewpoint, research publications are the most important factor in determining whether an academic or an administrator gets employed, promoted, acknowledged, retained, or not hired. The idea of 'publish or perish', on the other hand, is based on the dominant Western knowledge creation realities, which largely misrepresent or ignore African realities. To avoid perpetuating inequalities in academia, it is critical to re-examine how this idea informs knowledge creation in Africa. For example, the enormous number of publications required for one to advance up the academic ladder comes at a hefty cost that is not always feasible to low-paid academics in Africa's resource-poor countries. This limits promotion of some individuals. Basically, for many Africans, what matters is the information gained, not how many times one's work is acknowledged in scholarly publications. We need to establish knowledge-creation processes that are tailored to African realities. To that goal, we must strike a balance between having numerous publications with the potential to have an impact on society, given that developing solutions to development concerns appears to be more vital for Africa right now. This paper problematizes the 'publish or perish' concept for African academics, especially those intending to make an impact in their society with a purpose of eliminating inequalities in academia.

Keywords Publish or Perish · Research · Global South · University · Staff

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Introduction

Bourguignon [1] and Milanovic [2] claim a global decrease in inequality. However, this is debatable since Zizzamia et al. [3] already explained that African inequality dynamics are given limited attention. Therefore, inequalities in Africa are either unknown or ignored, and such do not make the situation any better. Limited data about inequality in Africa exists, and there is a tendency by most development partners such as the World Bank to interpret inequality mainly in terms of poverty levels. Therefore, attempts to examine inequalities have been based on unrealistic and non-exorbitant considerations. It is now critical to bring forward other perspectives as we continue searching for a fair world.

Limited attention has, for example, been paid to the existence of inequalities concerning research and publications. However, according to Asare et al. [4], Africa published only 25% of the open-access education research publications between 2010 and 2018. The same authors also claim that the open-access publications from Africa mainly appear in low-impact factor journals, raising questions about such publications' quality. At the same time, academics worldwide are experiencing pressure to publish, otherwise, they stand to lose their academic spaces. While these are factual issues, the demands pressed upon Africa's academics to publish otherwise they perish will most likely deter researchers' progress in the Global South instead of improving the situation.

The 'publish or perish' concept ignores the contextual issues that African researchers confront daily. A case in point is the limited access to quality studies published in internationally recognized journals experienced by African researchers [5]. They certainly do not get chances to benchmark their publications, hence their low quality and failure to appear in high-impact journals. Additionally, the high publication fees which represent a large portion of the monthly payment of a researcher from Africa, deters them from producing a desirable number of publications.

Therefore, the 'publish or perish' concept threatens the progress of an African academic and undermines the contributions of Africans as teachers, administrators, scholars, and researchers in the service of their communities. Continued propagation of the idea augments the inequalities between Africa and the rest of the world. We are likely to continue consuming knowledge produced elsewhere, especially in those resource-rich countries that most certainly do not recognize or are unaware of African realities. Therefore, demanding that researchers must have a certain number of publications before being promoted is demanding that African researchers conform to standards set by the Western world—a form of neo-colonialism. Such standards are unfair to an academic in Somalia who spent all his life in a war zone; they are also unfair to a medical doctor who spent much time treating Ebola patients in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This should not negate the relevance of research and publications but rather emphasize the need to accommodate the research and publication-related challenges African academics face all the time. With such considerations, we can think of alternativeness that are fair to the African academic. Therefore, this paper purposes to elicit creative thinking about how research and publishing can be harmonized with

the contextual issues in academia in Africa. It points to the possibility of having a balanced opinion between the urge to have more publications without hindering the progress of African researchers capable of improving societies with the already acquired knowledge. Some academics are capable of causing impact in society without publications, and such should be recognized.

Action is needed in African institutions to stop the continued propagation of unrealistic ideologies developed in contexts that differ from Africa's. The world needs to stop and question the validity of the different ideologies and how they serve the African needs. For example, we need to decide what Africa needs more between publications and service delivery interventions. Therefore, there is a need to engage in system-wide corrective initiatives. This calls for a willingness to challenge the status quo, perceive possibilities beyond the ordinary, and overcome the forces that reproduce the inequalities in academia. Approaches that relate to the realities in Africa but still advocate for increased knowledge originating from the Global South are what we need. Only then shall we contribute to fair workspaces for researchers and academics.

However, the author still recognizes the views from Emeagwali and Dei [6] that decolonization of the African Academe is a great challenge, especially concerning the democratization of knowledge. Vargas [7] advises that, among other things, while decolonizing knowledge creation, it is essential to remain careful so as not to end up validating other knowledge systems.

The paper starts by analyzing the research and publication environment in Africa, pointing out the difficulties African researchers face in an attempt to live with the demands of the 'publish or perish' concept. Using literature review as a methodology, the paper explores possibilities of decolonizing the knowledge creation and dissemination process. The paper analyses the views expressed by different writers and researchers in light of colonialism, modernism, and capitalism. As suggested by Dei [8], we should critically analyze the crafting of the past and how it informs the present to initiate a change. In all, we acknowledge that the past gave rise to a system of laws that have organized nature and other human beings under the knowledge that was objectified and detached from body and context, claiming universality and objectivity [7]. Consequently, a universal-unique worldview was imposed upon humans. This, however, needs to be revisited to make it fairer to all.

Failures of the 'Publish or Perish' Concept in the Light of Social Justice Theory

The paper is based on the social justice theory (SJT) of Nancy Fraser. According to this theory, Fraser argues that justice can be understood in two separate but interrelated ways, i.e., in terms of redistribution and in terms of recognition [9]. By redistribution, Fraser refers to the socially just allocation of resources. At the same time, recognition concerns the equal recognition of different identities/groups within a society regarding achievements, services, virtues, and other attributes [10]. In this light, *inequality* is defined as the unequal distribution of resources and the lack of

recognition of social individuals and groups who do not have access to the most valuable resources [11].

Applying this theory in this paper, we notice that the research environment in the Global South and more so in Africa differs from that in the Global North. There is an unequal resource distribution between the North and the South research institutions. Empty libraries, high publication costs, limited funding for conference participation, class differences that limit access to English (the 'acceptable' language in academia), or a weak social and economic position when belonging to a minority group are all issues that Rojo [11] identifies as issues affecting many institutions. While the author does not specify Africa, these are the challenges that confront African researchers as they perform their daily roles. The difficult conditions in which African researchers operate do not allow them to carry out research and disseminate the findings at the same rate as those in the resource-rich institutions of the Global North. Only a few of them manage to circumvent these limitations. However, their publications rarely get recognized since they are from underprivileged institutions and often appear in low-impact journals.

According to Kigotho [5], researchers from the Global North tend to partner with researchers from Sub-Saharan African countries with the most significant volume of research outputs, namely Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Therefore, in most instances, the research funding modalities and other partnership practices have a specific agenda whose aim is not to build capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa but to improve the global university ranking and visibility. In this regard, the more Northern institutions place a premium on publishing numerous publications in prestigious journals to stay afloat, the less the incentive to invest in effective collaborations that contribute to capacity building and inclusivity [12].

Noteworthy also are the activities involved in disseminating research findings, such as conferences. Attending the most prestigious conferences is essential for a researcher's visibility and contributes to winning research grants. However, getting invited to such conferences largely depends on one's networks and, at times, one's ability to meet the associated cost. Coming from Africa denies most researchers rewarding networks that would influence gaining access to prestigious international conferences. Secondly, the poor pay associated with the academic jobs in Africa limits them from funding the costs associated with attendance to research dissemination events. With these issues in view, researchers in Africa should not be subjected to the exact standard requirements as those in the North. This is because, despite the lack of local research support infrastructure, the ambition of African researchers and institutions to fit into the Western-imposed model may be counterproductive in the pursuit of Africa's long-term development.

From the preceding, therefore, while the 'publish or perish' concept can increase research productivity in the developed world, it has an opposite effect for African scholars. For such a concept to positively impact Africa, the research infrastructure needs to be improved first. Otherwise, researchers should not be subjected to its demands. After all, it has already had adverse effects on scholars and scholarship, even in resource-rich institutions. For example, according to Rawat and Meena [13], due to the pressure to increase the number of publications, unethical methods and useless research have emerged. It decreased the value of the resulting scholarship

as scholars must spend time scrambling to publish whatever they can manage rather than developing a significant research agenda. The pressure associated with 'publish or perish' concept also detracts from the time and effort professors can devote to teaching undergraduate and post-graduates. Therefore, we must promote alternative approaches that suit the contextual condition of Africa. For example, instead of emphasizing only publications as a standard for progression along the academic ladder, a mix of publication, experience, and societal impact can be utilized.

The Research and Publication Environment in Africa

According to Kigotho [14], Africa's research and publishing scenes have a "weak publishing industry, including a lack of distribution hubs and an intra-Africa book trade, curricula, pedagogy, and learning processes that are still rooted in the colonial situation, and the absence of a scholarship culture". According to the author, these factors undermine the development and production of academic books on the continent. With a similar voice, Kana [15] claimed that inadequate research funding and internet access, language barriers, low-quality research methods, technological challenges, and high processing fees for top international journals also limit researchers' potential to engage in research engagements. Below we explain some of these issues and how they interact to form the observed research environment in Africa.

Africa accounts for not more than 1% of the global research output, yet it is home to over 12% of the world's population, points out Duermeijer et al. [16]. As if that is not enough, Schneegans et al. [17] reported that the African continent contributes less than 2.6% of the world's scientific research output. First, the statistics reveal an unequal research output between Africa and the rest of the world, and second, they offer an opportunity for us to question the inequalities. With critical analysis, we can tell whether Africa is naturally destined for the lowest end of the research output inequality or whether there are some enabling conditions for it to happen that way. In line with this perception, Asaolu [18] holds that the impulse surrounding Africans and their institutions in 'trying to fit into the Western-imposed models' even when resources necessary for research growth are limited further puts Africa in a disadvantaged position in pursuit of sustainable development. The preceding points to the basic idea in this paper that the 'publish or perish' view, which originated from the Western world, negatively influences the progress of research and publication in Africa.

However, this should not be used as an excuse to stop striving to develop the continent's research infrastructure. Efforts are already in place to enable researchers based in Africa to improve their situation. For example, Duermeijer et al. [16] explained that Africa had a scientific production growth rate of 38.6% for the period starting from 2012 to the end of 2016, which was the highest figure for all the world regions. The authors further clarified that the number of authors increased at a satisfactory rate of 43% during the same period. According to these authors, this rate was 10% higher than that of the Middle East, which had the next fastest-growing (33%) author population Worldwide during the same period. However, using these values does not imply that Africa must have adopted these standards as developed in the

Western world even when they may not lead to the desired development outcomes. As situations demand, Africa can always design approaches that support its growth in any sphere.

Though there may be disparities, the publishing industry in Africa is yet to attain full development. In agreement, Kigotho [14] explains that Africa lacks distribution hubs and the intra-Africa book trade. At the same time, the curricula, pedagogy, and learning processes are still rooted in the colonial situation, and a scholarship culture is absent, as further clarified by Kigotho. With these factors at play, the development and production of academic books on the continent has been restrained by denying potential African authors mentors and 'homemade' reference material.

Furthermore, African researchers and authors face a complex problem in producing articles and making them prominent at the same time. For example, publications from Africa are often perceived to be of poor quality in terms of content and author visibility [19]. Kigotho [14] explains that it is difficult for African authors to achieve good visibility because they are 'unknown and from a developing country'. At times, the publishers for content from Africa may not have a broad reach due to poor marketing and distribution. This points to the financial aspects of publishing. The charges associated with the publication process in Africa are very high. The high cost for publication discourages many researchers from disseminating their findings [20], while others opt for predatory journals [19]. However, such practices further propagate the influence of the North on African universities regarding the curriculum used in these universities, researched focus, nature of the process, and the research dissemination process. As argued in the other parts of this paper, this is a tendency towards neocolonialism whose benefits for the African continent are not precisely positive.

Academic staff in most African countries are poorly paid [21]. In some cases, some are involved in moonlighting to make ends meet. With the struggles associated with little pay, it is difficult for some researchers to spare funds out of the meager pay to fund the publication process. Consequently, the publications score low on the priority list for such lecturers. Therefore, overcoming the research and publication challenge in Africa does not involve a 'reward and punishment' intervention but instead tackles the contextual challenges in African universities. Rewarding (for example, with a promotion) or punishing (for example, by refusing to employ) a researcher may aggravate rather than improve the issue.

To minimize the challenges associated with financing research and publication processes, researchers from Africa have often opted to partner with those from the resource-rich universities in the Global North. This has, however, been criticized. According to Carbonnier and Kontinen [12], during research collaborations, partners from Africa are usually relegated to data collection activities, with partners from the Global North being the leaders of the leading research project activities such as data analysis and dissemination of outcomes of academic publications. In effect, such partnerships become only ceremonial [22], with minimum chances for Africans to learn from the experience and improve on their research practice.

In addition to the preceding, studies have indicated that education research partnerships involving African scholars and funding from outside agencies in the North favored very few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa [5]. According to this author,

Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda account for about half of the collaborative outputs. Furthermore, when to these countries Ethiopia is added, the five countries account for over 65% of internationally collaborative publication outputs in Sub-Saharan Africa. The same countries except Nigeria have the highest volume of peer-reviewed research in the region, as further explained by Kigotho, hence clarifying how global partners in the North continue to promote inequalities. This is because, as indicated, countries with more collaborations tend to have a higher research output by partnering with some countries while ignoring others in a way challenges to bring about equality.

Another important consideration here is the political environment in some African countries. Kighoto [5] reported a study conducted by Asare et al. [4], who found that countries with the fewest publications in Africa include Somalia, Chad, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. A standard variable among these four countries is that they all experienced war recently (familiar in Africa). Expecting a scholar from such countries to carry out research and publish at the same rate as someone in Europe is unrealistic. In recent years, all of these countries have witnessed conflict. Some researchers, especially public health practitioners, would be engaged in 'life-saving' activities, and most certainly, such activities count more than publications. In such circumstances, criteria for relevance in academia should be sought rather than only considering publications.

'Publish or Perish' and Neo-Colonialism

Colonialism is defined as the direct and total dominance of one country by another, based on a foreign force's possession of state power [23]. While the primary objective of colonialism is political domination, other intentions such as material exploitation of the colony are known. This notwithstanding, the global decolonization wave of 1960 contributed much towards the liberation of man, especially in Africa [24]. While such is appreciated, colonialism is still with us [25]. Thus, while Africa is no longer directly colonized, intellectual colonialism has persisted in Africa's various educational practices and processes. This seems to relate very well with the words of John Henrik Clarke quoted in Lumbard [26] that 'to control a people you must first control what they think about themselves and how they regard their history and culture. Moreover, when conquerors make one ashamed of their culture and history, prison walls and chains are no longer needed to hold the conquered.

With the above under consideration, knowledge production in Africa continues to follow the dominant Eurocentric systems, which is to the detriment and even exclusion of African modes of analysis. This form of intellectual hegemony denies efficacy to the analytical tools developed by Africans. With colonialism comes a presumed intellectual superiority of the modes of analysis produced outside Africa, especially in Europe or America, that later influence the area of research and publication. Recognizing the barriers to knowledge creation and dissemination that neo-colonialism creates can help us design more inclusive approaches that embrace diverse modes of analysis. Scholars from the Global South can engage in more effective dialogue.

As they pursued their colonial interests, forming the 'other' played a crucial role. The colonialists used this construction about the colonized, signifying their inferiority [7]. This same perception still finds its way into the present-day academia in which researchers and their academic work are still under-rated hence constituting the 'other' category. Additionally, most of the Western literary and academic publications have, over the years, been belittling the Africans, which continues to undermine the efforts of Africans seeking to publish with recognized Western academic publishers [14]. According to Fanon [27], African colonies were inhabited by savages under an irrational, unorganized and unhuman world, opposite to the modern world, developed Europe. Such societies would undoubtedly have no contribution to the present-day knowledge production processes. Additionally, depicting Africans as a lower form of humanity justified why an African should follow laws, ideas and guidelines developed from Europe [28]. Therefore, the publish or perish concept aims to further colonize the African scholar who seems to be disadvantaged to research and publish at the same rate as one in Europe.

Mamdani [22] expresses his displeasure in conducting doctoral training in many African universities, particularly in Uganda. This is because the training is oriented towards neocolonialism. According to him, doctoral training in Africa 'simply reproduces knowledge required outside Africa.' With doctoral training being an essential component of research activities in universities, indeed, the way it is carried out influences the quality or even quantity of research output. In the same way, the impact of the 'publish or perish' concept may not necessarily be positively felt in Africa. The continent certainly desires those engagements that offer practical solutions to the existing development challenges before getting to those geared at, for example, increasing the visibility of researchers.

'Publish or Perish' as a Component of Modernism

From agricultural, rural, and traditional cultures to post-industrial, urban, and contemporary forms, the modernization thesis (the basis for modernism) views development as a standard evolutionary path that all societies follow [29]. To the proponents of this theory, societies, irrespective of their location, must follow pre-set stages of development to achieve modernity. Traditional economies, transition to take-off, take-off itself, drive to maturity, age of high consumption and post-industrial society are examples of such stages, according to Chirot and Hall [30]. (p. 82). Furthermore, the theory emphasizes internal causes and sources of socio-economic development, such as formal education, market-based economies, and democratic and secular political systems [31].

According to Herkenrath and Bornschier [32], to achieve speedier development, less developed civilizations should absorb Western technological capital, organizational systems, and science and technology. Therefore, by adopting the idea of 'publish or perish,' universities intend to step up their rate of growth and development. However, this may not be the appropriate time for African universities to adopt the idea. As the theory suggests, societies may be at different stages of development towards modernity and therefore deserve different interventions to quicken

development. Importing a development strategy from Europe that has already achieved modernity and imposing it on Africa, which is still in transition, may not achieve the desired development results. Indeed, this explains why the idea has further entrenched inequalities between universities in Africa and those in Europe.

As already explained, modernization considers that development is monolithic [31], which is not true since development as a process is affected by internal and external processes which are context-specific. Therefore, by arguing for a 'publish or perish' policy among universities worldwide, the proponents assume uniformity of contextual factors while ignoring the obtaining difficulties different researchers in different regions face. As seen with modernism, the 'publish or perish' policy is a 'top-down development scheme' conceived from the Global North (top) to the Global South (bottom). It does not regard the interaction between the researcher and the surroundings as a model for social change and development in the academic sector. However, it strives to establish uniformity of standards among university researchers. However, with the different contextual factors playing an important role, different regions can devise approaches that are context-appropriate until they are at the same development level as the other regions to adopt similar standards.

In submitting this idea, the author is aware of contrary opinions that hold that modernization positively influences civilization [33]. However, modernization has been meant to propagate Western ideologies (hence the term westernization) [18]. Quek Zhi Xing [34] has elaborated on the failures that have been brought about by westernization in Africa. Like Obioma [35] explained, Africa does not have to imitate the rest of the world (at times without question) to become modern or civilized.

Capitalism in the 'Publish or Perish' Concept

Capitalism, by design, is meant to benefit powerful countries at the expense of the weaker ones [36], and this is a true reflection of what is happening in academia under the influence of the 'publish or perish' movement [37]. Lamba and colleagues explain that due to academic capitalism, researchers already with a high number of publications (and these are from the Global North) are the ones that continue to get more publications, the funded continue to get more funds. An exclusive fraternity of scientists has formed, getting into which becomes an arduous task for the outsiders. Thus, since African researchers cannot always publish, they continue to miss the opportunities associated with more publications, and the cycle repeats itself. So in effect, adopting this idea in Africa is to the detriment of this region to a large extent.

Additionally, like Bloch et al. [38] explain, the idea behind calls for 'publish or perish' was meant to increase the economic benefits for publishing houses (mainly located in the Global North). It is important to remember that "those who establish the rules control the market," which is true in academics and publishing [18]. According to Jossep [39], the profitability of journal publishing is behind the idea of the 'publish or perish' concept. This explains the rapid expansion since the 1960s of profit-oriented scientific journal publishing that charges authors for processing and publishing their papers to supplement the publisher's income from subscriptions, downloads, and copyright licensees further explains Jossep. The lucrative publishing

business in the North requires publications to remain operational. This extends to other services essential for research and publication, which are also controlled in the Global North, e.g., 'the bodies that oversee acceptable publication outlets, universal patents, registration of internet domain names and hosting servers' [18]. The capitalistic nature of this business is that the North monopolizes this market. In effect, Africa, which is ill-equipped to produce a comparable number of publications, does not benefit from such a business.

The growing concentration of commercial publishing houses clarifies why publication is given more importance than other academic duties, yet publications are not the only measure of output or performance. Besides, the ability to publish a paper is usually beyond the researcher's control: the paper's quality and the study's validity are not the only factors that influence whether a paper is accepted for publication [40]. Other factors that determine the fate of a submitted paper, and hence a researcher's career opportunities, include journal policies, the referee's mood, and the papers submitted by other researchers. Therefore, publication as a measure of performance may be influenced by other motives and the economic gains associated with the publication process that primarily go to the Global North. At the same time, imposing this criterion upon researchers may not solve Africa's development needs but somewhat weakens them. Ideally, the capitalist tendencies embedded in this concept further weaken Africa.

In African universities, capitalism is experienced in commercialism exercised by university presses and bookshops [14]. Rather than encouraging the creation, marketing, and sale of academic books, Kigotho notes that publishing and selling textbooks and imported motivational literature have become a significant concern. This is an attempt to generate more revenues for the universities, which certainly impacts the quality of universities. Universities must become entrepreneurial, but this should not occur at the expense of quality education. Commercialization lowers the quality of education. For example, Makerere University (Uganda) commercialized her education by admitting fee-paying students even beyond capacity, which affected the quality of the educational process in this university.

Consequences of 'Publish or Perish' Imperative

The significant negative consequence that has been experienced as a result of adopting the 'publish or perish' imperative is that it has worsened the inequality between scholars in Africa and those in the Western world [11]. The imperative has been associated with many prerequisites, which has limited many African researchers from publishing. Recalling that the failure to publish is tantamount to limited visibility, most African researchers have remained invisible, yet this denies them other possibilities such as participation in international conferences, collaboration in research, or winning research grants. Such tendencies maintain the cycle of not researching and not publishing being repeated in the life of many African scholars.

Since publications are produced mainly by publishers in the North, these publishers set rules for publishing [18]. This negatively affects Africa in that African researchers become engrossed in meeting the requirements set by the North. This

denies them a chance to set their requirements for publication,after all, the practice even denies them a chance to learn. In a way, this restricts the publication process out of Africa. Thus, Africa is left with a chance to produce minimal research (since high impact factor journals may reject most publications) and mainly as a consumer of knowledge produced in the North. This practice has maintained colonial ideologies in African institutions, and it may not be easy to overcome not until Africa starts to produce and disseminate its knowledge in the desired quality and quantity.

The desire for African researchers to publish in high-quality journals (following the standards set by the North) challenges the application of research findings in Africa. This stems from challenges associated with access and copyrights [18]. A study conducted may be valuable for the continent, especially concerning its application to achieve development. This is, however, only possible if the findings and recommendations from the study are accessible to the implementers. In some cases, publications in high-impact factor journals are inaccessible in Africa. Therefore, in some cases, publishing in a high-impact factor journal becomes a costly, wasteful process for Africa since it does not reach the target audience.

Another negative consequence of this imperative is that it has encouraged publication vices into academia. Some lecturers present theses, dissertations, and journal publications as part of their scholarly production for promotion purposes. According to Kigotho [14], the lack of clarity on what counts as scholarly output has made it challenging to have researchers and scholars develop quality research output. At times, in the quest for promotions, researchers publish in predatory journals, which challenges the quality of the research output. This is all in response to the 'publish or perish' imperative, which serves as a reward or a punishment.

With the emphasis on just publishing and the quality of publications, Lee [41] holds that scholars, especially those from developing countries, may publish and still perish. This makes the work of an African academic burdensome, with many unsure how to get out of the confusion. The confusion does affect not only the individual but also institutions in general.

Possible Remedies to the Challenges

There is a need to revisit the criteria used to recruit or promote staff. Relying on publications as the only measure of a researcher's potential works against some scholars limited by circumstantial factors, such as war or epidemics. A combination of measures, such as the quality of service to the community or experience or supervision of graduate students, can supplement publications. The system should be flexible to include other alternatives. This will make it accommodative and help reduce inequalities between the North and South. Absolute citation impact (a measure of how many times a research paper has been cited per year of existence) and weighted author impact (a measure of how many times a research article has been cited per year of existence) are two more recommendations, according to Asaolu [18]. In addition, instead of relying on indexing systems dictated by the North, (a way of rating researchers, virtually independent of their respective disciplines), Africa should consider establishing and developing its indexing system. The continent will

be able to track the number of publications and citations of scholarly works created in Africa. Confidence, fairness, and chances for African and other researchers could lead to increased productivity and continental growth. Additionally, it would help improve the researchers' visibility on the continent.

Another possible solution can be achieved by creating more centers of excellence on the African continent. The centers would help mobilize the necessary resources for African researchers to conduct research and disseminate their findings. Additionally, the centers of excellence would allow the creation of African context-specific knowledge as advocated for by Shizha [42]. For Shizha, knowledge should be context-specific to be relevant to communities and societies in a better manner. Such knowledge allows student cultures, languages, values, and worldviews to be incorporated into the learning process. Vargas [7] explains that this should not be a way to exclude African knowledge systems from other available ones. It should be regarded as an integrative process in which knowledge processes are initiated locally and then connected to the international knowledge networks. This initiative increases research output on the continent, provides African researchers with mentors and best practice, and induce more studies.

Lastly, African scholars and institutions need to stand their ground and resist unfair conditions set by North-funded agencies. In fact, like Asaolu [18] suggests, each nation must set its developmental priorities and align scientific research with them. This will allow scholars to participate in projects beneficial to both Africa and the development partners.

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