Journals Choice for Research Publication at Ethiopian Public Universities Academia in Decision Making Experience

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how academic staff make decisions when choosing journals for publication at Ethiopian public universities. To realize this, a phenomenological research design was employed, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 academic staff from six selected Ethiopian public universities using purposive sampling. Thematic analysis and narrative data analysis were used. The study found a preference for international journals over local ones and highlighted the influence of the Ministry of Education's policy. According to the study, 66% of the participants reported that their articles were rejected when they submitted them for publication in a journal. It also identified challenges such as a lack of awareness about distinguishing peer-reviewed journals from predatory ones, a lengthy review process, and insufficient funding for article publication charges. The study suggests that the Ministry of Education should support accredited local journals to gain recognition equal to highly indexed international journals, provide awareness training for academics about locally accredited and internationally indexed journals, and offer technical and financial assistance to local journals based on their performance to improve their acceptance by academics.

Keywords: *Academia Decision, Challenges, Higher Education, Journal Choice, Publication*

INTRODUCTION

Research publishing plays a crucial role in facilitating meaningful communication within the academic community. It serves as a platform for researchers to share their findings, contribute to the body of knowledge, and have their voices represented and heard by peers and the wider academic audience (Cade, 2022).The complexity of the scholarly publication landscape presents researchers with dilemmas regarding journal choice, leading to decision-making processes that involve expectations, university policies, familiarity, confidence, and publishing objectives (Rowley & Sbaffi, 2021).

Moreover, choosing the right journal for publishing research is a crucial decision for academics in higher education. It not only affects the dissemination of their research findings but also has an impact on their academic standing and career progression. Researchers often find it challenging to align their work with the focus of journals and to choose the most appropriate one for submission (Ramia, J. M., 2023).

The process of journal selection involves a complex decision-making experience, influenced by various factors such as the journal's impact factor, scope, audience, publication speed, and open access policies. Other factors include the state of the organization, personality and skill of the decision maker, external conditions, type of problem within the organization, the goal of decision-making, and the type of decision (Fagence & Hansom, 2018). Additionally, the speed of the reviewing process, known as the "First decision," is a significant factor in selecting the most appropriate journal for publication (Haris, 2012). These factors play a crucial role in researchers' journal choice and can impact the quality and visibility of their work.

Higher education institutions and academia influence the selection of journals for research publication through various factors. One factor is the emphasis on publishing in peer-reviewed journals indexed in reliable databases like Web of Sciences (WoS) (Daengsi *et al.*, 2022). This ensures the quality of the program and the PhD students

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who complete it. Another factor is the global diffusion of rules and values, where universities in developing countries join ranking systems and introduce faculty promotion criteria to create world-class universities (Daengsi *et* al., 2022).

Many governments and higher education institutions now encourage publication in international journals in their pursuit of 'world-class' status following similar policies were adopted in Ethiopian higher institutions as in table one explained comparing the points allocated to the publication of articles in national and international journals give more value for international journal publication out let and sole authors while providing funds prefers to group of researchers than individual researchers and this all make confusion among academies which way they proceeds (Bedenlier *et* al,2018;Chou & Chan, 2016, MoE,2019).

Table 1 *Points allocated to journals and Authors Numbers*

Authors no	Sol authors		Co-authors		corresponding authors	
	Nat Journal	Inter Journal	Nat Journal	Inter al Journal	Nat Journal	Inter Journal
1	0.75	1	-	-	0.75	1
2	0.60	0.8	0.57	0.75	0.575	0.775
3	0.525	0.7	0.475	0.65	0.500	0.675
4	0.45	0.6	0.400	0.55	0.425	0.575
≥5	0.375	0.5	0.365	0.45	0.375	0.475

Source: MoE, (2020),Note:Nat=National ,Inter= International

Universities can enhance the visibility and credibility of their accredited journals by ensuring they are indexed in reputable international journal databases like PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. This increased exposure can lead to greater awareness and recognition within the academic community (Kinde, 2021). Researcher should also be cautious of predatory publishers and ensure that the publisher provides all necessary information to address any concerns (Tazegul *et* al., 2022). Furthermore, researchers should consider factors such as journal prestige, indexing, impact factor, acceptance and rejection rates, and the target audience of the journal (Daengsi *et* al., 2022).

In recent years, the proliferation of academic journals and the emergence of predatory publishers have added further complexity to this decision-making process. The factors that influence higher education academia's decision-making process when choosing a publication outlet for their research include financial factors, such as funding systems and availability of information (Rowley *et* al., 2022).

The existing research on journal choice for research publication in the context of Ethiopian higher education academia is limited. Most of the available literature on this topic focuses on the broader aspects of academic publishing and research dissemination, with limited emphasis on the specific decision-making experiences of Ethiopian scholars.

The limited available literature on the Ethiopian context and mainly focused on that factors such as challenges of management research in Africa, academic staff practices, challenges of publishing trends, and challenges of academic publishing in Ethiopian public universities (Abera,2018; Aliye, 2019;Alehegn & Diale, 2021;Vinnikova et al.,2021). However, there is a need for more in-depth exploration of the specific challenges, strategies, and decision-making experiences of Ethiopian academics in their efforts to disseminate their research.

Understanding the experiences and challenges faced by higher education academia in choosing the right journal for research publication is crucial for improving the scholarly communication landscape. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by investigating the decision-making experience of Ethiopian higher education academia in selecting journals for research publication. By gaining insights into the factors influencing journal choice and the unique challenges faced by academia in Ethiopia, this research article seeks to inform strategies for improving the scholarly publishing landscape and supporting the academic community in their pursuit of impactful research dissemination. To this end, the researchers formulated the following three research questions in the following ways:

RQ1.What are the experiences of Ethiopian Higher Educations Academia who are published at local and international peer reviewed journals for the last five years?

RQ2.How can research policies shape the academic behavior of journal choice at Ethiopian higher education institutions?

RQ3. What are the challenges that face Ethiopian Higher Education Academia during publication of their research Articles local and international peer review journals?

Theoretical Framework

Institutional theory can be used to explain the journal selection process by academia. According to Aksom and Tymchenko (2020), institutional theory predicts a prevalence of passivity and isomorphism over change and strategic behavior, suggesting that academia tends to conform to institutional pressures and adopt widely accepted practices (Amenta and Ramsey,2010).This conformity increases organizational legitimacy, as organizations that conform to accepted practices receive acceptance and support from their environment (Aksom and Tymchenko,2020).

Therefore, academia may select journals that are perceived as most legitimate and widely accepted in their field, in order to enhance their own legitimacy and compete effectively (Cai and Mehari, 2015). Additionally, institutional theory explains the tendency for organizations to become more similar to each other over time, which may influence academia to select journals that align with the prevailing practices and norms in their discipline (David *et* al., 2019).By applying institutional theory, academia can gain insights into the factors that shape their journal selection process and the role of conformity and legitimacy in this decision-making process.

The theory explains that organizations, including academic institutions, tend to conform to widely accepted practices and forms (Amenta and Ramsey, 2010). This conformity is driven by the desire for legitimacy and acceptance from the environment (Aksom and Tymchenko , 2020).

In the context of academia, this means that academic institutions may prioritize publishing in journals that are widely recognized and respected within their field (Pereira *et* al., 2018). The theory also suggests that organizations may adopt practices that are perceived as most legitimate, even if they may not be the most effective or innovative (Thomas and Lamm, 2012). Therefore, in the journal selection process, academia may prioritize journals that are seen as prestigious and conform to established norms and practices within the academic community (Dickie, 2004).

Information Seeking Behavior of researchers influences the journal selection of academia by considering factors such as the nature of discipline, level of program, and personal constructs formed through experience with different sources of information (Mahajan, 2009).

Importance of Journals in Academic Publishing

Journals play a crucial role in academic publishing by providing a platform for researchers to share their findings and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in their respective fields. They serve as a means of communication among scholars, allowing them to disseminate their research to a wider audience. Not only do journals facilitate the exchange of ideas and information, but they also serve as repositories of knowledge, making scholarly literature easily accessible for future reference. Furthermore, the rigorous peer review process that journals employ ensures the reliability and credibility of the published research. This process involves evaluation by experts in the field who assess the quality, validity, and originality of the research before it is published, thus maintaining the high standards of academic scholarship. Overall, the importance of journals in academic publishing cannot be overstated, as they are essential for the advancement of knowledge and the growth of academic disciplines (Gringarten and Fernández, 2015).

Factors Influencing Journal Selection

Several factors influence the decision-making process for journal selection in higher education academia. One important factor is the reputation and impact factor of the journal. Researchers aim to publish their work in prestigious and well-established journals to enhance their academic reputation and increase the visibility and impact of their research. The qualities of the content and rigorous peer-review process of the journal are also

significant considerations in the selection process. Researchers want to ensure that their work undergoes thorough scrutiny and meets the standards of the academic community (Habibullah *et* al., 2023).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study utilizes a phenomenological research design) to investigate the experiences of academia within the Ethiopian higher education system (26). The aim of a phenomenological study is to depict the fundamental essence of individual experiences with a phenomenon and to acquire a profound understanding of 'what they have experienced' and 'how they experienced it' (27). This approach is valuable for comprehending the perspectives on issues associated with the firsthand experiences of academia and their decisions regarding the publication of research articles in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

Participants

The research participants include 12 permanent faculty members from six randomly selected Ethiopian higher education institutions. They must have published at least one article in MoE accredited local journals or international journals indexed at Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed between 2018 and 2023. Using a snowball purposive sampling technique (Patton, 2002), participants from different departments were selected through the research and publication office's communication network.

Participants provided consent and completed a short survey before in-person interviews, which lasted 15 to 30 minutes and were audio recorded. A pilot group of two interviews was held at Madd Walabu University to ensure clarity and relevance of the interview questions, with no changes made based on the pilot. Participant identities were kept confidential, and no personal information was disclosed. The researcher also gathered demographic information about the participants' educational background and experience with in higher education institutions. The semi-structured interview focused on the participants' decision on journal choices for research publication at Ethiopian higher education was recorded for accuracy.

The researcher established trust and rapport by contacting the research and publication director of the sampled public universities in Ethiopia to schedule interviews with the participants. All academic staff members were required to submit their published articles to those offices, regardless of whether they were published in local or international journals. The directors, who were aware of the participants' publication status, facilitated communication with the first author. This network of relationships facilitated a better understanding of the participants' needs and maintained consistent contact, ultimately aiding the researchers in building rapport. Each interviewee was given anonymity and informed about the purpose of the study

The interviewees all held positions in various departments at different universities. Additionally, out of the 12 interviewees, 9 were male and 3 were female. Some of them occupied high-ranking roles such as directors, deans, and department heads, which provided an opportunity to gain valuable insights for the researcher's study. The researcher employed criterion-based purposive sampling to select participants with a minimum of five years of experience at an Ethiopian public higher education institution and at least one publication in local journals or international peer-reviewed Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed-indexed journals (28).

Instrumentation and Procedure

In this study, the researcher used depth -a semi-structured interview to gather data (29). The interview form was composed of two guides grouped under three categories: demographic information, reasons for choosing local journals and international journals, challenges that academia faces during the publication of their research at local and international journals for 15-30 munities each session and how Ethiopian higher education institutions policies can shape the journal choice behavior of academics.

The Ethical Review Committee of the Institution provided approval for the research before data collection began. After reading and signing an informed consent form in English, all participants permitted audio recording before the interviews. Interviews were conducted by the researchers. Each interview was conducted individually in a separate place within the university compound, where each participant agreed to meet up, and

lasted approximately 15–30 minutes for all sampled university within six months from September 2023 to February 2024.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2014) and Hatch (2023) discuss the data analysis phase in qualitative studies, emphasizing the importance of systematically examining participants' experiences to identify patterns, themes, and relationships. The transcripts were reviewed multiple times to identify common themes, and coding was used to categorize the phenomena experienced by the participants. This phenomenological study aimed to explore the real-life experiences of choosing academic journals for research publication at Ethiopian higher education institutions, and to examine the decision-making process of academia. The findings were analyzed and the research questions were addressed using codes and themes identified from the data analysis (Hatch, 2023).

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the real-life experiences of choosing academic journals for research publication at Ethiopian higher education institutions, and to explore the decision-making process of academia. The findings were analyzed and the research questions were addressed using codes and themes identified from the data analysis Moreover, in the present study, there were nine male participants and three female participants, aged between 35 and 55. Two participants were from Haramaya University, two from Diredawa University, two from Jigjiga University, two from Hawassa University, two from Wallaga University, and two from Waliyta Sodo University.

All the participants were employed in various colleges, such as the College of Agriculture and Environment, the College of Health and Medical Science, the College of Social Science and Humanity, and the College of Business and Economics. Six participants held the rank of assistant professor; one was a full professor; two were an associate professor; and the remaining three were lecturers. The duration of the participants' stays in Ethiopian higher education institutions ranged from 6 to 25 years.

The study asked Ethiopian public higher education academic staff about their decision-making process for selecting the publication venue for their research manuscript. The study revealed three main themes.

RESULTS

The Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants

In the present study, there were nine male participants and three female participants, aged between 35 and 55. Two participants were from Haramaya University, two from Diredawa University, two from Jigjiga University, two from Hawassa University, two from Wellega University, and two from Waliyta Sodo University. All participants were employed in various colleges, including the College of Agriculture and Environment, the College of Health and Medical Science, the College of Social Science and Humanity, and the College of Business and Economics.

The following table presents a detailed summary of the academic backgrounds of 12 individuals, covering information such as their gender, age, academic standing, university affiliation, and years of service, publication history, and current roles. The table features entries for 12 individuals, identified by pseudo-names (P1, P2, P3... P12), with 9 males and 3 females aged between 36 and 55. These individuals hold different academic positions, including lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, and are associated with various types of universities, including applied, research, and comprehensive institutions. Their years of service range from 6 to 32 years. In this to the study, 66% of the participants reported that their articles were rejected when they submitted them for publication in a journal. The participants have published articles in both local and international journals and hold a variety of roles within their respective institutions, such as department head, director, and dean.

Table 2 *Provide overview participants.*

Psdo	Sex	Age	Level	University	S years	Number of publication		Position
						Local	International	
P1	M	39	Lectur	Applied	6	1	2	Dep head
P2	M	50	Ass Pro	Comper	14	1	5	Dep head
P3	M	55	Prof	Research	32	5	27	Director
P4	M	42	Ass pro	Research	20	2	4	Dep head
P5	F	37	Lectur	Comper	8	1	1	Dep head
P6	M	40	Ass Pro	Applied	8	1	3	Dep head
P7	M	46	Asso Pr	Research	29	3	14	Dep head
P8	F	38	Lectur	Applied	10	1	1	Director
P9	M	41	Ass pro	Applied	12	1	3	Dean
P10	F	46	Ass Pro	Comper	16	1	2	Director
P11	M	50	Asso pr	Research	28	2	18	Dean
P12	M	36	Ass Pro	Comper	11	1	2	Deparhead

The study asked Ethiopian public universities academic staff about their decision-making process for selecting the publication venue for their research manuscript. Accordingly, here are the three main themes based on basic research questions and objectives of the study.

Academic Staff Experiences of Ethiopian Public Universities on Publication

The academics emphasized that choosing the right journal for publishing research is a crucial decision, as it has a significant impact on the dissemination of their work and their professional reputation. Many participants expressed challenges in choosing suitable journals, as each journal has its own author guidelines that authors must meet as the first criteria for qualification. One participant shared his experiences by stating that:

> *"Academics at higher education institutions in Ethiopia do not have access to organized information regarding the details of journals affiliated with their institution, such as reputation, scope, impact factor, audience reach, publication speed, and open access policies." These details are considered essential factors by the Ministry of Education and the universities* (P3, P2, P4, P5, P6, P9, P10, and P12).

Participants explain the process how to selected journals. The majority of participants are academics who stress the significance of expert assessment and peer review in well-regarded journals like Web of Science, PubMed, and Scopus. They are of the opinion that their research should add to the current knowledge base in order to gain approval from experts. One participant also mentioned that publishing in respected journals that meet institutional and Ministry of Education criteria will elevate their field of study.

Another participant shared her thoughts on where she submitted he manuscripts for publication, stating, *and "I am choosing to submit my research manuscript for publication to an international journal because it holds more prestige at our institution."* When compared to the local journals, for example, the Ethiopia Journal of Education, which is owned by Addis Ababa University, the website does not display the time frame from submission to publication, a criterion for journal accreditation (32).

Furthermore, the majority of participants favor international journals despite the expensive article publication charges (APCs) and the need for foreign currency. Some participants also prefer international journals due to their waivers for developing countries and faster review periods of eight to ten weeks, in contrast to local journals, which often lack a clear review policy.

A few Participants explained the role of an academic from a personal viewpoint, highlighting that the choice to publish is influenced by factors such as indexing and other considerations related to article publishing. They also emphasized that instructors often face financial limitations. The decision-making process is affected by the accessibility of information and the networking capabilities of individuals.

Some participants shared their thoughts on why they choose peer-reviewed indexed journals.

> *"Our preference is to release our work in peer-reviewed journals, as peer reviewing is considered an ethical practice in academia at institutions of higher education. This is an accepted standard by the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia and is widely recognized as a part of the culture of the academic profession in higher education. However, there is a lack of clear identification and guidance from institutions on which journals are peer-reviewed, leading academics to search for this information themselves and sometimes falling victim to predatory journals" (p3,p7,* p9).

Moreover, participants emphasized that their selection of peer review journals is driven by the culture of intellectual identity within higher education institutions. They take pride in this culture and view it as a means of learning from each other while receiving feedback on their work. One participant expressed his perspective by stating: In higher education, peer review is a respected and integral part of the culture, regardless of whether it is in developed or developing countries.

One participant shared his perspective that being an academic is a demanding and committed career that goes beyond simply teaching course material. It involves identifying areas of knowledge that need further exploration and conducting research for publication in national and international journals. This role also offers the chance to serve as a positive influence on students and help them develop their own identities. Cultivating curiosity about the subject matter in the classroom is a crucial aspect of this profession.

The Research Policy Influence

The first notable impact of this theme on policy is that some participants could exploit it to minimize the proliferation of predatory journals by guiding academics on where to publish their research papers, such as through reputable indexing services like Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed, which are recognized for career advancement in higher education institutions. On similar interests, especially (P1, P5, and P8) and most of the respondents has similar idea that they are stated that on influences of policy on choice journals:

> *In particular, a few individuals in higher education highlighted additional guidelines that create obstacles for academics without a Ph.D., as their publications do not lead to career advancement and may demotivate them. Despite publishing one manuscript in an international journal and another in a national journal consecutively, I have not been promoted by the university. Many academics at my college view me as a role model, yet the university has not acknowledged my achievements. There seems to be a bias towards only promoting individuals with a Ph.D. In today's context, Ethiopian higher education institutions are not as reputable as they were in the past*

Some participants have shared their concerns about the research publication policy initiated by the Ministry of Education, which seems to be heavily influenced by academicians without PhDs. As a result, many have become disinterested in publishing. One participant expressed his view, stating that publishing in national or international journals is futile and does not contribute to career advancement, but merely serves as a formality.

The majority of the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the publishing process in higher education research policy, particularly the divide between national and international journals when assigning points to researcher publication. They found it discouraging, particularly when publishing as a group or individually, and felt that the value of local journals was not as high as international ones. A few participants from higher education shared their thoughts on this issue:

> *"Collaborative publishing is a widespread practice in higher education institutions worldwide, aimed at fostering teamwork and cooperation"*. This practice is also prevalent in our own higher education system. However, we are concerned about the unequal recognition we receive, which may have implications for the research publications of academic staff in higher education (p1, P2, P4, and P5).

Challenges Facing Academic Staffs

The majority of participants shared the difficulties they encountered in trying to get their research papers published that:

> *"They felt discouraged because most international journals required article publishing charges that the academic staff of Ethiopian Higher Education could not afford. The university grants did not cover these charges, leading to frustration for instructors who had successfully submitted their manuscripts but could not pay the publishing fees, even with a discount offered by the journal's editor in chief. As a result, their papers remained unpublished, leaving them dissatisfied. On the other hand, more than half of participants which means 66 % reported rejection in their first submission in local and international journals. Farther more, delayed responses and unclear policies from submission to publication reported as a challenge when submitted manuscripts to local journals "* (P1, P3, P7, P8, P9, P11, and P12).

The main reason participants gave for choosing to publish their manuscripts in international journals was the clear information available on submission and publication timelines, which they found lacking in local journals. They also pointed out that funding from higher institutions is more readily available for groups rather than individuals. Participants stressed the importance of adhering to policy directives and being recognized by their peers as factors influencing their decision to publish in international journals. Additionally, some participants mentioned that they initially looked for journals that offered waivers and discounts for countries facing economic challenges, as stated on the journal's website.

Publishing in international journals promotes an institution globally and establishes connections with other academic institutions, potentially attracting research funds. However, this process presents numerous challenges such as a lack of foreign currency for academic staff, journals not adhering to their own policies, and unclear author requirements. *"While experienced academics may improve over time, novice academics require support to excel in publishing"* (P3, P7, and P11).

> The majority of participants believed that their research publications in international journals were beneficial to the Ethiopian higher education system. This indicates that they view their work as improving the global standing of Ethiopian higher education institutions, potentially leading to career advancement, and positively influencing educational standards *(P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, and P12).*

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the present study aimed to examine journal choice for research publication among Ethiopian higher education academia: decision making experience of analyzing their lived experiences based on the criteria of journal selection, difficulties encounter during the publication process, and the impact of research policies on their choices. Results revealed that, in particular there is a growing interest in understanding the journal choice patterns and decision-making processes among higher education academia in Ethiopia, where the research ecosystem is evolving rapidly.

Chatio et al. (2024) also found that some individuals regretted their initial journal selections early in their careers and had since adopted a strategy of ensuring that each publication is meaningful. Many discussed a distinction between low-quality "local" journals and reputable "international" journals. The majority of participants believed that additional training, supervision, and mentorship would assist them in making informed publishing decisions. Similarly, in 2019, the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia implemented a new policy requiring all academic staff at public universities in Ethiopia to publish their research papers in Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed-indexed journals in order to qualify for promotion.

Furthermore, studies by Xu et al., (2021) found that most universities in china actively promoted international publications, with variations and similarities in their incentive schemes. In general, more benefits were granted for SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index) and A&HCI (Arts and Humanities Citation Index) journal publications than domestic publications.

Accordingly, selection of a journal involves multiple factors, including the subject area alignment, the reputation and impact factor of the journal, and the relevance of the research to the intended audience. Furthermore, aforementioned findings could be regarded as influence of policies on academic publication practice at higher education explained by (González, 2022) the choice of journal can also be influenced by institutional policies

and expectations regarding research output. For instance, universities may encourage publication in certain journals that are considered prestigious or have collaborations with the institution.

Publishing research in reputable journals can enhance recognition and career opportunities. It can lead to increased citations, collaborations, and further research prospects. Conversely, publishing in low-quality journals can limit visibility and impact. Therefore, the role of institutional policy can be a decisive factors as it influences the behavior of researcher. Literature exists on how research evaluation policies affect the behavior of scientists in both Western (Abramo et al., 2019a, 2019b) and non-Western societies (Hladchenko, 2022).

In 2019, 16 domestic journals received accreditation from the Ministry of Education. In 2024, the Ministry also accredited 17 local journals. Furthermore, new research guidelines were introduced requiring faculty members to have their research published in international journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed, in addition to meeting the promotion criteria.

Another area of research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of research policy reforms and the associated incentive systems. Evaluation schemes that solely consider output quantity have generally led to an increase in the average number of publications in lower-impact journals. For example, in Indonesia (Rochmyaningsih, 2019), Kazakhstan (Kuzhabekova, 2019), Turkey (Demir, 2018). Additionally, these schemes have resulted in an increase in the publication of document types that are more easily published and less frequently cited than articles, such as proceedings papers (Vanecek & Pecha, 2020). In Uzbekistan, research assessment policies have led to the country having the largest share of publications in journals discontinued from Scopus (59.67%) (Eshchanov et al., 2021).All this show us the high impact of research policy on choice of journals on manuscript publication.

In recent years, the proliferation of academic journals and the emergence of predatory publishers have added further complexity to this decision-making process. The factors that influence higher education academia's decision-making process when choosing a publication outlet for their research include financial factors, such as funding systems and availability of information (Rowley, et al., 2022).

Challenges faced by academia in journal choice are multifaceted and are influenced by various factors. One major challenge is international journals required article publishing charges that the academic staff of Ethiopian Higher Education could not afford. The study done by Tazegul et al.,(2022) identified high publishing costs and mandatory paid open access policy as negative factors that affect journal choice for manuscript submission. Moreover, again the researchers identified journal prestige as journal impact factor (JIF), along with acceptance and rejection rates, the age of the journal, and journal audience. Furthermore, study conducted by Solomon and Björk in (2012) identified Fit, quality, and speed of publication were the most important factors in the authors' choice of a journal.

Implication

The Ministry of Education and higher education institutions must prioritize and recognize accredited local journals in order to enhance the perception of higher education academia towards them. Additionally, they should provide technical and financial support to local journals according to their performance.

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