

Academic Journal Indexing: A review of the awareness among faculty members in India

*Ms. Soumya Simon¹ & Mr. Bijin Philip²

¹*Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru*

²*Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru*

¹*Email: soumya@kristujayanti.com*

²*Email: Bijin.p@kristujayanti.com*

Abstract

The exigency of the academic accreditation bodies has led to an increase in academic publications and also the emphasis on the indexing of academic journals. Indexing reflects the quality of a journal and increases its visibility and availability. The current study was conducted to inquire about the awareness among university and college faculty members in India about various indexing agencies, indexing parameters, and terms related to indexing. The sample consisted of 34 participants across various disciplines from Karnataka, Kerala, and Rajasthan in India. The data was collected using a 10-point scale. The study indicates that there is a need for improvement in the awareness about academic Journal Indexing, the process of indexing, and its usefulness.

Keywords: Indexing, Awareness, Indexing Parameters

INTRODUCTION

Indexing a journal is a reflection of higher scientific quality (Balhara, 2012). It helps in keeping an account of what one has written and makes it available online. It is also helpful in locating any particular knowledge or information related to a field. It also arranges information in order (Rose, 2019).

The Concept of Indexing

According to Knight (1979) the Latin word index meant, “he who, or that which, points the way”. It indicates the location of an object or idea. It is a systematic guide to various reading matters, documentaries and has a series of entries in an alphabetical order that helps users to find, where the content is located. It is thus helpful in finding a way out of numerous documents of information in a particular field. Initially, the indexes were based on personal names or the occurrence of words rather than on concepts. It was only in the 19th century that subject

indexing became more popular and was widely used. Indexing is essential in describing and identifying documents in terms of their content and helps store data in easily retrievable forms. It helps set a standard norm.

A theoretical view:

Weinberg (2017) explained indexing as art and is not dependent on formal training or intelligence of an individual and that the art has been excelled by individuals who are self-taught and these individuals have even received awards for the same. An indexer must have the capability to envision the concepts that users of a document are more likely to search for and provide the necessary links to related terms so that users can easily find all the important and relevant information related to their topic of interest. It distills the essence of the document.

Rationalist view

It suggests that indexing must have rules and principles that are universal and neutral in reflecting and underlying order. According to Fugmann (1979), the choice of the core of the article must be indexed with an adequate degree of predictability and fidelity. It also insists on the inter indexer consistency in indexing, however the assumption that consistent indexing is good indexing can be problematic as it can be either consistently good or consistently bad.

Cognitive views:

The human mind can be considered similar to a computer and it is assumed that the mental process of an indexer would be guided by some rules and that these rules need to be identified. Farrow (1995) explains the indexing process based on cognitive psychology. He emphasizes that indexing is based on either relying on scanning for cues while reading or is based on the background knowledge of the subject. The view fails to explain in detail the process of indexing and merely focuses on the mental process of the indexer based on the information processing model in cognitive psychology.

Empiricist views:

According to this view, knowledge is based on experience and is the primary means of obtaining knowledge. Therefore, knowledge must be obtained by direct observation by individuals or by inducting from various other observations. It emphasizes that indexing is based on the idea that informational objects share a large number of properties, and can be classified based on those properties, but the criteria for classification must be neutral. The properties must not be selected from theoretical points as it will lead to subjective criteria.

The best way to be considered is the numerical and statistical procedures and retrieval techniques that are based on statistical measurements. The drawback of the empirical view is that it assumes

that the investigations can be made without subjective interpretations and theoretical assumptions.

Indexing Parameters

Indexing parameters determine the category of a research article or journal. The various factors that determine the quality of an article are known as the indexing parameters, some of these indexing parameters are H index, cite score, impact factor, M index, G index etc. (Rose, 2019). The Impact factor is the rate at which an article in a particular journal is cited in a year. It is calculated by dividing the number of times the articles are cited by the number of articles that can be cited. It is extremely helpful in predicting the quality and importance of a journal (Rose, 2019). The H Index was developed by Jorge E. Hirsch in 2005. It is an author level indexing that helps in measuring the citation impact and the consistency of publishing by an author. It is calculated by identifying the h number of articles cited h number of times each. It helps in giving a count of the number of articles published and the no. of articles cited. It helps locate journals and articles easily and can be calculated by anyone easily. The G index was developed by Leo Egghe in 2006. It is an improvement of the H index. The G score will be higher if the number of citations in the top class that skew the citation distribution is higher. The M index is another variant of the H index and assumes unbroken research activity since the first publication.

Indexing Agencies

The Accessibility of a Journal increases its value. Currently, the process of indexing is done by several indexing Agencies like ISI, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Ulrich Periodicals Directory, BIOSIS, BASE, ABDC, Index Copernicus, Crossref, etc. Each of these agencies is an online database for journals, books, research papers, etc. and have their criteria and evaluation process and regulations for deciding the quality and the content sent to them for indexing. Some of the criteria for the selection and evaluation of these journals are Peer review, Editor abstracts, regular publication, proper references and bibliography, and publication ethics. The journals must ensure that the content and the title of the journal are relevant, novel, authentic, and of interest to the audience (Rose, 2019). Every indexing agency has its process of reviewing and publishing a research article. It includes an editorial review, peer review, and a desk review, the peer reviews can be classified into internal and external and single, double and triple-blind reviews. The review helps in assessing the novelty, relevance, impact, and quality of a research article. These articles are published in open and closed-access journals. In open access journals, the copyrights are given to the author, although they may lack in quality of peer review and increase the misunderstanding of the topics. On the other hand, closed journals demand individual or institutional subscriptions for access to the full text. The advantage of closed access journals is that they are peer-reviewed and will not compromise the quality of the articles.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rodrigues, Schwarz, Rosângela., Taga, Vitor., & Faustino, Mariana. (2016) in their article focused on the research papers that have been published in open access in the Scopus database, published from 2001 to 2015. This article reveals that continuous and growing research interest among the open-access community led to the development and evolution of open access relation to certain groups, regions, and institutions. Dhammi IK, Rehan-Ul-Haq. (2020) in their article talk about indexing and emphasised the uses, importance, and parameters of indexing in academic journals Margolis, J. (1967) this paper focused on citation indexing and evaluation of scientific papers. As per this article, Critical reviews have become somewhat of a rarity, and editorial judgment is usually relegated to referees, who are contemporaries and perhaps, competitors of the authors—a situation which has its undesirable implications. Chatterjee, Sharmili. (2019) has carefully divided the paper into different sections that deal with various aspects related to indexing. It provides the history of indexing, indexing agencies, indexing parameters, and review methods. This article also discusses open access journals and aims to help researchers in understanding the concept of indexing.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The knowledge created using research is of no use to society until it is disseminated through publication. In the recent past publication of research papers has become an essential part of the professional growth of the academicians in the Indian Higher Education System. Although most academic professionals strive to publish as many research articles as possible, very few are aware of the need and benefits of publishing articles in quality journals. Various indexing agencies ensure the quality of these journals by using various indexing parameters. Proper awareness of these indexing agencies and the indexing parameters will help identify quality journals and publishing in the same would give the articles better scope and exposure. The current research focuses on inquiring about the awareness and understanding of various terms and concepts related to indexing agencies and indexing parameters.

RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

To inquire about the level of awareness and knowledge of indexing agencies and parameters among University and College faculty members in India.

METHODOLOGY

The current study aims to inquire about the awareness and knowledge of Indexing agencies and parameters among University and College professors in India using an online questionnaire.

- **Research design**

The study undertaken is exploratory and quantitative and involves an analysis of the total points obtained by the participants.

- **Population and Sample**

The population was the University and College Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant professors from various institutes across India. The sample was collected by a convenient sampling method. The sample consisted of 34 participants including 7 males and 27 females from different parts of India, especially from Karnataka, Kerala, and Rajasthan. The participants were from 5 different subject domains.

- **Procedure**

The data was collected using Google Forms by creating a questionnaire consisting of 18 questions. The first part of the questionnaire consists of 8 questions to inquire about the socio-demographic details of the participants and the second part of the questionnaire consists of 10 questions that were in the form of a quiz, consisting of questions about indexing agencies, indexing parameters and various concepts related to them. All of the 10 questions in part 2 were multiple choice questions with options ranging from 2-4. Each correct response to an answer is assigned 1 point. All questions in part 1 and part 2 were mandatory. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their data and score on the test.

The awareness of indexing was assessed using the following criteria:

Range	Remark
0–3	Weak
4–5	Average
6–7	Strong
8–9	Very Strong
10	Excellent

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and graphs in Google Forms.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

An inquiry on the awareness of indexing among university and college professors was conducted with a sample of 34 academicians consisting of 7 males and 27 females from different parts of

India. The majority (47.1%) of the participants were in the age range of 26- 35 and 26.5% were in the age range of 36-45 while others were in the age range of 20-25 (17.6%) and 46-55 (8.8%).

Table 1. Socio-demographic details of the sample

Age Range	20–25	6 (17.6%)
	26-35	16 (47.1%)
	36-45	9 (26.5%)
	46-55	3 (8.8%)
Gender	Male	7 (20.6%)
	Female	27 (79.4%)
Educational Qualification	Post-Graduation	20 (58.8%)
	M.Phil.	4 (11.8%)
	PhD	10 (29.4%)
Academic Position	Assistant Professor	30 (88.2%)
	Associate Professor	3 (8.8%)
	Professor	1 (2.9%)
Subject Domain	Life Sciences	2 (5.9%)
	Commerce	6 (17.6%)
	Social Sciences	6 (17.6%)
	Other	11 (32.4%)
Frequency of Paper Publication	Not Published at all	3 (8.8%)
	Once in two years	3 (8.8%)
	Annually	9 (26.5%)
	Bi monthly	1 (2.9%)

Table 2. Scores obtained by the participants

Score	Number of Respondents
1	1
2	3
3	2
4	1
5	7
6	7
7	1
8	3

The results in table 2 show that the sample scored an average of 4.74 points out of 10 with a median of 5 out of 10 and the scores ranged from 1- 8 points, this indicates that the sample had an average level of understanding and knowledge of indexing agencies and indexing parameters.

Table 3. Frequency of Correct responses

Question	N (Percentage)
1. MEDLINE and PUBMED Central, indexes journals that publish in the following subject area-	20 (58.8%)
2. Which of the following models does Google Scholar use to collect and process information?	7 (20.6%)
3. M index is a -	15 (44.1%)
4. Which of the following is not an indexing agency?	10 (29.4%)

5. The Universal Bibliographic Repository was developed by-	19 (55.9%)
6. Are all Elsevier Journals indexed in Elsevier Scopus?	17 (50 %)
7. The inflated value of the G index helps to give credit to lowly-cited or non-cited papers while giving credit to highly-cited papers.	25 (73.5%)
8. The H-Index differentiates between books and articles published by authors	13 (38.2%)
9. The s-index accounts for the entropic	15 (44.1%)
10. The h-index can be manipulated by Self-citation	20 (58.8 %)

The results indicate the university and college professors in India have an average level of awareness and knowledge about the indexing agencies and indexing parameters as 70.5% (24) of the participants scored in the range of 0-5 and 32.3% individuals scored in the range of 6-8 indicating a strong knowledge about indexing. The findings of this study are in line with the National Education Policy 2020 that indicates that the majority of faculty members engage in research and publication in compliance with the increasing demand for publication to meet the requirements set for professional growth and end up compromising on the quality of journals.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate a need for spreading awareness about the indexing agencies and parameters and faculty development programs that can be organized to help people have a better and deeper understanding of identifying quality journals and writing quality articles. The sample size of the study was a limitation even though the participants were from different parts of India. The availability of time in answering the questions is also a drawback as participants could have to take help in answering the questions. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were also not done. However the participation of the younger generation of academicians and assistant professors brings about a clearer picture of the current level of understanding and knowledge about indexing, this can help address the concern at a much early stage of their academic career. Future research can focus on a larger sample size and a better method could be used to ensure lesser time is taken to respond to the answers and ensure the authenticity of the response.

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