



Comparative Analysis of Research Scholars' Awareness about Research Publication and Related Aspects

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Abstract

Research publication is an indispensable part of a research scholars' academic life. It is very important to disseminate the knowledge generated through research to the related scientific community otherwise all the efforts involved are in vain. But often the research scholars' lack the information and awareness regarding the various aspects associated with research publication. They have very limited knowledge of the process and terminology related to research publication, particularly in Indian context. This paper presents a comparative analysis of the research scholars' awareness about research publication and related aspects of two universities. A telephonic interview was used to collect data from the participants because of the lockdown due to corona virus pandemic. Results reveal that research scholars from one university have significantly higher awareness about research publication process and related terminology because they have a separate paper in their Ph.D course work which deals solely with the aspects related to research publication. Implications have been suggested for Ph.D programme curriculum and for research scholars as well.

Keywords: Research Publication, Research scholars, Awareness, Indexing, Peer review

Introduction

Research publication is an important aspect of the academic career of research scholars and university teachers. Universities are considered as the centers for creating and disseminating knowledge. It is expected out of university teachers to be continuously involved in the process of knowledge creation by the means of conducting researches. A university usually has its own research center for the doctoral students popularly known as Research scholars. Doctorate degree is considered as highest level of academic mastery in one's chosen field. It involves conducting original researches in one's chosen area whereby data is collected and analyzed and conclusions are drawn in support of or to condemn a theory. Sometimes, these researches are also funded by various agencies and are done by experts. The outcome of these researches are compiled in the form of research papers or research article. Disseminating this new knowledge to larger research community is also a very important. Conducting research is only a half way to the destination. If the findings of the research studies are not published, other members of the same community cannot appreciate the value of the evidence or proof generated and they cannot give their inputs to build upon it and overall field cannot grow. There is a very famous proverb prevalent amongst the research

community which goes like this: “Either you publish or you perish”. This proverb alone is capable of highlighting the importance of publication in the field of research. Moreover, Publications helps an author to earn recognition as an expert in his/her chosen field at national and international levels. In many universities and colleges, the selection and the promotion of teaching faculty to higher designations like associate professors and professors is also based on specified number of research publications in reputed journals.

Thus, it is important for people engaged in generating knowledge through research to also have knowledge about the research publication and various aspects associated with it because it is important for the research study to reach right people who work in the same field and can be benefited by the knowledge generated through that research. Otherwise the very purpose of conducting research is defeated.

Need of the study

Though publication is extremely important but publishing in any journal will not serve the purpose in its true sense. If an article is published without being noticed by the related research community, it will not be worth the time and effort involved. It has to reach a large number of audience or readers to have an impact. Here comes the importance of indexing. If a journal is indexed with popular and widely recognized indexing agencies like Scopus, Web of science, Google scholar, Directory of Open access Journals etc, it has better chances of being read, cited and acknowledged by the people of scientific community. Thus, indexing has become an important determinant of the Journal quality. It also ensures the publishing standards which a journal must comply by. Thus, it is extremely important for a research scholar to publish their research articles in journals included in reputed indexing agencies and to have awareness about various aspects related to research publications. Also, UGC has made it compulsory for a research scholar to have at least two research publications for the award of Ph.D. degree in India. It has now become an eligibility criteria for the award of doctoral degree. This demands a research scholar to be aware of research publications and associated aspects. Therefore, this article aims to study the awareness of research scholars about the various aspects related to quality research publications. Accordingly, the following research question is explored in the study.

Research Questions

Do the Research Scholars have awareness regarding the different aspects associated with research publication? Is there is any difference in the awareness status of the research scholars of Christ University and Jamia Millia Islamia regarding the different aspects associated with research publication?

Research Methodology

This is a pilot study is carried out during the coronavirus lockdown period. An interview schedule was preferred over a questionnaire because with questionnaire there was a possibility for the participants to refer to various sources (eg search engines like google) to find the answers of the knowledge based questions and give responses, which might have not reflected their awareness status. Therefore an interview schedule was prepared and administered telephonically to the participants because face to face interaction during coronavirus lockdown period was not possible.

Research Design

The design of the study is exploratory in nature whereby the awareness status of research scholars is explored and compared. The interview schedule consisted of two parts. The first part collected the

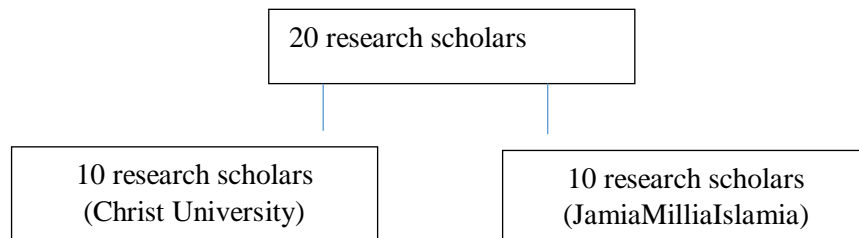
demographic information of the participants like their name, age, educational qualification, discipline, and number of publications by far etc and the second part has some questions reflecting their awareness on the various aspects associated with research publication like impact factor, h index, types of review methods, indexing agencies, citescore etc.

Population

The population for the present study is all the research scholars currently enrolled in Christ university and Jamia Millia Islamia for Ph.d programme.

Sample

Overall, 20 research scholars were selected on convenient basis for the purpose of the study. Since the study has been conducted during coronavirus lockdown period, hence visiting universities for the random selection of the participants was not possible. For comparison purpose 10 research scholars were from Christ University and 10 research scholars were selected from Jamia Millia Islamia. Out of 10 research scholars, 5 were from social science background and 5 were from science background from both the universities.



The rationale behind choosing the scholars from Christ university and Jamia Millia Islamia is that for comparative analysis, these two universities justify the purpose because Christ university’s course work for Ph.D includes a paper on research publications while Jamia Millia Islamia’s course work for Ph.D does not include any paper on research publications. Also, researcher has studied in both the universities and therefore can have an easy access participants required for the study.

Analysis of the data

The data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. For the analysis of the data obtained through telephonic interview, the questions were divided on the basis of various pre decided themes with fixed number of points awarded against each theme. The table below shows the themes and the number of points awarded to a respondent for the correct answer:

S.No	Theme	Number of points	Number of questions
1.	Criteria of selecting journal for publication	4 points	1 question
2.	Importance of indexing and examples	3 points	2 questions
3.	Peer - Review and its types	5 points	2 questions

4.	Indexing Parameters	6 points	4 questions
5.	Open access publication	2 points	1 question

Results of the study and Discussion

University	Total points per respondent	Mean score
Christ university	20	15.2
JamiaMilliaIslamia	20	8.1

Each respondent was awarded points out of 20. The mean score combining all the themes for Christ university research scholars was 15.2 and for Jamia Millia Islamia was 8.1. This clearly indicates that the awareness status of research scholars of Christ University about the research publication and related aspects is much higher than the awareness status of research scholars of Jamia Millia Islamia. The very obvious reason for the above results can be attributed to the fact that, in Christ University there is a separate paper on research publication which is taught as a part of Ph.D course work programme which comprehensively covers all the important details related to various aspects of research publications in depth. Hence the research scholars here are more informed about the various aspects of research publications.

Comparative analysis of each of the theme

The following paragraphs discusses the detailed comparative responses of the respondents from both the universities as per each of the theme:

1. Criteria for selecting a journal for publication: 4 points

University	Total points	Mean score
Christ university	4	3.2
JamiaMilliaIslamia	4	1.8

This particular theme included 1 question related to the number of criteria considered by the research scholars when it comes to choosing a journal for the publication of their research article. Respondents mentioned a number of criteria for selecting a journal for publication. There was difference between the types of criteria mentioned by the respondents from each university. Respondents from Christ university stated criteria like whether the journal is indexed with some reputed indexing agency like Scopus, Web of science etc, double checking the claims of the journal and its impact factor. While the respondents from JamiaMilliaIslamia stated factors like reliability and validity of journal, whether the journal belongs to their discipline, the cost of the paper submission etc. It is interesting to note that there was no mention of terms like indexing agencies and impact factor in the responses of the research scholars of JamiaMilliaIslamia.

2. Importance of Indexing and examples: 3 points

University	Total Points	Mean Score
Christ university	3	2.5
JamiaMilliaIslamia	3	1.1

There were 2 questions from this theme. Scholars from both the universities were asked about importance of indexing and to name some of the indexing agencies. Most of the respondents(40%) from JamiaMilliaIslamia were unaware about the concept and importance of indexing. They were also unable to cite the examples of indexing agencies. On the other hand the respondents (60%) from Christ university were found to be quite informed about the concept and importance of indexing and promptly cited various examples of indexing agencies. This can be attributed as one of the strong reasons of not mentioning indexing agencies as an important criteria for selection of journal for publication by the research scholars of JamiaMilliaIslamia.

3. Peer Review and its types: 5 points

University	Total points	Mean Score
Christ University	5	3.5
JamiaMilliaIslamia	5	1.5

There were 2 questions under this theme, about the concept of peer review and its various types. Research scholars from both the universities were aware of the peer review followed by the journals to evaluate the research article on various bases after its submission. However, almost all the respondents (90%) from JamiaMilliaIslamia were unaware of the types of review methods followed by journals before considering the paper for publication. On contrary their counterparts in Christ University were quite well aware of the review methods followed by journals like open review, single blind, double blind and triple blind.

4. Indexing parameters: 6 points

University	Total Points	Mean Score
Christ university	6	4.4
JamiaMilliaIslamia	6	2.0

This particular theme included 4 questions related to various indexing parameters like ISSN, ISBN, Cite Score, Impact factor and h index. A huge gap between the awareness of various indexing parameters was observed between the research scholars of both the universities. Most of the scholars from Christ University (70%) were well informed about the difference between ISSN and ISBN, relevance of Cite Score, Impact factor and h index while majority of scholars from JamiaMilliaIslamia were aware of ISSN and ISBN but they had no clue regarding other indexing parameters. These indexing parameters serve as the basis for the selection of journal for the paper

publication therefore, anyone who is engaged in the research and its publication should have knowledge of these important parameters.

5. Open access publication: 2 points

University	Total Points	Mean Score
Christ university	2	1.6
JamiaMilliaIslamia	2	1.6

This theme included only 1 question related to the respondents' understanding of the concept of open access publication. The analysis of the data collected under this particular theme shows research scholars (60%) from both the universities are almost equal in the knowledge related the concept of open access publications and its benefits for the authors and readers as well. They cited many advantages of the open access publications as they are already using these open access sources to read articles related to their area of research. Moreover, these articles are freely available and scholars don't have to pay for these articles which makes it even more beneficial and popular amongst them. Though as an author one is required to pay more to get the article published in an open access platform but it comes with additional advantage as the chances of getting more number of citations are increased.

Conclusion

On the basis of the results of the study conducted to assess the awareness of the research scholars on the various aspects related to the research publication it can be conveniently concluded that researchers have limited knowledge on the aspects related to the research publication particularly in scenario whereby there is lack of orientation on these aspects. The process of research is incomplete without quality publication and for quality publication it is important to be aware of certain parameters which a research scholar should scrutinize before considering a journal for publication of his/her research work.

Limitations of the study

The present study is limited to the sample size of 20 research scholars only. A study can be repeated with a larger sample size. Since the study was conducted during the lockdown period due to coronavirus pandemic, the researcher had no other option but to rely upon telephonic interview instead of face to face interview.

Implications of the study

The results of the study has implications for the Ph.D programmes run by the research departments of the universities in India. These programmes prepare the researchers to be eligible for the posts of assistant professors in the teaching departments of the universities and they can also opt to be the part of numerous full time/part time research projects conducted by various government funded research centres. Thus, a research scholar should also be oriented about the research publication and its related aspects apart from the regular knowledge about the research methodologies which is also an integral part of the Ph.D programme. Moreover, according to the latest amendment related to the norms of awarding Ph.D degree in India, a research scholar should have minimum of 2

publications in UGC indexed journals. This calls for a revision in the curriculum of the Ph.D programme to include some orientation related to the various aspects of research publication. The study has implications for research scholars also to be aware of the practices which lead to quality research publication. They should keep themselves updated and informed about the various quality journals publishing in their area of research on the basis of their impact factor or Cite Score. They should not fall prey to the fraudulent journals and verify all the facts claimed by the journal.

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