

Faculty experiences in publishing in Scopus-indexed journals: Challenges and strategies among higher education institutions in the Philippines

Roland A. Niez^{1*}

¹Biliran Province State University, Naval, Biliran Province, Philippines; dnalorzie3@gmail.com (R.A.N).

Abstract: Research is a cornerstone of education, with publication output often used as a key metric for research performance. This study investigates the experiences of Philippine Higher Education Institution (HEI) faculty as they work to publish in Scopus-indexed journals. By exploring faculty members' challenges, strategies, and perspectives, this research aims to inform how HEIs can enhance support for faculty in contributing to global scholarship and advancing academic careers. Using Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, 12 faculty members from HEIs in Eastern Visayas, Philippines, were purposively selected as participants, with theoretical saturation guiding the sample size. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's method. The study reveals four primary themes regarding the publication journey: motivation for publishing, preparation and publication process, challenges faced, and support systems. Faculty perceptions of publishing centered around five themes: career advancement and promotion, increased visibility and credibility, personal and professional satisfaction, institutional expectations, and incentives. Key challenges included financial barriers, the rigorous peer review and revision process, submission and formatting requirements, and emotional strain. To address these, participants highlighted strategies involving financial and personal investment, mentorship and collegial support, institutional resources, continuous learning, strategic journal selection, and maintaining resilience. Findings indicate that publishing in Scopus-indexed journals requires a blend of motivation, planning, and resilience, as faculty strive to contribute to knowledge and further their careers. Yet, they face substantial barriers, especially high publication fees and stringent formatting standards. Institutional support—especially through funding, mentorship, and workshops—is vital to overcoming these obstacles. For greater faculty success, institutions should cultivate a supportive research culture that recognizes and addresses the logistical and emotional demands of academic publishing.

Keywords: Faculty publishing challenges, Higher education institutions (HEIs) Philippines, Institutional support in academic publishing, Research productivity and career advancement, Scopus-indexed journals.

1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are tasked with three primary responsibilities: teaching, research, and extension. Faculty members are at the forefront of fulfilling these duties, particularly in research, where they contribute to advancing knowledge that benefits both the institution and the nation. Research serves as a key pillar of education, and one common metric for assessing research performance is publication output. In recent years, there has been increasing emphasis on evaluating the scientific productivity of academic staff and students through bibliometric measures, such as the number of published papers and citation counts Lozano et al. [17]; Guan et al. [12]; Kamdem et al. [1].

Faculty aspirations to publish in Scopus-indexed journals reflect the pressure from their institutions, which often regard such publications as a benchmark for faculty promotion and career advancement. In some cases, financial incentives are provided for publications in Scopus-listed journals, which are widely considered an indicator of research productivity and impact Saloma [24]; Carpenter et

al. [2]. Publishing in Scopus-indexed journals thus not only enhances faculty standing but also contributes to the institution's prestige.

Shahjahan et al. [27] observed that universities' emphasis on publishing in Scopus-indexed journals aligns with the Scopus-centric focus of prominent university ranking systems. For example, THE World University Rankings 2020: Methodology explicitly identifies Scopus as the primary database for measuring the research productivity of ranked institutions. Likewise, QS relies on Scopus data in its "Citations per Faculty" metric, as outlined in their QS World University Rankings – Methodology.

Reviewing relevant policies, it is evident that Scopus-centrism has become a priority for agencies such as CHED, NRCF, DOST, and leading Philippine universities. Consequently, publishing in Scopus-indexed journals, along with other reputable indexes like Clarivate Analytics, is increasingly prioritized in faculty evaluation, promotion, and incentive structures across Philippine HEIs San Juan [25].

In today's competitive academic environment, publishing in Scopus-indexed journals enhances visibility, credibility, and scholarly impact. Choosing the right publication venue can unlock significant opportunities, raising a researcher's profile and influence on a global scale. In this context, Scopus-indexed journals represent a powerful platform for elevating academic pursuits.

The emphasis on research publication in Scopus-indexed journals reflects a broader push within HEIs worldwide to gain international recognition and improve institutional rankings. In the Philippines, there is growing pressure on faculty to contribute to global scholarship. Yet, the path to publication in these journals presents considerable challenges, including institutional limitations, resource constraints, and varying familiarity with international publishing standards.

As Quitoras [21] noted, not all faculty members actively engage in research; some may prefer the familiarity of teaching, while others might feel that a research-oriented culture is still developing in many universities. Mbaleka [18] identified common challenges hindering faculty research output, including time constraints, lack of publication training, fear of rejection, and limited institutional support. Despite these barriers, CHED has actively promoted research through policies like Memorandum Order No. 46, Series of 2012, which mandates HEIs to contribute to nation-building through specialized education, knowledge generation, and technological innovation Quitoras [21].

For multilingual scholars, publishing in top-tier journals comes with additional hurdles. Uzuner (2008) highlighted that, beyond language issues, multilingual authors may struggle with conforming to research conventions, often presenting arguments without sufficient evidence—a stylistic rather than linguistic challenge.

Amid this landscape, Philippine faculty continue striving to enhance their research output and gain international visibility. Understanding their experiences is essential for crafting supportive strategies and fostering a culture of research excellence. Despite increasing literature on academic publishing, limited studies focus on the experiences of Filipino faculty in overcoming barriers to publishing in Scopus-indexed journals, signaling a gap that this study aims to address.

This research investigates the experiences of Philippine HEI faculty as they navigate the complexities of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals. By examining their challenges, strategies, and insights, this study seeks to inform how HEIs can better support faculty in contributing to global scholarship and advancing their academic careers.

2. Research Questions

This study aimed to address the gap by exploring the following research questions:

- 1) What are the experiences of faculty members from higher education institutions in the Philippines in publishing in Scopus-indexed journals?
- 2) How do faculty members in the Philippines perceive the impact of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals on their academic careers?
- 3) What are the primary challenges faced by faculty members from higher education institutions in the Philippines when publishing in Scopus-indexed journals?
- 4) What strategies do faculty members employ to overcome the challenges associated with publishing in Scopus-indexed journals?

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

The study utilized Husserl's descriptive phenomenology to examine the lived experiences of faculty members from various State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region 08, Philippines, as they navigated the process of publishing research outputs in Scopus-indexed journals. Descriptive phenomenology, a widely used methodology in qualitative research within the social and health sciences, is designed to describe how individuals experience specific phenomena Holloway [14]. This approach provides a powerful means of understanding subjective experiences, gaining insights into actions and motivations, and challenging conventional wisdom by revealing underlying assumptions. Such insights can contribute to the development of new theories, inform policy changes, or inspire modified responses Rodriguez & Smith [23].

Husserl's descriptive phenomenology focuses on a functional and systematic investigation of lived experiences, aiming to minimize researcher influence through a process called phenomenological reduction. This reduction allows the researcher to set aside preconceived notions and approach the study purely through the participants' accounts, thereby uncovering the essence or core meaning of their experiences Finlay [8]. By bracketing out biases about the journey of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals, the researcher could closely follow the faculty members' descriptions as they recounted their experiences.

This methodology was chosen as the most suitable approach to address the study's objective: to capture and describe the faculty members' perceptions, strategies, and challenges in publishing in Scopus-indexed journals. The use of Husserl's phenomenology was particularly relevant given the limited documentation on faculty experiences from learning institutions within and beyond the Philippines, highlighting the importance of this exploration in understanding their unique journeys.

3.2. Research Settings

The study was conducted across various State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Eastern Visayas, a region located in the east-central part of the Philippine archipelago. Eastern Visayas is composed of three major islands—Samar, Leyte, and Biliran—and includes six provinces: Biliran, Leyte, Northern Samar, Samar, Eastern Samar, and Southern Leyte. The region also has one independent city, Ormoc, and one highly urbanized city, Tacloban, which serves as the regional center and largest city.

Geographically, Eastern Visayas is bordered to the east and north by the Philippine Sea, with the San Bernardino Strait separating Samar from southeastern Luzon. To the west lie the Camotes and Visayan seas, while to the south, the region is bordered by the Bohol Sea, with the Surigao Strait separating Leyte from northeastern Mindanao. The region spans a total land area of approximately 2,156,285 hectares (5,328,300 acres), representing 7.2% of the country's total land area. Of this, 52% is classified as forestland, while 48% is designated as alienable and disposable land. Figure 1 provides a location map of Eastern Visayas, illustrating its geographical context within the Philippines.

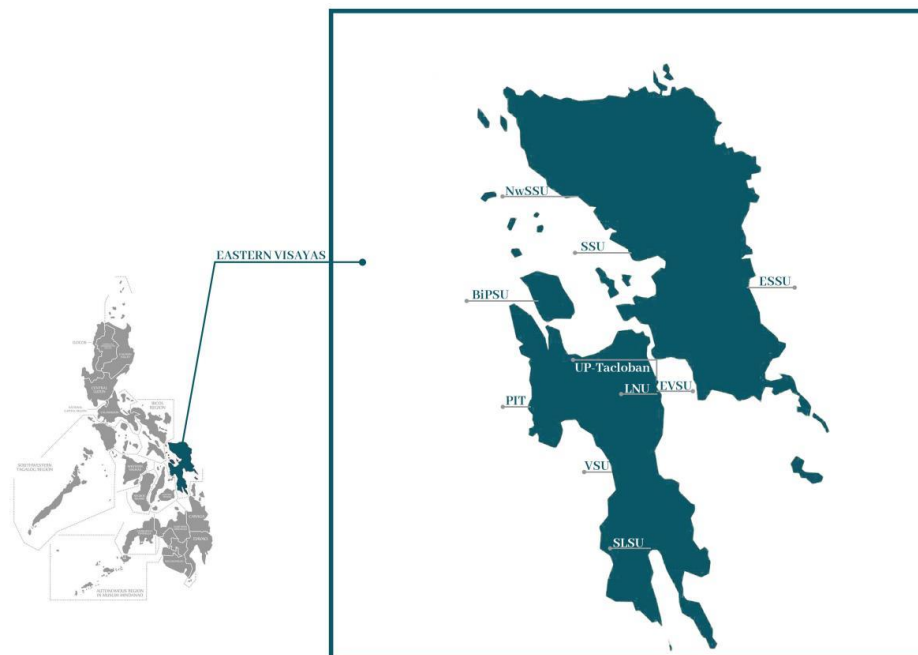


Figure 1.
Location map of Eastern Visayas, Philippines.

3.3. Participants

Twelve (12) faculty members from various SUCs in Region 08, Philippines, participated in this study. They were selected using purposive sampling, and the final number was established by theoretical saturation. When no new topic emerges from further data, theoretical saturation has occurred Given [9]. Charmaz [3] also clarified that theoretical saturation occurs when a researcher notices duplication in the data being gathered and all theoretical concepts have been fully taken into consideration. When the data in this study reached theoretical saturation, the recruitment and interviewing of participants was completed. The following requirements were met by the participants: (a) they must be current full-time or part-time faculty members from higher education institutions in the Philippines; (b) they must have at least attempted to publish in Scopus-indexed journals within the last five years, regardless of whether they succeeded; and (c) they should be from various academic ranks (e.g., assistant professor, associate professor, professor) to capture a range of experiences and perceptions regarding the importance and challenges of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals.

3.4. Data Gathering

The research participants were given a set of open-ended questions from an interview guide. The guide, which was initially written in English, contained questions intended to investigate the following subjects: (1) the main challenges faced by faculty members from higher education institutions in the Philippines when attempting to publish in Scopus-indexed journals, (2) faculty perceptions of the importance of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals for their academic careers, and (3) strategies employed by faculty to overcome challenges in publishing in these journals. These questions aimed to elicit participants' lived experiences in their journey toward publishing in Scopus-indexed journals.

Each participant was interviewed in-depth to obtain comprehensive information. In order to record observations made throughout the data gathering process, the researcher additionally gathered field notes. An audio recorder was used for every interview to guarantee that the responses of the participants were accurately documented.

2.5. Analysis

Complete transcriptions of the recorded interviews were made. The English translation was limited to the important statements that were quoted in the study. Colaizzi's [5] steps for the descriptive phenomenological method of analysis were followed in the analysis of the transcripts. The procedures are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1.
Steps in Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method.

| Step | Description |
|--|---|
| 1. Familiarization | The researcher familiarizes him or herself with the data, by reading through all the participant accounts several times |
| 2. Identifying significant statements | The researcher identifies all statements in the accounts that are of direct relevance to the phenomenon under investigation |
| 3. Formulating meanings | The researcher identifies meanings relevant to the phenomenon that arise from a careful consideration of the significant statements. The researcher must reflexively "bracket" his or her pre-suppositions to stick closely to the phenomenon as experienced (though Colaizzi recognizes that complete bracketing is never possible). |
| 4. Clustering themes | The researcher clusters the identified meanings into themes that are common across all accounts. Again bracketing of pre-suppositions is crucial, especially to avoid any potential influence of existing theory. |
| 5. Developing an exhaustive description | The researcher writes a full and inclusive description of the phenomenon, incorporating all the themes produced at step 4. |
| 6. Producing the fundamental structure | The researcher condenses the exhaustive description down to a short, dense statement that captures just those aspects deemed to be essential to the structure of the phenomenon. |
| 7. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure | The researcher returns the fundamental structure statement to all participants (or sometimes a subsample in larger studies) to ask whether it captures their experience. He or she may go back and modify earlier steps in the analysis in the light of this feedback. |

Source: Colaizzi (1978).

3.6. Ethical Consideration

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the participants, and voluntary informed consent was also sought from each individual selected. Before signing the consent form, the 13 participants were given the opportunity to read the document thoroughly and were provided ample time to ask questions or express any concerns. Participants were informed that the in-depth interview sessions would be recorded, and they were assured of their right to decline, cancel, or withdraw from the interview at any time without consequence. This study's methodology received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Biliran Province State University (BiPSU), ensuring adherence to ethical standards.

4. Results

4.1. Experiences in Publishing

The study explored the lived experiences of faculty members from higher education institutions in the Philippines regarding their journey to publishing in Scopus-indexed journals. The results reveal motivations, challenges, strategies, and perceptions surrounding the publication process. The key themes derived from the data are as follows:

4.1.1. Theme 1: Motivation for Publishing

Faculty members expressed a strong drive to publish, motivated by both personal and professional goals. Many viewed publishing as essential for knowledge dissemination and career progression. They further reflect a shared view that research publication has intrinsic value not only for the academic community but also for personal fulfillment and growth. The following statements from the participants echo the theme:

"Publishing research in a journal...contributes to the global body of knowledge and helps others build upon research." (Participant 2)

"First...an indicator in promotion...second...to allow others to read and know my results...for dissemination purposes." (Participant 4)

"By publishing our research, we can disseminate it to the whole academic community worldwide and add to the knowledge in the disciplines in which we specialize." (Participant 8)

"It can help because after conducting the research if you will just archive the research it will not serve any good." (Participant 12)

4.1.2. Theme 2: Preparation and Publication Process

Faculty members recognized the need for a strategic approach when selecting journals. They prioritized reputable journals with Scopus indexing, high impact factors, and alignment with their research scope. This theme illustrates that the process of publishing is not only about content creation but also involves careful consideration of journal attributes to maximize visibility and impact. The participants' narratives below support such theme:

"A strategic approach is taken in choosing the right journal that aligns with the research topic, especially one that is prestigious." (Participant 2)

"I pick a journal with a solid reputation... I take into account the journal's impact factor, readership, and indexing in Scopus." (Participant 8)

"I will check the theme of the journal... if my paper is within the scope, then I will consider the journal." (Participant 10)

"I consider those journals that are easier and cheaper for publication." (Participant 11)

4.1.3. Theme 3: Challenges in Publishing

Participants encountered numerous challenges throughout the publication process, categorized into subthemes of formatting requirements, publication fees, and rejection.

4.2. Formatting Requirement

Adhering to each journal's formatting guidelines was a common hurdle. This issue was pervasive across participants, suggesting that faculty spend considerable time and effort adapting manuscripts to fit each journal's standards. The following excerpts capture the said sub-theme:

"One common challenge is ensuring the research paper meets the specific guidelines and formatting requirements of the target journal." (Participant 2)

"In terms of formatting, it's quite challenging." (Participant 3)

"Different journals have different guidelines...so I had to change the way I cited my references and the list of references." (Participant 5)

"One of the challenges that I have encountered is really the formatting... you need to revise it again and again." (Participant 10)

4.3 Publication Fee

The high cost of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals emerged as a major barrier. Participant 4 highlighted the steep fees, which can reach up to 200,000 PHP for prestigious international journals, making it financially challenging for many faculty members. This finding underscores the need for financial support to facilitate broader faculty participation in publishing. Some significant statements reflected below support the theme:

“The publication fee is really high...like it ranges from 80k to 200k pesos, especially for journals from the UK or US.” (Participant 4)

“Doing the manuscript is hard enough but the real challenge is getting accepted, doing the revisions, and finally the publication fee.” (Participant 8)

“Only the financial because you have to pay in the journal for your paper to be published.” (Participant 11)

4.4. Rejection

Rejection and the extensive revision process were significant challenges for many participants. This theme reveals that the process of achieving publication can be both demoralizing and educational, highlighting the resilience required to persist through multiple submission cycles. The theme is highlighted by the following claims:

“Receiving feedback that calls for major revisions can be both disheartening and overwhelming...handling manuscript rejection...can be discouraging.” (Participant 2)

“I felt hesitant to proceed with the process as I am afraid of rejection...I feel like I lack necessary information in doing it right.” (Participant 6)

“The memorable experience is when my paper was accepted... but the good thing of being rejected is that they will provide you the reasons why your paper was rejected.” (Participant 10)

4.4.1. Theme 4: Support and Resources for Overcoming Obstacles

Institutional support, such as mentorship programs and in-house reviews, was instrumental in helping faculty navigate publication challenges. This institutional support was seen as critical, providing faculty with the confidence and skills necessary to meet the rigorous standards of Scopus-indexed journals. This theme is supported by the participants' views below:

“The accelerated research mentorship program is the support that I find helpful...at least I have the overview and the comments during the activity from our expert.” (Participant 3)

“The research mentorship provided by the RDO gave me light as to the steps from preparation to submission...[it] was able to provide prospect journals.” (Participant 6)

“BiPSU has been helpful... we have in-house reviews and also accelerated mentorship programs.” (Participant 8)

“Feedback and guidance from mentors and colleagues... offer valuable insights and suggestions.” (Participant 9)

4.4.2. Theme 5: Strategic Decision-Making in Journal Selection

Faculty members emphasized the importance of choosing the right journal strategically to align with their research focus and publication goals. These strategies highlight the deliberate and calculated approach faculty take to increase the likelihood of acceptance and the impact of their publications. Here are excerpts from the theme:

“I just start to look for journals that I know their own credibility through “Journal Finder”, and then visit the journal’s page, read the “About journal” and learn the tropes in “Author’s Guide”.” (Participant 1)

“The niche of that journal should tailor fit...with the paper that you are preparing.” (Participant 5)

“I prioritize journals based on their relevance to my research topic, their reputation, and their impact factor.” (Participant 9)

4.4.3. Theme 6: Success and Recognition in Publishing

Success in publishing was defined by participants as a combination of personal achievement, professional recognition, and audience reach. This theme reflects that success in publishing is both a milestone and an ongoing endeavor for faculty, contributing to their academic identity and influence within their fields. The following narrations articulate the theme:

"The measure of success is when your paper is accepted...that's personal satisfaction." (Participant 4)

"As long as my research will be accepted... then I consider it as a success." (Participant 7)

"If I think I have published many papers, then that is how I measure success." (Participant 10)

"If daghan makabasa sa ako paper, then makasabot sila." (Participant 12)

4.5. Perceptions of Publishing

This section outlines the perceptions of faculty members concerning their experiences with publishing in Scopus-indexed journals. The data reveals several prominent themes, each supported by participants' statements.

4.5.1. Theme 1: Academic Advancement and Promotion

Participants overwhelmingly perceive publishing in Scopus-indexed journals as essential for academic advancement. Many associate their publication efforts with opportunities for promotion and further academic pursuits. The following statements explain the theme:

"In my field, I perceive the importance of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals for applying for a doctorate degree and gaining competitive scholarships. I also see it as beneficial for academic ranking." (Participant 1)

"It's important because, in the latest joint circular for promotion, they will not credit your output if it's not published in a Scopus-indexed journal." (Participant 5)

"Publishing in Scopus-indexed journals is now a requirement for promotion. It also opens doors for opportunities." (Participant 10)

4.5.2. Theme 2: Enhanced Visibility, Credibility, and Recognition

Many participants associate Scopus-indexed journals with increased visibility and recognition in their fields, which they believe enhances their academic credibility and opens doors for networking and collaborative opportunities. This perception underscores the role of Scopus-indexed journals in establishing a researcher's reputation and influence within their discipline.

"Publishing in Scopus journals is highly important because it enhances the credibility of my research and boosts visibility within the academic community." (Participant 2)

"Publishing in Scopus-indexed journals is critical as it increases the visibility, legitimacy, and influence of my research." (Participant 8)

"Publishing in these journals strengthens my academic profile and contributes to professional development." (Participant 9)

4.5.3. Theme 3: Personal and Professional Satisfaction

Some participants emphasize a sense of personal achievement and pride in contributing to their field through publication. They see their work as a legacy that builds prestige, which suggests an intrinsic motivation to publish beyond institutional requirements.

"I feel accomplished whenever I can publish my paper." (Participant 6)

"It helps build your prestige in your chosen field, and you contribute to the body of knowledge, leaving a legacy." (Participant 1)

4.5.4. Theme 4: Institutional Expectations and Pressures

Participants frequently mention the pressure to meet institutional publishing targets or fulfill university development plans. This indicates that publishing in Scopus-indexed journals is not solely an individual ambition but also a response to institutional goals for reputation and ranking.

"Yes, there are institutional expectations and pressures regarding publishing in Scopus-indexed journals, as part of the evaluation criteria for faculty performance." (Participant 2)

"We are required to publish at least one research paper per faculty to help with university rankings." (Participant 7)

"Our university aims to publish 250 indexed articles this year, which puts pressure on us to contribute to this goal." (Participant 5)

4.5.5. Theme 5: Challenges and Drawbacks in the Publishing Process

The participants report various challenges associated with publishing in Scopus-indexed journals, such as high costs, rigorous review processes, and the emotional toll of rejection. These challenges highlight barriers that may discourage early-career researchers or those with limited resources, making the publication process a complex and demanding endeavor.

"There are high publication fees, and the review process is lengthy, which can be challenging, especially for early-career researchers." (Participant 9)

"The process requires patience, intellectual, emotional, and financial investments, which may not always yield expected benefits." (Participant 1)

"There's a high rejection rate, and for beginners, rejection can be demotivating." (Participant 10)

4.5.6. Theme 6: Institutional Incentives and Rewards

Incentives provided by institutions, such as financial rewards, academic rank elevation, and professional development opportunities, motivate participants to publish in Scopus-indexed journals. This reflects a trend where universities support and reward research productivity to enhance institutional standing and foster a culture of academic excellence.

"The university has been known for giving incentives, and if you publish in Scopus-indexed journals, your rank will elevate." (Participant 12)

"Publishing in these journals brings invitations to conferences and opportunities to peer-review other works." (Participant 5)

4.6. Challenges in Publishing in Scopus-Indexed Journals

One of the aspects explored in the study was to uncover the challenges experienced by the faculty in publishing their research papers in scopus-indexed journals. When asked about their main challenges, they quickly responded by enumerating them. Analysis of their interview responses generated four themes: financial barriers, peer review and revision process, navigating submission and formatting requirements, and emotional and psychological challenges.

4.6.1. Theme 1. Financial Barriers

Most participants identified high publication fees as a major obstacle, particularly for open-access journals where authors bear the cost. Participants expressed frustration with this financial demand, which is often prohibitive and limits accessibility to prestigious platforms, thus making funding crucial for Scopus publications.

"The big challenge is that Scopus is expensive. Some Scopus-indexed journals, particularly open-access ones, charge article processing fees (APCs) that can be significant." (Participant 2)

"One of the main challenges I've faced when publishing in Scopus-indexed journals is the high publication fees, which can be expensive and often pose a financial barrier." (Participant 9)

"High indexed publication journals are requiring high publication fees." (Participant 4)

4.6.2. Theme 2. Peer Review and Revision Process

The rigorous peer review process in Scopus-indexed journals, although beneficial for research quality, adds stress and time pressure for authors. Participants struggled with extensive feedback, tight resubmission deadlines, and the risk of rejection. This process requires persistence and resilience, as many experiences repeated rounds of revision before achieving acceptance.

"Receiving critical feedback from peer reviewers can highlight numerous issues and require substantial revisions. The pressure to meet tight deadlines for re-submission can be stressful."
(Participant 2)

"Revising the study with all the comments of the journal I chose... Reviewers in Scopus-indexed journals are frequently prominent experts, providing thorough criticism that can improve research quality."
(Participant 8)

"The revisions are a challenge, especially if you are the type of person who wants it to be perfect immediately." (Participant 10)

4.6.3. Theme 3. Navigating Submission and Formatting Requirements

Adhering to strict formatting and thematic guidelines was another major challenge. Some participants found it difficult to adapt their research to align with the specified scopes of various journals. A lack of institutional support for guidance in these detailed formatting demands further complicates the process, requiring authors to independently learn and adapt.

"It was the lack of support and the formatting of the paper as to what the journal would have wanted."
(Participant 5)

"Navigating the submission guidelines and formatting requirements of different journals proved to be challenging at times." (Participant 9)

"In Scopus-indexed journals, they have their specific theme and scope... creating a paper that would fit in the theme or scope is a challenge." (Participant 10)

4.6.4. Theme 4. Emotional and Psychological Challenges

The psychological toll of the publication process is significant. Participants frequently mentioned the emotional strain of handling criticism, facing possible rejection, and the uncertainty of acceptance, which can deter persistence in publishing. The need for resilience in this high-stakes environment is apparent, as authors grapple with the anxiety of repeated revisions and potential rejection.

"Rejection of manuscripts is another common experience, requiring resilience and adaptability."
(Participant 2)

"If you are not used to being rejected, then it could demotivate you from creating another paper."
(Participant 10)

"You need to be patient, and sometimes it makes you nervous... the negative part of being excited, whether your research might not be accepted." (Participant 4)

4.7. Strategies to Overcome Challenges

This section explores the strategies identified by faculty members to overcome challenges encountered when publishing in Scopus-indexed journals. The data reveals several key themes, each supported by participant insights that illustrate their approaches.

4.7.1. Theme 1. Financial and Personal Investment

Many participants expressed that personal financial commitment and time management are essential strategies in overcoming challenges associated with publishing in Scopus-indexed journals. The willingness to invest in their careers is seen as crucial for success.

"You really have to ready yourselves for rejections, patience, and your wallets." (Participant 1)

"You have to loan or save because this is an investment for your career." (Participant 3)

"You have to manage your money in order to publish in refereed journals and time management is the way." (Participant 8)

4.7.2. Theme 2. Mentorship and Collegial Support

Participants highlighted the importance of mentorship and collegial support as critical strategies for navigating the publishing process. Engaging with experienced colleagues and institutional mentorship programs was deemed beneficial. Mentorship from experienced colleagues, as well as

institutional mentorship programs, play a critical role in guiding participants through the publication process.

"Seeking feedback from colleagues and mentors during the drafting process helps identify potential weaknesses early on." (Participant 2)

"I seek help from my colleagues who had experience publishing their papers in Scopus-indexed journals." (Participant 6)

"The institution provides mentorship where experts are invited to discuss and share how to publish a research paper in a Scopus-indexed journal." (Participant 10)

4.7.3. Theme 3. Institutional Support Systems and Resources

Many participants cited institutional resources, such as Research Development Office (RDO) activities, mentorship programs, and workshops, as valuable support mechanisms that facilitated their publishing efforts. Institutional resources, such as Research Development Office (RDO) activities, mentorship programs, and workshops, were frequently cited as supportive mechanisms that helped some participants improve their publishing skills.

"RDO activities and BiPSU-approved collaboration from DOST-NRCP RD Lead program." (Participant 1)

"There are activities from the research office, and so far, the accelerated research mentorship program." (Participant 8)

"My institution supports faculty in publishing in Scopus-indexed journals through engagement in webinars and training sessions focused on research paper publishing." (Participant 9)

4.7.4. Theme 4. Continuous Learning and Staying Updated with Journal Requirements

Staying updated with Scopus journals' standards and requirements is key for participants to align their work with expectations and avoid unnecessary revisions.

"I regularly review the official websites of relevant journals and read recently published articles in Scopus-indexed journals to familiarize myself with current standards." (Participant 2)

"Once you have a paper, then just go to whatever journal you want to be published in and view the guidelines." (Participant 5)

"To stay updated, I visit their websites and the journals themselves every now and then, especially the Scopus-indexed journals because they change themes and scopes." (Participant 10)

4.7.5. Theme 5. Strategic Journal Selection and Planning

Participants emphasize the importance of strategically selecting journals aligned with their research topics and evaluating the quality of their research before submitting.

"Careful selection of the appropriate journal is crucial to align with my research topic and target audience." (Participant 2)

"I always check the theme or scope of the journal so that there is less rejection and I would not waste my time creating a paper that they would definitely reject because it is not aligned." (Participant 10)

4.7.6. Theme 6. Resilience and Positive Mindset

Participants highlighted the need for resilience, accepting rejections, and maintaining a positive outlook on challenges as part of their strategies.

"I maintain a positive mindset towards challenges, viewing setbacks as learning experiences." (Participant 2)

"You really have to ready yourselves for rejections, patience..." (Participant 1)

5. Discussion

The findings reveal that publishing in Scopus-indexed journals is a multifaceted endeavor requiring motivation, strategic planning, and resilience. Faculty members are driven by the desire to contribute to knowledge, achieve career advancement, and engage with broader academic audiences. However, they face substantial barriers, including high publication costs, stringent formatting requirements, and

frequent rejections. Institutional support, particularly through mentorship, training, and financial resources, proves essential in facilitating their publication journeys.

A significant insight is the financial burden posed by publication fees, which suggests a need for more robust institutional funding to assist faculty, especially those from resource-limited settings, in accessing high-impact journals. The strategic approaches to journal selection also highlight participants' adaptability and commitment to aligning their work with journals best suited to their research focus. This strategic alignment not only minimizes the likelihood of rejection but also ensures that faculty contributions resonate with the target journal's audience.

The study underscores the importance of continued institutional support and the cultivation of a supportive research culture. Elements such as mentorship programs, funding for publication fees, and workshops on journal requirements are essential for empowering faculty to navigate the demanding process of publishing in Scopus-indexed journals. These resources collectively enhance faculty members' ability to contribute meaningfully to their fields and to the broader academic community.

The insights from faculty regarding their experiences with Scopus-indexed journals reflect a landscape of both opportunity and challenge. Faculty are motivated by career progression and recognition within their fields, viewing Scopus publications as crucial to their professional growth. However, the challenges they face—high costs, extensive review processes, and the emotional toll of potential rejection—suggest a need for balanced support structures that address both the logistical and psychological aspects of publishing. This finding is confirmed in the study of Hakami [13] which states that, among the identified barriers, difficulties in following APA guidelines, lack of knowledge of scientific research writing, challenges in rephrasing paragraphs and expressing ideas in English, and difficulty following journal instructions were prominent. Other significant barriers include a limited understanding of referencing and citations, reluctance to publish without external pressure, and the perception that scientific publishing is essential for career advancement. Similarly, many other barriers to publishing a scientific article have been reported in several previous studies, such as poor technical skills, lack of time for writing, the teaching load of academics, lack of resources, lack of guidelines, lack of interest, lack of motivation or rewards, and lack of training on research and publishing Turk et al. [29].

Notably, while faculty are intrinsically motivated by the desire for personal achievement and legacy-building, institutional expectations shape the environment within which they operate. This dynamic indicates that the drive to publish is influenced by both personal goals and external factors, including institutional priorities and the competitive nature of academia. Recognizing institutional incentives as a key motivator point to an opportunity for universities to strengthen their support systems. By fostering a publishing-oriented environment and providing adequate resources, institutions can alleviate some of the pressures associated with the publication process, ultimately enhancing both individual productivity and collective academic success.

The identified challenges—including financial constraints, rigorous peer review processes, stringent submission guidelines, and the psychological toll of rejection—highlight the complex landscape faculty navigate in their publishing efforts. Addressing these challenges through targeted institutional support can significantly ease faculty experiences. Providing funding for publication fees, offering workshops on formatting and submission guidelines, and implementing mentorship programs that bolster emotional resilience could help mitigate these barriers, allowing faculty to focus more on producing high-quality research.

The strategies employed by participants reflect a comprehensive and collaborative approach to overcoming publishing challenges. Personal financial investment, mentorship, institutional support, continuous learning, strategic journal selection, and resilience all play intertwined roles in navigating the complexities of academic publishing. Institutions are pivotal in creating a conducive environment for publishing success, where investment in resources, mentorship, and a culture of continuous learning can empower faculty to overcome obstacles and achieve greater publication rates. This collaborative approach to the publishing process highlights the need for institutions to implement policies that support academic productivity, cultivating a culture of excellence in research and elevating the institution's overall research profile. These findings reaffirm previous studies suggesting various

strategies to overcome these barriers. For instance, the establishment of open-access policies has been recommended to enhance access to research outputs. Griffin (2011) posited that increased training in scientific writing, manuscript formatting, and journal selection has also been suggested as a means of improving publishing skills Pittman et al. [20]. Additionally, providing support and guidance in designing and running studies as well as addressing research-based skills and funding limitations can help overcome barriers to conducting research Driver et al. [6].

6. Conclusion

The findings highlight that publishing in Scopus-indexed journals is a complex process that requires not only individual motivation and strategic planning but also robust institutional support. Faculty members' aspirations for knowledge contribution, career advancement, and increased visibility drive their determination to publish in these prestigious journals. However, they encounter significant barriers, such as high publication fees, stringent formatting requirements, and rigorous peer review processes. These obstacles underscore the importance of institutional resources—especially funding, mentorship, and training programs—in supporting faculty on their publishing journeys.

While faculty members demonstrate adaptability and resilience in the face of these challenges, institutional backing remains a critical factor. Institutions that provide mentorship, workshops on journal requirements, and financial assistance for publication fees empower their faculty to overcome hurdles, achieve success, and make meaningful contributions to their fields. Additionally, faculty members' strategic selection of journals and careful alignment with journal scopes and guidelines reveal a proactive approach, yet one that often benefits from further institutional guidance and resources.

7. Recommendations

Increase Institutional Funding for Publication Costs: Universities, particularly those in resource-limited settings, should consider allocating funds specifically to support faculty in covering publication fees. This funding can make high-impact publishing more accessible and encourage broader faculty participation in Scopus-indexed journals.

Expand Mentorship and Support Programs: Institutions should enhance mentorship initiatives by pairing early-career researchers with experienced faculty who have successfully published in Scopus-indexed journals. Such mentorship programs could include regular consultations, feedback sessions, and workshops that demystify the publication process.

Offer Workshops on Journal Requirements and Submission Processes: Hosting workshops focused on the specific requirements of Scopus-indexed journals, including formatting and thematic alignment, can help faculty streamline the submission process. These sessions should also cover journal selection strategies and adapting research to fit a journal's scope, thereby reducing the likelihood of rejection.

Develop Emotional Resilience and Coping Mechanisms: Institutions should recognize the emotional strain associated with frequent revisions and possible rejection. Offering workshops or counseling on resilience and coping strategies can help faculty navigate the publication process with a positive mindset, fostering persistence and long-term commitment to research goals.

Encourage Continuous Learning and Awareness of Journal Updates: Universities can facilitate access to journal updates by organizing forums or circulating resources that keep faculty informed on shifting standards and scopes in Scopus-indexed journals. A systematic approach to staying updated can enhance faculty alignment with journal requirements and reduce the need for extensive revisions.

Foster a Supportive Research Culture: Institutions should prioritize creating an environment that values and supports publishing efforts. This may involve recognizing publication achievements, promoting collaborative research, and integrating publishing as a key component of faculty development programs.

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