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Research Article

Championing Inclusivity: Underrepresentation of Women in African Academic Leadership and Scholarly Journal Management

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Abstract

Objectives – This study seeks to investigate the exclusion of women from the management of scholarly journals across East Swahili (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Anglo-West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia) by delving into the implications of marginalization. Furthermore, the study aims to illuminate the often-overlooked experiences of black women, whose narratives are frequently overshadowed by those of black men or subsumed within the context of white women.

Methods – By employing empirical evidence from African Journals Online (AJO) and

institutional journal data from countries in focus, this study examines the pervasive domination of men within scholarly journal management in East Swahili and Anglo-West Africa.

Results – Findings reveal a widespread dominance of men in the management of scholarly journals in the targeted countries despite the considerable presence of women in academia.

Conclusion – The underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions carries significant consequences, including a lack of diversity in decision-making processes. Such homogeneity can perpetuate existing disparities and impede progress towards gender equality within academia. Furthermore, discussions concerning gender inequality in academia often neglect the experiences of black women.

Introduction and Background

This study critically examines the structural marginalization of women within academic leadership and the management of scholarly journals across selected African regions, specifically East Swahili and Anglo-West Africa. By interrogating the representation of women in roles within scholarly publishing, the research aims to uncover the underlying dynamics that perpetuate gender disparities, focusing mainly on the nuanced experiences of black women in these academic spaces. Through a methodological approach that synthesizes empirical data from the African Journals Online (AJOL) database and institutional records, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How does the gender composition of journal management in African universities reflect broader patterns of gender inequality within the academic landscape? The study argues that despite the increasing presence of women in academia, the entrenched patriarchal structures within scholarly journal management significantly hinder their representation and influence, thereby exacerbating the gender divide.

The pervasive marginalization and exclusion of women from political, social, economic, and cultural spheres have persisted throughout history in numerous societies across the globe. Demeter (2020) highlights that even the esteemed Western philosopher Aristotle perpetuated the belief that women possessed inferior intellect compared to men, likening them to "eternal children" (p. 21). In many African societies, patriarchal norms reinforce the perception of women as child-like, while men are heralded as the embodiment of leadership. Furthermore, Demeter (2020) emphasizes Aristotle's assertion that women should be governed like children, with the distinction that only boys, never girls, would eventually mature into adults. René Descartes, celebrated as the father of Western rationalism, once remarked that his writings were designed to be comprehensible even to women (Lloyd, 2002). These deeply entrenched ideas about the roles and capabilities of women have perpetuated over time, continuing to influence perceptions of women across diverse cultures and societies worldwide.

Postcolonial scholars have consistently examined the ramifications of colonialism on gender dynamics in Africa. Nwando Achebe's (2020) exploration of women and authority in West African history reveals that women held substantial influence in leadership roles alongside men. These roles extended beyond advisory capacities, with some women ascending to supreme leadership positions (Achebe, 2020, p. 50). Achebe emphasizes that women in pre-colonial West Africa actively contributed to the development of their histories rather than passively participating (2020, p. 171). She further contends that women in West Africa held considerable sway over their societies' religious, political, social, and economic processes, exercising control over essential aspects and demonstrating authority (2020, p. 51).

Similar patterns of women's leadership were present across the African continent. In East Africa, matriarchal communities existed, albeit with power structures that still favoured men. Oduol (1993) traces the evolution of women's roles in Kenyan politics from the precolonial era, highlighting that many communities possessed respected and supreme women-led structures. For example, among the Pokot people of Kenya, women functioned as a "police force" and held the authority to sanction misbehaving men within a council. This trend persisted among the Agikuyu community, where an advisory council of women addressed cultural issues such as circumcision, birth rites, and religious duties (Oduol, 1993).

During the colonial period, women leaders such as Mekatilili wa Menza, a Kenyan independence activist, spearheaded revolts against British colonial rule, while Wangũ wa Makeri served as a formidable Kikuyu Chiefess. Post-colonial feminist theorists challenge the notion of colonialism as ungendered (Giraldo, 2016; Mendoza, 2015; Spencer-Wood, 2016), arguing that colonial subjugation intersected with gender, sexuality, race, and religion, ultimately reshaping the cultural, political, and social structures of colonized subjects (Spencer-Wood, 2016). Some theorists contend that patriarchy, including sexual relations, played a pivotal role in European conquests, colonization, exploitation of indigenous peoples, and cultural connections.

While pre-colonial African communities often elevated men's status, some researchers (Afisi, 2010; Amadiume, 2005; Dogo, 2014) argue that such patriarchal practices were not inherently oppressive. However, with the advent of colonialism and the subsequent transformation of societal norms in Africa, patriarchy became oppressive. Spencer-Wood (2016) posits that colonial patriarchy undermined indigenous women's power by relegating them to domestic spaces, devaluing their unpaid labour as "unskilled", denying land rights, prohibiting public or religious powers and positions, and imposing patriarchal monogamy. In contemporary postcolonial African societies, women continue to experience marginalization as numerous communities perpetuate patriarchal customs. The struggle against women's marginalization remains a central theme in the discourse surrounding power, leadership, and control — the dual challenges of being a woman and an African woman often compound experiences of marginalization. To more comprehensively understand the marginalization of women, oppression, and the ongoing fight for equal rights, it is necessary to move beyond a solely feminist lens to examine how women confront racism, sexism, economic subversion, and other forms of discrimination. Intersectionality, an analytical framework introduced by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989, provides a valuable perspective for examining these issues. Crenshaw's intersectionality theory explores how aspects of an individual's social, political, and cultural identities intersect to produce distinct experiences of discrimination and privilege.

African institutions display various forms of marginalization and discrimination against women and girls. Often subjected to patriarchal domination within their homes, women are typically relegated to the domestic sphere, with personal development and growth sacrificed for the well-being of their children and husbands. This marginalization and discrimination persist when they enter academic institutions. For instance, Dunor and Urassa (2019) cite data that designates Tanzania as one of the developing countries with the highest rates of teenage pregnancy globally. Adolescent pregnancy was also identified as the leading cause of school dropout, impeding girls' opportunities to secure employment in high-skilled industries requiring post-secondary education.

In 2017, Reuters reported that the then-Tanzanian President John Pombe Maghufuli reaffirmed a 1961 government directive prohibiting pregnant students from attending school, deeming it immoral (Ng'wanakilala, 2017). Despite activists' efforts to overturn the decree, their appeals have largely gone

unheeded. In numerous other African countries, teenage pregnancy poses a significant obstacle to achieving gender parity in access to education.

Upon gaining admission to universities, women encounter an array of additional gender-related challenges. They are frequently steered toward disciplines perceived as more feminine or softer, such as the arts and humanities, and remain significantly underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). McGee & Bentley (2017) highlighted the presence of structural racism and race-gender bias in women's STEM environments, while Perry et al. (2012) illustrated how pervasive racial and gender stereotypes deter some black women from pursuing STEM careers. Women's underrepresentation in scientific practices, discourses, and decision-making limits the scope of intellectual contributions to complex global issues. Moreover, women continue to experience marginalization in academia, especially in leadership roles in higher education institutions in Africa.

Even when women do attain leadership positions in academia, they face numerous obstacles. Alcalde & Subramaniam (2020) discovered that women in senior administrative roles in Australia received the lowest compensation among higher education administrators. Furthermore, they not only encountered limited leadership opportunities at the end of extensive careers but also found career prospects diminishing at various stages throughout their trajectories. As of June 2021, South Africa had only four women vice-chancellors out of 26 universities, and in Kenya, a mere eight out of 48 vice-chancellors were women.

The discourse surrounding gender within higher education institutions is extensive. In this study, we investigate the marginalization of women in knowledge production in Africa. While the African continent is marginalized in the global knowledge production domain, it is clear from the preceding discussion that African/black women confront even more exclusionary and restrictive conditions. This study specifically examines women's representation in the management and leadership of scholarly journals as editors and editors-in-chief on the editorial boards of journals listed in African Journals Online (AJOL). In the subsequent section, we explore ongoing debates addressing structural inequality in academia, particularly the marginalization and exclusion of women.

Literature Review

Exclusion and Marginalization of Women in Academic Publishing

As noted in the introduction of this study, structural inequality in academia is a barrier impeding women's success in their academic careers. This literature review delves into the challenges women face in scholarly publishing. Current literature suggests that while the exclusion of women in academia may be less conspicuous, they remain marginalized in academic publishing. Lundine et al. (2019) contend that scholarly publishing is a gatekeeper, facilitating career advancement and knowledge dissemination opportunities. Consequently, they maintain that examining the exclusion of women through a gendered lens is essential. Hagan et al. (2020) underscored the gatekeeper role of academic publishing in their study on women's representation in American Society for Microbiology (ASM) journals. They found that "women are underrepresented as expert scientists in ASM journals. This is, in part, due to a combination of both low submissions from senior women authors and more negative outcomes on submitted manuscripts for women compared to men" (Hagan et al., 2020, p. 1). Moreover, they discovered that only 17.6% of the 17 editors-in-chief of ASM journals were women, suggesting that gatekeeper roles were primarily allocated to men, who in turn made publishing more challenging for women.

In Europe, Lundine et al. (2019) argue that gendered exclusion is pervasive in academic publishing within the sciences. Their research revealed that despite editors not collecting gender-identifying information, inequalities persisted in the system, perpetuating the exclusion of women's ideas. They emphasized that to ensure knowledge diversity, editors need a heightened awareness of these inequalities to foster more conducive environments for women to publish. In contrast, Boynton et al. (2018, p. 1515) maintain that analyzing the gendered exclusion of women overlooks various factors contributing to women's limited publications, such as "free choice." Nevertheless, research has shown that while women are perceived as hardworking, they are less likely than men to secure funding in the sciences (Magua et al., 2017). Spates (2012) found that knowledge production in psychology primarily involves white men, leading to gaps in research regarding black women and a conspicuous absence of literature on their experiences with mental illness.

Furthermore, Savigny (2014) identified pervasive cultural sexism in British academia, emphasizing the need to challenge and address this issue. She asserts that recognizing the constraints women in academia face is the first step towards resolving them. Building on Parker (2005), Davis (2016) argues that the experiences of African American women should be understood through an intersectional framework encompassing race, gender, and social class. This approach is crucial for unveiling otherwise neglected dynamics when investigating how women navigate the world.

Underrepresentation and Exclusion of Women in Academic Publishing on the African Continent

Discourses of exclusion and underrepresentation in Africa are echoed in Sow's (2007) analysis of writing, publishing, and distributing feminist research in Francophone countries, with a focus on Senegal. Sow comments on the challenges faced by feminist researchers, predominantly women, who struggle to incorporate feminist content into courses and research. She highlights the low interest and uptake of women's and gender issues, often discouraging researchers from engaging with these topics. Naicker (2013) pinpoints racism and structural inequalities as fundamental factors excluding black women in academia. Examining historical discrimination against women academics in South Africa, Naicker finds that "Black women are still not seen or fully heard," and their experiences are frequently overshadowed by those of black men or subsumed under the realities of white women. Naicker emphasizes the need to examine women's academic experiences in Africa through multiple lenses, such as gender, race, and culture, thus underscoring transformation issues in the South African academic space. Du Preez, Simmonds, and Verhoef (2016) advocate for an "access for success" framework that not only provides access to institutions but also supports academics to enhance their chances of success, ultimately creating robust support structures for black African women.

Similarly, Rathgeber (2013: vii) observes that while African universities have become more inclusive, male faculty often benefit from long-established networks and mentorship opportunities, while women lag due to smaller numbers and concentration at lower levels, resulting in limited influence. Women also experience the harsher realities of "gender-blind" peer review processes, which, according to Lundine et al. (2019), perpetuate existing inequalities by ignoring power dynamics that reinforce structural gender inequities. Rathgeber (2013) contends that women's recruitment in academic spaces has been quantitative, neglecting the need to adjust attitudes and behaviours that shape academic and university culture. West et al. (2013) concur that academics should be more cognizant of the subtle ways gender disparities occur in scholarly authorship. Analyzing the JSTOR corpus of over 8 million articles, they found that women were underrepresented in first-author and last-author positions, with declining numbers of women as single authors of papers. This underrepresentation is particularly problematic in a system that values publications for promotion and achieving professorship. Although their analysis did not identify the

reasons for these disparities, West et al. (2013, p. 6) conclude that "though significant progress has been made toward gender equality, significant differences in positions of intellectual authorship draw our attention to the subtle ways gender disparities continue to exist. The findings underscore that we cannot yet disregard gender disparity as a notable characteristic of academia."

This literature review has explored various global challenges, particularly in Africa, that impede women's opportunities for publishing. However, scant literature focuses on the humanities or investigates the factors affecting women's participation in academic publishing in Africa. There is a need for more research examining race in formerly colonized countries besides South Africa and the role of African culture, especially the impact of gendered socialization in perpetuating women's exclusion outside the home. This study aims to contribute to these debates on the exclusion and marginalization of women in knowledge production management in Africa.

In the following section, we discuss how intersectionality theory informs this study and how it can be employed to understand the relationship between women and scholarly publishing in Africa.

Intersectionality Theory in the Context of Women and Scholarly Publishing

To investigate the marginalization and exclusion of women in scholarly publishing and research dissemination in Africa, this study adopts the intersectionality theory. As previously noted, intersectionality provides a comprehensive lens to examine the marginalization and exclusion of women in managing scholarly publishing in Africa. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) introduced the term "intersectionality" to describe the complex power dynamics impacting the lives of women of colour, particularly black women. This study evidences that women face numerous, multifaceted challenges that intersect across categories of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class. This makes intersectionality a more comprehensive theory for examining the convergence of these issues and their effects on scholarly publishing in Africa. Haynes, Joseph, and Patton (2020) concur that intersectionality specifically identifies systems of dominance and structural realities, such as racism, sexism, and classism when exploring women's experiences in higher education. Liani et al. (2021) also agree that an intersectional lens highlights multiple social identities related to power, age, professional cadre/requirements, marital status, ethnicity, language, (dis)ability, and parenthood. This theory, rooted in gender and feminist studies, has gained traction across various fields due to its broad scope.

Most African women scholars and researchers come from patriarchal communities where men are considered the heads of households and women are deemed subservient and inferior. These practices persist in African higher learning institutions, where women are often regarded as intellectually inferior to men. Maphalala and Mpofu (2017), citing Dehdarirad, Villarroya, and Barrios (2015), observed that women in many higher learning institutions carry a heavier teaching and service load, possess a lower degree of specialization and academic status and experience difficulties accessing funding compared to their male counterparts. These disparities can be attributed to the patriarchal nature of these institutions. Furthermore, the extensive time, commitment, and resources required for academic and research careers create a challenging balance for women attempting to manage their professional expectations with family obligations and unequal distribution of labour in the home. Women often face the dilemma of prioritizing career or family demands, ultimately impacting their research and scholarly outputs. Those who manage to allocate sufficient time for research sometimes face other underreported challenges like sexual abuse from male supervisors or sexual harassment during fieldwork.

Within the African continent, ethnic and language barriers also hinder career advancement in academia. Ethnicity and language challenges can be examined through an intersectional lens. Liani et al. (2021) observed that women (and men) from Francophone Africa face the additional burden of translating their scholarly works into English. While French is spoken in 29 out of 52 African nations, global knowledge production primarily occurs in North America and Europe, where English is the predominant language. This renders French a minority language in global knowledge production.

Consequently, women in Francophone Africa experience increased pressure to produce scholarly works in English to achieve global competitiveness and broader visibility. However, writing in English does not guarantee successful publication for women. Many issues persist, including biases from men- and Global North-dominated journals that enforce specific language and calibre standards. Various intersectional issues concerning power, language, race, class, and ethnicity continue to affect women in scholarly publishing and research dissemination in Africa.

Methodology

This study was conducted as a component of a continent-wide research project entitled "Scholarly Publishing and Research Dissemination in Africa", in which the lead researcher, Dr. Job Mwaura, served as an Open Society Fellow in the project. The Institute for Humanities in Africa hosted the project at the University of Cape Town from January 2021 to June 2022. The methodology initially involved creating a comprehensive database of journals, which included categorizing journals into broader subject areas, determining the first and last published issues, and identifying the year of establishment. Additionally, the database documented the names, genders, and institutional affiliations of managing editors and editors-in-chief. The database also contained the names, genders, and institutional affiliations of members of the editorial boards of the investigated journals from the ten countries in East Africa and West Africa. This scope was strategically selected based on the focus area of the lead researcher in the continental research.

Data for this research were derived from an analysis of journals hosted on African Journals Online (AJOL) from East Swahili and Anglo-West African nations, encompassing ten African countries. The research was conducted between February and August 2021. To map out the genders of these individuals, our method incorporated a blend of automated web scraping techniques and manual verification processes to gather publicly accessible information from a variety of online sources, including institutional and individual web pages associated with the subjects of our study. The first step involved analyzing official profiles on university or organizational websites, where pronouns and other explicit gender indicators are frequently mentioned, providing a straightforward basis for gender determination. Recognizing the diversity and complexity of gender identification, we also considered the cultural and regional nuances of names, which, in many African contexts, can strongly suggest a gender. Where possible and appropriate, we supplemented this with an examination of photographs to aid in our gender identification efforts. It is important to emphasize that this technique was applied with the highest level of caution, respect for individual gender diversity, and presentation, meticulously avoiding assumptions based on appearance alone.

This methodological approach, while aimed at accurately mapping gender, inherently privileges binary gender identification due to the reliance on publicly available data that predominantly categorize gender within a binary framework. The public nature of the sources we consulted often reflects societal norms that recognize gender in binary terms, thus limiting our capacity to identify non-binary genders accurately. Furthermore, in the specific cultural and regional contexts of the African countries studied,

public acknowledgement and discourse around non-binary gender identities remain limited, influencing the availability of information that explicitly identifies individuals as non-binary. Consequently, our methodology, by focusing on available binary gender indicators, may inadvertently overlook non-binary individuals. This decision was not based on the assumption that non-binary persons do not exist within the academic leadership landscape. Still, it was a pragmatic response to the limitations imposed by the current state of publicly disclosed gender identities and the methodological constraints of accurately identifying non-binary genders without explicit self-disclosure.

To supplement the data from AJOL, the study also included institutional-based journals not listed on AJOL but found on institutional websites. This process involved mapping all universities in the ten countries under study and web scraping information on journals, repositories, libraries, bookshops, and biographic details of those managing them. Furthermore, data from AJOL were complemented with information from South African-based NISC journals.

The Case of African Journals Online

African Journals Online (AJOL), established in 1997 by the UK-based international development charity working group INASP (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications), aimed to increase the visibility of African journals and raise awareness of research conducted in Africa. In 2005, AJOL's hosting was transferred from the UK-based INASP to the South African-based company NISC (Pty) - National Inquiry Services Centre. Since its inception, the AJOL platform has hosted African-based journals from 32 countries across various fields of study.

Table 1
Number of Journals Listed in the AJOL Database per Country

Country	**No. of Journals**	**Country**	**No. of Journals**
Algeria	5	Benin	1
Botswana	3	Burkina Faso	3
Cameroon	8	Congo, Republic	1
Côte d'Ivoire	4	Egypt, Arab Rep.	14
Eritrea	1	Eswatini	3
Ethiopia	30	Ghana	27
Kenya	29	Lesotho	1
Libya	2	Madagascar	1
Malawi	4	Mauritius	3
Mozambique	1	Nigeria	222
Rwanda	7	Senegal	6
Sierra Leone	1	South Africa	96
South Sudan	1	Sudan	3
Tanzania	19	Togo	1
Tunisia	2	Uganda	12
Liberia	0	Gambia	0
Zambia	2	Zimbabwe	12
Total Number of Journals	**525**		

Table 2
Categorization of Journals According to Subject Areas

Subjects	**No. of Journals**	**Subjects**	**No. of Journals**
African Studies	56	Agriculture & Food Sciences	54
Aquatic Sciences	10	Art & Architecture	18
Biology & Life Sciences	71	Chemistry, Mathematics & Physics	36
Earth Sciences	8	Economics & Development	48
Education	35	Environmental Sciences	30
Finance & Management	16	Fish & Fisheries	4
General Science (broad subject range)	87	Health	169
History	3	Humanities (broad subject range)	56
Information, Communication & Library Sciences	18	Language & Literature	20
Philosophy	7	Political Science & Law	18
Psychology & Psychiatry	16	Religion	6
Sociology & Anthropology	42	Technology, Computer Science & Engineering	30
Veterinary Science	16		

Data Presentation and Analysis

A Comprehensive Examination of AJOL in East Swahili and Anglo-West African Countries

The following data was derived from an in-depth analysis of African Journals Online (AJOL) concerning ten East Swahili and Anglo-West African countries, namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Gambia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. These countries constituted the focus of Dr Mwaura's postdoctoral research project on scholarly publishing and research dissemination. Of the 525 journals in the AJOL database spanning all African countries, 341 journals (approximately 65%) were from the ten countries under study.

The data includes the number of journals listed per country, institutional affiliations, subject areas, publication schedules, editors-in-chief genders, editorial board members' institutional affiliations (including departments), and additional information such as addresses. To identify the gender of editors-in-chief and editorial board members, various points were used, including web scraping and matching names with institutional affiliations, departments, addresses, areas of study, and profiles. Out of the 5,301 editors and editorial members associated with the journals in the 10 countries analyzed, the genders of 336 (6.3%) individuals could not be determined due to limited details, such as incomplete names or insufficient information on institutional affiliations, departments, and addresses. However, this limitation did not significantly impact the overall analysis or conclusions of the study.

Table 3 presents data on the gender distribution of journal management in the 10 countries under investigation. The findings reveal a journal management landscape dominated by men. Male scholars and researchers account for 91.47% of editors-in-chief, while women represent only 9.41%. Furthermore, 85.40% of editorial board members are men, and 14.60% are women. This disparity underscores the need to address the gender imbalance in the management of scholarly publishing in the African continent to foster a more inclusive and diverse academic environment.

Table 3
Gender Distribution of Journal Management in the Investigated Countries

Countries	**Number of Journals**	**Editors in Chief/Journal Editors**		**Editorial Board Members**	
		Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Kenya	29	27*	5	328	60
Uganda	12	11	1	132	32
Tanzania	19	17	2	184	52
Ethiopia	30	30	2	410	43
Nigeria	222	200**	20	2548	433
South Sudan	1	1	0	10	4
The Gambia	0				
Liberia	0				
Sierra Leone	1	1	0	11	3
Ghana	27	24	2	319	47
Totals	341	311	32	3942	674
%		91.47%	9.41%	85.40%	14.60%

* Some journals list more than one editor-in-chief
** It was challenging to identify the genders of some journal editors

In addition to the overall gender disparities observed in journal management across the 10 countries, a closer examination of individual journals revealed a striking male dominance in some cases. Some journals lacked representation of women among editors or editorial board members. It is important to note that identifying the genders of some journal editors proved challenging, and some journals listed more than one editor-in-chief.

The table below presents a selection of journals with complete identification of the genders of their editors and editorial board members, highlighting those without any women representation:

Table 4
Gender Identification of Editors and Editorial Board Members in Selected Journals

Journals	**Editors**	**Editorial board members**
Bulletin of Animal Health and Production in Africa	Man (1)	All men (17)
East African Journal of Statistics	Man (1)	All men (22)
Tanzania Journal of Forestry and Nature Conservation	Man (1)	All men (10)
Ethiopian Veterinary Journal	Man (1)	All men (16)
Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities	Man (1)	All men (9)
African Journal of Paediatric Surgery	Man (1)	All men (26)
Annals of African Medicine	Man (1)	All men (10)
ATBU Journal of Environmental Technology	Man (1)	All men (13)

These findings further emphasize the critical need to address gender imbalance within the academic journal management sphere. Ensuring more equitable representation of women scholars in editorial roles is essential to fostering diversity and inclusivity within the African scholarly community.

To further explore the influence of gender dynamics on editorial board compositions, a comparative analysis was conducted focusing on journals with women editors or editors-in-chief. The objective was to determine whether the presence of women leadership in these positions correlated with a higher representation of women editorial board members. Table 5 below presents a sample of journals with women editors-in-chief, highlighting the proportion of women editorial board members in each:

Table 5
Journals with Women Editors-in-Chief and the Proportion of Women Editorial Board Members

	Journal	**Editor-In-Chief**	**Editorial Board Members**	
			Men	Women
1.	African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development	W	14	6
2.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence	W	19	9
3.	Nigerian Journal of Nutritional Sciences	W	0	4
4.	Journal of the Nigerian Optometric Association	W	4	4
5.	African Journal of Reproductive Health	M & W	45	24

6.	African Journal of Paediatric Nephrology	W	18	15
7.	African Journal of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care	W	10	8

Interestingly, the analysis revealed a significant trend: journals with female editors or editors-in-chief exhibited a higher number of female editorial board members, even surpassing the number of male members, as shown in Table 5 above. This observation suggests that gender diversity in leadership positions within journals may contribute to a more balanced representation of women on editorial boards. Consequently, promoting gender equity in journal management is essential not only for achieving inclusivity but also for fostering an environment that encourages increased representation of women across all levels of the academic publishing process.

To complement the data generated from AJOL, we contrasted it with data from South Africa's NISC journals, and the findings are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6
Gender Composition of Journal Leadership: AJOL vs. NISC Journals

	Number of Journals	**Journal Editors**		**Editorial Board Members**	
		Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
No.	29*	23	8	640	280
%		74.19%	25.81%	69.57	30.43

During our analysis, it became evident that numerous journals from various African universities were not included in the AJOL database. To address this, we employed web scraping techniques to identify these unlisted journals and investigate the gender dynamics of their editors and editorial board members. This supplementary data set complemented the information obtained from the AJOL database, with the findings presented in Table 7 below:

Table 7
Gender Distribution among Editors and Editorial Board Members in Unlisted African University Journals

Countries	**Number of Journals**	**Editors/Editors in Chief**		**Editorial Board Members**	**Totals**			**%**	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	women	**Men**	**Women**
Kenya	13	11	2	107	4	118	6	**95.16**	**4.8**
Uganda	5	2*	0*	13	4	15	4	**78.9**	**21.05**
Tanzania	23	7*	4*	235	57	242	61	**79.87**	**20.13**
Ethiopia	26	15*	0*	144	2	159	2	**98.76**	**1.24**
Nigeria	44	25*	5*	66	8	91	13	**87.50**	**12.5**
South Sudan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**

The Gambia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**
Liberia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**
Ghana	15	0*	0*	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**
Totals	**126**	**60**	**11**	**565**	**75**	**625**	**86**	**87.90**	**12.10**

*It was difficult to identify the genders of some editors and editorial board members

The analysis identified 126 university-based journals in the 10 East Swahili and Anglo-West African countries under investigation. Of these, the gender of 71 (56%) Editors-in-Chief could be determined. The data uncovered a significant gender imbalance: 87.90% of both the Editors-in-Chief and editorial board members were men, while a mere 12.10% were women. This finding highlights the persistent gender disparities within the management and composition of editorial boards in the academic publishing landscape of these regions.

Discussion

The data presented in this study highlights the prevailing dominance of men scholars in the management of scholarly journals in East Swahili and Anglo-West African regions. Examining gender balance in these journals is crucial for understanding the potential implications of this imbalance. To elucidate this point, it is essential to consider the roles and responsibilities of journal editors and editors-in-chief in various contexts.

For instance, the guidelines of the Journal of the Cameroon Academy of Science (2023) hosted on AJOL states that the Editor-in-Chief oversees the general management of the journal's publication and distribution, including calling for articles, arranging reviews, making final decisions on article acceptance or rejection, and supervising the journal's printing and distribution.

Similarly, the Taylor & Francis Group (n.d), a major publisher of these academic journals, outlines six broad categories of editor responsibilities: managing editorial boards, overseeing the peer review process, understanding research metrics, increasing journal visibility, developing high-impact content, and ensuring ethical integrity. Furthermore, in a call for statements of interest for editorship by the African Studies Association Review (2013), the editor's responsibilities include soliciting and enhancing cutting-edge articles, selecting multiple reviewers, working directly with authors, maintaining a database of reviewers, and recommending appointments to the Editorial Review Board.

These roles demonstrate the immense power journal editors or editors-in-chief wield in determining what is published and what is not. As outlined by Springer (n.d), editorial board members also play a vital role in providing prestige, advising and supporting the editor, identifying peer reviewers, offering second opinions on papers, and contributing to significant journal decisions.

Given the substantial influence that journal editors and editorial board members have on the scholarly publishing landscape, the gender imbalance in these positions may result in unintended biases and a lack of diverse perspectives. Promoting gender equity in journal management is vital for fostering an inclusive and balanced environment that accurately represents the breadth of scholarly contributions.

In sum, editors and editorial board members serve as gatekeepers of knowledge production, wielding exclusive power to determine whether articles are published in their respective journals. These individuals also have a considerable influence on the methodology, subject matter, and reviewer selection for submitted articles. Often, due to the pressure for high-ranking journals, editors and editorial board members may prefer to accept papers from highly cited authors. This power dynamic becomes increasingly complex when editorial boards lack diversity in terms of geography, gender, race, and other aspects.

The findings of this study align with those of other researchers examining the gatekeeping of knowledge production and the diversity of editors and editorial boards (Metz & Harzing, 2009; Dhanani & Jones, 2017; Ioannidou & Rosania, 2015). Global academic inequality is deeply ingrained, particularly impacting women from the Global South. The pervasive discrimination against women in the management of scholarly publishing in African-based journals mirrors the entrenched gender discrimination in African societies. This discrimination extends to various levels of management in academia.
The sustained exclusion of women in knowledge production management has far-reaching implications, potentially hindering scholarship on women, undervaluing research interests among women and on women, and hindering the identification of solutions to global gender inequalities. Goyanes and Demeter (2020) examined whether editorial board diversity influenced journal features and found that increased diversity led to published content representing a more diverse range of topics. Although their investigation focused on geographical diversity, it is reasonable to expect similar outcomes for journals with gender diversity on their editorial boards.

As evidenced by the data from this study, when women serve as journal editors, the number of women on editorial boards increases (see Table 5). This suggests that women are more likely to take initiatives to overcome existing inequalities. Relying on men's mentorship as a solution to gender disparities in academia has proven insufficient. The data in this study suggests that men dominate the landscape of knowledge production management in Africa. It further suggests the limitations of men's mentorship for women in academia. Women appear to be more effective in mentoring other women and promoting women's leadership in journal management. This is reflected in women-led caucuses in business, science, and other organizations where women excel by supporting each other. Research by Uzzi, Yang, and Chawla (2019) found that forming networks with other women, sharing experiences, and promoting each other's leadership aspirations were crucial factors for women to overcome systemic hurdles and advance in their careers.

In addition to forming networks with other women, institutions must actively support women in knowledge production management and provide a conducive workplace for them. Institutions with a lack of women in leadership positions may be discouraging other women from pursuing such roles. In response to recent racial and historical injustices, higher education institutions are becoming more intentional about embracing principles of inclusion, equity, justice, and diversity. Beyond focusing on racially-centered diversity and inclusion statements, institutions should also be required to adopt and implement gender inclusion/diversity statements. This requirement should extend to the management of journals and other scholarly publications, ensuring that diversity and inclusion statements are not only created but actively put into practice.

Limitations of the Study and Future Directions

This study examined the gender representation of editors and editorial board members of journals listed in African Journals Online (AJOL), focusing on ten countries in East Swahili and Anglo-West Africa.

While these journals represented 65% of the total journals in the database, the research has certain limitations that warrant consideration for future studies.

First, the sample size in this study could be expanded in future research to encompass a larger proportion of journals and countries, thereby enabling more reliable conclusions about the state of scholarly management in Africa. Second, the identification of editors' and editorial board members' genders proved challenging at times, as it involved matching names with additional information from various sources. Future studies should strive for more accurate identification of binary and non-binary genders to ensure the reliability of the data and conclusions drawn.

Third, this study relied heavily on information available on the internet. It is important to acknowledge that some institutional journals may not be listed online due to varying levels of information and communication technology adoption in different African countries. Future research should seek to uncover the gender dynamics of journals in African institutions that are not listed in journal databases or available on institutional websites.

By addressing these limitations and exploring the suggested future directions, subsequent research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of gender representation in scholarly journal management across Africa.

Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate gender diversity in the management of scholarly journals in ten East Swahili and Anglophone-West African countries, focusing on journals listed in African Journals Online. The study examined 341 journals, identifying the genders of editors/editors-in-chief and editorial board members. The results revealed a pervasive marginalization and exclusion of women from editor/editor-in-chief positions and editorial boards in these regions.

The lack of gender diversity among journal editors and editorial boards represents an injustice against women and contributes to other inequalities. Biases and undervaluation of women's scholarship, such as feminist studies, are perpetuated by men's domination in knowledge management. To address these disparities, the study proposes two key recommendations.

Firstly, women should actively participate in networks that support their peers in academia. This recommendation stems from the finding that journals with women editors-in-chief had a higher representation of women on their editorial boards. This suggests that women editors-in-chief are more likely to promote gender diversity in their editorial boards.

Second, the study recommends that both institutions and journals adopt and implement clear gender diversity and inclusion statements. By actively working towards greater representation of women in knowledge management and scholarly publications, these institutions and journals can help mitigate the existing gender disparities. In conclusion, promoting gender diversity in journal management is crucial not only for achieving greater equity in academia but also for fostering a more inclusive and diverse environment in scholarly publishing.

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