

Decolonizing Knowledge Production: Barriers and Strategies for African Scholars in Academic Publishing

Sylvia Ndanu Mutua

Department of Communication Studies, School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Technical University of Mombasa, P.O. Box 90420 – 80100, Mombasa, Kenya.

Author's email: smutua2014@tum.ac.ke

Abstract

African researchers face significant challenges in academic publishing, including financial constraints, epistemic marginalization, linguistic biases, and reliance on informal support systems. These barriers hinder equitable participation in global knowledge production and perpetuate systemic inequalities. A qualitative phenomenological study involving 50 African intellectuals across disciplines explored these issues through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis revealed key obstacles, such as high article processing charges (APCs) and limited institutional funding, which hinder publication in high-impact journals. Linguistic biases favor English, disadvantaging non-native speakers, while peer review processes often exclude African perspectives, pressuring scholars to conform to Western epistemologies. Despite these hurdles, informal peer networks provide practical and emotional support, fostering resilience among African scholars. The findings underscore systemic inequities in academic publishing and the urgent need for inclusive reforms. Recommendations include decolonized knowledge production approaches that validate African epistemologies, ensure financial support, and promote linguistic inclusivity. Such measures would enable African researchers to share contextually relevant insights, enriching the global knowledge ecosystem. By addressing these disparities, the study contributes to advancing equality in academic publishing and strengthening efforts to decolonize scholarly communication. Enhanced inclusion of African scholars is essential for fostering diverse and equitable global scholarship.

Key Words: Academic Publishing; African Scholars; Decolonization; Epistemic Marginalization; Open Access Barriers

Introduction

The global academic publishing industry, deeply rooted in colonial legacies, perpetuates systemic inequities that marginalize scholars from the Global South, particularly Africa. African researchers face significant barriers, including financial, epistemic, and linguistic challenges that hinder their ability to publish in high-impact journals. These challenges reflect historical disparities in power and resources within global academia, raising critical questions about accessibility, fairness, and the representation of African researchers in the knowledge production ecosystem (Noda, 2020; Ayandele & Oriola, 2023). Although Open Access (OA) publishing

initially promised to democratize research dissemination, elevated Article Processing Charges (APCs) have become a significant obstacle for underfunded African scholars. In many cases, APCs surpass the monthly income of researchers, rendering participation in OA publishing unsustainable without institutional support (Falola, 2022; Budzinski, Grebel, Wolling, & Zhang, 2020). This financial exclusion reinforces the monopolization of knowledge production by scholars with economic privilege, perpetuating disparities in the global academic landscape (Demeter & Demeter, 2020). Linguistic biases further compound these challenges. English, the dominant language in academic publishing, compels African scholars to conform

to linguistic norms that often undermine their ability to articulate culturally nuanced ideas (Politzer-Ahles, Girolamo, & Ghali, 2020). Non-native speakers face additional burdens of translation, often sacrificing cultural specificity and depth in their work. This linguistic dominance limits access for non-English speakers and narrows the diversity of epistemic perspectives in global scholarship (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986).

The peer review process, largely guided by Western epistemologies, exacerbates epistemic exclusion. African-centered research is often undervalued or dismissed, compelling scholars to adapt to Western paradigms at the expense of their cultural authenticity. This systematic bias, described as "intellectual imperialism" by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), prioritizes Western methodologies while marginalizing African knowledge systems (Noda, 2020; Hall, Godrie, & Heck, 2020; Mignolo, 2009). Critical race theory (CRT) further highlights how systemic biases in peer review sustain racial exclusions and reinforce epistemic hierarchies in global academia. Despite these obstacles, African scholars are actively decolonizing academic publishing through initiatives like the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and Feminist Africa. These platforms challenge Western paradigms, amplifying African voices and fostering diverse perspectives (Hall, Godrie, & Heck, 2020; Opoku, Nketsia, Nsowah, & Amponteng, 2024). However, they face limitations in gaining the prestige of Western journals, constraining their influence on career advancement and academic mobility (Opoku et al., 2024).

This study sought to investigate the structural and institutional barriers African scholars face in academic publishing. Using a phenomenological approach, it employed in-depth interviews with 50 African researchers across disciplines and regions to explore their challenges and coping strategies. The study aimed to: (1) analyze financial, linguistic, and epistemic obstacles, (2) examine the role of informal support networks, and (3) propose strategies to decolonize academic publishing. By centring African perspectives, this study advocates for reforms that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, fostering a more

representative global academic ecosystem for African Scholars.

Structural impediments in academic publishing that hinder African scholars are frequently based on historical disparities stemming from colonial legacies, financial constraints, epistemic exclusion, and language marginalization.

Colonial Legacies in Scholarly Publishing

The academic publishing business is structured on a colonial foundation that favors Western epistemologies and marginalizes knowledge from the Global South. Decolonial theorists such as Mignolo (2009) contend that the epistemic supremacy of Western paradigms, instituted during colonialism, persists inside modern academic structures, influencing the definition of legitimate knowledge. Ayandele & Oriola (2023) elucidate how Western-centric journals perpetuate this hegemony by establishing criteria that tacitly marginalize non-Western approaches and theoretical frameworks, so complicating the publication of research by African scholars that is rooted in local contexts. This structural exclusion, defined by a Eurocentric framework, constrains the representation of African viewpoints, perpetuating an intellectual hierarchy that privileges the Global North (Hall, Godrie, & Heck, 2020). African researchers have significant disadvantages in fields dominated by Western quantitative paradigms, particularly in the social sciences, where African epistemologies are frequently regarded as inappropriate for "mainstream" research (Kessi, Marks, & Ramugondo, 2020, p.280). Onditi (2024) further emphasizes that colonial arrangements hinder African scholars' capacity to publish work that accurately represents local realities, as their research frequently requires modification to conform to Western standards. This epistemic marginalization creates a cycle in which African knowledge systems stay marginalized, leading to a distorted global knowledge landscape that favors Western intellectual traditions (Noda, 2020).

Monetary and Organizational Obstacles

Besides epistemological discrimination, financial constraints represent a substantial obstacle for African scholars seeking to publish in high-

impact journals, especially under Open Access (OA) frameworks. Although open access (OA) publishing aims to democratize knowledge access, the substantial article processing costs (APCs) of numerous OA journals frequently render these publications inaccessible to researchers in low-resource environments (Demeter & Demeter, 2020). Budzinski et al. (2020) contend that OA models unintentionally generate novel types of financial exclusion, as APCs may surpass the monthly incomes of numerous African scholars, thereby perpetuating disparities in academic publishing. African institutions frequently lack the financial resources necessary to fund researchers' research and publishing requirements, exacerbating this problem (Falola, 2022). In these institutions, where financial support for research and publication is frequently restricted or nonexistent, scientists are compelled to self-finance their publication costs, resulting in a considerable deterrent to academic study. Severin, Eve, & Hürlimann (2020) assert that financial exclusion limits publication chances and shapes research agendas, as African scientists may forgo ambitious initiatives due to expected publication expenses. This economic obstacle intensifies the disparity in access to academic publishing, enabling scientists from affluent institutions to prevail in high-impact journals, while those from resource-limited environments stay marginalized (Lazem, Giglitto, Nkwo, Mthoko, Upani, & Peters, 2021).

Epistemic Exclusion and Bias in Peer Review

Peer review, designed to guarantee quality, frequently reinforces biases that prioritize Western epistemologies, so it marginalizes non-Western viewpoints. Kubota (2020) emphasizes that African researchers often face peer review bias when submitting research employing African theoretical frameworks, as Western reviewers may perceive these approaches as "unfamiliar" or "unscientific." This exclusionary dynamic corresponds with Critical Race Theory (CRT), which conceptualizes these biases as systemic rather than isolated, highlighting profound structural disparities within academics (Bell, 1995). Twumasi & Runswick (2024) contend that prejudice in peer review within global

academic publishing systematically disadvantages scholars from the Global South, who frequently must adhere to Western paradigms to secure publication acceptance. African researchers often dilute local perspectives to conform to Western standards, resulting in a loss of cultural individuality and intellectual authenticity (Hall, Godrie, & Heck, 2020). Critical Race Theory elucidates the systematic character of these exclusions, underscoring the necessity for more varied and inclusive peer review systems that acknowledge and legitimize non-Western epistemologies (Noda, 2020).

Challenges in Linguistics within Academic Publishing

The pre-eminence of English in academic publishing further marginalizes scholars from non-English-speaking backgrounds, introducing an extra dimension of exclusion. Shamsi, & Osam (2022) and Smith et al. (2023) elucidate that language biases preferentially benefit native English speakers, necessitating African scholars to traverse intricate linguistic obstacles to attain publication. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) challenges linguistic imperialism, asserting that the mandate to publish in English not only excludes non-English-speaking researchers but also constrains the diversity of perspectives in academia by marginalizing non-Western languages and knowledge systems. The requirement for English competence presents both a practical and conceptual obstacle for African researchers from multilingual environments. Academics from Francophone, Lusophone, and various language origins encounter the twin issue of translating intricate concepts into English while addressing reviewers who may be unfamiliar with the cultural nuances of their research (Yako, 2021). This linguistic prejudice compromises the intellectual integrity of African academia, compelling scholars to adhere to Western linguistic standards, frequently at the expense of local nuances and cultural insights (Smith et al., 2023).

Emerging African-Led Publishing Initiatives

In reaction to these structural obstacles, African-led publishing ventures have arisen as essential

outlets for advancing African studies. Institutions like CODESRIA and Feminist Africa create alternative platforms that emphasize African viewpoints and enable scholars to publish free from the financial and epistemological limitations imposed by Western publications (Opoku et al. 2024). These activities represent a decolonial strategy in academic publishing, contesting Western standards by elevating African perspectives and promoting enhanced inclusivity in knowledge creation (Severin et al. 2020). African-led publishing platforms present a viable alternative; nonetheless, they have difficulties in achieving the exposure and prestige linked to Western publications. Severin et al. (2020) observe that these platforms frequently encounter difficulties in garnering an international reputation, hence constraining their influence on scholars' career progression. Nevertheless, publishing initiatives in Africa have made considerable progress in cultivating a more inclusive and diverse academic environment, aiding the overarching endeavor of decolonizing knowledge and advancing African intellectual autonomy.

This present study employs a comprehensive theoretical framework that amalgamates Decolonial Theory, Critical Race Theory (CRT), and the Sociology of Knowledge to examine the systemic obstacles encountered by African scholars in international academic publications. Collectively, these frameworks underscore the influence of historical, racial, and epistemological elements on knowledge creation, exposing systemic obstacles for African scholars. Decolonial Theory, as articulated by Mignolo (2009) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), attacks the enduring influence of colonial legacies in academia, wherein Western epistemologies prevail, marginalizing non-Western viewpoints (Boillat, 2020; Ayandele & Oriola, 2023). This theory posits that global publishing perpetuates colonial inequalities by favoring Western methodologies, languages, and frameworks, frequently necessitating that African researchers conform to Western standards for publication (Onditi, 2024). Ngugi's critique of linguistic imperialism highlights how the supremacy of English in academia sustains Western power,

thereby marginalizing African languages and knowledge.

Critical Race Theory (CRT), based on the contributions of Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw, builds upon decolonial critiques by analyzing racial and systemic inequalities in academic institutions (Bell, 1995). Critical Race Theory underscores the detrimental impact of racial prejudices in peer review, editorial decisions, and financing on scholars from the Global South (Twumasi & Runswick, 2024; Noda, 2020). These prejudices perpetuate Eurocentric standards, frequently resulting in elevated rejection rates for African scholarship (Hall, Godrie, & Heck, 2020). The Sociology of Knowledge, based on Mannheim (1984), examines how social power dynamics influence knowledge validation, highlighting the predominance of Western institutions in establishing academic norms (Opoku et al. 2024). This concept contends that Western academic dominance frequently marginalizes African viewpoints, limiting intellectual diversity and compelling African researchers to adhere to Western standards (Yako, 2021; Shamsi & Osam, 2022). The integration of Decolonial Theory for historical context, Critical Race Theory for examining racial and structural biases, and the Sociology of Knowledge for understanding social power dynamics offers a holistic perspective on the obstacles encountered by African intellectuals. They advocate for revolutionary reforms in academic publications to enhance inclusion and equitable representation among diverse epistemologies.

Methodology

This present study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological approach to understand the experiences of African scholars in the global academic publishing landscape. The study sought to understand complex challenges such as financial constraints, epistemic marginalization, linguistic barriers, and the role of informal networks in knowledge production. This study was structured around semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and thematic analysis. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation across academic disciplines, career stages, and

geographical regions. The study recruited 50 participants from various fields, including Humanities, Social Sciences, and STEM, and selected them based on their experiences with both Western and African-based publishing platforms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, covering topics such as publishing costs, institutional support, peer review experiences, and the role of language in publication. Document analysis was used to contextualize the interview findings and enhance the study's validity and reliability. Thematic analysis was used to identify, organize, and interpret patterns within qualitative data. Ethical measures were implemented, including confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent.

Table 1. Demographic composition of respondents

Attribute	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Academic Discipline	Humanities	15	30%
	Social Sciences	12	24%
	STEM	15	30%
	Interdisciplinary Studies	8	16%
Career Stage	Early career (0–5 years)	20	40%
	Mid-career (6–15 years)	18	36%
	Senior (16+ years)	12	24%
Geographical Region	East Africa	15	30%
	West Africa	12	24%
	Central Africa	8	16%
	Southern Africa	15	30%
Institutional Type	Public University	30	60%
	Private University	15	30%
	Research Institute	5	10%
Publishing Experience	Published in OA Journals	40	80%
	Published in Non-OA Journals	10	20%
	Experience with Peer Review	50	100%
Primary Language	English	35	70%
	French	10	20%
	Portuguese	5	10%
Funding Access	Has Institutional Funding	20	40%
	No Institutional Funding	30	60%

Participants were primarily from public universities (60%), followed by private universities (30%) and research institutes (10%). The majority had experience with Open Access (OA) publishing (80%) and peer review (100%),

Results

A purposive sampling method was used to select 50 African scholars from diverse academic backgrounds, career stages, and regions within the continent. As shown in Table 1, respondents represented various disciplines, including humanities (30%), social sciences (24%), STEM (30%), and interdisciplinary studies (16%). Career stages were balanced, with 40% early-career scholars, 36% mid-career, and 24% senior scholars. Regional representation included East Africa (30%), West Africa (24%), Central Africa (16%), and Southern Africa (30%), capturing a broad spectrum of geographical and institutional contexts.

reflecting familiarity with contemporary academic publishing dynamics. Linguistically, 70% were native English speakers, with 20% French and 10% Portuguese speakers, underscoring the linguistic diversity within the

sample. Notably, only 40% had institutional funding, highlighting financial constraints faced by many African scholars in pursuing academic publishing opportunities. Figure 1 illustrates the

principal themes derived from the study findings: financial hurdles, epistemic exclusion, and linguistic challenges.

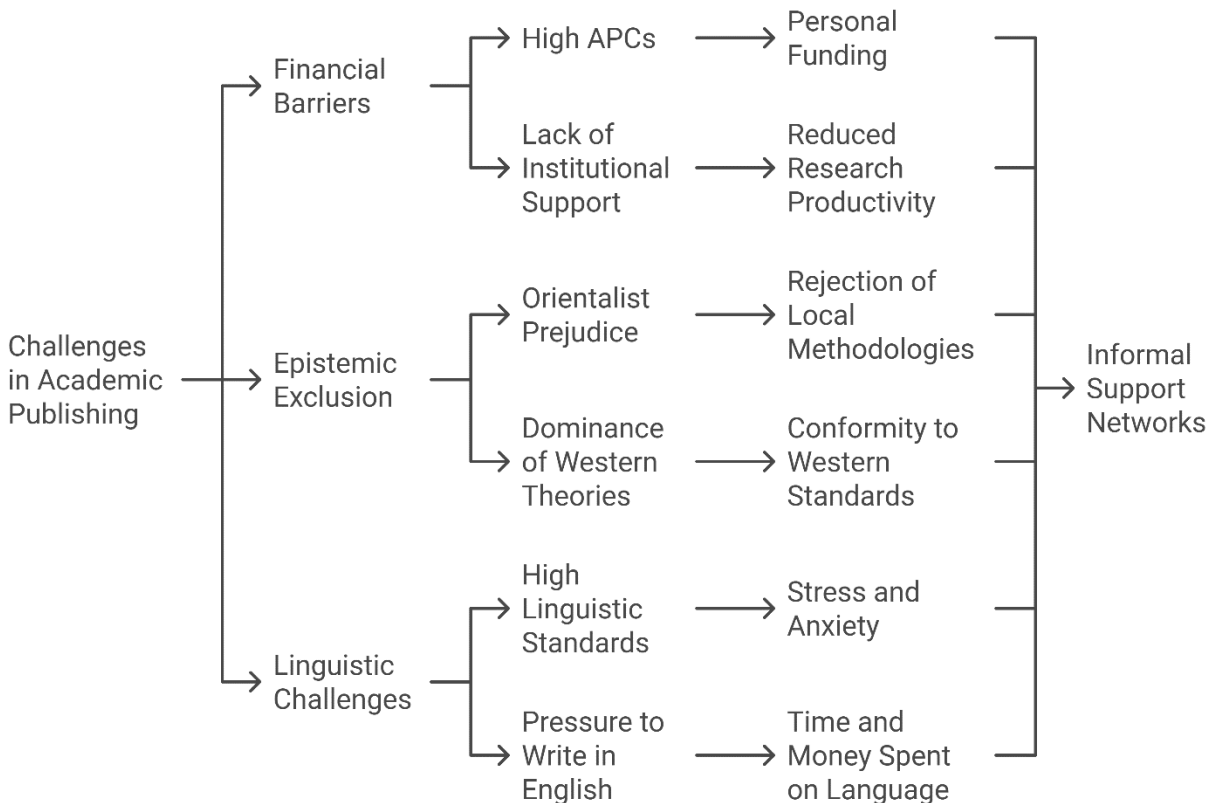


Figure 1. Prevalence of various challenges faced by respondents in the study

Financial Barriers

The participants were also able to identify several challenges, of which the most notable was the issue of costs incurred in the publishing of academic articles. The expensive APC rates in the OA journals were mentioned most of the time as the main barrier to publishing for scholars from developing countries and Institutions with limited research funds. Some of the participants complained that APCs put authors in a dilemma in that they had to decide between paying for a good journal and other needs, such as feeding. For example, an academic from East Africa said;

I just cannot be able to meet the prices set for the publication of such journals. That is disheartening to me because it is my

work that is passing unnoticed because of the money it brings (EE 2).

Many participants shared this view, stating that the problem of inadequate funds was compounded by the absence of institutional support. This showed that scholars from institutions that form the majority but have little research funds often had to fund their publications from their pockets, which many described as unsustainable. West Africa participants noted;

I am a postgraduate university student, and I have realized that my university does not provide any assistance when it comes to publishing the work. (WW7)

That is, one has to spend a lot of money out of their pocket, which is not easy when one is paid an average wage. (CC4).

Besides the financial problem, it had painful impacts on their prospect of promotion and visibility in their fields of expertise. Finally, participants also commented on how funding constraints affect research productivity. Some said they have been dissuaded from carrying out big research projects because of their unfamiliarity with funding and publishing expenses. This is the comment of one scholar from Southern Africa;

When you know that you may have to pay thousands to publish, this influences the type of research you are willing to undertake. Instead, I just choose the topics I know will be less likely to get rejected because I do not have the time or the energy to fight for a more unique or provocative idea. (SS9).

This can be seen as a part of a more general worry about how funding not only excludes publishing but also reduces the range and depth of scholarship coming from Africa.

Epistemic Exclusion

The second major theme identified in the studies was the epistemic marginalization within the worldwide academic publishing environment. Some participants complained about the failure to provide appreciation or affirmation for studies based on African perspectives. Academics said that they experienced an orientalist prejudice while submitting their papers for peer reviews, as the peers infused their bias into the methods that were incompatible with the scholars' methodological and theoretical frameworks. Several participants argued that;

When I was submitting my paper, the reviewers complained that I used local data, but these are the issues we encounter day in and day out in our societies! (CC8)

This epistemological marginalization was again worsened by what was perceived as a domination of Western theories and methods in

publication. Some of the participants pointed out that their work, despite attempting to determine local problems and solutions using local epistemologies, was easily rejected by Western journals. A scholar from Central Africa put it in this way;

Every time I write a paper, it seems like I have to explain to a group of people who do not understand our environment. (EE4).

It is always tiring to defend why our opinions count (WW5).

Such sentiments are representative of a general preoccupation with the lack of representation of African epistemologies in the global academia, thus the call for more diverse and inclusive publishing philosophies. It was also mentioned by participants that they have to make many changes to fit their work in Western academic standards so that they are publishable. This frequently resulted in a watering down of their concepts since they had to bend to the convention of most of the editors from Western nations. One participant from Nigeria said;

Some of the time, I transform the papers so that they have a 'global look' or 'universality' despite eradicating some local information that requires a great deal of understanding. (WW3)

It is rather irritating, but one has to publish to progress in one's career path (CC4).

Linguistic Challenges

Another critical aspect that participants reported was the linguistic barriers that learners with English as a second language experienced. Some scholars described themselves as losing the competition for publishing their works in English-focused journals because the linguistic standards they expected limited their ability to convey their thoughts. Several of the study's participants reported that, regardless of the quality of the research, their work was often overlooked as a result of perceived language impairment. One scholar from Kenya said;

I have good research, but what I received back is more regarding

*grammar than the content of my work.
It's discouraging. (EE8).*

Given that English has become the leading language in academic publishing, researchers from multilingual backgrounds face increased disadvantages when doing duties in their second languages. This linguistic imperialism excludes non-native speakers from the international scholarly arena and undermines the substantial knowledge that may be found in African languages. A scholar from South Africa expressed a desire for increased opportunities to publish in African languages.

Our local languages have notions and paradigms that do not have a direct equivalent in the English language. (SS12).

This underscores the fact that there is a need for more languages in journals where different languages used by authors are appreciated. Furthermore, participants said that the pressure to write in English often provoked further stress and anxiety because participants had to spend more time or money to enhance the English language instead of the research. A participant from a Francophone background stated;

I wish I could spend more time doing my research, but I have to attend language classes to enhance my writing skills. It detracts from the time I can be spending on what's important – my job. (CC2)

This highlights the overarching issues of linguistic inadequacies in the publication process, wherein scholars must navigate a system that favors English while simultaneously striving for authenticity and intellectual integrity.

Informal Support Networks

Participants further observed that African researchers encounter numerous challenges in publishing academic research; yet, they recognized alternative sources of support throughout the research process. The majority of scholars indicated that they sought assistance from their peers, mentors, or colleagues during the article publication process. Such networks

provided friends, family, and colleagues with both emotional support and tangible assistance, such as disseminating information about grants, reviewing each other's work, and providing feedback on papers. A participant hailing from Ghana stated,

In my last paper, I could not have published it without my colleagues. We also give out suggestions on where to submit and assist each other in the editing process. It makes a huge difference. (WW10).

Collaboration among African researchers in the quest for academic publication is essential due to the often isolating nature of the publishing process. This type of network is crucial for researchers since it empowers them, facilitates the sharing of coping mechanisms inside academia, and amplifies their voices. Furthermore, participants emphasized the importance of having a mentor during the publication process. Several respondents noted that the presence of amicable individuals to assist African scholars in the publication process was positive since many mentors comprehended the diverse challenges faced by most African researchers. A scholar from Uganda stated,

My mentor has really been my savior. He was a professional and assisted me in avoiding some pitfalls of publishing. But for that support, I think I would have felt stranded. (EE5)

This underscores the necessity for institutional mentorship programs in academia to assist early-career scholars in navigating the challenges of publishing their research. Moreover, the utilization of technology has facilitated the establishment of informal support networks, as scholars can interact across countries through digital platforms. Several participants noted that social media and online discussion forums serve as excellent resources for support and assistance, facilitating communication among individuals in small or under-resourced departments. According to one researcher,

Social media has given avenues for networking, for example, I have managed to interact with

other scholars from different countries, especially on Facebook and WhatsApp. (SS7)

Engaging with fellow scholars from this continent has been immensely rewarding, and I have gained valuable insights from their experiences. (CC7)

This facet of digital connectivity demonstrates that, despite obstacles, African researchers are leveraging technology to enhance their academic publication endeavors.

Discussion

The financial constraints faced by African scholars underscore the persistent systemic inequalities in the academic publishing system. This study, following Budzinski et al. (2020) and Yako (2021), demonstrates that elevated Article Processing Charges (APCs) constitute a significant obstacle to publishing in Open Access (OA) journals, particularly for researchers affiliated with under-resourced universities. Critical racism theory (CRT) identifies financial exclusion as a structural obstacle rather than an individual deficiency, disproportionately impacting researchers from the Global South and sustaining economic and racial disparities (Twumasi & Runswick, 2024). Mignolo's (2013) study on the "coloniality of power" from a decolonial perspective clarifies how financial structures in publishing sustain global inequalities, with access to global knowledge creation reliant on economic resources rather than intellectual merit. The findings reveal that many African researchers, especially those lacking institutional funding, are required to self-finance their publications, a situation highlighted by Falola (2022) in the examination of financial constraints within low-resource institutions. This challenge has limited the scope of African scholarship and influences the nature of African research inquiries, leading scholars to avoid resource-intensive research studies. Addressing this imbalance requires that we re-evaluate the open-access models that prioritize inclusivity, enabling underfunded scholars to engage equitably in global academic discourse.

Epistemic marginalization in academic writing underscores enduring biases that favor Western

paradigms at the expense of African-centered frameworks. The findings of this study correspond with Smith et al. (2023), who highlight peer review practices that undermine research grounded in non-Western epistemologies. Consistent with CRT's assertion of systemic racial bias, most African scholars reported feeling forced to conform to the Western research standards for acceptance of their academic work, often at the expense of their cultural frameworks (Noda, 2020). The findings support the argument made by Hall, Godrie, and Heck (2020) that peer review is at times influenced by subconscious biases, which reinforce Western-centric ideas of validity and rigor at the expense of African Scholarship. Decolonial philosophy, especially Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) promotion of "epistemic sovereignty," offers a framework for contesting these exclusionary practices. African researchers must navigate Western perspectives that often overlook indigenous knowledge, as noted by Ayandele & Oriola (2023). This epistemic exclusion, as evidenced by the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 1984), reinforces the structural supremacy of Western academic institutions that prescribe acceptable kinds of knowing. The need for editorial reforms that acknowledge and validate non-Western paradigms is very important because failing to address these challenges limits the diversity of perspectives in global academia and sustains intellectual colonialism.

The dominance of English as the main language in academic writing also presents significant challenges for African scholars, especially those from non-Anglophone backgrounds. This study's findings align with those of Smith et al. (2023) and Shamsi & Osam (2022), indicating that language biases adversely affect non-native English speakers by requiring them to assimilate into the English language, often compromising the cultural specificity of their academic work. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) critique of linguistic imperialism captures this well because linguistic prejudice limits knowledge accessibility for non-native English speakers and constrains the articulation of culturally nuanced concepts in academia (Sadeghi & Alinasab, 2020). From a Critical Race Theory perspective, this language

exclusion spreads both racial and cultural disparities in academic publishing. As a result, Non-native English speakers face heightened scrutiny in peer review, concerning both the merit of their research and their language proficiency (Twumasi & Runswick, 2024). This bias can be understood within the sociology of knowledge framework as a mechanism that shapes global academic discourse by privileging certain languages and marginalizing others. Mitigating linguistic disparity necessitates a commitment from academic journals to implement multilingual publication policies or provide free translation assistance to enhance inclusion and enrich global scholarship with varied linguistic viewpoints.

African scholars demonstrate significant resilience despite structural obstacles by utilizing informal support networks. Digital networks, peer mentorship, and collegial support have proven to be essential resources in addressing the logistical and financial intricacies of publishing. This discovery corresponds with Burgess & Chataway (2021) and Mgaiwa & Kapinga (2021), who highlight the significance of informal networks in addressing institutional deficiencies, especially in resource-limited contexts. The sociology of knowledge paradigm underscores the significance of social capital in academic achievement, as researchers utilize informal networks to get resources and maneuver through institutional constraints. Bourdieu's (2011) concept of social capital is particularly pertinent in academia, as African scholars depend on these networks for mentorship and emotional sustenance. CRT emphasizes the significance of community resilience among oppressed groups, illustrating how African scholars collaboratively confront structural obstacles through the exchange of information and resources. The study's findings indicate that, despite the essential support provided by digital networks, there is a need for African universities and other research institutions to come up with formal mentorship programs to deliver constant assistance to early-career academics, therefore boosting resilience and promoting sustainable academic growth on the continent.

Addressing financial constraints through subsidized APCs or targeted funding can promote the democratization of OA publishing, thereby reducing the financial obstacles that impede African scholars' participation in global academia. Additionally, editorial policies should evolve to include diverse epistemic perspectives, challenging the dominance of Western theories, concepts, and paradigms and promoting a more pluralistic and inclusive discourse. The need for the promotion of linguistic diversity is essential in academic discourse. This will enable publications to adopt multilingual policies and/or provide translation support to enable contributions from non-native English speakers while maintaining cultural nuances. The reliance on informal support networks underscores the need for formal mentorship frameworks in African institutions. Through the cultivation of community-based support, African scholars can bolster their resilience, thereby maintaining their essential role in the global academic arena.

Conclusion

This present study has highlighted the substantial and diverse obstacles encountered by African scholars in worldwide academic publications, such as financial limitations, epistemological marginalization, linguistic difficulties, and dependence on informal support networks. From the perspectives of Decolonial Theory, Critical Race Theory, and the Sociology of Knowledge, these challenges are not discrete problems but rather structural and systemic inequities entrenched in both historical and colonial legacies. Overcoming these obstacles requires a thorough reform of academic publications to promote inclusivity, equitable funding, and enhanced language diversity, thus removing the enduring colonial frameworks that restrict the full engagement of African researchers. This change would empower African voices and enhance global research, fostering a more egalitarian and pluralistic knowledge environment that appreciates multiple epistemologies. By emphasizing inclusivity and eliminating exclusionary practices, the academic publishing sector can progress towards a future in which African scholars and other underrepresented voices

possess equal chances to contribute to and influence global knowledge production.

Acknowledgments

I thank all the respondents for their invaluable contributions to this study, which made this publication possible.

References

- Ayandele, O., & Oriola, T. B. (2023). Africa, Knowledge Production and Scholarly Prestige. In *Decolonizing African Studies Pedagogies: Knowledge Production, Epistemic Imperialism and Black Agency*: 55-71pp Cham: Springer International Publishing
- Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory. *University of Illinois Law Review*, 4(3), 823-846
- Bourdieu, P. (2011). The forms of capital. (1986). *Cultural theory: An anthology*, 1(81-93): 949
- Budzinski, O., Grebel, T., Wolling, J., & Zhang, X. (2020). Drivers of article processing charges in open access. *Scientometrics*, 124, 2185-2206
- Burgess, H. E., & Chataway, J. (2021). The importance of mentorship and collaboration for scientific capacity-building and capacity-sharing: perspectives of African scientists. *F1000Research*, 10.
- Demeter, M., & Demeter, M. (2020). Gatekeepers of knowledge dissemination: Inequality in journal editorial boards. *Academic knowledge production and the global south: Questioning inequality and under-representation*, 137-151.
- Falola, T. (2022). *Decolonizing African knowledge: autoethnography and African epistemologies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, B. L., Godrie, B., & Heck, I. (2020). Knowledge democracy and epistemic in/justice: Reflections on a conversation. *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 21(1), 27-45.
- Kessi, S., Marks, Z., & Ramugondo, E. (2020). Decolonizing African Studies. *Critical African Studies*, 12(3), 271-282.
- Kubota, R. (2020). Confronting epistemological racism, decolonizing scholarly knowledge: Race and gender in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 41(5), 712-732.
- Lazem, S., Giglito, D., Nkwo, M. S., Mthoko, H., Upani, J., & Peters, A. (2021). Challenges and paradoxes in decolonising HCI: A critical discussion. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, 1-38.
- Mannheim, K. (1984). Sociology of knowledge. *Tavistock Publication Limited*.
- Mgaiwa, S., & Kapinga, O. (2021). Mentorship of early career academics in Tanzania: issues and implications for the next generation of academics. *Higher Education Pedagogies*, 6(1), 114-134.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom. *Theory, culture & society*, 26(7-8), 159-181.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2013). Introduction: Coloniality of power and de-colonial thinking. *Globalization and the decolonial option*, 1-21.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. (1986). *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. James Currey.
- Noda, O. (2020). Epistemic hegemony: the Western straitjacket and post-colonial scars in academic publishing. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 63(1), e007.
- Onditi, F. (2024). Eurocentrism vs. Afrocentric Scholarship: A Constructive Disruptive Account of an Academic (Conflictology) Self-Reflexivity. *Alternatives*, 03043754241247257.
- Opoku, M. P., Nketsia, W., Nsowah, F. A., & Amponteng, M. (2024). 4 Perception of researchers from non-Western countries towards publishing in international peer-reviewed journals. *Developing Feedback Literacy for Academic Journal Peer Review: Narratives from Researchers in Education and Applied Linguistics*.
- Politzer-Ahles, S., Girolamo, T., & Ghali, S. (2020). Preliminary evidence of linguistic bias in academic reviewing. *Journal of English for academic purposes*, 47, 100895.
- Sadeghi, K., & Alinasab, M. (2020). Academic conflict in applied linguistics research article discussions: The case of native and

- non-native writers. *English for Specific Purposes*, 59, 17-28.
- Severin, A., Egger, M., Eve, M. P., & Hürlimann, D. (2020). Discipline-specific open access publishing practices and barriers to change: an evidence-based review. *F1000Research*, 7, 1925.
- Shamsi, A. F., & Osam, U. V. (2022). Challenges and support in article publication: Perspectives of non-native English speaking doctoral students in a "Publish or No Degree" context. *Sage Open*, 12(2), 21582440221095021.
- Smith, A. C., Merz, L., Borden, J. B., Gulick, C. K., Kshirsagar, A. R., & Bruna, E. M. (2021). Assessing the effect of article processing charges on the geographic diversity of authors using Elsevier's "Mirror Journal" system. *Quantitative Science Studies*, 2(4), 1123-1143.
- Smith, O. M., Davis, K. L., Pizza, R. B., Waterman, R., Dobson, K. C., Foster, B., ... & Davis, C. L. (2023). Peer review perpetuates barriers for historically excluded groups. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 7(4), 512-523.
- Twumasi, R., & Runswick, O. (2024). Organisation Studies Publishing is Racist: A Call for Change. *Stolen Tools*, 2(1), 41-48
- Yako, L. (2021). Decolonizing knowledge production: A practical guide. *Counterp*
- unch April*, 9, 2021