
ENHANCING FACULTY RESEARCH VISIBILITY IN THE ERA OF OPEN SCIENCE IN UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF DIGITAL SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

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Abstract

This study examined the use of digital scholarly communication platforms (DSCP) by faculty in federal universities in Nigeria. The survey design was descriptive, and the study population comprised all faculty in federal universities in Nigeria. The census sampling technique was adopted, and the online questionnaire was used for data collection. The online questionnaire was administered to faculty through professional networks such as LinkedIn and WhatsApp platforms, and 917 completed it, which formed the basis for the analysis. Findings revealed that Nigerian university faculty predominantly use Google Scholar Profiles and ResearchGate for promoting their research, reflecting a strong preference for platforms that provide citation tracking, visibility, and academic networking opportunities. Faculty placed high value on DSCP for enhancing research visibility. The findings also revealed that DSCP facilitates collaborative research that contributes to faculty research visibility by enabling co-authorship opportunities, fostering connections with researchers in similar fields, supporting regular scholarly interactions, improving the visibility of faculty research outputs, and helping to identify potential research collaborators. However, barriers such as inadequate institutional support or training, concerns about data privacy and research misuse, low digital literacy, time constraints, and the challenge of managing multiple profiles hinder Nigerian university faculty from effectively using DSCP. The hypothesis test showed a strong positive statistically significant relationship between research visibility and research collaboration among faculty. The authors recommended that university libraries should prioritize targeted training on ASNPs and digital literacy skills for faculty, promote awareness of

ORCID, and provide structured support for the effective use of DSCP

Keywords: *Faculty, research visibility, open science, digital scholarly communication platforms, universities in Nigeria.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan platform komunikasi ilmiah digital (DSCP) oleh staf pengajar di universitas negeri (federal) di Nigeria. Desain survei yang digunakan bersifat deskriptif, dengan populasi penelitian yang mencakup seluruh staf pengajar di universitas negeri Nigeria. Teknik pengambilan sampel sensus diterapkan, dan kuesioner daring digunakan untuk pengumpulan data. Kuesioner daring tersebut disebarkan kepada staf pengajar melalui jaringan profesional seperti LinkedIn dan WhatsApp; sebanyak 917 responden mengisi kuesioner tersebut, yang kemudian menjadi dasar analisis. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa staf pengajar universitas di Nigeria lebih banyak menggunakan Google Scholar Profiles dan ResearchGate untuk mempromosikan penelitian mereka, yang mencerminkan preferensi kuat terhadap platform yang menyediakan fitur pelacakan sitasi, visibilitas, dan peluang jejaring akademik. Staf pengajar sangat menghargai peran DSCP dalam meningkatkan visibilitas penelitian. Temuan juga mengungkapkan bahwa DSCP memfasilitasi penelitian kolaboratif yang berkontribusi pada visibilitas penelitian staf pengajar dengan cara membuka peluang penulisan bersama (co-authorship), membangun koneksi dengan peneliti di bidang serupa, mendukung interaksi ilmiah secara rutin, meningkatkan visibilitas hasil penelitian, serta membantu mengidentifikasi calon mitra kolaborasi penelitian. Namun, berbagai hambatan—seperti kurangnya dukungan atau pelatihan institusional, kekhawatiran mengenai privasi data dan penyalahgunaan penelitian, rendahnya literasi digital, keterbatasan waktu, serta tantangan dalam mengelola banyak profil—menghalangi staf pengajar universitas di Nigeria untuk memanfaatkan DSCP secara efektif. Uji hipotesis menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif yang kuat dan signifikan secara statistik antara visibilitas penelitian dan kolaborasi penelitian di kalangan staf pengajar. Penulis merekomendasikan agar perpustakaan universitas memprioritaskan pelatihan terarah mengenai platform jejaring ilmiah akademik (ASNP) dan keterampilan literasi digital bagi staf pengajar, meningkatkan kesadaran tentang ORCID, serta menyediakan dukungan terstruktur untuk penggunaan DSCP secara efektif.

Kata kunci: *Dosen, visibilitas penelitian, sains terbuka, platform komunikasi ilmiah digital, universitas di Nigeria.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global scholarly communication system is experiencing a massive change in line with the tenets of open science, which center on transparency, open access, research collaboration at all phases, and the free flow of knowledge (Awoyemi & Agbetuyi, 2024). UNESCO (2021) defines open science as an inclusive research method that embraces openness through all the steps of developing research. It aims at facilitating the open access, accessibility, and reusability of scientific outputs (publications, data, software, methodologies, and peer review) for the academic community and society in general. Open science will facilitate the dismantling of the walls to enable additional individuals to invest in the creation of academic information, reproducibility, and the overall development of knowledge (Ciriminna et al., 2021). The resulting

paradigm shift provides researchers and institutions with new opportunities and responsibilities to redesign the way scholarly work is shared, assessed, and used.

Within this developing ecosystem, the visibility of research has become a key determinant of academic career, building cooperation, and institutional reputation. Research visibility is the level at which academic outputs are findable, accessible, and referenced within and outside academia (Musa et al., 2024; Awoyemi & Agbetuyi, 2024). In the case of individual faculty members, high visibility might result in a higher rate of citation, requests to collaborate, and authority in their area (Polyakov et al., 2017; Abramo et al., 2023). In the case of universities, the accumulated presence of faculty research helps with international ranking, assessment, collaboration, and a competitive edge in gaining funds (Ogunbodede & Okiy, 2020; Lariviere et al., 2015). In that regard, improving the visibility of research is not just an academic issue but a strategic need for individual researchers and institutions that want to be successful in the competitive world of world knowledge production.

Faculty and institutions in developed countries have adopted open science practices as well as digital tools, such as Digital Scholarly Communication Platforms (DSCP) as an effective research-visibility and impact-enhancing strategy (Salami et al., 2020). DSCPs include ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Mendeley, Google Scholar, and ORCID, among others, allowing academics to build professional profiles, publish works, collect citations, collaborate with colleagues, and increase the visibility of their work. Moreover, networking and exchange of knowledge and reviewing of research could also be encouraged through these channels, provided the institutions show a high degree of support, both policy-wise and training-wise (Musa et al., 2024). Special research communication offices, open access requirements, and sufficient investment in dissemination activities are now becoming part of research processes. In these situations, the development and maintenance of a digital research profile is part of academic training, making using DSCP strategic and common (Corvello et al., 2020; Laakso et al., 2017; Nicholas and Rowlands, 2011). Recent studies have demonstrated that the integration of these platforms into research practices improves collaboration, exchange of knowledge, visibility and is considered to be one of the primary drivers of research impact in developed contexts (Vermond et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2021).

Unlike in the developed contexts, Nigeria faculty are struggling greatly to use DSCP to increase research visibility. Some faculty personally maintain the DSCP profiles and post their works, whereas many do not know about such tools because they lack the required training, skills, and institutional encouragement to use them (Ogunbodede et al., 2023; Naik, 2023; Ali et al., 2022; Awoyemi & Agbetuyi, 2024; Ezema & Eze, 2024). The most significant obstacle is the extremely high cost of publication in reputable journals, which most faculty can't afford due to low wages and little institutional funding, which reduces the extent of global visibility besides deterring submissions (Popoola et al., 2024; Egbetokun et al., 2022; Ogunode, 2020). By contrast, institutions in South Africa finance high-impact journals, thereby making faculty and the institutions more visible and more capable of receiving research grants (Ocholla and Maluleka, 2022; Tomaselli, 2018). These gap differences indicate more fundamental structural problems in the higher education sector in Nigeria, such as chronic underinvestment, poor research facilities,

ineffective research support mechanisms, and the lack of coordinated policies in disseminating and funding research (Ezema & Eze, 2024; Popoola et al., 2024; Ogunode & Gregory, 2023; Egbetokun et al., 2022; Ogunode, 2020). As a result, Nigerian research output may be characterized by poor international competitiveness, low international ranking, and low acquisition of grants. These gaps are of paramount importance to close to ensure that Nigerian scholarship is in accord with the ethos of open science and its principles of equal access, transparency, and cooperation.

To overcome these gaps, the Nigerian universities will have to prioritize systematic education regarding the application of DSCP and consider them part of the institutional research support systems (Akinde, 2024; Egbetokun et al., 2022; Uzorka and Olaniyan, 2022). But little empirical research has been conducted on what kinds of DSCP Nigerian university faculty are presently using and to what degree they contribute to greater research visibility, as well as how this facilitates collaborative research and what obstacles are encountered with the use of DSCP. It is imperative that these gaps be addressed to enable the Nigerian universities not only to increase their visibility but also to become active members of the global scholarly community.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that DSCPs like ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and Academia.edu have become critical in increasing the visibility of research, collaboration, and scholarly impact in the era of open science (Musa et al., 2024; Wiechetek and Pastuszak, 2022; Salami et al., 2020). In developed nations, faculty are strategically employing these platforms in their research processes to present their work, monitor, influence, and create partnerships well supported with institutional funding, policy, and training, whereas Nigerian scholars suffer continued limitations. Most faculty in Nigeria have no knowledge or use of DSCP because of poor digital skills, lack of institutional support, and poor research communication policy. The high cost of publication in prestigious journals again diminishes opportunities to gain global visibility (Musa et al., 2024; Salami et al., 2020). These difficulties, exacerbated by a history of chronic underinvestment and inadequate research facilities, lead to low citation impact, low international collaborations, and low international competitiveness in the award of research grants. Nonetheless, although DSCP has the potential to bridge these gaps, little empirical data exists about the kinds of DSCP that Nigerian university faculty utilize, whether it increases the visibility of research, and to what degree, the role DSCP plays in encouraging collaborative research, and the difficulties related to using DSCP.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What DSCP platforms do faculty frequently use to promote their research?
- To what extent do DSCP enhance the visibility of scholarly research beyond traditional academic publishing channels?
- In what ways do DSCP facilitate collaborative research that contributes to faculty research visibility?
- What challenges do faculty encounter in the use of DSCP?

Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between research visibility and research collaboration among faculty members.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature was reviewed according to the research questions.

Digital scholarly communication platforms used by faculty to promote their research

Stephen and Pramanathan (2020) investigated awareness and use of the academic social networking sites (ASNS) among the LIS professionals in India. This paper demonstrates that the professionals were familiar with ASNS, and Google Scholar and Academia were the most popular ASNS with LIS professionals. Also, Subaveerapandiyan and Sumath (2024) investigated awareness and use of ASNS by female research scholars and faculty members in Tamil Nadu, India. The research scholars (838 female) were surveyed via online platforms using a structured questionnaire. Most respondents use one or more ASNS, with Google Scholar being the most popular. Moreover, Adeniyi et al. (2024) determined the knowledge and utilization of ASNTs by Nigerian scholars. The result indicates that ResearchGate and Academia.edu were known by the majority of the respondents, and they were often used. Mbada et al. (2023) conducted research on the quality of awareness and utilization of academic social networking tools among physiotherapy education providers in Nigeria. Most of the respondents were aware of and used ASNTs, including ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Google Plus, LinkedIn, and Academia.edu. Similarly, Salami et al. (2020) studied academic social media utilization in improving scholarly communication among faculty members in federal universities in Nigeria based on 387 respondents. It was found that the faculty members rely on academic social media to find and access knowledge with other researchers using majorly three academic social media platforms, i.e., Academia.edu, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate.

Extent to which digital scholarly communication platforms enhance the visibility of scholarly research

Scholarly research outside of traditional publication gatekeepers has grown exponentially due to ASNPs such as ResearchGate, Academia.edu, and Mendeley. These platforms allow wider publication of research results, networking, and cross-disciplinary collaboration, which can motivate democratic distribution of knowledge and lead to expansion of scholarly contributions to more people, including those outside of the academic world (Rimban, 2023; Jordan, 2022; Shah, 2021; Masenya, 2021). Engagement in social media, such as posting and interaction on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, is also associated with better journal metrics and an increased involvement of people in the field of consideration, but the correlation depends on such factors as content quality and the relevancy of the identified themes (Nacipucha et al., 2024; Zimba & Gasparyan, 2021). These alternative metrics (altmetrics) led by ASNPs are seen to supplement the traditional citation counts and provide a complete picture of the research impact (Zimba & Gasparyan, 2021; Manca, 2018). Nevertheless, difficulties persist, and they are associated with the issue of data privacy, academic quality, copyright, and the authenticity of platform-derived

metrics (Rimban, 2023; Francke & Hammarfelt, 2021; Masenya, 2021; Manca, 2018). Although the evidence backs the concept of ASNPs in contributing to the higher awareness of research, its impact depends on individual fields, the platform, and audience interaction and continues to require further longitudinal and comparative research on its effects in the long term (Nacipucha et al., 2024; Rimban, 2023; Manca, 2018). Altogether, the ASNPs are a new wave in academic communication, and it is crucial to employ them wisely and strategically to derive utmost profits and battle perpetual problems.

Ways in which digital scholarly communication platforms facilitate collaborative research that contributes to faculty research visibility

ASNPs allow a collaborative approach to research and increase faculty research exposure in a variety of ways. Such platforms allow researchers to network with colleagues all over the world, list publications and data, and receive comments, leading to teamwork and making results more attainable (Pandya & Vyas, 2024; Masenya, 2021; Ebrahim, 2015). The empirical observations indicate that ASNPs facilitate the establishment of research networks in different countries, eliminate geographical and institutional distance, and allow the possibility of interdisciplinary research, which increases the visibility and impact of research (Pandya & Vyas, 2024; Mason, 2020; Corvello et al., 2020). Researchers actively use the knowledge acquired on these platforms in their work, which allows them to gain new competencies; additionally, the collaborative functionalities and shared values of the community are the main factors that facilitate knowledge sharing (Masenya, 2021; Corvello et al., 2020). Social-signaling and virtual networking properties can also weaken the social markers themselves, and consequently, faculty can project and develop intentional discourse about research and collaboration into less inflammatory forms (Park et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the lack of participation, copyright issues, and the unrealized potential of interactive functions may act as barriers to fully realizing the potential of these platforms (Masenya, 2021; Mason, 2020). While ASNPs serve as valuable tools for collaborative research and enhancing faculty visibility, however, they require active engagement and proactive participation.

Challenges faculty encounter in the use of digital scholarly communication platforms

In both developed and developing nations, faculty members encounter multiple problems with the use of academic social networking platforms (ASNPs). Some of the issues are data privacy, difficulty in separating professional and personal identities, and the lack of knowledge about decent online practices that might lead to tensions and inhibit participation (Jordan & Weller, 2018; Malesky & Peters, 2012). Further hindering participation and effective use in developing countries such as Nigeria are the high costs of the internet, unreliable electricity power, and the digital divide, which are some additional barriers (Gamji et al., 2021). There are also still the questions of data quality, evaluation measures, and the necessity of effective algorithms to handle high amounts of information alongside disciplinary and positional variations that are used to affect usage patterns and difficulties (Mohammad et al., 2018). The mentioned realities indicate that better infrastructure, more user-friendly guidelines, and specific support are necessary to allow

the faculty to utilize the benefits of ASNP to the fullest but, at the same time, minimize the risks (Jordan & Weller, 2018; Mohammad et al., 2018; Gamji et al., 2021; Malesky & Peters, 2012).

Developed countries; however, share similar issues, but each one has a unique local context. Data security and privacy are also the main concerns since faculty are not always willing to share research projects or personal information out of fear of misdistribution or release (Akcyayir, 2017; Alsolamy, 2017). Intellectual property and copyright also play an important role, because occasionally a publisher alleges an infringement when a researcher publishes an article on an ASNP (Masenya, 2021). The faculty are also suffering with poor data quality, inadequate measurement metrics, and the inability to filter large amounts of information effectively (Mohammad et al., 2018). There is also resistance to the introduction of new technologies by older academics and fear of being seen online, along with a further lack of clarity about the boundaries of the profession that also restricts interaction, particularly for those who have less ability to digitize their lives (Akcyayir, 2017). The variations in disciplines and academic positions remain a factor influencing the way these platforms are employed and the hardships arising (Mohammad et al., 2018; Alsolamy, 2017).

Relationship between research visibility and research collaboration among faculty members.

Research consistently shows a positive relationship between research visibility and research collaboration among faculty. Studies have shown that increased visibility, often achieved through platforms such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate, enhances the discoverability of scholarly work, thereby attracting potential collaborators within and beyond institutional boundaries (Kumar & Margam, 2025; Pandya & Vyas, 2024). Collaboration itself has been widely recognized as a driver of improved research performance, visibility, and reputation, prompting calls for university management to actively support both domestic and international partnerships (Mwantimwa & Kassim, 2023). Knowledge sharing, a practice closely linked to research visibility, has also been shown to influence collaborative activity significantly among academics (Tan, 2016). While some studies have examined barriers and facilitators of collaboration, such as departmental climate and institutional support, none provide empirical evidence of a negative or absent relationship between visibility and collaboration. Rather, the literature consistently points to a positive association, with recommendations to leverage visibility as a catalyst for greater research collaboration (Kumar & Margam, 2025; Pandya & Vyas, 2024; Mwantimwa & Kassim, 2023; Tan, 2016).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DIT) by Rogers (2003), which explains how new ideas, products, services, or technologies spread through a population over time. The theory is well-suited to understanding the adoption of DSCP for enhancing faculty research visibility in Nigerian universities. According to Rogers, the rate and success of adoption depend on five key attributes of an innovation: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. For research question one, DIT suggests that the adoption of innovations such as DSCP depends largely on how potential users perceive these attributes.

Faculty are more likely to choose platforms that provide a clear relative advantage (e.g., efficient research dissemination), are compatible with their professional needs, and are not overly complex to use. The identification of the most commonly used platforms therefore reveals which DSCPs are perceived as most favourable and are diffusing fastest among Nigerian university faculty. For research question two, the concept of observability is central. DSCP enhances research visibility by making scholarly outputs more accessible to audiences beyond traditional journals, reaching interdisciplinary peers, practitioners, and the public. The improved visibility not only justifies the value of these platforms, but it also helps in reinforce their use by giving them positive comments in the academic community.

On research question three, the role of DSCP in enhancing the collaboration can be attributed to the fact that DIT focused on the communication channels within a social system. The social networks required to facilitate collaborative research with researchers around the world are enhanced by platforms that facilitate efficient communication, the sharing of knowledge, and building networks. When such collaborations are shared or broadcasted through DSCP, their use helps even more to gain visibility and results in a positive cycle of adoption and scholarship. With regard to question four of the research, DIT recognized that adoption may be inhibited due to factors like the perceived complexity, lack of trialability, or inability to meet prevailing norms or resources. Lack of digital literacy, a lack of sufficient infrastructure, privacy issues, and deficient support of these platforms by the institutions are possible challenges to the diffusion of the platforms as faced by Nigeria university faculty. Designing interventions that promote adoption and maximize the visible advantages of DSCP requires a thorough understanding these obstacles. Finally, the faculty's adoption and utilization of DSCP explains the correlation between research visibility and collaboration. DIT suggests that innovations spread more quickly when perceived as beneficial, compatible, and easy to use. Adopting these platforms by faculty, allows them to be more visible and gives them the opportunity to find collaborators, establish networks, and undertake common projects. As such, increased visibility can spur increased cooperation, which in turn contributes to the identified strong relationship. DIT provides a comprehensive lens for examining how DSCP are adopted by Nigerian university faculty, how they enhance research visibility and collaboration in the open science era, and what factors either facilitate or hinder their use.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The descriptive survey was applied in the study. The study population included all faculty in federal universities in Nigeria, and the census sampling method was utilized. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed online via professional social networks, such as LinkedIn and WhatsApp platforms, which are restricted to faculty in the various universities. Reminders for the questionnaire were also sent privately to the respondents to encourage responses. The survey lasted for three months, from February 10 to May 9, 2025. It was stated on the questionnaire that the respondents should not fill it out more than once. However, of the faculty who received the questionnaire, 917 completed it, and with that the analysis was conducted. The research procedures were conducted ethically during the distribution of the questionnaire. Initially, the researcher introduced himself and the purpose of

the study to the participants, obtaining their consent. All participants who completed the questionnaire process did so voluntarily.

The face and content validity tests administered by experts in the fields of measurement and evaluation, library, and information science establish that the questionnaire used was suitable for the study. To ensure that the instrument was reliable, a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85 was obtained. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data, while hypothesis testing was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment Correlations (PPMC) via SPSS version 29. A nominal scale and 4-point Likert-type scale were used to measure and analyze responses to the questionnaire. Research questions 2-4 adopted a criterion score of 2.5. The criterion score was calculated by dividing the total by 4, where the sum was (4 + 3 + 2 + 1) divided by 4, or the criterion score = (4 + 3 + 2 + 1)/4 = 2.5. For research question 1, any DSCP with a usage percentage above the mean percentage (17.4%) was categorized as "commonly used," while those below were categorized as "less commonly used." For research question 2, the mean response below 2.5 was considered low, and the mean response between 2.5 and 2.9 was considered moderate, while the mean response of 3.0 and above was considered high. Regarding research question 3, mean scores less than 2.5 were considered as faculty not perceiving DSCP as facilitating collaborative research effectively, while mean scores of 2.6 and above were considered as faculty perceiving DSCP as facilitating collaborative research that enhances visibility. For research question 4, the mean scores less than 2.5 were taken as disagreement, and the mean scores between 2.5 and above were taken as agreement.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS/RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section A: Demographic Information

Analysis and Presentation of Data

Table 1: Geo-political zones of the respondents

S/N	Geo-political zones	No. of responses
1.	Southern Nigeria	572
4.	Northern Nigeria	210
5.	Central Nigeria (middle belt)	135
	Total	917

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the responses came from southern Nigeria.

Table 2: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	489	53
Female	428	47
Total	917	100

The finding shows that the majority of the respondents are male.

Answering research questions

Based on the posed research questions, the findings of this study are discussed in this part. Tables 3-7 present the findings.

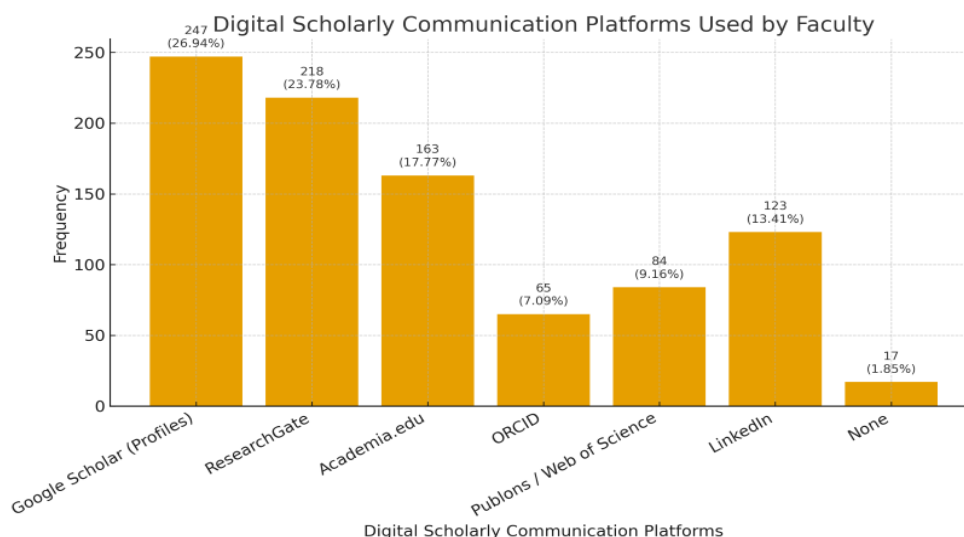
Research Question 1: What digital scholarly communication platforms are most commonly used by faculty for promoting their research?

Table 3: Digital Scholarly Communication Platforms Used by Faculty

S/N	Digital Scholarly Communication Platforms	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1.	Google Scholar (Profiles)	247	26.94
2.	ResearchGate	218	23.78
3.	Academia.edu	163	17.77
4.	ORCID (Researcher Identifier Profile)	65	7.09
5.	Publons / Web of Science Researcher Profiles	84	9.16
6.	LinkedIn (Academic/Professional Networking)	123	13.41
7.	I do not use any of the digital scholarly communication platforms	17	1.85
	Total	917	100%

The findings reveal that Nigerian university faculty predominantly use Google Scholar Profiles (26.94%) and ResearchGate (23.78%) to promote their research, reflecting a strong preference for platforms that provide citation tracking, visibility, and academic networking opportunities. Academia.edu (17.77%) also enjoys considerable usage, while LinkedIn (13.41%) and Publons/Web of Science Researcher Profiles (9.16%) are moderately adopted, likely for broader professional networking and peer review recognition, respectively. Adoption of ORCID (7.09%) is relatively low, suggesting limited awareness or institutional enforcement despite its global relevance. A small proportion of respondents (1.85%) indicated that they do not use any digital scholarly communication platforms (DSCP). Overall, these results imply that while Nigerian university faculty actively engage with popular platforms for research visibility, the minimal use

This is represented in a bar chart



A bar chart showing the frequency of respondents using each digital scholarly communication platforms.

Research Question 2: To what extent do digital scholarly communication platforms enhance the visibility of research beyond the traditional academic publishing?

Table 4: Extent to which Digital Scholarly Communication Platforms Enhance Research Visibility

S/ N	Digital scholarly platforms and research visibility	VH	H	L	VL	Mean	S.D
1.	Digital scholarly communication platforms have expanded the global reach of my research beyond my immediate academic community.	537	338	14	28	3.5	0.68
2.	These platforms are more effective than traditional publishing alone in reaching diverse and non-traditional audiences.	490	363	45	18	3.4	0.68
3.	My research has gained recognition or readership from international audiences through these platforms.	449	422	46	0	3.4	0.59
4.	I have observed my work being cited or referenced in other scholarly outputs as a result of exposure on these platforms.	409	472	18	18	3.3	0.63
5.	I have received engagement, feedback, or inquiries from researchers outside my institution through these platforms.	354	445	100	18	3.2	0.72

6.	I share working papers or preprints on these platforms, which increases the early visibility of my research.	354	463	82	18	3.2	0.70
7.	Altmetrics and analytics have helped improve the visibility of my research.	300	470	120	27	3.1	0.75
	Grand Mean					3.3	0.67

Table 4 show that DSCP enhance faculty research visibility to a high extent since all the mean scores are above the benchmark value of 2.5. Faculty members benefit most in expanding the global reach of their research and gaining recognition from international audiences. Other advantages, such as engagement from researchers outside their institutions, increased early visibility through sharing preprints, and the use of altmetrics, are also evident, though experienced to varying degrees. This suggests that while these platforms generally improve research visibility, the extent of their impact may depend on individual usage patterns, disciplinary practices, and the level of faculty engagement with digital scholarly communication tools.

Research Question 3: In what ways do digital scholarly communication platforms facilitate collaborative research that contributes to faculty research visibility?

Table 5: Ways Digital Scholarly Communication Platforms Facilitate Collaborative Research Contributing to Faculty Research Visibility

S/N	Ways DCCP Facilitates Collaborative Research	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1.	Digital scholarly communication platforms have enabled me to connect with researchers in my area of expertise.	363	518	18	18	3.3	0.61
2.	I engage in regular academic interactions with other scholars through these platforms.	339	550	28	0	3.3	0.53
3.	Digital scholarly communication platforms are effective for identifying potential research collaborators.	293	541	83	0	3.2	0.59
4.	Collaborative projects initiated through digital scholarly communication platforms have improved the visibility of my research.	321	514	73	9	3.2	0.61
5.	Using these platforms has expanded my professional academic network.	309	436	154	18	3.1	0.75
6.	These platforms help me maintain ongoing communication and engagement with my academic peers.	183	596	138	0	3.0	0.66
7.	I have obtained opportunities for collaborative research or co-authorship via these platforms.	236	445	97	139	2.9	0.95
	Grand Mean					3.1	0.67

All items in Table 5 exceed the criterion mean of 2.5, with a grand mean of 3.1, indicating a generally positive perception of DSCPs. Respondents agree that DSCPs help them connect with researchers in similar fields, engage in regular academic interactions, increase the visibility of their research outputs, and identify potential collaborators. Items related to expanding academic networks and sustaining communication received moderately positive ratings. Item 7, concerning opportunities for collaborative research or co-authorship, had the lowest mean (2.9) and the highest standard deviation (0.95), suggesting wide variation in users' experiences. Overall, DSCPs are viewed as valuable for supporting scholarly collaboration, though benefits vary, particularly regarding direct co-authorship opportunities.

Research Question 4: What challenges do faculty encounter in using digital scholarly communication platforms?

Table 6: Challenges Faculty Encounter in Using Digital Scholarly Communication Platforms

S/N	Challenges	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1.	My institution does not provide adequate support or training for effective use of these platforms.	220	490	190	17	2.9	0.72
2.	I am concerned about data privacy or misuse of my research when using these platforms	229	344	229	115	2.7	0.96
3.	Inadequate digital literacy	120	400	420	17	2.7	0.69
4.	I find it challenging to use digital scholarly communication platforms due to time constraints.	90	431	291	105	2.6	0.82
5.	Managing and updating multiple academic profiles is difficult	80	460	350	27	2.6	0.67
6.	I lack confidence in optimizing my profile to enhance research visibility.	80	190	560	87	2.3	0.75
7.	I encounter difficulties registering or setting up profiles on research gate.	90	170	230	427	2.0	0.95
	Grand Mean					2.5	0.79

Items 1-5 have mean values that are above the criterion mean of 2.5, while items 6-7 have mean values below the criterion mean, lack of confidence in optimizing profiles ($M = 2.3$), and difficulties in registering or setting up profiles ($M = 2.0$), which indicate lower agreement. The overall grand mean of 2.5 ($SD = 0.79$) reflects a moderate level of agreement among faculty regarding the challenges associated with using academic social networking platforms. The most frequently reported barriers are inadequate institutional support or training ($M = 2.9$) and concerns over data privacy or research misuse ($M = 2.7$), followed closely by inadequate digital literacy ($M = 2.7$). Time constraints ($M = 2.6$) and managing multiple profiles ($M = 2.6$) also emerged as

common but less critical issues. Overall, these results suggest that while faculty recognize the value of DSCP, institutional gaps, privacy concerns, and usability challenges may hinder optimal adoption and use.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between research visibility and research collaboration among faculty members.

Table 7: Relationship between research visibility and research collaboration

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	R	p-value	Remark
Research visibility	21.7	4.69				
Research collaboration	22.4	4.34	917	0.94	0.0015	Significant

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 7 indicates a strong positive relationship with a value of 0.94 and a p-value of 0.0015. The p-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05, testing the hypothesis at the 0.05 level. Since the p-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 0.05 significance level. This result implies that there is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between research visibility and research collaboration among faculty. The positive correlation means that faculty who experience higher research visibility also tend to engage more in collaborative research activities, and vice versa.

Discussion

The findings show that Nigerian university faculty actively engage with popular digital scholarly communication platforms, with Google Scholar Profiles and ResearchGate being the most frequently used for enhancing research visibility. This preference reflects a tendency toward widely recognized, easy-to-use platforms linked to citation tracking and research dissemination. The low usage of widely accepted identifiers such as ORCID, however, indicates the large disparity in standard researcher profiling. Although Google Scholar and ResearchGate increase discoverability in their respective platforms, a low adoption of ORCID can affect the overall global discoverability and integration of foreign research systems and inhibit collaboration. Such a situation may be due to limited awareness, lack of institutional support, and even doubts concerning the advantages of ORCID. These gaps could be addressed through specific awareness campaigns and institutional and capacity building to support the use of standardized identifiers, ensuring that faculty in Nigeria are subject to the world's best practices, improving visibility and international recognition. The results align with the DIT, which demonstrates that faculty in Nigerian universities embrace DSCP with regard to the perceived benefits, compatibility with job requirements, and usability. Google Scholar Profiles and ResearchGate are preferred to other platforms due to their comparative advantage, consistency with the research-sharing habits of the faculty, and ease of use. On the contrary, the low ORCID adoption indicates that the platform is regarded as less significant or more difficult to use, as the principle of DIT indicates that innovations are adopted when they are believed to be useful, consistent, and simple to adapt. This observation does not reflect the outcomes of Stephen and Pramanathan (2020) and Adeniyi

et al. (2024), who found that Google Scholar and Academia were the most popular DSCP among LIS professionals in India, and Adeniyi et al. found that ResearchGate and Academia.edu were the most popular in Nigeria.

Findings from the second research question reveal that faculty in Nigerian universities place high value on DSCP for enhancing research visibility. The most notable positive impacts include the opportunity to expand the research reach beyond the local academic community and improved acknowledgement by audiences located in other countries. The positive outcomes mentioned by faculty also include receiving engagement and feedback from researchers outside their institutions, gaining early visibility through sharing preprints, and utilizing altmetrics and analytics tools to track and enhance visibility. However, respondents rated the aspects of broadening academic networks and maintaining active connections with peers as high, despite not experiencing them universally. The result suggests that the degree of individual attachment to these platforms can determine their usefulness. This trend demonstrates the importance of specific capacity-building efforts that would assist the faculty in maximizing all of the visibility-increasing opportunities provided by DSCP. The result aligns with the DIT observability concept, which refers to how visible the outcome of an innovation is. In this case, the outcome was that the faculty in Nigerian universities appreciate the use of DSCPs to promote research visibility. The main visible advantages are an increased audience that goes beyond the local communities, having international recognition, collaborators among external researchers, preprints, and altmetrics that allow tracking the impact. These apparent results encourage subsequent use. This result aligns best with those of Nacipucha et al. (2024), Rimban (2023), and Manca (2018), who identified DSCP as a mechanism of increasing the visibility of research but acknowledged that their activity depends on the discipline, the platform, and the degree of user engagement.

The results of the third research question indicate broad agreement among faculty that DSCP facilitates collaborative research that contributes to faculty research visibility. In particular, DSCP fosters connections with researchers in similar fields, supports regular scholarly interactions, improves the visibility of faculty research outputs, aids in identifying potential research collaborators, and opportunities for collaborative research or co-authorship. These results suggest that DSCP could be used to improve the productivity and visibility of research by increasing collaboration, assuming faculty use the sites to engage regularly and usefully. The results favor DIT by showing how the existence of effective channels of communication within the DSCP promotes collaboration and increases the visibility of research, thus strengthening its adoption and intensifying its scholarly influence. The discovery is consistent with Pandya and Vyas (2024), Mason (2020), and Corvello et al. (2020), who observed that DSCP aid the establishment of international research networks, geographical and institutional barriers, and opportunities to collaborate with others interdisciplinary, all of which can lead to higher research visibility and impact.

The results of the fourth research question show some obstacles that can affect the application of DSCP by faculty. The major impediments are insufficient institutional encouragement or training, the risk of data confidentiality, and a possible abuse of studies, as well as poor digital literacy. Limited time and the ability to address several profiles were identified

as related but less critical problems. These limitations point to the idea that structural and trust issues have a considerable impact on the interest of faculty in the use of these platforms. Conversely, two of the platforms scored below the mean criterion due to a lack of impact from optimizing profiles and challenges in creating profiles, indicating that the fundamental aspects of platform and profile management are not significant barriers for most faculty. The limitations related to time constraints, the necessity to work with multiple profiles, and technical or content constraints in general were rated in the middle range, indicating that they do not represent a universal situation but occur rather often. To conclude, the usefulness of academic social networking sites for the faculty is well understood; however, a lack of institutional support, privacy issues, and some usage drawbacks still limit their full potential to achieve research visibility and collaboration. These results align with the DIT, which suggests that adoption may be hindered because it is perceived as complex, cannot be tested, or does not align with existing norms and resources. Among faculty members of the Nigerian universities, the most prominent inhibitors are the lack of digital literacy, concerns about privacy, time management issues, troubles handling more than one profile, and the lack of such support, which slows the immune system of such platforms. Such results support DIT findings, as they show that these barriers may hinder the diffusion of innovations, and thus specific interventions are needed to increase adoption and visibility advantages of DSCP. This result conforms to that stated by Akcayir (2017) and Alsolamy (2017), who claimed that the topics of privacy and data protection are still within the primary concern, and the faculty is usually unwilling to share the results of research or personal information because they are afraid that it can be applied wrongly or hacked. Nevertheless, it does not support the finding that poor or insufficient institutional support or training is a key impediment.

The result from the hypothesis shows a strong positive relationship between research visits and research collaboration. The positive correlation means that faculty who experience higher research visibility also tend to engage more in collaborative research activities, and vice versa. The results validate the DIT, which claimed that innovations can spread quickly when they are considered beneficial, easy to understand, and compatible. Faculty using these platforms that could increase their visibility may be in a better position to collaborate, network, and undertake collaborative initiatives; hence, increased visibility could lead to the propensity of increased collaboration, substantiating the existence of a strong relationship. The result aligns with the findings of Kumar and Margam (2025) and Pandya and Vyas (2024), who concluded that greater visibility, which is commonly attained with the help of such services as Google Scholar and ResearchGate, improves the discoverability of scholarly works, thereby attracting prospective collaborators both around and outside institutional borders.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings revealed that Nigerian university faculty predominantly use Google Scholar Profiles and ResearchGate to promote their research. Additionally, faculty highly valued DSCP for enhancing research visibility and perceive them as useful for facilitating collaborative research that improves their visibility. However, barriers such as inadequate institutional support or training,

concerns about data privacy and research misuse, low digital literacy, time constraints, and the challenge of managing multiple profiles hinder Nigerian university faculty from effectively using DSCP. The hypothesis test showed a positive, strong, statistically significant relationship between research visibility and research collaboration among faculty. The authors recommended that university libraries should prioritize targeted training on DSCP and digital literacy skills for faculty, promote awareness on the use of ORCID, and provide structured support for the effective use of DSCP.

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