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CHANGES, CHARACTERISTICS AND ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTENTS OF QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ADMINISTRATION

by

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ABSTRACT

The Contents of Quarterly Journal of Administration (QJN) for the period of 25 years were analyzed to find out the nature of publication, authorship, editorial policy, etc. 630 contributions, out of which 400 (63:49%) articles and 230 (36:51 %) book/article review were made by 284 and 119 contributors respectively The analysis illustrates the conceptual, theoretical and methodological nature of research in Administration in Nigeria. It also shows that these researches have on the whole been individualistic and theoretical.

The study concluded that there is the need to encourage collaboration among researchers in the area of Administration as well as diversification or researches into empirical and practical type of research. Finally, the study suggests among other things, the need to apply ISSN as well as sending copies for Indexing and Abstracting in Library and Information Science Abstracting (LISA).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of the structure, communication patterns and communication habits of scholars in different subject fields is increasingly receiving the attention of librarians and information scientists. The need to understand the above, as noted by Ibrahim (1991:8) is in both knowledge and subjects literatures. He further noted that the continuing changing characteristics of subject literature and the forms in which they are presented, as well as their effective utilization are other reasons why librarians and information scientists devote part of their research activities to the study of subject literatures.

One essential method that is helpful in understanding the structure of subjects field is content analysis. Content analysis has been defined by Berelson (1952:74) as research techniques for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of manifest content of communication.

In analyzing the content of any form of communication, collected data are changed into sets of symbols like motives, concepts, etc. These symbols could further on be quantified by breaking down the contents of materials into relevant units for information to point out characteristics of messages, which would help detect the biases, the intentions, prejudices, oversight, etc of people responsible for the work.

Bekkedal (1973:110) also observes that the investigator, using content analysis, can move away from individual titles to an objective description of the contents of a systematically

selected group of books or articles.

Following the above discussion, Nicholas and Ritchie (1978:70) identified the various types of published information employed in information exchange. These are:

(i) Articles (ii) News Item (iii) Reviews (iv) Citations/References

(v) Conference Proceeding (vi) Directory type information

(vii) Forthcoming events/calendars (viii) Letters

(ix) Illustrations/Advertisements

(x) Bibliographic information and services

The Quarterly Journal of Administration (QJA), published by the Institute of Administration, University of Ife, is one of the oldest journals in Nigeria. Although the first issue under the name QJA was published in October 1966, the journal was in existence much earlier than this date under the name **"ADMINISTRATION"**, the newsletter of the IOA, University of Ife. The journal is devoted to the study, research dissemination and exchange of knowledge and information on all aspects of administration and management.

There is no doubt that QJA had come a long way. It has survived more than four decades of publishing, even in an era when journals die no sooner than they are launched. Therefore, it is important to study the structure, communication patterns and contents of publication in the QJA in order to find out the changes that happened to it over time. Although contents analysis have been applied to many subjects areas, for instance, Afolabi and Mohammed (1984:32-44) and Momoh (1998:12-21 have applied the concepts to final year undergraduate library science projects and articles from Journal of Library Focus respectively, no study has been devoted to QJA.

Hence, this study analyzed the contents of the Quarterly Journal of Administration (QJA) from 1966-1991; a period of 25 years with the view to finding out:

(a) Nature of publication

(b) Authorship/author affiliation

(c) Research trend

(d) Data/Quantitative representation

The study is significant in the sense that it will provide useful information in determining the scope of the subject field-Administration. It will also reveal the developing and declining areas, as well as areas of weakness in coverage and of possible improvement. These, and the identifications of subject interrelations, trends and fashions would greatly help contributors, editors and librarians.

The scope of this study covers a period of twenty five (25) years, i.e. from 1966 - 1991. However, certain volumes were excluded from the study as a result of their physical inaccessibility. This was after several abortive attempts to locate them in libraries. Although all forms of communications in the journal were be considered, emphasis was placed on articles and book/article reviews, this is because they form the core intellectual contribution.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The method adopted is documentary. All the journals from 1966-91 were physically analysed with a view to collection data that will help in achieving the objectives of the study. For each article, five types of information were collected: (i) Bibliographical information such as title, author(s) and their addresses, date, etc. (ii) Nature of publication, i.e. articles or book/article review, and in case of articles, description of articles; (iii) Research trends; (iv) Quantitative representation, i.e. length of articles and number of references, and (v) Data representation, i.e. type of statistics and illustration used.

7.5 cm by 5.5 cm cards were used to collect the above information and later sorted out accordingly to obtain data necessary to analyze and discuss each of the above stated objectives.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

All the data derived from the journal for the period under review were quantified, processed and analysed for each of the objectives. Generally, only descriptive statistics, such as percentages of distributions, tables, etc. was used for analyzing data and discussing the findings of the study.

3.1 THE NATURE OF PUBLICATIONS

Content analysis of QJA reveals some interesting features of the journal itself. The journal contains articles; book/article review; list of recent publications by the Nigerian Governments; Institute quarterly news, e.g. training programs, announcement of staff college courses, appointments/promotions, advertisement of some related journals, e.g. the African Review, international affairs and Journal of the Royal Institute of Public Administration; and accession lists of new additions to the library of the institute. The articles and book reviews constitute the bulk of communication among administrators. Articles recorded the highest number of entries with 400 (63:49%) and book/article reviews recorded 230 (36:51%) entries.

Volume of research could be assessed in terms of size of articles and number of volumes of Journal publication. The QJA carried as many as 18 and as low as 6 entries per volumes of Journal publication. The QJA carried as many as 18 and as low as 6 entries per volume. However, it appears that there is no well-defined pattern of distribution between articles and book/article reviews. The number of entries on book reviews out weigh the number of entries on articles in some volumes, especially during the early years of publication. While in some volumes, especially in the recent publication, the number of reviews reduced drastically to as low as zero.

Aiyepeku (1979:12) has noted earlier conclusions by scholars who have written on content analysis that in a learned journal reporting original investigations, research papers account for a predominant proportion. It is interesting therefore, to note that the finding in this study with regards to the number of articles published in QJA is strongly in agreement with the above conclusions. This is because articles in QJA account for 63:4%.

Though the emphasis in this study is on articles and book/article reviews, it is

noteworthy to state that other forms of communications have greatly contributed to the size and quality of the journal. The continued publications of the list of recent publications by Nigerian Governments and contents page of some related journals, as well as library accession lists have no doubt added substantially to the size and quality of the journal.

Although the introduction of SAP in Nigeria did not stop the publication of QJA, however its advance effect could clearly be seen in the period 1983-89. Not only that issue numbers were combined into one volume but also numbers of articles had drastically reduced to between 7-6 entries, with a mode of 6 entries.

3.2 AUTHORSHIP/AUTHORS AFFILIATION

The total numbers of authors who have contributed to articles in QJA under the period of this study are found to be 284. Single authors characterize the journal articles. This group accounts for 263 (92.61%) entries, articles by two authors account for 19 (6.69%) and three authors 2 (0.70%) entries. The highest number of papers contributed by any single author is 5, while the mean number of papers per author is 2. On the other hand the total number of authors who have contributed to book/article reviews is 119 with two authors contributing the highest of 14 each.

It is however sad to note that the editors of this journal have been publishing some of the names of reviewers by abbreviating all of their names. For instance, one of the highest contributing reviewers has been known throughout his contributions, and somebody with the same initials could be mistaken as the original contributor.

Highly experienced scholars, researchers and managers have written articles for QJA. Table I below shows that the highest contributors in terms of rank/position are the Senior Lecturers 135 (47.54%) contributions. This may be associated with the fact that the staff strength of most southern Nigerian Universities who happens to be the major contributors to QJA is dominated by Senior Lecturers. It is also a fact that for this group to attain this rank/position they needed a lot of publications. The lowest contributors are the Advisor/Ambassador group with 5 (1.76%) contributions. A critical look at their contribution revealed that they are policy statements.

TABLE I : RANK/POSITION OF CONTRIBUTORS

S/No	Rank/Position	No. of Contribution	% of Contribution
1	Professor	20	7.04
2	Assistant Professor	11	3.87
3	Senior Lecturer	135	47.54
4	Lecturer	32	11.27
5	Research Fellows	22	7.75
6	Per. Sec./Dir. Gen./Sec./Com	20	7.04
7	Advisor/Ambassador	05	1.76
8	Consultant	08	2.82
9	Director/Chairman	19	6.69
10	Others	19	6.69
	TOTAL	**284**	**100.00**

In terms of organizational affiliation of contributing authors, the study shows that authors from different aspect of life have contributed articles to QJA. However, most of the articles 234 (82.39%) came from the Universities. Therefore, it is not surprising to note that contributors from University of Ife have dominated the scene with 109 (38:38%) contribution. This revelation may be due to the fact that the journal is published in the Institution and naturally the Editors would give priority to staff from the University. Table II below reveals that contributions came from as far as America, UK and Asian Universities. ASCON, C.M.D. and other staff development center are equally not left behind.

TABLE II AUTHORS' ORGANISATIONAL AFFILIATION

S/No	Organizational Affiliation	No. Of Contributors	% Of Contributions
1	University of Ife	109	38.38
2	University of Ibadan	42	14.79
3	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	14	4.93
4	University of Lagos	10	3.52
5	University of Benin	05	1.76
6	University of Nigeria	09	3.17
7	Other Nigerian Universities	07	2.46
8	State Universities	06	2.11
9	African Universities	05	1.76
10	Asian Universities	05	1.76
11	European Universities	05	1.76
12	American Universities	17	5.99
13	NISER, Ibadan	09	3.17
14	Federal/State Ministries	25	8.80
15	ASCON/Staff development centers	06	2.11
16	Others	10	3.52
	TOTAL	**284**	**100.00**

3.3 EDITORIAL POLICY

Part of what makes a journal qualitative and continuous is editorialship. From data analysed in this study, it is clear and remarkably interesting to note that QJA has one of the best editorial policy. The choice of the caliber of Editors over the years provides the backbone for the survival of the journal.

One very important revelation in this study is the fact that editors spend long years editing. This no doubt ensures consistency and continuity. For instance, for the period under the study, six Editors edited the journal. Adebayo Adedeji the first editor spent nine years on the job. The change in Editorship in 1975 was very significant because it was a change from one of the founding father of not only the journal but also the Institutes to one of the students of these founding fathers.

As a sign of positive changes happening to the journal, the idea of assistant editor(s) was introduced in 1971. Also in 1979 the idea of books/article review editor(s) was introduced. These positive initiatives brought the number of Editors, assistant Editors and book/article review Editors to the Journal to at least four. This innovation no doubt provided the necessary editorial control, which is a pre-requisite for qualitative journals. Editorial control could also visibly be seen from the 'note to contributors' area. The aim of the journal, average length of articles and the size of the journal have always been the same since the inception of the journal.

Another contributing factor to the qualitative nature of QJA is the number and sprea of the members of the Editorial Advisory Board. The journal has always had between 15 20 members coming from Nigerian and foreign Universities, Federal and State Governments as well as private sectors. Adebayo Adedeji, Edited the Journal for 9 years, became a member of the Editorial Advisory Board at latter years when he was the Executive Secretar of the Economic Commission for Africa.

3.4 RESEARCH TREND

The study discovered that two types of researches characterize the articles of QJA theoretical and empirical. The theoretical type of research dominated the articles in the journal with 388 (97:00%) entries; empirical research recorded only 12 (03:00%) entries

This finding goes to confirm that Administration as a subject field belong to the socia science discipline, because science subjects are characterized by experimental type o researches.

In terms of distribution of articles by subject, table III below shows that out of a total of 400 articles, 229 (57:25%) articles are in Administration. This finding is not surprising since the journal emanates from an Institute of Administration, its title and the declared aim of the journal "to use it to disseminate and exchange knowledge and information on all aspects of Administration and Management", not with standing.

TABLE III - DISTRIBUTION OF ARTICLE BY MAJOR SUBJECTS

S/No	Subjects	No. Of Contribution	% Of Contribution
1	Administration/Management	229	57.25
2	Accounting/Insurance	14	3.50
3	Agric./Agric. Economics	20	5.00
4	Business/Commerce	2	0.50
5	Education	6	1.50
6	Economics	51	12.75
7	Building/Constructing Industry	2	0.50
8	Geography/Urban & Regional	4	1.00
9	Health/Medicine	1	0.25
10	Law	7	1.75
11	Library Science	2	0.50
12	Military Science	4	1.00
13	Political Science/International Relation	46	11.50
14	Sociology/Social Science	9	2.25
15	Social Statistics	3	0.75
	TOTAL	**400**	**100.00**

The above table also shows that articles are drawn from a wide range of essential social science discipline. Economics with 51 (12.75%) and political science/international relation with 46 (11.50%) are the closest to the boundary of Administration. The appearance of articles on subjects like Accounting, Sociology, Social Statistics, etc, has further revealed the interdisciplinary nature of Administration and also confirms that it is a subject of social science discipline. Additionally, the representation of a wide range of articles from other subjects illustrates and establishes Bibliometric law that research papers on a given subject actually occur in significant numbers in periodicals devoted to other subjects.

3.5 DATA/QUANTITATIVE REPRESENTATION

The idea of data/quantitative representation in journal articles came out of the contention to know the kinds and appropriateness of data, illustration, etc. and the use and appropriateness of statistical methods used in the articles.

A close examination of the articles in QJA shows that they are largely descriptive and carried little statistics and illustrations. The few statistics found in the articles mostly came from Economics and Agricultural Economics; even these are mainly mathematical analysis. While the type of illustrations were mostly tables and charts. The articles seldom employ the use of maps, plates and other forms of illustrations.

On the number of pages, as one of the bibliographical parameters, which offer potentially valuable information, the study discovered that the number of pages of articles in QJA lies between 11-20 pages. This class accounts for 239 (59.75%). Only one article carried above 31 pages, and 30 (7.50%) articles between 21-30 pages. This finding is an indication that majority (92.25%) of contributors to articles in QJA have strictly been following the 'note of contributors'.

Referencing in both book and journal articles is increasingly becoming important especially in citation studies. Articles in QJA are properly cited and citations acknowledged. However, the journal failed to adopt a single type of referencing. In some articles, especially the early ones, it was footnotes, while in others; it was references at the end of the articles. The numbers of references differ greatly from article. The mode lies between 11-20 references, which accounts for 116 (29:00%). The number of articles with 31 and above references is 68 (17:00%). Only few articles recorded as high as 60 - 70 references.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study attempt was made to analyse the contents of QJA for the period of 25 years with the view to finding out the nature of publication, authorship, editorial policy, research trend and data/quantitative representations of articles. A total of 630 contributions by 284 contributors were published in the 25 volumes of the journal analysed. These comprised 400 (63:49%) articles and 230 (36:41%) book/article reviews.

The content analysis of articles in QJA illustrates the conceptual, theoretical and methodological limitations of research in Administrative phenomena in Nigeria. The analysis shows that research in Administrative in Nigeria has on the whole been rather individualistic and theoretical. This phenomenon is rather unfortunate because, apart from the fact that is it is a measure of lack of teamwork of a multi disciplinary nature currently existing among social scientists in Nigeria, it also shows that the contributions are devoid of practical solutions on the increasing problems in administration and management in Nigeria.

In view of the above, this paper suggests that editors of QJA should find a way of encouraging collaboration especially among authors from different subjects background. This will ensure cross-fertilization of ideas; the proverb that "two heads are better than one" holds sway here. Editors should also encourage more empirical and practical researches. Our societies are increasingly becoming more complex, so also Administration or Management as it is called today. The need to employ scientific and therefore practical researches to solve the many problems of Administration cannot be over emphasized.

In terms of physical appearance of QJA, this paper recommends that it should be changed. Since inception, the journal has been publishing on Quarto paper, this undoubtedly reduced the number of contributions and the size of the journal. In view of the increasing number of contributors, QJA should be published on A4 papers, this will accommodate more contributions, increase the size of the journal and even enhance its physical appearance. Additionally and more importantly, QJA should be assigned International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). Apart from this, copies of QJA should regularly be sent to Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) for Indexing and Abstracting QJA articles. These measures, when implemented, would no doubt internationalize the journal and ensure full bibliographic control.

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