

## Non-Citations of Domestic and Collegiate Papers by Writers of Global South Descent: The Self-Crafted Neo-Imperialism in the Knowledge Industry

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### Abstract

The globalisation of scholarly communication has intensified asymmetries in whose knowledge is recognised and cited. This article examines the persistent practice whereby scholars from Global South (developing countries) under-cite, ignore, or marginalise domestic and locally produced academic work in favour of scholarship published in metropolitan, largely Western venues. The literature rooted in postcolonial perspectives, the sociology of science, and citation studies, provides a rich blend of historical anecdotes. While strands of The Citation Economy, Coloniality of Knowledge, and Academic Capital and Prestige Bias theories, espoused themes that shape citation behaviour. It is argued in the paper that this behaviour constitutes self-crafted neo-imperialism that reproduces epistemic dependency. It also, diminishes local research ecosystems, and reinforces unequal global knowledge hierarchies. The conceptual analytical extrapolations situated within the contexts of illustrative bibliometric patterns leveraged structural, institutional, and cultural drivers of non-citation conundrum. The study offers a conceptual model of the citation decision-making process in peripheral contexts and proposes multi-layered policy, institutional, and scholarly interventions to decolonise citation practices and strengthen local epistemic sovereignty.

**Keywords:** citation bias, epistemic coloniality, academic capital, Global South, self-crafted neo-imperialism, Global North

## Introduction

In global academic ecosystems, citations perform several critical functions. They acknowledge prior work, situate arguments within scholarly conversations, and act as currency for reputational capital, hiring, promotion, and funding (Merton, 1968; Garfield, 1972). While they provide an avenue to offer credence to intellectual property owners, they also, exonerate the writer from unintentional duplication of patented works or accusation of plagiarism (Awak, 2022). Yet, the normative ideal of citations as impartial markers of intellectual debt collides with persistent inequalities in who is cited and whose knowledge counts. Scholars in developing countries frequently look outward for evidence, theory, and empirical comparisons, privileging works published in Western journals and presses, while neglecting domestic and collegial outputs (Altbach, 2004; de Sousa Santos, 2014).

Indeed, the globalisation of scholarly communication has intensified long-standing asymmetries in whose knowledge is recognised, cited, and legitimised within the global academy. For writers of developing nations descent, particularly those from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, the institutional and cognitive architectures of knowledge production often end by incentivising the privileges of the metropolitan or Western scholarship at the expense of domestic and collegial contributions.

This patterned exclusion constitutes a self-crafted form of neo-imperialism wherein local scholars unwittingly reproduce epistemic hierarchies by under-citing or ignoring research emerging from their own backyard (institutions or regions). It is appalling that very good topics researched and produced for promotion are mostly utilised by shelves. There is no policy connection or collaboration between researchers and policy makers (Awak, 2019). Just as colleagues abhor citing or appreciating their fellow researchers for the simple reason that they are local or unindexed and would not amount to anything substantial in terms of recognition, appreciation, grading and elitist appeal deserving of their articles.

Citation is a scholarly gesture of intellectual acknowledgement and a mechanism of power. It is an instrument through which academic legitimacy, resource allocation, and symbolic capital circulate (Merton, 1968; Bourdieu, 1988). When domestic work is consistently omitted, its authors, institutions, and knowledge systems become marginalised, weakening research ecosystems and skewing policy decisions.

This paper explores with the central question, why do writers from the Global South often fail to cite or engage substantively with local scholarship? It is contended that this pattern

is not merely a byproduct of availability or quality differentials; rather, it is an enactment of a self-crafted neo-imperialism, which of course, has to do with an internalised hierarchy of knowledge that offers special rights and privileges to metropolitan scholars, venues and norms.

The crux of the paper is designed to propose interventions that would not only build citation reflexivity and knowledge sovereignty, but extricate and emancipate scholars of the Global South descent from mental slavery enunciated through self-crafted neo imperialism.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the rapid expansion of higher education systems and academic publishing in developing nations, a persistent pattern of non-citation of domestic and collegiate research continues to undermine the visibility, legitimacy, and global integration of local scholarship. Scholars of Global South descent often bypass locally produced knowledge even when it is methodically rigorous, contextually and ideologically relevant, while disproportionately citing foreign, Global North (North America and Western Europe) literature. This practice entrenches a self-crafted neo-imperialism within the knowledge industry, whereby intellectual authority is outsourced to external epistemic centres, leaving domestic knowledge ecosystems dependent and underdeveloped.

Existing literature paints a vivid picture that depicts asymmetrical citation flows, prestige biases, and epistemic hierarchies that privilege Northern scholarship in the global knowledge production landscape. An unimaginable scenario is the emerging internal dynamic, where researchers within developing nations themselves reproduce these hierarchies by devaluing their own intellectual outputs (Awak, 2019, 2024). This internalised citation behaviour fuels a cycle in which domestic journals remain weak; local epistemic communities remain fragmented, and Global South perspectives are systematically excluded from shaping disciplinary theories, frameworks, and methodologies (ChatGPT, personal communication, September 2025).

This problem is further accentuated by structural constraints such as limited indexation of local journals, language barriers, editorial gatekeeping, inadequate research funding, and the dominance of Euro-American theories within academic curricula. Together, these factors create an environment where local researchers perceive foreign literature as more credible, more citable, and more valuable for academic advancement. As a consequence, domestic scholarship becomes epistemically invisible, lacking both local recognition and global influence.

The implication is profound and impacting. The non-citation of domestic and collegiate research reproduces intellectual dependency and erodes the development of indigenous knowledge traditions. Furthermore, it perpetuates a form of epistemic subordination that mirrors colonial patterns of knowledge domination, which is now sustained not by external actors, but by local scholars themselves. This phenomenon raises urgent questions about academic identity, knowledge sovereignty, and the future of scholarly development in the Global South.

There is therefore, a compelling exigency for a paper of this magnitude to critique how and why scholars from developing nations contribute to this self-imposed marginalisation. Within the package is the need to identify the systemic factors that sustain it, and the broader consequences, while situating multi-layered interventions within perspectives for knowledge democratisation, academic autonomy, and national development.

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Review

**Historical context and intellectual genealogy:** Colonial administrations established education systems that aligned with metropolitan interests, which in turn propelled Western epistemologies, while relegating indigenous knowledge systems to the margins. The legacy of this epistemic conditioning persists in postcolonial academic cultures. A cultural conditioning that instils deference to Western knowledge, but led to under-recognition of domestic scholarship (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986; Said, 1978).

**Post-independence academic development:** As emerging institutions continue to struggle with underfunding, limited infrastructure, and reliance on foreign-trained academics, the obvious outcome manifest in epistemic orientation toward Western traditions. The craving for foreign journals juxtaposed with the position of domestic journals that perpetually struggle and become subservient in their quest to gain legitimacy.

**Globalisation and the rise of international publishing hegemony:** Indexing systems such as Web of Science and Scopus reinforced visibility hierarchies. University, polytechnic and similar institutions' promotion criteria, which reward indexed publications further incentivised citation of Western sources. In Nigeria for instance, one must have published not less than five articles in international journals in addition to articles from other sources as a condition before one is considered for promotion to the cadre of professorship. The hegemony is akin to asking a fresh graduate to apply for a



job, where one of the requirements is acquisition of three to five years cognate experience. By so asking, the applicant is already knocked off, while seasoned employees would continue to gain access to career mobility at will.

By this practice, the implication includes Scopus, Web of Science, Elsevier, Academia, and others are overloaded with work to assess, review and grade. They continue to accumulate high volume of articles sent, leading to delayed publication and high publication fees that are beyond the financial capacities of the Southern authors. Indeed, to publish in the “assumed high impact journals” in the UK is a herculean task, while some papers from the Global South are termed “predatory” just to foster the existing hegemony.

**Internalisation of academic coloniality:** Over generations, writers of Global South descent have indoctrinated and mastered the ethos of Western citation tradition that inadvertently propel self-crafted neo-imperialism. This has not only created self-doubt and dependency, but subtly reproducing external epistemic dominance voluntarily.

## Thematic Review

### Coloniality of Knowledge and Epistemic Dependency

Postcolonial writers such as Said (1978), Fanon (1961) and Quijano (2000) have illustrated the extent to which knowledge hierarchies have persisted over the decades. The persistence is accordingly argued to favour and provide undue privileges to Western epistemologies and their proponents. This is why de Sousa Santos (2014) has asserted that the marginalisation of local knowledge paves the way for the internalisation of metropolitan authority. In the same vein, Grosfoguel (2011); Maldonado-Torres (2007), and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) are united in concluding that the persistent colonial power relations are only to the advantages of Euro-American epistemologies as the only acceptable sources of knowledge.

### Citation Behaviour and Symbolic Capital

Merton's (1968) “Matthew Effect” focuses on how recognition and citations accumulate disproportionately among already prestigious authors and journals. To Merton, renowned scientists or institutions often receive disproportionate credit, funding and recognition for collaborative work, which overshadows lesser-known contributors. It is the situation that those who are already advantaged get more, while the disadvantaged drip further down the line. The rich get richer, while the poor get poorer (for instance, TetFund's disproportionate allocation of resources between universities, polytechnics and others). Corroborating Merton, Bourdieu (1988) conceptualises that citations

constitute a form of academic capital, with the potential of converting symbolic recognition into career advancement, funding opportunities, and institutional influence. In this manner, those who hold the power can readily convert it to capital against those without such a privilege.

### **Citation Inequalities and Global Knowledge Hierarchies**

Western journals benefit disproportionately due to the Matthew Effect (Merton, 1968). Studies show scholars in developing nations cite Northern work more, even when domestic research exists (Chan et al., 2019; Powell, 2021).

### **Reward Structures and Incentives**

Evaluation criteria that emphasise high-impact journals inadvertently is instigating scholars to cite internationally recognised work, rather than local research, and this deeply reinforce epistemic dependence (Altbach, 2004; Yudkevich, Altbach, & Rumbley, 2016). As authors and editors with substantial experience, the obvious suffices that this practice kills local journals and the spirit of publication. There are many instances that writers refuse to send their papers after hearing that the journal is not Scopus or Google indexed or that there is yet to exist impact factor for the journal. Moreso, there are many writers within a department or faculty or school churning out papers for assessment, yet, most of these writers hardly referenced their own papers published previously; not to mention citing their colleagues' papers, no matter how good the papers might have been. This is not ignorance, but self-imposed negativity.

### **Structural Barriers in Global South Publishing Ecosystems**

Challenges include limited funding, irregular peer-review processes, poor indexing, and open-access sustainability issues (Onyancha, 2020; Owusu-Ansah, 2022). Evaluation criteria that emphasise international journals exacerbate the problem. Again, English-language dominance and exclusion of domestic journals from major indexing databases reduce visibility and access for peripheral scholars thereby, shaping their citation patterns, (Meneghini & Packer, 2007).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **The Citation Economy Theory**

The theory is an accumulation of ideas on academic capital and power. However, key figures are Pierre Bourdieu (1988, 1993), Robert Merton (1968) and Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar (1979). Citations function as intellectual currency in the knowledge industry. The academia, scholars, journals and institutions participate in the economy where the value of knowledge is partly determined by how often it is cited by whom, and

in what venues. It is explained in the theory how citations shape academic reputation, influence career progression and determine the visibility and legitimacy of research.

Obviously, citations are traded much like financial currency in such a way that the more citations an author, article, journal or institution receives, the more valuable they become. Therefore, citations are reflective of intellectual influence, knowledge worth and academic visibility. With all these, citation economy reproduces academic hierarchies, centre-periphery patterns, gender inequality and discipline dominance.

The implications of this are the inducement of certain strategic behaviour by authors such as self-citation to increase personal metrics; getting involved in citation rings where a group of scholars cite each other to boost impact; over-citing popular authors to align with certain dominant schools of thought, as well as avoiding controversial or low status authors to maintain prestige.

The instruments of citation economy include h-index, impact factor, Scopus citations, Google Scholar counts and Journal quartile rankings. Since institutions, promotion panels, funding agencies and global ranking systems comfortably rely on these metrics, they lend credence to citations as a serious academic capital. This practice makes citation a determinant of whose knowledge is visible, respected, reproduced and institutionalised. The theory concludes that digital platforms such as Google scholar, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Scopus and Web of Science amplify the citation economy, while under-citation diminishes local epistemic capital.

The Nigerian context presents a precarious picture where researchers struggle to get their works cited in international sources due to low journal visibility. This is even made worse by the rising demands by TetFund, NBTE, NUC and institutional promotion guidelines that researchers must acquire certain citation metrics before their articles are counted.

### **Coloniality of Knowledge Theory**

Anibal Quijano (2000), Walter Mignolo, Nelson Macdonaldo-Torres and Boanaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) in their various conceptions explain that although political colonialism seems to have ended with political independence, the global systems of knowledge production have continued to reflect the power, hierarchies, and epistemic dominance established during colonialism. This is so because the manner in which knowledge is defined, valued, produced and circulated have continued to radiate around colonial epistemic structures.

The central theme of the theory is that colonialism reorganises global epistemology by creating hierarchy where Western/ European knowledge is superior, universal and scientific, while non-Western knowledge such as African, Indigenous, Asian, Latin American are inferior, local and primitive. These hierarchies shape academic publishing, citation practices, research funding, higher institution's curricula, global recognition and what is constituted as “valid knowledge”.

According to the theory, knowledge is validated only when it is through Eurocentric Gauge such as Western theories, white authors and Global North journals. These have translated into who gets published, whose work is cited and whose knowledge is considered rigorous. The fallout of these practices is that scholars from Africa, Asia and Latin America experience limited visibility, systematic under-citation, discriminatory peer review, linguistic barrier, thematic constraints where local topics are regarded as inconsequential. Infact, Western knowledge is regarded as universal and objective while others are indigenous, cultural, traditional, area studies and non-scientific.

#### **Academic Capital and Prestige Bias Theory - Bourdieu (1988)**

This is an offshoot of the theory of academic capital pioneered by Bourdieu. The main assumptions of the theory are that citations, publications, and impact factors operate as forms of symbolic capital such that journals and scholars with prestige capital attract more citations; Global South journals and scholars lack such capital due to structural inequalities; and that citation practices have become self-reinforcing cycles favouring already prestigious Global North. With all these in place, the attendant results include situations where researchers in the Global South over-cite Global North authors just to gain credibility for their papers. Again, even when high quality domestic research exists, it is often ignored as a result of prestige bias.

The strands of the three theories considered here are at the root of the topic of discourse. They are interconnected and interdependent on each other and radiating around the central theme, which is the neglect of domestic ideas, research results and the subjugation of their essence to contribute to the growth of knowledge. The theories have laid bare the continuous propagation of Western colonial ideologies and the extent to which they have dominated the thinking and actions of Global South scholars. Indeed, the theories reflect persistent Eurocentric epistemic dominance. Non-citation reflects internalised hierarchies positioning Western authors as default authorities, and authors of the peripheral enclave as nothing but inferior, followers and dependent, who have no right to originate anything novel and authentic. These are the albatross of the Global South scholars, and cannot be partakers (maybe spectators) in the knowledge capital economy.

## Methodological Orientation

### Scope of Conceptual Analysis

this synthesises postcolonial theory, sociology of knowledge, bibliometrics, and higher education research to understand ideological, institutional, and cognitive foundations of citation behaviour.

### Use of Illustrative Bibliometric Patterns

The bibliometric design uses representative patterns documented in bibliometric literature to exemplify the problem of non-citation of domestic scholarship in developing regions.

### Bibliometric depiction of Global Citation Asymmetry

To demonstrate how scholars from developing nations under-cite domestic and collegiate research, this section provides a simplified bibliometric illustration based on typical patterns reported in global citation studies (e.g., Meneghini & Packer, 2007; Onyancha, 2022; Mosbah-Natanson & Gingras, 2014).

**Table 1**

*Distribution of sources cited by scholars in Developing Regions*

Source Region of Cited Works	Average % of All Citations	Interpretation
Global North (US, UK, EU)	65–78%	Heavy dependence on Euro-American scholarship.
Other Global South Regions	10–15%	Selective but low cross-regional citation.
Domestic (same country)	5–12%	Systematically under-cited despite local relevance.
Collegiate (same institution or national network)	1–4%	Lowest level of citation despite proximity.

The picture painted by the above table is clearer that even when the topics are locally generated or context-specific, the reality holds that scholars will still prefer to cite the Global North at a staggering rate of 7–12 times higher than domestic scholars.

**Table 2**

*Citation visibility gap between local and foreign journals*

Journal Category	Average Annual Citations	Indexing Status	Notes
Foreign high-impact journal	150–800	Indexed (Scopus/WoS)	High visibility → attracts more citations.
Regional journal (Africa/Asia)	20–60	Partially indexed	Moderate visibility.
Domestic journal (developing country)	2–10	Non-indexed / locally indexed	Often cited only within a small circle.

From the above table, it is obvious that indexing inequalities create structural invisibility, which ultimately reinforce the existing bias toward citing foreign literature.

### **Bibliometric plot**

A typical bibliometric plot usually depicts a situation where:

- High local relevance but low citation frequency for domestic studies.
- Low local relevance but high citation frequency for Global North studies.

This plot results in a skewed citation landscape where relevance does not correlate with recognition.

**Table 3**

*Self-citation against collegiate citation gap in Developing Countries*

Citation Type	Typical Frequency (per 100 references)
Self-citation	3–6
Citation of colleagues in same country	2–4
Citation of foreign landmark texts	40–60



The perceived pressure and misconceptions have made scholars to rely heavily on established foreign citation networks, but rarely build domestic citation ecosystems, thereby weakening the national knowledge base.

### Journal Prestige Bias and Impact Factor Effects

A bibliometric breakdown often shows that:

- Articles published in high-impact foreign journals receive 10–20 times more citations than similar domestic articles.
- Even when domestic research is more methodologically relevant, it is marginalised because scholars pursue journals with symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), rather than contextual fit.

### Consequences of the Bibliometric Pattern

- a. Knowledge export without local circulation:** There is dearth of local citation that stems from poor institutional and national circulation of locally produced research results and materials, while research procedures, results and materials from the Global North are circulated unhindered everywhere owing to abundance of channels and facilities.
- b. Internalised academic coloniality:** This is where indigenous writers and scholarships are unconsciously coerced to accelerate the process of internalisation of external citation norms. This process only manifests in the production of people and ideas that are dependants of foreign knowledge.
- c. Collapse of national research ecosystems:** Under-citation weakens national research impact, funding justification, scholarly continuity and institutional knowledge production

### Scope of Conceptual Analysis

The conceptual analysis in this study is focused on understanding the phenomenon of non-citation of domestic and collegiate research by scholars from developing nations and its implications for the global knowledge industry. Specifically, the scope covers:

- **Theoretical Scope:** This examines interesting frameworks such as Coloniality of Knowledge (Quijano, 2000; de Sousa Santos, 2014), Citation Economy (Bourdieu, 1988,

1993; Merton, 1968), and Academic Capital and Prestige Bias (Bourdieu (1988). Exploration of epistemic hierarchies, symbolic capital, and prestige biases in citation practices. Analysis of the internalised neo-imperialistic tendencies among scholars in the Global South.

- **Content Scope:** This focuses on academic citation behaviours in higher education, scholarly publications, and research outputs from developing nations. It expands the understanding of the various dynamics that instigate and sustain citation behaviour. While considering structural, institutional, and cultural drivers, it was glaring that they influence citation decisions, including indexing, language dominance, reward systems, and colonial legacies.
- **Geographical Scope:** This segment primarily revolved around scholars and research institutions in developing regions, including Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia. References to the Global North are contextual, since it is used as the dominant benchmark in citation and knowledge hierarchies.
- **Temporal Scope:** The analysis considers contemporary scholarly practices, while tracing the historical and colonial roots of knowledge hierarchies. The timeframe spans postcolonial academic development from the 1960s to the present, emphasising ongoing patterns.
- **Analytical Scope:** The study focuses on conceptual, theoretical, and systemic dimensions of citation behaviour, rather than quantitative bibliometric measurement. Although illustrative empirical examples are used to contextualise conceptual claims, they are not the primary analytical focus of the study.
- **AI use disclosure:** The authors adopted ChatGPT (OpenAI), 2025) to support idea refinement, language clarification and extraction of some quantitative data during manuscript development. All AI generated ideas were subjected to critical evaluation and edited by the authors for the purpose of ensuring accuracy and originality of information
- **Limitations:** The analysis does not cover all disciplines or global research outputs exhaustively; it is illustrative of broader systemic trends. Non-academic forms of knowledge (indigenous or community knowledge outside formal academia) are mentioned only in relation to epistemic marginalisation.

## Citation Flows

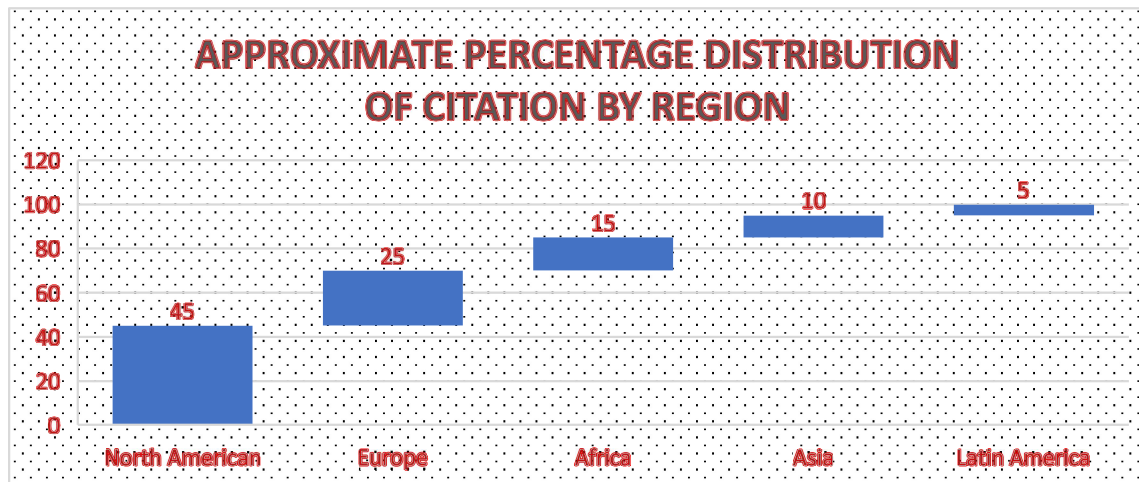
Figure 1: *Approximate citation distribution by region*

Table 4

*Approximate citation distribution by region*

Region of Cited Author	percentage of Citations (%)
North America	45%
Europe	25%
Africa	15%
Asia	10%
Latin America	5%

Figure 2: Indexing Status of Domestic Journals

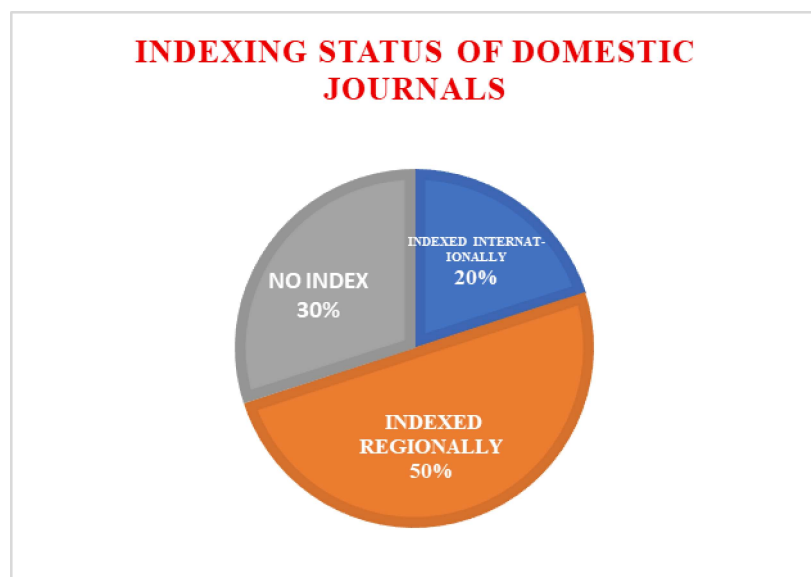


Table 5

*Citation preferences between foreign and local sources by discipline*

Discipline	Domestic	Foreign
Social Sciences	20%	80%
Natural Sciences	15%	85%
Health Sciences	25%	75%
Engineering & Tech	10%	90%

### Drivers of Non-Citation of Domestic Work

**Structural drivers:** Domestic citations are hindered by factors that include indexing disparities, resource limitations, language barriers, digital access and discoverability gaps (Onyancha, 2020; Owusu-Ansah, 2022).

**Institutional drivers:** The prevalent aphorism “Publish or Perish” serves as a very potent instigator of the razzmatazz of foreign citations and publications. Promotion and hiring metrics in tertiary institutions in most of the developing nations favour international journals. In the same vein, curriculum design, granting and evaluation systems,

mentorship practices are add-ons to reinforcing Northern-centric citation norms, (Powell, 2021).

**Symbolic and cultural drivers:** Internalised academic coloniality or colonial educational legacies., perceived prestige, status anxiety and cultural capital continuously engage the psychic, intellectual domain and rationality of scholars' citation choices.

### **Consequences for Knowledge Sovereignty**

**Erosion of research ecosystems:** Non-citation limits local journal visibility, reduces recognition for early-career researchers, and perpetuates dependency on external knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2011; Onyancha, 2020).

**Knowledge fragmentation:** Local context and continuity are lost.

**Perpetuation of epistemic injustice:** Marginalised voices remain unheard.

**Policy and practice misalignment:** Recommendations may be ill-suited to local realities. Marginalisation of domestic research affects evidence-based policy, reducing societal relevance and effectiveness of any perceived interventions.

### **Discussion**

Non-citation is a structural and symbolic phenomenon. This is submerged in the fact that structural, institutional, and cultural drivers create a self-perpetuating cycle of epistemic marginalisation. South-South epistemic solidarity is critical to reclaim intellectual agency, and coordinated multiplex interventions are required.

### **Conclusion**

Non-citation of domestic work is a structural and cultural phenomenon, producing a self-crafted neo-imperialism that undermines local research ecosystems and perpetuates epistemic injustice. It constitutes a systemic issue with implications for knowledge production, policy relevance, and academic development in the Global South. Interventions across scholars, journals, academic institutions, funders, and indexers are required to achieve a more equitable knowledge system, which can strengthen recognition and legitimacy of domestic scholarship and advance knowledge sovereignty.

### **Recommendations**

- **Deliberate citation of local sources:** There must be a deliberate practice where certain percent of references and citations are reserved for local materials. Also, mentorship (which is a very rare practice in developing institutions) must be

strengthened as an institutional policy and one of the academic promotion requirements from the senior faculty members. There must be serious engagement with domestic journals to foster collaboration.

- **Journal editorial policies:** These should include stepping up actions on indexing efforts, strengthening peer review, and promoting bibliodiversity. Special issues that foreground domestic scholarship should be published, while local institutions must partner to accept and encourage such initiatives to thrive.
- **Academic institutions and regulatory frameworks:** It is about time that academic institutions revised promotion criteria to recognise domestic journal contributions, diversify metrics, policy impact and community scholarship to value local engagement and curriculum integration to boost domestic citations.
- **Funders and Indexing Bodies:** Funding incentives to support local journal capacity-building, enhance indexing of domestic journals, revise inclusion criteria to favour multi-lingual and regional visibility, and support for open access.
- **Collective responsibility:** There is a compelling need to develop regional and institutional citation platforms, as well as the conduct of departmental citation audits. Authors should not fret about citing non-English sources, rather, this should be done with summaries or translations.

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