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ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICES COMPLIANCE AND TRANSPARENCY FOR DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. This research examines the level of compliance with quality and transparency standards in diamond open access academic journals published by the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon (UANL). The study focuses on the evaluation of the implementation of practices that optimize the visibility, accessibility and reuse of academic content. **Methodology**: A documentary content analysis was conducted on the web platforms of 38 institutional journals. The evaluation was based on the principles of transparency and good practices established by international reference organizations, including The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ), Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA) and World Association of Medical Editors (WAME). For the evaluation an instrument was used to rate these indicators which was created in the tool QuestionPro. **Conclusions**: The results reveal significant heterogeneity in compliance with the standards evaluated among the different institutional publications. This disparity in adherence to recommended practices suggests the existence of substantial gaps in the implementation of fundamental editorial policies. This variability in results represents both an institutional challenge and an opportunity for strategic development. The

identification of successful practices within the university ecosystem itself provides a solid foundation for institutional development. These findings represent a critical opportunity to consolidate UANL's position in the field of open access publishing.

Keywords: open access; open access diamond; academic journals; journal quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic journals have become the main channel of scientific communication, where researchers and professionals of any discipline go when they want to exchange experiences, be informed or learn about findings (López-Cózar et al., 2006), adding that:

> they also come with the certainty that the published knowledge is valid, that is, it is scientifically contrasted and respects the academic standards of the scientific method, because it has been fairly and impartially evaluated by the members of the scientific community themselves at different stages of the scientific production process, thus making them an instrument of certification and validation of knowledge. (2006)

On the other hand, academic journals can be seen as common goods, according to Licandro Goldaracena (2023) since they are resources of social interest in which everyone has the right to have access, simply because they belong to society, and it is the responsibility of the Institution or University to manage the knowledge that is produced in its journals as a common good to ensure quality, dissemination and belonging.

1.1. Importance of research or dissemination journals

"Specialized scientific and academic journals are fundamental instruments for the dissemination, access and validation by academic peers of the results of research processes" (Calvache & Delgado-Noguera, 2022). Journals have become a communication tool for science to be made known, and this requires efforts (many of them unpaid) to carry out a correct evaluation of science.

Academic journals have been, before monographs, the main means of communication in which science is disseminated more rapidly. As stated by Riquelme et al. (2024):

> The scientific article is the fundamental product in science: it disseminates the knowledge, whether theoretical or technical, generated in such a way that all members of the community can know it, it provides the accumulation of knowledge in a scientific field, it prevents the repetition of research on the same topic and maintains the process of self-correction of science. (p. 36)

1.2. Open Access

Academic journals have experienced significant growth and consolidation in recent decades. Driven by the Open Access (OA) movement, these journals seek to offer an alternative to democratize the dissemination of scientific knowledge by making the

literature freely available to any reader via the Internet. One of the initiatives that gave a guideline for the formal establishment of the Open Access movement on a global scale was the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) developed in 2002 (Suber, 2012).

Open access is also the means for the visibility and impact of science, as mentioned by Hernandez et al., (2020):

> Open access (open access) is a tool that allows creating new knowledge and also disseminating it, in addition to increasing the visibility and scientific impact by increasing the number of citations, access to information in a simple and equal way; for this reason, open access scientific journals should implement strategies that allow creating public recognition and scientific quality. (p. 82)

1.3. Diamond open access

There are different paths to open access, the golden path which is for-profit where authors pay for their article to be published in open access, the green path where articles are placed in an institutional repository (self-archiving). The Diamond path or Diamond access, which is a non-profit academic publishing model that makes academic knowledge a common good, vindicates the commonality of the academic system and entails the possibility of fostering job security through the creation of public service publishing jobs (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013). Diamond access overcomes the conceptual limitations of other models, such as golden open access, to which it is related to the Article Processing Charge (APC).

1.4. Number of Diamond Open Access Journals

The analysis of the data provided by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) (Khanna et al., 2024) reveals that, globally as of August 2024, there are more than 63,404 academic journals operating under the open access model through the Open Journal System (OJS) platform, the editorial management software developed by PKP. In the specific context of Mexico, 826 publications were identified that implement this platform, the great majority being found in the Asian continent.

1.5. The problem

Academic publications face an institutional paradox: they have become the object of pressures derived from the evaluation mechanisms implemented by the institutions that host them. Universities, in their quest to achieve outstanding positions in international rankings and obtain accreditation, impose standardized performance criteria that significantly condition the nature and development of these publications. As Licandro Goldaracena (2023) mentions, accreditation agencies value more the articles published in journals with greater impact (even paying to publish), reducing it to a group of international indexes in which certain (commercial) journals are the ones that fall within this qualification. Leaving out the possibility that academic journals, unable to have the economic solvency of large publishers, can receive these papers.

This condition generates an operational paradox: while researchers prioritize publication in journals indexed in high impact databases, open access publications develop alternative visibility strategies. As Alperin et al., (2015) point out:

> in the absence of major commercial interests in scientific journals made in Latin America, a logic of self-promotion and of being registered in the largest number of portals and distribution sites for scientific publications has been developed resulting, intentionally or not, in the maximization of the common good. (p. 108)

The absence of equitable evaluative methodologies generates a significant asymmetry between diamond open access journals and commercial publications, the latter being supported by substantial economic resources. In this context, diamond journals have proactively adopted rigorous standards of transparency and good editorial practices, with the dual objective of optimizing their processes and enhancing the visibility of their scholarly content, thus compensating for the structural limitations they face in the current ecosystem of scientific publications.

1.6. Quality and evaluation of academic journals

At the international level, most journals aim to be indexed in Scopus or Web of Science. However, to achieve this recognition, they must first go a long way. In this process, journals start by registering in internationally renowned directories, indexes and aggregators, such as Latindex and Scielo, among others. Latindex, for example, has a total of 2,340 refereed journals from Latin America included in its database. These journals are characterized by offering open access at no cost for processing, which corresponds to the main characteristics of diamond open access. All these journals are included in the Latindex directory and the 2.0 Catalog[1], and to be part of the latter, they must meet 38 quality criteria.

At the regional level, in Mexico, the scientific information system Redalyc works directly with diamond open access journals and provides high quality scientific services at no cost to readers or authors. In its database, Redalyc has the participation of 751 institutions from 31 countries and a total of 1,585 aggregated journals, which offer more than 798,632 articles that are available, all of them belonging to diamond open access journals.

At the governmental level, Mexico has the Conahcyt Scientific Journals Register, which later changed to Index of Mexican Journals of Scientific and Technological Dissemination[2] with the aim of promoting the dissemination of science and technology, as well as recognizing the work and quality of the publications. It is an index of journals only and does not indicate the requirements to belong to such index. The Classification

[1] Application requirements for Latindex Catalog 2.0
https://latindex.org/latindex/postulacion/postulacionCatalogo
[2] https://conahcyt.mx/comunicacion/indice-de-revistas-mexicanas-de-divulgacion-cientifica-y-tecnologica/

System of Mexican Science and Technology Journals (CRMCYT)[3] is a public policy instrument that, through the selective registration and periodic evaluation of scientific journals published in electronic format in Mexico, seeks to raise their quality, visibility and impact. However, since 2019, it has had no activity, delegating to external systems such as Redalyc, Latindex, Scimago, among others, the responsibility of providing visibility to journal contents and, a guide to improve and obtain in some way a quality ranking using those systems, but the journals basically they are looking for visibility. Visibility can be measured by the degree of indexing of a journal in various bibliographic tools, whether regional, thematic or even multidisciplinary. Indexing exposes journal articles not only to bibliographic searches, but also to bibliometric studies (Packer, 2010).

2. OBJECTIVES

Main Objective: To analyze the degree of implementation of editorial transparency practices and the adherence to good practice standards in the academic journals of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon, in order to evaluate the level of institutional commitment to the integrity of its editorial processes.

Specific Objective:

To determine the patterns for the adoption of editorial transparency practices through the systematic evaluation of standardized indicators in the academic journals of UANL.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Diamond open access

One of the main ways for the dissemination and visibility of the contents of academic journals has been open access. Open access are digital resources, online, free and without most copyright restrictions and licenses (Suber, 2012). In Latin America it has been for several years a tradition the use of open access in academic publications, with non-commercial public access, has allowed the expansion of open access fueling the success of many journals and regional initiatives (Alperin et al., 2015).

The Open Access movement has been the natural way to share research results in regions such as Latin America for decades. However, one of the initiatives that is considered to be foundational to the movement is the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI), published in 2002.

There are different ways for open access, the gold, for-profit, where authors pay for their article to be published in open access, and the green, where articles are deposited in an institutional repository (self-archiving). The Diamond path or Diamond access is a non-profit academic publishing model that makes academic knowledge a common good, vindicates the commonality of the academic system and entails the possibility of

[3] https://conahcyt.mx/servicios-en-linea/crmcyt/#:~:text=El%20Sistema%20de%20Clasificaci%C3%B3n%20de,su%20calidad%2C%20visibilidad%20e%20impacto

fostering job security through the creation of public service publishing jobs (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013). Diamond access overcomes the conceptual limitations of other models, such as golden open access, which is associated with Access Processing Charge (APC).

Diamond access journals are free to publish and read. The cost of maintaining and publishing these journals is generally borne by the sponsoring organization (mostly universities and some non-profit institutions). The diamond open access model has no impact on the peer review process of the journal. By making articles completely free for authors and readers, this approach comes closer to the goals of democratizing and widely distributing scholarly output.

3.2. Academic journals

Academic journals have become the main scientific communication channel, where researchers and professionals of any discipline go when they want to exchange experiences, be informed or learn about findings. López-Cózar mentions that they also go there with the certainty that the published knowledge is valid, that is, it is scientifically contrasted and respects the academic standards of the scientific method, because it has been fairly and impartially evaluated by the members of the scientific community themselves at different moments of the scientific production process, thus turning them into an instrument of certification and validation of knowledge (López-Cózar et al., 2006).

The characterization or evaluation of scientific activity is an area where different models can be identified for assessing the work carried out by researchers, their institutions and the scientific journals where they publish their findings. One of the most commonly used models is the mainstream-oriented model (Eduardo Aguado-López et al., 2023).

The Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon has been working on open access for approximately 14 years, when the institutional repository was inaugurated. More recently, since 2017, work has been done on the migration of print journals to an online open access platform. Currently, there are 59 academic journals at UANL, out of which 49 follow the diamond open access model, 29 of them are research journals and 15 are dissemination journals. The remaining 15 could be classified more as thematic journals or magazines, since they deal with news or general interest content and do not have any type of peer review.

3.3. Quality of academic journals

Diamond open access academic journals have had a significant growth in recent years in Latin America. In this regard, Latindex[4], which is the Regional Online Information System for Scientific Journals of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal, has registered a total of 2,340 refereed journals, with no processing fees and open access, the main characteristics of Diamond access. The tradition of using a non-commercial public funding model -with no fees paid by readers or authors of scientific journals-

4 Latindex url: https://latinex.org

has allowed the expansion of OA in the region and has fueled the success of many journals and regional initiatives (Alperin et al., 2015)

Diamond open access academic journals and scientific journals in general are under increasing pressure due to the international paradigm that measures quality using impact indicators based on the number of citations received by published articles. As well mentioned by Lorena, Ruiz Serna et al., (2022) that [...] this comes, on the one hand, from the international paradigm of quality being measured using citation impact indicators, with strong influence from commercial companies that produce bibliographic databases, and on the other hand, from the research promotion offices, which act as evaluating bodies and determine journal classification criteria for the purpose of distributing resources for research and higher education.

López-Cózar (2006) mentions that, in general terms, approaches to the evaluation of scientific journals have addressed their multidimensional nature. For a journal to reach a minimum standard of quality, it must meet requirements related to the excellence of its informative content, as well as its editorial and scientific quality. The evaluation of journals is also used for entry and permanence in databases or indexing systems, all according to "quality" criteria that must be met. Such evaluations consider general parameters: content and standardization (de Oliveira Amorim et al., 2015).

Regarding the content, "the quality of the articles, editorial staff and consultants is evaluated, in addition to the criteria for sanctioning articles, the institutional and geographical diversity of the authors, the dissemination of the journal and the inclusion in databases. Regarding standardization: format, title page, ISSN, summary, bilingual abstracts, use of descriptors, standardization of bibliographic reference lists, citations in the text, instructions to authors, publication frequency, periodicity, time of existence, dissemination, indexing and graphic presentation" (Ferreira & Krzyzanowski, 2003, cited in de Oliveira Amorim et al., 2015)

3.4 Transparency and best practices

Given that diamond open access journals have little (though not no) chance of being evaluated by commercial systems, several initiatives have been implemented that allow them to increase their editorial quality by using transparency and good practices, and organizations such as COPE (The Committee on Publication Ethics), DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journal), OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association), and WAME (World Association of Medical Editors) have defined that academic journals should be governed by what they have defined as Principles of Transparency and Best Practices in Academic Publishing. Among the 16 indicators they mention important elements such as preservation, licensing, periodicity of publication, ethics policy, review, among others (COPE DOAJ OASPA WAME, 2022).

These principles of transparency and good practice also recognize that editors and publishers are responsible for promoting accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of publication (COPE DOAJ OASPA WAME, 2022). Editorial decisions should be based on scholarly merit and should not be affected by the origin of the manuscript, including authors' nationality, ethnicity, political beliefs, race, or religion. Journals should ensure that any policy does not create an exclusionary environment

for those who wish to contribute to the journal and should periodically evaluate their inclusion policies.

4. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive documentary methodology was selected to review the contents included in the web pages of each academic journal of the UANL.

4.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

For this process, journals that meet the following requirements will be selected:

a) They are in an Open Access platform such as Open Journal System (OJS).

b) They offer their contents in open access without restrictions.

c) They must be published by the UANL.

4.2. Development of the analysis tool

Data collection will be carried out through a systematic evaluation of the active journals of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon. The methodological process comprises a documentary analysis of the journals' web platforms, including an exhaustive review of their online documentation. The evaluation will be carried out by means of a structured instrument developed in QuestionPro, which includes standardized measurement criteria with predetermined values.

4.2.1. UANL Diamond Magazine Sample Selection

For the selection of the sample, a list of 43 diamond open access journals published by UANL that meet the inclusion criteria will be compiled, identifying their names and access URLs. The selected journals were:

1 *Actas*, UANL History Journal

2 *Revista Scientia Agricolis Vita* (SAV)

3 *Aitías*, *Revista de Estudios Filosóficos*

4 *Biología y Sociedad*

5 *Revista Bitácora* from CIHR

6 *BLOCH,* History Student Journal

7 *CIENCIA*, from UANL

8 *Constructos Criminológicos*

9 *CONTEXTO,* FARQ Journal

10 *Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Asuntos Urbanos*

11 *Cultura Regional*

12 *Desafíos Jurídicos*

13 *ENSAYOS,* Economy Journal

14 *Global Media Journal México*

15 *Humanitas Digital* (Archive)

16 *IDCYTA Investigación y Desarrollo en Ciencias y Tecnologías de Alimentos*

17 *Ingenierías*

18 *Multidisciplinas de la Ingeniería*

19 *Memoria Universitaria*

20 *Paradigma Creativo*

21 *Perspectivas Sociales*

22 *Revista Planta*

23 *Presencia Universitaria*

24 *Química Hoy*

25 *Revista de Ciencias Farmacéuticas y Biomedicina*

26 *Revista de Comunicación Política*

27 *Revista de Divulgación Científica FOD*

28 Realidades Revista de la FTSyDH

29 *Reforma Siglo XXI*

30 *RESPYN Revista Salud Pública y Nutrición*

31 *Humanitas,* journal of literary theory, criticism and studies

32 *Ingeniería y Gestión Industrial*

33 *Revista de Ciencias Agroalimentarias y Biotecnología*

34 *CROMA*

35 *Revista de Ciencias del Ejercicio FOD*

36 *Métodos de solución de Conflictos*

37 *NOMOS,* Strategic Proceduralism

38 *Revista Política Globalidad y Ciudadanía*

39 *Sillares. Revista de Estudios Históricos*

40 *Transdisciplinar, Revista de Ciencias Sociales*

41 *Trayectorias Revista de Ciencias Sociales,* from UANL

42 *Vectores educativos*

43 *Vinculatégica EFAN*

4.2.2. Collection and validation of documents

The URL of each selected journal will be accessed and the documents indicated in the list of evaluation criteria will be reviewed. If the selected criterion is completely fulfilled, it will be rated excellent, if it is treated with the minimum necessary, it will be rated good, if the text of the criterion is very small and only mentions it, it will be rated regular, and if the criterion is not fulfilled, it will be rated deficient. Occasionally there will be journals that do not meet certain criteria due to their nature, in which case they will not be rated and will be described as "not applicable."

4.2.3. Definition of Evaluation Criteria

The criteria of the Principles of Transparency and Best Practices of COPE DOAJ OASPA WAME, (2022) have been taken as a basis. Non-essential elements have been eliminated, such as whether it has a name, web page, etc. The most relevant elements have been maintained and those that have reciprocity with the criteria of Latindex[5] and DOAJ[6] have been grouped into the following categories:

Editorial policies

1 Code of Ethics

2 Description of the editorial process

3 Requirement of originality

4 Anti-plagiarism policy

5 Objective and Scope

6 ISSN and registration of exclusive name use

Rights management

7 Copyrights

8 Publication rights

9 Access and reuse policies (CC licenses)

10 Self-archiving policy

5 Regional On-Line Information System for Scientific Journals in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal https://latindex.org/latindex/
6 Directory of Open Access Journals https://doaj.org/

Committees and arbitration

11. Scientific, academic or international committee
12. Editorial committee
13. Institutional and country affiliation of the committee members.
14. Statement of refereeing system (blind peer review, open peer review, etc.).

Open access and preservation

15. Identification as an open access journal
16. Open access statement
17. Digital preservation policy

Metadata and permanent identifiers

18. Metadata in a second language (preference: English)
19. Use of persistent identifiers (DOI, ORCID, ROR)
20. Publication of bibliographic references

4.2.4. Reasons and relevance for the items included in the tool

The principles of good practices and transparency of COPE DOAJ OASPA WAME, (2022) includes 16 items, some of which have been eliminated because they are not relevant for the evaluator's own consideration and others have been added that are taken from the common requirements of Latindex and DOAJ.

Table 1.

Basics of the COPE, DOAJ, OASPA and WAME Principles of Transparency and Best Practices (2022)

1	Name of journal	(deleted, not relevant)
2	WebSite	(deleted, not relevant)
3	Publication schedule	Part of the Editorial Process
4	Archive	
5	Copyrights	
6	Licenses	
7	Ethical and publication-related policies	
8	Peer Review	
9	Access	
10	Organization and administration	
11	Scientific, academic or international committee	
12	Editorial board	
13	Charges to the author	(part of open access)
14	Other income	(deleted, not relevant)
15	Advertising	(deleted, not relevant)
16	Direct marketing	(deleted, not relevant)

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The rest of the added elements correspond to both Latindex and DOAJ:

1. Objective and scope
2. Description of the editorial process
3. Requirement of originality
4. ISSN and registration of exclusive name use
5. Institutional and country affiliation of committee members.
6. Identification as an open access reviewer
7. Metadata in a second language (preferably English).
8. Use of persistent identifiers (DOI, ORCID, ROR).
9. Publication of bibliographic references

4.2.5. Limitations of the study

Sample limits: The study sample is limited to the active academic journals of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon. Although the institution publishes 50 online journals, the analysis focuses on the 43 publications that demonstrate regular editorial activity and keep a consistent frequency of publication. This delimitation ensures that the evaluation focuses on publications that keep current editorial processes.

4.2.6. Tool design

A review was carried out on the journals' web pages for each of the indicators using QuestionPro software to collect information. Each indicator has a maximum value of 1 point if it meets the criterion, 0.5 if it partially meets it, 0 if it does not meet it or if it does not apply; this will give us a maximum of 20 points per journal if all the criteria are met.

- Total number of questions (indicators): 20

- Maximum score per question: 1 point

- Total maximum score per journal: 20 points

Only the last publication was reviewed for the criteria directly related to the articles.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forty-three journals were evaluated, and at a general level of compliance they can be divided into three levels of compliance:

- High conformity (≥80%): 12 journals
- Medium conformity (60-79%): 12 journals
- Low conformity (<60%): 19 journals

The journals with the highest scores are:

- *Revista de Comunicación Política*: 20.0 points (100% compliance)
- *Constructos Criminológicos*: 19.0 points (95% compliance)
- *Política Globalidad y Ciudadanía* Journal: 19.0 points (95% compliance)
- *Aitías, Revista de Estudios Filosóficos*: 18.5 points (92.5% compliance)
- *CONTEXTO*, FARQ Journal: 18.5 points (92.5% compliance)

The five journals with the lowest scores were:

- *Planta* Journal: 0.5 points (2.5% compliance)
- *Actas*, Revista de Historia de la UANL: 1.5 points (7.5% compliance)
- *Memoria Universitaria*: 2.5 points (12.5% compliance)
- *Revista de Divulgación Científica FOD*: 4.5 points (22.5% compliance)
- *Química Hoy*: 4.5 points (22.5% compliance)

Table 2.

Overall evaluation results.

Name of the journal	Total score	Compliance
Revista de Comunicación Política	20	100%
Constructos Criminológicos	19	95%
Revista Política Globalidad y Ciudadanía	19	95 %
Aitías, Revista de Estudios Filosóficos	19	92.50%
CONTEXTO Revista de la FARQ	19	92.50%
ENSAYOS Revista de Economía	19	92.50%
Desafíos Jurídicos	18	90%
RESPYN Revista Salud Pública y Nutrición	18	90 %
Revista Métodos de solución de Conflictos	18	90%
Presencia Universitaria	17	85%
Vectores educativos	17	85 %
Vinculatégica EFAN	16	80%
BLOCH Revista Estudiantil de Historia	15	72.50%
Revista Ingeniería y Gestión Industrial	15	72.50%
Revista NOMOS Procesalismo estratégico	15	72.50%
Global Media Journal México	14	70%
Revista Scientia Agricolis Vita (SAV)	13	62.50%
Revista de Ciencias Farmacéuticas y Biomedicina	13	62.50%
Realidades Revista de la FTSyDH	13	62.50%
Sillares Revista de Estudios Históricos	13	62.50%
Biología y Sociedad	12	60%
Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Asuntos Urbanos	12	60%

Revista de Ciencias Agroalimentarias y Biotecnología	12	60%
Revista Ciencias del Ejercicio FOD	12	60 %
Ingenierías	12	57.50%
Paradigma Creativo	11	52.50%
Humanitas revista de teoría, crítica y estudios literarios	11	52.50%
Transdisciplinar Revista de Ciencias Sociales	10	50%
Cultura Regional	10	47.50%
IDCYTA Investigación y Desarrollo en Ciencias y Tecnologías de Alimentos	9	42.50%
Revista Bitácora del CIHR	8	40%
Humanitas Digital (Archivo)	8	40%
CIENCIA UANL	6	30%
Reforma Siglo XXI	6	27.50%
Multidisciplinas de la Ingeniería	5	25%
Revista CROMA	5	25%
Trayectorias Revista de Ciencias Sociales de la UANL	5	25%
Perspectivas Sociales	5	22.50%
Química Hoy	5	22.50%
Revista de Divulgación Científica FOD	5	22.50%
Memoria Universitaria	3	12.50%
Actas, Revista de Historia de la UANL	2	7.50%
Revista Planta	1	2.50%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The Criteria with the highest implementation are:

- Access and reuse policies (CC licenses), with 93% total compliance.
- Editorial committee and Publication of bibliographic references, both with 81% of total compliance.
- ISSN and registration of exclusive name use, with 79% total compliance.

Open access to articles and the use of licenses for the reuse of content is one of the important characteristics of Open Access (Suber, 2012). Meeting these criteria allows the journal to have a wider reach and be open to everyone.

The Areas Requiring Attention are:

- Digital preservation policy, with only 7% total compliance.
- Identification as an open access journal, with 19% compliance.
- Self-archiving policy, with 35% compliance.
- Anti-plagiarism policy, with 40% compliance.

Elements in high-scoring Journals:

The best evaluated journals (12 journals with scores above 16 points) share a systematic implementation of fundamental policies. These journals have established a solid foundation that includes all the essential elements of professional scholarly publishing, including code of ethics, clear editorial processes, and copyright policies.

A particularly relevant finding is that all of the high-performing journals maintain remarkable consistency in the following areas:

- Full implementation of basic policies such as code of ethics and originality requirements
- Professional management of copyrights and publication policies
- The establishment of clearly defined objectives and scope
- Adoption of persistent identifiers and standardized bibliographic references.

Low-scoring journals:

The analysis revealed that 13 journals scored less than 8 points, showing significant deficiencies in critical areas. The main shortcomings are found in:

- The absence of formal codes of ethics.
- Lack of description of editorial processes
- Lack of structured anti-plagiarism policies
- The absence of established scientific or academic committees

The lack of transparency in the editorial processes and organizational structures of these journals is a significant barrier to attracting quality scholarly contributions. This procedural non-transparency can generate uncertainty among potential researchers, who tend to prefer journals with clearly defined and documented editorial processes. The perception of lack of transparency can directly affect the credibility of the journal and, consequently, its ability to attract manuscripts of high academic level (Hernández et al., 2020).

Patterns of Institutional Development:

An interesting pattern is observed in the evolution of the journals. The highest scoring journals have developed a comprehensive structure that encompasses both technical and organizational aspects. This development does not appear to be random, but follows a logical sequence where basic policies are first established and then more advanced elements are implemented.

Differentiating Factors:

The analysis reveals that the main difference between high and low performing journals lies not in complex technical aspects, but in the consistent implementation of basic policies. The highest scoring journals have managed to establish and maintain:

- Documented and transparent editorial processes.
- Clear governance structures (editorial and scientific committees)
- Clearly defined access and rights policies.

Implications for Improvement:

These patterns suggest that, in order to improve the overall performance of UANL journals, it would be beneficial to:

- First establish a solid foundation of basic editorial policies.
- Gradually develop more advanced elements such as digital preservation.
- Share best practices between high-performing and developing journals
- Standardize fundamental processes at the institutional level

This analysis suggests that the key to improving journal performance does not necessarily require significant resources, but rather a systematic approach to implementing well-established core policies and processes.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Open access academic journals operating outside the main commercial databases (Scopus y Web of Science) face the imperative of keeping editorial standards comparable to the publications indexed in these platforms. The particularity of the diamond model of open access implies that these publications operate without direct income, depending entirely on academic institutional support, which is often limited in terms of economic and human resources.

A significant finding of this research reveals that the disparity in quality among journals does not reside primarily in complex technical or resource-intensive aspects, but in the systematic implementation of fundamental editorial policies. This finding suggests considerable potential for the optimization of editorial performance through the adoption of practices already validated within the institutional context.

The Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon is at a strategic juncture for strengthening its academic publishing ecosystem. The gaps identified can be addressed through a process of transferring knowledge and best practices from high-performing publications to those that require optimization. The implementation of a systematic approach that prioritizes the consolidation of fundamental editorial policies, the progressive development of advanced editorial aspects and the standardization of institutional processes.

This scenario represents both a challenge and a strategic opportunity. By taking advantage of successful internal experiences and establishing robust institutional standards, the university can evolve towards a more solid publishing ecosystem that integrally benefits its academic community.

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