

Academic freedom in Africa: A systematic review of content analysis studies

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Academic freedom
Systematic review
Autonomy, higher education
Academic community
Africa

ABSTRACT

The intellectual discourse on academic freedom has gained prominence across the globe in recent past. While such discussions portend a positive signal for academics, little is known about academic freedom in Africa. This article examines the existing research and scholarship on academic freedom in Africa with the sole intention of questioning the conceptual underpinnings of the frequently studied topics related to academic freedom and the methodological distribution of studies related to academic freedom in Africa. An electronic database search was performed in Scopus and google scholar for papers published between 2004 and 2022, followed by a systematic review of content analysis articles which described academic freedom in Africa. After eliminating all the duplicates, 29 unique research studies were identified as peer-reviewed articles in English. Out of the 29 full texts which were assessed for eligibility criteria, 4 were excluded with 25 Full-text records left to be used for the systematic review of content analysis. The systematic review revealed five main areas of study namely, legal and constitutional laws for the protection of academic freedom, effects of colonialism on academic freedom, challenges and safety of academic freedom, academic freedom and intellectual engagement, and academic freedom and sexuality. Our findings further revealed that there is a dearth of literature on academic freedom in Africa presumably because of the chequered development of Africa's democracy. One thing is however clear that as the democratic architecture of Africa dips, as a result of the upsurge of coup d'état in recent past, the future of academic freedom remains bleak. It called for academics to seek support from other civil society groups to promote academic freedom and to keep the discussion on academic freedom alive, relevant and current, within the academic community.

1. Introduction

In the last three decades, there has been a significant increase in the massification, privatization and commercialisation of university education across the globe. Enrolments in University education across the globe have quadrupled between 1991 and 2004 (Areen, 2008). Universities have undergone significant range of amalgamations with subsequent resource squeezes in many countries. Within the same period, University rankings have gained the attention of university managers, employers, policymakers, academics and the wider public (Billot, 2010; Beck and Young, 2005). One ignored fact however within this narrative is the concept of academic freedom which espouses the right of academics/scholars to voice an opinion on the running of a university; take part in decision-making within the university; appoint and disappoint

people from, positions of managerial authority (Bauman, 1996). Such a right is understandably so as the pursuit of truth and scholarship can only be achieved through the defiance of anyone within or outside the university. Academic freedom as a concept is not new but became topical when the first generation of American scholars first imported it into the US from Germany. (American Association of University Professors, 2015). Since then, the concept has gained prominence across the globe, taking a centre stage in global conversation (Burros, 2012).

As the most cherished right of the academic community, academic freedom invokes the freedom of Professors to teach any discipline without any external control, (Clegg, 2008), research on any topic of their choice and report the findings without fear of retribution (Davies, 2005). These freedoms are not farfetched as they have been explicitly and tellingly enshrined in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Abbreviations: FIRE, Foundations for Individual Rights in Education; ILO, International Labour Organisation; UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.; KNUST, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology; UTAG, University Teachers' Association of Ghana; PRISM, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses; PICOCS, Participants, Intervention, Comparator, Outcome, Context, Study.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102785>

Received 18 December 2022; Received in revised form 21 April 2023; Accepted 22 April 2023

Available online 2 May 2023

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Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) document published in 1997, entitled *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*. In the said document, governments of the world were admonished to respect the right of academics and take the necessary steps to give effect to the provisions spelt out in the Recommendation. Unfortunately, academic freedom is often violated by academic institutions and taken for granted by politicians. In 2021, over 1500 academicians submitted cases of violations to the Foundations for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). FIRE's website lists some 3000 plus instances where it has acted on behalf of students or faculty whose views were being suppressed or coerced. Violations of such rights have the potential to demoralise faculty members and students as scientific research and academic scholarship thrive in an environment where academic freedom is respected. The Kampala Declaration and Dar es salaam declaration on academic freedom and social responsibility (Bauman, 1996) similarly proved that African Universities have also not been spared of such violations. Twelve countries in Africa (Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Central Africa Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Kenya, Mali, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe) were found to have failed to comply with the ILO/UNESCO recommendation in the area of institutional governance (Drennan et al., 2020).

In Ghana, the decision of the government to enact a new law to regulate all 24 public universities under a single act of parliament were forcefully resisted. The antecedents for the passage of the bill were linked to an incident in 2018 on the campus of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), when a group of students staged a demonstration to challenge the conversion of an all-male hall into a mixed hall. The demonstration turned into violence and resulted in damage to school property. The government reaction was to dismiss the university's vice-chancellor and introduce a university bill to regulate all public universities. In response to the action of the government, the University Teachers' Association of Ghana (UTAG) felt the bill constitutes a major intrusion into the life of universities as it touches on institutional autonomy, individual rights and freedoms of academics and students, self-governance and tenure. Beyond that, UTAG felt the bill violates the sacred tenets of academic freedom protected in the Fourth Republic Constitution of Ghana which states that "All persons shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief, which shall include academic freedom" (Constitution of Ghana, Article 21, Section 1b).

These violations are not only exclusive to just one University (KNUST) as previously narrated but it is a common phenomenon across public universities in Africa. The action of the government reinforces the assertion that Academic freedom is indeed taken for granted in Africa and matters taken for granted are often not much written about. Socially, the subject is hardly talked about as it is considered as an attempt to question the authority of superiors. It comes as no surprise that literature on academic freedom in Africa has been approached from the global perspectives rather than the African perspectives (Karran, Beiter, and Mallinson, 2022; Adebayo, 2022; Nongxa, 2020; Kagee, 2020; Vráblíková, 2020). Clearly, there is a dearth/paucity of literature addressing the issues of academic freedom either conceptually, or methodologically in Africa. This study is set out to examine the existing research and scholarship on academic freedom in Africa with the sole intention of questioning the (i) conceptual underpinnings of the frequently studied topics related to academic freedom and (ii) the methodological distribution of studies related to academic freedom in Africa. It does so at a time when democratisation in Africa has stagnated and remains chequered in Mali, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso. The subsequent section of the paper presents a global assessment of academic freedom and the extent to which academic freedom has been perceived in Africa.

2. Theories, definitions and perspectives on academic freedom

Three key theories are usually associated with literature on academic freedom. The Special Theory, General Theory and the most recent, Composite Theory (Appiagyei-Atua et al., 2015). While the Special Theory and the General Theory trace their root and application to the concept of academic freedom from Germany and the United States of America, the Composite Theory, the third Theory articulates a theory from the African perspectives, emphasising on the traditional scope of academic freedom to promote democracy. The originators of the theory, Appiagyei-Atua et al. (2015) argue that the Composite theory is largely influenced by the historical, cultural, and political context of university education during the post-colonial period. This supposition was premised on the *Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics*, in 1990 and the *Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (Kampala Declaration)* which emphasize on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The Kampala Declaration, takes the view that the relationship between academic freedom and democracy must be symbiotic and mutual. They note that both concepts are interdependent as the survival of one depends on the other. Thus, the ability of academics to participate and contribute to decision-making and political discussions depend largely on the level of democracy in that particular country (Kratou and Laakso, 2022). In other words, the higher the level of academic freedom, the better it is for multiparty democracy to be entrenched. In essence, the concept of academic freedom rests heavily on the development and structure of democracy in Africa. In countries where democracy has been poorly delivered, academic freedom has suffered. Justification of the theory to the study becomes even more relevant particularly when Africa's democratic experiment remains chequered with regular occurrence of military takeovers in Mali, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso. By 2021, democratisation in Africa looked bleak, as opposed to the progressive nature of democracy in other continents. Occurrences of electoral violence (Bozzon et al., 2017) and 'constitutional coups' have eroded the gains made in constitutional democracy (Gill, 2010). In order to underscore the link between the literature review and the theoretical framework, it is imperative that the empirical literature on the violations of academic freedom is reviewed to provide the conceptual and methodological underpinning of the study. The next section addresses the review of literature on academic freedom.

3. Literature review

For many years, academic freedom has been one of the value systems jealously observed and protected by academics in many countries. However, the way it is perceived, understood and articulated varies significantly by country or region (Harris, 2005). Without any doubt, there is no single definition of academic freedom. While persons within government circles limit the definition of academic freedom exclusively to the right to teach and research with minimal interference, others conceptualise the subject to include human and democratic rights (Horak, 2004). A critical examination of the various definitions offered by African authors points to three basic principles, namely, the protection of institutional autonomy, the protection of science, and the freedom of faculty and students (Arowosegbe, 2021; Nongxa, 2020; Benatar, and Lange, 2016, 2016). The idea of academic freedom assumes that University research is not subjected to the political, religious and economic interest of anybody. Unfortunately, the attacks on scientific research have been with us for many years. It started far back in the days of Socrates. Socrates (c. 470–399 B.C) was put to death for being accused of corrupting the youth of Athens with his philosophy. Galileo (1564–1642) was sentenced to life imprisonment for championing the Copernican view of the solar system. Descartes (1596–1650) have had to suppress his writing to avoid similar trouble. Teachers were fired for telling their students about Darwin's (18–9–1882) views. While the ideas of these scholars have survived the test of time, one is unable to tell

how the ideas of other scholars have been suppressed in the past. There was no protection for scholars under Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945. In that oppressive regime, thousands of Academics who opposed the religious, political and economic policies under the totalitarian rule of Adolf Hitler were displaced and hounded. Unsurprisingly, intellectual oppression has still not disappeared.

The aforementioned persecutions are not too different from the happenings/ persecutions of scholars in African Universities. In a study to look at how academic freedom is perceived in Egyptian higher education, [Esmat \(2016\)](#) found that pedagogical techniques, political indoctrination, professor's authority, lack of university autonomy, culture of fear, restrictions on data collection, and mandated readiness posed as threats against the academic freedom of both students and faculty members. This situation is also not different in Libya as the political shift in Libya has had a negative influence on the academic environment ([Derbesh, 2020](#)). Since 2011, the new governments in Libya has not shown any interest in advancing the freedom of her citizens. In effect, any effort to advance political or academic freedom has been hampered by the government. A study by [Derbesh \(2020\)](#) acknowledges how detrimental it has been for Libyan society to have long-term restrictions on press freedom, free speech, and academic freedom. The situation is not too different in Kenya, Ghana and Tunisia. Conflicts between academic staff and Kenya's postcolonial government have been characterized by intellectual deprivation that is bound to limit academic choice and jeopardize academic freedom ([Johnson and Singleton, 2015](#)). In Ghana, attempts by the government to enact a new law to regulate and control all 24 public universities under a single act of parliament was forcefully resisted. Dismissals of university faculty members over the expression of views has become a common phenomenon. In 2017, 330 academics were dismissed in Turkey, purely on political grounds (Scholar at Risk, 2017). The action of the government was linked to the expression of views of lecturers which the government considered or deemed unpopular. Although these events were met with strident protests from academics all over the world ([McNamara, 2010](#)), they posed a huge threat to academic freedom. There is no doubt that the freedom of the lecturer to investigate or discuss a research problem in any academic environment is crucially important. And so any attempt to interfere in the conclusion of a research whether through the publication or instruction of students from administrative officials or higher authority may be found to run contrary to the professional ethics of the lecturer or considered an oppression to the freedom of the lecturer ([Sarup, 1996](#)). Today, heightened commercialism on the campuses of universities is taking away the core mandate of higher education. While Academy-Industrial relationship have contributed to the advancement of knowledge and birthed new disciplines, mounting market-driven activities have largely stifled many academic initiatives. There are several such examples where powerful corporate organizations have taken Universities to court just so they could profit from the university.

4. Methodology

As was indicated in the previous section, the study adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Several academic databases are available to search the relevant papers on academic freedom in Africa., such as SCOPUS, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, Business Sources and many others. Among these databases, the use of SCOPUS and google scholar were considered advantageous because they provide detailed bibliometric information for each article. All these search engines were searched using the key word "Academic freedom in Africa". Titles and articles of abstract retrieved were screened. Records identified through the databases were 611 with additional records of 13, totalling 624 records. Fifteen duplicated records were removed with 609 left for screening. During the screening stage, 508 records were excluded on the basis of context and the key word. After eliminating all the duplicates and the excluded records, 29 unique research studies were identified

and screened to identify peer-reviewed articles in English. Four articles were further excluded from the 29 articles on the basis of their titles, abstract, and relevance. A total of 25 full text records were left to be used for the systematic review of content analysis.

5. Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria were developed using the PICOCS (Participants, Intervention, Comparator, Outcome, Context, Study Design) proposed by Petticrew and Roberts (2006) and recommended by the Centre for Research and Dissemination (2009). According to Petticrew and Roberts (2006), content analysis can be conducted through systematic review by seven stages namely, (1) defining question (2) determining types of studies (3) literature search (4) screening the results of search (5) appraising studies (6) synthesizing studies, and (7) disseminating the findings of the review. This study complied with the dictates of all these stages: where (1) questions were identified to determine how studies on academic freedom have been conducted in Africa (2) articles in higher education were considered; and (3) search engines were identified such as Google Scholar and Scopus. Keywords identified and refined and then an inclusion and exclusion criteria were employed. The purpose of this study is to identify the conceptual and methodological framing of discussions on academic freedom in the African context. As a result, the research questions are posed in the following ways: (i) What are the conceptual elements of the frequently studied topics related to academic freedom? And (ii) what are the methodological distribution of studies related to academic freedom? To address this, the study used content analysis as a technique to systematically identify, quantify, and describe specific themes or categories in the articles ([Sparkes, 2007](#)). A diagram flow with the inclusion and exclusion criteria is summarized according to the PRISMA guidelines (2009) The search identified a total of 31 articles with the first publication in 2004. [Fig. 1](#) visually sketches the papers selection process.

[Table 1](#). below shows the list of titles and common themes addressed by authors in Africa.

From [Table 1](#), majority of the studies conducted on academic freedom in several institutions ($n = 13$) were conducted between 2016 and 2020. Other studies ($n = 5$) were also carried out between 2021 and 2022. However, a few of the studies ($n = 5$) were conducted between 2011 and 2015. Two (2) studies were carried out by researchers between 2000 and 2005. In the case between 2006 and 2010 only one (1) study was carried out. Out of the total number of twenty-four (24) studies conducted on academic freedom in higher educational institutions, sixteen (16) of them were carried out globally in different countries such as Britain, Israel, Europe among others. In Africa, only eight (8) studies had been carried out to date. In summary, majority of studies on academic freedom had been carried out extensively globally with limited studies in the African context.

The analysis in [Table 2](#) shows that all the studies conducted on academic freedom in Africa had been published in Journals. None of the studies reviewed had been published in book chapters, reports, dissertation etc. With respect to the design, majority of the studies ($n = 9$) were non-empirical. Others were quantitative ($n = 1$) and survey ($n = 1$). The sample used in the studies were university staff ($n = 1$), academic staff ($n = 1$), teachers ($n = 1$) and university students ($n = 1$). The data collection tools used were centered around questionnaires ($n = 1$), primary data ($n = 1$) and secondary data ($n = 1$). In terms of the data analysis, different approaches such as Descriptive analysis ($n = 1$), Chi-Square ($n = 1$) and Meta- Analysis ($n = 1$) were used. To conclude, the overview of the methodology portrays that between 2006 and 2022, studies carried on academic freedom had solely been in journals, surveys, quantitative, non-empirical, university staff, academic staff, university students and teachers and data had been analysed using descriptive analysis, Chi-Square and Meta – Analysis.

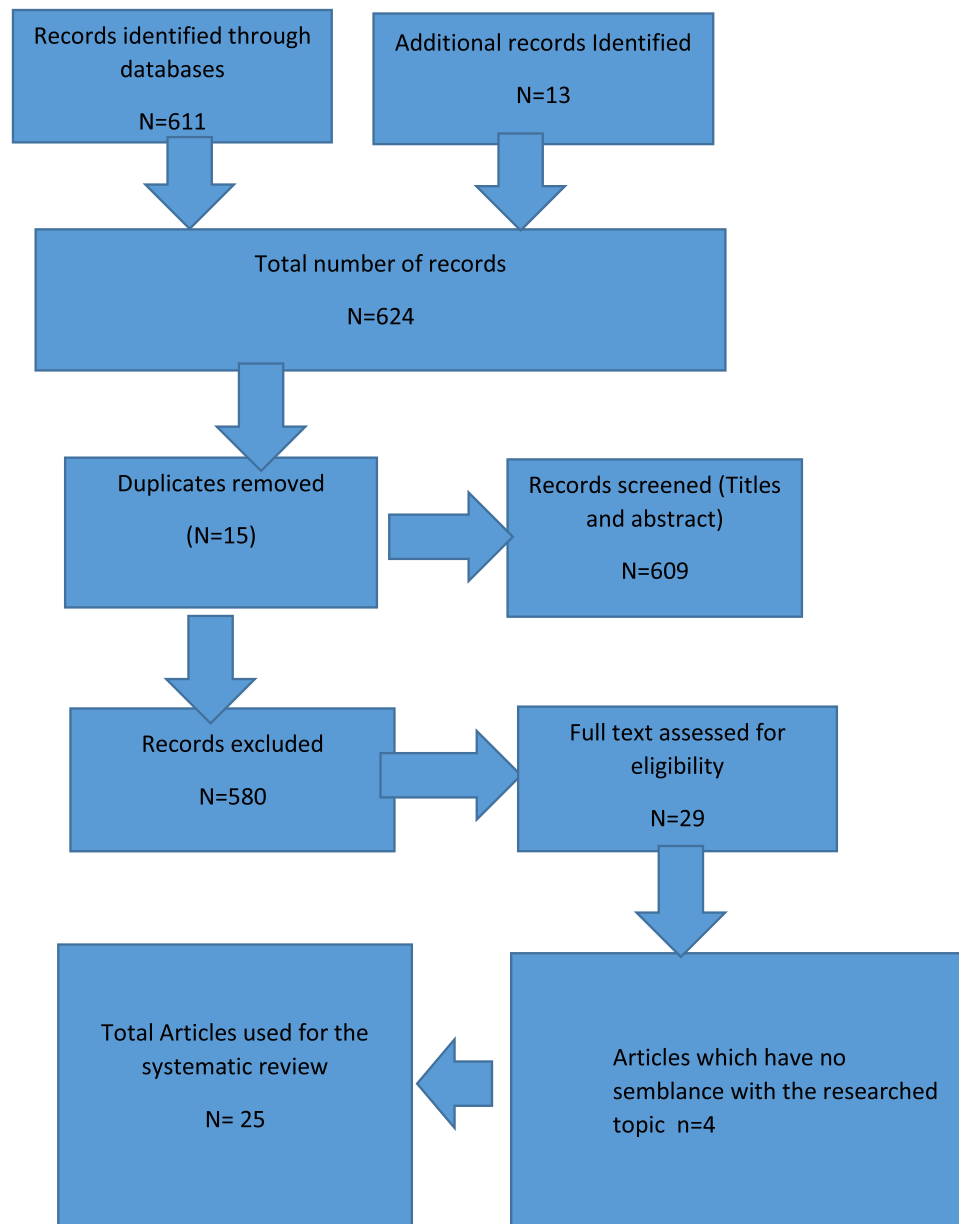


Fig. 1. The PRISM flow diagram.

6. Results

The section present results from the publication trends, general and characteristics of the studies and the methods employed.

Annual scientific production is presented in Table 2 which reveals that the total number of publications on academic freedom in Africa (2008–2022) has been growing more rapidly since 2015. It can further be observed that until 2015, only two papers were published within a period of ten years but it saw a significant rise after 2013. Several factors might account for this rise. Firstly, Africa's, chequered democracy was gradually improving and getting better with respects to freedom of speech and human rights issues. For the first time in the History of Africa Constitutional law, academic freedom has been enshrined in the constitution of many African States (Appiagyei-Atua et al., 2015), with 14 out of the 55 countries referencing academic freedom in their constitution and incorporating it in the Chapter of fundamental rights and freedoms. Eight out of the 55 countries in Africa were observed to have undertaken works on academic freedom, churning out an insignificant number of 25 studies with majority of the studies coming from

South Africa. The 25 studies were published between 2008 and 2022. South Africa led the charge with 15 papers. Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe had two papers each. This was followed by Kenya, Namibia, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya with one paper each.

The systematic review revealed five main studied areas of research, namely, studies on legal and constitutional laws for the protection of the academic freedom ($n = 7$), studies on the effects of colonialism on academic freedom ($n = 1$), Challenges and Safety of academic freedom, ($n = 6$), Academic freedom and intellectual engagement, ($n = 2$) and then studies on academic freedom and sexuality, ($n = 2$). The studied areas by the researchers were probably influenced by the level of freedom and democratic development in their countries.

Apart from Karran et al., (2017), many of the studies retrieved had no explicit reference to theories, content analysis approach and clear cut methodology. The study identified five areas of academic freedom which are of great interest to academic researchers in the region. One of the critical areas identified was the legal and constitutional laws for the protection of academic freedom which was addressed within the context of three supportive components viz, autonomy, governance and tenure)

Table 1
Authors, Title, Themes, Context.

Author	Title	Context	Themes
Karran et al. (2022)	Academic freedom in contemporary Britain: A cause for concern?	Global	Academic freedom and tenure
Nhemachena and Mawere (2022)	Academics with Clay Feet? Anthropological Perspectives on Academic Freedom in Twenty-First Century African Universities	Africa	Academic freedom and tenure
Adebayo (2022)	The state of academic (un) freedom and scholar rescue programmes: A contemporary and critical overview.	Global	Academic immobility and scholars at risk
Arowosegbe (2021)	Academic freedom, decolonization and the state in Africa	Africa	Academic freedom and decolonisation
Davids (2021)	Academic freedom and the fallacy of a post-truth era	Global	Academic freedom and intellectual engagement
Nongxa (2020)	Intellectual laziness and academic dishonesty: A threat to academic freedom?	Global	Institutional autonomy, race and materialistic research
Kagee, (2020)	Academic freedom, the boycott of Israel, and what psychologists can do: against the politics of normalization	Global	Academic Freedom and academic boycott
Esmat, (2016)	Student academic freedom policy in Egyptian Higher Education; case study: Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University.	Africa	Academic freedom
Vráblíková, (2020)	Reading the Sexual Economy of Academic Freedom with Sarah Kofman and Jacques Derrida: A Feminist Deconstruction of Kant's Concept of the University	Global	Academic freedom, female deconstruction and sexual difference
Gukurume (2019)	Surveillance, Spying and Disciplining the University: Deployment of State Security Agents on Campus in Zimbabwe	Africa	Government spies, surveillance, militarization and academic freedom
Derbesh (2020).	The impact of political change on the state of academia including academic freedom in the Arab world: Libya as a case study.	Africa	Academic freedom
Duncan (2018)	Criminalising Academia: The Protection of State Information Bill and Academic Freedom	Africa	Academic Freedom, national security and information bill
Baser et al. (2017)	"Academics for Peace" in Turkey: a case of criminalising dissent and critical thought via counterterrorism policy	Global	Academic for peace and academic freedom
Karran et al. (2017)	Measuring academic freedom in Europe: A criterion referenced approach.	Global	Academic freedom and comparative analysis of EU
Benatar (2016)	Freedom of speech, academic freedom, and challenges to universities in South Africa.	Africa	Freedom of speech, rights, academic boycott and protest
Lange (2016)	Thinking academic freedom. Arts and	Global	Academic freedom

Table 1 (continued)

Author	Title	Context	Themes
Coetzee (2016)	Humanities in Higher Education. Academic freedom in contexts	Global	Academic freedom
Zha and Shen (2018)	The paradox of academic freedom in the Chinese context.	Global	Academic freedom
Beite et al. (2016)	Academic freedom and its protection in the law of European states: Measuring an international human right.	Global	Academic Freedom
Sands (2016)	Beginning with property? Hegel and unfolding freedom in a South African academic context.	Africa	Academic freedom and fees must fall campaign
Strauss (2015)	The new Threat to Societal Freedoms: A return to the persecution of Christians?	Global	Fundamental rights
Chapman (2015)	'What is the language that the humanities have to offer?' 'Reflections on John Higgins' Academic freedom in a democratic South Africa: essays and interviews on higher education and the humanities.	Africa	Academic freedom and critical literacy
Hsu and Lin (2013)	A study of the protection of the fundamental rights of college students from the perspective of university autonomy.	Global	Fundamental rights and institutional autonomy
Habib et al. (2008)	Academic freedom, institutional autonomy and the corporatised university in contemporary South Africa.	Africa	Academic Freedom and Institutional autonomy
Johnson and Singleton (2015)	A part but apart: Discursive explorations of the university as contested space in Kenya.	Africa	Academic freedom

of academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). It conceived of academic freedom as the right of academics to freely express their views, publish their scientific research unhindered and disseminate their findings without any influence. It however blames African academics for failing to independently speak their mind on issues affecting the University autonomy and sovereignty (Arowosegbe, 2021). It is not surprising that most academic setting in Africa are subjected to censorship and violence, while academic programmes considered 'politically sensitive have been cancelled (Nhemachena and Mawere, 2022). It proposes a number of ways, academics can pursue/push to minimize the attacks on academic freedom. This include solidarizing with civil society to support their cause in the promotion of academic freedom, keeping the discussion on academic freedom alive, relevant and current, within the academic community and pushing for the introduction of parliamentary bills that secures and protect the tenure of scholars. While scholar rescue programmes may not be critical within the African context, it could to a large extent ameliorate some of the challenges faced by academics and enhance academic freedom (Adebayo, 2021). Few of the leading agencies that have pushed for the setting up of scholar rescue schemes and initiatives include the Institute of International Education (IIE), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Human Rights Watch, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and the

Table 2

Overview of methodology and processes.

Variables	Category	Frequency
Year of Publications	2006 – 2010	1
	2011 – 2015	4
	2016 – 2020	15
	2021 – 2022	5
Publications/Articles	Journal	25
Research Design	Survey	1
	Quantitative	1
	Non-empirical	9
Sample used	University Staff	1
	Academic Staff	1
	Teachers	1
	University students	1
Instrument used	Questionnaire	1
	Primary Data	1
	Secondary Data	1
Data Analysis	Descriptive	1
	Chi-Square	1
	Meta-Analysis	1

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7. Conclusion

The paper sought to identify the conceptual and methodological gaps on academic freedom within Africa literature. While the findings of the study revealed the paucity of literature on academic freedom within Sub-saharan Africa, it showed a multi-disciplinary nature of publications in the subject area. In terms of coverage of the subject, the most discussed topics were the challenges and safety of academic freedom and the legal and constitutional laws for the protection of the academic.

A striking feature of the study was the criminalisation of academic freedom in some African states, which uncovers the challenges faced by African researchers in their line of work. The call therefore for the adoption of a legislative protection for academic freedom into the national constitutions could not have come at a better time (Beiter et al., 2016). The literature suggests that the criminalisation of academic freedom is just not exclusive in some parts of the western world but also a common phenomenon in a continent where democratic institutions are weak and respect for human rights are taken for granted. One thing is however clear that as the democratic architecture of Africa dips, as a result of the upsurge of coup d'état in recent past, the future of academic freedom remains bleak. It proposes academics to partner and seek support from other civil society groups to promote academic freedom and then keep the discussion on academic freedom alive, relevant and current, within the academic community. Scholar rescue programmes appears to be one of the possible ways to minimise the attacks on academic freedom (Adebayo, 2021). It is hoped that this study will shape discussions on academic freedom and chart a new path for more empirical studies to be undertaken. This assertion explains why some studies blame African academics for failing to speak their mind on issues affecting the autonomy of their universities.

Authors statement

The letter serves to respectfully request for the publication of an article titled **Academic freedom in Africa: A systematic review of content analysis studies** in your esteemed journal. I look forward to your kind response and attention.

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