



Prevention of Endogamy in the Editorial Boards of University Journals

Maryna Nazarovets¹ · Serhii Nazarovets²

Received: 4 June 2025 / Accepted: 11 August 2025
© The Author(s) 2025

Abstract

Editorial endogamy, the over-representation of scholars affiliated with a journal's host institution on its editorial board, is a widespread phenomenon in university journals (UJs). This practice is often shaped by institutional traditions, resource limitations, internal loyalty, promotion incentives, and opaque selection practices. While some degree of institutional representation is inevitable, excessive editorial endogamy raises concerns about peer review integrity, international visibility, and negatively impacts the credibility and inclusivity of scholarly publishing. This review explores the systemic drivers of editorial endogamy, focusing on institutional governance structures, national research policies, and academic evaluation frameworks that influence editorial board composition in UJs. Additionally, we review best practices to mitigate negative effects, including increasing editorial transparency, diversifying peer review processes, and strengthening regulatory oversight. Strategies such as rotational editorial leadership, transparent peer review policies, structured regulatory interventions, and cross-institutional collaborations are recommended to balance institutional autonomy with international publishing standards. The implementation of these measures has the potential to enhance the credibility, inclusivity, and global impact of UJs while preserving their role in supporting local and disciplinary research communities. Recognizing the constraints faced by many UJs, we propose flexible and scalable solutions to enhance editorial integrity while considering the operational realities of university-based publishing. Effectively addressing editorial endogamy requires coordinated action among universities, journal editors, and policymakers.

Keywords Academic integrity · Editorial boards · Editorial endogamy · University journals · Scholarly communication

✉ Maryna Nazarovets
maryna.nazarovets@tib.eu

Serhii Nazarovets
serhii.nazarovets@gmail.com

¹ TIB Leibniz Information Centre for Science and Technology, Welfengarten 1B, 30167 Hannover, Germany

² Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, 18/2 Bulvarno-Kudriavska Str, Kyiv 04053, Ukraine

Introduction

University journals (UJs) are scholarly publications managed or published by universities or academic institutions. They represent a distinct category within the academic publishing ecosystem, with diverse roles and objectives. Some UJs serve as important platforms for disseminating research that may not align with the priorities of major commercial publishers, for instance, topics of regional and emerging importance. Others primarily function to support their host institution's academic activities, providing publication outlets for faculty members, or PhD students. Many UJs focus on disseminating work by local academics, early-career researchers, frequently under open-access models supported by the institution. This practice enables universities to gain greater control over how research outputs are published and shared. However, their close ties to their parent institutions can also introduce editorial challenges, particularly concerning governance and oversight.

Despite their significance, UJs face numerous structural and institutional challenges (Nazarovets, 2025). One of the systemic issues we have focused on in this study is editorial endogamy – the tendency for editorial boards to be composed predominantly of scholars (usually professors, faculty members, or administrators) affiliated with the journal's host institution. This practice, while sometimes driven by logistical constraints such as limited resources, difficulty in recruiting external editors, and administrative policies favoring local faculty, raises concerns about editorial impartiality. Editorial endogamy can contribute to intellectual insularity, limiting external scholarly engagement and reinforcing institutional biases in manuscript selection and evaluation. It may also suppress openness to unconventional research perspectives, thereby reducing the likelihood of publishing creative or innovative manuscripts that could promote more diverse and robust approaches to academic inquiry. In some cases, this practice may be justified by practical necessity, such as when journals have small operational budgets or require frequent in-person editorial board meetings. However, unchecked editorial endogamy can negatively impact journal credibility, fairness in peer review, and international reach. It affects not only the reputation of individual UJs, but also the equity and efficiency of scholarly communication in regions where UJs are a significant part of the publishing ecosystem.

This study examines the phenomenon of editorial endogamy in UJs. It explores the structural and contextual factors that sustain this practice and assesses its influence on journal quality, peer-review integrity, and international visibility. Recognizing that UJs differ in their missions and constraints from professional society or commercial journals, this paper incorporates these contextual factors while emphasizing the importance of upholding editorial integrity. By differentiating editorial endogamy from broader academic inbreeding, this paper offers a conceptual framework for understanding the issue and presents recommendations for fostering more diverse and transparent editorial practices. While acknowledging that some degree of institutional affiliation among editors is inevitable, we argue that adopting more inclusive editorial policies, external peer-review mechanisms, and transparent governance structures can mitigate the negative effects of endogamy.

University Journals: Characteristics and Global Distribution

The number of UJs varies widely across academic systems, yet precise quantification remains challenging due to differences in indexing practices and classification inconsistencies (Nazarovets, 2025). According to data from the Ulrichsweb Global Serials Directory¹, universities in the United States publish around 2,200 active journals, making them one of the world's largest UJs publishers (accounting for around 11% of all UJs published globally, and roughly 15% of all academic journals published in the United States (Wang et al., 2017). In Europe, UJs constitute a substantial segment of the small- and mid-sized publishing sector, with 46% of single-journal publishers being university-based (Laakso & Multas, 2023). In Ukraine, academic institutions distribute approximately 85% of all journals (Nazarovets, 2024), while in Turkey, universities and non-profits publish most of the 3,000+ active journals (Kiran et al., 2023). In China, universities are responsible for approximately 40% of open-access journals (Shen, 2017). In Latin America, UJs dominate the diamond open-access publishing landscape, contributing to around 25% of the world's total (Beigel et al., 2024). Despite their prevalence, the role and influence of UJs vary considerably across countries and disciplines. Some operate as highly respected scholarly platforms, while others primarily serve institutional interests, such as faculty promotion and accreditation. Additionally, UJs often struggle with global visibility due to challenges related to limited resources for editorial management (Salager-Meyer, 2015).

UJs differ from commercial and independent academic journals in several key aspects, including financial sustainability, editorial governance, and audience engagement. They can play a crucial role in disseminating research that does not always align with the commercial priorities of for-profit publishers, especially within the humanities, social sciences, and innovative disciplines, where commercial viability is often lower (Hérubel, 2023; Neubert & Rodrigues, 2021). Many UJs align with national research priorities, providing platforms for studies addressing local and regional issues that might not fit within the editorial scope of high-impact international journals (Salager-Meyer, 2015). Another defining characteristic of UJs is their contribution to linguistic diversity: they often publish in multiple languages, supporting regional scholarship that might otherwise be marginalized within the predominantly English-language academic publishing system (Laakso & Multas, 2023). This linguistic inclusivity enhances knowledge dissemination within non-English-speaking communities, though it may also present challenges for wider international recognition.

Unlike commercial publishers' journals, which primarily rely on subscription-based models or article processing charges (APCs), UJs are typically funded through institutional budgets, governmental support, or national publishing initiatives (Laakso & Multas, 2023). In many cases, they are maintained as part of a university's broader academic infrastructure rather than as independent scholarly enterprises. This financial structure enhances accessibility, as many UJs operate on open-access or low-cost models, reducing financial barriers for authors and readers. However, it also introduces vulnerabilities, as institutional support can be inconsistent and subject to administrative or policy shifts. Dependence on institutional funding can also create tensions between maintaining editorial independence and aligning with university priorities, particularly in systems where journal operation is linked to faculty evaluation or accreditation.

¹ <https://ulrichsweb.serialssolutions.com/>.

A notable characteristic of UJs is their editorial structure. Unlike commercially published journals, which often recruit editors based on disciplinary expertise and institutional diversity, UJs frequently appoint editorial board members from within their host institutions (Nazarovets, 2025). While this practice may stem from logistical and financial constraints rather than deliberate exclusion, it raises concerns about the phenomenon known as editorial endogamy, particularly when institutional affiliations disproportionately influence editorial decisions and peer-review processes (Tutuncu, 2023). Editorial boards composed primarily of internal faculty may facilitate journal operations by ensuring active participation and institutional oversight. However, when internal affiliations predominate, such practices may lead to intellectual insularity, discourage external contributions, and limit the diversity of perspectives represented in published research. Over time, such strong institutional ties can hinder the broader impact of these journals in global academia, particularly if editorial policies prioritize local academic networks over external engagement.

Editorial Endogamy: Definition and Conceptual Distinctions

Editorial endogamy refers to the over-representation of scholars affiliated with a journal's host institution on its editorial board. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in UJs, where editorial positions are frequently held by faculty members, administrators, or researchers from the journal's home university. While this structure can facilitate journal operations by ensuring active participation from institutional members, it simultaneously raises concerns about editorial independence and decision-making transparency.

Unlike the related phenomenon of academic inbreeding, which describes the hiring of a university's own graduates for faculty positions (Horta & Yudkevich, 2016), editorial endogamy specifically concerns the composition of editorial boards and their influence on scholarly publishing. Distinguishing between editorial endogamy and academic inbreeding is crucial, as they affect different aspects of academic life. Although both phenomena can contribute to intellectual insularity, academic inbreeding primarily affects knowledge circulation within universities by reinforcing closed academic hierarchies that hinder systemic innovation and resist external influence (Horta, 2022; Karadag & Ciftci, 2022), whereas editorial endogamy can introduce biases in peer review and editorial decision-making in UJs. In extreme cases, it can create an environment where manuscript selection prioritizes institutional ties over objective scholarly evaluation.

When editorial boards are dominated by scholars from a single institution, the risk of biased manuscript selection, favouritism, and reduced editorial accountability increases (Salager-Meyer, 2015). A study on library and information science journals found that editorial endogamy in this field correlates with high self-citation rates and preferential treatment of submissions from affiliated authors (Pinto et al., 2024). In addition to direct favouritism, editorial boards that lack external perspectives may inadvertently reinforce existing academic networks, limiting opportunities for scholars outside the host institution.

Beyond their influence on peer review, these patterns also shape broader editorial dynamics, reinforcing a narrow intellectual exchange within journals, as the same group of scholars frequently participates in editorial decisions, authorship, and peer review. Such practices can reduce exposure to alternative methodologies and interdisciplinary insights, ultimately affecting the diversity of research published. This can also pose challenges for early-career

researchers, particularly those unaffiliated with the host institution, who may face barriers to publishing in journals controlled by a closed group of editors (Wu et al., 2020).

Despite these concerns, some scholars argue that editorial endogamy is not inherently detrimental and, in specific contexts, can be a functional necessity rather than a flaw. In the United States, for example, the dominance of a ‘dense core’ of economists mainly affiliated with a few renowned institutions on editorial boards positively correlates with journal impact (Petersen et al., 2017). However, such cases often involve well-established academic networks with rigorous editorial policies that ensure high-quality peer review. Justifications for editorial endogamy remain valid only when accompanied by strong editorial policies, external review mechanisms, and periodic rotation of editorial board members to prevent stagnation and favouritism. Without these safeguards, excessive editorial endogamy can compromise journal credibility, limit scholarly diversity, and reduce engagement with international academic audiences.

Systemic Roots of Editorial Endogamy

The persistence of editorial endogamy in UJs is deeply rooted in institutional, cultural, and policy-driven factors. While some degree of editorial affiliation with the host institution is inevitable, the extent to which this practice dominates journal governance varies significantly across national academic systems. In some cases, internal editorial appointments help ensure journal continuity and facilitate decision-making, particularly when financial or logistical constraints limit the recruitment of external scholars. However, excessive reliance on institutional affiliations can also hinder editorial transparency and limit engagement with the broader research community. This practice is reinforced by several structural conditions, including institutional loyalty, national research policies, and the prioritization of domestic publication metrics in academic evaluation.

Institutional and Cultural Factors

Institutional loyalty is a key driver of editorial endogamy. Many UJs are directly managed by university faculties or research departments, where editorial positions are assigned based on internal networks rather than open selection processes. Since serving on an editorial board can provide academic recognition or career advancement, universities often prioritize appointing their own faculty members over external scholars. While this practice may foster operational stability, it entrenches a closed editorial culture, limiting external participation. For example, Giménez-Toledo (2010) argues that this type of editorial endogamy in Spain creates barriers to internationalization by hindering transparency and compliance with international editorial standards.

A related institutional factor is the absence of sustained ethical oversight in editorial governance. As Karabag et al. (2025) show in their survey of over 3,000 researchers at Swedish universities, the most important driver of questionable research practices is what they term the counter norm of Biasedness, characterized by preferential treatment of certain individuals or groups within the same academic environment, such as colleagues from the same department or institution, and by the suspension of critical scrutiny. This orientation, shaped by organizational climate and group norms, can normalize closed appointment practices

within UJs, where editorial board positions are routinely filled from within the same institution, without external oversight or competitive selection. Moreover, a recent scoping review of research ethics education in STEM fields has emphasized that research integrity is often viewed as a matter of individual rather than institutional responsibility, particularly in countries with limited ethics infrastructure (Homma et al., 2025). This institutional neglect may extend to editorial governance, where ethical oversight is similarly fragmented or absent, enabling practices such as editorial endogamy to persist unchecked.

In Turkey, another form of editorial endogamy is reinforced by institutionally driven publishing incentives and internal career structures. For instance, an analysis of 68 Turkish UJs revealed that nearly 30% of papers had at least one “insider” author, and these insider-authored papers were accepted 41.5 days faster on average than papers by external authors (Tutuncu et al., 2022). Additionally, the frequent publication of editors in their own journals raises concerns about conflicts of interest and editorial bias (Tutuncu, 2024). In such cases, editorial endogamy not only influences manuscript selection but also accelerates the review process for affiliated authors, raising concerns about fairness in academic publishing.

Beyond formal structures, **cultural** norms also shape editorial endogamy. Beigel (2014) conceptualizes scholarly publishing systems in Latin America as structurally heterogeneous, comprising distinct and coexisting circuits of communication. University journals often operate within what she describes as national academic circuits, where publication practices are shaped more by institutional logics and local recognition than by global visibility or impact. In such contexts, editorial endogamy is not necessarily perceived as problematic; instead, it becomes embedded in mechanisms of academic reproduction and internal career progression.

In China, the concept of *guanxi* – a system of reciprocal professional and personal relationships – has been shown to influence manuscript acceptance processes and editorial appointments, as personal ties, often shape recruitment and decision-making within editorial boards. Editors may grant preferential treatment to authors within their institutional or personal networks, potentially compromising peer-review objectivity and reinforcing local academic hierarchies (Tam & Chen, 2010). Similar informal networks influence editorial decisions in other regions as well, where personal relationships and institutional loyalty play a significant role in journal management.

These cases illustrate how editorial endogamy persists across different academic contexts, shaped by a combination of institutional favoritism, cultural norms, and professional hierarchies, with varying degrees of influence on editorial integrity and scholarly engagement.

National Research Policies and Editorial Endogamy

National research policies and evaluation frameworks can shape the composition and governance of editorial boards in UJs. In such contexts, journals may come under stronger institutional control, as universities seek to align editorial practices with evaluation criteria and optimize publication outputs for assessment purposes. While such policies are often designed to support local research ecosystems and increase national scholarly output, they can also contribute to editorial insularity, reinforcing endogamy by prioritizing local affiliations over international participation.

- In China, the 2020 reform of research evaluation introduced a “representative works”

model, which limits the number of outputs submitted for evaluation and requires researchers to publish at least one third of their papers in national journals (Li, 2020; Shu et al., 2022). This shift was part of a broader policy move to address the imbalance between Chinese scholarly production and ownership of international journals. Consequently, national journals, many of which are university-managed, have gained strategic importance within academic evaluation and funding systems. Although the reform was intended to enhance research quality and integrity, it has raised concerns about side effects such as reduced international engagement, increased reliance on nationally controlled publishing structures, and limited editorial openness.

- In Colombia, reforms to the Publindex evaluation system have generated widespread criticism for undermining local scholarly publishing. According to López-López (2019), the system imposes internationalized metrics that marginalize national journals and diminish editorial autonomy, despite their scientific merit. While these reforms do not explicitly regulate editorial boards, they may influence editorial policies by encouraging compliance with contested indicators over academic or community relevance. This suggests that evaluation regimes can reshape journal behavior in ways that indirectly affect editorial independence.
- In Spain, the dominance of affiliated scholars on editorial boards has been identified as a key barrier to aligning UJs with international publishing standards. Despite reform efforts emphasizing greater editorial diversity, entrenched academic hierarchies and the prioritization of national journal output continue to reinforce internal editorial appointments and reliance on domestic contributors (Giménez-Toledo, 2010). This situation reflects a broader tension between national research priorities and international best practices in scholarly publishing.
- In Turkey, national journal lists play a central role in faculty evaluation, encouraging universities to prioritize publication in local journals. This system has encouraged journals to maintain editorial leadership within established national academic circles, often prioritizing institutional loyalty over international expertise. As a result, editorial boards tend to be insular, with limited inclusion of external scholars. This inward orientation reinforces editorial endogamy and may contribute to biases in peer review and manuscript selection processes, ultimately constraining the diversity and global relevance of Turkish UJs (Tutuncu, 2023).
- In Ukraine, government incentives emphasizing publication in Scopus-indexed journals aim to integrate national research into the global academic landscape (Hladchenko, 2025). While this policy has increased the number of Ukrainian journals in international databases, studies show that Ukrainian scholars predominantly publish in these national journals rather than in foreign ones (Nazarovets, 2020). As Hladchenko and Moed (2021) observe, these journals are often used to fulfil formal evaluation requirements rather than to support genuine internationalization. This trend raises concerns about the balance between promoting national research visibility and ensuring adherence to rigorous editorial standards.

Across different national contexts, government incentives linked to publication metrics, while aimed at strengthening national research output, often result in editorial boards dominated by institutional insiders. This limits engagement with external scholars and can reduce

opportunities for international collaboration, particularly in fields where global discourse is critical to advancing research.

This interplay between local academic cultures, national policies, and global publishing standards underscores the complexity of editorial endogamy. While the phenomenon is often framed as a challenge to editorial integrity, it is also embedded in institutional and systemic incentives that shape academic publishing at national and international levels. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced approach that balances national research priorities with international editorial best practices, ensuring that institutional loyalty does not come at the expense of editorial transparency and diversity.

Strategies for Preventing Editorial Endogamy

Addressing editorial endogamy in UJs requires a comprehensive and scalable approach that enhances inclusivity, strengthens peer-review integrity, and promotes transparent editorial governance. While the complete elimination of endogamy may be impractical due to institutional and financial constraints, effective institutional, regulatory, and cultural interventions can mitigate its negative effects and foster editorial diversity while respecting the operational realities of different types of UJs.

Diversifying Editorial Boards

One of the most effective strategies for reducing excessive editorial endogamy is the gradual internationalization and diversification of editorial boards. Expanding editorial teams to include scholars from multiple institutions can enhance academic diversity and mitigate internal favoritism. Research has shown that journals with geographically diverse editorial boards tend to publish a broader range of research topics and attract a more international pool of contributors (Goyanes & Demeter, 2020).

We propose that UJs gradually increase the proportion of editorial board members affiliated with institutions outside the host university as a step toward fostering editorial inclusivity. While a target of at least 50% external members may be ideal for larger or internationally focused journals, smaller UJs may need to adapt this recommendation based on available resources and disciplinary norms. Establishing external advisory boards can also provide independent oversight and prevent the concentration of editorial decision-making power within a single institution without significantly disrupting the operational stability of smaller UJs.

However, board diversification efforts should go beyond mere representation. Simply adding international members to editorial boards is not sufficient if deeper structural reforms are not implemented. A study of Croatian social sciences and humanities journals found that international editorial board members were generally not recognized as exceptionally distinguished experts within their parent journals, and their presence did not significantly improve journal impact metrics (Jokić & Sirotić, 2015). Similar patterns have been observed in Poland, where journal evaluation policies incentivize the inclusion of foreign-affiliated editorial board members. According to Kulczycki et al. (2019), such performative internationalization often lacks meaningful engagement and serves primarily to boost the journal's position within the national evaluation system, rather than to improve editorial

quality or global visibility. This suggests that diversification efforts should be coupled with clear roles and responsibilities for external members to ensure meaningful participation.

Alongside board diversification, another effective approach is editorial leadership rotation. Implementing fixed-term appointments for editors prevents the consolidation of editorial influence and ensures continuous renewal of perspectives. Even within smaller UJs, rotational editorial roles – such as staggered terms for editorial board members – can introduce fresh perspectives while maintaining institutional continuity. The case of the *Journal of Informetrics* illustrates how editorial actions can enhance journal independence. In 2019, the journal's entire editorial board resigned over restrictive publisher policies and launched an independent Open Access journal, *Quantitative Science Studies*, under MIT Press (Singh Chawla, 2019). This transition emphasized transparent governance, broader institutional participation, and full editorial autonomy. While such large-scale transformations may not be feasible for all UJs, smaller-scale governance reforms – such as rotating editorial leadership every few years – can serve as a pragmatic step toward reducing editorial stagnation.

Improving Peer-Review Processes

An effective peer-review system is crucial for counteracting the negative consequences of editorial endogamy. Implementing mechanisms that ensure fairness and transparency in manuscript evaluation can help mitigate the risks associated with internal favoritism and institutional bias. Different peer-review models offer varying approaches to achieving these goals, each with distinct advantages and challenges.

- *Double-blind peer review*, where both author and reviewer identities are concealed, is one of the most widely used approaches for minimizing bias. By making manuscript evaluation merit-based rather than affiliation-based, this model reduces the likelihood that institutional ties influence reviewer decisions. Empirical evidence suggests that double-blind peer review significantly reduces bias in peer-review scores, particularly in disciplines where institutional prestige influences publication decisions (Sun et al., 2022). However, some studies indicate that full anonymization is difficult to achieve, particularly in niche research areas where authorship can be inferred based on writing style or subject expertise (Drozd & Ladomery, 2024). Despite these challenges, UJs should consider adopting double-blind review as a standard where feasible, particularly in disciplines where institutional affiliations strongly influence publication outcomes.
- *Open peer review*, where review reports are made publicly available while preserving reviewer anonymity, increases editorial accountability. Journals such as *eLife* (n.d) and *PeerJ* (n.d) have demonstrated that open peer review enhances the quality and transparency of manuscript evaluations, reducing the likelihood of institutional favoritism in decision-making (Teixeira da Silva & Nazarovets, 2022). This model fosters greater accountability in the editorial process, as published reviews allow the research community to assess the fairness and rigor of peer assessments. However, critics argue that open peer review may deter reviewers from providing candid feedback, particularly in hierarchical academic environments where junior scholars might feel uncomfortable critiquing senior researchers. Despite these concerns, hybrid approaches – such as offering authors or reviewers the option to participate in open peer review – could provide a balanced solution that promotes transparency while maintaining reviewer discretion.

Beyond selecting an appropriate peer-review model, editorial transparency can be further strengthened through independent oversight mechanisms. Regular editorial audits can assess adherence to peer-review standards, ensuring integrity and minimizing the risks of favoritism. Establishing journal oversight committees composed of scholars from multiple institutions can help monitor editorial decisions and ensure that review processes align with best practices in scholarly publishing. Such committees can provide external validation of editorial quality, particularly for UJs where internal governance structures may be prone to institutional biases.

Regulatory and Institutional Reforms

External regulatory frameworks play a critical role in enforcing editorial transparency and accountability. In response to growing concerns over editorial malpractice, leading indexing services and scholarly organizations have strengthened their oversight of journal governance and publishing ethics. These measures aim to curb unethical practices, including editorial endogamy, predatory publishing, and conflicts of interest.

- In recent years, major indexing services such as Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and DOAJ have tightened their criteria for journal inclusion, emphasizing editorial diversity, peer-review integrity, and ethical publishing standards. Failure to meet these standards has led to journal delisting, signaling a shift toward stricter enforcement of editorial policies. A recent analysis of Scopus delisting found that more than 60% of excluded journals were removed due to “publication concerns”, such as predatory editorial practices and violations of ethical standards (Wilches-Visbal et al., 2024). In 2023, Clarivate delisted over 50 journals from WoS due to concerns about editorial conflicts of interest, citation manipulation, and rapid acceptance rates (Clarivate, 2023). Similarly, DOAJ removed hundreds of journals, including 348 from Turkey alone, for reasons such as non-adherence to best practice and suspected editorial misconduct (Koçak & Kiran, 2024). Such actions indicate that indexing services are increasingly using journal governance as a key criterion for inclusion, placing pressure on UJs to adopt more transparent editorial policies.
- The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) has called for the diversification of editorial boards (COPE, 2021) and introduced guidelines on editorial conflicts of interest, encouraging journals to adopt clear governance structures that prevent institutional bias (COPE, 2025). COPE’s recommendations emphasize the need for independent editorial oversight, particularly in cases where editorial endogamy leads to ethical concerns. In cases where endogamy has led to editorial misconduct, COPE has recommended board restructuring and transparent editorial selection processes.

While regulatory actions have become more responsive to problematic editorial practices in several documented cases mentioned above, their impact remains uneven. Many academic systems lack formal mechanisms to detect or address structurally embedded editorial endogamy. As a result, journals may continue to operate with opaque or exclusionary editorial structures despite formal compliance with indexing requirements. Stronger collaboration between indexing services, academic institutions, and editorial organizations is

necessary to ensure that ethical publishing standards are upheld across diverse scholarly environments.

Encouraging Cultural Shifts in Editorial Governance

While structural reforms and regulatory oversight are essential, sustainable editorial practices require a cultural shift from institutional control to merit-based governance. This transition is particularly important for UJs, where editorial appointments are often shaped by institutional affiliations rather than independent scholarly expertise. To strengthen editorial integrity, UJs should move toward an expertise-driven approach, where board selection prioritizes scholarly qualifications, disciplinary expertise, and editorial competence over institutional loyalty or administrative considerations.

To facilitate this transition, journals can adopt several practical measures:

- *Implementing transparent editorial appointment processes:* Calls for editors and board members should be made publicly available and based on clear selection criteria, rather than relying exclusively on internal institutional networks. Open recruitment practices encourage a more diverse applicant pool, ensuring that editorial positions are filled based on academic and editorial qualifications rather than proximity to the host institution.
- *Developing collaborative editorial models:* Sharing journal management across multiple institutions can help prevent editorial control from being concentrated in a single university. This approach fosters diversity in editorial decision-making and reduces the risk of institutional biases. Examples include consortium-based editorial structures, where universities or research institutes co-manage journals, ensuring that no single institution dominates editorial policies.
- *Fostering international partnerships and joint editorial initiatives:* Collaboration with international scholars and editorial teams can help UJs integrate into the global publishing ecosystem while preserving their regional and disciplinary focus. Co-editorship agreements with scholars from different institutions or editorial exchange programs can facilitate knowledge sharing and reduce institutional insularity. Such initiatives not only enhance editorial diversity but also improve journal visibility and credibility within international academic networks.

Conclusion

This paper examined the prevalence, drivers, and consequences of editorial endogamy in journals published by universities. Through conceptual analysis and illustrative case studies, it identified institutional, cultural, and policy-related factors that contribute to the overrepresentation of internally affiliated scholars on editorial boards. The study also reviewed strategies and regulatory mechanisms aimed at promoting editorial transparency, diversity, and accountability.

This study has demonstrated that editorial endogamy in UJs is not merely an internal organizational feature, but a widespread and systemic challenge sustained by a complex

interplay of institutional loyalty, national research policies prioritizing domestic publication metrics, and the absence of independent oversight mechanisms.

Although the specific factors underlying editorial endogamy vary across academic systems, their combined effect often results in limited editorial diversity, reduced collaboration and diminished global visibility for UJs. The overconcentration of decision-making power within a single academic entity may compromise editorial independence and undermine trust in the peer-review process, ultimately reducing a journal's credibility in the international scholarly community.

While a certain level of institutional affiliation among board members is both inevitable and beneficial for UJ operations, editorial endogamy extends beyond logistical necessity. It reinforces academic hierarchies, restricts external participation in editorial governance, and limits the diversity of perspectives in scholarly publishing.

Addressing these challenges requires structural and procedural reforms that go beyond superficial diversification of editorial boards. While increasing the proportion of external members is a necessary step, it is insufficient without transparent selection procedures, rotational editorial leadership, and mechanisms for independent oversight. Enhancing peer-review integrity – through double-blind or open peer review – can reduce institutional favoritism and improve editorial accountability. At the same time, reform efforts must consider the constraints faced by smaller UJs, ensuring that solutions are adaptable rather than prescriptive. Regulatory bodies and indexing services must also continue enforcing editorial transparency and institutional diversity as prerequisites for journal recognition, ensuring compliance with international best practices.

Without such systemic and cultural shifts, UJs risk remaining structurally isolated, reinforcing localized academic cultures without achieving broader scholarly legitimacy. Ensuring their long-term sustainability requires a transition from institution-centered governance to expertise-driven editorial management, where editorial decisions are guided by scholarly merit, transparency, and inclusive participation in global academic discourse.

Acknowledgements The authors would like to thank all Ukrainian defenders for making it possible to complete and publish this work. We also sincerely appreciate the reviewers and the editorial board for their valuable comments and suggestions, which have significantly contributed to the improvement and expansion of this study.

Author Contributions Both authors contributed equally to the study conception, design, material preparation, and analysis. They jointly wrote the first draft of the manuscript and revised all subsequent versions. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL. The research of MN was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under project number 541976107. SN declares that no funding was received for his contribution.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material.

If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Beigel, F. (2014). Publishing from the periphery: Structural heterogeneity and segmented circuits. The evaluation of scientific publications for tenure in Argentina's CONICET. *Current Sociology*, 62(5), 743–765. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392114533977>
- Beigel, F., Packer, A. L., Gallardo, O., & Salatino, M. (2024). OLIVA: The scientific output in journals edited in Latin America. Disciplinary Diversity, institutional Collaboration, and multilingualism in SciELO and redalyc (1995–2018)*. *Dados*. <https://doi.org/10.1590/dados.2024.67.1.307x>
- Clarivate (2023). Supporting integrity of the scholarly record: Our commitment to curation and selectivity in the Web of Science. Retrieved August 08, 2025, from <https://www.clarivate.com/academia-governm-ent/blog/supporting-integrity-of-the-scholarly-record-our-commitment-to-curation-and-selectivity-in-the-web-of-science/>
- COPE. (2021). Diversifying editorial boards. Retrieved August 08, 2025, from <https://publicationethics.org/news-opinion/diversifying-editorial-boards>
- COPE. (2025). Editorial conflicts of interest. Retrieved August 08, 2025, from <https://publicationethics.org/topic-discussions/editorial-conflicts-interest>
- Drozd, J. A., & Lodomery, M. R. (2024). The peer review process: Past, present, and future. *British Journal of Biomedical Science*, 81, 12054. <https://doi.org/10.3389/bjbs.2024.12054>
- eLife. (n.d). *Publishing and peer review at eLife*. Retrieved August 08, 2025, from <https://elifesciences.org/about/peer-review>
- Giménez-Toledo, E. (2010). Papel de Los servicios de publicaciones En La Mejora de Las revistas científicas universitarias. *Anuario ThinkEPI*, 4, 266–268.
- Goyanes, M., & Demeter, M. (2020). How the geographic diversity of editorial boards affects what is published in JCR-ranked communication journals. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(4), 1123–1148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699020904169>
- Hérubel, J. V. M. (2023). University press publishing and the ecology of disciplinary fluidity: General observations. *Learned Publishing*, 36(2), 164–170. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1516>
- Hladchenko, M. (2025). Ukrainian universities in QS world university rankings: When the means become ends. *Scientometrics*, 130(2), 969–997. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-024-05165-2>
- Hladchenko, M., & Moed, H. F. (2021). National orientation of Ukrainian journals: Means-ends decoupling in a semi-peripheral state. *Scientometrics*, 126(3), 2365–2389. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03844-4>
- Homma, K., Levett, P., Watkins, R., & Shittu, E. (2025). Research ethics in STEM education at universities: A scoping review. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, , Article 0123456789. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-025-09608-0>
- Horta, H. (2022). Academic inbreeding: Academic oligarchy, effects, and barriers to change. *Minerva*, 60, 593–613. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-022-09469-6>
- Horta, H., & Yudkevich, M. (2016). The role of academic inbreeding in developing higher education systems: Challenges and possible solutions. *Technological Forecasting And Social Change*, 113, 363–372. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2015.06.039>
- Jokić, M., & Sirotić, G. (2015). Do the international editorial board members of Croatian social sciences and humanities journals contribute to their visibility? *Medijska Istrazivanja*, 21(2), 5–32.
- Karabag, S. F., Berggren, C., Pielaszekiewicz, J., & Gerdin, B. (2025). Minimizing questionable research practices – The role of norms, counter norms, and micro-organizational ethics discussion. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 23(1), 113–139. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-024-09520-z>
- Karadag, E., & Ciftci, S. K. (2022). Deepening the effects of the academic inbreeding: Its impact on individual and institutional research productivity. *Research in Higher Education*, 63(6), 1015–1036. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-021-09670-8>
- Kiran, K., Demiröz, E., Güleç, H. A., Atakan, M., & Uzun, C. (2023). Analysis of academic publishing in Trakya University journals. *European Science Editing*, 49, e99151. <https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2023.e99151>
- Koçak, Z., & Kiran, K. (2024). Turkish journals removed from directory of open access journals (DOAJ) in the last 10 years. *Balkan Medical Journal*, 41(2), 153–154. <https://doi.org/10.4274/balkanmedj.galenos.2023.2023-11-136>

- Kulczycki, E., Rozkosz, E. A., & Drabek, A. (2019). Internationalization of Polish journals in the social sciences and humanities: Transformative role of the research evaluation system. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 44(1), 9–38. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjs28794>
- Laakso, M., & Multas, A. M. (2023). European scholarly journals from small- and mid-size publishers: Mapping journals and public funding mechanisms. *Science and Public Policy*, 50(3), 445–456. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scac081>
- López-López, W. (2019, April 30). The Colombian journal measurement system (Publindex): paradoxes of a system that devalues knowledge produced locally. *Voces AmeliCA*. Retrieved August 06, 2025, from <https://amelica.org/index.php/en/2019/04/30/the-colombian-journal-measurement-system-publindex-paradoxes-of-a-system-that-devalues-knowledge-produced-locally/>
- Nazarovets, S. (2020). Controversial practice of rewarding for publications in national journals. *Scientometrics*, 124(1), 813–818. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03485-7>
- Nazarovets, M. (2024). Unlocking the hidden realms: Analysing the Ukrainian journal landscape with Ulrichsweb. *Learned Publishing*, 37(3), e1605. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1605>
- Nazarovets, M. (2025). University journals: A semi-systematic literature review of trends, challenges, and future research directions. *Insights: The UKSG Journal*, 38(1), 13. <https://doi.org/10.1629/uksg.705>
- Neubert, P. S., & Rodrigues, R. S. (2021). Oligopolies and scientific publication: The search for impact in Latin America. *Transinformação*, 33, e200069. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2318-0889202133e200069>
- PeerJ. (n.d.). *Journal Policies & Procedures*. Retrieved June 04, 2025, from <https://peerj.com/about/policies-and-procedures/#open-peer-review>
- Petersen, J., Hattke, F., & Vogel, R. (2017). Editorial governance and journal impact: A study of management and business journals. *Scientometrics*, 112(3), 1593–1614. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-017-2434-7>
- Pinto, A., Canto, F. L., do, Segundo, W. L. R., de González-Valiente, C., Semeler, C. L., & González, M. (2024). Academic endogamy in library and information science journals. *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología*, 47(2), e355413. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.rib.v47n2e355413>
- Q Li, S. (2020). The End of Publish or Perish? China's New Policy on Research Evaluation. *Observations*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.17617/2.3263127>
- Salager-Meyer, F. (2015). Peripheral scholarly journals: From locality to globality. *Ibérica*, 30, 15–36.
- Shen, C. (2017). Open access scholarly journal publishing in Chinese. *Publications*, 5(4), 22. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications5040022>
- Shu, F., Liu, S., & Larivière, V. (2022). China's research evaluation reform: What are the consequences for global science? *Minerva*, 60, 329–347. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-022-09468-7>
- Singh Chawla, D. (2019, 14 January). Open-access row prompts editorial board of Elsevier journal to resign. *Nature*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-00135-8>
- Sun, M., Barry Danfa, J., & Teplitskiy, M. (2022). Does double-blind peer review reduce bias? Evidence from a top computer science conference. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 73(6), 811–819. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.2458>
- Tam, K. Y. B., & Chen, M. L. (2010). Examining scholarship in China's academe: An exploratory study. *Higher Education*, 60(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9288-8>
- Teixeira da Silva, J. A., & Nazarovets, S. (2022). The role of Publons in the context of open peer review. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 38(4), 760–781. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-022-09914-0>
- Tutuncu, L. (2023). All-pervading insider bias alters review time in Turkish university journals. *Scientometrics*, 128(6), 3743–3791. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-023-04724-3>
- Tutuncu, L. (2024). Gatekeepers or gatecrashers? The inside connection in editorial board publications of Turkish National journals. *Scientometrics*, 129(2), 957–984. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-023-04905-0>
- Tutuncu, L., Yucedogru, R., & Sarisoy, I. (2022). Academic favoritism at work: Insider bias in Turkish National journals. *Scientometrics*, 127(5), 2547–2576. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-022-04355-0>
- Wang, Y., Ruifeng, H., & Meijun, L. (2017). The geotemporal demographics of academic journals from 1950 to 2013 according to ulrich's database. *Journal of Informetrics*, 11(3), 655–671. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.05.006>
- Wilches-Visbal, J. H., Pérez-Anaya, O., & Castillo-Pedraza, M. C. (2024). Discontinued reasons of journals in SCOPUS: Analysis and reflections. *Bibliotecas Anales De Investigacion*, 20(1), 1–5.
- Wu, D., Lu, X., Li, J., & Li, J. (2020). Does the institutional diversity of editorial boards increase journal quality? The case economics field. *Scientometrics*, 124(2), 1579–1597. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03505-6>