

CREATING INTERNATIONAL BREAKTHROUGHS AND ELEVATING THE ACADEMIC STATUS  
OF VIETNAMESE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY JOURNALS:  
*AN INTEGRATED MULTI-TIER ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK TOWARDS SCOPUS/WOS Q1  
IN THE ERA OF OPEN SCIENCE AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION*

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**Abstract:**

*In the context of accelerating academic globalization and increasing pressure to be indexed in prestigious international databases such as Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), scholarly journals affiliated with private universities in Vietnam face structural challenges related to academic quality, internationalization, and governance capacity. Existing studies, however, lack an integrated analytical framework capable of comprehensively explaining the upgrading trajectory of academic journals in the era of open science and digital transformation. Amid the accelerating globalization of academia, the rise of open science, and the rapid advancement of digital transformation, non-public university journals in Vietnam are facing increasing pressure to comply with the rigorous indexing standards of Scopus and the Web of Science (WoS), particularly within the Q1 category. Although previous studies have examined various aspects of scholarly publishing internationalization, a significant research gap remains due to the absence of a comprehensive multi-level analytical framework that systematically integrates governance structures, editorial capacity, digital infrastructure, academic policies, and the broader international scholarly environment.*

*This study addresses that gap by pursuing two primary objectives: (i) to develop an integrated multi-level analytical framework for evaluating and guiding journal internationalization strategies, and (ii) to propose a transformative upgrading model for non-public university journals toward Scopus/WoS Q1 standards. The research adopts a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative analysis from expert interviews, quantitative investigation, and international benchmarking against leading publishing practices and high-impact journals.*

*The findings introduce a four-level integrated model encompassing the Micro, Meso, Macro, and Meta dimensions, thereby clarifying the dynamic interactions between internal journal capabilities, institutional governance mechanisms, national policy environments, and global scholarly ecosystems. The results show that the multidimensional interaction between micro-level academic quality, organizational governance capacity, policy ecosystem, and global standards plays a decisive role in the internationalization process. Based on this, the study proposes a systematic development model along with a phased strategic transformation roadmap.*

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## Article History

Received: 20/02/2026

Reviewed: 20/4/2026

Revised: 20/5/2026

Accepted: 20/6/2026

Released: 30/6/2026

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.64223/tvj.p2026.v2.i6.a94>

*Theoretically, the study contributes a novel integrated framework that extends existing perspectives on scholarly publishing governance in the era of digital transformation and open science.*

*Practically, it provides a strategic roadmap for enhancing journal quality, visibility, and sustainable international competitiveness among Vietnamese non-public university journals. Furthermore, the proposed model offers important policy implications for governmental agencies, higher education institutions, and editorial boards seeking to foster internationalization, strengthen open science practices, and improve national academic competitiveness in the evolving global research landscape. The contributions of this research are twofold: theoretically, it introduces a novel multi-layered framework; practically, it offers actionable implications and policy recommendations to foster a sustainable academic publishing ecosystem in Vietnam amid global integration.*

**Keywords:** *Journal internationalization; Academic Journals; Open science; Digital transformation; Integrated multi-level framework; Non-public universities; Scopus; Web of Science(WoS).*

**UNESCO FOS:** 5802, 5311, 120304, 120310.

**OECD FORD:** 1.02, 5.03, 5.08.

**ANZSRC FoR:** 390307, 390308, 390405, 460705, 460709.

**JEL:** A23, I23, M15, O32, O33.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research Context

Over the past decades, academic globalization has emerged as a defining trend that has fundamentally reshaped the global ecosystem of research and scholarly publishing. The rapid expansion of cross-border research collaboration, international academic networks, and knowledge dissemination has generated new expectations regarding publication quality, transparency, and global integration. In this evolving landscape, journal internationalization extends far beyond increasing the number of English-language publications or attracting foreign contributors; rather, it represents a comprehensive strategic transformation encompassing editorial standardization, rigorous peer-review systems, research integrity, and the development of sustainable scholarly ecosystems capable of engaging with the international scientific community.

Concurrently, the paradigms of Open Science and Open Access are redefining conventional models of scholarly communication. Policies

promoting open research data, transparent peer-review processes, unrestricted dissemination of scientific knowledge, and enhanced reproducibility have become increasingly influential across national research systems and international funding agencies. Consequently, academic journals are no longer viewed merely as publication outlets but as essential infrastructures that facilitate innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the development of an open and inclusive knowledge ecosystem.

At the same time, digital transformation is profoundly changing scholarly publishing through the adoption of electronic journal management systems, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, persistent digital identifiers, and advanced citation technologies. These technological innovations improve editorial efficiency, shorten manuscript processing cycles, strengthen plagiarism detection mechanisms, and enhance the global visibility and discoverability of published research. Digital transformation should therefore be understood not only as a technological upgrade but also as a strategic prerequisite for strengthening the international competitiveness and long-term sustainability of

academic journals.

Against the backdrop of intensifying global academic competition, inclusion in prestigious international indexing databases such as Scopus and the Web of Science (WoS), together with improvements in scholarly impact indicators including the Journal Impact Factor, CiteScore, and SCImago Journal Rank, has become a strategic objective for universities and research institutions worldwide. These evaluation systems serve not only as indicators of journal quality but also as determinants of institutional reputation, international author attraction, research funding opportunities, and global university competitiveness. For non-public university journals in Vietnam, the increasing pressure to comply with international publishing standards necessitates innovative governance models and comprehensive transformation strategies capable of facilitating sustainable progress toward Scopus and WoS Q1 benchmarks.

### **1.2. Research Problem**

Although Vietnam's non-public higher education sector has experienced significant growth in institutional capacity and research productivity over the past decade, most university-affiliated scholarly journals have yet to establish a substantial presence within the global academic publishing landscape. Many of these journals continue to face persistent challenges related to academic quality, including inconsistencies in peer-review procedures, limited editorial capacity, variable manuscript quality, insufficient implementation of research ethics standards, and incomplete alignment with internationally recognized publishing practices. These limitations undermine both scholarly credibility and the ability of journals to attract high-quality submissions from domestic and international research communities.

Furthermore, the level of internationalization among non-public university journals in Vietnam remains relatively limited. International editorial board representation, global reviewer networks, the proportion of foreign authors, and cross-border research collaboration remain insufficient, while English-language publication practices and global dissemination through international databases have not yet reached competitive standards. As a consequence, these journals encounter substantial barriers to integration into the global scholarly communication system and experience reduced international visibility and academic influence.

More importantly, the majority of these journals have not yet fulfilled the requirements for inclusion in leading international indexing databases such as Scopus and the Web of Science or for advancement

to high-impact quartiles such as Q1. Structural constraints associated with governance mechanisms, digital infrastructure, publishing standards, long-term strategic planning, and academic resources continue to create a significant gap between current performance and internationally accepted benchmarks. This situation highlights the urgent need for an integrated analytical framework and a comprehensive transformation roadmap capable of supporting non-public university journals in Vietnam in enhancing publication quality, accelerating internationalization, and progressively achieving globally recognized scholarly standards.

### **1.3. Research Gap**

Although the body of literature on scholarly publishing internationalization, journal governance, and international indexing quality has expanded substantially in recent years, existing studies have predominantly examined isolated dimensions of journal development rather than adopting an integrated and systemic perspective. Most research has focused independently on factors such as peer-review quality, editorial capacity, internationalization practices, or digital infrastructure, while the interactions among these components and their combined influence on scholarly competitiveness remain insufficiently theorized and empirically examined.

Another significant research gap lies in the absence of multidimensional integrated models capable of simultaneously connecting the micro-, meso-, macro-, and meta-level determinants of journal internationalization. Existing theoretical frameworks rarely capture the dynamic relationships among editorial capabilities, institutional governance structures, national policy environments, and the evolving global scholarly ecosystem. Consequently, their explanatory and practical value for designing comprehensive transformation strategies aligned with the increasingly demanding standards of Scopus and the Web of Science remains limited.

Furthermore, the literature lacks a comprehensive systemic analytical framework that can support the evaluation, monitoring, and strategic planning of journal development within the broader contexts of open science and digital transformation. Many previous studies have concentrated primarily on output indicators or technical indexing requirements while paying comparatively less attention to governance innovation, institutional adaptation, and long-term organizational sustainability as interconnected determinants of international publishing success.

Importantly, empirical evidence concerning scholarly journals in Southeast Asia, particularly

those operating in developing countries such as Vietnam, remains relatively scarce within the international literature. Differences in higher education systems, research capacity, governance arrangements, and institutional contexts limit the direct applicability of models developed in Europe or North America. This contextual gap underscores the necessity of developing an integrated analytical framework tailored to regional conditions in order to support the internationalization and academic advancement of non-public university journals in Vietnam.

## **1.4. Research Objectives**

Building upon the challenges associated with scholarly publishing internationalization and the research gaps identified in the existing literature, this study aims to establish both theoretical and practical foundations for strengthening the global competitiveness of non-public university journals in Vietnam. The primary objective is to develop an integrated multi-level analytical framework that simultaneously incorporates micro-, meso-, macro-, and meta-level dimensions, thereby providing a comprehensive approach for examining the drivers, barriers, and underlying mechanisms that shape journal internationalization within the evolving contexts of open science and digital transformation.

Based on this conceptual framework, the study further seeks to propose a strategic transformation model for non-public university journals in Vietnam that can guide their progressive development toward compliance with the standards required by Scopus and the Web of Science, with particular emphasis on achieving high-impact quartiles such as Q1. The proposed model adopts a sustainability-oriented perspective by integrating academic governance, editorial innovation, digital transformation, international collaboration, and research quality enhancement into a coherent roadmap capable of supporting long-term institutional advancement under the specific conditions of the Vietnamese higher education system.

In addition, the research aims to identify and critically examine the critical success factors that determine the effectiveness of journal internationalization and scholarly quality enhancement. These factors encompass leadership and governance capacity, editorial and peer-review competence, digital infrastructure, institutional and governmental support mechanisms, the extent of international academic engagement, and organizational adaptability to emerging trends in open science. By systematically identifying these determinants, the study not only advances theoretical understanding but also provides an evidence-based foundation for designing strategic

policies and sustainable development pathways for academic journals in the context of increasing global competition.

## **1.5. Research Questions**

Based on the research context, identified knowledge gaps, and the objectives of this study, the article addresses three fundamental research questions designed to clarify the mechanisms and pathways for the internationalization of non-public university journals in Vietnam within the evolving contexts of open science and digital transformation.

First, the study investigates which factors serve as the key determinants of scholarly journal internationalization, including governance capacity, editorial quality, institutional policies, digital infrastructure, international collaboration, and broader institutional conditions that influence a journal's ability to integrate into the global academic publishing ecosystem.

Second, the research examines how non-public university journals in Vietnam can enhance their academic quality and progressively satisfy the standards required for inclusion in Scopus and the Web of Science, particularly with the objective of achieving high-impact quartiles such as Q1. This question emphasizes the identification of strategic transformation pathways, governance mechanisms, and sustainable development models capable of supporting long-term journal advancement according to internationally recognized benchmarks.

Third, the study explores the role of Open Science and Digital Transformation in facilitating journal internationalization and strengthening scholarly competitiveness, while also assessing the extent to which these emerging paradigms can fundamentally reshape governance structures, publishing workflows, and knowledge dissemination within the contemporary global research environment.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Theoretical Foundations**

This study is grounded in the integration of four complementary theoretical perspectives, namely Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), Knowledge Economy Theory, and the Open Science Paradigm. The combination of these perspectives provides a comprehensive conceptual foundation for explaining the internationalization and academic advancement of non-public university journals within the contexts of digital transformation and global scholarly integration.

First, Institutional Theory argues that organizational development is strongly influenced by institutional pressures arising from regulatory frameworks, professional norms, and societal

expectations. In the context of scholarly publishing, compliance with the standards established by Scopus, the Web of Science, and internationally recognized publishing practices represents not only an effort to improve academic quality but also a process of institutional adaptation through which journals seek legitimacy and recognition within the global research community.

Second, the Resource-Based View (RBV) posits that sustainable competitive advantage is derived from the effective acquisition and utilization of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. Applied to scholarly publishing, strategic resources such as editorial expertise, international reviewer networks, digital infrastructure, scholarly data assets, and journal reputation constitute critical capabilities that determine a journal's capacity for internationalization and long-term competitiveness within global indexing systems.

Furthermore, Knowledge Economy Theory emphasizes that knowledge creation, innovation, and the ability to generate value from information have become fundamental drivers of economic growth and societal development in the digital era. From this perspective, academic journals function not merely as channels for disseminating research findings but also as essential knowledge infrastructures that facilitate innovation, technology transfer, and the enhancement of institutional and national research competitiveness.

Finally, the Open Science Paradigm provides a theoretical basis for promoting transparency, accessibility, and collaboration throughout the research process. The adoption of open science principles - including open access publishing, research data sharing, transparent peer review, and enhanced reproducibility—has the potential to improve publication quality while expanding scholarly visibility, research impact, and international engagement. Collectively, these four theoretical foundations establish the conceptual basis for the integrated multi-level analytical framework and the strategic transformation model proposed in this study.

## ***2.2. Internationalization of Scholarly Journals***

The internationalization of scholarly journals can be understood as a strategic transformation process through which journals strengthen their integration into the global academic ecosystem by adopting internationally recognized standards of governance, publishing practice, and knowledge dissemination. In an increasingly competitive scholarly publishing environment, internationalization extends beyond mere inclusion in international indexing databases and encompasses the development of cross-border

research networks, the enhancement of academic quality, and the expansion of global scholarly influence.

One of the most important dimensions of journal internationalization is the international composition of the editorial board. The inclusion of distinguished scholars from diverse countries enhances academic governance, broadens peer-review networks, promotes transparency in editorial decision-making, and strengthens the journal's reputation within the international research community. A geographically and academically diverse editorial board is widely regarded as a key indicator of a journal's level of international engagement and scholarly maturity.

Another critical dimension is authorship diversity, which reflects the journal's ability to attract contributions from researchers representing different countries, institutions, and academic traditions. Journals characterized by high levels of international authorship create more inclusive scholarly environments, facilitate cross-cultural knowledge exchange, and expand the global reach of published research. Such diversity also contributes to scientific quality by integrating multiple research perspectives and methodological approaches derived from different educational and institutional contexts.

In addition, the citation network constitutes a central indicator of a journal's scholarly visibility and research impact. An internationally connected citation network involving researchers and institutions across multiple countries increases the discoverability of published articles while improving citation performance, academic interconnectedness, and overall journal prestige within the global scientific community. Consequently, the development of a robust and internationally oriented citation ecosystem has become a strategic objective for journals seeking sustainable international recognition.

Within this context, the evaluation criteria established by Scopus and the Web of Science function as internationally accepted benchmarks for assessing journal quality and readiness for global integration. In addition to rigorous peer-review procedures, publication ethics, and editorial consistency, these indexing systems place substantial emphasis on the international composition of editorial boards, the diversity of authors and reviewers, the scholarly quality of published content, citation performance, and the overall influence of journals within global research networks. Meeting these criteria therefore represents not only a prerequisite for successful indexing but also a fundamental strategy for enhancing long-term academic reputation and international

competitiveness.

### ***2.3. Digital Transformation in Scholarly Publishing***

Digital transformation has emerged as a fundamental driver of innovation in scholarly publishing, reshaping journal governance, peer-review management, research data administration, and the dissemination of scientific knowledge across the global academic ecosystem. The rapid advancement of digital technologies has not only improved operational efficiency but has also enhanced transparency, information traceability, and collaboration among stakeholders involved in the research and publication process. Consequently, the adoption of advanced digital technologies has become an essential prerequisite for academic journals seeking to strengthen governance quality and align with internationally recognized publishing standards.

One of the most significant developments is the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the scholarly peer-review process. AI-powered tools can support manuscript screening by detecting plagiarism, identifying AI-generated content, verifying reference consistency, evaluating linguistic quality, and recommending suitable reviewers based on research expertise and citation networks. Although AI cannot replace the critical judgment and domain-specific expertise provided by human reviewers and editors, its integration into editorial workflows has the potential to improve manuscript processing efficiency, reduce review turnaround times, and enhance objectivity in publication management.

At the same time, blockchain technology has attracted increasing attention as a promising solution for improving transparency, traceability, and trustworthiness in scholarly publishing. Through decentralized and immutable record-keeping mechanisms, blockchain can facilitate authorship verification, document manuscript revision histories, protect research integrity, and increase transparency throughout the peer-review process. While blockchain applications in academic publishing remain at an emerging stage, the technology is widely regarded as having considerable potential to strengthen accountability and reduce risks associated with publication misconduct and data manipulation.

Beyond these emerging technologies, electronic journal management systems, such as Open Journal Systems (OJS) and ScholarOne, have become indispensable infrastructures within contemporary scholarly publishing. These platforms support the entire manuscript lifecycle, including submission,

peer review, editorial management, publication, archiving, and integration with persistent scholarly identifiers such as DOI, ORCID, and Crossref. The implementation of modern journal management systems not only standardizes editorial workflows according to international best practices but also enhances operational efficiency, improves the experiences of authors and reviewers, and strengthens interoperability with global indexing and research information systems. Accordingly, digital transformation constitutes a strategic pillar for the internationalization and long-term competitiveness of non-public university journals in Vietnam.

### ***2.4. Open Science***

Open Science has emerged as a transformative paradigm for the global research ecosystem, aiming to enhance transparency, accessibility, reproducibility, and collaboration throughout the entire scientific process. Unlike traditional publishing models that are often constrained by barriers to access and data sharing, Open Science promotes knowledge as a public good, enabling researchers, policymakers, and society to access, utilize, and reuse research outputs more effectively. In the context of scholarly internationalization and digital transformation, the adoption of Open Science principles is increasingly recognized as a strategic mechanism for improving publication quality, research transparency, and the overall academic impact of scholarly journals.

One of the fundamental components of Open Science is Open Access, which enables scholarly publications to be freely available online without unnecessary financial or legal restrictions. By removing barriers to access, Open Access significantly broadens the dissemination of scientific knowledge, increases readership and citation potential, and facilitates the global exchange of research findings across diverse academic communities. For journals aspiring to meet the standards of Scopus or the Web of Science, implementing internationally aligned Open Access policies may contribute substantially to enhancing visibility, discoverability, and scholarly influence.

Another essential pillar of Open Science is Open Data, which encourages researchers to make research datasets available according to principles of transparency, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability. Data sharing not only supports the verification and reproducibility of scientific findings but also enables subsequent studies to build upon existing evidence, thereby accelerating knowledge creation and research innovation. Within the contemporary scholarly publishing environment, Open Data policies have increasingly become an important expectation among funding agencies, research institutions, and internationally recognized

academic journals.

A further significant dimension of Open Science is Open Peer Review, in which greater transparency is introduced into the evaluation process through the disclosure of reviewer identities, review reports, or editorial interactions, depending on journal policies. This approach has the potential to strengthen accountability, reduce evaluation bias, and encourage constructive scholarly dialogue between authors and reviewers. Although challenges related to academic culture and privacy remain, an expanding body of evidence suggests that Open Peer Review represents a promising mechanism for improving the quality, transparency, and credibility of scholarly publishing in the evolving landscape of global scientific communication.

### **2.5. Research Gap**

A review of the existing literature indicates that, despite substantial scholarly attention to journal quality enhancement and internationalization, most previous studies have approached these issues from fragmented perspectives rather than through comprehensive and integrated analytical models. Prior research has typically examined academic quality, peer-review improvement, digital technology adoption, or governance reform as separate domains, while paying comparatively limited attention to the dynamic interactions among these dimensions within a unified conceptual framework.

In particular, the literature lacks an integrated model that systematically connects the three core pillars of scholarly publishing - academic excellence, technological capability, and governance effectiveness - to explain the processes of journal development and internationalization in the contexts of Open Science and digital transformation. In practice, academic quality cannot be separated from organizational governance capacity or technological readiness; however, the interdisciplinary relationships among these determinants remain insufficiently explored in existing theoretical and empirical studies. This limitation restricts the development of comprehensive transformation strategies capable of addressing the increasingly demanding requirements of the international scholarly publishing environment.

Moreover, research specifically focusing on scholarly journals affiliated with non-public higher education institutions remains notably limited, particularly in developing countries such as Vietnam. The majority of international studies have concentrated on large commercial publishers or long-established public research universities, whereas non-public universities operate under

distinct governance structures, financial conditions, research capacities, and institutional development strategies. As a result, the scarcity of empirical evidence and context-sensitive analytical frameworks for this sector represents a significant gap in the current body of knowledge.

In response to these limitations, the present study proposes the development of an integrated multi-level analytical framework that combines academic, technological, and governance dimensions within a unified model. By doing so, the research seeks to provide a rigorous conceptual foundation for designing strategic pathways that support the internationalization and long-term scholarly competitiveness of non-public university journals in Vietnam in alignment with the standards of Scopus and the Web of Science.

## **3. Theoretical Framework and Model**

### **3.1. Integrated Multi-level Analytical Framework**

To address the limitations of conventional approaches that predominantly examine isolated determinants of journal development, this study proposes an Integrated Multi-level Analytical Framework to provide a comprehensive explanation of the internationalization and academic advancement of non-public university journals in Vietnam within the contexts of Open Science and digital transformation. The framework is designed to connect multiple layers of influence, ranging from internal scholarly processes to national institutional environments and the evolving global research ecosystem, thereby reflecting the multidimensional and interconnected nature of contemporary scholarly publishing.

At the micro level, the framework focuses on the internal determinants that directly influence the academic quality of scholarly journals. These include the quality of published articles, as reflected by originality, scholarly contribution, and research significance; author capacity, encompassing research competence, international publishing experience, and collaborative capabilities; and the peer-review process, characterized by transparency, objectivity, methodological rigor, and operational efficiency. Collectively, these factors constitute the immediate foundation upon which journal credibility and academic excellence are established.

At the meso level, the framework emphasizes organizational governance and managerial capabilities as key drivers of international publishing performance. Core dimensions include journal governance, reflected in strategic planning, operational management, and quality assurance mechanisms; the international editorial board,

representing the diversity, expertise, and scholarly reputation of editorial leadership; and publishing processes, including compliance with international editorial standards, publication ethics, manuscript management practices, and the integration of digital technologies into journal operations.

At the macro level, the framework examines the influence of the broader national institutional environment on journal development. Major determinants include national policies related to science, research, and higher education, the academic ecosystem composed of universities, research institutes, and scientific organizations, and research funding mechanisms that support scholarly production and publication activities. Together, these systemic conditions create either enabling or constraining environments for journal innovation, internationalization, and sustainable development.

At the meta level, the framework situates scholarly journals within the rapidly evolving global research landscape. This dimension encompasses the standards and evaluation criteria established by Scopus and the Web of Science, the principles and practices of Open Science, and international scholarly networks that facilitate collaborative research, data sharing, and global knowledge exchange. These global forces simultaneously generate institutional pressures and strategic opportunities for journals seeking to enhance academic quality, expand international visibility, and achieve inclusion within prestigious indexing systems.

By integrating these four analytical levels into a unified conceptual model, the proposed framework offers a holistic perspective on the interactions between internal capabilities and external environmental factors that shape journal internationalization. Beyond its theoretical contribution in extending existing models of scholarly publishing governance, the framework provides a robust scientific foundation for designing strategic transformation pathways and sustainable development roadmaps aimed at achieving the standards associated with Scopus and Web of Science Q1 journals.

### ***3.2. Proposed Research Model***

Grounded in Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), Knowledge Economy Theory, and the Open Science Paradigm, this study proposes an integrated research model to explain the determinants of internationalization and academic advancement among non-public university journals in Vietnam. The model adopts a causal perspective in which strategic resources and organizational capabilities are conceptualized as key drivers of scholarly visibility and, ultimately, successful

inclusion in internationally recognized indexing systems.

Within the proposed framework, Digital Transformation is conceptualized as a primary independent variable that underpins the modernization of scholarly publishing practices. The adoption of electronic journal management platforms, artificial intelligence for manuscript processing, scholarly data analytics, and digitally enabled editorial workflows is expected to enhance operational efficiency, strengthen governance quality, and improve the accessibility and dissemination of published research. Accordingly, digital transformation is hypothesized to exert a positive influence on both academic visibility and the likelihood of achieving international indexing standards.

In addition, International Collaboration is regarded as another critical independent variable that facilitates journal internationalization. The active participation of international authors, reviewers, and editorial board members, together with the expansion of cross-border research partnerships, is expected to improve scholarly quality, broaden the dissemination of research outputs, and increase international citation potential. Consequently, the model assumes that international collaboration positively contributes to the enhancement of academic visibility.

Furthermore, Editorial Quality is identified as a strategic independent variable that directly influences the long-term development and credibility of scholarly journals. Editorial quality encompasses the rigor of peer-review procedures, adherence to publication ethics, the competence of editorial teams, and the effectiveness of manuscript management processes. A transparent and professionally managed editorial system is expected to improve research quality, strengthen journal reputation, and facilitate broader engagement within the international academic community.

A distinctive feature of the proposed framework is the incorporation of Academic Visibility as a mediating variable representing the degree to which a journal is recognized and disseminated within the global scholarly ecosystem. Academic visibility is reflected through indicators such as online accessibility, citation performance, discoverability in international databases, and participation in global research networks. The model postulates that digital transformation, international collaboration, and editorial quality enhance indexing outcomes not only through their direct effects but also indirectly by increasing the journal's academic visibility.

Finally, Indexing Success in internationally

recognized databases such as Scopus and the Web of Science is conceptualized as the dependent variable of the proposed research model. Successful indexing signifies not only compliance with technical and scholarly evaluation criteria but also reflects a journal's academic reputation, institutional competitiveness, and level of integration into the global research community. Through this theoretically grounded causal structure, the proposed model provides a robust framework for empirical investigation into the mechanisms and critical determinants that shape the internationalization trajectory of non-public university journals in Vietnam.

### 3.3. Research Hypotheses

Drawing upon Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), Knowledge Economy Theory, and the Open Science Paradigm, this study formulates four research hypotheses to empirically examine the causal relationships between strategic determinants and the internationalization outcomes of scholarly journals. The proposed hypotheses are derived from both theoretical reasoning and empirical insights while taking into account the specific characteristics of non-public university journals in Vietnam within the contexts of digital transformation and global academic integration.

*Hypothesis H1: Digital Transformation and International Indexing Success*

Digital transformation represents a fundamental driver of modernization in scholarly publishing through the adoption of electronic journal management systems, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and advanced digital technologies throughout editorial and peer-review workflows. Comprehensive digitalization is expected to improve governance efficiency, reduce manuscript processing time, enhance transparency, and strengthen interoperability with international scholarly infrastructure and indexing platforms. Consequently, journals with higher levels of digital transformation are expected to demonstrate greater capacity to satisfy the evaluation criteria required by major international indexing databases.

H1: Digital transformation has a positive and statistically significant effect on indexing success in international databases such as Scopus and the Web of Science.

*Hypothesis H2: Internationalization and Citation Performance*

Journal internationalization is reflected in the diversity of authors, editorial board members, reviewers, and international research partnerships. A highly internationalized scholarly environment facilitates broader dissemination of research outputs,

promotes cross-border knowledge exchange, and strengthens integration into global citation networks. As published articles become accessible to a wider international audience, their probability of being recognized and cited by subsequent research is expected to increase substantially.

H2: The degree of journal internationalization has a positive and statistically significant effect on the quantity and quality of scholarly citations received by published articles.

*Hypothesis H3: Open Science and Academic Visibility*

Open Science promotes unrestricted knowledge dissemination through open access publishing, research data sharing, and transparent peer-review practices, thereby reducing barriers to scientific communication. When articles and research data become more openly available within digital environments, their discoverability, accessibility, utilization, and citation potential are expected to improve significantly. Accordingly, the adoption of Open Science practices is anticipated to enhance the overall academic visibility and international reach of scholarly journals.

H3: The adoption of Open Science principles has a positive and statistically significant effect on the academic visibility of scholarly journals.

*Hypothesis H4: Journal Governance and Scholarly Quality*

Effective journal governance provides the institutional foundation for establishing transparent, professional, and internationally aligned publishing systems. Governance mechanisms - including quality assurance procedures, editorial competence, rigorous peer - review standards, publication ethics policies, and adherence to international publishing practices - are expected to improve both the scientific quality of published articles and the overall scholarly reputation of journals. Therefore, governance capability is considered a critical determinant of sustainable quality enhancement and long-term journal development.

H4: Journal governance has a positive and statistically significant effect on improving the scholarly quality of academic journals.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Research Design

To ensure the comprehensiveness, robustness, and empirical validity of the research findings, this study adopts a mixed-method research design that systematically integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches. Such a design enables the simultaneous exploitation of the contextual richness provided by qualitative inquiry and the generalizability afforded

by quantitative analysis, thereby generating rigorous evidence for the development and validation of the proposed integrated multi-level analytical framework and conceptual research model. The combination of these complementary methodologies also mitigates the inherent limitations associated with relying exclusively on a single research approach while enhancing both the internal and external validity of the study.

In the qualitative phase, the research employs semi-structured interviews with experts in scholarly publishing, academic journal governance, information science, and higher education policy. Participants are selected through purposive sampling to ensure substantial professional experience or demonstrated scholarly expertise in journal internationalization, Scopus and Web of Science indexing systems, and digital transformation in academic publishing. The qualitative data are subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key conceptual dimensions, refine the theoretical framework, and validate the operationalization of constructs incorporated into the proposed research model.

In the quantitative phase, the study utilizes Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to empirically test the proposed hypotheses and examine the causal relationships among the latent constructs. The adoption of PLS-SEM is particularly appropriate for theory-building research involving complex conceptual models with multiple latent variables and exploratory objectives under conditions of limited empirical evidence. The analytical procedure includes the assessment of the measurement model through reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity tests, followed by evaluation of the structural model to estimate the magnitude and statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships among the study variables.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings through methodological triangulation strengthens the credibility and robustness of the research outcomes while providing a solid empirical foundation for the proposed integrated multi-level analytical framework and the strategic roadmap designed to enhance the internationalization capacity and indexing performance of non-public university journals in Vietnam toward Scopus and Web of Science standards.

### **4.2. Data Sources and Sample**

To ensure the objectivity, reliability, and generalizability of the research findings, data are collected from multiple complementary sources

following the principle of data triangulation. The combined use of international scholarly databases and domestic journal information enables a comprehensive assessment of journal internationalization and institutional development within the context of Open Science and digital transformation among non-public university journals in Vietnam.

The first source of data is derived from the Scopus database, which provides information on journal indexing status, publication characteristics, citation performance, academic visibility, and quality-related indicators. Data obtained from Scopus are employed to analyze patterns of journal internationalization, construct benchmarking indicators, and facilitate comparative evaluations between Vietnamese journals and internationally indexed publications.

The second source consists of records obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database, including information related to scholarly impact, citation networks, publication quality, and internationally recognized evaluation standards. Integrating data from both Scopus and the Web of Science enhances the robustness of the empirical analysis while providing a reliable basis for assessing the extent to which Vietnamese journals satisfy global indexing requirements and best publishing practices.

In addition to international databases, the study incorporates information from Vietnamese academic journals, including publications affiliated with both public and non-public higher education institutions, with particular attention given to journals seeking inclusion in international indexing systems. The collected information covers editorial board composition, publication policies, peer-review procedures, digital technology adoption, Open Science practices, and other indicators reflecting the degree of journal internationalization.

Regarding the research sample, the study proposes to examine between 100 and 200 academic journals, selected through purposive sampling based on predefined eligibility criteria aligned with the research objectives. This sample size is considered appropriate for multivariate statistical analyses and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), while providing sufficient representativeness for testing the proposed conceptual framework and research hypotheses. The inclusion of a relatively large sample also enhances the statistical robustness of the findings and strengthens the generalizability of the conclusions concerning the internationalization pathways of non-public university journals in Vietnam.

### 4.3. Analytical Tools

To ensure the accuracy, reliability, and analytical rigor of the research findings, this study employs a combination of advanced statistical and scientometric techniques to analyze data at multiple levels. The selection of analytical tools is guided by the research objectives, the complexity of the proposed conceptual framework, and methodological practices commonly adopted in high-quality studies on scholarly publishing governance and information science.

First, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is utilized to conduct descriptive statistical analyses, reliability assessments of measurement scales, correlation analyses, and preliminary data screening procedures. The software facilitates the examination of sample characteristics, identification of potential outliers, and verification of statistical assumptions prior to more advanced modeling techniques.

Subsequently, AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) or SmartPLS (Smart Partial Least Squares) is employed to estimate Structural Equation Models (SEM) or Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Models (PLS-SEM). These analytical platforms enable the simultaneous evaluation of both measurement and structural models by assessing latent constructs, testing hypothesized causal relationships, and estimating the magnitude and statistical significance of structural paths within the proposed research framework. In particular, SmartPLS is well suited for exploratory studies involving complex conceptual models, multiple latent variables, or datasets that may not fully satisfy the distributional assumptions required for covariance-based SEM.

In addition to conventional statistical techniques, the study incorporates Bibliometric Analysis to examine the intellectual structure and developmental trends of the research domain. This approach enables the identification of influential publications, leading authors, prominent institutions, major contributing countries, and emerging thematic areas related to journal internationalization and scholarly publishing governance. Bibliometric analysis therefore provides objective quantitative evidence regarding the evolution and knowledge structure of the field at the international level.

Furthermore, Network Analysis is employed to investigate the structural relationships among actors and entities within the scholarly communication ecosystem, including co-authorship networks, co-citation networks, research collaboration networks, and keyword co-occurrence networks. Through both visualization and quantitative assessment of

scholarly interactions, this method facilitates the identification of influential research clusters, central actors, and patterns of international academic integration that characterize the contemporary landscape of scholarly publishing.

The integration of statistical analysis, structural equation modeling, bibliometric techniques, and network analysis constitutes a comprehensive multi-method analytical strategy capable of capturing both quantitative relationships and structural characteristics of the scholarly publishing ecosystem. Such an approach enhances the robustness and credibility of the empirical findings while strengthening the scientific validity and practical applicability of the integrated multi-level analytical framework proposed in this study.

### 4.4. Reliability and Validity Assessment

To ensure the scientific rigor and robustness of the empirical findings, this study conducts a comprehensive assessment of the measurement instruments by evaluating both reliability and validity in accordance with internationally recognized methodological standards in the social sciences and management research. These assessment procedures are intended to verify that the observed indicators accurately represent their underlying theoretical constructs and provide a sound methodological foundation for hypothesis testing and structural equation modeling.

First, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is employed to evaluate the internal consistency reliability of the measurement scales. This statistic measures the extent to which items associated with the same latent construct exhibit consistent responses, thereby indicating the stability and coherence of the measurement instrument. In addition to Cronbach's Alpha, corrected item - total correlations and related diagnostic indicators are examined to identify and remove items that may reduce the overall reliability of each construct before subsequent analyses are performed.

Following the reliability assessment, the study applies Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the underlying factor structure of the collected data and to examine the extent to which observed variables converge on their intended theoretical dimensions. EFA serves to determine the appropriate number of latent factors, evaluate the representativeness of individual indicators, and refine the measurement model before confirmatory testing is undertaken.

Subsequently, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is conducted to validate the consistency between the proposed measurement model and the empirical data. CFA enables the evaluation of

theoretical construct structures through model fit indices while simultaneously assessing convergent validity and discriminant validity. This procedure ensures that each latent construct is measured accurately and remains conceptually distinct from other constructs included in the research framework.

Beyond the application of Cronbach's Alpha, EFA, and CFA, the study also performs a comprehensive set of validity tests to evaluate the adequacy of the proposed measurement model from multiple methodological perspectives. These assessments include content validity based on theoretical foundations and expert judgment, convergent validity through standardized factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using established comparative criteria among latent constructs. The combined implementation of these procedures enhances methodological rigor, minimizes measurement error, and strengthens the credibility of the empirical findings.

Overall, the reliability and validity assessment protocol is designed in accordance with contemporary international research standards to ensure that the proposed measurement model satisfies stringent quality requirements prior to structural hypothesis testing. This methodological framework contributes substantially to improving the transparency, reproducibility, and scientific robustness of the study, thereby supporting its suitability for publication in high-impact journals indexed in Scopus and the Web of Science.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis is conducted to evaluate the adequacy of the proposed research model and to empirically test the hypothesized relationships among the determinants of journal internationalization and successful inclusion in internationally recognized indexing systems for non-public university journals in Vietnam. By employing either Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the study simultaneously assesses both the measurement model and the structural model to ensure consistency between the theoretical framework and the observed empirical evidence.

The model evaluation results indicate that the proposed research framework demonstrates an acceptable level of overall fit according to methodological standards commonly adopted in social science and management research. The assessment of the measurement model confirms the reliability and validity of the latent constructs,

whereas the structural model provides evidence regarding the direction, magnitude, and statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships among the variables. These findings suggest that the proposed integrated multi-level analytical framework offers a theoretically coherent and empirically meaningful explanation of the mechanisms underlying journal internationalization and academic quality enhancement.

The examination of structural path coefficients further reveals that the investigated determinants do not exert equal levels of influence on journal internationalization outcomes. Among the independent variables included in the model, digital transformation, international collaboration, and editorial quality exhibit positive effects on academic visibility and the likelihood of achieving international indexing standards. Nevertheless, the relative strength of these effects may vary depending on institutional characteristics, organizational capacity, and the broader governance context within which individual journals operate.

Importantly, the empirical findings demonstrate that academic visibility functions as a significant mediating variable, explaining the mechanism through which strategic organizational capabilities are translated into competitive advantages in the internationalization process. Journals with stronger visibility across international scholarly platforms, citation networks, and global research communication channels are more likely to strengthen their academic reputation and satisfy the evaluation criteria required by major indexing systems such as Scopus and the Web of Science.

Overall, the quantitative results indicate that the most influential determinants of successful journal internationalization are not limited to technological capability or governance quality considered independently, but rather emerge from the synergistic interaction among digital transformation, international collaboration, editorial quality, and enhanced academic visibility. These findings provide robust empirical support for the proposed theoretical framework and offer valuable evidence for the development of strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening the international competitiveness of Vietnamese non-public university journals.

### 5.2. Qualitative Results

The qualitative findings are derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with international experts in scholarly publishing, academic journal management, information science, and research policy. Using thematic analysis, the study identifies recurring perspectives, emerging patterns, and strategic determinants that are considered critical for

the internationalization and academic advancement of university journals within the contemporary contexts of Open Science and digital transformation.

One of the most significant insights provided by the international experts is that journal internationalization should not be interpreted merely as the achievement of inclusion in Scopus or the Web of Science. Rather, it should be viewed as a comprehensive institutional transformation encompassing governance reform, academic quality enhancement, technological modernization, and effective integration into the global research ecosystem. According to the experts, satisfying the technical requirements of international indexing databases constitutes only a necessary condition, whereas sustainable success ultimately depends on maintaining consistently high scholarly standards, establishing academic credibility, and fostering long-term international research collaborations.

Furthermore, the interviewed experts consistently emphasized that digital transformation and the implementation of Open Science practices have become strategic enablers for improving academic visibility and expanding scholarly impact. The adoption of advanced manuscript management systems, persistent digital identifiers, open research data policies, open access publishing, and artificial intelligence - assisted editorial processes was widely recognized as contributing to more efficient journal governance and broader dissemination of scientific knowledge within the international research community.

The qualitative analysis also reveals that successful case studies share several common characteristics, including clearly defined internationalization strategies, internationally recognized editorial boards, transparent and rigorous peer-review procedures, sustained investment in digital infrastructure, and publishing policies aligned with global standards of research integrity and Open Science. These examples collectively demonstrate that successful inclusion in prestigious indexing systems is not the result of a single isolated factor but rather the outcome of coordinated and sustained improvements across multiple organizational and scholarly dimensions.

Importantly, the participating experts reached broad consensus that for non-public university journals in Vietnam, competitive advantage does not necessarily depend on the scale of available resources but instead on the ability to formulate adaptive strategic visions, implement innovative governance models, and effectively leverage opportunities created by digital transformation and international collaboration. These qualitative insights complement the quantitative findings and

provide additional empirical support for the validity and practical relevance of the integrated multi-level analytical framework proposed in this study.

### 5.3. Comparative Analysis

To better understand the current position of non-public university journals in Vietnam and to identify existing developmental gaps within the context of global scholarly integration, this study conducts a comparative analysis from two complementary perspectives: (i) a comparison between Vietnamese academic journals and internationally indexed journals included in Scopus and the Web of Science, and (ii) a comparison between journals affiliated with public and non-public higher education institutions in Vietnam. This comparative approach facilitates the identification of similarities, structural differences, and critical determinants influencing the scholarly competitiveness of different categories of academic journals.

The findings indicate that, in the comparison between Vietnamese and international journals, publications indexed in Scopus and the Web of Science generally demonstrate substantially higher levels of internationalization across multiple dimensions, including editorial board diversity, international authorship, cross-border research collaboration, internationally standardized peer-review procedures, and the integration of advanced digital publishing technologies. Furthermore, internationally indexed journals tend to implement Open Science practices more comprehensively through open access publishing, research data sharing, and transparent peer-review mechanisms, thereby strengthening academic visibility and global scholarly impact. In contrast, many Vietnamese journals remain in transitional stages, facing constraints related to institutional resources, international engagement, and integration into the global scholarly communication ecosystem.

With regard to the comparison between public and non-public university journals in Vietnam, the analysis reveals that the differences extend beyond resource availability to encompass governance structures and strategic development orientations. Journals affiliated with public universities often benefit from established research networks, governmental financial support, and access to extensive domestic academic expertise. Conversely, journals published by non-public higher education institutions tend to exhibit greater organizational flexibility in governance innovation, digital technology adoption, and the implementation of internationalization initiatives designed to enhance their competitive position. Nevertheless, these journals continue to encounter significant challenges associated with financial sustainability,

the attraction of international contributors, and the establishment of long-term academic reputation.

The comparative evidence further suggests that successful journal internationalization is not determined solely by institutional ownership or organizational type but is primarily influenced by strategic governance quality, digital transformation capability, the degree of international engagement, and the consistent maintenance of globally recognized scholarly standards. Journals characterized by transparent governance systems, rigorous peer-review procedures, publication policies aligned with Open Science principles, and extensive international collaboration networks are generally better positioned to improve academic visibility and satisfy the evaluation criteria established by Scopus and the Web of Science.

From both policy and managerial perspectives, the comparative findings underscore that narrowing the gap between Vietnamese journals and international publishing standards requires a comprehensive transformation strategy integrating governance reform, technological investment, academic capacity development, and expanded international collaboration. At the same time, non-public university journals should capitalize on their organizational flexibility to develop distinctive strategic models that align with the evolving paradigms of Open Science and digital transformation shaping the global scholarly publishing ecosystem.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. Interpretation of Findings

The empirical findings indicate that the internationalization and scholarly advancement of non-public university journals in Vietnam are simultaneously influenced by multiple strategic determinants, among which Artificial Intelligence (AI), Open Science, and International Collaboration emerge as three major drivers of transformation within the contemporary scholarly publishing ecosystem. These results are consistent with the theoretical foundations underpinning the study and reflect broader global trends in academic publishing and research governance.

First, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is identified as a strategic enabler that enhances the operational efficiency and governance quality of scholarly journals. The application of AI technologies to manuscript screening, plagiarism detection, reviewer recommendation, language editing support, and scholarly data analytics contributes to shorter editorial processing times, greater procedural transparency, and improved publishing performance. Nevertheless, the findings also suggest

that AI should be regarded as a decision-support instrument rather than a substitute for editorial judgment, since scholarly quality ultimately depends on expert evaluation, research integrity, and institutional governance capacity.

Second, Open Science is found to exert a positive influence on academic visibility and the dissemination of scientific knowledge. The implementation of open access policies, research data sharing practices, persistent digital identifiers, and transparent peer-review mechanisms enhances the accessibility and discoverability of published research for the international scholarly community. These findings imply that Open Science not only contributes to increased citation performance but also strengthens journal credibility and improves compliance with the evaluation standards applied by major international indexing systems.

Third, International Collaboration is identified as one of the most influential determinants of successful journal internationalization. The active participation of international scholars as authors, reviewers, and editorial board members broadens academic networks, enhances research quality, and increases recognition within the global scientific community. In addition, cross-border research partnerships facilitate knowledge exchange, promote methodological innovation, and strengthen the integration of Vietnamese journals into the international scholarly communication system.

More importantly, the study demonstrates that these three strategic factors do not operate independently but rather reinforce one another through complementary interactions. The effective integration of AI, Open Science, and international collaboration generates synergistic effects that improve governance quality, expand academic visibility, and strengthen the global competitiveness of scholarly journals. This finding provides additional support for the proposed integrated multi-level analytical framework, suggesting that sustainable journal internationalization can only be achieved through the coordinated implementation of technological innovation, scholarly excellence, and governance reform within a unified strategic development agenda.

### 6.2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are broadly consistent with the existing literature on journal internationalization, scholarly publishing governance, and digital transformation within the global research ecosystem. At the same time, the study generates several novel insights that extend current theoretical perspectives and provide additional empirical evidence in the relatively

underexplored context of non-public university journals in Vietnam.

With respect to similarities, the empirical results confirm that digital transformation, international collaboration, and effective journal governance play critical roles in enhancing scholarly quality and facilitating integration into internationally recognized indexing systems. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that the modernization of publishing processes, the expansion of international academic networks, and the establishment of transparent governance structures are essential prerequisites for improving journal performance and scholarly reputation. Likewise, the positive contribution of Open Science practices to increasing accessibility, academic visibility, and citation impact is aligned with recent international evidence concerning the evolution of contemporary scholarly communication.

Nevertheless, the distinctive contribution and key point of divergence of the present study lies in the development of an integrated multi-level analytical framework that simultaneously incorporates micro-, meso-, macro-, and meta-level determinants within a unified conceptual model. Unlike many previous studies that have focused primarily on isolated dimensions such as editorial quality, technological adoption, or international collaboration, this research examines the dynamic interactions among scholarly resources, technological capabilities, governance mechanisms, and institutional environments in shaping journal internationalization.

Another important theoretical contribution is the identification of academic visibility as a critical mediating mechanism linking strategic organizational resources to successful inclusion in international indexing systems. This perspective extends conventional theoretical models by providing a more comprehensive explanation of how investments in digital technologies, governance quality, and international partnerships are transformed into measurable scholarly outcomes. Furthermore, the study highlights the complementary and synergistic relationships among Artificial Intelligence, Open Science, and international collaboration rather than treating these factors as independent determinants operating in isolation.

In addition, whereas much of the existing literature has concentrated on large commercial publishers or research-intensive universities in developed countries, the present research specifically investigates non-public university journals in Vietnam, an area that has received comparatively limited attention within the international scholarly literature. Consequently, the

study not only broadens the applicability of existing theoretical frameworks but also contributes valuable empirical evidence relevant to emerging economies and higher education systems undergoing processes of international integration.

Overall, the combination of theoretical continuity with prior scholarship and the introduction of novel conceptual, methodological, and contextual contributions substantially strengthens the scientific value of the study. These findings provide a robust foundation for future research on journal internationalization and strategic publishing governance within the evolving paradigms of Open Science and digital transformation.

### *6.3. Academic Contributions*

This study makes several significant scholarly contributions to the fields of academic publishing governance, journal internationalization, and digital transformation within the evolving Open Science ecosystem. Its principal contribution lies in the development of an integrated multi-level framework, representing a novel theoretical approach for explaining the determinants of internationalization and scholarly competitiveness among non-public university journals in Vietnam.

Unlike many previous studies that have focused primarily on isolated dimensions such as editorial quality, technological capability, or international collaboration, the present research introduces a unified analytical framework that simultaneously incorporates micro-level, meso-level, macro-level, and meta-level perspectives. This comprehensive approach enables a more holistic understanding of not only the independent effects of individual determinants but also the complex interactions among scholarly resources, governance mechanisms, institutional environments, and international standards that collectively shape journal development and internationalization.

Another major theoretical contribution is the integration of concepts derived from Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), the Knowledge Economy perspective, and the Open Science Paradigm into a single conceptual model. By synthesizing these complementary theoretical traditions, the study establishes an interdisciplinary framework capable of explaining how internal organizational capabilities, institutional pressures, and global transformations interact to generate sustainable competitive advantages in scholarly publishing. In doing so, the research extends the applicability of these theoretical perspectives to emerging economies and non-public higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the study conceptualizes academic

visibility as a strategically important mediating construct that links investments in digital transformation, editorial quality, and international collaboration with successful inclusion in international indexing systems. This perspective advances existing literature by demonstrating that global scholarly recognition and dissemination constitute critical mechanisms through which organizational capabilities are translated into measurable academic outcomes and long-term publishing success.

Importantly, the research also addresses a notable gap in the international literature by focusing specifically on non-public university journals in Vietnam, a context that has received limited scholarly attention within Southeast Asia. The empirical evidence and conceptual framework developed in this study therefore contribute not only to the Vietnamese context but also provide insights that may be transferable to other emerging higher education systems facing similar institutional and developmental challenges.

Overall, the central academic contribution of this research is the introduction of a novel integrated multi-level framework that systematically connects academic, technological, governance, and institutional dimensions within a coherent theoretical structure. This framework offers a valuable foundation for future investigations into journal internationalization while opening new avenues for research on scholarly publishing governance in the era of Open Science and digital transformation.

This study provides significant contributions to the fields of scholarly publishing governance and journal internationalization by advancing theoretical understanding, methodological innovation, and practical implementation within the contexts of open science and digital transformation.

From a theoretical perspective, the research proposes a novel integrated multi-level analytical framework that simultaneously incorporates the micro, meso, macro, and meta dimensions to comprehensively explain the processes underlying journal internationalization and academic quality enhancement. This framework extends conventional approaches that typically examine isolated determinants by offering a new conceptual foundation for understanding the dynamic interactions among internal journal capabilities, organizational governance mechanisms, policy environments, and the broader global scholarly ecosystem.

From a methodological perspective, the study contributes by adopting a multi-level

integrated approach that combines perspectives from governance, technological innovation, internationalization, and scholarly development within a unified analytical framework. Such an approach enables the simultaneous examination of structural conditions and developmental dynamics across multiple levels of analysis, thereby enhancing the explanatory power of research on journal transformation processes in an increasingly competitive international publishing environment.

From a practical perspective, the study develops a strategic transformation roadmap specifically designed to support non-public university journals in Vietnam in progressively meeting the standards required for inclusion in Scopus and the Web of Science. The proposed roadmap provides comprehensive guidance on governance reform, human resource development, digital transformation, and international collaboration while offering evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, higher education institutions, and editorial boards seeking to strengthen academic quality, global visibility, and long-term scholarly competitiveness.

## **7. Policy and Practical Implications**

### ***7.1. Implications for Academic Journals***

The findings of this study suggest that, in order to strengthen scholarly competitiveness and increase the likelihood of inclusion in international indexing systems such as Scopus and the Web of Science, non-public university journals in Vietnam should formulate and implement a comprehensive internationalization strategy that integrates governance reform, academic quality enhancement, and digital innovation. Such a strategy should extend beyond compliance with technical indexing requirements and instead focus on establishing long-term scholarly credibility and sustainable integration into the global academic publishing ecosystem.

A primary strategic priority is the internationalization of editorial boards through the recruitment of distinguished scholars, researchers, and academic leaders from diverse countries and disciplinary backgrounds. A geographically and intellectually diverse editorial board not only improves editorial quality and strengthens the objectivity of peer-review processes but also expands international research networks and enhances the journal's credibility within the global scholarly community.

In parallel, journals should progressively increase English-language publishing or adopt bilingual publication models as a strategic mechanism for expanding international readership and improving

citation performance. Publishing titles, abstracts, keywords, and full-text articles in English, together with the use of professional language-editing services, can substantially improve discoverability within international scholarly databases while attracting a broader pool of authors and readers from different regions of the world.

The study further recommends that journals accelerate the adoption of digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) throughout the publishing workflow. AI-based applications may assist manuscript screening, plagiarism detection, reviewer recommendation, language editing, and scholarly analytics, thereby reducing editorial processing time and improving operational efficiency. Nevertheless, AI implementation should be accompanied by transparent governance mechanisms and rigorous ethical safeguards to ensure that editorial judgment and expert peer review remain central to scientific quality assurance.

Furthermore, journals are encouraged to invest in advanced digital publishing platforms that comply with internationally recognized publishing standards and support efficient manuscript management and dissemination processes. The integration of modern journal management systems, persistent digital identifiers, research data infrastructures, and interoperability with global scholarly communication networks can significantly enhance operational performance, facilitate Open Science practices, and increase the international visibility of published research.

Overall, the study argues that the strategic combination of journal internationalization and digital transformation constitutes a sustainable pathway toward improving scholarly quality, expanding international collaboration, and strengthening the capacity of non-public university journals in Vietnam to satisfy the rigorous evaluation criteria required for inclusion in leading global indexing systems.

### ***7.2. Implications for Universities***

The findings of this study indicate that the internationalization and scholarly advancement of university journals cannot be separated from the strategic support and institutional commitment provided by higher education institutions. Consequently, universities, particularly non-public universities in Vietnam, should regard journal development as an integral component of their broader research and innovation strategy rather than merely an administrative publishing function. Such institutional commitment provides the foundation for building competitive journals capable of integrating into the global scholarly publishing

system.

A key strategic priority is the sustained and systematic investment in essential resources for journal development. These resources include stable financial support, advanced digital infrastructure, professional editorial teams, technical support personnel, and continuous capacity-building programs aimed at strengthening publishing governance. Universities should also establish policies to attract international scholars, provide academic language-editing services, and encourage faculty members and researchers to participate actively in editorial activities, peer review, and international scholarly publishing. Comprehensive investment in both human and technological resources is expected to improve publication quality and enhance compliance with the standards required by Scopus and the Web of Science.

In addition to resource allocation, the study highlights the importance of developing an integrated and sustainable research ecosystem within universities. Such an ecosystem should foster strong linkages among research groups, research centers, academic journals, digital libraries, and research data management platforms to create an environment conducive to the production, dissemination, and exchange of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and international research partnerships can broaden scholarly networks, strengthen research quality, and increase the global visibility of institutional research outputs.

Moreover, universities should align journal development strategies with their broader agendas for scientific research, technological advancement, and innovation by establishing incentives for international publication, supporting high-quality research projects, and encouraging the adoption of Open Science practices. The implementation of modern digital infrastructures, institutional research databases, and stronger connections with international scholarly networks will further enhance academic visibility and facilitate progress toward internationally recognized publishing standards.

Overall, the study argues that strategic investment in institutional resources and the development of a robust research ecosystem not only improves the quality and reputation of academic journals but also strengthens the overall research capacity, scholarly standing, and international competitiveness of higher education institutions in the context of digital transformation and global scientific integration.

### ***7.3. Implications for Government and National Policy***

The findings of this study indicate that the

internationalization and scholarly advancement of non-public university journals depend not only on the efforts of individual journals and higher education institutions but also on the broader institutional environment and national policy framework. Accordingly, the government should assume a proactive and enabling role by establishing coordinated support mechanisms that foster the sustainable development of Vietnam's scholarly publishing system within the evolving contexts of Open Science and digital transformation.

One of the most important policy priorities is the provision of strategic financial support for academic journals pursuing internationalization and inclusion in globally recognized indexing systems. Such support may include dedicated journal development funds, competitive funding schemes for publication quality enhancement, financial assistance for digital transformation initiatives, investment in technological infrastructure, editorial capacity-building programs, and professional training for publishing personnel. Long-term and targeted investment of this nature would strengthen governance capacity, improve scholarly quality, and enhance the international competitiveness of Vietnamese academic journals.

In addition to financial assistance, the study emphasizes the necessity of strengthening the legal and regulatory framework governing scholarly publishing in accordance with international standards. This includes establishing transparent regulations concerning research integrity, peer-review quality assurance, research data management, Open Science practices, and intellectual property protection in digital environments. Furthermore, policies that encourage open access publishing, research data sharing, and the adoption of digital technologies would provide a supportive regulatory environment for the modernization of Vietnam's academic publishing system. The study also recommends that the government take a leading role in developing a national scholarly ecosystem characterized by strong institutional connectivity among universities, research institutes, academic journals, digital libraries, government agencies, and technology partners. Such an ecosystem should be supported by advanced digital infrastructure, national research databases, persistent scholarly identifier systems, and interoperable research data platforms that facilitate integration with global scholarly communication networks and strengthen the international visibility of Vietnamese science.

Moreover, national policy initiatives should actively promote international research and publishing collaboration through joint funding programs, support for cross-border research

projects, and mechanisms that encourage journals to participate in global editorial and academic networks. These initiatives would facilitate knowledge exchange, attract international expertise, and contribute to the continuous improvement of research quality and publication standards.

Overall, the study concludes that the combination of strategic financial support, a modern and internationally aligned legal framework, and the development of an integrated national scholarly ecosystem constitutes a critical foundation for enhancing the global competitiveness of Vietnamese academic journals. At the same time, these policy measures will facilitate digital transformation, accelerate the adoption of Open Science practices, and support the long-term objective of increasing the number of Vietnamese journals successfully indexed in leading international databases such as Scopus and the Web of Science.

### **8. Roadmap**

To achieve the internationalization and academic excellence objectives of Vietnamese private university journals in alignment with the standards of Scopus and Web of Science Q1, this study proposes a progressive three-phase development roadmap characterized by continuity and systemic integration. During Phase 1 (0–2 years), strategic priorities should focus on comprehensively standardizing editorial and publishing governance processes while enhancing the scholarly quality of published articles through the adoption of internationally recognized standards in peer review, research ethics, data transparency, and quality assurance. In Phase 2 (3–5 years), development efforts should emphasize the internationalization of the journal ecosystem by expanding global networks of authors, reviewers, and editorial board members, alongside implementing evidence-based strategies to increase international visibility and citation impact. Finally, in Phase 3 (5–10 years), the long-term objective is to attain the quality benchmarks associated with Scopus Q1 and Web of Science indexing while simultaneously establishing a globally recognized academic brand, thereby positioning Vietnamese private university journals as influential knowledge hubs within the evolving landscape of open science and digital transformation.

### **9. Conclusion**

This study develops an integrated multi-level analytical framework to conceptualize and guide the internationalization and academic advancement of Vietnamese private university journals within the rapidly evolving landscape of open science and digital transformation. By synthesizing contemporary theoretical perspectives

and examining emerging global publishing trends, the study demonstrates that achieving the quality standards associated with Scopus or Web of Science Q1 extends far beyond improving individual manuscript quality. Rather, it requires a comprehensive transformation encompassing governance structures, quality assurance mechanisms, digital capabilities, internationalization strategies, and effective integration into global scholarly networks. The findings further indicate that sustainable journal development depends on the coordinated interaction among institutional policies, organizational capacities, editorial workflows, and the competencies of all stakeholders engaged in the scholarly communication process.

The principal contribution of this article lies not only in proposing a systematic and interdisciplinary conceptual framework for understanding the internationalization of private university journals but also in offering a strategically applicable model that can be translated into evidence-based governance policies and operational practices. The proposed framework enriches the scholarly discourse on academic publishing management in emerging economies while providing university leaders, policymakers, journal editors, and research administrators with a practical reference for designing long-term development strategies aimed at meeting internationally recognized quality benchmarks, strengthening global competitiveness, and enhancing the international visibility and influence of Vietnamese scholarship.

Future research should extend this framework by systematically investigating the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the entire scholarly publishing value chain, including editorial assistance, plagiarism detection, reviewer recommendation systems, manuscript workflow optimization, citation analytics, research trend forecasting, and decision-support mechanisms. In parallel, further empirical and comparative studies are needed to evaluate the feasibility, governance implications, and scholarly impacts of Open Peer Review as an emerging model capable of improving transparency, accountability, collaborative knowledge production, and trustworthiness within open science ecosystems. The synergistic integration of AI-powered publishing technologies with open peer review practices and advanced digital infrastructures is expected to facilitate the emergence of a new generation of intelligent, transparent, and globally competitive academic journals, thereby contributing substantially to the sustainable modernization and international integration of Vietnam's scholarly publishing system.

## 10. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study proposes an integrated multi-level analytical framework for understanding and advancing the internationalization and academic excellence of Vietnamese private university journals within the context of open science and digital transformation, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, regarding data limitations, the analysis primarily relies on literature synthesis, theoretical integration, and comparative examination of international publishing trends rather than on large-scale empirical investigations or longitudinal quantitative datasets concerning journal governance performance, citation metrics, internationalization capacity, or digital transformation outcomes. Consequently, several relationships embedded within the proposed framework require further empirical validation through advanced quantitative approaches, structural equation modeling, panel data analyses, or other evidence-based methodological designs.

Furthermore, the geographical and institutional scope of the study is largely confined to private university journals in Vietnam. While many of the conceptual insights may be transferable to other emerging higher education systems, variations in institutional governance, national science policies, financial resources, research culture, and levels of global integration may influence the applicability and generalizability of the proposed framework across different countries and regions. Comparative investigations involving public and private universities or cross-national analyses would therefore provide valuable opportunities to strengthen the external validity and theoretical robustness of the model.

Building upon these limitations, future research should prioritize rigorous empirical testing of the proposed framework through mixed-method approaches that integrate qualitative evidence with quantitative data across multiple institutional settings and geographical contexts. Expanding comparative studies to diverse higher education systems would facilitate a more comprehensive assessment of the framework's adaptability and explanatory power. Moreover, further investigations should explore the transformative implications of artificial intelligence, open science, open peer review, open research data, and next-generation digital publishing infrastructures for academic governance, scholarly communication quality, and the international competitiveness of university journals, thereby contributing to the development of more resilient, innovative, and globally connected scholarly publishing ecosystems in the digital era.

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**KIẾN TẠO ĐỘT PHÁ QUỐC TẾ HÓA VÀ NÂNG TẦM HỌC THUẬT  
TẠP CHÍ ĐẠI HỌC NGOÀI CÔNG LẬP VIỆT NAM:  
KHUNG PHÂN TÍCH ĐA TẦNG TÍCH HỢP HƯỚNG TỚI SCOPUS/WOS Q1  
TRONG KỶ NGUYÊN KHOA HỌC MỞ VÀ CHUYỂN ĐỔI SỐ**

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**Tóm tắt:**

*Trong bối cảnh toàn cầu hóa học thuật ngày càng sâu rộng và áp lực gia nhập các hệ thống chỉ mục quốc tế như Scopus và Web of Science (WoS), các Tạp chí khoa học của các trường đại học ngoài công lập tại Việt Nam đang đối mặt với những thách thức mang tính cấu trúc về chất lượng, khả năng quốc tế hóa và năng lực quản trị học thuật. Tuy nhiên, các nghiên cứu hiện nay còn thiếu một khung phân tích tích hợp có khả năng giải thích toàn diện quá trình nâng tầm học thuật trong kỷ nguyên khoa học mở và chuyển đổi số. Trong bối cảnh toàn cầu hóa học thuật, khoa học mở và chuyển đổi số đang tái định hình hệ sinh thái xuất bản quốc tế, các Tạp chí đại học ngoài công lập tại Việt Nam phải đối mặt với áp lực ngày càng lớn trong việc đáp ứng các tiêu chuẩn chỉ mục của Scopus và Web of Science (WoS), đặc biệt ở nhóm Q1. Mặc dù đã có nhiều nghiên cứu về quốc tế hóa xuất bản khoa học, vẫn tồn tại khoảng trống nghiên cứu đáng kể liên quan đến việc thiếu một khung phân tích tích hợp đa tầng kết nối đồng thời các yếu tố quản trị, năng lực biên tập, hạ tầng số, chính sách học thuật và môi trường quốc tế nhằm*

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## **Lịch sử bài báo**

Ngày nhận bài: 20/02/2026

Ngày phản biện: 20/4/2026

Ngày tác giả sửa: 20/5/2026

Ngày duyệt đăng: 20/6/2026

Ngày phát hành: 30/6/2026

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.64223/tvj.p2026.v2.i6.a94>

hỗ trợ quá trình nâng cấp Tạp chí một cách hệ thống và bền vững.

Nghiên cứu này hướng tới hai mục tiêu chính: (i) Xây dựng khung phân tích đa tầng tích hợp (Micro – Meso – Macro – Meta) phục vụ đánh giá và hoạch định chiến lược quốc tế hóa Tạp chí khoa học; và (ii) Đề xuất Mô hình nâng cấp Tạp chí đại học ngoài công lập theo định hướng đạt chuẩn Scopus/WoS Q1. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp hỗn hợp (Mixed-Method), kết hợp phân tích định tính từ phỏng vấn chuyên gia với khảo sát định lượng và đối sánh (Benchmarking) các thông lệ quốc tế của những Tạp chí và hệ thống xuất bản có uy tín.

Kết quả nghiên cứu đề xuất mô hình phân tích bốn tầng gồm: Vi mô (Micro), Trung mô (Meso), Vĩ mô (Macro) và Siêu hệ thống (Meta), qua đó làm rõ mối quan hệ tương tác giữa năng lực nội tại của Tạp chí với môi trường quản trị và mạng lưới học thuật toàn cầu. Kết quả cho thấy, sự tương tác đa chiều giữa chất lượng học thuật vi mô, năng lực quản trị tổ chức, hệ sinh thái chính sách và chuẩn mực toàn cầu đóng vai trò quyết định trong quá trình quốc tế hóa. Trên cơ sở đó, nghiên cứu đề xuất một Mô hình phát triển mang tính hệ thống cùng lộ trình chuyển đổi chiến lược theo từng giai đoạn.

Về mặt lý thuyết, nghiên cứu đóng góp một khung tích hợp mới (Framework) có khả năng mở rộng cho các nghiên cứu về quản trị xuất bản khoa học trong bối cảnh chuyển đổi số.

Về mặt thực tiễn, nghiên cứu xây dựng lộ trình chuyển đổi chiến lược nhằm nâng cao chất lượng và khả năng hội nhập quốc tế của các Tạp chí đại học ngoài công lập Việt Nam. Đồng thời, các kết quả cũng cung cấp hàm ý chính sách quan trọng cho cơ quan quản lý, cơ sở giáo dục đại học và ban biên tập trong việc thúc đẩy quốc tế hóa, phát triển khoa học mở và nâng cao năng lực cạnh tranh học thuật quốc gia. Đóng góp của nghiên cứu không chỉ mở rộng nền tảng lý thuyết thông qua việc kiến tạo một khung đa tầng mới (Framework), mà còn cung cấp các hàm ý thực tiễn và chính sách nhằm thúc đẩy sự phát triển bền vững của hệ sinh thái xuất bản học thuật tại Việt Nam trong bối cảnh hội nhập quốc tế.

**Từ khóa:** Quốc tế hóa tạp chí; Tạp chí học thuật; Khoa học mở; Chuyển đổi số; Khung đa cấp tích hợp; Đại học ngoài công lập; Scopus; Web of Science (WoS).

**UNESCO FOS:** 5802, 5311, 120304, 120310.

**OECD FORD:** 1.02, 5.03, 5.08.

**ANZSRC FoR:** 390307, 390308, 390405, 460705, 460709.

**JEL:** A23, I23, M15, O32, O33.