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## Review on Open Access Journals

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### ABSTRACT

*Open Access Journals intends to make available data and publication of scholarly information free of cost to its users. The funds for operating the same are obtained from the charge levied from authors of the manuscript. The article outlines the history and development of open access journals. It also gives a description of the various aspects and functioning of open access journals. There are a number of open-access journals that operate and charge different amounts for publishing articles. Some are of the view that publishing in open-access is not worth since it is paid by the authors and forms an obligation on the part of the publisher to publish the article. The only method the open-access journals can and have adopted for proving them wrong are maintaining an expert panel of editors and reviewers with strict reviewing policies.*

**Keywords**— Open-Access Journals, review, article processing charges, author, publisher

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of open access is making available research outputs without any financial, legal or technical barriers. This can be applied to any form of published output – articles, conference papers, thesis, book chapters or monographs. Open access was introduced as a result of a huge international movement seeking access to academic information including Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) and Berlin Declaration on Open Access. It permits anyone interested in getting access to publication and data to read, download, print, or use it for educational purposes within the legal boundaries (Weller, 2014). The idea of traditional publication was to publish scholarly information without paying any charges for the users of information. Later, with the introduction of technology into the scenario, the concept of making available data for free to the public became prevalent. This marked the initiation of open-access publication.

During the initial years of open access from 2000-2004, strong growth potential was identified. BioMed Central initiated the 'author charge for publication' and PLoS was the first to publish a number of scholarly open access journals. In 2003, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was launched at Lund University, Sweden with 300 open access journals. It

indexes peer-reviewed open-access journals that ensure quality standards in journals.

### 2. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of conducting a review on 'open-access journals' articles and websites containing relevant data was browsed through based on a set inclusion criteria. Research articles and books related to open-access journals was identified with the help of standard databases such as JSTOR, Sage Journals, Google Scholar, Wiley Online Library, etc.

The following mind-map was developed in the initial stage while conducting the reviews and the relevant key areas where identified.

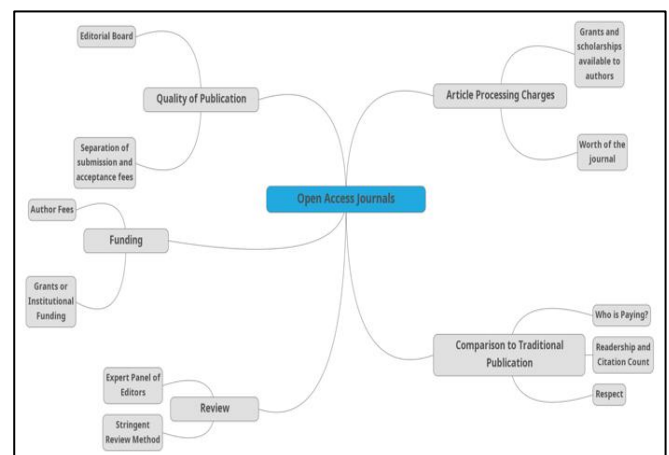


Fig. 1: Mind-map on terms identified (created using MindMap)

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Article Processing Charges (APC)

Unlike the traditional form of publication wherein the readers have to make payments to access an article, open-access journals publish scholarly information accessible to readers at no cost. The authors have to make payments either in the stage of the review or after acceptance or both to get the manuscript published in the journal. A journal covering the subject area where large number and sums of grants and scholarships provided are likely to charge higher APC's (Solomon & Björk, 2012).

### 3.2 Quality of Publication

The editor has a major role to play in open access journals. Publishing by accepting payment can question the quality of the articles since money can become an obligation for the journal to accept and publish the manuscript. To avoid this Mark J. McCabe and Christopher M. Snyder in their article "Open Access and Academic Journal Quality", suggested division of submission fees and acceptance fees would solve the issue.

### 3.3 Funding

"When all educators are passionate about free and open access to their educational resources, when we change the rules on the money, when the default on all publicly funded educational resources is 'open' and not 'closed,' we will live in a world where everyone can attain all the education they desire." wrote Cable Green, in the Book 'Open'. The open- access journals obtain funding from universities, government, research centres, etc., but the main source is APC, which can either be paid by the author himself/ herself or received from the granting agency of the author. But this does not always cover all costs, that being the major reason for not many open-access journals existing.

### 3.4 Review

Peer-review is one major factor that measures the quality of the journal. But there are discrepancies in the view as to which method of peer-review is most suitable - single-blind, double-blind, triple-blind, or open review. On selecting the open-access journal for submitting the manuscript the main factor of concern is the APC of submission should be worth to cover the dissemination, branding and other services provided by a journal (Solomon & Björk, 2012). Journal can ensure quality articles to be published using the best editors and the stringent review methods.

### 3.5 Comparison with Traditional Publication

There are three things that differentiate open access journals from traditional journals – they are:

- Who is paying: In traditional journals, there is no cost to the author since the publisher is going to sell the article – people can buy that article or subscribe to the journal in which the article appears. Whereas, in open access journals there is a direct influence on the end users (readers), since they need not make any payment for accessing it. The open-access journals request money from the researchers who are publishing the article – the authors.
- Readership and Citation Count: For Traditional publications, the readers will be the ones who have subscribed that one article or journal or those who have institutional access. The citations of traditional publications will be less in comparison to the open access journals because of the free accessibility it provides.

- Respect: The national and international associations has only started to accept open access journals. Because of the same the number of open access journals are less and lack track records for them. But with the faster movement towards a technologically updated research world, the open access journals will gain much more prominence in years to come. (Singh, 2019)

## 4. CONCLUSION

Open Access Journals provide easier access to scholarly information who does not fall within the boundaries of a subscribing institution or who cannot afford to pay huge sum of money. The citation rates of open-access journals are higher in comparison to traditional journals. Therefore, the visibility, impact and reach of open-access journals are far ahead of traditional publications in the era of digital access. The article processing charges can be one obstacle that is stopping authors in submitting their manuscripts, but if the worth of publishing in the journal is more than the money value, people will not be reluctant. The quality of publication can be ensured through a set of an expert panel of editors and strict norms on peer-review. To conclude, open-access journals ensure a free flow of content to the scientists and research scholars creating a pool of information for future research works to be conducted. With a greater number of institutions and authors recognising its importance, it can be said to be an influential movement in the field of research.

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