

NAVIGATING THE OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

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Abstract *This paper provides a brief overview of open access journals in the field of Library Science. The data has been gathered from the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the most authoritative online directory of open access journals. The study reveals that over 25% of open access journals in this field are published from the USA and Brazil, while India shows a relatively modest contribution. The study also reveals that the majority of open access journals are published in English language, with some journals available in multiple languages. Additionally, it finds that the vast majority of these journals are published by non-profit organizations.*

Keywords: *Open Access Journals, Open Access Publishing, Directory of Open Access Journals, DOAJ, Library Science*

INTRODUCTION

Nowaday, scholarly content in various forms is widely distributed online, free of charge and without copyright or licensing restrictions by publishers, institutions, and individuals across the globe. The rapid growth of scholarly journals, digital catalogs, repositories, preprint archives, and similar resources has significantly contributed to this shift. Throughout history, humanity has sought to identify, locate, and access all available knowledge, regardless of its origin or language, that might be of interest (Husain, 1984). Advances in information and communication technologies—particularly the Internet and the Web—have revolutionized scholarly communication, facilitating innovations in research processes and the dissemination of ideas to a global audience (Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2003).

Open access sources play a crucial role in the widespread dissemination of research, helping to eliminate barriers to access. According to the Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science, open access journals are defined as “scholarly periodicals that make the full text of the articles they publish universally and freely available through the Internet, in easily accessible formats. In some cases, they are deposited immediately upon publication without embargo in at least one widely recognized open access repository.”

Open access journals are scholarly publications available online to anyone with an internet connection, without any cost. These platforms allow researchers to share their findings

with the world, free from financial or legal constraints. Open access is a global initiative aimed at providing unrestricted online access to scientific and scholarly literature, especially peer-reviewed articles and their preprints. In essence, it provides immediate, permanent access to research outcomes upon publication, enabling users to read, download, copy, and distribute the content freely.

There are two types of open access journals: (1) those published exclusively in electronic format, regularly updated on the internet, and without a print counterpart, and (2) those available in both electronic and print formats (Khode & Choudhary, 2011).

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore and evaluate open access journals in the field of Library Science, with the following specific objectives:

- To determine the prevalence of open access journals in Library Science.
- To analyze the year-wise distribution of open access journals.
- To identify the countries that lead in the publication of open access journals.
- To assess the current state of open access journals.

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- To recognize the major publishers of open access journals.
- To explore the language distribution of open access journals.
- To examine the publishing patterns and methods of access for open access journals.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of this study, data was collected from the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the most authoritative online directory of open access journals (<http://www.doaj.org/>). The DOAJ is operated and maintained by a non-profit, community-governed foundation based in Denmark. As of May 22, 2025, the directory listed a total of 21,560 open access journals, with 206 journals categorized under the subject of Library Science.

The data was extracted from the DOAJ website in Microsoft Excel format for subsequent analysis. The analysis focused on various aspects, including the number of journals, their year of publication, country of origin, language, format, and other relevant characteristics.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prevalence of Open Access Journals

An effort was made to determine the prevalence of open access journals in the field of Library Science. As shown in Table 1, the distribution of journal frequencies is as follows: 70 journals are bi-annual, 47 are quarterly, 39 have unfixed frequencies, 24 are published annually, 16 are fortnightly, and 5 journals each are bi-monthly and tri-annual. The data in Table 1 reveals that over 56% of the journals are published on a bi-annual and quarterly basis.

Table 1: Prevalence of Open Access Journals

Periodicity	No. of Journals
Bi-Annual	70 (34.0%)
Quarterly	47 (22.8%)
Not fixed	39 (18.9%)
Annual	24 (11.7%)
Fortnightly	16 (7.8%)
Bi-Monthly	5 (2.4%)
Tri-Annual	5 (2.4%)
Total	206 (100%)

Year-Wise Distribution of Open Access Journals

The growth in the number of open access journals listed in the DOAJ over the past 23 years was analyzed. Table 2 illustrates that the highest number of journals was published in 2017. In contrast, only one journal was published in 2004 and 2014. A year-wise analysis of open access journals reveals that, from 2003 to 2014, there were only 50 open access journals in Library Science. However, between 2015 and 2025, the number of journals increased to 156. This indicates that the number of open access journals published in the last 11 years is nearly three times higher than in the previous 12 years (2003-2014).

Table 2: Year-Wise Distribution of Open Access Journals

Year	No. of Journals
2025	7
2024	14
2023	19
2022	14
2021	12
2020	15
2019	14
2018	13
2017	28
2016	10
2015	9
2014	1
2013	12
2012	6
2011	3
2010	4
2009	3
2008	3
2007	6
2006	5
2005	3
2004	1
2003	4
Total	206

Countries That Lead in the Publication of Open Access Journals

Open access journals in Library Science are published in 53 different countries. As shown in Table 3, the highest number of journals are published in the USA (34), followed by Brazil (26), Spain and Indonesia (15 each), Iran (11), Poland (10), UK (8), Ukraine (7), Canada (6), Germany and Italy (5 each), Switzerland and Egypt (4 each), and Netherlands, Argentina, Mexico, Taiwan, and Romania (3 each). Sweden, China, Croatia, Norway, Russia, and Lithuania have two journals each. The data presented in Table 3 also indicates that 29 journals are published from 29 different countries. Notably, USA and Brazil together account for more than 25% of the open access journals published in the field of Library Science.

Table 3: Countries That Lead in the Publication of Open Access Journals

Sr. No.	Countries	No. of Journals
1.	USA	34
2.	Brazil	26
3.	Spain	15
4.	Indonesia	15
5.	Iran	11
6.	Poland	10
7.	UK	8
8.	Ukraine	7
9.	Canada	6
10.	Germany	5
11.	Italy	5
12.	Switzerland	4
13.	Egypt	4
14.	Netherland	3
15.	Argentina	3
16.	Mexico	3
17.	Taiwan	3
18.	Romania	3
19.	Sweden	2
20.	China	2
21.	Croatia	2
22.	Norway	2
23.	Russia	2
24.	Lithuania	2
25.	Serbia	1
26.	Colombia	1
27.	Bulgaria	1
28.	Uruguay	1

Sr. No.	Countries	No. of Journals
29.	Japan	1
30.	Kenya	1
31.	Slovenia	1
32.	Nigeria	1
33.	Qatar	1
34.	Denmark	1
35.	Tunisia	1
36.	Singapore	1
37.	Finland	1
38.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
39.	Austria	1
40.	Portugal	1
41.	Nigeria	1
42.	Morocco	1
43.	Norway	1
44.	Malaysia	1
45.	South Korea	1
46.	India	1
47.	France	1
48.	Costa Rica	1
49.	Egypt	1
50.	Pakistan	1
51.	Slovenia	1
52.	South Africa	1
53.	Turkiye	1
	Total	206

Current State of Open Access Journals

Table 4 presents the current state of open access journal publishing. The data reveals that 201 journals are currently active, while 5 journals have ceased their publications.

Table 4: Current State of Open Access Journals

Sr. No.	State (Status)	No. of Journals
1.	Active	201
2.	Ceased	5
	Total	206

Major Publishers of Open Access Journals

The analysis of Table 5 shows that the vast majority of open access journals, i.e. over 98%, are published by the non-profit organizations. Nearly 48% of these journals (100 journals) are published by academic institutions and universities,

while 103 journals are published by associations and societies. Only 3 journals are published by independent or commercial publishers. The data indicates that the majority of open access journals in Library Science are published by academic institutions, universities, and associations— all of which are non-profit organizations.

Table 5: Major Publishers of Open Access Journals

Types of Publishers	Number of Journals (%)
Association/societies	103 (50%)
Academic institutions/ universities	100 (48.5.0%)
Independent/commercial publishers	3 (1.5%)
Total	206

Language Distribution of Open Access Journals

English is the most dominant language for publishing open access journals in Library Science. As shown in Table 6, out of 206 open access journals, 166 are published in English, followed by Spanish (41), Portuguese (37), French (14), German (10), and Italian and Polish (9 each). Additionally, 24 other languages are represented in the publishing of these 206 journals. The language analysis of open access journals reveals that some journals are published in more than one language.

Table 6: Language Distribution of Open Access Journals

Language	No. of Journals
English	166
Spanish	41
Portuguese	37
French	14
German	10
Italian	9
Polish	9
Arabic	8
Persian	8
Ukrainian	8
Russian	7
Chinese	5
Croatian	5
Catalan	4
Serbian	4

Language	No. of Journals
Bosnian	3
Lithuanian	3
Swedish	3
Danish	2
Norwegian	2
Slovenian	2
Belarusian	1
Bulgarian	1
Czech	1
Finnish	1
Galician	1
Norwegian Bokmål	1
Romanian	1
Slovak	1
Turkish	1
Urdu	1
Total	360

The number of journals is more than 206 as some of the journals are published in more than one language.

Publishing Pattern and Methods of Access of Open Access Journals

Table 7 shows that 147 journals are published exclusively online, without print versions, while 59 journals are available both online and in print.

In terms of Method of Access, Table 8 reveals that 18 journals provide articles in both PDF and HTML formats for reading and downloading. Only one journal offers articles in HTML and XML formats, while the majority of journals (187) provide articles exclusively in PDF format.

Table 7: Publishing Pattern of Open Access Journal

Publishing Pattern	No. of Journals (%age)
Both print and online	59 (28.7 %)
Only online	147 (71.3 %)
Total	206

Table 8: Method of Access of Open Access journals

Method of Access	No. of Journals (%age)
Only PDF	187 (90.8%)
PDF, HTML	18 (8.7%)
HTML, XML	1 (0.5%)
Total	206

CONCLUSION

Open access journals have become an essential platform for scholarly communication in the digital era, as evidenced by their continuous growth across various disciplines worldwide (Husain & Nazim, 2013). In the field of Library Science, these journals have emerged as a critical medium for Library Science research.

The analysis reveals that a significant number of open access journals in Library Science are published in the USA and Brazil, with India contributing a relatively very small share. Furthermore, it is observed that the majority of these journals are published bi-annually or quarterly and remain active.

Currently, most open access journals in Library Science are published by academic institutions, particularly universities and associations. However, Indian universities and associations have minimal participation in publishing open access journals, with the only exception being the journal published by CSIR-NIScPR. It is, therefore, crucial for Indian universities to take proactive steps toward initiating and publishing their own open access journals.

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