

**ATTITUDE OF LIBRARIANS IN ANAMBRA STATE TOWARDS OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING**

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**Abstracts**

*This research work examined the perception and attitude of librarians in Anambra State towards publishing in open access journals. The population for the study comprised all the 208 librarians working in the 16 libraries in Anambra State. There was no sampling because of the small size of the population. A self-developed questionnaire entitled “Attitude of Librarians towards Open Access Publishing Questionnaire (ALOAPQ)” was used for data collection. The structured pattern adopted was a four-point Likert - type scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The validity of the instrument was established by three experts: one from Measurement and Evaluation; two from Library Information Science Department, all in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to obtain a reliability co-efficient value of 0.84 which seems enough for the study. Data collected were analysed using mean. Scores from 2.50 and above were adjudged to be acceptable while scores below 2.50 were regarded as non - acceptable. The findings include that librarians in Anambra State are aware of OA journals, they publish their papers in both traditional and open access journals, and that high cost of publication is a barrier in publishing in OA platforms. Based on the findings, the study recommended amongst*

*others that academic libraries in institutions of higher learning in Anambra State should organize seminars periodically on the need for their librarians to research and publish in OA journals.*

**Keywords: Open access, Publishing, Librarians, Perceptions**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Scholarly journals first appeared in the 17th century, since then, the journals have been the main vehicle for the dissemination of scientific knowledge. Researchers publish the results of their activities for a number of reasons: to expand the knowledge in their subject field, to contribute towards solving problems or to establish their reputation (Palmer, K.L., Dill, E. & Christie, C. as cited in Togia, & Korobili, 2014). On the other hand, access of scientists and academics to scientific literature is essential for upgrading their knowledge, designing new research studies and writing research papers. Scholars have always been seeking efficient ways for communicating their thoughts to the larger possible audience and the Open Access (OA) publishing model has the potential to meet this challenge, by making scientific information free for anyone to access.

Scholarly publishing and communication refer to the creation of new knowledge by researchers and its dissemination to relevant academic community (HLWIKI Canada, 2016). Scholarly publishing is now a core requirement for faculty promotion, hence, the priority and attention accorded it. Its adoption dates back to 1665, when the Royal Society of London, England produced the first journal titled, ‘the journal des scavans’ in France. Since then scholarly publishing has grown astronomically and advanced technologically. The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has brought new dimension to scholarly publishing and we now have what is being referred to as Open Access.

Open Access (OA), is defined as the free availability of scientific research publications, permitting users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these publications without financial, legal or technical barriers (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2012). Open Access (OA) journals provide a wide range of information to researchers and users in general. OA refers to accessibility of all kinds of print that are published and can be accessed through the internet free of charge, which includes scholarly publications. Information, no doubt, is an integral part of man’s daily activities and existence, and access to available information resources or scholarly publications should be a global concern to all stakeholders.

According to Yang, & Li, (2015) the Budapest Open Access Initiative identified two primary means for achieving OA goals. They are “Gold” OA or “author pays,” achieved by publishing in a peer-reviewed, scholarly OA journal in which articles are freely available online, and “Green” OA or “self-archiving,” achieved by publishing in any peer-reviewed journal and then depositing a peer-reviewed version or preprint of the article in an OA repository. The third avenue or means for achieving OA was however identified by Bosah, Okeji, Baro, (2017) as the ‘Diamond’ This is peer-reviewed journals in which the articles are free to read and authors are free to publish in them. In the Diamond OA, no author publication charges. Example of a Diamond OA is Library Philosophy and Practices, scholarly articles are thoroughly peer reviewed and published free of charge if accepted by the journal body. All OA journals are online publications.

The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has brought new dimension to scholarly publishing and we now have what is being referred to as Open Access. This initiative has helped overcome several challenges of scholarly publishing and communication provided the Internet is available. The emergence of Open Access initiatives has majorly been attributed to unwelcoming attitudes of commercial publishers’ penchant for exorbitant charges for publishing articles, high cost of accessing print journals, limited access to other researchers’ scholarly work (Yiotis, 2005; Moller, 2006) and time lapse to publish research

findings. The high price/cost has forced academic libraries expected to be the repositories of these print journals to reduce journals funding and subscription (Giarlo, as cited in Oyedipe, W. J., Adekunmisi, S. R., Akinbode, R. O., 2017)

For years now, authorities in the field of research have been advocating that scholarship should be freely available to all. Due to the significance attached to research and publication in institutions of higher learning in Africa, academic librarians in the universities are expected to conduct research and publish their research results in scholarly journals. Thus, Baro and Ebhomeya, 2012 reiterated that research and research publications complement each other, meaning that academic librarians should not only engage in research but also publish the outcome of their studies.

With the Open Access initiative in place, scholars and researchers now find new and creative ways of disseminating their research findings with stakeholders (that is, librarians, publishers, journal bodies, researchers and students) all benefitting from the approach. Open Access therefore allows free and timely accessibility to information in the desired formats. It has thus become an important process in fostering the growth and development of science and technology through effective, faster, easier and cheaper mode of dissemination of opinions, reviews, research findings and recommendations. They are laden with the benefits of providing researchers with access to relevant and up-to-date digital information, wherever they are located in a relatively easier, faster, cheaper and desired format.

Open Access is now a subject of much concern among lecturers, academic librarians, students, university administrators, government officials, commercial publishers and learned society publishers. This is because Open Access products have become important sources for scientific research and development. It has also been found to be beneficial to academic, researchers, librarians, publishers and students, most especially, the postgraduates. The main motivation for authors to publish in an Open Access journal is to enhance increased visibility and citation advantage (Antelman, 2004; Suber, 2008; 2012; 2013). Other reasons are to provide up-to-the-minute information, obtainable anywhere around the world and increased research output (Antelman, 2004), career development (Okoye and Ejikeme, 2011) and several others. The initiative has helped libraries globally to attract more users to libraries and especially their electronic resources and services. Further, libraries and librarians in tertiary institutions have enhanced image because of their abilities to manage digital information resources which was somehow being threatened by commercial information services providers (Swan and Chan, 2010). Rapid price escalations in scholarly journal subscription rates, however, have adversely affected access to scholarly publications within Africa and even beyond. Hence OA solves the problem since it is not just cheap but completely free of charge. Despite the benefits of Open Access to individuals in the university community, researchers are still reluctant to the use of this initiative services and products. This is because many researchers, librarians inclusive, are still unaware of the services thus such persons neither use nor publish their articles in OA journals.

Researchers revealed poor ICT infrastructures; inadequate funding for building and upgrading ICT infrastructures; low level of awareness; unstable power supply; technological barriers; unavailability and slow Internet connectivity; lack of sensitisation to adopt Open Access; lack of ICT skills and inadequate advocacy for Open Access in academic and research institutes as major constraint to Open Access (Musa 2016; Ivwighreghweta & Onoriode 2012; Okoye & Ejikeme 2011; Oyedipe, W. J., Adekunmisi, S. R., & Akinbode, R. O., 2017).

Besides perceived advantages, OA usually raises some concerns too. A number of studies have demonstrated that open access publications are often considered to be of low quality and consequently less respected and prestigious than established, subscription-based journals (Warlick, & Vaughan, 2007; Coonin, 2004). However, despite perceptions of poor quality, researchers believe that publishing in OA helps career development and should not be viewed as an obstacle to tenure and promotion. Also, it appears that discussions

about OA always bring up the issue of impact factor, and there is a belief that OA publications have lower impact factors than traditional journals or no impact factors at all, a problem discouraging many authors from publishing in such journals (Nariani, & Fernandez, 2012; Warlick, & Vaughan, 2007). In addition, there is evidence that OA is mixed up with peer review, with many researchers assuming that OA journals have inferior peer review, something that might lead to vanity publishing (Togia, & Korobili, 2014).

This research work therefore sets to find out the perceptions of Open Access journals by librarians in Anambra State, identify the extent to which academic librarians in Anambra State publish in OA journals, find out the extent to which librarians from Anambra State use open access content, identify constraint factors to effective use of Open Access as a publishing model among librarians in Anambra State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The core value of scholarly publishing and communication has been sharing of knowledge without price and copyright restrictions. However, the joining and dominance of commercial publishers has resulted to high cost of publishing, high cost of accessing, delay in publishing research findings and unavailability of suitable and relevant materials for inclusion in scholarly works amongst others. Open Access initiative has come to stay with its abundant benefits and opportunities to many stakeholders in the university community. Yet, librarians that are supposed to be great users of the initiative medium and products are still unaware of the many benefits and opportunities that the medium and products are capable of offering them. Little is known about the extent to which librarians in Anambra State use the medium and its products to enhance their academic status and visibility as well as web metric counts of their universities and/or other institutions. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to examine perception and attitude of librarians towards publishing in open access journals: a case study of librarians in Anambra State. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, a lot of research has been conducted to investigate the perception and attitude of librarians towards publishing in open access journals. None has determined empirically the perception and attitude of librarians Anambra State of Nigeria towards publishing in open access journals. It is therefore pertinent to carry out a research to fill the gap. Hence the question: what is the perception and attitude of librarians in Anambra State towards publishing in open access journals.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the perceptions of Open Access journals by librarians in Anambra State?
2. To what extent do librarians in Anambra State publish in OA journals?
3. What factors militate against effective use of Open Access as a publishing model?

### **Method**

The research adopted a descriptive survey design which sought information from respondents on the perception and attitude of librarians in Anambra State towards publishing in open access journals. The population for the study comprised all the 208 librarians (49 males and 159 females) working in the 16 libraries in Anambra State. The data on population was gotten from the Nigerian Library Association Anambra State Chapter directory published in December 2018. There was no sampling because of the small size of the population.

A self-developed questionnaire entitled "Attitude of Librarians towards Open Access Publishing Questionnaire (ALOAPQ)" was used for data collection. ALOAPQ has two parts (1 & 2): Part 1 sought information on the personal data of the respondent; Part 2 was on the issue of the study. Part 2 had three sections (A, B & C): Section A sought information on the perception of librarians towards OA publishing; Section B was on the to which librarians in Anambra State publish in OA journals; Section C concentrated on factors militate against effective

use of Open Access as a publishing model. The structured pattern adopted was a four-point Likert - type scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The responses were weighted as follows; SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2, SD = 1. The validity of the instrument was established by three experts: one from Measurement and Evaluation; two from Library Information Science Department, all in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. Their suggestions were incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaire. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to obtain a reliability co-efficient value of 0.84 which seems enough for the study. The researchers appointed and trained three research assistants who helped to administer the instrument on the respondents and collected same from them. Out of the 208 instruments administered, 200 were correctly filled and returned. The collection of data lasted for two weeks. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. Any score from 2.50 and above was adjudged to be acceptable while scores below 2.50 were regarded as non - acceptable.

**Presentation of findings**

**Research question one:** What are the perceptions of librarians in Anambra State towards publishing in Open Access journals?

**Table 1:** Mean of responses on perceptions of librarians in Anambra State towards publishing in Open Access journals.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN(x)	DECISION
1.	Journals not relevant to my articles	100(4)	80(3)	10(2)	10(1)	3.35	Accepted
2.	Journals have low prestige	80(4)	60(3)	50(2)	10(1)	3.05	Accepted
3.	Contents are free	120(4)	60(3)	20(2)	0(1)	4.00	Accepted
4.	Not properly peer reviewed	90(4)	100(3)	0(2)	10(1)	3.35	Accepted
5.	Submission not easy	75(4)	99(3)	6(2)	20(1)	3.14	Accepted
6.	Most widely read journals	82(4)	105(3)	3(2)	10(1)	3.30	Accepted
7.	Reputation of journal	106(4)	80(3)	10(2)	4(1)	3.44	Accepted
8.	Information dissemination is free	95(4)	95(3)	8(2)	2(1)	3.41	Accepted
9.	Impact factor of journal is high	93(4)	82(3)	15(2)	10(1)	3.26	Accepted
10.	Speed of publication process	70(4)	130(3)	0(2)	0(1)	3.00	Accepted
11.	Copyright retention not sure	150(4)	41(3)	8(2)	0(1)	3.70	Accepted

The result in Table 1 shows that all the respondents accepted the 11 items on perception of librarians in Anambra State towards open access journal. Item 3 (Contents are free), has the highest acceptance with the mean score of 4.00.

**Research question two:** To what extent do librarians in Anambra State publish in OA journals?

**Table 2:** Mean of responses on the extent librarians publish in Open Access journals.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN(x)	DECISION
1.	I rarely publish in OA journals	150(4)	50(3)	0(2)	0(1)	3.75	Accepted
2.	I don't publish in OA journals	10(4)	20(3)	100(2)	80(1)	1.90	Rejected
3.	I publish in both OA and Traditional journals	180(4)	20(3)	0(2)	0(1)	3.90	Accepted
4.	My papers are in Traditional journals only	3(4)	0(3)	160(2)	37(1)	1.85	Rejected
5.	All my articles are published in OA journals only.	10(4)	5(3)	95(2)	90(1)	1.63	Rejected

The result in Table two revealed that two out of the five items were accepted while three were rejected. Item number 3(I publish in both OA and Traditional journals) has the highest acceptance with mean score of 3.90.

**Research question three:** What factors militate against effective use of Open Access as a publishing model?

**Table 3:** Mean of responses on factors militate against effective use of Open Access as a publishing model

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN(X)	DECISION
1.	The existing scholarly publication culture do not encourage journal publication	98(4)	82(3)	10(2)	10(1)	3.34	Accepted
2.	Research articles are of low quality	86(4)	75(3)	30(2)	9(1)	3.19	Accepted
3.	Poor disposition towards open access by Appointments and Promotion Committees of universities	31(4)	40(3)	59(2)	70(1)	2.51	Accepted
4.	Research contents could easily be plagiarized	140(4)	60(3)	0(2)	0(1)	3.70	Accepted
5.	Lack the skill to use Internet and ICT tools for publishing my work on open access medium	70(4)	82(3)	44(2)	4(1)	3.09	Accepted
6.	Research articles are not well peer reviewed	96(4)	60(3)	30(2)	14(1)	3.19	Accepted
7.	Not fully aware of the benefit of publishing my research in open access medium	50(4)	40(3)	40(2)	70(1)	2.35	Rejected
8.	Poor availability of Internet technologies	0(4)	60(3)	45(2)	95(1)	1.83	Rejected
9.	Poor awareness of existence of journals and other databases in open access medium	72(4)	56(3)	30(2)	42(1)	2.79	Accepted
10.	Increasing number of unscrupulous publishers	100(4)	91(3)	9(2)	0(1)	3.45	Accepted
11.	High cost of publishing in open access	89(4)	51(3)	11(2)	49(1)	2.90	Accepted
12.	Lack of financial rewards to authors	120(4)	30(3)	30(2)	20(1)	3.25	Accepted
13.	Lack of hard/print copies of open access journals	125(4)	50(3)	15(2)	15(1)	3.47	Accepted
14.	High cost of publication	140(4)	60(3)	0(2)	0(1)	3.70	Accepted

Table 3 reveals that two out of the 14 items were rejected while the rest were accepted. The rejected items are item 7 (Not fully aware of the benefit of publishing my research in open access medium) with mean score of

2.35 and item 8 (Poor availability of Internet technologies) with the mean of 1.83. However, item 13 (Lack of hard/print copies of open access journals) has the highest acceptance.

### **Discussion**

The main findings of this study include the fact that majority of librarians in Anambra State publish their papers in both traditional and open access journals. This shows that these librarians recognized the importance of open access to knowledge as one of the emerging issues in knowledge and information management. The librarians are not just aware of the open access journals; they also make use of them. This finding is in line with that of Ugwuanyi, Eze, Obi, and Ugwuanyi, (2013) who found out that professional librarian recognized their place in promoting awareness of the Open Access both in their college academic communities and private endeavors as knowledge managers.

Most of the academic librarians in Anambra State agreed that high cost of publication (article processing charges), increasing number of unscrupulous publishers, research contents could easily be plagiarized, existing scholarly publication culture, are the most outstanding barriers to publishing in OA journals. This is the opinion of many academics even in developed countries. This finding particularly agrees with the assertions of Bosah, Okeji, and Baro, (2017) who concluded that academic librarian in Africa do not publish in Open Access journals because the publication fee is always on the high side. They emphasized that more librarians would embrace OA if the cost of publication is lower.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The Open Access is an emerging phenomenon that should be embraced by all professional librarians. It is a veritable tool for satisfying the clientele. Government at all levels should double their efforts in making sure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to realize the full potentials of Open Access to knowledge. Based on the findings, the study recommends as follows:

1. Academic libraries in institutions of higher learning in Anambra State should organize seminars periodically on the need for their librarians to research and publish in OA journals.
2. In the annual appraisals of staff, more marks should be awarded to authors who published in OA journals.
3. Editors of OA journals need to market the OA titles so that more authors or researchers will become aware of this publishing venue.
4. Professional librarians should periodically undergo retraining exercise in ICT related Courses.
1. The Federal government of Nigeria should do everything within her power to improve the electricity supply in the country.



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