

Conceptualizing Academic Marginalization Based on Level of Accessibility among Reputed Research Journals and Publication Houses

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Abstract: *The study aimed to explore and conceptualize academic marginalization based on levels of accessibility among reputed research journals and publication houses. It explored and reported the issues related to academic marginalization based on level of accessibility among reputed research journals and publication houses. It was based on an exploratory & descriptive research design. The data was mainly collected from the secondary sources. The data source for the study was Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) journal list, 2016. Journals were categorized into four quality classes ranking from A*, A, B, C. The journal list was taken from JQL (Journal Quality List), 2016. Findings of the study indicated that the accessibility provided by the journal publisher were mostly not freely accessible and the journal website did not share journal articles without payment process or registration process. Few journals were available which provided free accessibility and downloading of full text research articles were also less in number and for a limited duration. It was observed and reported that there was an element of marginalization based on accessibility among top rated journals & publication houses.*

Keywords: Academic marginalization

JEL Classification: M00, M10

1. Introduction

Problem statement

The study highlights conceptualizing academic marginalization based on level of accessibility among reputed research journals and publication houses. The main reason behind taking the topic was that most of the journals research articles were not freely available. The journal articles were not completely accessed without any membership or prior paid intuitional registration or individual/ institutional online payment process. These reputed publishers were not inclined to share content of their journals articles without any registration or payment process.

However, few of the journal's issues were freely made available for certain time period to the researcher with certain terms and conditions. Most of the open accesses journals in ABDC listing were only sharing abstract to the researchers . Many research articles from reputed Journals with full text were not available without any membership riders or payment process.

2. Theoretical Framework

Operationalization

According to the study “Academic marginalization refers to *not providing uniform access to the published research articles by reputed research journals and journal publication houses to all types of researchers*”. Academic marginalization was conceptualized in terms of “not providing equal accessibility or opportunity to read and access published research articles by all kinds of researchers willing to undertake quality research as a free being”.

Two types of researches were conceptualized for the present study:

- 1) Independent researcher (without any affiliation to any academic institutions)
- 2) Affiliated researcher (with affiliation to one or few academic institutions)

Assumptions: These researchers are willing to publish research papers after identifying and solving the research problem related to organizations and society and also keen to publish and further their career in social awareness, academia and consultancy.

3. Literature Review

Review of literature provides a base for any research work conducted by the researcher. It also helps to identify theoretical background for the topic of research. Academic marginalization was identified as a keyword for the present study. Reviewed articles related to the keywords shall provide an initial framework to further the study in this area, although there was paucity of research in the area of academic marginalization or monopoly.

According to researchers, top 10 publishers of academia has received £94m in subscription revenues from UK academic libraries in the year 2014 alone. One Austrian researcher estimated that nearly €65–70m is spent on journal subscriptions in Austria every year.

Few academicians and researchers pointed out that digitization would limit the power of publishers. But, the expansion of Elsevier into social reference management and networking software (Mendeley) and Open Access repositories (SSRN), is another term of an aggressive digital feudalism that indicates no discretion to monopolize the current scholarly publishing infrastructures as possible. Sharing of knowledge and universal access are fundamental, the idea of the equality of all knowledge is also equally

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important. In other words, it is required to work harder, jointly as academia, to develop and progress the visibility of local academic knowledge and also to redefine its current geographical, epistemological and political hierarchies (PRIEGO, 2016).

Research questions and significance of study

The study shall try to explore and report the academic marginalization based on level of accessibility among reputed research journals listed in ABDC. Study attempted to find whether the journals are freely accessible or not? And, if it is accessible what is the level of accessibility? How many quality research journals are sharing their articles freely? And even if they are sharing without taking any monetary benefits, Are they sharing without any accessibility terms and conditions? How many of them are not sharing the full article without any riders?

These questions helped us to identify the extent of the marginalization based on accessibility of the research articles for social awareness, higher education and research for independent researchers.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study to explore the phenomena of academic marginalization based on level of accessibility of journal articles(online)
- 2) To identify and report the extent of marginalization.

Scope of the Study

The study on academic marginalization based on level of accessibility among reputed research journals and publication houses were based on ABDC (Australian Business Deans Council) Journals which is categorized into A*, A, B, C.

4. Research Methodology

An exploratory & descriptive research design was used to report the present phenomena. In order to elaborate on the concept of academic marginalization, a universally accepted database ABDC Journal listing was identified to collect the data based on its accessibility. The ABDC Journal List is a collective list advanced by the Australian Business Deans Council that looks to list the journals significant to Australian business academics. (Harzing, 2016)

The Journals were classified into four quality classes ranking from A*, A, B, C. the journal list was taken from JQL (Journal Quality List).The JQL is published mainly to promote and support academics to focus various journals of a suitable standard. (Harzing, JOURNAL QUALITY LIST, 2016)

The analysis of the data was based on the secondary data and based on a descriptive statistics. Data was classified according to the accessibility of the articles to explore and report the extent of marginalization. The accessibility of articles in these journals was categorized into five levels of accessibility for the study.

Level 1: Sharing abstract only

Level 2: Online reading (full text)

Level 3: Online reading with login

Level 4: Download with payment

Level 5: Full text download (free)

5. Findings of the Study

Analysis of the study was based on ABDC journal listing and it was categorized into A*, A, B and C. From the total journals in ABDC listing, the number of 'A*' rating journals were 196 in numbers, 'A' rating journals were 590, 'B' rating journals were 809 and 'C' rating journals were 1195.

The findings of the study conducted are as follows:

A* rating journals				
Abstract	Online reading (full text)	Online reading with login	Download With payment	Full text download
110	35	60	60	36
Total: 196 journals				

Based on the A* rating journals, the total number of journals were 196. Out of 196 journals, 110 journals were sharing abstract only, which mean 37% of journals were making their abstract freely available. The online reading journals were 35 in numbers, which means 12% of online journals were available freely for online reading/viewing. Online reading with login category journals were 60 in numbers ,which mean 20% of journals required login for online reading. Download with payment journals were 60 in numbers and it was showing 20% of journals require payment for download. Rest of the 36 journals, which mean 12% of journals can be downloaded with full text research articles without any payment and login.

A rating journals				
Abstract	Online reading (full text)	Online reading with login	Download With payment	Full text download
376	113	224	170	90
Total: 590 journals				

Based on the A rating journals in ABDC listing, the total number of journals were 590. Out of 590 journals, only 376 journals were sharing abstract, which mean 39% of abstract were available for free access. The online reading journals were 113, which mean 12% of online reading journals were available for reading full research texts. Online readings with login journals were 224, which means 23% of journals required login for online reading. Download with payment journals were 170 in numbers and it was showing 17% of journals required payment for download. Rest of the 90 journals, which mean 9% of journals can be accessed with downloading full text research articles without any payment and login to independent researchers.

B rating journals				
Abstract	Online reading (full text)	Online reading with login	Download With payment	Full text download
495	136	265	263	108
Total: 809 journals				

Based on B rating journals in ABDC listing, the total numbers of journals were 809 in numbers. Out 809 of journals, 495 journals were sharing abstract only, which mean 39% of journals were making their abstract freely available. Journals providing with online reading access

were 136, which means 11% of such journals were providing online reading platform to independent researchers. Online readings with login journals were 265 in numbers which mean 21% of such journals required login for providing online reading access to the independent researchers. Download with payment categories of journals were 263 in numbers, it means 21% of such journals required payment for downloading the full text research articles. Rest of the 108 journals, which mean 9% of journals can be downloaded with full text articles without any payment and login to independent researches.

C rating journals				
Abstract	Online reading (full text)	Online reading with login	Download With payment	Full text download
615	212	332	429	127
Total: 1195 journals				

Based on the C rating journals in ABDC Listing, the total number of journals were 1195. Out 1195 of journals, 615 journals were sharing abstract only, which mean 36% of journals were making their abstract freely available. The online reading journals were 212 in numbers which means 12% of such journals were providing online reading platform to independent researchers. Online reading with login journals were 332 in numbers, which means 19% of such journals required login for providing online reading access to the independent researchers. Download with payment categories of journals were 429 in numbers, it means 25% of such journals required payment for downloading the full text research articles. Rest of the journals were 127 in numbers, which means 7% of journals can be downloaded with full text articles without any payment and login to independent researches.

6. Discussion on findings of the study

Based on the findings of the study, most of the journals were not freely available. Only few journals in ABDC listing were providing the access to the abstract of the research article. Few of these journals were providing access to online reading to independent researchers. Most of these journals were providing the access to the full text research articles by either online login & registration process by filling personal and professional details or by making online payment for the full text research articles. The levels of accessibility for full text of the research journal articles were found less compare to the journals which were giving free access to their articles. Most of the journals in the ABDC listing were neither freely accessible nor freely availability for full text viewing or downloading. Also, some of the journal websites were unable to open and some of the journals were not having the website link in the ABDC journal listing.

7. Conclusion

The study on conceptualizing academic marginalization based on level of accessibility among reputed research journals and publication houses. The exhaustive journal list was taken from the ABDC Journal listing. These Journals were ordered into four classes ranking from A*, A, B and C. The ABDC journal list was taken from JQL, 2016 (Journal Quality List).

From the total journals documented in ABDC listing, the number of 'A*' rating journals were 196 in numbers, 'A' rating journals were 590, 'B' rating journals were 809 and 'C' rating journals were 1195.

On the basis of reported findings, the accessibility provided by the publisher were mostly not freely accessible partially or fully and also the journal website did not share any usable information about the journal article without the payment process or without the registration/login process. Few journals were available for free viewing, accessing and downloading. Journals with the provision of free full text downloading were comparatively less in numbers. It appears that there was an element of marginalization based on accessibility in top rated journals in ABDC journal list and subsequently with the related research publication houses.

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9. Directions for Future Research

- 1) The same research can be done for other research database to explore the phenomena in detail.
- 2) The research findings can be used as a reference point for the researchers conducting similar studies.
- 3) A more exhaustive parameters of accessibilities can be explored in future studies

10. Limitations

- 1) Time & resources were limited to 6 months
- 2) Frequent changing of website content

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