

# A Study on Attitude of Research Scholars towards Open Access Resources

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**Abstract:** *The present study is an attempt to find out the attitude of research scholars towards open access resources. The study involved the opinions of 20 research scholars who are doing their research work across India on a 5 point scale Likert scale. The findings of the study indicate that the research scholars showed positive attitude towards open access resources. The study explored the awareness of research scholars about open access resources and it stresses the fact the research scholars should be trained more towards open access resources and publishing, its cost effectiveness and approval of open access resources among the academic community.*

**Keywords:** Open access resources, attitude, research scholars, Academic Community

## 1. Introduction

Finding authentic resources for one's study is highly important in any researcher's progress. Initially it is hard for the beginners to find out the various available resources in their research area. To familiarize the aspiring research scholars about the various resources available can be achieved by a properly planned coursework, and skill development training. But most of the time the scholars are confused about this. It is also observed that their previous knowledge, experience, and prejudices come in way to access these open access resources. There are various factors which develops attitude. The attitude and awareness of faculty members, librarians, and other academic fraternity, towards open access resources plays an important role in developing positive attitude among scholars<sup>1</sup>. The American Research Libraries Association (ARL) Task Force defines open access as "a cost effective way to disseminate and use information. It is an alternative to the traditional subscription based publishing model made possible by new digital technologies and networked communication". And also the level of awareness about open access resources and electronic data bases has a direct correlation with research productivity<sup>2</sup>. Globally there is a growing trend among good writers and publishers being positive to open access publishing and over look at the traditional means of publishing and disseminating knowledge<sup>3</sup>. The present study is an attempt to explore the attitude of research scholars towards open access resources so that any misconceptions and lack of awareness among the scholars can be rectified.

## 2. Methodology

Towards studying the attitude of research scholars towards open access resources, the researcher has used survey method. A questionnaire was prepared based on various aspects of the topic in study in a 5 point scale and data collected and analyzed using Google forms.

## 3. Research Design

The questionnaire for data collection consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire attempted to gather some

demographic information about the participants. The second part consisted of 20 items to explore the attitude of the research scholars towards open access resources on areas such as scholar's interest towards using open access resources, likelihood of using open access resources and publishing their project in future, belief and pre-conceived notions about open access resources, and role of open access resources in higher education sector. Descriptive indicators such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree are used on a five point scale to mark the responses. The system configured Google form questionnaire was sent to participants through online. Responses were collected and analyzed using Google form.

### 3.1 Population of the study

The population of the study consisted of all research scholars who are pursuing their PhD in various disciplines which includes male and female scholars from urban, semi-urban, and rural areas of India.

### 3.2 Sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of 20 research scholars who are pursuing their PhD in various disciplines across India, which includes both male female from urban, semi-urban, and rural areas of the country.

## 4. Review of Literature

Promoting Open Access and Open Educational Resources to Faculty. The study brings light into the fact that cost for educational resources in colleges and universities burdens the students from pursuing higher education<sup>4</sup>.

Equity considerations for open educational resources in the globalization of education. This study investigates the broader concept of open access resources through equity terms. The study argues that there are some equity issues in accessing the open access resources and equity should be the fundamental principle of open access resources<sup>5</sup>.

Adoption and diffusion of open educational resources (OER) in education: A meta-analysis of 25 OER-projects. In this

study the investigator points out that even though open access is a rampant term used in higher education, the notion of using the open access resources among the educational practitioners are not up to the mark and there is a lot of uncertainty and lack of clarity<sup>6</sup>.

Awareness and availability of institutional repository: Perceptions of Pakistani research scholars. This study explores how the awareness regarding open access publishing and attitudes of institutional repositories contribute to the success of any institutional repository. The paper evaluates the perceptions of the research scholars on awareness, attitudes, and availability of institutional repositories<sup>7</sup>.

Improving access to scholarly research in Africa: Open access initiatives. As per the author the economic development and scientific progress of developing countries very much depend on how scholarly knowledge out of research are disseminated free and easily accessible to aspiring researchers. Open access resources provide high quality scientific data very fast online. Access to full text of what is happening in science, commerce and economics around the world will enhance further research<sup>8</sup>.

Investigated the perception and use of open access resources by the information science students. The study reveals that open access resources are peer reviewed scholarly communication readily and freely available in the internet which can be downloaded, read and printed by the research scholars<sup>9</sup>.

Role of open access digital repositories (OADR) on information seeking behaviour among research scholars. The present study evaluated the role of open access repositories on the information seeking behaviour of research scholars. Most of the respondents revealed that they have used open access resources while seeking information and it has substantially increased their research activities<sup>10</sup>.

Perceptions, preferences of scholarly publishing in open access routes. This study investigated the challenges librarians face with open access journal publishing. The study revealed that most of the librarian community are aware about the routes of publishing in open access resources. Low impact factor and author fees are some barriers to publishing in open access journals<sup>11</sup>.

### 5. Findings

The data obtained from Google form responses are analyzed. From the analysis it is found that the total research experience of the research scholars varies. Around 60% have prior experience in research. Around 50% of the research scholars have publishing experience around 70% of the research scholars under study have published their conference papers. And almost 50 % have published their article in various journals. 20% has book publishing experience and 11% have published their Dissertations. The findings are summarized in the table 1 given below.

**Table 1:** Research and publishing experiences of the participants

SLN	Experience in	Percentage
1	Research	60
2	Publication	50
3	Publishing in journal	50
4	Publishing a book	20
5	Conference papers	70
6	Others	11

The table 2 below summarizes the results of the questionnaire in a 5 point Likert scale to measure the attitude research scholars towards open access resources.

**Table 2:** Attitude towards Open Access Resources

S.N	Statements	Responses in percentage (%)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Un decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I like to read open access resources for my academic purposes	40	55	5	0	0
2	I like open access resources because it provides relevant information for my project	35	60	5	0	0
3	In my opinion open access resources are very useful to researchers	45	55	0	0	0
4	I download articles from open access journals or sources for my research projects	50	40	5	5	0
5	I like open access resources because they are smooth and consistent	55	15	30	0	0
6	I like open access resources because they are accessible from anywhere	50	40	5	5	0
7	I believe articles published in open access platform do not get recognition from any scholarly community	5	40	20	30	5
8	I like to publish articles in open access platform	30	60	15	0	0
9	I like to cite open access resources in my research writing	30	60	5	5	0
10	Open access resources provide wider readership than subscription based resources	40	45	10	5	0
11	In my opinion open access journals have lower impact factor	15	25	25	30	5
12	I feel that open access journals are not peer reviewed	10	10	25	45	10
13	Archiving facilities are available in open access resources	20	50	25	5	0
14	Open access publishing is more cost-effective than non open access ones.	25	50	20	0	0
15	Open access resources are substandard	0	15	40	35	10
16	Articles are more frequently cited from open Access Resources	20	50	25	5	0
17	In my opinion, open access guarantees the principles of free access for all its users.	25	55	20	0	0

18	Open access gives wider accessibility for electronic content resources	30	70	0	0	0
19	Open access resources promote quality research practices	35	45	20	0	0
20	The future will see more use of open access resources in the higher education system	30	65	5	0	0

## 6. Discussion

Most of the research scholars like to read open access resources for my academic purposes. They believe it provides relevant information for my project. In their opinion open access resources are very useful and they download articles from open access journals or sources for their research purposes. Majority believes they are easily accessible and consistent. The graduate students are interested to use open access resources and open access publishing and the students are aware of the basic facts of open access resources<sup>12</sup>. It gives free access to vast amount of electronic content and it guarantees free access to all the content. The present study shows not much clarity among the scholars regarding whether open access publishing that whether they get the same recognition from the scholarly community<sup>13</sup> explored the negative attitudes of administrators of college and university towards open access publishing in an era where the traditional concepts of publishing academic journals are changing and they were not able to fully understand the basics of open access publishing. The findings of the present study show that there is no clarity in opinion regarding the peer-reviewing system in open access resources, or whether open access platforms publish standard articles as well<sup>14</sup> views in peer reviewed publishing open access journals has a significant role. Peer reviewed publications are considered as bench mark any scholarly communication. If the article is not peer reviewed it will not get any recognition from the scholarly community. The present study reveals that most of the research scholars would like to publish their articles in open access platform. This is attributed to their agreement that open access provides wider readership and those are frequently cited. Most of the researchers would like to cite articles in their research work from the open access platforms. About the impact factors of open access journal the scholars have given mixed response<sup>15</sup> has explored the purpose of citation analysis to determine the impact factor of open access articles and journals in comparison with the traditional non -open access articles and journals. The study showed that open access journals over the years steadily increased within humanities, science and social sciences. The study revealed that the research scholars believes open access resources are more cost effective than in other journals. The course cost can be reduced effectively by accessing to available open access resources. It also enhances the teachers to use the resources effectively for their work. So usage of open access resources needs to be promoted for knowledge dissemination and financial burdens open access have emerged as a cost effective option among the scholars because the journal publishing charges are huge and also as science technology advances the dissemination of information and availability of resources are changing in a fast pace. So there is a change in the way publishers and

librarians view the entire process. Through open access publishing the results are available very fast for whoever looks for information<sup>16</sup>. Most of the research scholars agrees open access resources promote quality research practices and in future the open access resources has to play a big role in higher education system<sup>17</sup> argues that the use of open access resources and other electronic library resources are used effectively in qualitative research and this is because of the high quality of the journals and books published in open access platform.

## 7. Suggestions for future research

Similar studies with a large sample size can be conducted to find out the attitude, awareness, usage of open access resources. Also in future studies can be undertaken to see whether open access resources are accessible for students from rural and remote areas where high speed internet connections is still a dream. Effective studies about the cost effectiveness of open access resources for research and publishing can be carried out for rural and urban population. A detailed study on availability of quality open access resources subject wise over the internet and electronic platform can be conducted.

## 8. Conclusion

The present study explored the attitude of research scholars towards open access resources. It is found that majority of the research scholars possess positive attitude towards open access resources and publishing. Majority of them use open access resources for their research work and considers open access resources provides peer reviewed high quality cost effective scholarly information. Having said this it is very important to spread more awareness and knowledge regarding the various open access resources for their subject interest need more training. So the aspiring research scholars must be trained well enough to use open access resources wisely for their academic activities. So that the productivity and dissemination of the scientific knowledge may be increased and more and more scholars are attracted to research practices and contribute towards economic and scientific development of India's economy.

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