

Awareness Of Open Access Publishing And Its Importance Among College Teachers: A Study Among The College Teachers In Mangalore

Dr Vanaja B¹, Dr Ravichandra Naika²

¹Selection Grade Librarian,
University College, Mangalore, Mangalore University
Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, India
vanajabolur@yahoo.in

²Selection Grade Librarian,
Dr P Dayananda Pai P Satish Pai
Government First Grade College, Carstreet, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, India
raviderampalu@gmail.com

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Abstract

The study titled "Awareness of Open Access Publishing and its Importance among College Teachers: A Study among the College Teachers in Mangalore" investigates the awareness, perceptions, and challenges associated with Open Access (OA) publishing among college teachers in Mangalore. The study reveals that while a significant majority (81%) of teachers are familiar with OA, only 11% have published in OA journals, indicating a gap between awareness and participation. It highlights those junior academics, such as Assistant Professors and Guest Faculty, show lower engagement with OA publishing. The study also emphasizes that a vast majority (78%) believe OA increases research visibility, with senior academics prioritizing free access to knowledge. Key barriers include high publication charges (70%) and concerns about predatory journals (23%). The findings suggest that addressing financial challenges and enhancing awareness could promote greater adoption of OA publishing practices among college teachers.

Keywords: Open Access Publishing, Academic Publishing, Research Visibility, Predatory Journals, Publication Barriers, Scholarly Communication

1. INTRODUCTION

Access to the research reports is essential as it helps in the advancement of knowledge. Beyond that, it also helps in global collaboration, informed decision-making, and acceleration of scientific progress. Research reports contain valuable findings and insights that contribute to the growth of knowledge. In the traditional scholarly publishing model, the research reports are kept behind paywalls, requiring readers to subscribe to the journals that carry them. In this model, authors usually have to transfer copyrights to publishers, which limits their ability to share their research findings. An important negative aspect of this model is that, as access is limited, that is, only to subscribers, it seriously affects the impact of the research. The peer review process in the traditional model impedes quick dissemination of research output.

In the early 1990s, as the Internet was starting to establish itself as a global network, scientists came up with the idea of providing free availability of research literature online without financial, legal, or technical barriers. This idea of Open Access (OA) gained momentum with the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) in 2002. The OA movement

gained momentum when academic institutions and funding bodies started encouraging or mandating Open Access to publicly funded research.

Open Access (OA) publishing refers to the practice of making unrestricted online access available to scholarly research, making it freely available to anyone without the need for a subscription or payment. This is different from traditional publishing, where access to articles is through subscriptions or to those who are affiliated with institutions that can afford expensive journal subscriptions. OA democratizes access to knowledge, enabling everyone to access the latest research without financial barriers. Alosi (2006), in his article on Open Access, opines that “Open Access has become not just a movement, but also a strategy aimed at guaranteeing the right of access to scientific and research literature which can be achieved by wider public access to scientific knowledge and its dissemination”.

OA is now a widespread option for scholarly communication and available in various shades viz. Green OA, Gold OA, Diamond OA, etc., each having its own specific features making them unique methods. The directory www.doaj.org lists around 21,000 OA journals from various fields of knowledge.

The present research evaluates the awareness of Open Access and its various manifestations among the teachers working in the colleges in Mangalore. This study is relevant because teachers play an important role in producing and disseminating knowledge. This study helps to identify whether they are utilizing the OA model to make their research more widely accessible to students, researchers, and the broader academic community. By studying the awareness of teachers, the colleges can encourage practices that enhance the impact of their research, ensuring it reaches a global audience.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To evaluate awareness and knowledge about Open Access publishing among college teachers in Mangalore.
- To examine the perceptions of college teachers regarding the importance and benefits of Open Access publishing in academic research.
- To identify the barriers or challenges college teachers face in adopting Open Access publishing.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem this study aims to address is the **lack of awareness and understanding regarding open-access publishing among college teachers in Mangalore**, which **hampers their ability to fully utilize its potential benefits** for research dissemination, visibility, and academic impact. This gap may result in the underutilization of Open Access platforms, limiting the visibility, accessibility, and impact of their scholarly work. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the barriers or misconceptions that prevent teachers from adopting Open Access publishing, such as concerns about quality, costs, or the complexities of Open Access models.

By identifying these gaps, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can help institutions and educators improve the utilization of Open Access, ultimately fostering greater academic collaboration and enhancing the reach of research.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

A 16-year study of Open Access (OA) publishing by Laakso et al. (2011) analyzed its growth from 1993 to 2009 using the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) for data. It identified three development phases: pioneering (1993–1999), innovation (2000–2004), and consolidation (2005–2009). OA publishing saw rapid growth, with an 18% annual increase in journals and 30% for articles since 2000. By 2009, OA accounted for 7.7% of all peer-reviewed articles. Technological advancements and institutional acceptance have made OA publishing a sustainable model. Beall (2012) critiques the rise of predatory publishers who exploit OA by creating counterfeit journals that deceive authors, particularly in countries like India, where publication pressures are high. These publishers lower peer-review standards, threatening academic integrity and future scientific communication. Awareness of predatory practices is necessary to protect research.

Tennant et al. (2016) provide an evidence-based review of the academic, economic, and societal impacts of OA, highlighting benefits like increased citations and broader societal engagement, particularly in developing countries. Challenges include predatory publishers and economic uncertainties for publishers and funding bodies. The paper emphasizes the importance of continued research and policy development for OA's sustainability.

Piwowar et al. (2018) conducted a large-scale analysis of 67 million articles using oaDOI and categorized them by access type: Gold, Green, Bronze, Hybrid, and Closed. OA accounted for 28% of scholarly articles, with Gold and Hybrid showing strong growth. Bronze OA emerged as the most common, though lacking open licenses. OA articles received 18% more citations than closed-access articles, particularly in the Green and Hybrid categories. Further research is suggested to assess Bronze OA's role and Green OA's preservation potential.

Pinfield (2015) discusses the Green and Gold OA models and their economic and policy implications, citing evidence that OA improves citation counts, accessibility, and economic benefits. The paper raises concerns about repository sustainability and predatory journals, calling for policy development to make OA more effective. The study suggests that the focus has shifted from whether OA is necessary to how it can be successfully implemented.

Turgut et al. (2022) surveyed 151 academics across 12 research areas to assess OA awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that 75% of respondents knew of OA, with the internet and peers being primary information sources. Despite high awareness, only 51% were published in OA journals due to unfamiliarity with options. The pandemic increased awareness, but gaps remain, particularly regarding institutional repositories and copyright issues. The study calls for universities to promote OA practices for improved research dissemination and impact.

The study "Open Access Awareness and Perceptions in an Institutional Landscape" by Serrano-Vicente et al. explores the awareness, attitudes, and practices related to Open Access (OA) among academic staff at the University of Navarra. Surveying 352 respondents found that older, more senior faculty were more engaged with OA practices, while only half of all respondents used institutional repositories. Although most agreed on the importance of OA, many were influenced by factors such as academic recognition and professional rewards in their decisions to adopt it. The study highlights the need for improved training and resources, especially concerning legal issues and self-archiving, to encourage broader OA adoption within the institution.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for this study involved a questionnaire survey conducted among college teachers in Mangalore. The questionnaire was designed to assess the teachers' awareness, perceptions, and use of Open Access publishing. The survey was distributed to all teaching staff across various colleges, and responses were collected and analyzed. The responses were received as follows: 79 Assistant Professors (48 females, 31 males), 44 Associate Professors (25 females, 19 males), and 96 Guest Faculties (64 females, 32 males).

6. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

6.1. *Awareness of Open Access*

A question was asked to evaluate the awareness and knowledge of Open Access (OA) publishing among college teachers, which aligns with the study's first objective. Understanding the familiarity levels with OA is essential because it provides insight into how well teachers are informed about OA resources and practices. The analysis of the data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Familiarity with Open Access (OA)

Gender	Extent of familiarity with OA			Total
	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar at all	
Male	72	15	7	94
	77%	16%	7%	100%
Female	118	21	3	142
	83%	15%	2%	100%
Total	190	36	10	236
	81%	15%	4%	100%

The data shows that both males and females are highly familiar with OA, with a slightly higher percentage of females (83%) than males (77%) being very familiar. A small proportion of respondents are not familiar at all, with more males (7%) than females (2%) falling into this category. Overall, a significant majority (81%) of respondents are very familiar with OA, indicating strong awareness across both genders. According to a study by Turgut et al., (2022), 75% of the participants were aware of Open Access, and the majority of them were "very familiar" with Open Access resources.

Similar to the current table demonstrating a high level of familiarity among male and female respondents (81% overall "very familiar"), the Turgut study also reflects strong awareness and engagement with Open Access materials during the pandemic. This consistency indicates a broader trend of growing familiarity and use of Open Access platforms across different academic populations.

6.2. *Publishing in OA platforms*

The question "Have you ever published in an Open Access journal?" was asked to assess the practical engagement of college teachers with Open Access (OA) publishing. This question directly relates to the second objective of the study. By determining whether respondents have experience publishing in OA journals, the study can gauge the extent to which teachers actively participate in OA practices and whether they recognize the value of making their research freely accessible. The responses to this question were tabulated and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Publishing in Open Access platforms
(Designation wise)

Gender	Publishing in Open Access			Total
	Yes	No	Planning to	
Professor	3	12	2	17
	18%	71%	12%	100%
Associate Professor	12	30	2	44
	27%	68%	5%	100%
Assistant Professor	6	69	4	79
	8%	87%	5%	100%
Guest Faculty	5	87	4	96
	5%	91%	4%	100%
Total	26	198	12	236
	11%	84%	5%	100%

Only 11% of the respondents have published in OA platforms, indicating relatively low participation in OA publishing. A significant majority, 84%, have not yet published in OA, suggesting a considerable gap in adoption. Senior academics (Professors and Associate Professors) are more likely to have published in OA platforms than their junior counterparts, suggesting that experience or tenure may play a role in OA engagement.

The overwhelming majority of Assistant Professors and Guest Faculties (87% and 91%) have not published in OA, highlighting the need for targeted awareness and support for junior faculty to engage with OA publishing. The low overall participation rate (11%) in OA publishing suggests potential barriers such as lack of awareness, publication fees concerns, or institutional encouragement.

The study by Turgut et al. (2021) shows similar results regarding publishing in Open Access (OA) platforms. In their study, about 50% of academics indicated they had never published in OA journals, despite the majority using OA articles for their research. This is similar to the data presented in Table 2, where a significant proportion of academics (84%) reported they had not published in OA journals. The primary reason for not publishing in OA journals in Turgut's study was a lack of familiarity with the journals in their field, a factor that aligns with your data showing low engagement in OA publishing across all designations.

6.3. *OA publishing increases the visibility of research*

The opinions of the participants were sought regarding whether publishing in OA journals increases the visibility of research or not. The data collected is presented in Table 4. The opinions of survey participants regarding the impact of Open Access (OA) publishing on increasing the visibility of research, categorized by academic designation. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that OA publishing enhances visibility, with options ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Disagree." The data provides insights into how different academic ranks - Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Guest Faculties—perceive the visibility benefits of publishing in OA journals.

Table 3. Opinion - Open Access publishing increases visibility (Designation-wise)

Gender	Open Access Publishing increases visibility				Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
Professor	6	11	0	0	17
	35%	65%	0%	0%	100%
Associate Professor	36	4	4	0	44
	82%	9%	9%	0%	100%
Assistant Professor	56	12	8	3	79
	71%	15%	10%	4%	100%
Guest faculty	87	5	4	0	96
	91%	5%	4%	0%	100%
Total	185	32	16	3	236
	78%	14%	7%	1%	100%

The data indicates broad support across all designations for the idea that OA publishing enhances visibility, with the majority either strongly agreeing or agreeing. A significant majority, 78%, of all participants strongly agree that OA publishing increases visibility. Guest Faculties, in particular, show the strongest positive opinion (91% strongly agree), suggesting that junior faculty may be more enthusiastic about the visibility benefits of OA publishing. The 4% disagreement among Assistant Professors suggests that this group may need more engagement or information to fully recognize the benefits of OA.

6.4. *Opinion – Benefits of OA*

The question "What is the primary objective of OA?" was asked to assess participants' understanding of the core purpose of Open Access (OA) publishing. This question is important because it directly aligns with the study's goal of evaluating the awareness and perceptions of college teachers regarding OA. This information helps to reveal whether teachers recognize the critical benefits of OA publishing, which is essential for promoting its broader adoption within academic communities. The responses are tabulated in Figure 1.

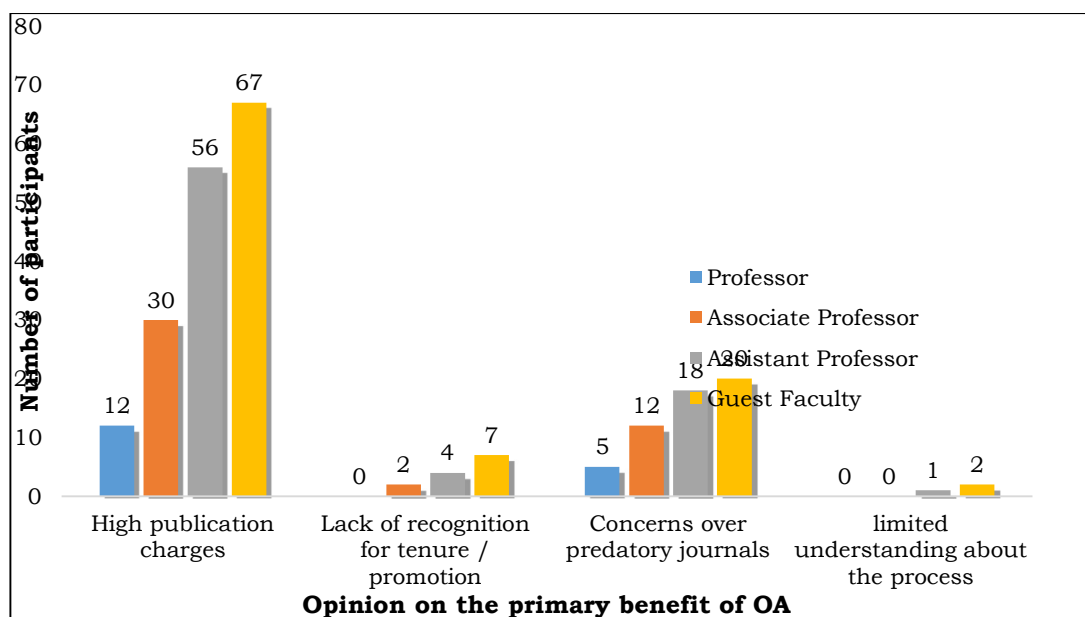


Figure 1. Opinion on the primary benefit of OA (Designation-wise)

Greater visibility and citations are overwhelmingly considered the primary benefit of OA publishing, especially among junior academics (Guest Faculty and Assistant Professors). 70% of Guest faculty and 66% of Assistant Professors consider this as the primary objective of OA. Associate Professors also recognize this benefit significantly (45%), but

Professors are less likely to prioritize visibility and citations, with only 29% choosing this as the top benefit. Professors and Associate Professors predominantly view "Free access to knowledge" as the primary benefit, with 71% and 52%, respectively, considering it the most important.

Senior academics (Professors and Associate Professors) tend to value free access to knowledge more, which may reflect their broader experience and a focus on disseminating knowledge for wider accessibility. Quicker dissemination is not seen as a significant benefit overall, and academic collaboration opportunities are not widely regarded as a primary advantage of OA publishing. Turgut et al. (2021) have highlighted similar patterns where academics across various ranks acknowledge visibility and accessibility as key benefits of OA.

6.5. *Opinion on the Quality of OA Publications*

The question "Whether Open Access journals maintain the same quality standards as traditional proprietary journals" was asked to assess participants' perceptions of the quality and credibility of Open Access (OA) journals compared to traditional subscription-based or proprietary journals. One of the most frequent criticisms or misconceptions about OA journals is that they may lack rigorous peer review processes or quality control, mainly due to the rise of predatory journals. This question relates to the study's objective of examining perceptions of OA publishing, specifically regarding its potential benefits and challenges. The responses to this question are tabulated in Table 4.

Table 4. Opinion - Open Access journals maintain the same quality standards as traditional proprietary journals (Designation wise)

Designation	Opinion - Open Access journals maintain the same quality standards as traditional proprietary journals			Total
	Yes	No	Not Sure	
Professor	15	0	2	17
	88%	0%	12%	100%
Associate Professor	36	4	4	44
	82%	9%	9%	100%
Assistant Professor	67	5	7	79
	85%	6%	9%	100%
Guest Faculty	79	8	9	96
	82%	8%	9%	100%
Total	197	17	22	236
	83%	7%	9%	100%

A large majority, 83% of all respondents, believe that OA journals maintain the same quality standards as traditional proprietary journals. Professors show the highest confidence, with 88% agreeing that OA journals maintain the same quality standards and none expressing disagreement. Associate Professors and Guest Faculty follow closely, with 82% in agreement. Associate Professors have a slightly higher percentage of respondents who disagree (9%).

Confidence in the quality of OA journals is strong across all designations, with Professors expressing the highest level of certainty. The 9% uncertainty across designations suggests that further information or education on the quality control mechanisms used in OA journals might be beneficial, especially for Guest Faculty and Assistant Professors, who may be less experienced with OA publishing. The overall positive perception of OA journal quality indicates that the majority of academics believe OA journals can meet the standards of traditional proprietary journals, but a small proportion remains sceptical, likely due to concerns over predatory journals or lesser-known OA journals. The perception of quality in OA journals, particularly in comparison to traditional journals, is often influenced by factors such as peer review processes and the rise of predatory publishers.

6.6. *Factors discouraging from publishing in OA*

A question about factors discouraging publishing in Open Access (OA) journals was asked to understand the barriers and challenges academics face when considering OA publishing. Identifying what discourages academics from publishing in OA journals helps reveal specific obstacles, such as high publication charges, concerns about predatory journals, or a lack of institutional support. By identifying whether a lack of understanding of OA processes is a deterrent, institutions can tailor educational programs to address misconceptions.

Table 5. Opinion - Factors discouraging from publishing in OA
(Designation wise)

Designation	Discouraging factors				Total
	High publication charges	Lack of recognition for tenure/promotion	Concerns over predatory journals	limited understanding of the process	
Professor	12	0	5	0	17
	71%	0%	29%	0%	100%
Associate Professor	30	2	12	0	44
	68%	5%	27%	0%	100%
Assistant Professor	56	4	18	1	79
	71%	5%	23%	1%	100%
Guest Faculty	67	7	20	2	96
	70%	7%	21%	2%	100%
Total	165	13	55	3	236
	70%	6%	23%	1%	100%

High publication charges is the most frequently cited discouraging factor across all designations, with 70% of respondents overall indicating that high publication fees deter them from publishing in OA journals. Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Guest Faculty report similarly high percentages, ranging from 68% to 71%, indicating that publication costs are a significant barrier at all academic levels.

Concerns about Predatory Journals is a notable factor for 23% of respondents, indicating that uncertainty about journal credibility plays a role in discouraging OA publishing. The concern is particularly strong among Guest Faculty (21%) and Assistant Professors (23%). Lack of recognition for tenure/promotion is a minor concern, primarily among Guest Faculty, indicating that some institutions may not yet fully value OA publishing for career progression. Limited understanding of processes is not a major deterrent, suggesting that most academics are relatively well-informed about OA, though minor gaps exist, especially among Guest Faculty. The common discouraging factors in the broader literature typically include concerns about high publication charges, quality and credibility of OA journals, lack of recognition for career progression, and predatory journals. These align with the findings in this study, where high publication fees and concerns about predatory journals are significant barriers.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study aimed to evaluate the awareness, perceptions, and challenges faced by college teachers in Mangalore regarding Open Access (OA) publishing. The findings reveal that a significant majority of teachers are highly familiar with OA, with 81% indicating strong awareness. However, actual participation in OA publishing is low, with only 11% having published in OA journals. Junior academics, particularly Assistant Professors and Guest Faculty, show lower engagement, highlighting the need for increased support and awareness-building initiatives. The study also found that a vast majority (78%) believe OA increases the visibility of their research, with junior faculty members being more enthusiastic about this benefit. Senior academics, on the other hand, prioritize free access to knowledge. Key discouraging factors identified include high publication charges (70%) and concerns about predatory journals (23%), indicating that financial barriers and journal credibility remain significant challenges. Overall, the study suggests the need for targeted efforts to reduce these barriers and promote greater adoption of OA publishing practices among college teachers. □

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