



RESEARCH ARTICLE

LIBRARY-LED OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING AND THE DEMOCRATISATION OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

ESSOR GOSPEL CHISA, MERCY DOUGLAS

Department of Library and Information Science School of Arts and Social Science
Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State, Nideria

ABSTRACT

The study investigates 'library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication' using survey research design. The study population were drawn from library users and library personnel in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria. Sample size of 96 was randomly drawn from the population. This comprises of 6 members from each of 9 schools and 42 libraries patrons'/library personnel in the study area. A self-administered questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Crombach Alpha was used to test for the internal consistency of the instrument and the result gave a high positive coefficient of 0.80. The research instrument was subjected to content and face validity by experts from library education and Measurement and Evaluation. Copies of the questionnaire were administered and retrieved by the researchers with the help of tutored research assistants and a response rate of 100% was achieved. All the data collected were organized in tabular form based on the questionnaire and analyzed using simple Mean (X) scores and Standard Deviation (SD). Analysis values were assigned to the four (4) response categories and the Mean (X) was interpreted in line with the 4- point scale as the highest to 1 the lowest. The decision making- the lower limit of the high response category which was 2.50 was used as a cut-off. Any item with a Mean (X) response of 2.50 and above was accepted as an influencing factor. Some recommendation was made based on the finding of the study

Keywords: Library, open access, publishing, democratization, communication

Corresponding Author

Mercy Douglas

Email Address: Mercydouglas54@gmail.com

Received: 21/1/2026; **Revised:** 2/3/2026; **Accepted:** 23/3/2026; **Published:** 30/3/2026



1.0. INTRODUCTION

Library as an institution which is specifically established for the purpose of acquiring, processing, organizing, preserving, storing, retrieving and disseminating of information that is stored in book and other contemporary formats. Generally speaking, the library is a center of information, a store of recorded materials for study, research and recreation of which the glory of these collections are that they are well organized to facilitate accessibility and usability. However, library in trying to take an active role, is supporting and managing the publication of open access (OA) material such as journals, books and research outputs, make research articles and publications freely available online whereby helping researchers disseminate their work which will in turn led to wider dissemination of research article and knowledge whereby reducing cost for readers, institutions and researchers as well as accelerating reach and enhancing visibility for researchers an institutions.

Open access is a broad international movement that seeks to grant free and open online access to scholarly information such as publications and data (Aminu and shitti, 2021). A publication according to the author, is said to be open access when there are no financial, legal or technical barriers to accessing it. Thus, open access is a publishing model for scholarly communication that makes research information readily available to readers at no cost as opposed to the traditional subscription pattern in which readers have to access scholarly information by paying a library subscription.

Open access (OA) resources have dawned as boom to both the academic users and library managers (Joshi *et al* as cited in Aminu and shitti, 2021). Open access means free access to the user which in other word means the democratization of scholarly communication- making research and scholarly output freely available online for all users whereby encouraging diverse voice and perspective. The main aim of democratization of scholarly communication is to reduce cost or totally eliminate subscription fees, increase global access, facilitate knowledge sharing, have wider audience and citation impact and greater control while author retain the right and freedom.

Libraries are beloved institutions but they cannot survive on accolades alone- with the advent of computers and search engines, digital libraries and the internet, some questions have been raised if libraries are essential and whether they should command priority be given funds by their parent institutions. The importance of publication in the growth and development of library profession is of paramount importance to research and libraries- it is essential for problem solving which leads to dynamism in library services as a response to changing time and environment. On one hand, scholarly information environment has undergone profound changes as a result of new technologies allowing new modes of research dissemination whereby changing research practice and needs – increased focus on research performance as a result, the traditional publishing patterns no longer serve well the needs of researchers for uninhibited access to research findings of others or the needs of their funding cost effective dissemination of finding in order to maximize the economic and social returns to their investment in research and development.

The importance of research in a library setup cannot be overemphasized- current information is very essential for research to be up to date, scholars being updated in their fields. Researchers depend on scholarly journals to meet their information requirement, libraries on the other hand being the information provider subscribes to journals in various discipline in accordance with the thrust of the



parent institution but with the tremendous growth of specialization in various discipline and the numbers of journals to be subscribed to has increased tremendously. The prohibitive factor for library is the escalating cost of the journals and the stringent library budget – has led to a phenomenon called “scholarly crisis” where libraries on one hand have to meet the users growing demands and journal prices are seriously shooting up and libraries budget is shrinking. At this breaking point, open accessing publishing have dawned as boom to both libraries managers and research scholar. It it against this backdrop that the study seeks to close the literature gap of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication.

1.1. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine the:

1. Benefits of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication
2. Challenges of library-led open access publishing
3. Role of libraries in open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication

1.2. Research question

To achieve the objective of the study, the following research questions are formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the benefits of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication?
2. What are the challenges of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication?
3. What are the roles of libraries in open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication?

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

Libraries today are in transitional phase-information and communication technologies (ICT)has greatly impacted libraries services and practices. Libraries patrons today request information in various formats from various sources. However, library users are very specific in their needs and are also very much aware of different alternative sources of information. Thus, the immediate consequences of this are that, libraries and librarians are seriously tapping all opportunities available to satisfy their users’ information needs. As information provider, libraries are constantly searching for and subscribing to journals in numerous disciplines in accordance with the objectives of their parent institutions.

Notwithstanding, with the increasing growth of specialization in various field of interest, the number of journals to be subscribed to, inadequate infrastructure and stringent budget which has led to a remarkable event where libraries have to ensure the meet the growing information needs of their users. However, open access movement which was once perceived as an alternative to traditional



method of scholarly publishing is today seen as a booster to both academic scholars, libraries, library managers and tertiary institutions (Nosakhere and Abdelwahid, 2014).

Open access (OA) is a broad term used for all knowledge research which are made available to the public for access and open consumption at a wide scale without any form of hindrance or subscription fee or access charges (Swan, 2012). Similarly, Hamad (2007) opined that library-led open access publishing is information that is free, immediate, permanent, full text, online and accessible. The author also suggested that there are three main justification of open access which are – to maximize the uptake, usage application and impact of the research output of the parent institution; to maximize the uptake, usage, application and impact of the research output of the parent institution (research metrics) and to collect, manage and showcase a permanent record of the research output and impact of the parent institution.

Similarly, Suber (2011) described library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication as information that are digital, online, and free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restriction. The author however, asserts that, library-led open access contents are not limited only to peer-reviewed research article; they can be in any format from text of data to software audio, video and multimedia. The goal of library-led open access publishing is to cultivate the use of institutional repositories. Libraries on one side, are attempting to alter the current scholarly communication process by promoting open access publishing alternatives- open access has a great impact on libraries due to a strong connection between open access and the mission of libraries. It is not out of place that libraries are involved in a wide range of open access related activities (Jain, 2012)

3.0. METHODOLOGY

The study employed survey research design. The population of the study composed of library users and library personnel in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria. Sample size of 96 was randomly drawn from the population. This comprises of 6 members from each of 9 schools and 42 libraries patrons'/library personnel in the study area. A self-administered questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection.

To test the internal consistency of the instrument, Crombach Alpha was used and the result have a high positive coefficient of 0.80. The research instrument was subjected to content and face validity by experts from library education and Measurement and Evaluation. Copies of the questionnaire were administered and retrieved by the researchers with the help of tutored research assistants and a response rate of 100% was achieved. All the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics: mean and standard deviation.

4.0. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Presentation of Results

Research question 1: What are the benefits of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication?



Table 1: Mean Response of benefits of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Library-led Open access publishing makes research output freely available, promoting wider dissemination and impact	3.17	0.83	Agree
2	Library-led Open access publishing facilitates global collaboration, accelerating scientific progress and innovation	2.74	0.73	Agree
3	Library-led Open access publishing increases visibility of research outputs, benefiting authors and institutions	3.10	0.93	Agree
4	Library-led Open access publishing can reduce cost for libraries and individuals making research more accessible	2.46	0.62	Agree
Grand Total		2.97	0.74	Agree

Source: Authors’ Analysis (2025).

Table 1 reveals that Library-led Open access publishing makes research output freely available, promoting wider dissemination and impact which is item one on the table with a mean of 3.17. while item two - Library-led Open access publishing facilitates global collaboration, accelerating scientific progress and innovation has a mean point of 2.74 and item three and four has mean point of 3.10 and 2.46 respectively. This means that leading open access publishing initiatives, libraries can significantly promote the dissemination of knowledge and advancing research

Research question 2: What are the challenges of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication?

Table 2: Mean Response of the challenges of library-led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Limited funding and sustainability models	3.09	0.78	Agree
2	Weak infrastructure including outdated software and insufficient IT support	2.94	1.65	Agree
3	Limited awareness and understanding of open access publishing among researchers	3.03	0.76	Agree
4	Resistance to change from traditional publish models	2.86	1.02	Agree
Grand Total		3.01	0.92	Agree

Source: Authors’ Analysis (2025).

Table 2 above shows that it was agreed by respondents that Limited funding and sustainability models; Weak infrastructure including outdated software and insufficient IT support; Limited awareness and understanding of open access publishing among researchers and Resistance to change from traditional publish models are some of the numerous challenges of library –led open access publishing with mean scores of 3.09, 2.94, 3.03 and 2.86 respectively. This means that to overcome these challenges, libraries and research institution can work together to develop sustainable funding and promote awareness of open access publishing. Additionally, as revealed from the study, libraries can play a crucial role in promoting open access and supporting researchers in navigating the complex landscape of open access publishing



Research Question 3: What are the roles of libraries in open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication?

Table 3: Mean Response of the roles of libraries in open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Offering expertise on copyright, licensing and author rights	3.08	0.95	Agree
2	Developing and implementing open access policies and guidelines for institutions	2.86	1.02	Agree
3	Raising awareness about open access publishing, its benefits and best practices	2.60	0.84	Agree
4	Providing repository infrastructure, hosting and preservation services for open access publications	3.04	0.90	Agree
Grand Total		2.53	0.72	Agree

Source: Authors’ Analysis (2025).

Table 3 revealed that libraries can play crucial role in open access publishing by - Offering expertise on copyright, licensing and author rights; Developing and implementing open access policies and guidelines for institutions; Raising awareness about open access publishing, its benefits and best practices and Providing repository infrastructure, hosting and preservation services for open access publications. This means that by supporting open access publishing libraries contribute to the advancement of knowledge and innovation.

Discussion of Findings

As shown in table 1 above, the study revealed that all the respondents agreed that library-led Open access publishing makes research output freely available, promoting wider dissemination and impact, library-led Open access publishing facilitates global collaboration, accelerating scientific progress and innovation. This means that leading open access publishing initiatives, libraries can play significantly promote the dissemination of knowledge and advancing research. These findings are in line with Burtle (2019) opined that open accessing publishing has recorded tremendous benefits on libraries – the most remarkable among them according to the author is the increased access to scholarly resources without affecting their budgets.

The effect of enhance budget is that the research output of the institutions has increased and the value of the institution improved. In the same vein, Willinsky and Suber (2011) are of the opinion that, library –led open access publishing integrates local research into all interoperable network of global knowledge; increase impact of local research, providing new contacts and research partnerships for authors, remove professional isolation and strengthens economics through developing a strong and independent national science base.

The responses from respondents in Table 2 shows that, all the respondents agreed that Limited funding and sustainability models; Weak infrastructure including outdated software and insufficient IT support; Limited awareness and understanding of open access publishing among researchers and Resistance to change from traditional publish models are some of the numerous challenges of library –led open access publishing. This means that to overcome these challenges, libraries and research



institution can work together to develop sustainable funding and promote awareness of open access publishing. Additionally, as revealed from the study, libraries can play a crucial role in promoting open access and supporting researchers in navigating the complex landscape of open access publishing- this is in line with Antelman (2018) assertion that information literacy is a challenge to successful open access movement. The author further opined that young researchers and students need required skills to research the internet for open access journals for research hence learning to use ICTs for effective research in open access publishing is an urgent need for librarians and researchers, especially those in the old school who have been affected by the paradigm shift of ICT usage.

It was also revealed in research question three (Table 3) that respondents all agreed to all four (4) items in the table- this means that by supporting open access publishing libraries contribute to the advancement of knowledge and innovation. This is in line with Walter & Linvill (2011) describes open access as information which is free, immediate, permanent, full-text, online and available. According to the authors, libraries play sensitive role in open access publish by ensuring the right infrastructure and policies are in play for effective take off of open access movement.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

Library–led open access publishing and the democratization of scholarly communication has provided the libraries with new challenges and presented a plethora of exclusive promising opportunities to give them the deserved value. Easy and wide spread availability of quality research output and publications will give value and improve the quality of library’s institution and will provide trajectory for the visibility of their collection and output globally as such libraries should promote open access publishing in all possible ways to increase visibility to their resources, their users, their institution and should as a matter of fact put up strategies to influence policies towards building sustainable institutional repositories in the parent institutions and engage in advocacy to change the mind sets of researchers and decision makers on the many benefit of open access publishing. Library – led open access publishing triggers the creation of new knowledge, facilitates information dissemination and helps libraries meet increasing demand for information, subscription costs and managing difficult negotiations with publishers.

5.2. Recommendation

Based on the finding of the study the makes the following recommendations:

1. Libraries should lead open access publishing initiatives and promote the dissemination of knowledge and advancement in research.
2. Libraries and research institution should work together to develop sustainable funding and promote awareness of open access publishing.
3. Libraries should support open access publishing which will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and innovation.



Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no conflict of interest exist in this manuscript.

REFERENCE

- Aminu, Y. and Shitti, B. (2021), Open access movement: Reception and acceptance by academic libraries in developing countries Retrieved 5/10/2026, from <http://research.library.gsu.edu/openaccess>
- Antelman, K (2018). Do open access article have a greater research impact? *College and research libraries*, 65(5), 372 -382
- Burtle , L. (2019) open access: what is open access. Retrieved 5/10/2026, from <http://research.library.gsu.edu/openaccess>
- Chan, L, Cuplinskas, D Eisen, M Friend, F., Genova, Y., Guedon, J. C & Kupryte, R. (2012) Budapest open access imitative.
- Hamad, S. (2017) Mandates and metrics: How open repositories enable universities to manage, measure and maximize their research assets
- Jain, p. (2012), promoting open access to research in academic libraries
- Joshi, A. N. Vatnal, R. &Manjunath, G (2012) Open access initiatives: A boon to academic libraries. *Library philosophy and practice*, 1
- Nosakhere, A. S & Abdelwahid, M. A. (2014). Open access resources for academic libraries in Africa: Selection and Evaluation
- Suber, P. (2012). Ensuring open access for publicly funded research: British Medical journal publishing group
- Swan, A. (2012). Policy guidelines for the development and promotion of open access: UNESCO
- Willinsky, J (2009). the stratified economics of open access. *economics Analysis and policy*, 39(1), 53 – 70
- Walter, W.H & Linvill, A. C (2011). Characteristics of open access journals in six subject areas. *College & research libraries*, 72(4), 372 – 392