

DOI : 10.5958/0975-6922.2019.00019.6

Open Access E-Books in Social Sciences: A Bibliometric Study of the DOAB

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Received: 18-1-2019; Accepted: 27-4-2019

ABSTRACT

The present study makes an attempt to explore and analyze the current trends in the publication of e-books in the field of Social Sciences available through the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB). In order to fulfill the set objectives, the relevant details of the Social Sciences e-books were collected in the month of June 2017. Later, the data were analyzed using simple quantitative techniques to reveal findings. The findings revealed that the highest number of books in the DOAB are related to Social Sciences (1954, 22.417%), contributed by the authors (72.72%, 1421) and in the English language (69.14%, 1351). The time-series analysis shows that the number of e-books is increasing very fast up to the growth rate of 400%. These books are mostly contributed by academic institutions, commercial publishers and non-profit organizations.

Keywords: Open access, E-books, Social Sciences, Directory of open access books, DOAB

INTRODUCTION

Open access movement has made possible democratic access to information and knowledge. It has overcome the drawbacks of conventional and commercial publishing by eliminating the financial barriers and copyright issues. It has made the scholarly literature available free of cost among the masses across the globe. Started with the Science and Technology fields, the open access movement is now quickly gaining momentum across other disciplines including the Social Sciences and Humanities. The journals were the first introduced in open access mode. The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was launched in May 2003 with 375 titles by the Lund University to register and index open access

journals (Prosser, 2004). Later on, the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) was officially launched on July 1, 2013, at the Open Access Monographs in the Humanities and Social Sciences Conference at the British Library in London to maintain the record of open access books especially in the field of Social Sciences (Loan & Refhat-Un-Nisa, 2015). The DOAB is a service of the Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN) Foundation. The OAPEN Foundation is an international initiative dedicated to open access monograph publishing, based at the National Library, The Hague. The DOAB is a discovery service for peer-reviewed open access e-books and aims to maximize their dissemination, visibility, utilization, and impact (Stenson, 2012).

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LITERATURE REVIEW

A good number of studies have been carried out on e-books in general and open access e-books on particular. Loan (2011) carried out a study on the open access e-books pertaining to Central Asia and found that open access e-books have started to appear on various regions of Central Asia, published especially from the developed countries like the USA and the UK. He further revealed that a good collection of the rare books have also come to limelight after digitization on the Central Asian regions and some titles dated back to the nineteenth century. In another study, Loan & Refhat-Un-Nisa (2015) analyzed the open access books in the field of Science and Technology available in the DOAB. The findings showed that the collection of the e-books in the DOAB is growing constantly. The results further revealed that 307 e-books were available on Science and Technology disciplines through the DOAB. The maximum number of e-books was available on General Science (95), Technology & Engineering (54), Earth & Environmental Sciences (50), and Health & Medical Sciences (47), respectively. The linguistic assessment depicted that 57.98% (178) of these e-books have been published in English followed by in German (88, 28.66%) and Italian (18, 5.86%), respectively. The publishers' analysis pointed out that 59.93% (184) e-books had contributed by the university presses, whereas 40.07% (123) by other publishing houses around the world. Mary (2015) conducted a study to analyze the e-books in education indexed by the DOAB. The findings depicted that a total number of 106 e-books were available in the DOAB mostly written by the single authors/editors and published after 2005. Dhanavandan & Tamizhchelvan (2016) conducted a study on the DOAB to have a systematic analysis of the books published globally. The results revealed that a total of 3379 books were listed in the DOAB published from 1866 to 2015. The maximum number of books (1584, 46.88%) was published in the English language by the ANU Press (368,

10.89%), and after 2011, 1621 (47.97%) books were published. Chakrabarti & Mandal (2017) conducted a study to identify open access e-books in the field of Library and Information Science available in the DOAB. A total number of 35 books had been found in the field of Library and Information Science, in which 22 books had been published in the English language and registered under the CC licenses. Khanchandani & Kumar (2017) conducted a study on e-books in Science and Technology available in the DOAB. The results revealed that there were 1052 e-books indexed in the DOAB in Science and Technology disciplines, in which fewer books were available in pure sciences and more in applied sciences. The scope of the maximum books (473) was Health Sciences and published after 2007. The linguistic analysis depicted that about 800 (76.04%) e-books were published in the English language followed by 118 e-books (11.21%) in Portuguese, German 95 (9.03%), and Italian 17 (1.61%), respectively. The DOAB is officially five years old and was primarily established to build the collection on the Social Sciences and Humanities. Almost five studies had been conducted on the DOAB but the growth and development of the open access e-books in the field of the Social Sciences have not been studied so far. Therefore, the present study has selected Social Sciences as the field of study.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Objectives

The present study makes an attempt to explore and analyze the current trends in the publication of e-books in the field of Social Sciences available through the DOAB. The specific objectives of the present study aim to:

1. Analyze the subject-wise inclusion of e-books,
2. Analyze the linguistic patterns in e-books,
3. Analyze the authorship and editorship trends of e-books,

4. Analyze the collaboration patterns of authors/editors,
5. Analyze the time-series inclusion of e-books, and last,
6. Analyze the publishing trends of e-books.

Methodology

The DOAB has classified the e-books under various subjects. The e-books classified in the Social Sciences were selected for the study. The relevant data were collected from all Social Sciences e-books in the month of June 2017 in order to achieve the set objectives. Later, data were analyzed using simple quantitative techniques and presented in tables and graphs to reveal findings.

Limitations

The data for the present study were collected from the e-books published in the field of Social Sciences available in the DOAB and hence the results cannot be generalized.

DATA ANALYSIS

Subject Coverage (General)

The DOAB contains 8730 e-books in all. The highest number of books are available on Social Sciences (1954, 22.417 %) followed by History and Archaeology (1264, 14.48%) and Health Sciences (916, 10.49%), respectively. The least number of e-books (34, 0.39%) are available on Chemistry (Table 1).

Subject Coverage (Social Sciences)

The e-books in Social Sciences have been distributed among 10 sub-categories. The majority of the e-books is contributed on the Social Sciences (General; 29.6%, 578), followed by the Sociology (19.08%, 373) and Education (12.18%, 238), respectively. Other sub-categories include Psychology (10.17%, 199), Anthropology (8.8%, 172), Media and Communication (7.11%, 139) and Ethnology (5.32%, 104) etc. Gender Studies,

Table 1: Subject-wise inclusion of E-books

Subject	Number	Percentage
Agriculture and Food Sciences	78	0.89
Arts and Architecture	483	5.53
Biology and Life Sciences	305	3.49
Business and Economics	341	3.91
Chemistry	34	0.39
Earth and Environmental Sciences	289	3.31
General works	14	0.16
Health Sciences	916	10.49
History and Archaeology	1264	14.48
Languages and Literature	713	8.17
Law and Political Science	836	9.58
Mathematics and Statistics	81	0.93
Philosophy and Religion	383	4.39
Physics and Astronomy	41	0.47
Science General	663	7.59
Social Sciences	1954	22.42
Technology and Engineering	335	3.84
Total	8730	100

Library and Information Sciences, and Sports Science are also making a small contribution of 3.48%, 3.33%, and 0.48%, respectively (Table 2).

Authorship Trends

Almost three-fourth of the e-books in Social Sciences has been contributed by the authors (72.72%, 1421) and one-fourth by editors (27.28%, 533). The collaboration pattern shows almost 60%

Table 2: Category-wise inclusion of E-books in Social Sciences

Subject Category	Number	Percentage
Anthropology	172	8.81
Education	238	12.18
Ethnology	104	5.32
Gender Studies	68	3.48
Library and Information Sciences	65	3.33
Media and Communication	139	7.12
Psychology	199	10.19
Social Sciences (General)	578	29.58
Sociology	373	19.09
Sports Sciences	18	0.92
Total	1954	100

of authored books are single-authored, whereas 40% are in collaboration. The collaboration among the two authors (364, 25.62%) is more followed by the three authors (127, 8.94%). A small percentage of e-books have also been contributed by more than four authors (45, 3.16%) and four authors (41, 2.89%), respectively (Table 3).

Table 3: Authorship Pattern in E-Books

Authors	Number	Percentage
Single Author	844	59.39
Two Authors	364	25.62
Three Authors	127	8.94
Four Authors	41	2.89
More than Four Authors	45	3.16
Total	1421	100

Editorship Trends

The editorial collaboration shows that almost one-third of the e-books are contributed by the single editor (180, 33.77 %) and two-third e-books are collaborative works. The collaboration is more between the two editors (155, 29.08%) followed by the three editors (108, 20.26%), respectively, whereas four editors (55, 10.31%) and more than four editors (35, 6.57%) contribute a very small percentage of books (Table 4).

Table 4: Editorship Pattern in E-Books

Editors	Number	Percentage
Single Editor	180	33.77
Two Editors	155	29.08
Three Editors	108	20.26
Four Editors	55	10.31
More than Four Editors	35	6.57
Total	533	100

Linguistic Pattern

The Social Sciences e-books have been published in 13 different languages. The English language has been a dominant one, contributing 69.14% (1351) of total e-books followed by Deutsch (10.49%, 205), Portuguese (7.17%, 140) and German (6.4%, 125), respectively. Other

languages include French, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Swedish, Russian, Czech, and Finnish etc. (Table 5).

Table 5: Linguistic Pattern of E-books

Language	Number	Percentage
English	1351	69.14
Deutsch	205	10.49
Portuguese	140	7.165
German	125	6.397
French	40	2.047
Italian	40	2.047
Spanish	25	1.279
Others	28	1.433
Total	1954	100

Publishing Authority

The publishing trends reveal that the books have been published by both the university presses as well as other publishing houses. The greater percentage of e-books are contributed by Amsterdam University Press (10.26%) followed by Australian University Press (8.34%), SciELO Books (7.17%), Springer (6.39%), and Frontiers Media SA (5.83%). There are many other publishers contributing the Social Sciences e-books to the DOAB (Table 6).

Time Series Analysis

The time-series analysis of the e-books in the DOAB shows that the highest number of e-books in the DOAB (844, 43.2%) is published between 2011 and 2015, however, the projected number shows that it will almost double from 2016 to 2020. Only 91 e-books published before 2000 have been made available (Table 7).

The availability of e-books in the DOAB is showing an increasing trend. The growth rate of e-books is increasing very fast with the time.

The growth rate varies from the half year decadal analysis. However, the maximum growth rate is almost 400% as compared to previous five years. The growth rate may further accelerate with the

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Table 6: Publishing authority of E-Books

Publisher	Number	Percentage
Amsterdam University Press	200	10.26
Australian National University Press (ANU Press)	163	8.34
SciELO Books	140	7.17
Springer	125	6.39
Frontiers Media SA	114	5.83
Universtatsverlag Gottingen	107	5.48
Bohlaus	84	4.3
University of North Texas Press	72	3.69
De Gruyter	62	3.2
Bloomsbury Academic	57	2.92
Brill	47	2.41
Open Book Publishers	38	1.95
Academia Press	37	1.9
UCL Press	31	1.6
Transcript Verlag	29	1.48
Manchester University Press	28	1.43
Ubiquity Press	27	1.38
University of California Press	25	1.28
KIT Scientific Publishing	23	1.18
University of Calgary Press	23	1.18
Palgrave Macmillan	22	1.13
Utah State University Library	22	1.13
Finnish Literature Society	21	1.08
Athabasca University Press	20	1.02
Others	437	22.36
Total	1954	100

Table 7: Half-Decadal Analyses of E-Books

Year	Number	Percentage
>2000	91	4.66
2001-2005	107	5.48
2006-2010	415	21.24
2011-2015	844	43.2
2016-2020 (Projected)	497	25.44
Total	1954	100

completion of the digitization projects worldwide (Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

The DOAB contains almost 9000 books and the highest number of books is related to Social

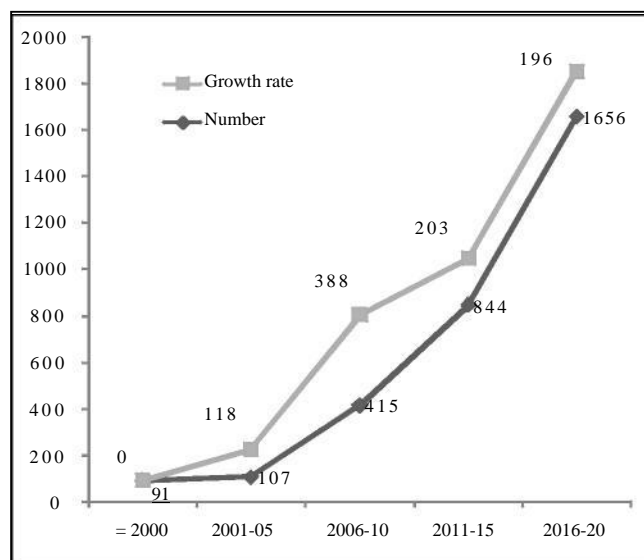


Figure 1: Grow rate of OA e-books in Social Sciences

Sciences (1954) because the primary aim of the DOAB is to archive books on the Social Sciences and Humanities. These e-books are published on all major areas of the Social Sciences like sociology and education, ethnology, gender studies, media communication, psychology, sports sciences, and library and information sciences. Established in 2013, the DOAB has archived a good number of books within 5 years almost as an average of 2000 per year. The growth rate of the e-books is increasing at a greater pace. The time-series analysis of the e-books shows that the maximum number of e-books is published in recent years and, therefore, may have current information. The e-books in the social sciences have been mostly contributed by the authors and published by the University Presses. It is an indication that authors and their institutions want to reap the benefits of open access like more visibility, usability, impact, citations to increase their impact and indexes. The collaboration is almost 60:40, where only 40% are collaborated works. The collaboration among the authors/editors also decreases with the increase in number of authors. The social sciences e-books have been published in 13 different languages. No doubt that the English has been a dominant one but e-books are also available in other

languages like Deutsch, Portuguese, German, French, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Swedish, Russian, Czech, and Finnish as well.

CONCLUSION

The open access movement is surpassing the disciplinary boundaries and geographic boundaries. The open access movement is in full bloom in the Science and Technology fields and now has powerfully entered into other disciplines including Social Sciences. The DOAB has the maximum number of books in the field of Social Sciences. These open access books offer many opportunities for institutions to enhance teaching, learning, and research. These e-books will help in enriching the collection of the libraries free of cost. These are viable in breaking down physical and financial barriers to provide democratic access to information and knowledge. However, the simple availability of these e-books is of no use until these are not used by the users. Therefore, the primary duty of libraries is not only to aware users about the DOAB but also integrate these e-books in the digital archives of libraries for greater use. In such a context, the availability of online digital collections may create new challenges for professionals and difficulties for users. The professional may have to identify new strategies for organizing digital collections, whereas the patrons may have difficulties to identify, find, access, and read these books. The professionals have to understand issues emerged from the digital collections like copyright rules, access protocols, plagiarism policies, preservation problems, safety concerns, technological issues, technical requirements, and cultural challenges. These issues need to be addressed thoroughly in the short- and long-term training programme of professionals. Further, the library orientation, as

well as information literacy programme, should be conducted regularly to update users about the recent collection and services. In this way, libraries can maintain their relevance in the digital age.

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How to cite this article: Ufaira Yaseen and Fayaz Ahmad Loan, 2019. Open Access E-Books in Social Sciences: A Bibliometric Study of the DOAB. *PEARL - A Journal of Library and Information Science*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 101-106.