



Comparative study of characteristics of authors between open access and non-open access journals in library and information science



Yu-Wei Chang

Department of Library and Information Science, National Taiwan University, No. 1, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd., Taipei 10617, Taiwan

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 31 July 2015

Received in revised form 10 June 2016

Accepted 9 January 2017

Available online 23 January 2017

1. Introduction

The advantages of the Internet, including rapid dissemination and high information visibility, make it a well established channel for digital scholarly communication. Threats of a “serial crisis” (decreased academic library subscription to journals because of their rising subscription fees and library budget reductions) have further triggered researchers’ expectations for an alternative channel of scholarly communication (Hagenhoff, Blumenstiel, & Ortelbach, 2008; Peekhaus & Proferes, 2015). Launching open access (OA) journals, which allow for free online access to scholarly articles, is regarded as a practical solution to the increasing subscription prices of traditional journals. The development of OA journals began in the early 1990s and has been tracked by numerous studies. The figures reported by Laakso et al. (2011) show a rapid increase in the number of OA journals after 2000. Although a substantial proportion of OA journals have become inactive (noted as far back as Crawford, 2002), new OA journals have been established, and the OA movement has even encouraged well established journals to convert to OA formats. Authors, therefore, now have more options when choosing how to publish. They can select to publish in OA journals which are freely accessible to scholars (but may involve author fees) or in traditional subscription-based journals, some of which allow authors to elect to subsidize open access, and most of which make recent articles available only for paying subscribers during an embargo period (Mammo & Ngulube, 2015; Nariani & Fernandez, 2012; Taylor & Francis Group, 2014).

2. Problem statement

The increase in number of OA journals has begun to attract studies analyzing the characteristics of OA journals. However, few studies have considered authorship characteristics. Because the growth of OA journals relies on author support, the characteristics of OA authors can affect the nature and development of OA journals and are worth investigating. Particularly, growth in numbers of OA journals can be anticipated when barriers to OA journal publishing decrease (Forrester, 2015). It is anticipated that the percentage of academic authors publishing in OA journals will increase every year. However, this assumption must be verified. This research focuses on the characteristics of authors in OA and non-OA journals published during the same period and in the same discipline—library and information science.

Librarians, the practitioners in the field, are largely not concerned with publishing, unlike LIS scholars (called *academics* in this study), who are typically affiliated with LIS degree programs and subject to their tenure practices. Some librarians, however, must conduct research to satisfy institutional requirements for evaluation, promotion, and tenure (Carter, Snyder, & Imre, 2007; Park & Riggs, 1993). Librarians tend to focus on practice-oriented research topics, whereas academics are more likely to be concerned with theory-oriented research topics. Librarians also actively advocate for OA publishing (Palmer, Dill, & Christie, 2009). Therefore, the research topics of OA journals may have a higher probability of being practice-oriented since practice-oriented librarians often advocate for these journals. However, several studies focusing on traditional non-OA LIS journals have reported that librarians were the most prevalent contributing author group (Buttler, 1991; Olsgaard & Olsgaard, 1980; Watson, 1985). These studies were conducted over two decades ago. It is necessary to examine the most prevalent author group in current LIS journals, leading to the first research question: “Is there a difference in occupation type between authors publishing in OA journals and those publishing in non-OA journals?”

Although LIS academics were identified as the largest group of article authors for LIS journals in recent studies (Aharony, 2011; Chang & Huang, 2012), an increasing trend in the percentage of non-LIS authors was also observed (Chang & Huang, 2012). A higher percentage of non-LIS authors publishing in LIS journals indicates a greater degree of interdisciplinarity in LIS journals. When librarians become OA authors and support OA publishing, does this affect the trend in the percentage of non-LIS authors in OA journals? If OA journals have a higher or just different percentage of non-LIS authors than do non-OA journals, the nature of OA journals may be distinct from that of non-OA journals. This

E-mail addresses: yuweichang2013@ntu.edu.tw, yuweichang2007@gmail.com.

leads to the second research question: “Is there a difference in the proportion of LIS authors who publish in OA and non-OA journals?”

LIS studies have demonstrated that there is limited collaboration between academics and practitioners (Apolinario, Eclevia, Eclevia, Lagrama, & Sagun, 2014; Winston & Williams, 2003). However, a trend toward an increase in the annual percentage of coauthored articles has been identified in LIS (Larivière, Sugimoto, & Cronin, 2012). Authors' tendencies to collaborate with other authors may contribute to an increase in the percentage of articles that are coauthored by academics and librarians, possibly representing a decrease in the research–practice gap. If an increasing trend in the annual percentage of articles coauthored by academics and librarians is observed only in OA journals, this implies that OA journals are potentially appropriate platforms for strengthening the interaction between academics and practitioners. Therefore, the third research question is “Is there a difference in the types of collaborations exhibited by authors publishing in OA and non-OA journals?”

The findings of this research will enhance the understanding of differences in the authorship of OA and non-OA journals. If there are no differences, then it might be assumed that authors who publish in non-OA journals may also support OA journals. However, if differences are revealed in author characteristics between OA and non-OA journals, then it might be assumed that most non-OA authors may remain loyal to traditional (subscription-based) journals. Better understanding of the differences among journals can support more informed decisions about collections and user services, and can help scholars select appropriate outlets for their research.

3. Literature review

The appearance of OA journal publishing means that the traditional scholarly communication process is not the only path available to researchers for publishing their work. Although non-OA journals dominate scholarly communication, some researchers anticipate the expansion of OA journals in scholarly communication because of the advantages and the increasing number of OA journals (Björk, Laakso, & Solomon, 2013; Schroter, Tite, & Smith, 2005). OA journal publishing can potentially compete with traditional academic journal publishing. There has been an increase in the number of OA journals (Laakso et al., 2011), although their influence is usually not as strong as non-OA journal (Davis, 2008; Frandsen, 2009; Testa & McVeigh, 2004; Wang, 2012;), and the changes in the influence of journals are not the same across disciplines (Björk & Solomon, 2012; Hwang, Huang, & Lai, 2012; Kousha & Abdoli, 2010; Mukherjee, 2009a; Norris, Oppenheim, & Rowland, 2008). OA publishing has been the subject of a large amount of literature in the last decade (Frosio, 2014), in LIS as well as other disciplines (Forrester, 2015).

Some surveys suggest that the majority of authors refuse to publish their work in OA journals because OA journals have inferior reputations and visibility compared with non-OA journals (Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005; Swan & Brown, 2004). However, Harnad (2009) asserted a different reason for researchers' wariness of OA journals: a failure to realize the potential benefits of OA journals. Numerous studies have reported that authors tend to first consider the reputation or quality of journals when choosing venues for publishing (Dalton, 2013; Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005). Publishing peer reviewed articles in high quality journals provides advantages for academics in obtaining promotion and tenure (Hendricks, 2010; Peekhaus & Proferes, 2015). However, the extent to which authors are willing to publish work in OA journals varies across fields (Nicholas, Huntington, & Rowlands, 2005; Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005; Spezi, Fry, Creaser, Proberts, & White, 2013), suggesting that researchers' attitudes toward OA journals in a specific field cannot be used to determine the attitude of researchers toward OA journals in another field. Other factors considered by authors may include the range of readers targeted by a journal, publication speed, journal subject, relatedness of journal subject to personal research, journal availability, journal rejection rate, publication cost, copyright policy, and personal career benefits associated with journal

publication (Björk & Holmström, 2006; Carter et al., 2007; Chuang, 2007; Hsu & Lin, 2011; Nariani & Fernandez, 2012; Nicholas et al., 2005; Park & Qin, 2007; Peterson, 2006; Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005; Swan & Brown, 2004; Warlick & Vaughan, 2007). How authors choose journals is a complex process influenced by various factors beyond just the author's discipline.

The primary focuses of LIS studies in OA journals have included authors' genders, institutional affiliations by type and country, the growth of coauthored papers, and types of collaboration (Ardanuy, 2012; Davarpanah & Asleki, 2008; He & Spink, 2002; Kaur & Manpreet, 2012; Khurshid, 2013; Lin, 2012; Terry, 1996; Wolfram, 2012).

3.1. Occupations of LIS authors

Various classification schemes for identifying author type have been used in different studies, usually based on a relatively limited number of journal articles (Norelli & Harper, 2013; Olsgaard & Olsgaard, 1980; Weller, Hurd, & Wiberley, 1999; Wiberley, Hurd, & Weller, 2006; Winston & Williams, 2003; Zemon & Bahr, 1998). Chapman and Pike (1993) divided authors into five groups: librarians, LIS faculty, LIS students, other faculty, and other. Other researchers have divided librarian authors by type of library and produced classification schemes comprising numerous categories. Olsgaard and Olsgaard (1980) classified authors of LIS journal articles into six categories: academic librarians, public librarians, other librarians, LIS faculty, other faculty, and other. Watson (1985) divided authors into 11 groups, 7 of which are related to librarians. The remaining groups comprise LIS faculty and students, other faculty, the corporate sector, and other. Buttlar (1991) developed a more detailed classification system comprising 22 categories differentiated according to authorial occupation. Most categories are related to the category “librarian”, and are separated according to job responsibilities and position. Winston and Williams (2003) devised a classification scheme comprising seven categories: academic librarians, academic library administrators, public librarians, LIS faculty, other faculty, doctoral students, and other. They found that academic librarians were the most prevalent authors, which was consistent with studies by Olsgaard and Olsgaard (1980), Watson (1985), and Buttlar (1991). Some studies have used simpler classification categories to analyze librarian authors or academic librarian authors specifically. Only two categories, academic librarians and others, were used by Mercer (2011), and Finlay, Ni, Tsou, and Sugimoto (2013) classified LIS articles into three groups: librarians, nonlibrarians, and librarian-nonlibrarian collaborations.

3.2. Disciplines of authors in LIS journals

Although LIS researchers dominate LIS journal article authorship, researchers outside LIS have also contributed. Aharony (2011) investigated 10 LIS journals published from 2007 to 2008. LIS authors accounted for the largest group (27.08%) among 19 disciplines. Walters and Wilder (2015) reported that over half of the top 50 authors were LIS researchers in an investigation of 31 LIS journals between 2007 and 2012. Related studies have determined that LIS researchers collaborate with researchers from different disciplines (Chen & Liang, 2004; Qiu, 1992). Qiu (1992) analyzed coauthored articles in 24 LIS journals and found that LIS researchers collaborated with researchers from 10 disciplines outside LIS. Chang and Huang (2012) examined the characteristics of and changes in LIS interdisciplinarity over a 30-year period, finding that the level of LIS interdisciplinarity had increased, indicating that LIS researchers have been increasingly coauthoring articles with authors from other disciplines.

3.3. Types of collaboration used by LIS authors

Although single-author articles are the most prevalent in LIS literature, numerous studies have investigated multi-author articles (Apolinario et al., 2014; Buttlar, 1991; Chapman & Pike, 1993; Weller et al., 1999;

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5123917>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5123917>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)