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Asifa Ali
asifalis100@gmail.com

Akib Ahmad Mr.
Central University of Kashmir, akibahmed@cukashmir.ac.in

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Open Access E-books in Islam: A Case Study of Directory of Open Access Books

Asifa Ali

**Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kashmir
asifalis100@gmail.com**

Akib Ahmed

**Professional Assistant, Central Library, Central University of Kashmir
akibahmed@cukashmir.ac.in**

Abstract

The present study aims to explore the current trends of open access e-books available through the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) in the subject field of Islam. The DOAB was selected as a source for data collection during July 2020. The findings reveal that 263 e-books are available on Islam, which contributes only (0.94 percent) of the total share of e-books (27,697) available in DOAB. The results reveal that the maximum number of e-books is available on Religion (111), History (42), Sociology (34), and Political Science (27). The publishing trends show that majority of these e-books were published by Transcript Verlag (28), followed by Presses de l'Ifpo (23) and Brill (18), respectively. The licensing authority reveals that the highest number of e-books (105) on Islam is available through Open Education License for Books. The linguistic assessment shows that (44.86 percent) of e-books have been published in the English language followed by French (38.78 percent) and German (12.92 percent), respectively. The majority of these books (28.51 percent) are published before 2000. In contrast, authorship trends reveal that majority of the e-books are by a single author (68.87 percent) followed by two authors (20.53 percent) and three authors (9.50 percent). The maximum number of e-books (24.71 percent) has 201-400 pages while as, (51.33 percent) of e-books do not have page numbering.

Keywords: Open access, e-book, Electronic book, Directory of Open Access Books, DOAB, Islam, Islamic Literature

Introduction:

The use of Information Technology tools to retrieve information impacted the pattern users access sources of information in electronic format. Electronic versions, particularly online resources, are a preferred information source nowadays due to their accessibility anywhere and anytime. The accessibility of restricted electronic resources is subject to certain conditions which

emerged as a building block for open access movement. Particularly e-books are available through various access points with the best search and retrieval options. The Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) uses a searchable index to peer-reviewed e-books published under an open access model, with links to the full text of the publications at the Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN) Library, publisher's website, or repositories. (Karak & Mandal, 2017). The prominent open access directories viz. DOAJ, DOAR, DOAB offers access to a vast extent of scholarly information. Many narratives exist under the parasol 'open access', yet there is a distinction between 'gratis' open access journals or books (e.g., free access) and 'libre' open access journals or books (e.g., free access with removed usage barriers). Some publishers consider that free access is enough for a title to be regarded as open access; others hold the importance of re-use rights of open access material. Stenson (2012). The scholarly databases set out the parameters for the inclusion of academic content in the database, which vary from database to database. In the contemporary knowledge-based society, information is expanding from all quarters, thereby adding to the already deep universe of knowledge. Due to such information explosion, it is even more complex to focus on qualitative peer-reviewed content from all published content available on a particular concept. Therefore, the importance of reputed open access directories has increased as most of the peer-reviewed content is available through commercial scholarly databases. Amanullah & Khiste (2012) argued that the growth rate of open access documents is increasing day by day. Particularly e-books have placed their strong position in this era of open access and the digital world. Furthermore, publishers and authors must make the most of open access initiatives for far visibility of e-books.

Review of Literature:

Open-access (OA) literature is a publishing mode where research-based documents are accessible via digital/online platforms free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. Open Access Publishing can be published/made available via various modes viz. Gold, Bronze, Green, or Diamond/Platinum. Pourret (2020) The concept of institutional repositories has further made the research output of institutions available to the broader public in some countries. Piwowar et al., (2018) also observed that since the early 2000s, there has been a steady increase in OA journals and articles. The further growth in publishing through various access modes is. To overcome the price barriers, initially, the Budapest Open Access Initiative

made a significant contribution globally in the Open Access Publishing. A paywall publishing, particularly in the form of Article Processing Charges (APCs), offers access to limited visibility by allowing access to the select community, thereby enhancing the digital divide. The economic factors have been the driving force of the modern-day publishing; manipulated academic publishing through commercial scholarly databases. **Bansal (2018)** conducted a similar study of open access books in health sciences where he concluded that the English language is the most preferred as (71.17%) of books are published in English. **Yaseen&Lone(2019)** also found that the number of e-books in social sciences is increasing rapidly up to the growth rate of 400% five-yearly. According to **Chinnadurai & Tamizhchelvan (2019)**, the most prominent resources for research scholars are e-journals, e-book, e-theses and dissertation and 94.59% of research scholars prefer open-access resources for their research.

The commercial scholarly databases provide access to institutions/individuals on a subscription basis perpetual/ limited access basis. Further, the discrimination in accessing the research shall go a long way in diminishing the research output, which otherwise would have grown if economically driven factors would not have influenced the access to scholarly literature. **Laakso&Björk(2012)** observed that OA journals demanding article-processing charges have become increasingly common, publishing 166,700 articles in 2011 (49% of all OA articles). **Antelman(2004)** studied articles on four disciplines viz. philosophy, political science, electrical and electronic engineering, and mathematics to access the impact as measured by citations in the ISI Web of Science database when their authors make them freely available on the Internet. The study observed that across all four disciplines, freely available articles do have a more significant research impact, which is an immense reward offered by way of open access.

Open access aims at bridging the information and economic development gap between the prosperous/developed economies and poor/under-developed/developing economies (**Anyira&Idubor, 2020**). However, predatory journals have degraded the quality of research by publishing articles merely on profit without having concern for quality research output. The Universe of Knowledge is increasing manifold; though, the total increase is not necessarily quality research. The low-quality research work is due to viz.a.viz plagiarism, improper data gathering techniques, and statistical methods applied to such data.

Objectives

The present study attempts to gauge the current trends of open access e-books in Islam available through the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB). The scope of this work is restricted to the open access e-books in Islam. The objectives of the study aim to:

1. To analyze publisher and subject wise contribution to DOAB
2. To find the subject and publishing contributions of e-books in Islam
3. To identify the license and language pattern of e-books in Islam
4. To ascertain the time series and pagination trends of e-books in Islam
5. To gauge the authorship trends of e-books in Islam.

Methodology

This study aims to identify the open-access literature/resources available via DOAB under social science subject. After a thorough literature review on open access books and journals available via different access points, the required data regarding e-books on Islam only has been accessed during July 2020. After collecting the data, it was analyzed based on a set of parameters using an excel spreadsheet to reveal findings. The present study is limited to e-books on Islam, which are listed only in DOAB.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

1 Contribution by Subject wise inclusion of e-book in DOAB

The DOAB contains 27,679 e-books in all the subjects. The highest number of books are available on Social Sciences (20.16%) followed by History and Archaeology (14.84%), Language and Literature (10.96%), Technology and Engineering (10.78%), and Law and Political Science(10.71%) respectively. These five subjects collectively contribute (67.42%) to the total share of e-books available in DOAB. The other subject category of e-books available in Science (General) (7.38%), Business and Commerce (6.54%), Health Science(4.69%), Philosophy and Religion (4.62%) and the least number of e-books (4.15%) are available on Arts and Architecture.

Table 1: Contributions by Subject

Subject	No. of e-books	Percentage
Social Sciences	5581	20.16
History and Archaeology	4108	14.84
Language and Literature	3036	10.96
Technology and Engineering	2978	10.75
Law and Political Science	2967	10.71
Science (General)	2045	7.38
Business and Commerce	1812	6.54
Health Science	1299	4.69
Philosophy and Religion	1280	4.62
Arts and Architecture	1151	4.15
Other Subjects	1422	5.13
Total	27679	100

2 Contribution by Publisher of e-books in DOAB

A total of 379 publishers contribute towards publishing open access e-books. The majority of the e-books are contributed by IntechOpen (7.31%), followed by KIIT Scientific Publishing (6.04%) and De Gruyter (5.65%), respectively. The least number of e-books published by Taylor & Francis (2.18%) and ANU Press(2.04%). The other publishers beyond the top 10 list contribute (57.35%) to the total share of DOAB output.

Table 2: Publishers Contribution

Publisher	No. of e-books	Percentage
IntechOpen	2026	7.31
KIIT Scientific Publishing	1672	6.04
De Gruyter	1566	5.65
Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institution	1362	4.92
Peter Lang International Academic Publishing Group	1309	4.72
PressessUniversitaries de Rennes	1003	3.62
Springer	981	3.54
Transcript Verlag	711	2.56
Taylor & Francis	606	2.18
ANU Press	565	2.04
Other Publishers	15875	57.35
Total	27679	100

3 Subject Wise Distribution of e-books in Islam

It is evident from Table 3 that a total of 263 e-books are available on Islam through DOAB, covering eight (08) major areas. The majority of e-books are available on Religion (42.20%) followed by History (15.96%) and Sociology (12.92%) e-books, respectively. The other subject categories are Political Science (10.26%), Social Science (4.56%), Education (2.66%), Language and Literature (1.90%), and the least number of e-books is available in Gender studies (1.14%). The other subject category includes Economics, Law, Technology, Linguistics, philosophy, and Ethnology contribute (8.36%) to the total share of e-books in Islam

Table 3: Subject-wise distribution of e-books

Subject Categories	No. of e-books	Percentage
Religion	111	42.20
History	42	15.96
Sociology	34	12.92
Political Science	27	10.26
Social Science	12	4.56
Education	7	2.66
Language and Literature	5	1.90
Gender Studies	3	1.14
Other Subjects	22	8.36
Total	263	100

4 Publishing authority wise distribution of e-books

The publishing trends reveal that reputed publishing houses across the world have published e-books. The Table 4 depicts that a greater percentage of e-books are contributed by Transcript Verlag (10.64%) followed by Pressess de l'ifpo (8.74%), Brill (6.84%), ANU Press (4.56%), and De Gruyter and Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute contribute (3.80%) each. Many other publishers are contributing to Islamic e-books, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Publishing Authority of e-books

Publishing Authority	No. of e-books	Percentage
Transcript Verlag	28	10.64
Pressess de l'ifpo	23	8.74
Brill	18	6.84
ANU Press	12	4.56

De Gruyter	10	3.80
Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute	10	3.80
CNRS Editions	9	3.42
University of California Press	8	3.04
Casa de Valazquez	7	2.66
Editions de la Sorbonne	7	2.66
Leiden University Press	6	2.28
Presses Universitaires de Rennes	6	2.28
Six publishers with five books each	30	11.40
Five publishers with four books each	20	7.60
Ten publishers with three books each	30	11.40
Fourteen publishers with twelve books each	28	10.64
Eleven publishers with one book each	11	4.18
Total	263	100

5 License Authority of e-books

The licensing trend reveals that the highest percentage of e-books (39.92%) is available through Open Edition License for books followed by Ccby-nc-nd (34.60%) and Cc by-nc (9.12%), ANU Press (4.56%), and CC by (3.80%) respectively. The other licenses that contribute to the meager percentage of e-books on Islam.

Table 5: License wise distribution of e-books

License Authority	No. of e-books	Percentage
Open Edition License for books	105	39.92
Cc by-nc-nd	91	34.60
Cc by-nc	24	9.12
ANU Press	12	4.56
CC by	10	3.80
Unknown	6	2.28
CC by-nc-sa	5	1.90
CC by-sa	5	1.90
Five licensors with 1 book each	5	1.90
Total	263	100

6 Language-wise distribution of e-books

The e-books accessible via DOAB on Islam are available in seven(07) different languages. It is found from Table 7 that the majority number of e-books are published in English (44.86%) followed by French (38.78%), German (12.92%) and Spanish (1.52%). The details regarding

the languages of (0.75%) e-books were not found while accessing DAOB. One e-book is published in Afrikaans, Arabic, and Portuguese languages.

Table 6: Language wise analysis of e-books

Language	No. of e-books	Percentage
English	118	44.86
French	102	38.78
German	34	12.92
Spanish	4	1.52
Undetermined	2	0.76
Afrikaans	1	0.38
Arabic	1	0.38
Portuguese	1	0.38
Total	263	100

7 Time series analysis of e-books

The Table 7 indicates that the majority of e-books in Islam are published before the year 2000 (28.51%) followed by 2016-2020 (23.95%), 2011-2015 (21.29%) and the least number of e-books belong to period 2001-2005 (8.74%) respectively. Therefore, it also reveals that there is an increasing trend of e-books publishing on Islam.

Table 7: Year-wise inclusion of e-books in Islam

Year	No. of e-books	Percentage
>2000	75	28.51
2001-2005	23	8.74
2006-2010	46	17.49
2011- 2015	56	21.29
2016-2020 (till April)	63	23.95
Total	263	100

8 Pagination Trends

It is clear from Table 8 that the majority of e-books have 301-400 pages (24.71%), followed by 401-600 (9.88%) pages and (7.98%) have up to 200 pages, respectively. It is found that (51.33%) of e-books do not have the total number of pages mentioned, revealing that the DOAB e-books are not properly documented.

Table 8: Pagination wise distribution of e-books

Pagination	No. of e-books	Percentage
More than 1000	03	1.14
801-1000	05	1.90
601-800	08	3.04
401-600	26	9.88
201-400	65	24.71
Up to 200	21	7.98
Not Available	135	51.33
Total	263	100

9 Authorship Pattern

The data presented in Table 9 reveals that the highest number of e-books in Islam are contributed by single authors (68.87%) followed by two authors (20.53%), three authors (9.50%), four authors (3.42%), and more than four authors (2.66%) respectively. It is evident from Table 9 that a single author contributes the majority of the e-books on Islam.

Table 9: Authorship Trends of e-books

Authorship	No. of e-books	Percentage
Single Author	168	68.87
Two Author	54	20.53
Three Author	25	9.50
Four Author	9	3.42
More than Four Author	7	2.66
Total	263	100

Conclusion

The open-access movement in the contemporary knowledge-based society has far-reaching implications in accessing peer-reviewed content in any particular field of study. With each passing day, open access publishing is gaining momentum due to many factors, mainly because of the wider reach contrary to paywall publishing. The present study shows the growth of open access e-books on Islam accessible via DOAB is steady. However, to reap the full benefits of open access publishing, issues like perpetual access, copyright violation, plagiarism, and

technological obsolescence needs due care. Furthermore, authors and publishers should show a keen interest in publishing books through open access mode.

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