

Online Appendix 1

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Comments of John Luiz:

This is an interesting piece which describes the experience of the SAJBM in changing its publishing model to open access. Providing a behind-the-scenes insight into the changing model offers a fascinating account both of the practical aspects associated with such a transition, but also of the impact it has had in various dimensions.

My comments relate mainly to questions that the research triggered in my mind especially as regards areas for future research and how this could be further analysed.

1. Whilst the paper briefly mentions that there are still those who equate the open access model with predatory practices, I think this is a serious problem and warrants more attention. The proliferation of predatory journals especially from and targeting developing countries is a scourge and if open access is to become more accepted there must be a better approach to allow for differentiating between legitimate and predatory journals. This is in the interests of both publishers and authors. Major publishing houses are capitalising upon their reputations to launch new open access journals and whilst that is to be welcomed, there is a danger that the market is captured by those to the exclusion of other credible options. How should we signal the quality of open access journals in environments of information asymmetries?
2. Currently I would argue that universities are finding themselves in the worst of both worlds as we straddle both the traditional publishing routes and the new open access options. For example, most universities are still paying for access to major journal databases and are now also having to pay fees associated with open access. How we manage this transition and in particular lower the costs associated with the major journal databases is going to be an important factor going forward as more publications go open access.
3. The SAJBM had the advantage that it is a long-established journal with a good reputation and that was likely an important factor in facilitating the transition. For journals not backed by a major publisher or without another way of signalling quality and credibility this could be a challenging experience.
4. This particular journal is also relevant because it is an important regional journal, and it would be interesting to explore how it compares with other regional journals and to juxtapose the data before and after with similar journals to provide more of a comparison.
5. I do have concerns regarding authors from less-developed countries which often face foreign exchange controls or funding shortages in terms of how we ensure that their voices are heard. Whilst figure 1 indicates that there has not been a noticeable decline, there might be microlevel dynamics in terms of funding models at particular institutions that make this possible or not so.
6. Figure 1 is intriguing because of the noticeable decline in papers from more developed economies and this is worth exploring as it may be linked to perceptions regarding open access models or indeed to the research funding models prevalent in these countries and how these funds are allocated. This carries implications for similar journal transitions to open access.
7. The large number of citations from Europe in figure 5 also warrants further analysis and it would be intriguing to investigate who is citing it, what they are citing and where it is being cited. This is interesting not only as regards open access models but also in terms of regional journals and their wider importance and how they fit into the overall global scholarly production.

This is a timely article on an important theme and provides interesting evidence of the advantages of a well-executed open access model.