

The Case for Open Access Journals

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I have been travelling in South East Asia for the past few weeks, meeting faculty and students from different universities in different countries. One of the issues that were raised by both faculty and graduate students is the high cost of subscription to academic journals. According to an article by Edwards and Shulenburg [1], from 1993 to 2003 the cost of subscription to scholarly journals rose over 300 percent while during the same period the Consumer Price Index increased only about 27 percent. This increase in cost of subscription is constant and consumer (university library and individual scholar) really do not have a choice in which they can choose to substitute one journal for another. For example, the annual institutional subscription rate to the Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research is US \$663, Tourist Studies is US \$784, and the Cornell Quarterly is \$502. This is just three journals out of hundreds if not thousands of titles available in hospitality management and related fields. Any respectable university library would not just subscribe to two or three journals, nor would it be helpful to the students and faculty to have access to just a few journals for research purposes. However, limited resources in developing countries made institutions of higher learning unable to afford but a few of the journals in their libraries. The lack of access to scholarly journals hinders the research activities of both faculty members and students in these universities.

Edwards and Shulenburg [1] article suggested several solutions to this problem that includes creation of a buying cartel (libraries) and price control (regulation) for academic journals. They also recommended an open access system that let scholars freely exchange ideas, which is championed by the OMICS Publishing group. On OMICS's website (www.omicsgroup.com), there is a list of close to 200 open access journals in various fields, from Accounting to Women's

Studies. OMICS also published a couple of hospitality journals (Journal of Hotel and Business Management & Journal of Tourism and Hospitality) as well as other related fields such as accounting and marketing.

McAndrew et al. [2] stated that an open approach or access in teaching and research is likely to encourage the crossing of boundaries between experts. They also argued that a new attitude of openness toward research and scholarship can be use to gather evidence, share thoughts, and disseminate results. What they are suggesting is already being practiced by many universities, especially in sharing their teaching content. To further promote this openness in research and publication, scholars should consider submitting their research (manuscripts) to open access journals. I understand there are scholars that view open access journals as second or third tier journals, however, the more submission and publication of quality manuscripts in open access journals will hopefully change the attitude of these scholars.

Open access journal publisher such as OMICS is doing their part by providing the same rigorous peer review system as any other academic journals and we must to do our part in promoting and submitting quality manuscripts to open access journals. In the world of openness and global access, the future for open access journals is bright and strong.

References

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