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Towards better Investment in OA Journals Publishing by Arab Educational and Research Institutions

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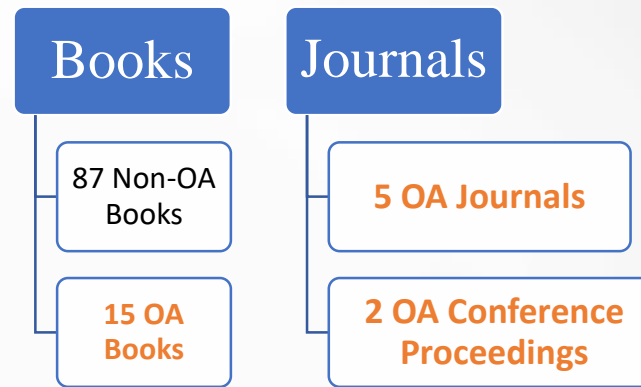
11 Years of working experience at Qatar University (17 years in total) among which 6
at QU Press

Played a key role in establishing Qatar University Press in 2018

About QU Press

(<https://journals.qu.edu.qa/>)

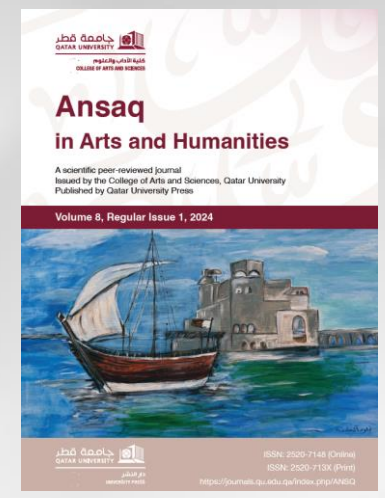
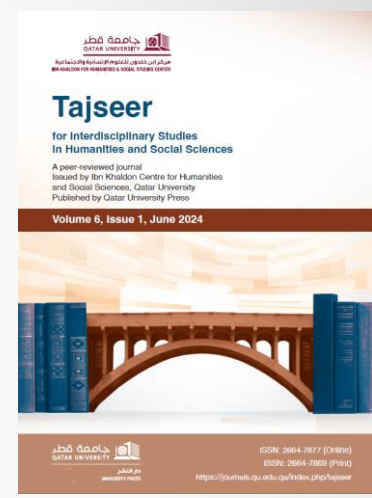
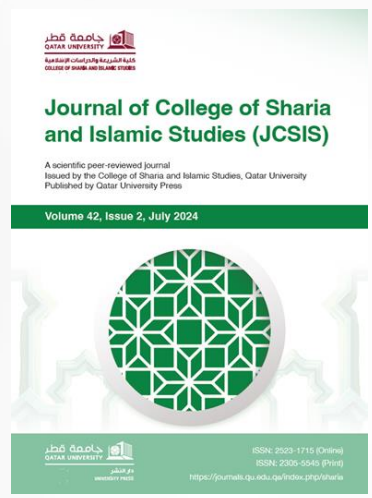
Qatar University Press (QU Press), a nonprofit publishing house established in 2018 by QU, is dedicated to promoting the dissemination of peer-reviewed and research-based publications in fields including social sciences, humanities, STEM, and more. QU Press aims to be a leading publisher of books, journals, and scholarly monographs that advance knowledge and influence policy. It equally endeavors to support QU's vision towards research and education excellence in Qatar and the region.





QU Press Journals

(5 OA journals available at <https://journals.qu.edu.qa/>)



Nr. of articles / year	20 articles/year	18 articles/year	25 articles/year	20 articles/year	12 articles/year
Nr. of issues per year	2 issues	2 issues	3 issues	2 issues	2 issues



Two OA Conference Proceedings



Proceedings of the International Conference on Civil Infrastructure and Construction

- ✓ 127 Articles published in 2020
- ✓ 130 Articles published in 2023

<https://journals.qu.edu.qa/index.php/CIC>



Academic Network for Development Dialogue (ANDD) Paper Series

- ✓ 8 Articles in 2022
- ✓ Working on 2023 Issue (13 articles)

<https://journals.qu.edu.qa/index.php/ANDD>

QU Press Open Access Books



More than 15 OA books, available at:

<https://qspace.qu.edu.qa/handle/10576/4941>



Indexing list for all QU Press Journals:



Additional Indexing for the Journal of the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies:



Additional Indexing for the International Review of Law Journal



Towards better Investment in OA Journals Publishing by Arab Educational and Research Institutions



I. What's the problem?

1.1 What hinders the investment in inhouse OA Journals in the Arab World:

- ✓ Solely rewarding and funding the world giant publishers
- ✓ Skepticism over the investment value of building a strong national inhouse publishing platform or funding the right national or regional publishing initiatives/consortiums
- ✓ Lack of structural, editorial and administrative support
- ✓ Not tackling the industries' developmental objectives through research
- ✓ Relating faculty promotion to merely SCOPUS and WebofScience indexed publications
- ✓ Considering faculty research and publishing output as a mean for promotion rather than a real research objective to fill the national research gaps and needs (Arvanitis, et al., 2010)

Source: Arvanitis, R., Waast , R., & Al-Husban, A. (2010). 2010 World Social Science Report, Knowledge Divides, Social Sciences in the Arab world. ISSC and UNESCO.

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I. What's the problem?

1.2 Journals problematic

- ✓ Journals' broad research scope
- ✓ Failure to build a research community around the journal's research scope
- ✓ Incomplete and untransparent journals' policies
- ✓ Non-compliance with the publishing and technical production standards
- ✓ Inefficient editorial committee members
- ✓ Weak financial compensation to faculty that are leading and taking editorial role in local academic journals
- ✓ Not receiving enough quality papers for publishing
- ✓ Insufficient marketing by all stakeholders involved
- ✓ Inactive publisher's role in auditing journals' editorial workflow
- ✓ Deficiency in applying a pro-active and ongoing evaluation system to comply with international standards

II. For what?

Why should we build a strong OA Journals infrastructure in the Arab World?

Main objectives:

- ✓ To strengthen Qatar and the Arab countries' cognitive power as a knowledge society in the World
- ✓ To advance the Global Knowledge Index (GKI) of Qatar and other Arab states
- ✓ To revive and utilize the capabilities of Arab scholars in advancing knowledge
- ✓ To re-position the Arab scholarly output among the world research map
- ✓ To contribute in being the “adequate source to supply countries in the region with the requisite human competencies to achieve their development aspirations and objectives” (United Nations Educational, 2022)
- ✓ To fill the “great knowledge gap that separates the Arab region from the developed world” (Ibid)
- ✓ To support the “low status of innovative and research aspects that constitute the nerve center of knowledge” (Ibid)



II. For what? Why should we build a strong OA Journals infrastructure in the Arab World?

Main objectives (continued):

- ✓ To foster the research collaboration among Arab research institutions
- ✓ To align the quality criteria of academic journals with international publishing criteria
- ✓ To create a trusted publishing hub for Arab scholars
- ✓ To qualify Arab journals to enter the international indexing arena of SCOPUS and WoS
- ✓ To raise the impact and ranking of the associated educational institutions
- ✓ To spread the research generated by Arab institutions globally
- ✓ To build a large pool of data to solve the lack of Arabic terminologies, especially in Natural Sciences and STEM fields





III. Why? Is it long-term profitable?

Business rationale and scalability:

- ✓ Break the monopolistic dilemma of giant publishers' extremely high APCs charges
Calculate the investment value.
- ✓ Counteract the recent boycott on giant publishers (Hindawi, MDPI, and Frontiers) by several academic institutions.
Calculate the investment losses and deploy the funds effectively in long-term inhouse plans.
- ✓ Lost business opportunity from letting Arab scholars publish their research in foreign journals
Calculate the lost opportunities and build upon local capacities.
- ✓ Increase the impact of Arab academic journals and place them among the international research map
Calculate the advantages gained by improving the impact and ranking of Arab institutions.
- ✓ Create job market opportunities in academic publishing in the Arab world
Calculate the number of jobs that will be created in the Arab world.
- ✓ Long-term investment in the non-oil sector
Invest in sustainable business opportunities.

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IV. HOW?

The implementation plan / common publishing standards:

1. Strong technical infrastructure (platform/website):

- ✓ Bilingual/multilingual in its core
- ✓ Machine readable text in Arabic and English
- ✓ Allows simultaneous translation
- ✓ Compatible with international indexing and API harvesting most essentially Crossref and DOAJ and Google Scholar
- ✓ User friendly and collaborative features between all stakeholders
- ✓ Secure and safe for intellectual property rights protection
- ✓ Allows automatic archiving in CLOCKSS, LOCKSS or similar
- ✓ Allows social research platforms sharing in LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Academia...



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IV. HOW?

Common publishing standards (continued):



2. Transparent policies in line with COPE or other international publishing standards:

- ✓ Focused journal research scope, vision, mission, brief
- ✓ Publication frequency is announced and followed
- ✓ Author submission and writing guide is clear and comprehensive
- ✓ Ethical statements are clear and enforced
- ✓ Peer-review process is clear standardized, objective, double blind
- ✓ Creative Commons license is declared and consent is taken by authors

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IV. HOW?

Common publishing standards (continued):

3. Proper editorial and administrative support system

- ✓ The journal has the qualified and sufficient administrative support
- ✓ The selection of editorial committee members is based on the international selection criteria
- ✓ The responsibilities of the editorial committee members are comprehensive and clear
- ✓ The remuneration of the editorial committee members is fair and equitable
- ✓ The journal involves graduate students internship programs

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IV. HOW? Common publishing standards (continued):

4. Proper scientific review of papers

- ✓ The structural and ethical aspects are checked and verified before peer-review
- ✓ The reviewers selection is based on specific selection criteria
- ✓ The peer-review process is standardized, objective, detailed and constructive
- ✓ The journal enforces the revision based on the review reports and editors comments
- ✓ The author's revision is comprehensive and complete, if not, justified
- ✓ The accepted papers are scientifically, structurally and ethically compliant



IV. HOW?

Common publishing standards (continued):



5. Strong production capabilities:

- ✓ Professional and fast language review – copyediting and typesetting
- ✓ Links, references and authors names are hyperlinked/clickable
- ✓ Machine readable content
- ✓ Properly tagged PDF, HTML, XML files
- ✓ Multilingual metadata entry
- ✓ Rich metadata doi registration in Crossref

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IV. HOW?

Common publishing standards (continued):

6. Steady supply of quality research papers and publications:

- ✓ Publish at least 15 to 25 research papers per year
- ✓ Research collaborations initiated by editors or the educational institution
- ✓ Special Issues on topical subjects that address pressing economic, social or environmental objectives
- ✓ Editorial committee members attend related scientific conferences and events and promote the journal
- ✓ Organization of yearly scientific events to promote the journal and the highly cited authors



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IV. HOW?

Common publishing standards (continued):



7. Proper Marketing and indexing

The publisher and the scientific educational and research institution:

- ✓ Promote the journal/s and latest issues through their websites and among their network
- ✓ Index the journal/s in prominent international indexing and ranking platforms
- ✓ Editorial committee members promote the journal and its publications within their network
- ✓ Authors enrich their public research profile on social research platforms and share their published papers among their network

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IV. HOW? Common publishing standards (continued):



8. Independent Total Quality Management

- ✓ The scientific and editorial scopes are separate from the quality control and publishing scopes
- ✓ The submitted articles for publishing are checked for editorial and ethical compliance with a two-way communication feedback and adjustment
- ✓ The journal is self-evaluated based on clear evaluation criteria in line with international publishing standards by the editorial members and the publisher/academic entity
- ✓ The journal is evaluated based on the same evaluation criteria by independent supervising or external members
- ✓ A continuous improvement plan is updated regularly based on the above feedback

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Major National Publishing Initiatives in the Arab World

What can we learn?



1. Ranking Data Base for Arab Scientific Journals - ARCIF:

<https://search.emarefa.net/ar>

2. Major Arab Indexing Data Bases:

- Dar Almandumah: <http://mandumah.com/>
- Clarivate Arabic Citation Index: <https://clarivate.com/arabic-citation-index/>
- Dar Al Manhal : <https://www.almanhal.com/>

3. Major countries that built a Common National Journals Publishing Platform

- Egypt: <https://journals.ekb.eg/>
- Algeria: <https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/Revue>
- Iraq: <https://www.iasj.net/>
- Jordan: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/communities.html>
- Saudi Arabia: https://sdl.edu.sa/SDLPortal/ar/saudi_journals.aspx



V. CONCLUSIONS

1. Re-deployment of government funds towards investment in long-term national OA publishing means
2. Fund an equivalent Arab version of SCOPUS or WebofScience
3. Fund an equivalent version of Publons for Arab peer-reviewers especially in Social Sciences
4. Create a reward program for scholars that publish in prestigious/indexed Arab Journals
5. Build an effective AI powered bilingual Open Access publishing platform that allows collaboration between editors and scholars
6. Invest in machine readable Arabic content solutions for simultaneous translation and enrichment of the Arabic dictionary especially in Natural Sciences
7. Solve the Arabic language copyediting, translation, typesetting, and tagging challenges through modern AI solutions
8. Enrich the Crossref metadata registration of Arabic academic content
9. Improve the marketing and promotion of Arab journals, publications and scholars

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Open comments and discussions

Thank you,
Sabine Saad

