The Current State of Scholarly Journal Publishing in Bangladesh

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File name:	The Current State of Scholarly Journal Publishing in Bangladesh
Date submitted:	15 April 2015
Date last updated:	15/04/2015 12:10:00

Introduction

Journal publishers and editors in different regions of the world have to meet similar challenges with regard to technology, international standards of quality assurance and information delivery, online publication and sustainable financial models. While there is a wealth of information on how journals in higher-income countries are meeting these challenges, there is little information about journals in other regions of the world.

In 2013 INASP worked closely with African Journals Online (AJOL) to research the state of scholarly publishing in Africa. It was then envisaged that the experiences in this region could be compared with other regions of the world. This study on journal publishing in Bangladesh is the first of these investigations.

The Bangladesh survey aimed to develop a picture of the publishing landscape in the country and to produce data that could be used to compare current practices, emerging trends, success factors, and challenges within the scholarly communication sector in Bangladesh with those in Africa. This report demonstrates that the survey has gone some way towards achieving these aims, while also raising important questions and prompting a measure of self-reflection on the process of doing research. As a result, INASP has been able to derive key lessons learned and to use these to improve the way it works in many countries, particularly with regard to training for publishers. These lessons may also be useful to other organizations, institutions, and publishers working in developing countries.

Methodology

The survey reported on here was based on work originally developed by Abby Clobridge at Clobridge Consulting. It aimed to gather quantitative and qualitative data about the scholarly publishing sector in Bangladesh. From February to March 2014 INASP invited editors-in-chief, members of editorial boards, managers, and other relevant staff from 164 scholarly journals in Bangladesh to complete the online survey. These stakeholders were identified primarily through their membership in BanglaJOL, but also through online searches. The survey comprised 80 questions, most of which were optional.

There were 86 responses to the survey. Removing duplicates left 63 unique respondents, which is a response rate of 38%. Duplicate responses from the same person were deleted. Questions answered by more than one respondent from the same journal were handled as follows: if the question sought factual information about the journal, only one response for each journal was analysed; but if the question was seeking the opinions of individuals working in the publishing sector, then all individual responses were included in the analysis. In cases where only one response was kept and responses were different, where possible, respondents were contacted for clarification. Otherwise, a decision was made on which was likely to be most accurate, based, for example, on their other responses to the survey or to their seniority.

Limitations

While a non-probability sampling method was used to identify the sample, INASP's experience working with publishers in Bangladesh suggests that the sample is a good representation of the publishing sector in the country. However, because not every respondent answered every question, the representativeness of the answers will differ between questions. In general, assuming a 10% confidence interval and 95% confidence level, a sample of 61 responses to a question was needed to be representative.

The questionnaire, which is the same version used to survey publishers in Africa, was piloted with a small number of Bangladeshi publishers prior to distribution. Some of the questions were changed slightly based on the findings of the piloting process, but nothing was substantially changed from the original. While this enabled an easier comparison of responses between Africa and Bangladesh, it also limited the potential for carefully tailoring the survey specifically to Bangladesh. As a result, a number of the survey questions did not capture accurate or clear information from the respondents. In particular, there were a few questions phrased in ambiguous ways or in ways that would make their answers invalid. There was some confusion about terminology and definitions in relation to particular topics, which led to unreliable responses. For example, some respondents conflated Open Access

(which means that a journal is freely available online at the point of publication) with 'online publishing', and many were unclear about the meaning of 'hybrid journal' (a journal in which some content is made freely available online at the point of publication, and other content is kept behind a subscription paywall). These issues were taken into careful consideration when interpreting the results and are noted where appropriate throughout this report.

In addition, some of the questions about Open Access publishing were somewhat leading, prompting positive responses about Open Access, while failing to capture more critical or constructive comments. This is important to consider in interpreting the results of this survey, particularly as Open Access remains a source of considerable debate across the publishing sector.

Part 2: Survey Results

Section 1: Demographics

All but two of the respondents were based in Bangladesh. The two based outside the country (one in the UK and one in South Korea) were editors on study leave or fellowship placements. Among the 70 people who responded to questions about age and gender, most were between 34 and 44 years old, and the great majority (92%) were male.

Age & Gender of Respondents
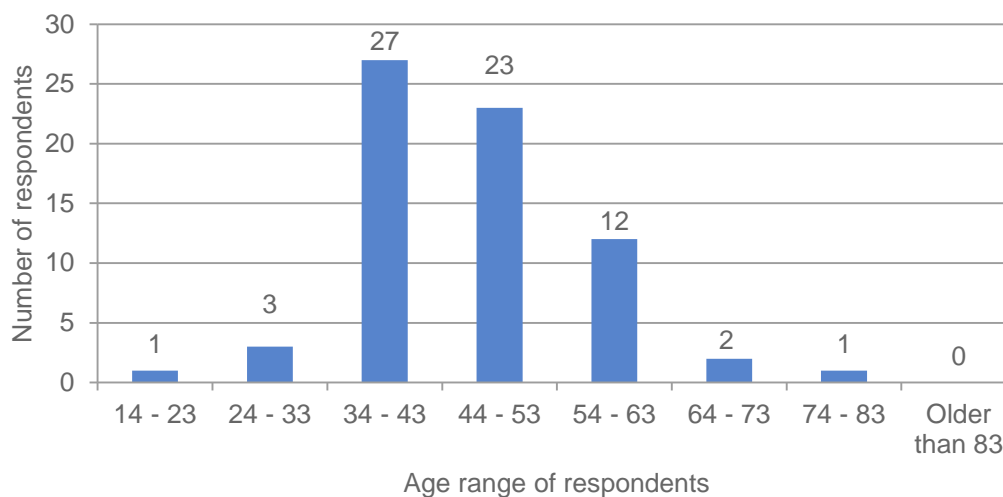
Figure 1: Age Range Of Respondents

8%

92%

■ Male ■ Female
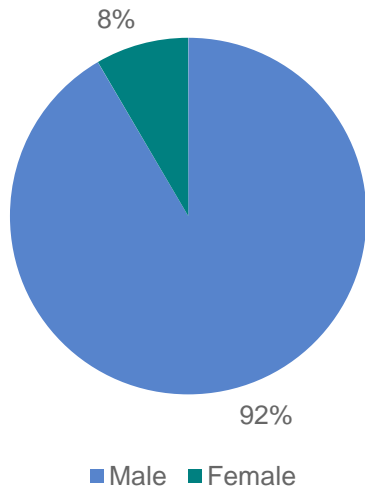
Figure 2: Respondents by Gender

Current Profession & Role in Publishing

The majority of respondents were university professors, with doctor/clinician the next most common profession. Some respondents gave their response as 'other', but all fitted within an existing category or a category could be amended slightly to include them.
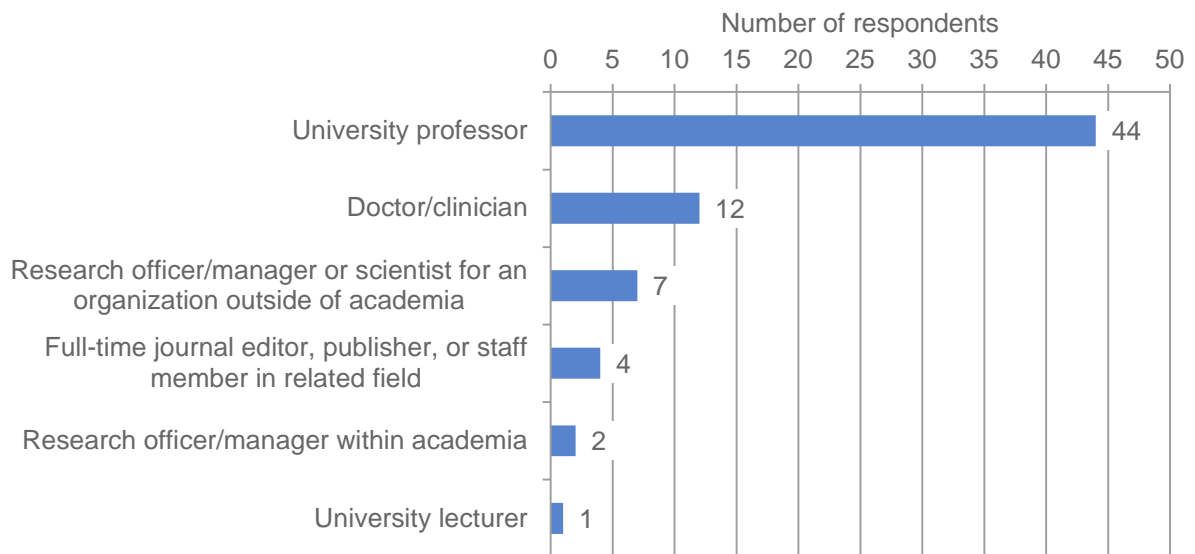
Figure 3: Respondents' Current Profession

The next question asked what the role of respondents was in the publishing sector. Editorial roles frequently have different titles at different institutions, and this probably created some confusion among the respondents.

It is also worth noting that respondents were asked if they were staff members at publishing organizations or printers and none reported performing these roles.

Figure 4: Respondents' Role in Publishing

When asked if they were involved with one or more journals, 25 of 70 respondents indicated that they were involved in two or more journals.
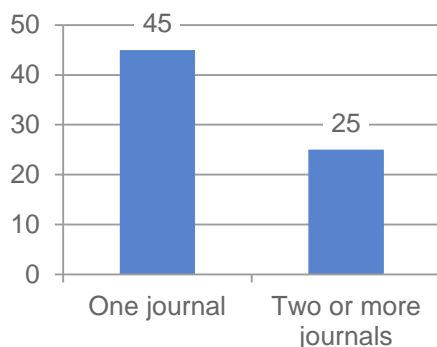
Figure 5: Primary Involvement – One or Multiple Journals?

Section 2: For Publishers

The next set of questions was aimed at publishers and asked if the respondents were involved in publishing multiple journals. The answers given, however, suggest that many of the respondents were not publishers. Nevertheless, it is clear that 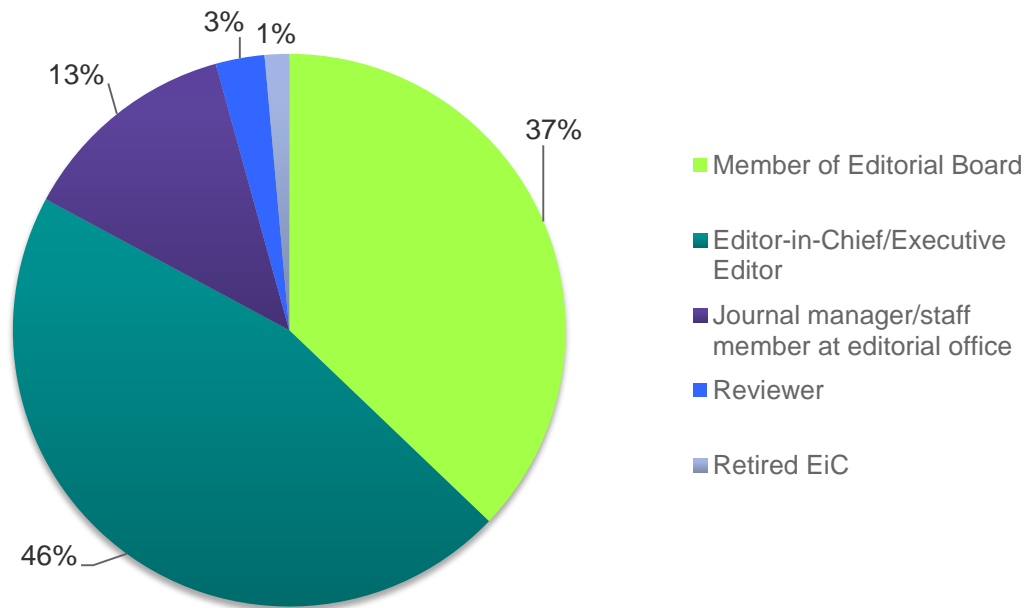all of the respondents are involved with and have knowledge of publishing, therefore their responses are meaningful and useful for helping to create a picture of the academic publishing industry in Bangladesh.

Twenty-one people responded to the question about how many journals their organization published, with 20 of them stating that their organization published between two and four journals. Two said that their organization published 11-20 journals and one said that they publish 21-50 journals. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution: for example the respondent who reported that his or her organization published more than 21 journals came from the same organization as other respondents who reported that they only published 2-4 journals. Also, the respondent answering that his or her organization publishes 21-50 journals is not a publisher but a large academic organization, where the publication of journals is likely handled by different people, in different departments, with no centralized or coordinated publishing service function.

Respondents were asked about the type of services offered by their publishing organization in general, not tied to a specific journal. The top three services reported were printing, proofreading and acquisition of ISSN, which is in line with what would be expected. Other top responses also related to online publication and additional printing/online archiving services.
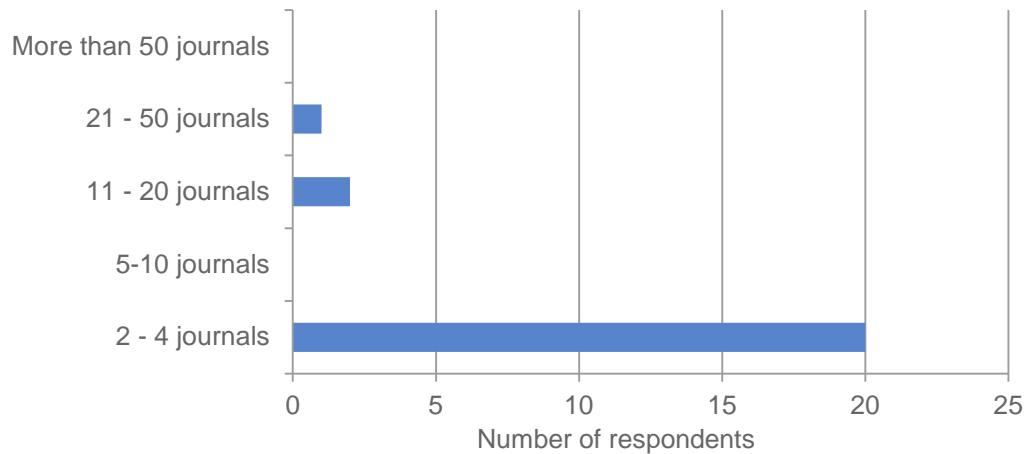
Figure 6: Number of Journals Published by Your Organization

Section 3: About Your Journal

Subject Area of Journals

Respondents were asked about the subject area that most closely described their journal. Additional subject areas – which did not appear on the questionnaire when it was used with African publishers – were added for the Bangladesh survey.

The top five subject areas reported by the respondents related to science, medicine and agriculture/environmental science. However, 11 journals focused on social studies, making it the sixth most popular discipline.
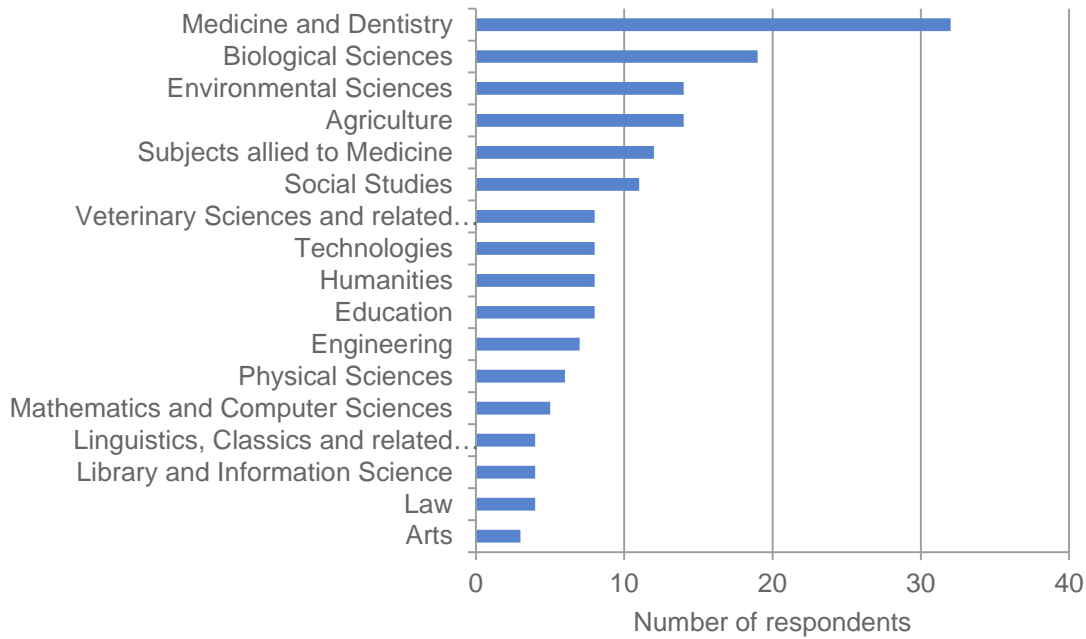
Figure 7: Subject Areas

When the Journal was Founded

Respondents were asked the year that their journal was founded. All journals were founded from the 1960s onwards, but most were founded from 2000 onwards, with just over 40% founded between 2000 and 2009.
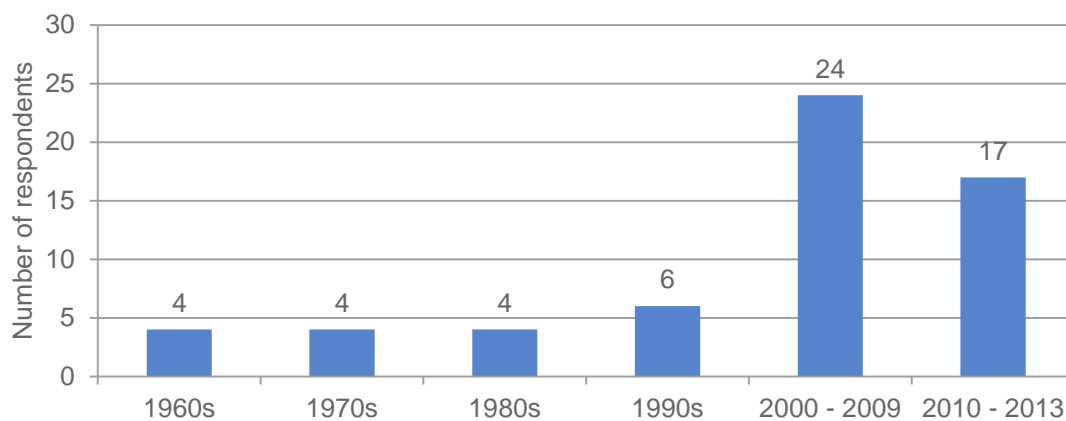
Figure 8: Founding Decade of Journals

Frequency of Publication During 2012

Among the 61 people who responded to the question about the number of issues of their journal that were published in 2012, the majority (36, or nearly 60%) said that they published two issues. Most published fewer than seven issues, while five respondents reported publishing 12 or more issues of their journal.
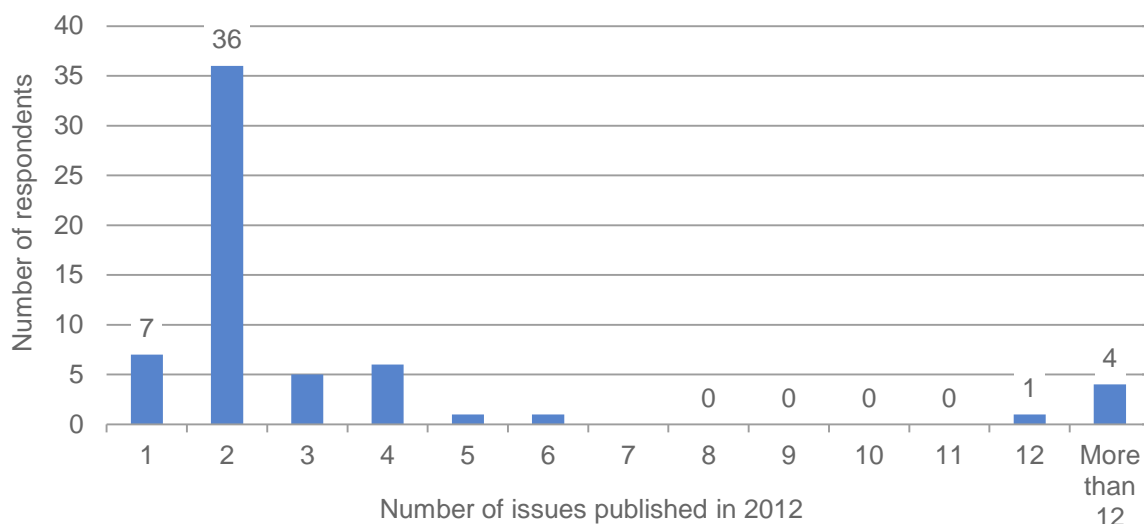
Figure 9: Frequency of Publication (2012)

Languages

All but one journal, which published in Bangla (*Dhaka University Journal of Linguistics*), said the primary language they publish in is English. All but three journals said that they did not publish in another language. The three that did publish articles in a second language published in English (where the first language was Bangla), Bangla, and French.

Section 4: Journal Operating Status & Details

Current Operating Status & Lapses in Publication

Sixty-three respondents reported their publishing frequency, with all but three publishing regularly. Two stated that their journal was on hold and one was publishing infrequently. Forty-eight said they had not experienced any interruptions in publishing, while 15 (almost a quarter) said that they had (see Figure 10). However, it should be noted that representatives from inactive journals would be less likely to have answered this, so the responses to these questions do not necessarily reflect on the success of the journal sector or of individual journals in Bangladesh.
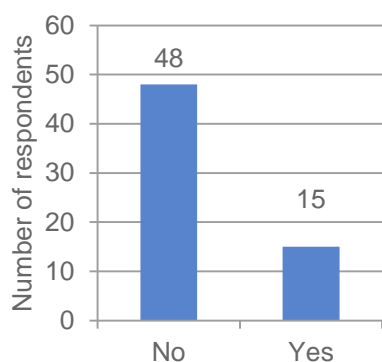

Figure 10: Has this Journal Experienced any Interruptions in Publishing?

Six journals mentioned lack of funds as one of the main reasons for interruptions. Other reasons included past committees or delays caused by their current executive committee, manuscript constraints, and delayed formation of the editorial board.

Manuscript Selection & Peer Review

Respondents were asked how their journal decides which articles to accept for publication. The most common responses were that they use some form of peer review, that the Editor-in-Chief or manager undertakes a preliminary review of manuscripts, and that the editorial board reviews submissions.

Digital Object Identifier (DOI) and International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)

Sixty-two respondents said that their journal had an ISSN. Only 53 respondents answered the question about DOIs, and of these nine said they did not know if their journal had DOIs, 17 said they did not, and 27 said they did. It is worth noting that of the respondents saying that they did not have – or did not know if they had, a DOI – 13 are included within BanglaJOL, which does allocate DOIs to the journals. This indicates that there is little awareness of the DOI among the participants responding to this survey. (Since this survey was undertaken, INASP has placed more emphasis on the DOI in its Improving Journal Quality training. See the Conclusions & Lessons Learned section at the end of this document for more details.)
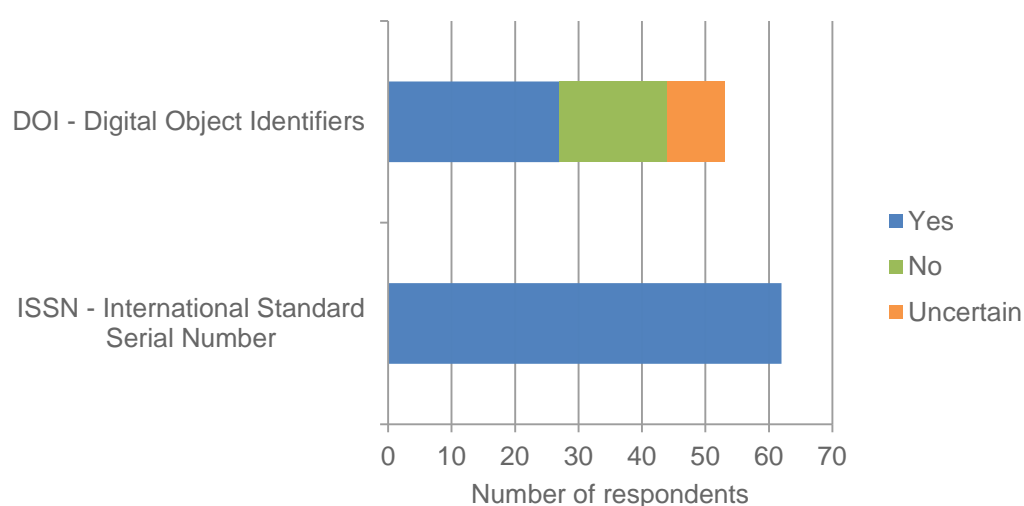
Figure 11: Use of DOIs and ISSNs

Online Submission

Fifty-seven people answered the question about online submission systems, with 3 saying they did not know if their journal had online submission, and 22 saying they did not have online submission.

Although 32 respondents said that they accepted online submission, further desk research revealed that only 15 have an online submission system. The others that reported having online submission appeared to either be referring to submission by email to the editor, or confusing the publication services provided through BanglaJol with submission (which can be undertaken on the system as an optional service). This may highlight a misunderstanding of terminology or a conflation of online submission (via an online system) with email submission.

Tracking Impact & Usage

Respondents were asked if they track the impact of their journal and, if so, how. The most common response was that they do not track the impact. Of those that did track impact the most common responses were that they tracked impact by looking at number of citations, downloads, comments, and page views. One journal commented that they use the Impact Factor (calculated by Thomson Reuters) to track their impact.

Respondents were also asked if they track the impact of their articles using article-level metrics. Most (80%) of the 54 people who responded to this question said that they were not using article-level metrics. However, it was clear from the previous question that they were, in fact, using article-level

metrics to judge their journal's impact. For example, citations, page views and downloads are all article-level metrics and respondents reported using these.
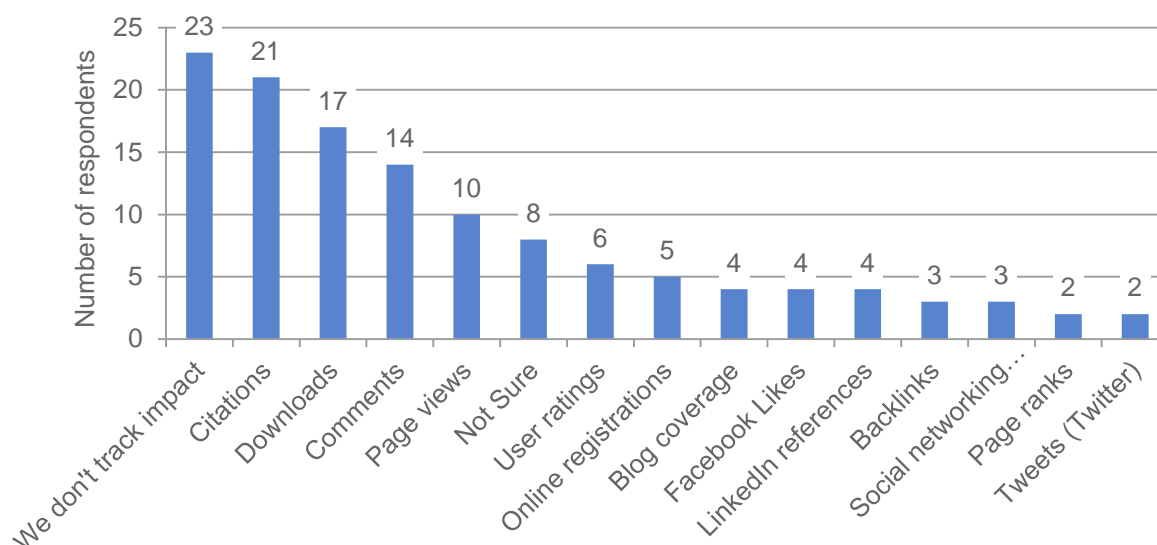
Figure 12: Measures for Tracking Journal Impact

Section 5: Journal Access & Formats

Print & Online Access

Respondents were asked if they provide print and/or online access to their journals, and whether it is fee-based or free. There were 63 respondents who said they provide print access, and 62 who reported that they provide online access. Almost the same number of individuals said that they provided printed copies for a fee as for free.

Some respondents also reported that they provide free access to their journal after a period of time (e.g. two years) or in the case of personal contact.

It is worth noting that desk research found the six online journals reported to be only available behind a subscription paywall are all freely available on BanglaJOL. These journals may be provided through a subscription service on another site.
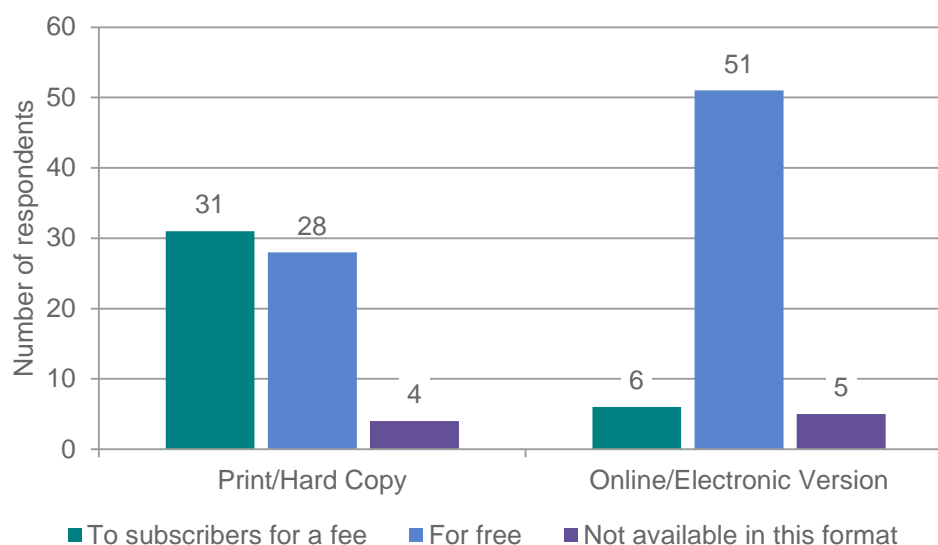
Figure 13: Breakdown of Free/Fee Print and Online Access

All but four respondents indicated that they provide their journal in print/hard copy, either free or for a fee. The following reasons were given for why their journal was made available in print / hard copy:

Table 1: Reasons for print/hard copy

Reason	Total
Reader demand	11
Library / organization requirements	9
Easier to deliver (without internet access)	7
Started in print / haven't stopped	7
Number of potential readers / reach (rural / suburban)	5
Author requirements	4
More accustomed	3
Storage for longer period	3
Older readers	2
Copy for Authors	2
Discipline requirements	2
Other reasons given: Seen as more 'authentic' Necessary to assess impact factor Preservation Encourage young readers to publish Display purposes Printed for a fee To include additional news to readers	

In addition, those that printed their journals were asked what services were provided by their printer.

Most respondents referred to printing services, and there were also some references to:

- Logistics and financial support
- Making the online version available
- Processing reviewers comments
- Editing / referencing support

Respondents were asked when they made their journal available online. There was a notable increase in the number of journals moving online in 2007, with a steady increase until 2012/2013 and then one journal reported going online in 2014. It is worth noting that BanglaJOL was launched in 2007 and may have provided a catalyst for the journals in the country to move online.
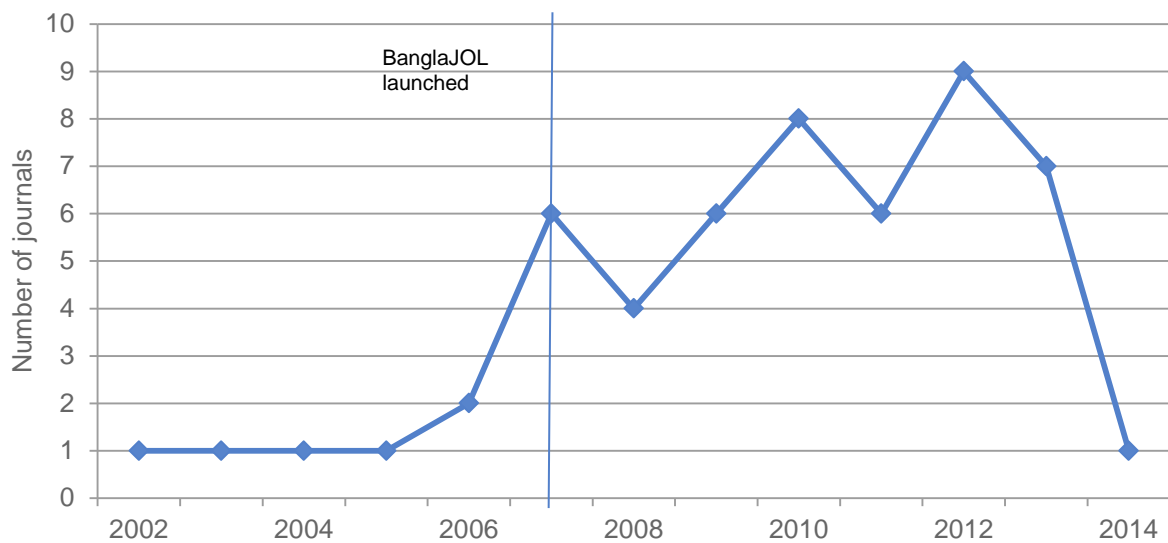
Figure 14: Year Journal Moved Online

Inclusion in Indexes, Directories & Aggregators

Respondents were asked in which indexes, directories or aggregators they are registered; the choices that received two or more 'yes' responses are shown in Figure 15. The most cited aggregator was BanglaJOL: of the 59 people who responded to the question, 46 indicated they are part of BanglaJOL. The next most frequent responses were the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Index Copernicus and HINARI, all of which had more than 10 responses.

Number of respondents
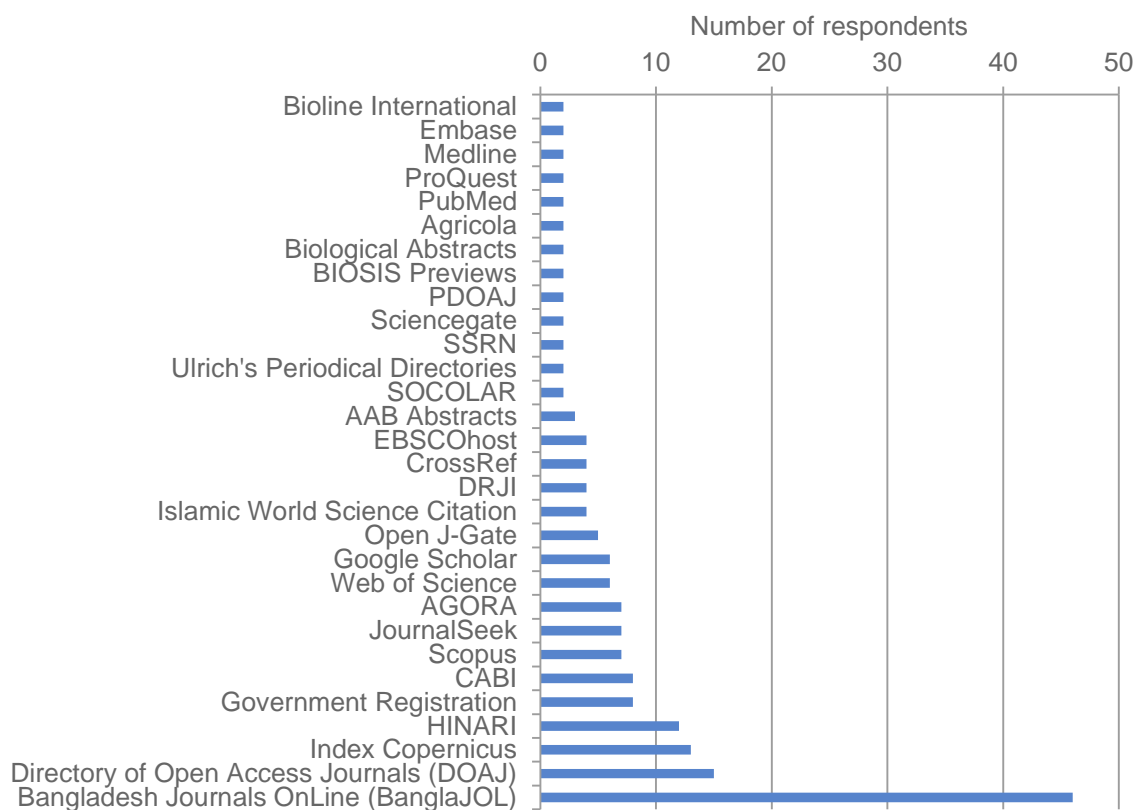
Figure15: Indexes, Directories, Aggregators

Respondents were then asked if they were registered with any other indexes, databases, or journal aggregators. There is no consensus about what constitutes an index, therefore the responses to this question are hard to interpret. What is clear is that journals in Bangladesh are registered with both quality-assured and non-quality assured indexes, and that there is a lack of awareness about the nature of indexes.

For example, some respondents reported that their journal was indexed in CrossRef, which is a membership organization that includes all journals within BanglaJOL and those with DOIs. CrossRef is viewed as an important affiliation for journals in Bangladesh, however, it is not a quality index. Google Scholar was also cited as one of the indexes or databases with which journals were registered, but Google Scholar is an online search engine rather than a quality index.

In addition to these issues, there were indications that some journals were indexed with bogus or predatory organizations. This is an ongoing concern, and is discussed briefly in the Conclusions & Lessons Learned.

Table 2: Other Indexes, Databases, or Journal Aggregators (with some cleaning of data)

Academic Search Complete
Agroforestry Abstracts
Arts & Humanities Citation Index
Asia Journals Online
Bangladesh Medical Research Council (Annual Index)
Biology & Environmental Sciences
CAB Health
Cabell Directory
Cambridge Scientific Abstracts
CIAT
CiteFactor
Current Abstracts
Current Contents / Agriculture
Directory of ERA
Electronic Journals Library
EMBiology
EmCare
ETH-Bibliothek
EyeSource
Forest Products Abstracts
Genamics
JournalSeek
Geneva Foundation for Medical Education
http://bmpt.du.ac.bd/ (Department of Biomedical Physics & Technology)
Index Copernicus
Index Medicus
International Pharmaceutical Abstracts
Jifactor
Jourinfo
Journal Directory
Journal Index
Journal Rate
Journals for Free
JournalTOC
NewJour (Lauinger Library)
OARE
Open University Malaysia
Popline
PSOAR & PGIAR group
Globethics.net
Georgetown University Law Library
Researchbib
Science Central
SOAJ
TEEL
UDLthesis
Uifactor
Universe Digital Library
University of Dhaka
WHO Global Index Medicus for South-East Asia
WorldCat
Freemedicaljournals.com

Permission to Deposit Articles or Manuscripts into Repositories

Sixty respondents replied to the question about granting authors permission to upload their articles into repositories. Not all respondents replied to each of the questions (about the author's original version, the peer-reviewed version, and the final version).

When asked if authors were permitted to upload their articles to an online repository, almost two thirds said they would not allow the author's version to be uploaded, and over half said that they would not allow the peer-reviewed version to be uploaded. However, just over two thirds said that they would allow the final, typeset version to be uploaded either immediately or after a delay.
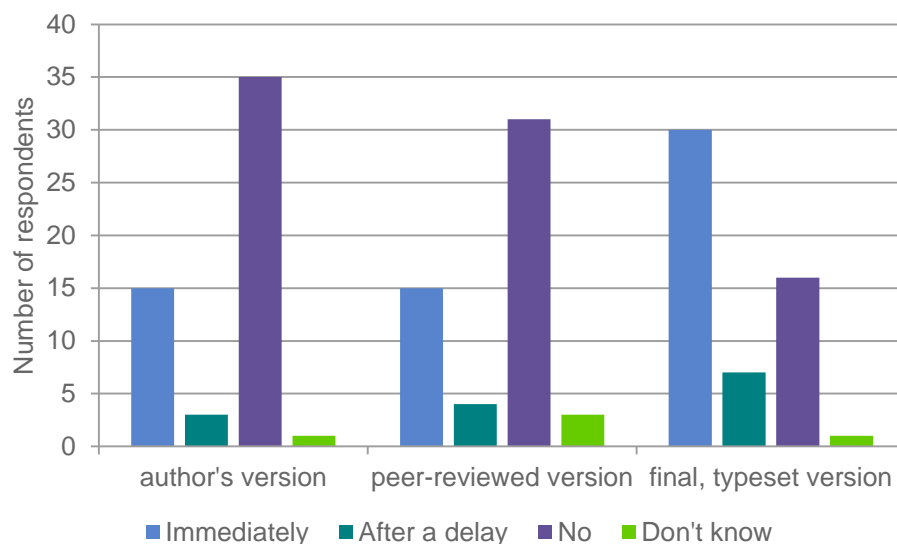
Figure 16: Permission to Deposit Articles or Manuscripts in Repositories

Section 6: Management, Publishing & Other Support for the Journal

Types of Organization Serving as Publisher

Sixty-six respondents provided information about who published their journal. Less than a quarter of the journals represented said that they were published by a university, with just over half of journals published by a scholarly/professional society or association instead. Four people indicated that their journal was published by another type of organization, three of these could be included within existing categories, and 1 indicated that they were published by a software company. Only five journals were reported to be published by a publishing company (two by a commercial publishing company, and three by a non-profit).
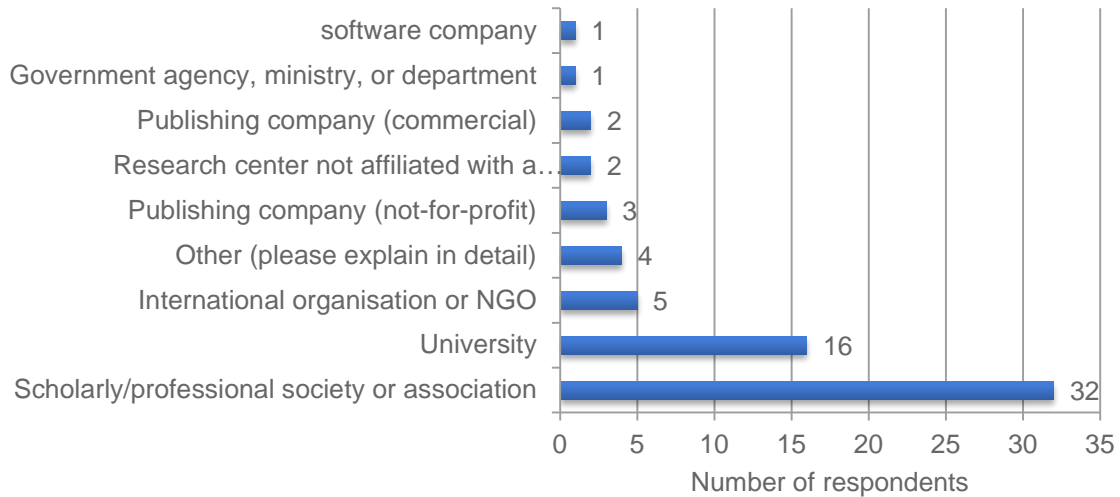
Figure 17: Types of Publishing Organizations

Day-to-Day Operations & Long-Term Oversight

Fifty-nine respondents answered a question about who was responsible for the day-to-day operations of their journal. As with earlier questions there was some confusion about job titles, however most of the replies that were given fall under one of the suggested categories. It is worth keeping in mind, though, that Journal Managers and Managing Editors may be the same roles with slightly different names, but have been captured separately since it is possible that they perform very separate roles (a Managing Editor is often mostly responsible for editorial processes, whereas a Journal Manager is often more involved with the production and not the editorial processes).

It is also notable that responsibility for the day-to-day running of most journals lies with the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board or a small group of volunteers, and that there is little other support for the editorial teams and the Editor-in-Chief.

Figure 18: Who Handles Day-to-Day Operations?

When asked about responsibility for the long-term survival of the journal, the parent association was identified as taking this responsibility, whether they were a university, an association or another entity. However, the Editor is frequently seen as responsible for the long-term operation of the journal, and not the parent organization.
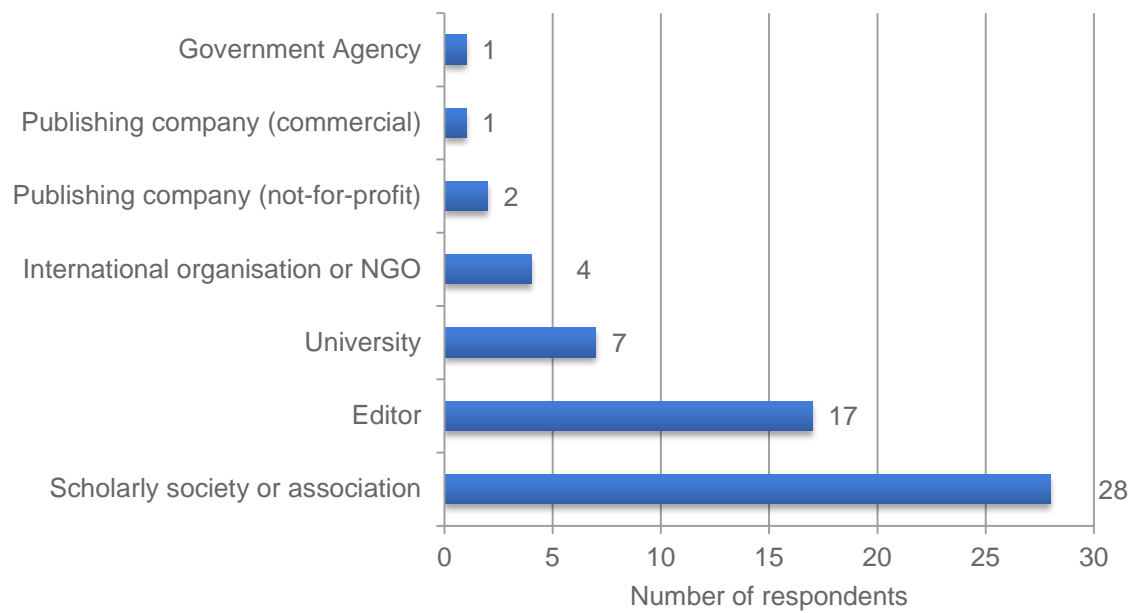
Figure 19: Who is Ultimately Responsible for the Continuation of this Journal?

Services Used by Journal

Respondents were asked to select the services that their journal used from a list of choices, and to indicate who provided those services: the journal or the publisher. Based on the responses to this and other questions, there appeared to be some problem in differentiating the journal and the publisher. Also, respondents could answer 'uncertain', which might mean they were uncertain about who provided the service, or about whether their journal that service. This has limited the ability to interpret these results. However, more clarification about services is reflected in Tables 3 and 4 below.
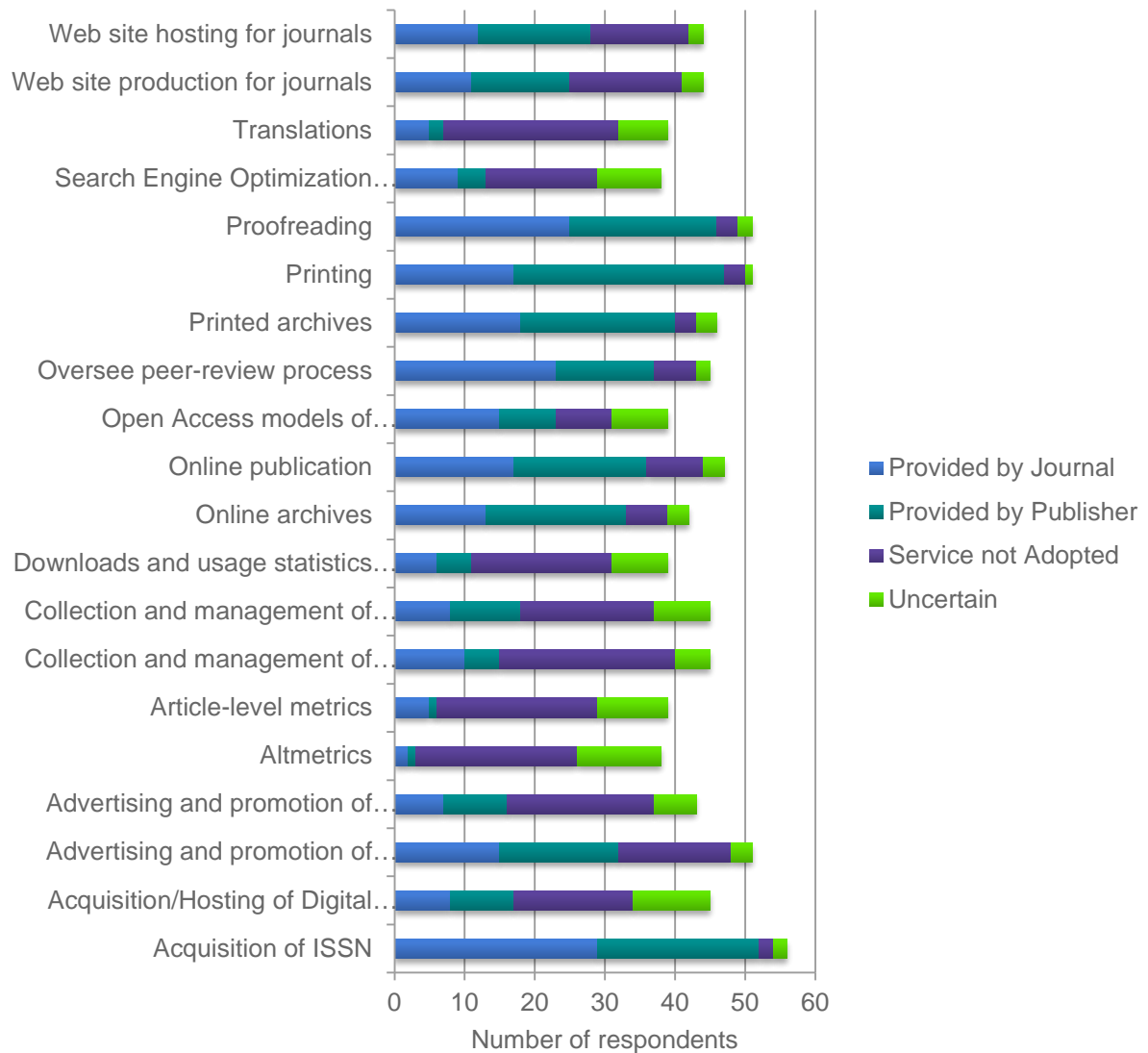
Figure 20: Services Adopted by Journals

Table 3 shows the top services (selected by more than 10 respondents) provided by the publisher and Table 4 shows the top services provided by the journal.

Table 3: Services Provided by Publishers

Service	Number of respondents
Printing	30
Acquisition of ISSN	23
Printed archives	22
Proofreading	21
Online archives	20
Online publication	19
Advertising and promotion of journals	17
Web site hosting for journals	16
Oversee peer-review process	14
Web site production for journals	14
Collection and management of subscription income	10

Table 4: Services Provided by Journals

| Service	Number of respondents
Acquisition of ISSN	29
Proofreading	25
Oversee peer-review process	23
Printed archives	18
Online publication	17
Printing	17
Advertising and promotion of journals	15
Open Access models of dissemination/business models	15
Online archives	13
Web site hosting for journals	12
Web site production for journals	11
Collection and management of author fees	10

There is overlap of all but three of the top services provided:

- Open Access models of dissemination/business models (provided by the journal – although these were mentioned by some respondents as being provided by the publisher)

- Collection and management of author fees (provided by the journal – although these were mentioned by some respondents as being provided by the publisher)

- Collection and management of subscription income (provided by the publisher)

As a follow-up question, respondents were asked what additional services they would like their publisher to provide. The types of services proposed indicated not only realistic requirements, but also some aspirations. These are summarized below.

- Online:
  - Online publishing
  - An automated internet service so that articles can be deposited and peer-reviewed on the system itself
  - Available free online

- o Website / hosting
- Publishing process
  - o Error-free publication
  - o Regular publishing (2 respondents)
  - o Good quality papers
- Financial support (6) for:
  - o Honorarium of editor, reviewers
  - o Hard copy/ print
  - o Accommodation office
  - o Publication cost
- For CrossRef / DOI
- Manpower (2)
- Logistics support
- IT and printing services
- DOIs

Section 7: Economics of Journal Publishing

The following set of questions raised issues related to journals' expenses, income sources, and revenue.

Current & Anticipated Financial Status

Almost half the respondents indicated that their journals are currently operating at a loss, and a large proportion of the remaining respondents indicated that they are breaking even. Only 10% of journals said that they were currently generating a financial surplus. However, in the next 3-5 years respondents appeared cautiously optimistic, with over half hoping to break even and over a quarter expecting to generate a financial surplus, while 20% still expected to be operating at a loss.

42%
48%
10%

- Breaking even
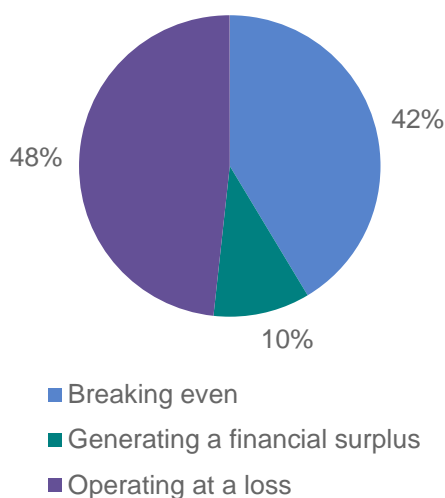- Generating a financial surplus
- Operating at a loss

Figure 21: Current Financial Status

20%
53%
27%

- Breaking even
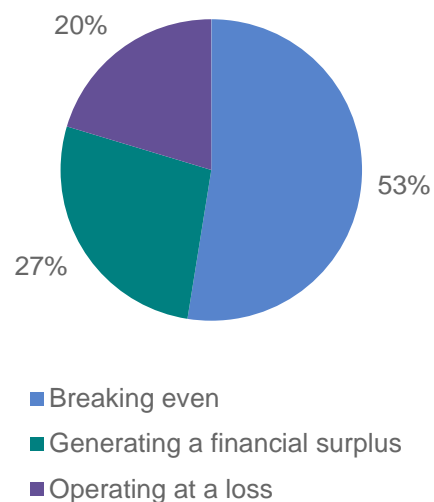- Generating a financial surplus
- Operating at a loss

Figure 22: Anticipated Financial Status in 3-5 Years

Respondents were asked to share any comments on their current financial situation, and the following themes emerged from their responses:

- The current struggle to maintain the journal, looking for sponsorship and the need for change

- A reliance on volunteers, using their own facilities, to keep the journal running

- The belief that, if there were funds or payment for volunteers, the journal could be more efficient or professional, could operate more smoothly or could have more dedicated staff

- Dependence on support from NGOs, government (three respondents), donations (two respondents) from academics or scientists, membership fees, or their association

- Collection of fees from authors as a form of financial support, though one respondent mentioned a dependence on author fees and yet an insufficient publication rate for this to be a viable source of income

- BanglaJOL as a free online publishing platform which had allowed journals to reduce their running costs. Two respondents cited this and said they were thinking of revoking their print copies

- One respondent said that they were a non-profit with the aim of promoting their field rather than financial gain

While answers to the above question indicate a dependence on external support, when asked if they receive monetary funding, income, or revenue of any kind, 30 people (out of 69 who responded to the question, or 43%) said that they do not receive any financial support.
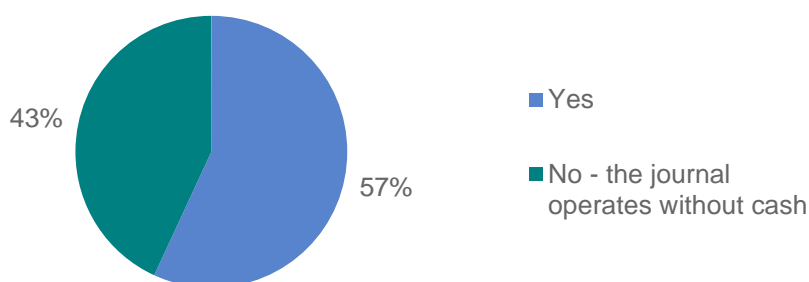
Figure 23: Journals' Use of Monetary Funding

In addition to the responses to the previous question on financial status, when asked for comments respondents said they received support from membership fees; author fees; advertising; and donations from companies. Some also mentioned a loss of funding sources.

Non-Financial Support & Resources

Reflecting responses to previous questions, the top sources of non-financial support were identified as volunteered time (from the Editor-in-Chief, editors and peer reviewers), which was cited by 43 people (or 78% of the 55 respondents to this question). Other important forms of non-financial support were identified as the use of office space and resources from the host institution and a free journal hosting service (also referred to in previous responses).
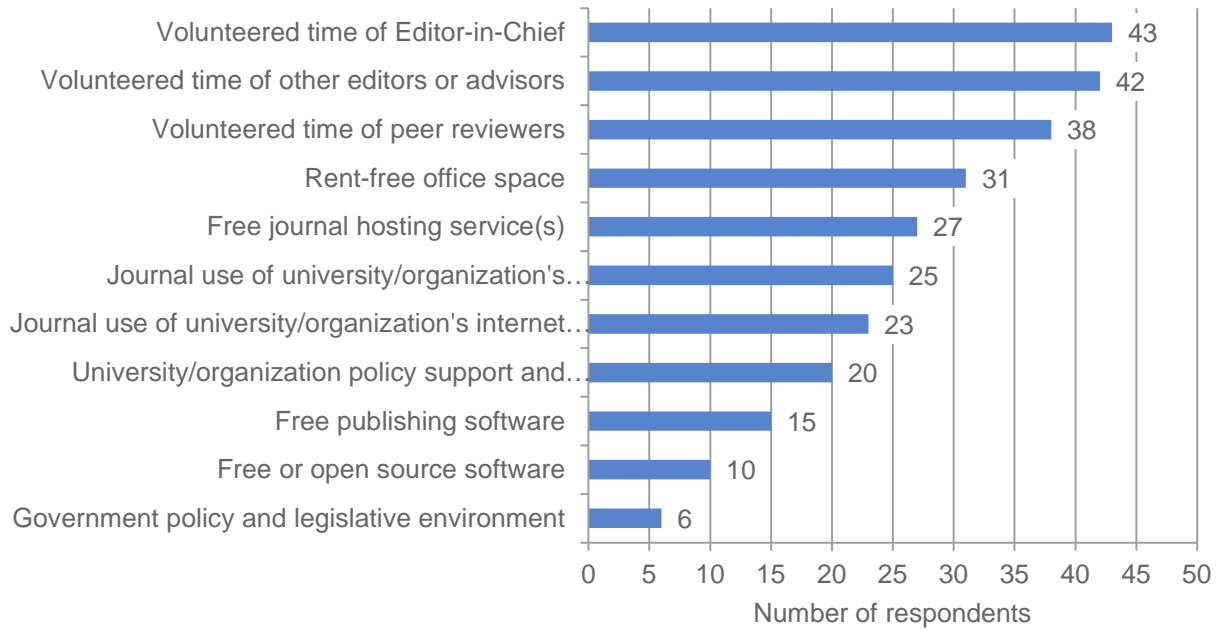
Figure 24: Sources of Non-Financial Support

Sources of Monetary Funding, Income & Revenue

Again, reflecting comments from the first question in this section, those sources of income selected as very important by the greatest number of respondents were: funds from a scholarly society or other (non-academic) organization which runs the journal, donations from organizations or corporations, funds from the university which runs the journal, and advertising. Other top answers also reflected previous comments. There were few respondents that offered additional sources of funding to those presented, and those suggested did not present anything not already covered.
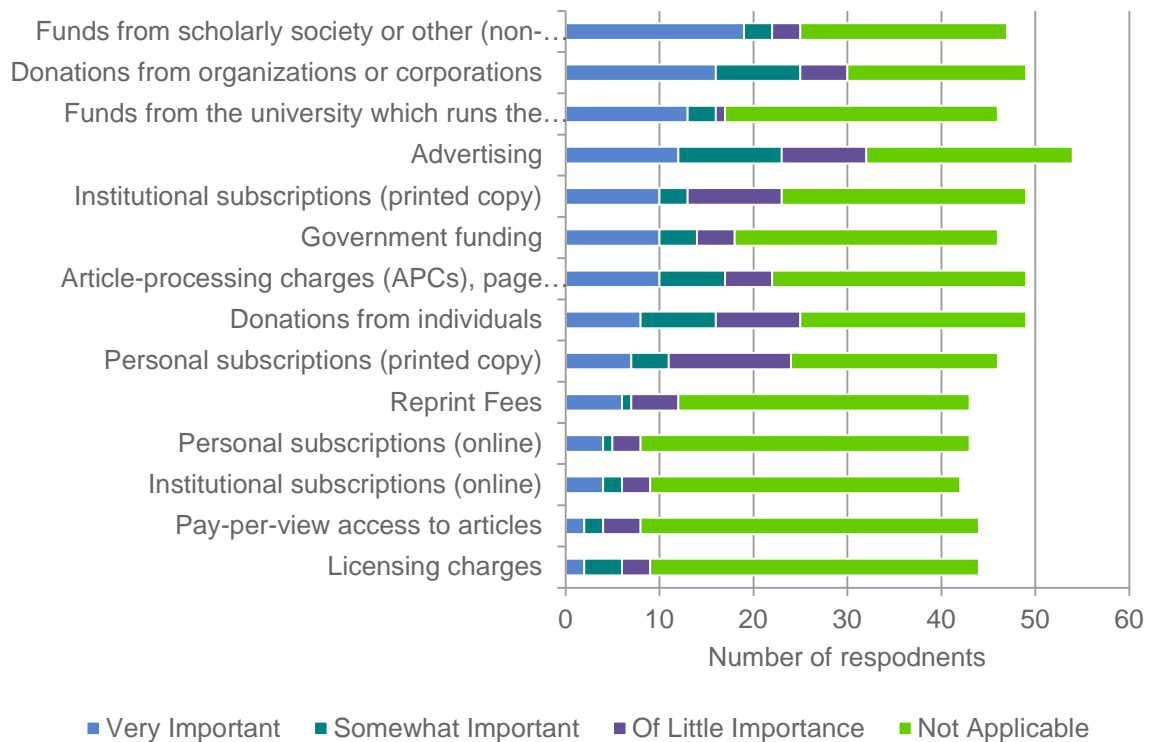
Figure 25: Sources of Funding, Income & Revenue

Author Fees & Waivers

There were around 53 respondents to the various questions about whether a journal charges author fees, and the majority did not report charging fees. Among those who did report charging authors, this was usually in the form of Article Processing Fees (APCs) on point of acceptance, or, less frequently, figure fees. Of the journals that did impose charges on authors, three offered waivers in the following situations:

- For authors from the poorest countries in the world (as specified by the United Nations, http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0908763.html)

- For authors who are members of the organization

- Where an author is unable to pay the fees but the article is deemed important
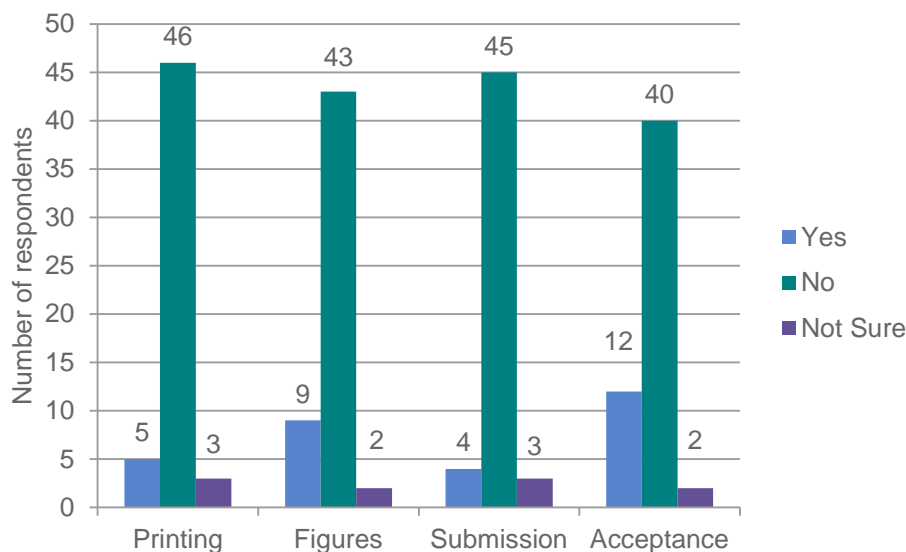
Figure 26: Fees charged to authors

Expenses

Respondents were asked to indicate their journal's main expenses. The highest number of respondents (just over 80% of the 60 people who responded to this option) indicated significant expenses for printing, followed by graphic design, typesetting and page layout, then mailing/distribution and office equipment, stationery and materials. Honorariums and advertising/marketing were identified by the fewest respondents as significant costs, reflecting previous comments that funds are not available for these services. There were no additional expenses identified that did not fit into the categories given.
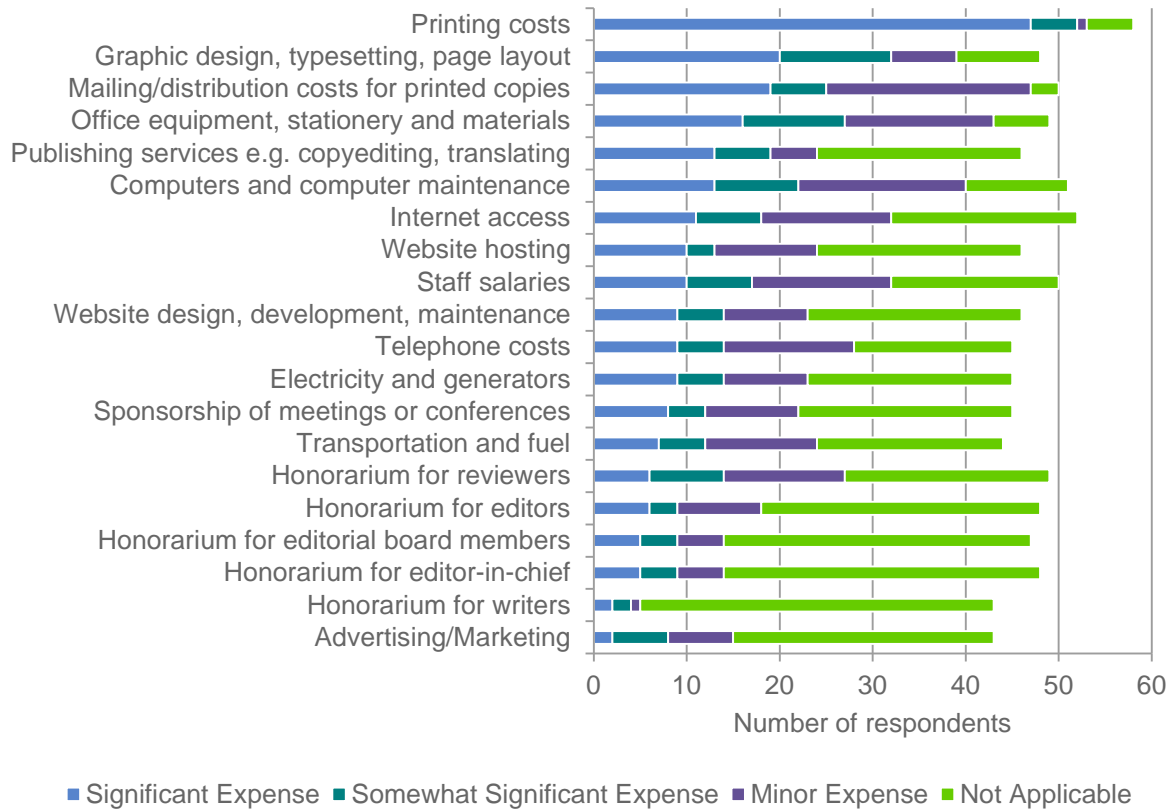
Figure 27: Journal Expenses

Section 8: Open Access

Respondents were asked a series of questions related to their journals' Open Access status. A journal that is Open Access is understood here as being freely available online at the point of publication. However, this was not made clear when the survey was administered. By cross-referencing answers to these questions with responses to other questions in this survey, it is clear that there was substantial confusion about the meaning of Open Access.

In particular, some respondents seemed to conflate Open Access with 'online publishing' or 'online access'. For example, six of the journals represented in this survey reported that they charged subscription to the online journal in an earlier question, but paradoxically reported that their journal was Open Access in this section. Also, when asked about the benefits of Open Access, many of the answers provided seemed to refer to the benefits of online publishing. In most cases, it appears that, while respondents were asked about the benefits of becoming an Open Access journal, their answers reflect the perceived benefits of either Open Access or online publishing, or the combined benefits of both.

This conflation of Open Access with online publishing is reflected in this statement from a respondent:

> *"Our shifting to open access [sic] brought significant changes in the journal's reputation and coverage. Our journal is currently searched and browsed by an international audience and we receive a good number of submissions from an international audience. Just [a] few minutes ago I received an email from a Professor of Library and Information Science in Pakistan wishing to submit an article for our journal. Moreover, we stopped publishing huge printed copies of the journal as it is already available online. We only issue very limited printed copies. Therefore, we were able to reduce the amount required to publish it in hard copies after our journal went online."*

While this respondent's comment does not reflect views about Open Access, it is still a valuable indication of the value of online publishing to the publishing sector in Bangladesh. However, the

attitudes about Open Access publishing among journals in Bangladesh remains unclear, as the data are impossible to interpret with any reliability.

Section 9: Subscription Model

This section was designed to elicit responses related to subscription publication or hybrid models of publication (i.e. offering some free content within a subscription-access online journal). However, due to the design of the survey, a number of individuals responded to the questions in this section even though they had indicated that they offered full Open Access rather than being subscription based. In addition, the questions asked respondents about both their online subscriptions and their print subscriptions, but did not enable separation of the responses. For all of these reasons, it is very hard to reliably interpret the answers to questions about subscription models.

It is possible, however to glean some useful information from recipients:

- Different charges were applied by at least one journal to different countries of the world, with higher rates charged to subscribers from wealthier nations.

- However there are issues regarding international payments, such as "Cheaper and easy to pay for national authors", "difficult to send [payments] from [a] foreign country", and "[difficulties] receiving [payment from] APC authors from overseas."

- And there was one indication of the impact of freely available online access on [journal] income: "Hardly any non-member purchases the hard-copy journal as it is freely available online."

Section 10: Author Issues

Copyright & Licences

Respondents were asked how they deal with copyrights and licences. Intellectual property rights law stipulates that authors must either retain the copyright for their articles but assign a publishing licence to the journal, or assign copyright to the journal. However, throughout the world many journals do not formally require authors to assign a licence (or, indeed, copyright) to the journal. This survey, therefore asked about the current working practices of the journals and revealed a clear need to raise awareness about copyright requirements (see the Conclusions & Lessons Learned for more information).

Thirty-two respondents indicated that they required authors to sign over copyright to the journal/publisher, 16 allowed authors to retain copyright but required them to assign licences to the publisher, and 10 allowed the author to own the copyright (but apparently did not require the authors to assign a licence). These responses suggest that there is confusion about the needs for obtaining publishing rights or assigning copyright, which is not uncommon across the publishing world due to the complexity of copyright law.
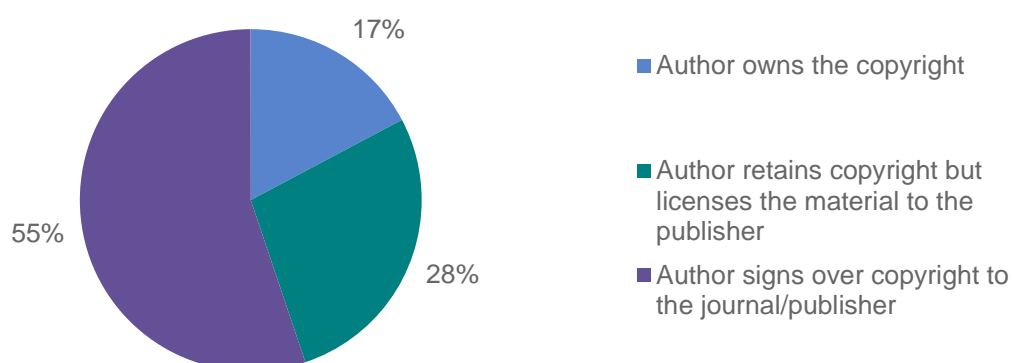

17%

55%

28%

■Author owns the copyright

■Author retains copyright but licenses the material to the publisher

■Author signs over copyright to the journal/publisher

Figure 28: Copyright Ownership of Articles

When asked about the licence under which their journal publishes, the majority of respondents were unclear on whether or not they used creative commons licences. The most identified form of licence used as a default was copyright, with no more than six responses (for CC BY) for any of the creative commons licences.
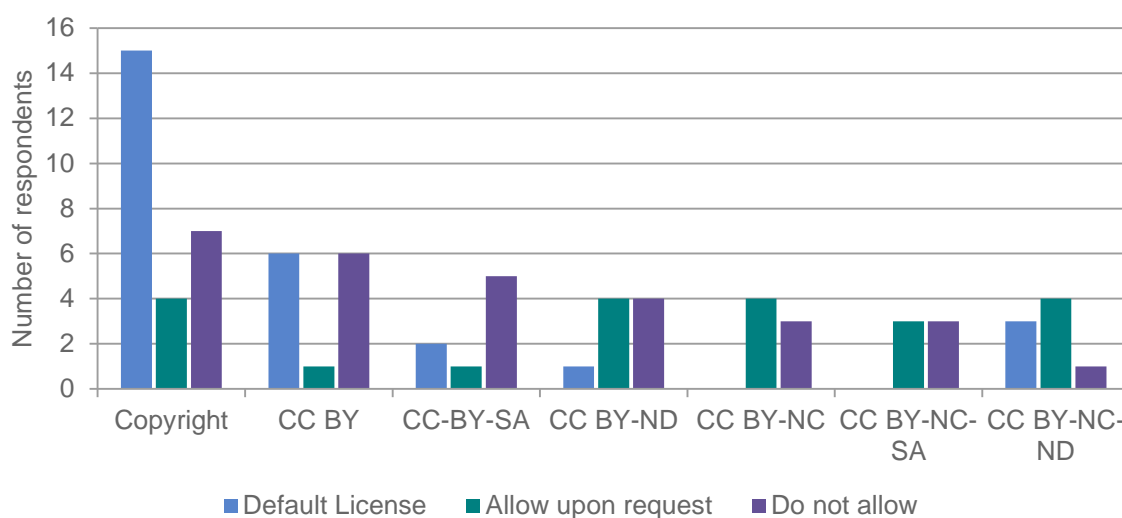

Figure 29: Types of Licences Offered

Competition for Manuscripts

Respondents were asked to explain if their journal had ever experienced competition for manuscripts from overseas journals or other journals in Bangladesh. There were 34 responses to this question, and 21 indicated that they were not experiencing any competition. One respondent indicated that this was due to their specialist area of focus. However, 13 responses reflected experiences of increasing competition. For example, several journals indicated that those more established in their field or with a higher impact factor were receiving more submissions, while one journal suggested that many of the articles they reject are accepted by other journals. They also suggested that there was a preference by international authors for more recognized journals.

Several other respondents suggested that there are too many journals in their field and too few authors, increasing competition to secure manuscripts and resulting in difficulties in publishing on time. One respondent stated that: "Some Open Access online journals [have] attract[ed] recent attention to authors because of their high speed of publication."

Section 11: Current & Future Issues (Open-Ended Questions)

Predatory Open Access

Respondents were asked if they were familiar with the phrase 'Predatory Open Access' and, if so, if it had affected their journal's practices in any way. Thirty-one respondents said that they were not aware of the term, while 10 said that they were aware of it but not affected by it. One respondent, however, said: "I know the term and we are aware of the consequences!" (For more information about predatory publishers, see the Conclusions & Lessons Learned.)

Concerns for the Next 3-5 Years

Forty-four individuals responded to the question about their top concerns related to publishing for the next 3-5 years. The most common theme (mentioned by 15 respondents) related to improving the quality of the manuscripts submitted to the journal. The following example reflects sentiments expressed by many other respondents:

"Presentation of articles is poor in many cases. The editors and reviewers have to give considerable time in reviewing, and in many cases have to help correct the presentation,

including English. At present, I have to perform a lot of these tasks as the Executive Editor. Unless I get more people with quality to give such services free of charge, we cannot handle more than 10 papers per year. If we simply reject the papers because of bad presentation and language we will not get enough articles."

The second most frequently cited concern was financial support for the journal to continue, mentioned by 12 respondents, while 9 respondents referred to concerns over the regularity of publications. All key concerns can be summarized as follows:

- Quality of manuscripts submitted (15 respondents)
- Financial (12)
- Frequency / regularity of publication / without delays (9)
- Skills of reviewers / improve review process (4)
- Indexation (4)
- Good impact factor (4)
- International reach of journal (readership / contributors) (3)
- Enthusiasm / continued support from (volunteer) staff (2)
- Training (2)

Other concerns included:

- Timely response of reviewers
- Publishing facilities
- Number of substandard journals
- Independently hosting journal website
- Reluctance of authors in their field to write papers
- Visibility of journal, Availability of articles
- Making journal available online
- Standardization
- Breadth of field covered
- Number of submissions

Other Insights, Observations, Ideas & Thoughts about Publishing in Bangladesh

The final question elicited 34 responses about insights, observations, ideas or thoughts on publishing in Bangladesh. Many of these reflected responses to the previous question, but the most common theme (cited by seven people) was the need for training of journal officials, particularly with regard to online publishing.

"Some advanced trainings are necessary for the Journal Manager, Executive Editor and editors to be familiar and acquainted with online publishing systems."

"As far I know most of the Bangladeshi editors are volunteers. They are involved in publishing a journal just out of passion, not for the token honorarium they are given. Government support is very important to cover almost total publication cost. [This] is particularly true for small associations like ours. The number of journals is increasing a lot, but I am concerned about quality of papers and regularity of publication. Editing needs devotion and patience, and not many old or young researchers are showing that."

Several respondents highlighted their concerns with the link between the increasing quantity of publications and the rise in plagiarism and reduced quality:

> "Many academic journals in Bangladesh, particularly published by universities, are published only to help faculty members to get promotion at the university level. Moreover, a high level of plagiarism exists in Bangladesh. High officials and those concerned are avoiding this issue. It is one of main reasons some faculty members are still against Open Access publishing, as they have a fear of being criticized for their publication. I would request INASP to popularize the concept of Open Access in Bangladesh and provide appropriate mechanisms (such as software to check plagiarism) to the journal authority free of cost to help publishing internationally acclaimed high-impact research. It is always better to publish a few good articles than to publish a huge number of low-quality articles."

> "Recently a trend can be seen where young graduates have become 'addicts' for publication of papers. They are publishing plagiarised papers, low-quality papers in journals coming out of neighbouring countries, which will publish almost anything on payment of money."

One respondent suggested that if there were more accessible, higher standard publications they would be used by researchers:

> "Bangladesh needs more peer-reviewed quality journals with online access so that the researchers, students, academicians and policy-makers can use the scholarly articles for their respective purposes."

In contrast to comments identifying too many poor quality publications, several respondents referred to the difficulty in encouraging new authors to start publishing, particularly in certain fields:

> "Professionals are not very eager to write articles. It is usually the same people that send articles."

> "Publication has no relation with posting, promotion and scholarship for a doctor from the Health authority. Therefore the potential authors are very reluctant in research and publication."

> "Educating authors and readers about scientific publications. Encourage people to write about their works."

> "Publications not yet getting much importance in career development."

Reflecting a comment quoted above on the need to 'popularize' Open Access, another respondent identified a need to change the attitudes of authors towards Open Access and online publication:

> "'Authors from Bangladesh are not sufficiently aware regarding only Open Access online journal[s]. To most Bangladeshi authors, [a] print version is more important than more citation, impact factor, and indexation."

Part 3: Conclusions & Lessons Learned

The aim of this survey was to capture trends and patterns in the publishing sector in Bangladesh, and to compare this to the results of the survey in African countries undertaken in 2013. While the results have gone some way towards achieving this, they have also prompted a number of other questions and led to some important lessons for INASP and its partners.

The most important outcome of the survey may, in fact, be what was learned from the process of conducting it. The challenges have led to critical self-reflection and have already resulted in changes to the way INASP works, for example, with the addition of new modules to the Journal Quality training curriculum. The main challenges and the lessons learned from these are summarized below.

Ensuring Level of Knowledge of Respondents

Overall, the methodology used in the survey was not as robust as intended. In particular, there was not enough reflection on how the questions were phrased and the questions were predicated on there being shared knowledge of basic concepts and terminology. For example, the majority of journals surveyed have DOIs, but answers to the questions reflected a general lack of awareness of DOIs. Since the survey was conducted, INASP has added two new modules to its Journal Quality training

on DOIs, including instruction on how to find a DOI on BanglaJOL, how to include it in an abstract and in references. These new modules came as a direct result of learning from the process of conducting the survey.

Defining Key Terminology & Roles

Misunderstanding and confusion about the meanings of Open Access and 'hybrid journal' meant that the responses to questions about those topics could not be reliably interpreted. The key lesson for future surveys is not to embark upon the process with assumptions about terms and knowledge, and to state clear definitions for key terms.

Similarly, it would have been useful to ask respondents to state the duties that they undertake for their journal, rather than simply asking them for a job title, which can reflect different duties in different organizations.

Understanding Indexes & Recognizing Bogus Impact Factors

Answers to questions about indexes suggested that respondents have a low level of awareness of what a quality index is, particularly in comparison of other types of affiliations or resources. In addition, some journals are being indexed in apparently fraudulent indexes and being given unauthorized impact factors. When this survey was undertaken, bogus impact factors and predatory publishers were not as prevalent as they have become in the past year. This emphasizes the need to support publishers in developing regions to identify which indexes (and other publishing support services) are *bona fide* and which are bogus or predatory.

Deciphering Copyright Rules

The survey questions about copyright and licences provided a striking snapshot of current practices by publishers in Bangladesh, and flagged up a serious need to raise awareness among publishers about their responsibilities in relation to copyright. This is the case, not only in Bangladesh, but in many countries, due to the highly complex nature of intellectual property rights.