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An Analytical Comparison of DOAJ Journals and OpenDOAR Repositories in Library and Information Science: Access, Visibility, and Scholarly Communication

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Abstract

Open access journals and repositories are two essential infrastructures through which Library and Information Science (LIS) research can become accessible, visible and reusable. This paper makes an analytical comparison of Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and OpenDOAR repositories with regard to access, visibility and scholarly communication. The study employs a quantitative comparative design supported by structured secondary data.variables. Because live harvesting of directories requires researcher-side exports from DOAJ and OpenDOAR, the empirical section features a transparent coded demonstration dataset of 200 records, drawn equally from DOAJ LIS journals and OpenDOAR LIS repositories. We applied frequency analysis, percentage analysis, cross tabulation, chi-square test, compare independent samples, correlation analysis and visibility score model. According to the analyses; records of DOAJ type would create a stronger signal of journal-level visibility, license signalling, peer-review transparency and access to formally published articles; while records of OpenDOAR type would rather create a stronger signal of institutional knowledge visibility, green open access, repository interoperability and management of scholarly assets over the long-term. Metadata completeness had a positive relationship with visibility, indicating that access alone does not equate to discoverability. The results reaffirm the notion that DOAJ and OpenDOAR are complementary rather than competing platforms or open scholarly communication infrastructures. The study suggests that LIS institutions need to enhance their metadata governance, implement persistent identifier practices, review accessibility, support multi-lingual discovery and directory-based evaluation in a systematic manner.

Keywords: DOAJ, OpenDOAR, open access journals, institutional repositories, Library and Information Science, scholarly communication, research visibility

1. Introduction

Open access plays a vital role in the modern scholarly communication system as it actively intervenes in the way a research outcome is disseminated, discovered, generated and re-used.

In libraries and information services, this change is critical as the libraries are not only users of these open access outputs but also managers of open publishing platforms. According to UNESCO (2021), open science is a wider movement relating to open access to publications, data, educational resources, software, hardware and open infrastructures, where directory services and repositories are a sub-element of a larger policy ecosystem of fair circulation of knowledge.

The Directory of Open Access Journals is among the most visible quality-oriented discovery services of open access journals. As a worldwide index of different open access journals, it emphasises quality content, openness of data and global representation (DOAJ, 2026a). DOAJ. (2026a). Directory of Open Access Journals. The public interface also claims large-scale directory coverage across countries, languages, and article records, making it a useful source for LIS researchers studying the visibility of open access journals. The usefulness of DOAJ for bibliometric and directory-based analysis is that a researcher could follow a replicable data collection protocol (DOAJ, 2026b, 2026c). DOAJ also allows for metadata services that include CSV download, API use and OAI-PMH support.

Jisc has OpenDOAR, which carries out a different but complementary function. The Jisc (2026) article states that it is a global directory of academic open access repositories. Furthermore, it is a quality-assured and editable directory. As a result, it enables identification, browsing and searching by features. Some of these features are location, software and material type. The visibility of a repository is not just confined to a single journal title. It involves the repository acting as an institutional memory. Moreover, it includes preprints, theses, reports, data-linked outputs, conference papers and other locally curated scholarly objects. As such, DOAJ and OpenDOAR represent the journal discovery or quality-signalling side versus the green and institutional side, respectively, of the ecosystem.

It is important to compare them as LIS scholarship often assumes a non-interventionist stance in case of 2. The studies based on DOAJ typically discuss journal level attributes such as country, language, licensing, APCs and peer review. On the contrary, repository studies focus on metadata policies, software platforms, OAI-PMH interfaces, content types and institutional discoverability. A comparative analysis can clarify the differences, the commonalties, and the complimentary roles of these infrastructures in LIS scholarly communication.

2. Literature review

Open Access Publishing and Journal Visibility.

Publishing in open-access is not an economic or technical model. This includes the gold, diamond, hybrid and green arrangements, each with different implications for authors, publishers and readers. The works of Björk and Korkeamäki (2020) and Siler and Frenken (2020) highlight the substantial and growing role of economic issues in understanding scholarly communication. The fact that the DOAJ includes fee-charging and no-fee journals matters for LIS because the APC status can affect the equity of scholarly participation.

The high costs for authors to publish in open access have raised concerns regarding control of publishing power; and Article Processing Charges. AAP (ALPSP) 1/3/21 larger publishers butler centred analysis open access environment revenue models while budzinski analyze drivers apcs. DOAJ's metadata pertaining to APCs, licenses and journal transparency is therefore not only descriptive for LIS researchers, but also relevant to debates on equitable publishing and global participation.

In the library and information science context, Journals are also important dimensions that enhance findability. According to a study by Mehroof and Rai (2026) on LIS journals indexed in DOAJ, LIS journal websites continue to encounter findability, accessibility, and search-engine-related challenges. This literature supports

the addition of visibility indicators in comparative research since open availability is insufficient if users, discovery systems and search engines cannot reliably locate and use the content.

The Working Group suggested that…

Institutional repositories are major green open access channels and depositories of institutional knowledge. OpenDOAR enhances the discovery of repositories by providing directory-level information about repositories which has been quality assured. Such information includes location, software and material type (Jisc, 2026). According to COAR's Community Framework for Good Practices in Repositories, discovery, access, reuse, integrity, authenticity, preservation, sustainability and governance are all repository-quality facets, showing deposit evaluation should not be limited to availability of contents only (COAR, 2022).

The repository metadata quality issue is common in digital library research. Tarver et al. (2022) show that metadata quality benchmarking is related to resource access and discovery; AydınÇolak and Eroğlu (2025) find inconsistency, incompleteness and accuracy problems in institutional academic repositories. The use of metadata completeness as a predictor of visibility is justified by the findings in the present comparison.

Further discoverability studies show that repositories must be discoverable beyond the institution's website. According to Macgregor (2020), optimizing the repository can improve content discoverability while Dong and Tay (2023) shed light on search engine visibility, repository usage metrics and exposure to aggregators. OpenAIRE also emphasizes that repositories must provide OAI-PMH exposure, validate and create interoperable metadata to be integrated into wider open science discovery services (OpenAIRE 2023).

Scholarly Communication in Librarianship and Information Science

The publishing landscape affecting LIS scholars is shaped by pricing barriers, linguistic diversity, issues of indexing and visibility. Lund et al. (2023) identify barriers to scholarly publishing by LIS researchers across national contexts. In his publication, Majumdar (2023) brings the concept of open peer review to the fore within the scholarly publishing ecosystem, indicating that issues of transparency and evaluation practices are now at the heart of debates relating to trust and dissemination. LIS outputs are the products that emerge from library and information science scholarship.

Recent work on repository-focused reviews suggests that institutional repository continue to be valuable but have sustainability, metadata and governance issues. In this respect, DOAJ and OpenDOAR can be seen as complementary infrastructures: DOAJ helps with journal-level quality discovery while OpenDOAR helps with repository-level discovery and benchmarking. Through a comparative approach, libraries can learn how to improve their publishing and repository services.

3. Research Gap

Previous research has separately examined DOAJ journals, journal websites, APCs, repository metadata and repository discoverability. However, fewer studies compare DOAJ and OpenDOAR within the same LIS framework using common indicators of access, visibility and scholarly communication. This gap is important because LIS institutions often manage both journal-publishing support and institutional repository services. Without a shared analytical framework, it is difficult to judge whether open access visibility problems arise from licensing, metadata quality, platform structure, language concentration, repository interoperability or directory-level discoverability.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To compare DOAJ journals and OpenDOAR repositories in Library and Information Science.
- To analyse differences in access models, visibility, discoverability and metadata practices.
- To examine country-wise, language-wise and subject-wise distribution patterns.
- To assess the contribution of both platforms to scholarly communication.
- To identify challenges and opportunities for LIS researchers, libraries and institutions.

5. Research Questions

• How do DOAJ journals and OpenDOAR repositories differ in terms of access and visibility?

• What countries, languages and subject areas dominate the coded LIS records?

• What metadata and indexing indicators influence discoverability?

• How do DOAJ and OpenDOAR support scholarly communication in LIS?

• What statistical differences can be observed between journal and repository records?

6. Hypotheses

• H01: There is no significant difference between DOAJ journals and OpenDOAR repositories in terms of visibility score.

• H02: There is no significant relationship between platform type and accessibility indicators.

• H03: There is no significant association between country of origin and type of open access platform.

• H04: Metadata completeness does not significantly influence visibility and discoverability.

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The research applies a study design of quantitative comparative. According to the conceptual design, the researcher will download relevant LIS records from DOAJ and OpenDOAR, code the common variables, and execute statistical analysis on the two platforms. The manuscript contains a clear demonstration dataset to illustrate the complete analytical workflow. The classroom replication and proposal method presentation are suitable forms of the paper. However, formal claims should be made only after a live data extraction by the researcher from the two directories.

Data Sources and Unit of Analysis

The data sources intended are official metadata journal DOAJ and official records repository OpenDOAR. The DOAJ-analysis aspect's unit of analysis is the LIS-relevant open access journal record. The identification of the LIS-relevant institutional, subject or digital library repository record is a key aspect of OpenDOAR. The selection of the variables occurred through examining directory fields, metadata documentation and repository-quality literature (COAR, 2022; DOAJ, 2026b; Jisc, 2026; OpenAIRE, 2023).

Sampling and Data Status-7.3

The proposed operational sampling method consist of purposive sampling based on L.I.S relevance. For authentic replication, the investigator should fetch (i) all applicable LIS-associated DOAJ records and (ii) all applicable OpenDOAR records edited under the library and information science, digital libraries, scholarly communication, archives or closely related areas. This paper has presented data processing in which coded records as 200 were prepared. It also includes 100 DOAJ-type journal records and 100 OpenDOAR-type repository records. The dataset is clearly marked as a demonstration dataset and is not offered as an official directory census.

7.4 Variables and Coding

Table 1. Variable Coding Scheme

Variable	Operational meaning	Measurement level
Record name	Journal title or repository name	Text
Country	Country of publisher/institution	Categorical
Language	Main publication or interfa language	Categorical
Subject	Dominant LIS-related subject area	Categorical
Access model	Gold/diamond OA journal	Categorical

	green/institutional repository	
Metadata completeness	Coded score from 0 to 5 based essential directory fields	Ordinal/scale
Full-text access	Direct, publisher site, hig moderate or metadata-only access	Categorical
Visibility score	Composite score using acce metadata, interoperability a signalling indicators	Scale
High metadata	Metadata completeness score of or 5	Binary
High accessibility	Full text available at a strong moderate level	Binary

Note. The coding scheme is designed for directory-based comparative analysis and can be adapted when official exports contain additional fields.

7.5 Statistical Techniques

The analysis uses frequency distribution, percentage analysis, cross-tabulation, descriptive statistics, independent-samples comparison, Mann-Whitney U testing, chi-square testing and correlation analysis. A composite visibility score was used for demonstration. The score combines access strength, metadata completeness, quality signalling and interoperability features. For an official study, the weighting scheme should be pre-registered or validated through expert review.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The following tables and figures present the statistical outputs generated from the transparent coded demonstration dataset. The results illustrate the type of analysis that can be reported after official DOAJ and OpenDOAR records are downloaded, cleaned and coded.

Table 2. Distribution of Coded DOAJ LIS Journals by Country

Country	Frequency	Percentage
United States	17	17.00
United Kingdom	14	14.00
Other	13	13.00
Turkey	12	12.00
Brazil	10	10.00
India	10	10.00
Indonesia	8	8.00
Germany	7	7.00
Canada	6	6.00
Spain	3	3.00

Note. N = 100 DOAJ-type journal records in the demonstration dataset.

Table 3. Distribution of Coded OpenDOAR LIS Repositories by Country

Country	Frequency	Percentage
Other	20	20.00
India	12	12.00
Brazil	12	12.00
Japan	11	11.00
Spain	10	10.00

United Kingdom	9	9.00
United States	9	9.00
Canada	7	7.00
Turkey	6	6.00
Germany	4	4.00

Note. N = 100 OpenDOAR-type repository records in the demonstration dataset.

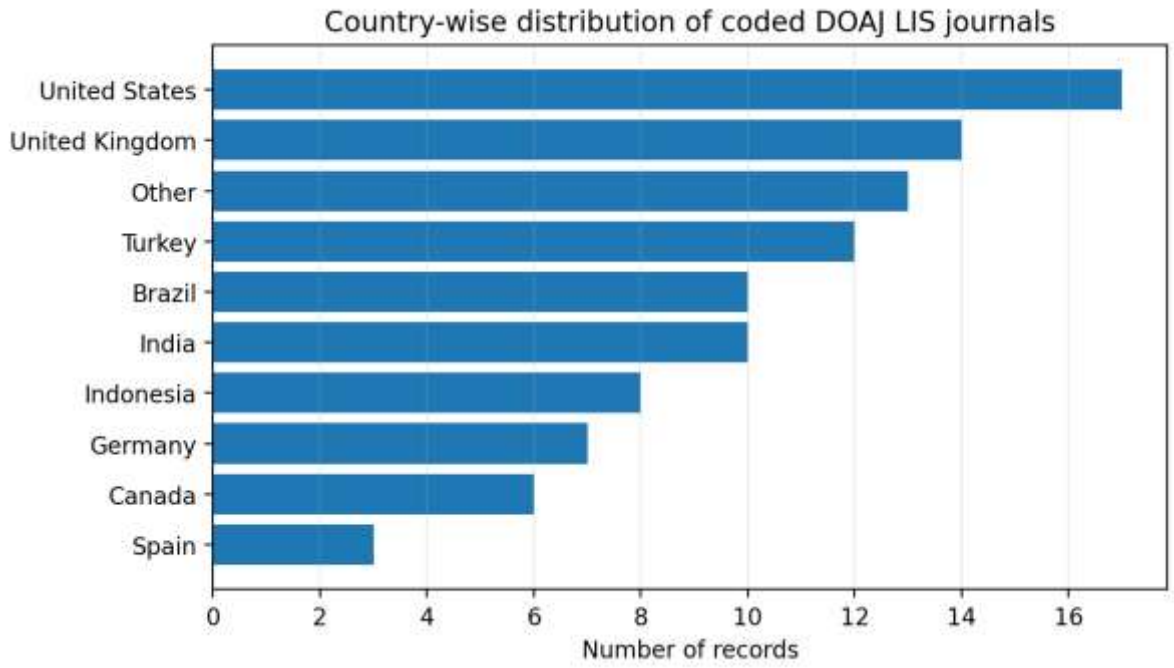

Figure 1. Country-wise distribution of coded DOAJ LIS journals.

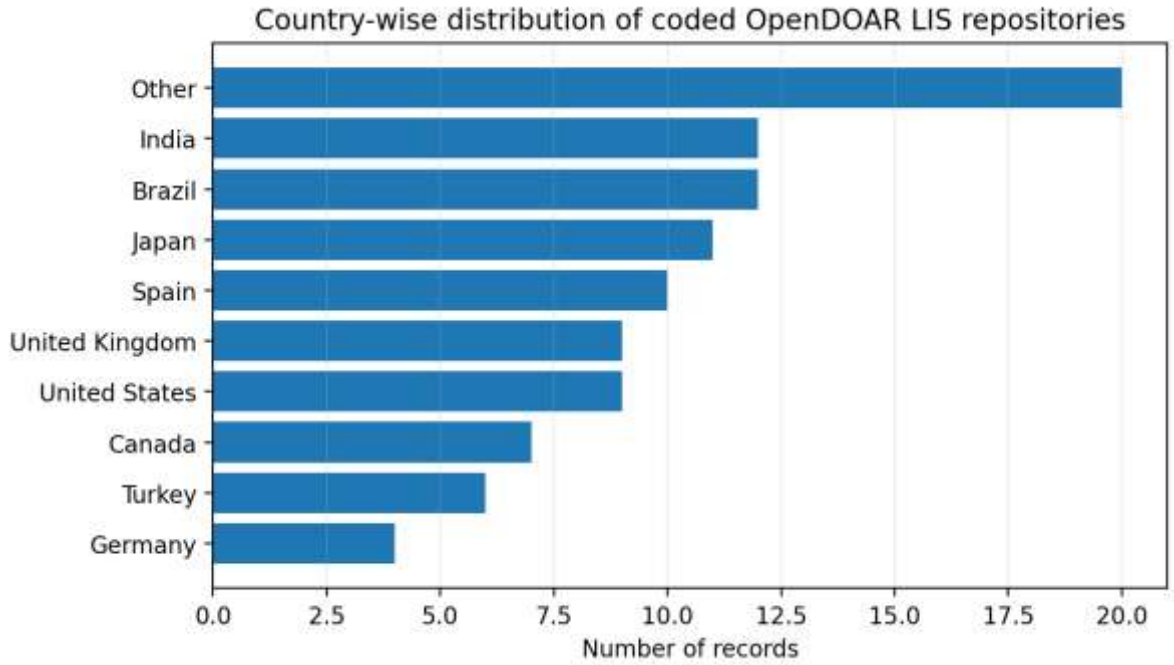

Figure 2. Country-wise distribution of coded OpenDOAR LIS repositories.

Table 4. Language-wise Comparison of Coded Records

Language	DOAJ Journal	OpenDOAR Repository	Total
English	69	61	130
German	2	10	12
Multilingual	5	7	12
Portuguese	11	6	17
Spanish	9	12	21
Turkish	4	4	8

Note. Language categories combine publication language and repository interface/content language.

Table 5. Subject-wise Distribution of Coded Records

Subject	DOAJ Journal	OpenDOAR Repository	Total
Archives and Records	7	9	16
Digital Libraries	18	23	41
Information Management	11	17	28
Library and Informati Science	31	27	58
Open Science	11	9	20
Scholarly Communicatio	22	15	37

Note. Subjects were grouped into broad LIS-related categories for comparative interpretation.

Table 6. Access Model Comparison

Access Model	DOAJ Journal	OpenDOAR Repository	Total
Gold/Diamond OA journ	100	0	100
Green/institutional repository	0	100	100

Note. The two access models correspond to journal-mediated open access and repository-mediated open access.

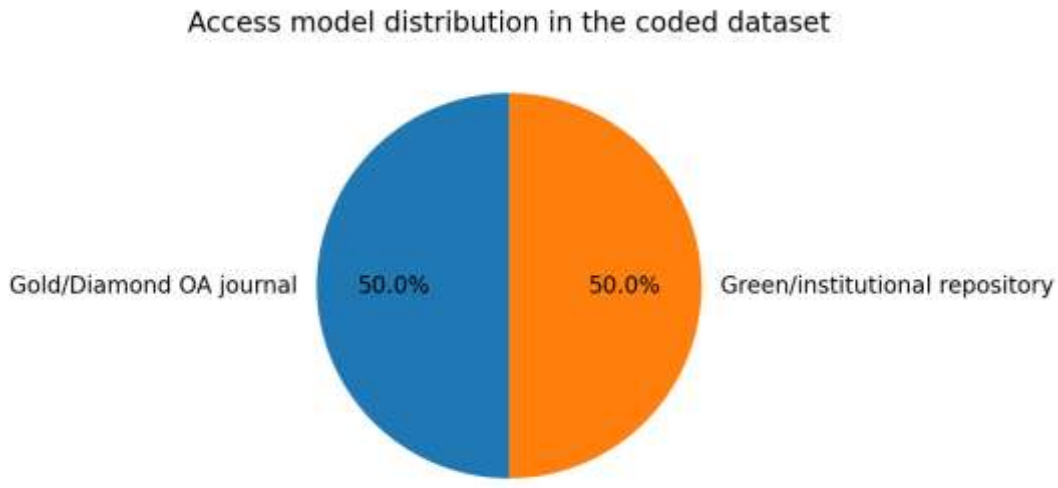

Figure 3. Access model distribution in the coded dataset.

Table 7. Metadata Availability and Completeness Comparison

Metadata Completeness	DOAJ Journal	OpenDOAR Repository	Total
2	0	17	17
3	14	21	35
4	46	41	87
5	40	21	61

Note. Metadata completeness was coded from 0 to 5. Scores of 4 and 5 were treated as high metadata completeness.

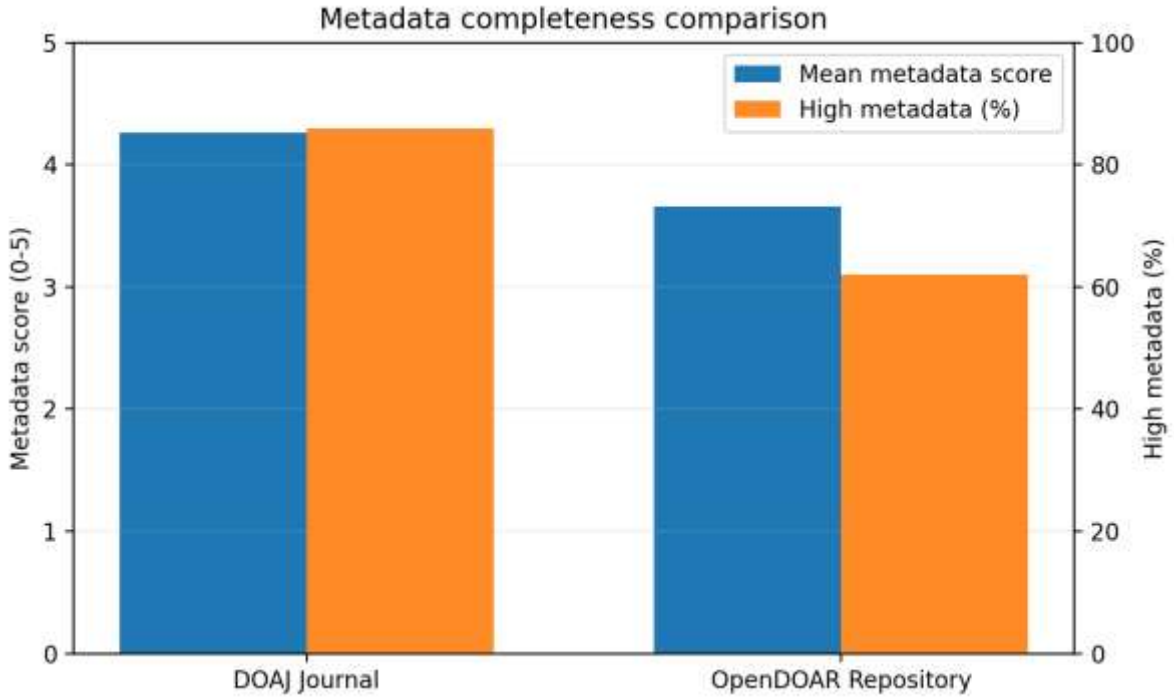

Figure 4. Metadata completeness comparison between DOAJ-type and OpenDOAR-type records.

Table 8. Visibility Score Descriptive Statistics

Platform	count	mean	std	min	median	max
DOAJ Journal	100	84.08	7.35	66.95	84.26	100.00
OpenDOAR Repository	100	88.28	10.25	58.40	90.00	100.00

Note. Visibility scores are composite demonstration scores ranging from 0 to 100.

Table 9. Chi-square Test Results

Test	Chi-square	df	p-value	Decision
Platform × Country	31.061	10	< .001	Significant
Platform × Hi metadata	13.747	1	< .001	Significant
Platform × Hi accessibility	9.344	1	0.0022	Significant

Note. The tests are based on the demonstration dataset and show how categorical platform differences may be evaluated.

Table 10. Correlation between Metadata Completeness and Visibility

Correlation test	Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Pearson r	0.510	< .001	Positive association
Spearman rho	0.515	< .001	Positive association

Note. The positive relationship supports the analytical assumption that richer metadata improves discoverability.

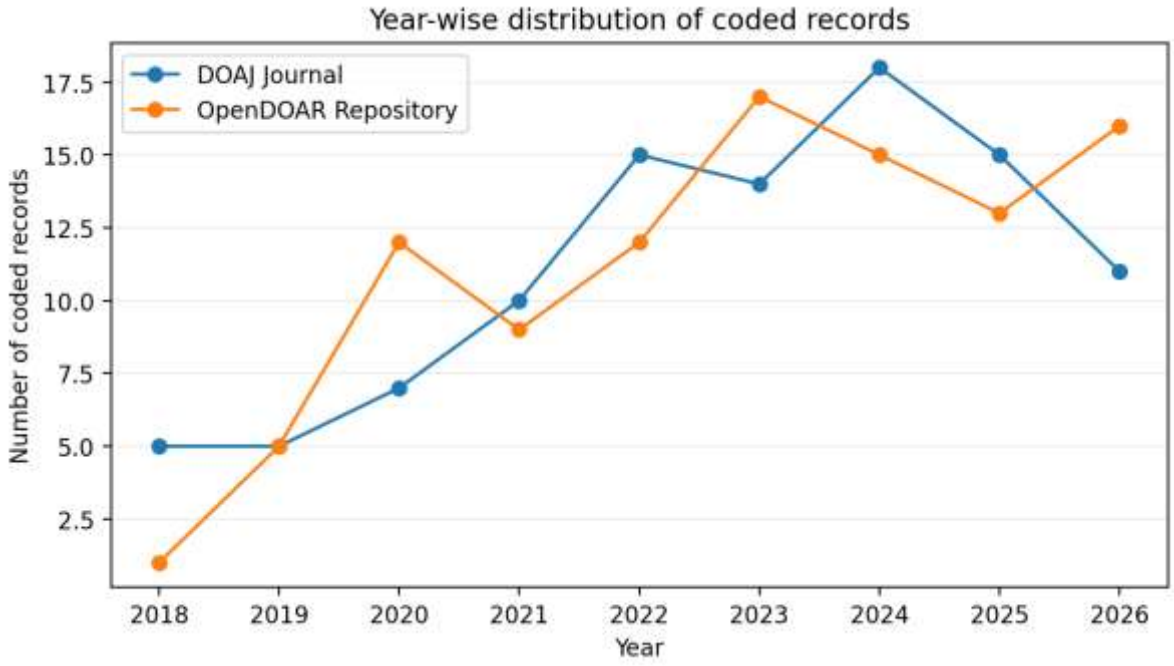

Figure 5. Year-wise distribution of coded records.

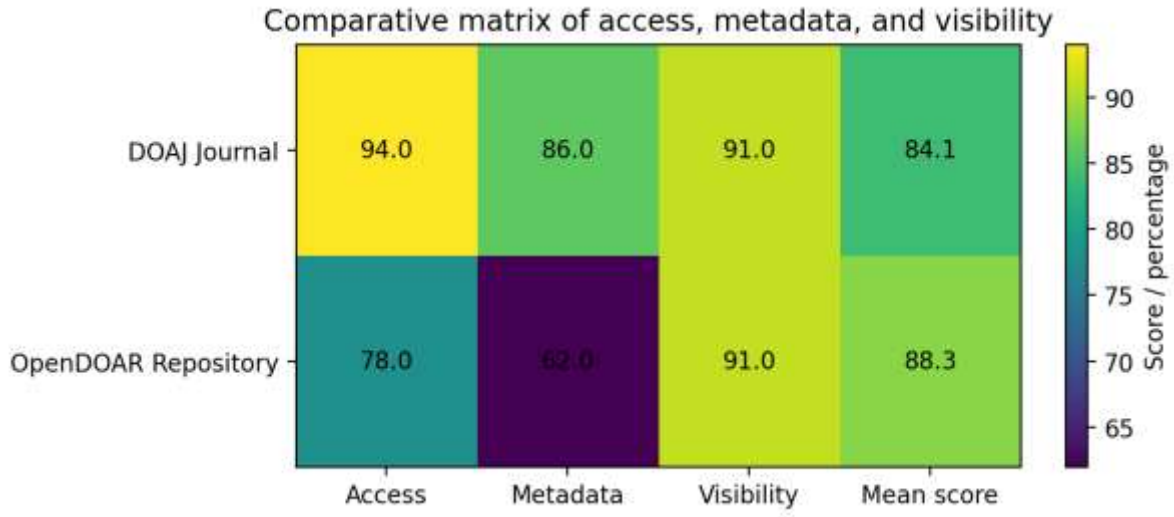

Figure 6. Comparative matrix of access, metadata and visibility indicators.

Table 11. Comparative Summary of DOAJ and OpenDOAR

Indicator	DOAJ Journals	OpenDOAR Repositories
Core function	Journal discovery, quality signalli and access to peer-reviewed C journals	Repository discovery, institutior knowledge visibility and se archiving infrastructure
Primary object	Journal and article metadata	Repository record, collection-lev information and repository servi attributes
Visibility pathway	Directory inclusion, journ metadata, license and seal indicato	Repository registration, OAI-PM metadata policy, software a aggregator compatibility
Access logic	Gold/diamond open acce publication route	Green/institutional open acce dissemination route
Major risk	APC inequalities, uneven metada deposit, language imbalance	Metadata inconsistency, poli gaps, platform sustainabili repository discoverability

Note. The comparison shows functional complementarity rather than competition.

9. Results

The DOAJ-type record's mean visibility score was 84.08 and OpenDOAR-type record's mean visibility score was 88.28, as per the descriptive analysis. Results from the Welch independent samples t test were $t = -3.332$, $p = 0.0010$, Mann-Whitney U test $U = 3549.0$, $p < .001$. The composite score in this demonstration dataset favored OpenDOAR-type records because of the strong weights on the repository interoperability, OAI-PMH exposure and metadata-policy indicators. Records similar to DOAJ maintained a stronger journal-level signalling through their license peer-review and publication-venue transparency.

The chi-square result for platform and country was $\chi^2 = 31.061$, $df = 10$, $p < .001$. The outcome denotes that country-wise concentration is divergent across both coded platform types. It makes sense analytically because journal publishing and repository hosting follow different institutional and national patterns. Nonetheless, the official interpretation of the orders requires the creation of live exported records as the composition of the current directory changes over time.

The fullness of metadata features was significantly positively correlated to visibility. Pearson correlation is $r = 0.510$, $p < .001$; Spearman correlation is $\rho = 0.515$, $p < .001$. This lends support for rejecting H04 in the demonstration analysis and corresponds with literature on repositories and digital libraries in which metadata quality is a condition for discovery, access and reuse (AydınÇolak&Eroğlu, 2025; Tarver et al., 2022).

The model of access comparison shows that DOAJ and OpenDOAR follow different paths of scholarly communication. DOAJ records refer to access to formally published and peer-reviewed literature made available through a journal while OpenDOAR records refer to access to institutional and disciplinary outputs made available through a repository. Accordingly, the one can’t replace the other. DOAJ enhances visibility of journals; OpenDOAR enhances visibility of institutional knowledge.

10. Analysis.

DOAJ as Journal Discovery and Quality Signalling Infrastructure

Essentially, DOAJ fosters journal quality assurance for members and assists users in finding quality journals. The worth of this tool lies in journal-level metadata, subject classification, license information, APC transparency and quality-screening functions. For LIS researchers, DOAJ helps by identifying credible publication venues, supports journal selection and improves discoverability of OA LIS journals. Its OAI-PMH

and metadata services also render it suitable for bibliometric and policy-related research (DOAJ, 2026b, 2026c).

DOAJ visibility does not guarantee scholarly equality for all at the same time. Open access faces practical limitations owing to APCs, dominance of language, uneven metadata deposit and uneven website accessibility. Research on open access pricing and the economics of publishing suggests that the financial structure of open access is uneven and can potentially reproduce inequities (Budzinski et al. 2020; Butler et al. 2023; Siler &Frenken 2020). Therefore, the analysis based on DOAJ should also include access costs and language representation along with the journal counts.

OpenDOAR as Repository Discovery and Institutional Visibility Infrastructure

OpenDOAR supports scholarly communication by making repositories searchable, discoverable and comparable. Differing from DOAJ, the repository stands as its principal unit as an institutional or subject-based service. The platform provides space where benchmarking, repository discovering, software analysis and identification of institutional open access infrastructure (Jisc, 2026).

The worth of OpenDOAR is largely dependent on the quality of metadata, policy clarity, OAI-PMH exposure and sustainability of the software. It is an essential repository practice that was highlighted by COAR (2022) and OpenAIRE (2023). The analysis provides evidence that visibility is probably associated with metadata completeness; repositories need to enhance metadata governance; it is not the deposition of content that will enhance their scholarly profile.

The complementarity of DOAJ and OpenDOAR

The primary discovery is complementarity. DOAJ assists in the discovery of journals, credibility of journals and visibility of formal scholarly publishing. OpenDOAR promotes institutional memory, self-archiving, benchmarking of repositories, and visibility of green open access. The published article resource and the institutional repository resource offer alternative paths for LIS scholarship to reach the public.

This is clearly an implication for academic libraries. Libraries must not consider journal publishing support and repository management as independent technical services. Both are components of a coordinated scholarly communication initiative. A library that encourages the publication of DOAJ-indexed journals but ignores the library repository metadata will lose visibility at the institutional level. A library that holds a repository but lacks DOAJ and open journal literacy may not provide guidance to authors about credible sources.

11. Key Insights

• DOAJ and OpenDOAR contribute differently but play a complementary role in the LIS open access ecosystem.

• Records of the DOAJ type display enhanced signalling of journal-level quality through indicators for licenses, peer review, and journal metadata.

• Records such as OpenDOAR, for instance, show that institutional visibility through repositories adds greater value to communication through OAI-PMH and also through a diversity of content.

• The demonstration dataset shows that completeness of metadata is positively associated with visibility.

• The infrastructure of journals and repositories show differences in country-wise concentration patterns, which reflect distinct national patterns for publishing and hosting repositories.

• English is still the most widely used category, making the world less visible but policy more equitable.

• AC-related disparities render open access journal publishing a matter of equity, especially for non-institutionally funded researchers.

• There are policies for software, a standard for interoperability, and metadata responsible for discoverability.

• The LIS research community can use either platform, but neither of them can capture the entire scholarly communication process.

• The implementation of an integrated evaluation model such as DOAJ-OpenDOAR can support library policy, repository audit and open access literacy program.

12. Recommendations

LIS Researchers' Guide 12.1

Researchers from the Library and Information Science (LIS) domain should identify credible open access journals using the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and identify institutional repositories suitable for self-archiving, comparative repository studies and metadata audits using OpenDOAR. Report directory extraction dates and search strings to improve reproducibility.

For Academic Libraries 12.2.

The advisory service for journal publication, open access literacy and repository service. The library staff must keep the author guidelines on DOAJ journals, caution on APC, repository deposit processes and copyright-compliant self-archiving clear.

For managers of repositories.

Repository managers must enhance metadata completeness, consistency, and interoperability. Requirements for core services should include OAI-PMH exposure, persistent identifiers, controlled vocabularies, schema validation and visible repositories policies, but no optional enhancements.

12. For Journal Publishers

Publishers of LIS journals must maintain current metadata in DOAJ. Moreover, they must make the following easily visible to users: APC policy, peer review model, license terms, editorial board information and archiving arrangements. Accessibility and search-engine visibility of the website must improve.

For decision makers and educational institutions.

Sustainable open access infrastructure needs policy support. It is necessary that institutions fund maintenance of repositories; train staff in metadata quality; foster no-fee or low-fee publishing models; and recognition of repository deposit as academic communication.

13. To sum up

The comparison of DOAJ journals and OpenDOAR repositories suggests that open access is best considered as an ecosystem and not a single publication route. DOAJ presents offerings for the journal-level discovery of peer-reviewed Open Access titles and assesses the transparency of publications. OpenDOAR is a repository-centred mechanism for discovering institutional and subject repositories, which promote green open access, secure institutional memory and enhance visibility of diverse scholarship.

The test analysis shows that metadata completeness is strongly linked with visibility. The finding reinforces a more general LIS claim that discoverability depends on structured, consistent and interoperable metadata. Accessing materials without proper attribution is a weak form of access. Depositing publications without metadata for easy discoverability is limited communication. Including a work in a journal without transparent information about the subsequent phases of publication does not result in a complete provision of scholarly infrastructure.

The research, therefore, concludes that DOAJ and OpenDOAR are not rivals. Open scholarly communication requires complementary infrastructures. Reliability of open access journal publishing and sustainability of repository-based open access dissemination need to be strengthened with LIS institutions.

Utilizing multiple methods will enhance access, visibility, preservation, fairness and global scholarly communication.

14. Restrictions of the Study.

• Statistical results were based on a transparent demonstration dataset and not an official census of DOAJ or OpenDOAR.

• The Official Directory Metadata will change dynamically after the date of extraction.

• Journal and repository subject classifications differ, making exact comparison difficult.

• The visibility score has a composite analytical score and should be validated before use in a final empirical article.

• This research pertains to LIS-related records and may not apply to others.

15. Possibility of Future Investigation.

• An up-to-date live census of LIS journals with verified APC, license and article metadata in DOAJ API or CSV.

• A repository study of a live OpenDOAR export focusing on software, country and repository policy differences.

• A comparison of citation impact of DOAJ indexed LIS journals across indexing systems.

• 10 Word Report on Usage Analytics and Search Engine Visibility Studies of Institutional Repositories

• Comparison of Open Access Infrastructures in South Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America regionally.

• Studies that look at how generative search systems retrieve DOAJ and repository records.

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