

Publication Concomitant Challenges

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ABSTRACT *In the present era, where there is an increasing pressure to publish the work for career advancement, scientific misconduct seems to be on the rise simultaneously. Interestingly, the number of ethical cases and research misconduct is not diminishing. The article talks about the publication challenges and ethics that include the importance of publication, types of journals, data accuracy, falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, submission fraud, duplicate publication, ethics of authorship, and the consequences of non-compliance of publication ethics. The write-up also talks about the open access publication, its variants, and charges related to the publication that includes article processing charges.*

Keywords: *publication ethics, falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, article processing charges*

1. Introduction

The growing emphasis on the significance of publication in the academic world has led to an increasing prevalence of potential writing, and ethical rigor might be questioned simultaneously. Therefore, it has become a matter of concern to regulate and govern the ethical standards of publications. COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) was established in 1997 to administer the complexity of research misconduct. The academic committee that includes COPE, editors, and publishers should work together to adopt research ethics, inculcate values in young researchers and avoid issues related to fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.

Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism are significant forms of scientific misconduct. Fabrication is the action or process of making up data or results; it means presenting fictitious data. Falsification implies the act of falsifying or manipulating research work. Plagiarism is the act of introducing someone else's work or ideas without full acknowledgment. If a researcher follows any of these practices, he/she will fail to comply with publication rules and will be considered misconduct and significant deviation from accepted practices.

Integrity and trust are the hallmarks of the publication process. The publication is also the primary way by which researchers make their reputations, get jobs and promotions. In the current scenario of academic research, the publication has become sensitive than ever. Even the Universities and journal publishers have publication rules and guidelines related to ethics that outlines the standards of quality publications the researchers should strive for (Ritter, 2001).

2. Importance of Publication and Journal Types

Nowadays, publication plays a significant role, as institutions are known by publications, and scholars are identified by their works. If you do not write, you are not counted. Therefore, if you want yourself to be counted among the known, you should keep your writing and publication habit on. The publication helps an individual to get invitations, appointments, promotions, and tenured positions. It gives recognition, goodwill, and a good reputation. Since publication has taken a vital position in our society, it is necessary to have a piece of good knowledge about the types of journals. Prior knowledge about journals will help a researcher to publish. There are three categories of journals domain-based journals, mega journals, and trade journals. Domain-based journals are ones where it is quite challenging to publish. The subcategories of domain-based journals are university publication, private publication, individual publication, regional publications, and society/association publications. University publications are considered to be the most trustworthy; they are university-based journals. A private group of people runs private publications. Individual publication purely looks for money and is handled by an individual.

There are predatory journals that exploit the academic publishing model as they ask for article processing charges without checking the quality and standard of the articles. The authors who are unaware of such practices get tricked and end up paying for these poor-quality journals. Hence, the academicians and researchers need to know about the journals, their types, and their publication process. As it can save them from publishing their work on predatory journals. A good journal should display article processing charges, names of the editorial board members with their email id, publication practices, and indexing & metrics.

3. Publication Ethics

3.1 Data Accuracy, Falsification and Fabrication

The data should be accurate and indicate the quality of the data, how correct, consistent, and unambiguous the data is. The values stored in the data must be precise and proper. It should not be manipulated or wrongly handled. The article should be free from falsification and fabrication. It should not lurk fake data. The publication committee or houses should make sure to double-check the accuracy of data since they demand article processing charges, they should make sure that they publish quality articles this would also enhance the quality and standard of journals which in turn will compel the authors, academicians, and researchers to produce quality work that will be useful for the society as a whole.

3.2 Plagiarism and Self-Plagiarism

If the writers have taken the help of other data or their own previous data, they must adequately cite them and add their work under the reference list. If the researchers have reproduced any material, figures, or tables, they must write permission as well. If these factors are not abided, it will lead to plagiarism.

3.3 Submission Fraud and Duplicate Publication

Simultaneous submission in two journals or publications of entire work or half of it in other journals is against publication ethics. Duplicate publication involves submitting a new manuscript with the same contents, hypothesis, data, and conclusions as a previously published manuscript. Most journals obtain a declaration from authors at the time of

manuscript submission, stating that it is their genuine work and has not been published or considered for publication by any other scientific journal or elsewhere. Therefore, declaring and then disregarding leads to misconduct and is similar to plagiarism as it involves the replication of data from another paper. COPE categorizes duplicate publications into two offense, i.e., major offense and minor offense.

3.3.1 Major Offense. It includes duplicate publication that is data with identical findings and results, just changing the title or author or order of the article and not referring to the previous dataset.

3.3.2 Minor Offense. It is referred to as 'salami slicing' that is duplicate publication with some component of redundancy. The author should submit and wait for a decision before submitting it to another journal. They must avoid such misconduct and should perceive that this is an unethical act.

Whereas, submitting or presenting a paper for a conference does not prevent authors from giving in or submitting the same paper to peer-reviewed journals for publication.

The writers should avoid excessive citing their own article as it may lead to a fraudulent act as well. Most of the time number of citations matter more than actually publishing it. Since the total number of citations is used to calculate metrics such as H-index, impact factor, which plays an important role in academic promotions, thus compelling authors to follow self-citation. But this act is considered unethical by the publication committee.

3.4 Ethics of Authorship

The authors' names should be included in a specific pre-agreed order. There should be a mutual agreement with co-authors. The co-authors should be well aware of the contents of the publication. They should have access to the data and should hold themselves responsible for the data and its interpretations.

The major misconduct with authorship is ghost authorship, guest authorship, and gifted authorship. Ghost authors contribute to the construction of the paper but do not take credit for that; they are not given authorship or acknowledgment. They are paid for their contribution. Gifted authors are ones whose name is included in the list of co-authors. As the name says, the credit is gifted without their contribution to the article and simply due to an association with an institute where the research was conducted. It is generally provided to the heads of institutions or departments. Guest authorship is provided to the ones whose name improves the acceptance chance of the manuscript. It is basically because of the person's goodwill and reputation in the academic field. Amendments in the authorship that is addition or removal of co-author's name are possible only when all the co-authors agree and sign the official application sent to the editor of the journal for such amendments.

4. Outcome of Non-Compliance

The COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) has clear guidelines that need to be taken if the above-mentioned misconduct is recognized. At first, the editorial board will reach the author, informing that there is an act identified that is against the publication ethics. If the authors accept their misconduct, the paper is rejected; if the paper is already published, the authors are given a chance to confess. If the fault is significant, the authors can be blacklisted by the respective journal, and information is forwarded to COPE. If authors deny their misconduct

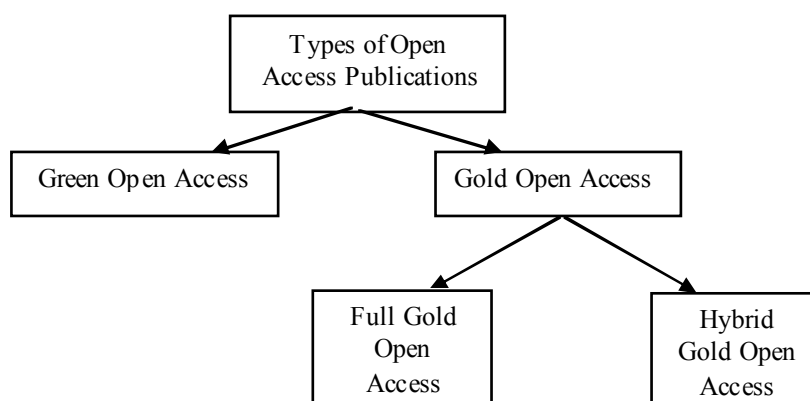
act, the publication committee or the editors can take appropriate action as per COPE guidelines.

5. Payment for Publication

Authors pay to scholarly journals to get their work or article published. Payment for publication of articles is an increasingly significant component for publications' houses and librarians.

Open access is a mechanism by which research work or articles are freely and immediately made available online coupled with the principle to use these articles completely in the digital surrounding. It is a form of scientific publishing in which information or research output is made accessible and available to readers free of charge.

Figure 1. Types of Open Access Publications



The research article is made available in any one of the two ways –

- Green open access
- Gold open access

The green method to open access publishing is placing a version of author copy of the final reviewed and corrected paper in an open access institutional online repository (open publication database). Green open access is also called 'self-archiving' because publications or articles are archived and registered by authors themselves, whereas gold open access is publishing the article open access. Many open access journals are free to publish and read as these journals are subsidized by institutions and society.

There are two subsets of gold open access journals –

- Full gold open access
- Hybrid gold open access

In full gold open access journals, the publications are made freely available and accessible to readers immediately without restrictions. There are no subscription fees, and publishers make earning by charging authors or institutions when articles get accepted. The charges that publishing houses ask authors to pay are known as Article Processing Charges (APCs). This category of open access publishing is also referred to as full gold open access or pure gold open access.

Hybrid gold open access is the other variant of gold open access publications, here the authors publish in traditional subscription journals but may offer gold open access to their publications by paying article processing charges. After the payment done by authors, the article is accessed by readers immediately as the articles are made available online. Generally, only a section of the article is made available in hybrid gold open access journals. Articles that are published and made available via gold open access can only be viewed by readers who subscribe to those journals.

Payment for publication has awoken many researchers' awareness of the article processing charges. The publication charges have gained prevalence as it gives the researcher an opportunity to determine the value for money, which compels them to search for quality journals and publish their article in a standard one. If having adequate knowledge about journals and article processing charges, the author can be protected from getting trapped by predatory journals.

6. Conclusion

The publication also helps in the dissemination of knowledge; it adds a general knowledge and understanding of the study to the existing knowledge. The frauds, misconduct, and biases that takes place at the dissemination step would falsify the validity of data and would lead to misleading academic future. Publication bias is an increasing ethical problem that needs to be governed and taken care of by the editorial members or publication committee. The researchers should make sure that their work is free from all elements that are against publication ethics.

Furthermore, the entire academic community should have the knowledge about publication ethics and should be aware that bias may exist in the articles they are reading and take a critical step before assuming that the published data are accurate.

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