

Misbehaviour in Managing Scholarly Publication among Academic Staffs

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Received: 30 December 2023 | Accepted: 25 January 2024 | Published: 1 March 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ajress.2024.6.1.16>

Abstract: *Scholarly publication entails the dissemination of academic and scientific works through publication in specialised journals or books. However, misbehaviour in scholarly publication among academic staff may occur. Misbehaviour in scholarly publication management refers to actions taken by academics that violate ethical, academic, or professional standards during the research material publishing process. The objective of this study is to review misbehaviour in managing scholarly publications among academic staffs. This study identifies and examines textual material pertaining to the issue found in academic literature and publicly accessible reports. This study indicates several misbehaviours in managing scholarly publication among academic staff, namely: (a) plagiarism; (b) falsification of research data; (c) failure to adhere to ethical standards; (d) self-plagiarism; (e) gift authorship; (f) scholarly publication sabotage; (g) engaging in predatory journals; and (h) predatory (corresponding) author. In conclusion, this study suggests that these misbehaviours are substantial issues that weaken the integrity and credibility of the academic publishing sector. Future research should focus on many aspects of misbehaviour in the management of scholarly publications among academic staff.*

Keywords: Misbehaviour, Scholarly Publication, Academic Staffs

1. Introduction

Scholarly publication entails the dissemination of academic and scientific works through publication in specialised journals or books. The purpose of this platform is to distribute scholarly content, such as original research, theories, or review articles, that have undergone a rigorous evaluation process by other experts in the field to ensure their validity and reliability. It is necessary to reference scholarly publications correctly according to agreed-upon citation styles by the publisher while also following scholarly norms of quality and ethical conduct. The purpose of scholarly publication is to enhance the advancement of knowledge by increasing research in a specific field, motivating future research endeavours, and creating a lasting historical record of the academic and scientific contributions made by scholars and scientists.

However, misbehaviour in scholarly publication among academic staff may occur. Misbehaviour in scholarly publication management refers to actions taken by academics that violate ethical, academic, or professional standards during the research material publishing process. Contributing factors to misbehaviour in scientific publication management encompass

the pressure to publish, avarice for career progression, absence of responsibility, insufficient regulatory frameworks, inadequate guidance, limited comprehension of ethical principles, and institutional culture. Implications of misbehaviour in managing scholarly publication include loss of research integrity, lack of trust among scholars, reputational damage, legal action, loss of public funding, and damage to the scholarly reputation of individuals and institutions involved.

The objective of this study is to review misbehaviour in managing scholarly publications among academic staffs. The benefits of this study are that it can facilitate the promotion of transparency, bolster quality, and contribute to the restoration of public faith in academic research. It can offer direction to governments, researchers, and academic institutions regarding optimal approaches for ethical behaviour in publishing. The evaluation can additionally facilitate the development of complete policies and protocols for handling complaints of misconduct, offer suggestions for training and educating researchers, and enhance collaboration among publishers, academic institutions, and researchers to foster ethical behaviour. Tackling misconduct in scientific publication can result in more stringent and dependable research, enhanced academic standing, and eventually higher advantages for society. Several identifiable misbehaviours in managing scholarly publications among academic staff are reviewed and further discussed.

The General Concept and Practise of Scholarly Publication

Scholarly publication is a vital aspect of academic research and serves as the primary means for researchers to disseminate their findings to the wider scientific community. The fundamental idea entails generating novel research with information of superior quality that is precise, dependable, and authenticated by peer evaluation (Dhillon, 2021). Scholarly publications encompass a variety of works such as journal articles, monographs, book chapters, conference proceedings, and other scholarly contributions that enhance knowledge within a specific topic (Wildemuth, 2020). The objective of academic publication is to promote the exchange of knowledge and progress by enabling scholars to distribute their work and encouraging subsequent conversations and future research endeavours.

Practically, scholarly publication entails a sequence of steps, including manuscript submission, review, and publication. Experts conduct a rigorous evaluation of researchers' work to guarantee adherence to certain quality criteria through peer review, which involves submitting their work to a journal or publisher (Mavrogenis et al., 2020). Once accepted, the journal or publisher publishes the manuscript in its definitive form, typically in a scholarly journal or as a book. The publication process exhibits variability contingent upon the policies of the publisher and the nature of the published material. Nevertheless, it is imperative to consistently adhere to the ideals of honesty, transparency, and high ethical standards in order to preserve integrity within the scholarly publication sector (Meeks, 2020).

2. Methodology

This study identifies and examines textual material pertaining to the issue found in academic literature and publicly accessible reports. This study entails gathering pertinent materials, such as scholarly publications, reports, institutional policies, and guidelines, and scrutinising their content to identify recurring themes, trends, and instances of misconduct. The searches utilised specific keywords such as “misbehaviour,” “scholarly publication,” and “academic staff” to identify pertinent literature. The analysis would thereafter be utilised to cultivate a comprehensive comprehension of the various categories of misconduct in scholarly

publications and their frequency. Content analysis methodology enables a methodical assessment of textual data to extract significant insights into problematic behaviour related to scholarly publication in academic environments.

3. Results and Discussion

This study indicates several misbehaviours in managing scholarly publication among academic staff, namely: (a) plagiarism; (b) falsification of research data; (c) failure to adhere to ethical standards; (d) self-plagiarism; (e) gift authorship; (f) scholarly publication sabotage; (g) engaging in predatory journals; and (h) predatory (corresponding) author.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism in managing scholarly publications among academic staff is a significant type of research misconduct that entails presenting someone else's work as one's own without giving necessary credit or recognition (Abad-García, 2019). Academic staff who commit plagiarism may utilise the work of others without authorization, replicate the words or ideas of other scholars, or duplicate data, charts, and images without acknowledging the original source (Kohli, 2019). Plagiarism may arise due to insufficient comprehension of research principles, the demand to generate research outputs, and the convenient availability of online resources. Plagiarism in academia is usually seen as unethical and can have detrimental effects on the integrity and reputation of academic personnel and organisations (Zimba & Gasparyan, 2021). It can also lead to disciplinary measures such as suspension, termination, or the withdrawal of research funding or awards.

Plagiarism is a widespread problem in academic publishing, as evidenced by research that has found significant levels of resemblance in South African management publications (Thomas, 2019). Academic staff's varying reactions towards student plagiarism exacerbate the issue (De Maio et al., 2019). Self-plagiarism, a closely connected subject, is a multifaceted problem that necessitates well-defined standards and methods for detection (Lin, 2020). The perception of plagiarism differs among academics and journal editors, especially in non-Anglophone nations (Gupta et al., 2021). The need to publish in prestigious journals might result in ethical transgressions, such as plagiarism, within the field of management research (Ayodele et al., 2019). In order to tackle these concerns, researchers must possess knowledge about plagiarism and its repercussions and employ proactive and evaluative approaches (Facina et al., 2020).

Falsification of Research Data

Some academic staff falsify research data to enhance their publications, career advancement, or financial benefits (Gelman & Guzey, 2020). This misbehaviour can result in serious consequences that can include damage to reputation or serious legal charges when fraudulent research is broadcast to the public (Dal-Ré et al., 2020). Participation in data falsification may modify experimental data, selectively choose data points that align with their conclusions, or employ faulty statistical procedures or methodologies to distort or amplify the results (Gefen, 2019). The act of falsifying data can have significant repercussions on the credibility and standing of academic personnel and organisations (Grech, 2019). It can lead to grave outcomes such as the retraction of research articles, the loss of funding and resources, the derailment of one's career, and probable legal ramifications (Craig et al., 2020). Moreover, manipulated research papers might have detrimental consequences for public health and safety, hence eroding public trust in academic research (Bassi et al., 2019).

Evidence indicates that academic staff frequently engage in data fabrication and falsification, which has significant ramifications for all parties involved (Kang & Hwang, 2020; Nurunnabi & Hossain, 2019; Reisig et al., 2020; Gopalakrishna et al., 2021). The pressure to publish, disseminate research findings, get funding for research endeavours, and make progress in one's professional trajectory are pivotal variables that propel this unethical behaviour (Poutoglidou et al., 2022; Kokiwar et al., 2020). Researchers have suggested various strategies, such as increasing knowledge, enforcing impactful regulations, and delivering training, to identify and stop the occurrence of this problem (Kang & Hwang, 2020; Nurunnabi & Hossain, 2019; Gopalakrishna et al., 2021; Kokiwar et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the frequency of this unethical behaviour continues to be a worry, especially in disciplines such as management science (Ayodele et al., 2019).

Failure to Adhere to Ethical Standards

Academic staff should comply with ethical standards in their scholarly publications, such as seeking informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and avoiding conflicts of interest. Noncompliance with ethical standards in the management of scholarly publications by academic staff can result in significant repercussions, including the loss of credibility, damage to reputation, disciplinary measures, and legal ramifications (Wright et al., 2022). Additionally, it undermines the trust of publishers, researchers, and the general public. Instances of failure can manifest in several ways, such as plagiarism, data falsification, conflict of interest, gift authorship, biased peer review, and delayed publishing. Moreover, failure to adhere to ethical standards in publishing can lead to the dissemination of erroneous findings (Navalta et al., 2019), causing substantial harm by spreading misinformation to both the scientific community and the general public (Summer-Gafford et al., 2019). Consequently, it is imperative for academic faculty to maintain and advocate for ethical standards in order to safeguard the integrity of the academic publishing sector.

Recently, various studies have highlighted the failure of academic staff to adhere to ethical standards in scholarly publication. Yoon et al. (2021) and Woldu (2019) both highlight the significance of research integrity and advocate for more robust institutional ethical standards. Choi et al. (2020) and Choi et al. (2019) discovered that numerous academic journals produced by Korean academic societies fail to adhere to international publishing standards, specifically in terms of publication ethics and disclosure of business model information. Both da Silva et al. (2019) and Choudhary & Kurien (2019) address the difficulties presented by predatory publications and advocate for more stringent ethical norms. Alehegn & Diale (2021) and Paruzel-Czachura et al. (2020) emphasise the pragmatic obstacles encountered by academic personnel, including insufficient institutional support and the repercussions of publication pressure on instances of scientific misconduct.

Self-plagiarism

Self-plagiarism, commonly referred to as duplicate publication, occurs when academic staff members reuse or republish their own previously published research or data without appropriate reference or permission (Shin, 2019). Self-plagiarism includes the act of publishing similar articles in various publications, presenting the same research at multiple conferences, or republishing significant portions of previous research in new works (Anson et al., 2020). Although there are instances where reusing information or data is permissible, academic staff must ensure they adequately attribute their previous works to prevent deceiving readers and infringing upon ethical standards (Brantley, 2022). Self-plagiarism can result in a dearth of novelty in the researcher's work, can skew the academic record, and can give rise to questions regarding research integrity. Authors are required by publishers to clearly state and secure

permission to reuse any previously published work. Failing to disclose prior publication history to the publisher can result in serious consequences, including manuscript rejections or retractions, harm to academic standing, or disciplinary measures by academic institutions. This misconduct can also raise ethical dilemmas, such as violating the copyright laws of the journal publishers.

Recently, the subject of self-plagiarism in scientific publications has become multifaceted and encompasses several viewpoints. According to the 2018 research, 52 publications (44%) had similarities, which included both plagiarism and self-plagiarism. However, 66 manuscripts (56%) did not show any substantial proof of plagiarism or self-plagiarism (Krokosz, 2021). Lin (2020) and Melo et al. (2019) both emphasise the necessity of precise definitions and guidelines. Lin (2020) focuses on the concerns of journal editors, while Melo et al. (2019) underscore the importance of purpose in identifying self-plagiarism. Horbach & Halfman (2019) and Kuleshova et al. (2019) examine the scope and origins of text recycling, with the former highlighting its common occurrence in specific disciplines and the latter pushing for well-defined standards to differentiate between acceptable recycling and self-plagiarism. Gupta et al. (2021) and De Maio et al. (2019) examine the perspectives and reactions of researchers and academic personnel, respectively. Gupta's study reveals a lack of agreement about the validity of textual replication, while Maio's research emphasises the necessity for uniform responses to student plagiarism. Mehta & Mukherjee (2022) and Burdine et al. (2019) both stress the significance of education and explicit instructions in preventing self-plagiarism. Mehta & Mukherjee (2022) focus on the repercussions and methods of detection, while Burdine et al. (2019) support the implementation of standardised rules and enhanced author education.

Gift Authorship

Gift authorship in scholarly publication among academic staff refers to the practice of bestowing authorship upon those who do not fulfil the criteria for authorship, such as making significant contributions to the research project (Varghese & Jacob, 2022). This unethical practice, involves a senior academic staff member adding the name of a less experienced or non-contributing scholar as an author in order to enhance their own career advancement, reputation, or as a favour (Kandil, 2022). The scientific community and publication norms deem granting authorship as a gift fraudulent and deceptive. This type of misconduct has the potential to damage the quality and honesty of the research, erode the faith of readers and co-authors, and often hinder the proper acknowledgement of deserving contributors. Due to the widespread occurrence of gift authorship, publishers now require each author to provide a statement detailing their specific contributions to the submitted work for publication (Bansal, 2022). Academic institutions have the responsibility of formulating and implementing rigorous protocols to guarantee equitable, moral, and transparent procedures for academic publishing.

Recently, other research has highlighted the concept of gift authorship from different angles. The matter of gift authorship in academic publications among faculty members is a noteworthy topic, especially within the framework of the "publish or perish" culture. In an environment characterised by intense pressure, academic scholars face an immense demand to publish their work (Rajaram, 2021; Varghese & Jacob, 2022). In India, the inclusion of individuals as authors who have made minimal or no contribution to the paper is widespread in biomedical research (Bansal, 2022). The motivation for this behaviour frequently stems from the desire to amass publications in order to progress in one's career (Burger, 2020). Researchers often lack awareness and acceptance of authorship qualifications, as defined by guidelines like the ICMJE criteria (Bansal, 2022). The widespread occurrence of gift authorship might give rise to

disputes and ethical issues, necessitating the implementation of solutions to prevent and surmount these obstacles (Cooke et al., 2021).

Scholarly Publication Sabotage

Despite the scholarly publication industry's efforts to uphold ethical norms and provide peer review, the problem of sabotage in scientific publication persists in academia. An academic staff member may deliberately undermine the career opportunities of another staff member by manipulating scholarly publications. They might compose unfavourable critiques, disseminate adverse commentary regarding the profession or subject matter, or partake in academic intimidation or harassment. Leydesdorff et al. (2021) found various forms of misconduct, such as acts of aggression (24.6%), undermining a colleague's work during meetings or talks (16.4%), engaging in research misconduct (8.3%), sabotaging a colleague's research (6.4%), or engaging in fraudulent practices to gain a competitive advantage (3.3%) (Smith et al., 2020). This can involve specifically targeting editors and reviewers. The study demonstrates that such acts of sabotage not only cause harm to the specific persons being targeted but also have a cascading impact that can result in detrimental research practices, credibility concerns, and reputational damages to the publishing industry. The authors propose the implementation of a system to observe and supervise retaliatory actions carried out by academic staff, as well as the establishment of policies and guidelines aimed at diminishing acts of sabotage, in order to address and alleviate academic inequality and unfair treatment.

Academic staff engaging in scholarly publication sabotage engage in unethical actions that try to undermine or impede the publication of their colleagues' work (Dohe et al., 2019). It encompasses actions such as pilfering manuscripts, deliberately prolonging the peer review procedures, offering deceitful evaluations, presenting falsified data to academic journals, and obstructing the dissemination of articles authored by rivals or colleagues (Wallace et al., 2019). Academic staff who participate in scholarly publishing sabotage may do so as a result of rivalry, envy, or in their quest for professional progress (Fontanarosa, 2020). Engaging in such misconduct could have severe consequences, including tarnishing researchers' academic reputation, depriving them of resources and funding opportunities, delaying the publication of research findings, and eventually impeding academic advancement and undermining confidence within the scientific community (Hall & Martin, 2019). In addition, engaging in the sabotage of scientific publications can damage the prestige of academic institutions and have adverse consequences for the safeguarding of intellectual property rights, breaches of privacy, and ethical norms (Memon & Rathore, 2021).

Engaging in Predatory Journals

A predatory journal is a commercial academic publishing platform that actively solicits researchers to publish their work without undergoing a thorough review procedure or editorial oversight (Strinzel et al., 2019). Predatory publishers frequently employ unscrupulous strategies to entice authors into publishing with them, including making false assurances of a simple publication procedure, rapid review times, and high impact factor guarantees (Kendall, 2021). These journals frequently exhibit inadequate editorial practices and lack inclusion in prominent academic databases. Their main objective is to obtain payments from naive authors who desire to have their work published for the first time or to enhance their academic credentials (Shankar et al., 2021). Furthermore, these journals have the potential to undermine the credibility of the writers, schools, and departments involved.

The widespread existence of predatory journals presents a substantial risk to the credibility of academic publishing since writers frequently become targets of these unscrupulous activities

(Shrestha et al., 2019; Choudhary & Kurien, 2019; Shrestha, 2020). The deliberate dissemination of findings in these publications, although not officially categorised as scientific misconduct, is a dubious research practice that necessitates intervention through institutional policies (Stein, 2020). Holtfreter et al. (2020) perceived that the pressure to obtain money and publish in prestigious publications, along with the low likelihood of being detected, contribute to research misconduct. However, many universities' tenure and promotion policies do not clearly prevent publishing in predatory journals, underscoring the necessity for more substantial measures to combat them (McQuarrie et al., 2020).

Predatory (Corresponding) Author

Predatory authors or researchers, who do not provide substantial contributions to the academic manuscript they are associated with, acquire complimentary articles exclusively by serving as corresponding authors (Betz, 2016). Predatory corresponding authors frequently collaborate with predatory journals or publishers that impose exorbitant costs for substandard publications, taking advantage of the scientific community's enthusiasm to disseminate their research (Frandsen, 2022). This misbehaviour is always practiced by junior or senior researchers who want to obtain high numbers of free publications to get a promotion or achieve the key performance index (KPI) (Saleem & Iqbal, 2022), using the other researcher as a platform. Predatory authors exploit the academic publishing process to acquire publications without making any meaningful contributions to the research, compromising the quality and legitimacy of the research findings and damaging the integrity of the scientific community. Predatory corresponding authorship is strongly discouraged due to its detrimental effects on the scholarly publishing process, academic rigour, and the research community (Shrestha et al., 2020).

The scholarly community is greatly concerned about authors and researchers who engage in predatory practices and make only minor contributions to academic articles. These individuals frequently focus on predatory journals, which prioritise financial gain above thorough peer review (Yeo-Teh & Tang, 2021). Their work has the ability to penetrate well-established citation databases, which undermines the credibility and reliability of academic research (Severin & Low, 2019). Predatory publishers take advantage of the open access paradigm, adding to the complexity of the problem (Cartwright, 2016). The practice of honorary authorship and the absence of robust authorship criteria exacerbate the issue (Cosentino et al., 2017). The proliferation of predatory journals in the medical domain is particularly concerning (Johal et al., 2017). Despite concerted efforts to address this problem, these practices persistently affect numerous authors, particularly those from underdeveloped nations (Anthony, 2015; Mathew & Patel, 2021). The academic community must prioritise the development of explicit guidelines and acknowledge reputable journals in order to minimise the negative effects of predatory publication (Sarfraz et al., 2020).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study suggests that these misbehaviours are substantial issues that weaken the integrity and credibility of the academic publishing sector. Those engaging in misbehaviour may experience detrimental effects on their academic trajectories while also undermining the confidence of publishers and researchers. The academic community should tackle this issue by advocating for the observance of ethical principles in scholarly publishing through the implementation of policies, guidelines, and training initiatives. In order to bolster the confidence, dependability, and responsibility of scholarly publishing, it is imperative for all parties involved in the academic publishing sector, such as academic personnel, publishers,

editors, and peer reviewers, to adhere to stringent ethical guidelines and exhibit professional behaviour.

Future research should focus on many aspects of misbehaviour in the management of scholarly publications among academic staff. Initially, research might investigate the frequency and trends of immoral actions within the publishing sector, encompassing various disciplinary, institutional, and cultural settings, in order to determine the extent and consequences of this problem. Furthermore, studies could delve into the underlying motivations that drive academic authors and editors to partake in unethical publication practices, shedding light on the reasons behind their behaviour. Furthermore, research could investigate the perceived ramifications of scientific publication misbehaviour on the professional trajectories, public standing, and overall welfare of both individuals affected and those responsible. Subsequent research endeavours could investigate the efficacy of existing policies and initiatives targeting the reduction of unethical conduct in scientific publication. These studies may offer valuable insights and recommendations for academic institutions, publishers, and scholarly organisations to advance ethical scholarly publishing procedures, as well as to guarantee fairness, trustworthiness, and openness in academic publication.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA for providing technical support for this study.

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