

Affiliation Oriented Journals: Don't Worry About Peer Review If You Have Good Affiliation

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ABSTRACT

There has been a growing concern about fraud peer review articles that have been published in some journals in favor of their authors' affiliation, which have been discussed extensively by some researchers. This research paper introduces a new another challenge in academic world concerning journals' editors who look at authors' affiliations rather than papers' contents. In this short paper, we will introduce this alarming problem and do an experimental test by submitting computer generated papers to some journals and finally present the results of our experiment. The paper is an expression of our concern about providing for maximum high ethics in and quality of publication policy of modern scientific journals.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity around the world is facing many challenges, such as hijacked journals [1-3], bogus impact factors [4], fake conferences [5], social engineering [6], predatory publishers [7, 8] and so forth. It is significant that researchers should know about these challenges, otherwise they may fall in the trap of being academically discriminated due to their affiliation status, or they may be victims of hijacked journals or predatory publishers. There are some researches that have been conducted to introduce hijacked journals and predatory publishers and their detection techniques to authors [1-3, 8-10]. We can also find some researches that discuss about some frauds or challenges in the academic word and present some guideline for authors to direct them [5-7], but we can just find one research about peer review issues [9] and there is no research about journals' editors who look at authors' affiliations rather than papers' contents. In this short paper, we will firstly introduce a new challenge in academic publications, which considers affiliation review rather than the paper review, then explain the method of the test in this domain by submitting computer generated papers to some journals, and finally discusses the findings.

Some peer review journals care about authors' affiliations rather than papers' contents and publish any paper belonging to authors with good affiliations, such as heads of departments or universities. These journals do not have peer reviews for such papers and their responses arrive quickly to these authors. We call

these journals “affiliation oriented journals.” In many trusted journals, the editor removes authors' names from papers and sends them for a blind review to avoid any bias in favor of those authors, but in affiliation oriented journals, the editor only attends to authors' affiliations and not to papers' content. Researchers should know about these challenges, otherwise they may fall in the trap of being academically discriminated due to their affiliation status and have to submit their papers to other journals.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

To confirm or refute our affiliation oriented journals hypothesis we did an experimental testing. First, we created a computer generated paper with SCIgen tools (<http://pdos.csail.mit.edu/scigen>). SCIgen is a software tool developed by MIT to generate papers. After generating the papers, we changed the style, added something and finally put names of authors with good affiliations (we used names and affiliations that it is not related to any people or committee). Also, we used Mail.com services and created emails with the following address: Example@europe.com. In developing countries, many journals accept papers from North American and European countries to show that their journals are popular all over the world. We submitted it to many really existing journals with different indexing, such as Scopus, Thomson Reuters, Islamic World Science Citation Database (ISC), etc. After submission, editors of many journals usually send emails about starting a review or rejection of the paper. The reasons of rejection are usually incompatibility with the aim and scope of the journals or low quality. Other journals which we sent the paper to informed us that they would respond shortly. If we had not used good affiliation, we would have waited for the first answer a week or more. After a while, we received acceptance and/or rejection answers from journals that we sent the papers to. Table 1 shows review time, the journal's scope and review result.

Table 1. Sample results of reviewing for several journals.

Cases*	Time of first answer form editor	Time of final answer (reviewing result)	Publication Charge	Journal Indexing	Review Result
Case 1	6 days after submission	-	525 USD	Scopus	Rejected, Editor's comment: "Your paper seems to have been automatically generated. It cannot be accepted."
Case 2	-	6 days after submission	500 USD	Scopus	Accepted
Case 3	-	5 days after submission	450 USD	Scopus	Accepted
Case 4	5 days after submission	-	100 USD	Google Scholar	Rejected, Editor's comment: "Your paper has more plagiarism content."
Case 5	1 days after submission	5 days after submission	150 USD	Google Scholar	Accepted
Case 6	1 days after submission	-	-	Thomson Reuters Scopus	Rejected, Editor's comment: "It falls outside the editorial policy of the Journal, which focuses on the organizational, social and management issues associated with information-based technologies rather than technical issues."
Case 7	1 days after submission	-	-	Thomson Reuters Scopus	Rejected, Editor's comment: "Your manuscript would be suitable for the journal of [name of journal...] that it is the second
Case 8	-	6 days after submission	150 USD	Scopus	Accepted
Case 9	8 hours after submission	15 days after submission	100 USD	Thomson Reuters	Accepted
Case 10	-	7 days after submission	325 USD	Scopus	Accepted

* The full documentation of the experiment is in possession of the authors. The paper does not provide the names of the journals, as it was only to introduce the problem and the dangers it may bring, and not to analyze the publication policies of individual journals.

Table 2 shows review result of case 10. According journal's email content, this journal do peer review by two external and internal reviewers. Editor and reviewers of this journal could not detect that our paper is fake.

Table 2. Review result of case 10 for our fake paper

Evaluation Criteria	Tend to reject					Tend to accept				
Technical Content and Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Significance of The Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Appropriate Title, Introduction, And Conclusion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall Organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Appropriateness for Journal (Scope)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Style and Clarity of The Paper	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Connection to Previous Research	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall Recommendation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
As a Referee How Do You Rate Your Knowledge, Ability And Confidence In Reviewing This Paper	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experiment lasted for one month, during which we submitted our fake paper to the journals and received their answer. Figure 1 shows the percentage of the journals that answered our request and the journals that did not send any answer. Figure 2 shows the percentage the aim and scope of the journals that accepted our fake papers, Figure 3 shows the percentage of indexing of journals (reputable indexing were selected) and Figure 4 shows the percentage of acceptance or rejection of our fake paper.

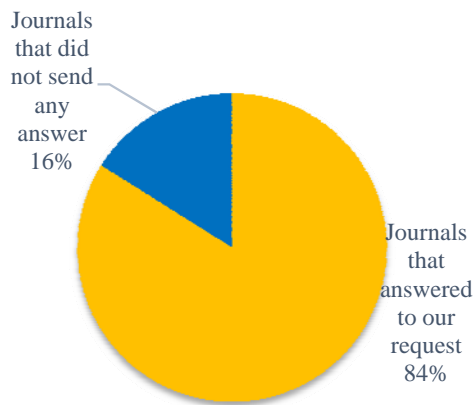


Figure 1. The percentage of the journals that answered our request and did not send any answer

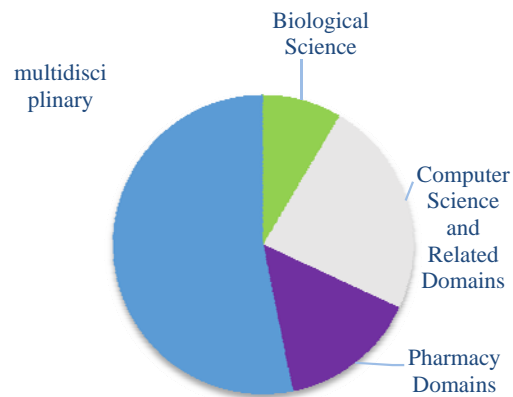


Figure 2. The percentage of journals' aim and scope that accepted our fake paper

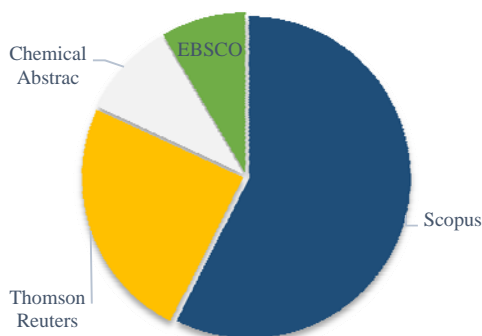


Figure 3. The percentage of indexing of journals

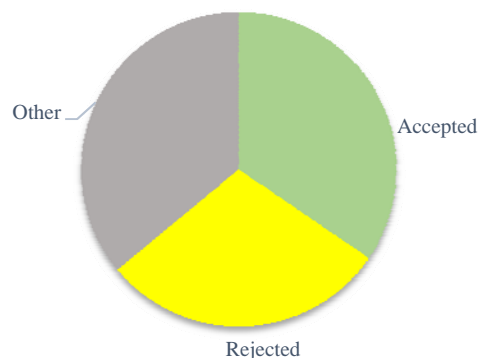


Figure 4. The percentage of acceptance or rejection of our fake paper

This paper has investigated “Affiliation Oriented Journals” to insure validity and credibility of research ethics in the submission process of different index journals. The study tested how do these journals process and respond to the submitted papers based on their affiliation. Similar research was also done by SCIMAG Dev [10]. From Table 1 and research in [9], it can be concluded that in affiliation oriented journals:

- The authors with good affiliation will receive the first answer from the editor (on sending for a review or rejection of the paper) sooner than other authors.
- The authors with good affiliation will receive reviewing results sooner than other authors. Their papers will be highly accepted.
- In some cases, predatory journals may request many publication charges from authors with good affiliation.

The affiliations that belong to top universities, big companies and chief or head of departments are considered to be good affiliations. As mentioned above, some journals send acceptance to a computer generated paper because it belongs to an author with good affiliation, which means that we cannot always be sure that we access good quality academic research in journals.

Although nowadays many trusted editors remove the authors’ names from papers before sending them for reviews, but with the number of journals being published, it is still very hard for researchers to find such journals. Besides, if that is the case, there can still be editor’s pre-selection in which a good affiliation of the author(s) can play a significant role.

Another challenge that we can speak about is computer generated papers. According to our observation, many editors cannot detect a computer generated paper and send it for a review. If the reviewer board members cannot detect that the paper has been written by computer generated software, it may be published in a peer reviewed journal. Forgers may use similar software to produce a paper or rephrase a paper, combine them and create new papers and finally present or/and sell them as their own. In the circumstances, we cannot be sure about the quality of academic research.

In the end, it left us with a crucial question-which research is original? And do journal(s) pledge to ensure equal rights of publishing academic papers based on the research content rather than looking at the affiliation of the authors to process publishing faster? It may be hard to answer these questions because of the large scale of peer review journals that might or might not comply with the research integrity in the process of publishing academic papers.

It is generally accepted that authors should not submit fake papers to journals, even for an experiment or study, also researchers should only use their own affiliations, Nevertheless, in the case of studies on research reliability such action seem to be justified, as they do not lead to getting unearned benefits by their authors but revealing the practices that have a negative impact on the entire research community and its social perception that is why such research is sometimes carried out compare also [9, 11].

4. CONCLUSION

This short research paper introduced two challenges-first, affiliation oriented journals, and second, acceptance of computer generates papers in journals. It is ethical that editors respect international editorial ethical policy in academic world and ask for reviews without paying attention to the author’s affiliation. Also, editors must send papers to expert people in each field rather than to general reviewer(s) in the specific domain to detect computer generated papers. It is our duty to help editors to do reviewing for their journal papers. The fact that, unfortunately, some journals do not observe these principles, or-in the case of authors with good affiliation-do not always observe them is of our obvious concern, as it is in the very best interest of the research world to have a fair and objective as much as possible publication acceptance process.

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