DO HIJACKED JOURNALS ATTRACT DISHONEST AUTHORS?

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Hijacked journals represent a type of cyber-crime. Fraudulent individuals clone legitimate journals and exploit their titles and ISSNs to cheat potential authors (Lukić 2014; Bohannon 2015; Jalalian and Dadkhah 2015). There is evidence of the continued proliferation of fraudulent publishers and hijacked journals (Dadkhah and Borchardt 2016; Abalkina 2021).

The goal of the current research project in progress is to study academic misconduct in papers submitted to hijacked journals. There is a common belief that naïve authors who are not able to distinguish between legitimate and fraudulent publishers submit their papers to hijacked journals (Watson 2015; Dadkhah and Borchardt 2016). However, this hypothesis about naïve authors who are deceived by hijacked journals has not been investigated in the literature. At the same time, there is evidence of the circulation of texts between predatory and hijacked journals (Dadkhah et al. 2016) and of the violation of academic ethics and the presence of plagiarism in papers submitted to hijacked journals (Abalkina 2020). This evidence suggests another hypothesis that besides naïve authors there are dishonest contributors to hijacked journals who violate academic ethics. To test this hypothesis, I detected plagiarism in papers published in hijacked journals. Plagiarism is considered to be one the most serious types of academic misconduct (Resnik et al. 2015), and the authors of papers that contain plagiarism can be considered dishonest. I extracted a list of 85 hijacked journals whose websites were available as of March 2021 from several sources, i.e., https://beallslist.net/hijacked-journals/, Jalalian and Dadkhah (2015), Abalkina (2021) and SCImago journal profiles in which users leave comments about hijacked journals. I selected articles from three recent issues and extracted each tenth paper to check for plagiarism. I randomly selected the first paper (from one to ten) and then downloaded each tenth paper. If the total number of papers in the issue was less than ten, I downloaded each fifth paper. In case of the hijacked "Journal of Talent and Development Excellence", I selected each 20th paper due to the large number of papers in each issue. The texts were checked for plagiarism in Urkund (Ouriginal). Foltýnek et al. (2020) have shown the efficiency of Urkund to detect text similarities.

The results of the research in progress show that most of the papers contained cases of academic misconduct violations, e.g., plagiarism, data fabrication, self-plagiarism or gift coauthorship. The average level of plagiarism in the sample was 20.3% (566 papers checked, more than 65%). Plagiarism was not detected in only 28.8% of the papers. These results suggest that in addition to honest and naïve authors, there are dishonest authors who choose to violate academic ethics and exploit hijacked journals.

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