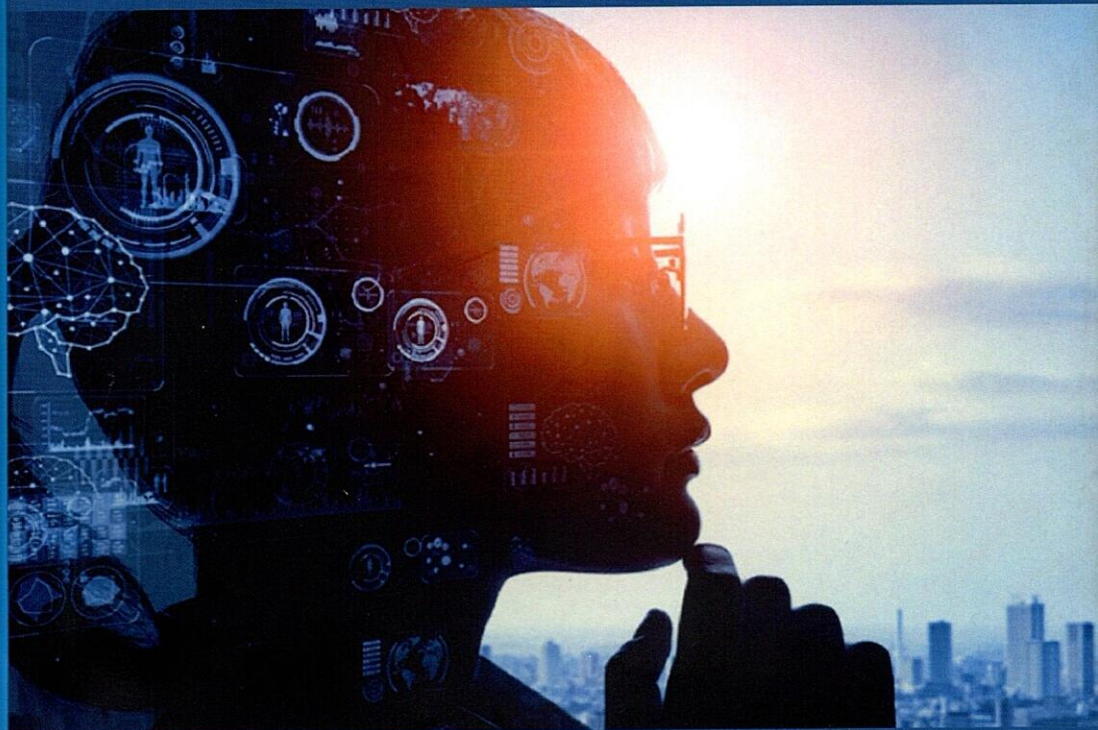


Academic Integrity & Research Ethics : A Teaching and Learning Imperative



Editors :
Sanjiv Sain, Anil Singh
Hiranmoy Roy, Asha Negi

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Unmasking the Problem of Cloned Journals: A Deceptive Threat to Academic Publishing

Dr. Prachi Shukla

Assistant Librarian, Central Library, Integral University

Dr. Uma Pandey

Assistant Librarian, Central Library, Integral University

Abstract:

Research publications play a vital role in disseminating knowledge and advancing scientific progress. However, the increasing emphasis on publications as a measure of researchers' credibility has led to the rise of predatory and cloned journals. This paper examines the deceptive nature of cloned journals, which mimic legitimate scholarly publications to exploit unsuspecting researchers. Strategies for identifying cloned journals are presented, including scrutinizing journal names, assessing website design and editorial practices, evaluating indexing and impact factors, examining publication fee structures, consulting trusted resources, and seeking advice from experienced colleagues and librarians. The paper also highlights the risks and consequences associated with cloned journals, such as reputational damage for researchers and flawed evaluations by academic institutions and funding bodies. Mitigation strategies are discussed, including maintaining awareness, consulting reputable resources, implementing guidelines, and fostering collaborative efforts between publishers, institutions, and researchers. The UGC CARE list of cloned journals of Group I is also included to help Indian researchers to find out dubious journals in their respective fields.

Introduction

Research publications serve as a primary means of sharing

new findings, insights, and advancements with the broader scientific community and society as a whole. They contribute to the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge, allowing researchers to build upon existing work and foster further progress in their respective fields. In the recent times, researchers are primarily evaluated based on the credibility of their research publications. Therefore, the fundamental purpose of publishing is not only to validate research findings but also to contribute new insights into the existing knowledge.

Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the volume of academic and scholarly communications, including within the Indian context. In Indian universities, the Academic Performance Index, an evaluation measure introduced by the University Grants Commission (UGC), has made publications essential for career advancement and promotions. As a result, publications have become a mandatory requirement, prompting ambitious aspirants and young researchers to prioritize publishing in order to progress in their academic careers. This situation, coupled with the rise of the open-access era, has led to a proliferation of journals, unfortunately, a majority of which are predatory or cloned in nature. India has, regrettably, become a hub for such journals.

In order to tackle the issues related to organized fraudulent practices, the UGC has introduced list of cloned journals under Group 1 as well as in Group 2 along with a list of authorized journals that assists researchers in choosing reputable publications. This initiative serves to foster academic integrity and serves as a deterrent against scientific misconduct. This endeavor has brought about a notable transformation in the landscape of publications within Indian.

Understanding Cloned Journals

In the realm of academic publishing, the proliferation of cloned journals has emerged as a significant concern. These deceptive entities mimic legitimate scholarly journals, exploiting the reputation and trust associated with established publications. Cloned journals are fraudulent publications that imitate reputable scholarly journals in appearance, scope, and editorial practices. These predatory entities aim to exploit the "publish or perish"

culture and lure unsuspecting researchers seeking a venue for their work. Cloners typically adopt names similar to renowned journals, making it difficult to distinguish them from legitimate counterparts. They often claim to offer a quick review process, easy acceptance, and open access at exorbitant publication fees, targeting researchers eager to publish their work swiftly.

The impact of cloned journals on scholarly publishing is significant. These journals can undermine the integrity of the peer-review process, as articles published in these journals are often not subjected to proper peer-review. This can lead to the publication of low-quality or fraudulent research, which can damage the reputation of the authors and the field as a whole.

Identifying and Combating Cloned Journals

Identifying cloned journals can be challenging, but there are several key indicators and strategies that researchers can employ to spot them:

1. **Scrutinize the Journal Name:** Pay close attention to the journal's name and check for any slight variations or similarities to established reputable journals. Cloned journals often adopt names that closely resemble well-known journals to deceive researchers.

2. **Assess Journal Website and Design:** Examine the website of the journal carefully. Cloned journals may have poorly designed or hastily created websites lacking essential information such as clear editorial policies, author guidelines, and contact details. Look for signs of unprofessionalism or inconsistencies in website layout and design.

3. **Evaluate Editorial Board and Review Process:** Check the composition of the editorial board. Cloned journals may list names of reputable scholars without their knowledge or consent. Research the background and expertise of the editorial board members. Additionally, assess the journal's peer-review process and whether it follows established scholarly practices.

4. **Investigate Indexing and Impact Factor:** Verify if the journal is indexed in reputable databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, or PubMed. Cloned journals often lack legitimate indexing

or have dubious indexing claims. Be cautious if the journal claims to have a high impact factor without proper evidence.

5. **Examine Publication Fee Structure:** While publication fees are common in open-access journals, be cautious of excessively high fees or journals that demand payment before the peer-review process. Cloned journals may charge exorbitant fees as a way to profit from unsuspecting authors.

6. **Consult Trusted Resources:** Utilize established resources like the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), which maintains a curated list of reputable open-access journals. Other reputable databases and resources specific to your research field can also help verify the legitimacy of a journal.

7. **Seek Advice and Recommendations:** Consult with experienced colleagues, mentors, or librarians who are familiar with the academic publishing landscape. They can provide valuable insights and recommendations regarding the credibility of specific journals.

By combining these approaches, researchers can enhance their ability to identify cloned journals and make informed decisions when selecting a suitable publication venue for their research.

The list of Cloned journals for group I and II journals as published and disseminated by UGC Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (Care) is available at <https://ugccare.unipune.ac.in/>. Total 45 Journals in Group I and 59 Journals in Group II are listed under cloned journals on UGC CARE portal. The list for Group I Journals (Indian) is given hereunder for ready reference:

Title	Language	Publisher	ISSN	URL
Aabru	Punjabi	Baljeet Singh Raina	2456-233X	NA
Adhgam	Hindi	State Ins. of Education	2394-773X	NA
AksharWangmay (print)	Marathi	Pratik Prakashan	2229-4929	NA
Akshargatha	Marathi	BalvanshPrakashan	0976-2957	NA
Alochona Chakra	Bengali	Chiranjib Sur	2231-3990	http://www.alochonachakra.com/
Ammanudi	Telugu	Samala Ramesh Babu	NA	NA
AruhuKuruhu	Kanna da	RathanaHalathiSomashekar	2347-5048	NA
Banaas Jan	Hindi	Notnal Publisher	2231-6558	NA
CLIO An Annual Interdisciplinary Journal of History	English	Corpus Research Institute	0976-075X	NA
Dastavej	Hindi	Central Institute of Hindi	2348-7763	NA
DogoRangang Research Journal	English And Assamese	DogoRangang Research Society	2347-7180	NA
Drishtikon	Hindi	DrishtikonPrakashan	0975-119X	NA
Flusser Studies: Multilingual Journal for Cultural and Media Theory	English, German, French	Universita della Svizzera	1661-5719	NA

George Washington International Law Review	English	George Washington University	1534-9977	https://www.law.gwu.edu/journals
Industrial Engineering Journal (print only)	English	Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering	0970-2555	https://www.iiit-india.com/IIIE-journal.php
International Journal of Food and Nutritional Sciences	English	Global E Smart Technologies	2319-1775	https://www.ijfns.org/
ItihadsDrishiti	Hindi	ItihadsDrishiti	0976-349X	NA
Journal of Management and Entrepreneurship	English	Xavier Institute of Management Entrepreneurship	2229-5348	https://xime.org/jme/jme-home
Journal of Management and Entrepreneurship	English	Xavier Institute of Management Entrepreneurship	2229-5348	https://xime.org/jme/jme-home
Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda	English	Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda	0025-0422	NA
Juni Khyat	Hindi	MaruBhumiShodhSansthan	2278-4632	http://www.rbhshodhsansthan.com/juni-khyat-patraika.php
Kala Sarovar	English and Hindi	Kala Evam Dharma ShodhaSansthan	0975-4520	NA
KALA: The Journal of Indian Art History Congress	English	Indian Art History Congress, Guwahati	0975-7943	NA
Kavita-Rati	Marathi	SujayPrakashan	2278-9243	NA
Lamahi	Hindi	Notnul	2278-554X	NA
Mahaambhav	Marathi	Unique Features	NA	NA
Mukt Shabd (print only)	Marathi	Mukta Shabd	2347-3150	NA
Nibandha Mala	Sanskrit	Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan	2277-2359	NA
Prasanna Bharathi	Telugu	PrasannaBharathiVidyaSanskritikaSeva Trust	NA	NA
Prava chan	Punjabi	Rajnrish Bahadur	2231-6930	NA
Purakala (print only)	English	Rock Art Society of India	0971-2143	https://rockartindia.org/category/purakala
RBV Journal of Library and Information Science	English	DLIS Rabintra Bharati University	0972-2750	https://libbu.vixsite.com/dlis/rbv-journal-of-lis
Journal of L. D. I. I	English, Gujarati, Hindi	L. D. Institute of Technology	2277-8887	NA
Samvad Path	Hindi	Kendriya Hindi Sansthan	2581-7353	http://sites.google.com/view/samvadpath/kha/home
Sarvdhara	Marathi	Sarvdhara	2249-3034	NA
Shabad	Punjabi	Vinod Kumar	2278-5167	NA
Shodhasamhita	English, Hindi, Sanskrit	KavikulaguruKalidas Sanskrit University	2277-7067	https://ekusshodhasamhitaa.org/index.php/sdss
South Asia Chronicle	English and German	Humboldt- UniversitätZu Berlin	NA	https://www.lawu.hu-berlin.de/en/research/southasia/publications/sa39chronicle
Tathapi	Gujarati	Tathapi	2320-0693	NA
Tattva- Sindhu	English, Hindi	Coomaraswamy Foundation	2349-1426	https://www.coomaraswamyfoundation.org/annual
The Journal of Oriental Research Madras	English	The KuppuswamiSastri Research Institute	0022-3301	https://kri.in/academic-and-research-pursuits/kri-publications
Tifan	Marathi	Tifan	2231-573X	NA
Ummulan	Hindi	DarshanPratishthan	0974-0053	NA
Utkal Historical Research Journal	English	Utkal University	0976-2132	NA
Vigyan Prakash	English, Hindi	Lok Vigyan Parishad	1549-523X	https://www.vicprakash.in
Wesleyan Journal of Research	Multilingual	Bankura Christian College	0975-1386	http://www.wesleyanjournal.in/

Risks and Consequences

The existence of cloned journals poses several risks to the academic community. Firstly, researchers who unknowingly submit their work to these journals may face serious reputational damage, as the publications lack rigorous peer-review processes and editorial standards. Their work may be discredited or dismissed due to association with disreputable journals.

Secondly, academic institutions and funding bodies may be misled by these deceptive publications, resulting in flawed evaluations of researchers' productivity and impact. Moreover, the prevalence of cloned journals threatens the integrity of scientific literature, compromising the overall trust in academic publishing.

Detecting cloned journals can be challenging, but researchers and institutions can employ certain strategies to mitigate the risks. Firstly, maintaining awareness and vigilance is crucial. Researchers should carefully scrutinize journal credentials, including indexing, editorial board composition, and publication history. Second, researchers can consult established resources like the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and the Web of Science to verify the legitimacy of a journal. Additionally, academic institutions can implement guidelines and provide educational resources to help researchers identify and avoid predatory publishers. Collaborative efforts between publishers, academic institutions, and researchers can play a pivotal role in combatting this issue.

Conclusion

Cloned journals present a pervasive threat to academic publishing, exploiting the trust and credibility associated with reputable scholarly journals. Researchers must exercise caution when selecting journals for publication, and institutions should foster awareness and provide support to prevent unwitting participation in this deceptive practice. Ultimately, by upholding the integrity of research publications and supporting legitimate journals, the scientific community can preserve the value and credibility of scholarly work, foster collaboration and innovation, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge for the betterment of society.

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