

## オープンアクセス研究モデルに関する考え方と 学術研究における倫理と出版の基準\*

フレイク・リー\*\*

### Thoughts on the Open-access Research Model and Ethics and Publication Standards in Academic Research

Lee FLAKE\*\*

**Keywords** : publication standards, ethics, academic research

#### 1. Introduction: Ending Academic Apartheid by Making Research Open-source and Open-access

If a research paper is not made accessible to others should the research be considered beneficial or valuable for furthering the academic area of study? Science and research are a process—it is a way of thinking. Research is carefully written and then published in academic journals; however, to read such research, one is required to *pay*. This author supports the open-access model as he believes that scientific knowledge and academic research should be made accessible without cost to the public. Most research is already paid for by governmental grants, non-profit organizations, universities, corporations, administrations, and other institutes with revenue to spare. Although the research was paid for, it is required for one to pay to see the research. This author questions the morality of this standard.

The first research journals were published over 350 years ago as a way to organize research and knowledge and this continues today. According to the International Association of Scientific and Technical and Medical Publishers, 2.5 million new research papers are published each year in over 28,000 different journals (Dominguez, 2017). This is the rate of a new journal being published every twenty seconds. Researchers need others to

read their paper so it can affect their field of research. Researchers freely send their manuscripts to journals for peer-review and publication. Manuscripts are carefully selected according to research expertise, knowledge and lack of bias. Papers are peer-reviewed, copy-edited, compiled into the issue of the journal, physically printed and then distributed or published online. This process requires revenue.

The traditional model is where authors submit their research for free and subscribers pay to see the research. Open-access model is where authors pay to submit their research and subscribers may see the research for free. A third model is where both authors and readers pay. In 2013, English language journals alone were worth 10 billion dollars (Dominguez, 2017). Making the journals entirely online to save on printing and distribution costs is one possible solution. However, there are different opinions and standards on publications.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) publish journals on science and the Public Library of Science (PLOS) publish PLOS-1 and other journals. Both of these publishers are non-profit organizations; however, PLOS is entirely open-access whereas AAAS is both open and closed access. There is no universal standard on publication. RELX, which publishes over 2000 journals yearly is both free and charged. Publishers such as McMillian publishers are entirely for-profit. Publishers can charge authors up to \$2,900 to publish their research.

\* Received January 16, 2019

\*\* 長崎ウエスレヤン大学 現代社会学部 外国語学科

Nagasaki Wesleyan University, Faculty of Contemporary Social Studies, Department of Foreign Languages

For-profit publishers making money off of research makes one question the ethics in the current standards. This is a debate that should be properly addressed by governments and academic institutes. This author used the overcharging of a fee as a standard to determine whether an online journal was legitimate or predatory. Predatory journals, known as ハゲタカ出版 in Japan, can be recognized by the fee charged for publication as such journals are created to generate revenue by exploiting researchers. Moreover, the review process and peer review process for such journals does not scrutinize the research. Jeffrey Beall, a researcher and librarian of the University of Colorado Denver created the “Beall’s list” for researchers to avoid and coined the term “predatory journals” in 2010 (Butler, 2013).

## 2. Ethics in Academic Research

Ethics is commonly defined as beliefs about what is right and wrong, proper or improper, good or bad (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). However, one might consider such a definition subjective as much disagreement exists about what is considered ethically correct. Ethics could also be defined as being legal responsibility. The author agrees that ethics in research exists for legal purposes in order to protect from infringement on individual rights. However, the author believes that “ethics” is more closely synonymous to “morals”. Therefore, ethics in research represents a moral code that provides safety to both the researcher and the respondent.

Research values have an impact on both the research respondent and the researcher. Research should provide productive support for theories, but not at the expense of one’s credibility. Protection of respondent and researcher are important factors as research ethics assures confidentiality and protect against harm. Personal information and data obtained for research should be strictly confidential. Respondent information should never be disclosed. Access to data should be limited to individuals directly involved in

conducting the research (Mills, 2007). Therefore, should data provide a negative picture of individual teachers, such data should never be made public or reported by using the instructor’s name. Researchers must use their discernment to determine what data should be shared. On one hand, research information should be used to benefit and promote positive growth; on the other hand, if the information obtained taints the reputation of others, the researcher should remember his or her responsibility to maintain the rights of their participants.

Confidentiality is important for protecting research participants and researchers from embarrassment, stress, or unwanted publicity (Mills, 2007). The author believes that although informed consent and anonymity removes the researcher from the participants and avoids potential harm due to invasion of privacy, the researcher should never place the research over the rights of individuals. Professional development can be promoted without causing individual harm through informed consent.

The use of informed consent and ethical discernment when conducting research promotes professionalism between participants and researchers. Collecting information on participants or making observations should always be done under the consent of the participant. The individual participant’s performance should never be reported or made public using the participant’s name. The use of a number, letter or other coded method to identify participants would help mask the identity of the individual. This author believes that researchers must follow personal ethic rules to determine if research information is beneficial and ensures positive growth.

The credibility, status, and reputation of the participant might be damaged if research and personal information is thoughtlessly disclosed. Through sharing research respondent information, the researcher also runs the risk of having his or her professionalism questioned. A breach in confidentiality brings a risk of embarrassment, stress, or unwanted publicity

for both the participant and the researcher (Mills, 2007).

Under the national Research Act and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 the protection of the participants, even with informed consent can be legally determined by the delegation of a committee. Committees such as a Human Subjects Review Board with a member representing the welfare and interests of the participants could be used to help determine if research information should be disclosed or not. Researchers must use discernment to weigh the benefits of the research against the possible risks posed to research respondents. Benefits to theory and knowledge are perhaps the greatest advantage research carries. (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Validity of data and unbiased data are also defined by research ethics. Data must not be manipulated to perform certain results. Researchers must remain unbiased and not use data to support an agenda.

Ethics in educational research is needed so that researchers do not infringe upon the individual rights of the respondent. Moreover, ethics in educational research ensures that researchers do not abuse research to support biased agendas. Ethics as a moral code denotes that the researcher has a responsibility toward their respondent. Without a code of ethics, researchers might abuse their position and not be held accountable for harm and abuse caused to respondents through their research.

Ethics, like morals is a code that protects individuals from harm. Without a code of ethics in educational research, researchers even with the best of intention run the risk of causing harm to oneself and respondents instead of promoting positive changes through research studies.

### 3. Publication Standards

The push for accountability in education also includes accountability and standards for the publishing of academic journals. This movement represents a paradigm shift toward seeking evidence of value and quality in education

standards. A standard implies that an individual or organization has determined specific criteria for what is acceptable. Through a determined standard, accountability is also determined. Accountability in publishing refers to the responsibility and representation the publisher has taken—both for the academic community and the author of the article. Publishers are liable to provide quality education journals.

Many education journals published before the American Educational Research Association (AERA) established a Committee on Evaluation of Research Journals are by minimum acceptable research theoretical or practical standards invalid or trivial (AERA, 2018). Errors include content errors, biased and misrepresented information or invalid facts. Academic journals should be reviewed for accuracy before publication (AERA, 2018).

Information is dated and can contain errors that might have been overlooked. Generalized findings based upon statistical assumptions with no evidence provided and analytical or interpretational errors are issues that educational research publishers should avoid through establishing publication standards (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2003). Publication standards help determine and maintain quality.

Content standards as well as format standards are important to adhere. Whether the research journal is medical or academic, the review process for journals submitted for publication is to ensure the standard of quality. A rigorous review process promotes quality and provides authors with information that enhances current and future manuscripts (Fried & Wechsler, 2007). Articles considered for publication by well-known academic journals must be reviewed by at least three reviewers known to be experts in the subject of study. Each reviewer must carefully analyze the importance of the hypothesis, reliability of the results, appropriateness of the methods, validity of the statistics used and the relevance of the discussion (Fried & Wechsler, 2007, p. 3).

Depending on the journal, authors may

choose to retain copyrights in the own name but are required to grant permission and intellectual rights to the article if published. The respective publishers maintain the right to approve or disapprove journal contributions at the discernment of the publishing company. Statement of policy and criteria for determining quality is a standard held by most all publishers. Knowledge of publication standards is an asset for the professional development of educators. Through determined standards, accountability and quality can be maintained.

#### 4. Conclusion

This author supports ethics and publication standards in academic research. Furthermore, this author feels that research should be maintained as open-access for free as a benefit to all academics and indeed for all society. The research is beneficial only if it is read. Having it squandered is counter-intuitive. Moreover, this open-access model would support a more transparent peer review, such as *open peer review* and *post-publication peer review* to ensure the quality of the research (Swoger, 2014). The E.U. is currently pushing for open-access of all journals by the year 2020 (Dominguez, 2017). In the United States, some scientists are calling for a boycott on certain for-profit publishers. In Japan, this author feels that there seems to be very little dialog that is openly expressed. Perhaps this is a manifestation of the national “gaman” characteristics of Japanese society members. Nevertheless, this author feels that his own interest in making his research available has been countered on occasion due to his previous status as a part-time instructor. Open-source for publications should be maintained as a standard. The content and quality of the article should take precedence over the title or position of the researcher.

Technology has ended humanity’s dependence on the physical publication model. Before the advent of the Internet, physical publication was the only method of making research known to others. This is no longer the case. This author believes that educational institutes, journals,

and governments should acknowledge the advantages of the non-physical publication model. The Internet is an open-source vessel of information and knowledge. Publishers should no longer have a monopoly on information and how information is made available. As more researchers support the free open-source model, publishers should follow suit. Educators, researchers, institutes and society alike would benefit by having research made freely available.

This author would like to extend his appreciation to Nagasaki Wesleyan University for their support for the professional development of their instructors and staff members by providing a venue for publication.

#### References

- American Education Research Association (AERA) (2018). History of AERA. Retrieved June 21, 2018 from <http://www.aera.net/Default.aspx?id=26>.
- Butler, Declan (2013). Investigating Journals: The Dark Side of Publishing. *Nature*, March 27, 2013. 495 (7442): 433-435. Bibcode: 2013Natur.495.433B, DOI: 10.1038/495433a
- Dominguez, Trace (2017). All scientific papers should be free; here’s why they’re not. D-News available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69yF7ksLWC0&feature=youtu.be>.
- Fried, P.W. & Wechsler, A.S., (2001, April). How to get your paper published. *Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*, 121(4), S3. Retrieved March 11, 2011 from [http://jtcs.ctsnetjournals.org/cgi/reprint/121/4\\_suppl/S3.pdf](http://jtcs.ctsnetjournals.org/cgi/reprint/121/4_suppl/S3.pdf).
- Kniess, B.J. (2008). *Model Academic Standards—Questions and Answers about Academic Standards*. Retrieved October 11, 2010 from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction webpage at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/standards/questions.html>
- McMillan J. & Schumacher S. (2006). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry. Chapter 6: Designing Quantitative Research*. Custom Text

- for University of Phoenix [e-text]. Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Miller, V. (2001). *The New Definition of Standards in American Education*. April 2001. Retrieved October 11, 2010 from Heritage Foundation webpage at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Education/BG1427.cfm>
- Mills, Geoffrey E. (2007). *Action Research: A guide for the Teacher Researcher. Chapter 5: Ethics*. Custom Text for University of Phoenix [e-text]. Prentice Hall, Inc. 2007.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. & Daniel L. G. (2003, February). Typology of analytical and interpretational errors in quantitative and qualitative educational research. *Current Issues in Education*, 6(2).
- Swoger, Bonnie (2014). Is this peer reviewed? Predatory journals and the transparency of peer review. *Scientific American*, November 26, 2014. Macmillan Publishers, Ltd.

