

Predatory Journals and Afghan University Instructors; The Extent of Usage, Factors and Impact- Acknowledging Authors to Manage Their Publication Process

Abdul Rahman ADIB¹ and Abdul Aziz Hakimi²

^{1,2}Academic Journals Specialist at The Ministry of Higher Education, Kabul, AFGHANISTAN.

¹Corresponding Author: adibabdulrahman1@gmail.com

ORCID

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-5865-7031>



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: As specialists having seen that a large number of Afghan authors throw their hard work and efforts into a trash along with an exuberant amount of their money, we conducted this study to find the root causes of predatory publishing among Afghan university instructors.

Methodology: looking at the type of research problem we adopted survey design. We administered a Google Forms survey questionnaire containing both close and open ended questions to which 230 Afghan university instructors responded.

Findings: The results demonstrated that a large number of Afghan university teachers get published in predatory journals for several reasons. These instructors (2.83) heavily relied on their guide teachers' and colleagues, thus made publications based on their order or recommendation. Others (3.4) had no idea how to spot or what to do to identify predatory journals. Among them some (3.17) were either pushed or compelled themselves to publish perpetually. A number of these teachers (3.39) knew not about predatory publishing, especially new recruited ones. Others (3.52) found it difficult to distinguish between authentic and predatory journals and a small number of them (3.65) could not afford the publication fees required by high standard, reputable journals.

Theoretical framework: As indicated we first identified themes and then conducted survey to find evidence for accepting or rejecting them. The existing theories were further explored through the study.

Implications: the study opens the gate for further studies and actions needed by practitioners especially calling on officials at the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan to prevent predatory publishing.

Value: Not only will this paper inform policy makers and practitioners to take steps but will also help authors get aware that a work can be invalid and be cautious.

Limitations: This study only provides the extent, impact and reasons of predatory publishing by Afghan authors and beware them of the danger. Therefore, further study, in particular, action study is needed in their own language to help them be able to manage their scholarly publications.

Keywords- Predatory journals, reputable, authentic journals, Afghan university instructors.

I. INTRODUCTION

A journal is a scholarly publication containing articles written by researchers, professors and other

experts. Journals focus on a specific discipline or field of study. Unlike newspapers and magazines, journals are intended for an academic or technical audience, not general readers. Journals are published on a regular basis (monthly, quarterly, etc.) and are sequentially numbered.

Each copy is an **issue**; a set of issues makes a **volume** (usually each year is a separate volume). Like newspapers and magazines, journals are also called periodicals or serials (University of Victoria, library). With the advances of the world in other fields, there is a remarkable improvement in educational fields too, especially in publishing scholarly manuscripts in different disciplines in journals and publishers. Academia is changing every day, new research is done and journals are established worldwide. A remarkable increase was seen in the number of academic journals since 2011. In 2001 there were only 24552 academic journals in the world, but in the year 2020 this number reached to 46736 academic journals, meaning that there was an increase of 22184 journals in 20 years, it uncovers that approximately every year about 1109,2 journals are launched (WordRated,2023). More journals are published, for there is a growing need for them, for instance, according to the documentation filing and experts at the Directorate of Research, Translation and Compilation, Ministry of Higher Education in Afghanistan universities every month(28) instructors are submitting their promotional documents to the ministry of higher education, directorate of research, translation and compilation for achieving their promotional educational degrees (Pohanyar, Pohannal, Pohandoy...in English; teaching assistant, senior teaching assistant, associate professor and prof.). Niazi and Nasiri; specialists at the ministry of higher education told us in an interview held on (Oct,7,2023) that every instructor receiving these promotional educational degrees must have at least one international article.

However, based on their credibility, journals can fall into one of these categories; authentic or predatory. Authentic are those journals that seek paper/work quality through peer review, observe research ethics throughout their policies and pay a good deal of attention to getting indexed in reliable index sources. Predatory journals, on the other hand lack these qualities. Jeffery Beal who coined the term predatory defines these journals as “journals that exploit the author-pays model damage scholarly publishing and promote unethical behavior by scientists”, Beal (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1038/489179a> In addition to the publication benefits, we also witness some problems and dishonesty in this field too which causes serious causalities and disruptions in scholarly works. Afghan university instructors choosing journals for their work often fall into the trap of predatory journals which makes them disappointed and sometimes even some of them neglect receiving their educational degrees. New researchers, specially suffer a lot. According to specialists about 10 research cases are rejected per month and referred back to the universities because their international articles are not acceptable for they are published in predatory journals and publishers. Several causes lead them to publish invalid research. Throughout various research instruments such as interview, survey

questionnaire and review of literature we detected the following causes leading the path way to this most concerning issue among Afghan university instructors.

Identifying predatory journals is challenging even for experts, in a study conducted by Richtig et al. in 2018 remarked that regardless of the fact that several authors attempted to beware authors not to publish in these predatory journals, it is still delicate and demanding to distinguish between legitimate and predatory journals that have newly emerged and use questionable methods to attract paper submissions. Predators are super intriguing. Mostly, predatory journals contain features and are designed in a way that can make it difficult to differentiate between authentic and disapproved of, Emanuel & Franciszeck (2021). Moreover, Journals specialist at Afghan universities research centers are not skillful and knowledgeable enough to be able to help instructors find reliable/acceptable and standard publishing sources.

This study is aims to discover the extent of predatory journals used by Afghan-University instructors and researchers, the reasons beyond it and to enable researchers how to effectively manage their scholarly publication process. We collected the data through a wide range of exposure to the research scenarios. This article would not be just helpful but also a needed one that would be greatly admired/accepted for it discusses the leading paths to predatory publishing. Once the issue (causes of predatory publishing) is detected it would be easy to manage the publishing process, as in the case of doctor and patient, for instance. If a therapist does not know the rise of a health issue, how would it be possible for him/her to cure it? Off course, it is not possible. Therefore, knowing not what causes invalid publishing to happen can make it easier to get into the trap of fake. Furthermore, through proceeding parts of the study we also highlighted the impact of predatory publishing on academia, life and society and suggested a few working strategies and techniques such as getting to identify the characteristics of predatory journals and the publishing practice of reputable journals in order to avoid invalid, free of credit publishing.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND/LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of predatory publishing has been widely addressed by researchers worldwide (Xia, et al. 2015; Ewhy, 2017; Narimani & Dadkhah, 2017; Kurt, 2018; Dadkhah & Lagezian, 2019; Grudniewicz, Lulu, et al. 2019; Cobey, Sarfaraz, et al. 2020; Shrestha, 2020) yet, not to be biased no work has been done on this issue in relation to Afghan context and partly that is why we decided to conduct research regarding this issue.

Predatory journals are considered as a significant threat to the trustworthiness and legitimacy of mainstream scientific research and reporting, defined as

deceptive or write-only publications. Predatory journals and predatory conference proceedings cater to the growing demand among scholars to have their research published. They promote themselves as having rapid manuscript review processes, but often fail to mention that they do not adhere to standard peer-review procedures. Some predatory journals are known for using false information to lure researchers into submitting manuscripts and then demand exorbitant article processing charges (APC) prior to publication (Chen, I et al., 2013).

Chen, et al., (2013) conducted a study about the quality of site systems of predatory journals. In this study he evaluated site design and its partial parts in order to detect the quality and credit of journals. The study mainly evaluated the site design, data collection systems of the journals, web content and data classification of the journals. In this study they reached to the conclusion that there was a remarkable difference between predatory and legitimate journals.

Probably, American librarian, Jeffery Beall the Associate Professor of Colorado university at Boulder, United States was the first who attempted to discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate journals in 2008. Beall was able to produce a list of 'potential, possible or probable' predatory OA journals and publishers and it can still be accessed with a new updated version at bealllist.net. Although, this list is still used by researchers as a valid tool for identifying whether or not a certain journal can be academically trusted or not, it is heavily criticized by individuals and institutions (Richtig et al. 2018).

A closely relevant study was conducted by Kurt in 2018. Kurt selected 50 journals (predatory) from Beall's list and within these 50 journals 300 articles were randomly chosen and then he contacted the corresponding authors of chosen articles and surveyed them through Google Forms. His study revealed that social identity threat, unawareness, high pressure and lack of research proficiency were the four main reasons authors have fallen into the trap of predatory publishing. In addition, he used WHOIS (WHOIS (pronounced as "who is") is an Internet service used to search out information about a domain name, TechTerms.com) to identify the real location of selected predatory journals. He found that most of these journals were located in India (38%), Pakistan (8%), Nigeria, Turkey, Romania, Iran and China. This study resulted evaluating some major reasons why the authors publish their papers in predatory journals. Based on his survey results, one of the reasons lied behind this issue was unawareness of the author from predatory journals. Some of the authors responded that it was their first paper so they had no publishing experience to distinguish legitimate journals from predatory ones. Others responded that their easy acceptance and encouraging emails gave them the feeling that their paper was the best. For instance, some authors sent their papers to journals of their own

language. Meanwhile, others, especially Muslims would not send their work to prestigious journals as they were from non-Muslim countries. The pressure from institutions was another reason authors published in these journals. They were pushed to publish continually or would be expelled. As in Afghanistan, authors in the university must have both authorship and also publish academic papers when getting their academic promotion, so they sometime need to publish in short term review journals that are usually predatory. Lack of research proficiency was another factor authors published in predatory journals.

Another study has been conducted related to predatory journals in Iran by Dadkhawhi & Lagezian in the year 2017. In their study a non-tested hypothesis (unawareness of researchers is the main reason of publishing in predatory journals) was evaluated. A questionnaire was used to test the understanding of the authors about the predatory journals. The study revealed that the main reason for being duped by predatory journals was the unawareness of authors, specially the new researchers. In their research they stated that the preparing a list of predatory journals is not enough to help authors not to be fallen to the trap of predatory journals, but the senior researchers should take a continues project and teach the new researchers to know about the characteristics of the fake journals, so the new researches themselves know about the characteristics of predatory journals .As it is also proven that in Afghanistan most of the authors who publish their research paper in journals, they only check out the list of predatory journals which is prepared by the Ministry of Higher Education in Research, Compilation and Translation Directorate, but they don't know how to analyze the technical and academic standards of journals, so most of them fall in the trap of predatory publishers.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was conducted to find answers for the following questions:

1. What factors contribute to the high rate of publication by Afghan authors in predatory journals?
2. How does predatory publishing affect the reputation and career trajectory of Afghan researchers?
3. What can Afghan authors do to have their publications managed properly?

IV. METHODS

Since the purpose of this study was to find the reasons or factors why Afghan university instructors publish in so called free-of-value, predatory journals and the extent of usage, a survey design would best fit the study in order for the results to be obtained were not subjective and could be generalized. Survey was first

developed in 1817 by Marc Antoine Jullien de Paris when he designed a 34-page international survey of national education systems (Creswell, 2012). According to Creswell (2012), Survey research designs are a set of research procedures in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2012, p.385). Survey design is used when we want to study trends and beliefs.

First, we randomly selected 30 Afghan universities and higher education institutions to be surveyed from the list of universities and higher education institutions at Human Resource Directorate, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). Using simple random sampling strategy, another random selection was made as a result of which we sent Google Forms survey to 20 universities and higher education institutions (there exist 40 universities in Afghanistan). The survey was intended to gain the insight into their view and understanding of what predatory publishing entailed and determine the factors leading them to publish in predatory journals. 230 Afghan university instructors participated and responded the survey questions. Participants were from faculties of Education, Agriculture, Literature and Humanities, Law and Political Science, Medicine, Engineering, Geology, Islamic Studies, Economy, and Computer Science with teaching experience between 5 to 15 years, some of whom were even teachers for more than 25 years.

We designed survey questions based on the feedback from our instructor; Dr. Abdul Habib Khalid, Fulbright Scholar and TESOL program master trainer at Kabul Educational University (KEU), evaluating the appropriateness for this study. We also used Pilot Testing so that the questions are more accurate and can help us collect valid data. In pilot testing, a questionnaire or interview is corrected based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate it (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Before we shared the survey link, we performed item analyses for each statement, removed vague, confusing and unnecessary sentences. The survey was divided into three compulsory to be responded and one optional section. In part one participants had to share their affiliation or demographic information including name, educational degree, field of study, promotional degree and work experience as an instructor (see demographic table of participants; figure 1). Part two included 10 Yes/No questions intended to check whether or not the participants knew about predatory publishing (see statements in the findings section). Part three included ordinal data. There were six reasons driven from interview and participants had to choose them from 1-mostly causes to 5-partially causes based on their extremity. The optional section, part four, included sharing participants experience of publishing with predatory journals, where they had to tell not only

about the journal but also how they were attracted by these journals and what caused.

Data collection took one month and a half starting from Oct 1 to Nov 15. Looking at the type of data, Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics which involve simple data analysis techniques such as calculating Sum, Totals, Percentages, and Averages in Microsoft Excel 2016. As stated above, the data on first part of the survey was mostly open-ended and nominal, thus analyzed through calculating the totals and was shown in Bar graphs, tables and pivots. Nominal data is described through a word or a phrase and is analyzed with both totals and percent (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). Data on part two was also of nominal type and this time analyzed through first calculating the sum and then changing to percentage. Data on part three was of ordinal type, therefore analyzed through the use of average and shown in a table.

It should be noted that this study aims to be responsive, meaning that this study indicates what is occurring rather than what should be occurring (Stake, 1983). The study is useful as it tackles the challenges that young, in-experienced researchers may encounter. By understanding the cause, the effect can be managed and researchers will weigh down their choices of journals.

V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1. Survey Results-Part One

A total of 230 participants responded to the survey questions. The participants had different educational backgrounds including 55 bachelors, 155 master, and 20 PhD. from different disciplines with different promotional degrees ranging from Pre-teaching assistant to Professor. Based on their educational background and work experience we received distinct responses for the same statements (in part one) in which we attempted to realize their knowledge of predatory publishing. The final average for correct responses was high 5.62, while the total average for incorrect responses was low, equal to 4.37. Though, most of the answers (5.62) were correct, meaning that the participants were able to recognize the characteristics of authentic journals, yet 4.37 of them responded incorrectly. The result indicates that more than half of the participants had difficulty discriminating between fake and authentic journals, thus leading them toward predatory publishing.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	228	99.13%
	Female	2	0.86%
	Total	230	100.0
Years of Experience	0-3	98	42.60%
	4-6	51	22.17%
	7-10	12	5.21%

	11-15	24	10.43%
	16-18	25	10.86%
	19-21	12	5.21%
	22-25	8	3.47%
	Total	230	100.0
Education	Bachelor	55	23.91%
	Master	155	67.39%
	Ph.D.	22	9.56%
	Total	230	100.0

Part one of the questionnaire which was dedicated to check participants' knowledge of publishing contained 10 statements. The details are provided as below:

Reliable journals publish papers with providing an actual peer-review process. However, predatory publishers approve not or do fewer peer-review process (Stratford, 2012). Even though, predatory journals claim to be publishing within a specific field of study, but in fact publish any article received as a result of their aggressive emailing. For instance, one of the predatory journals (**International Journal of Academic Management Science Research (IJAMSR)**) that claim to publish papers only in mathematics and natural sciences (On its ISSN page with ISSN number: **2643-900X**), make publications in all fields. It is widely accepted that authentic journals keep their subject area specific, accept papers within their scope and have board members and reviewers within the field, but predatory journals do not. Since the scope of work matters while evaluating the authenticity of journals, it should be carefully considered while making the choice for publication. Only a small number of participants 34 were incorrect and thus can cause them to publish their valid work in predatory journals.

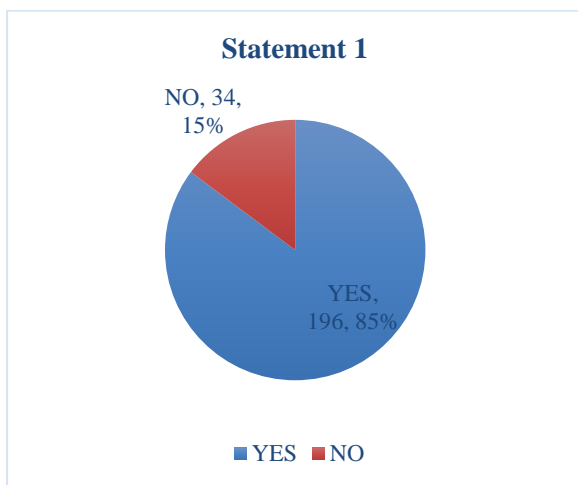


Figure 2: The scope of work (subject area) is not specified in predatory journals.

Predatory journals exist worldwide. Bahnnon (2013), found that most of the predatory journals are

located in developing world. This could further be supported by the study conducted by Kurt (2018) where he used WHIOS to find the exact location of journals. He found that predatory journals came from both developing and under-developing countries, especially China (8%), Turkey (9%), Malaysia (7%), and India (15%). Some journals use names (like American journal of..., International Journal of...etc.) implying that they came from developing countries like America or UK, but are located in a different country origin. According to Kearney (2015), predatory journals often mimic titles or logos of prestigious, well-known journals to confuse less experienced researchers. Such journals are preceded by prefixes like 'International', 'Innovative', 'Global', 'American' or 'European' and use fake images of reputable indexing databases. One hundred and thirteen participants responded correctly.

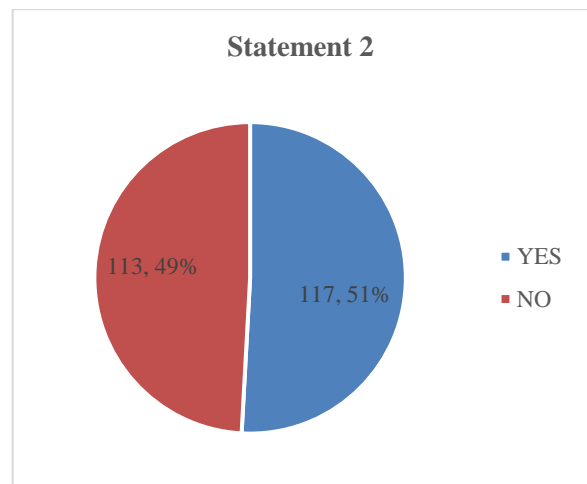


Figure 3: Predatory journals exist only in under-developing (back-warded) countries.

In-experienced and young researchers are often the victims of predatory journals (Shrestha, 2022). As it can be seen most of the respondents agreed that novice researchers get published in predatory journals. Novice researchers who got rejected several times by peer-reviewed journals because of their low-quality papers try to find journals that publish their work quickly without reviewing the paper (Clark & Thompson, 2017). Christopher & Young (2015); Shamseer et al. (2017) as cited in Richtig et al. (2018) stated:

Since new researchers are not sophisticated and new to the publication process, they might be unaware of the fake journals. In this situation, institutions working as predators take advantage of the chance and invite researchers who are frustrated by a series of rejections, peer-review process and publication times.

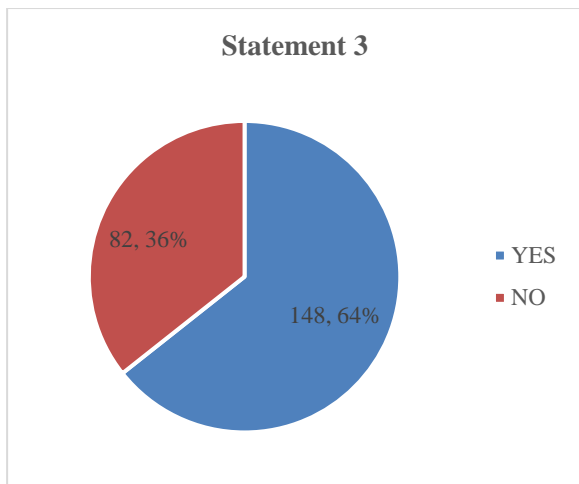


Figure 4: Only novice researchers publish predatory content.

In the year 1950 there was a continuous increase in publication of the manuscript and it was based on the policies of the institution or funding company to ask their members to have continual publication. So, some of the authors were looking for journals to publish their papers without caring about the academic standards of the journals (Richtig, et al, 2018). It was because the authors wanted to get their funding and also suit the institutions rules and policies.

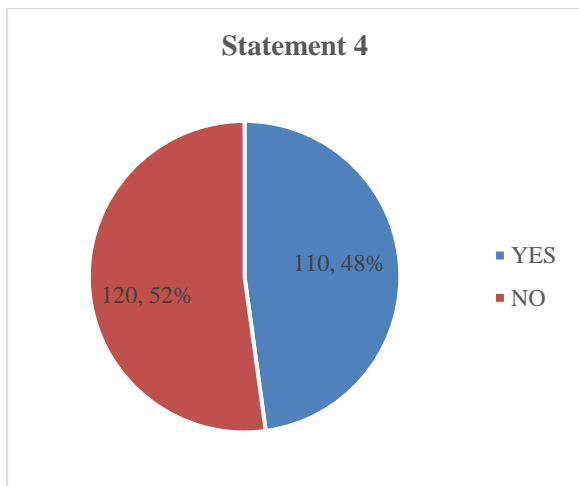


Figure 5: We can receive credit through predatory publishing for we did not intend to do so; the blame is on those who are the owners of predatory journals.

Journals are said to be authentic when they are being indexed by reputable databases. It should be pointed that predatory journals use the Photoshoped version of indexes. Most of the responses (70%) show that respondents were aware of the significance of the index in the reliability of journals.

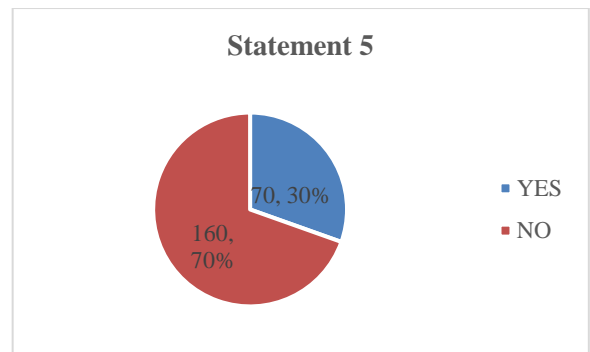


Figure 6: The difference between authentic and predatory journals is in their being indexed.

Dewa and Shah (2016) showed that papers published by so called predatory journals and the guidelines they offer often contain numerous small grammar and spelling mistakes which are the gestures of poor-quality standards. Following research ethics and code of conduct are things which are seriously followed by institutions and individuals. The responses revealed participants knew that a research should be in line with research ethics and standards.

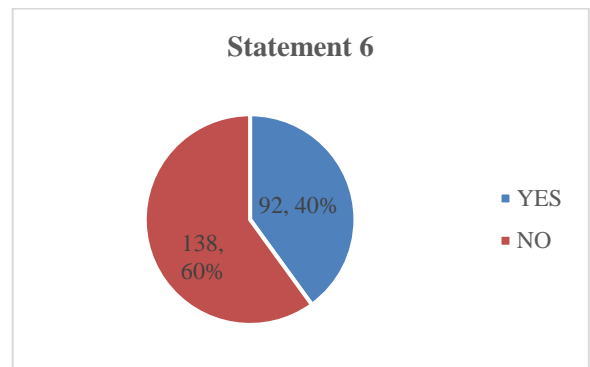


Figure 7: Predatory journals do not care about research ethics, grammar and writing principles, content, and formats.

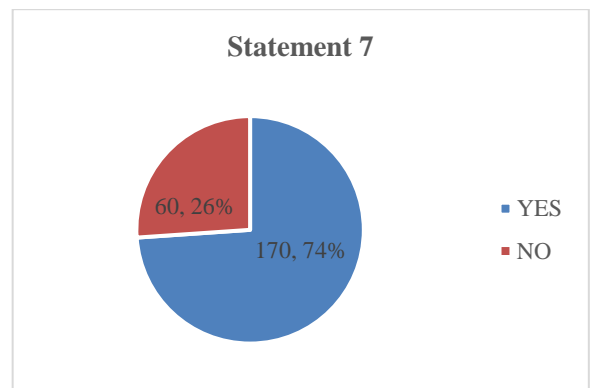


Figure 8: Predatory journals accept and publish any paper without looking at its subject area and the language of article is also not important; accepting and publishing articles in any language. (60 participants responded correctly)

Studies conducted by researchers regarding predatory publishing reveal that authors faced continual publishing with free of charge or predatory journals in various countries. Therefore, it can be said that it is not only Afghan authors who publish in predatory journals but, is a concerning issue around the world as the respondents agreed.

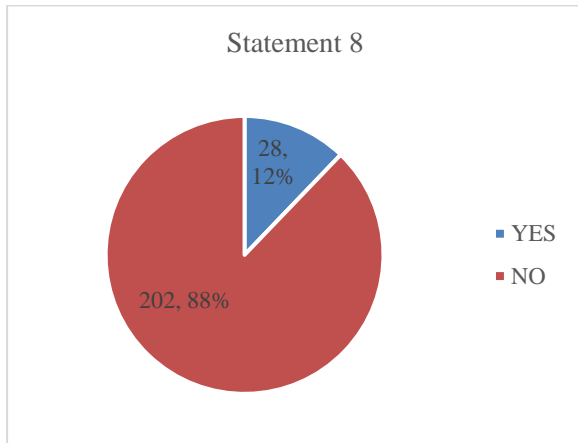


Figure 8: Only Afghan researchers publish their papers in predatory journals.

At the ministry of higher education in Afghanistan authors would get promoted just by having an article published outside the country without looking at the validity of the paper. After 2019 when the Directorate of Research, Translation and Compilation was established papers get evaluated first and then gave credit. It is not only Afghanistan where the reliability of papers was not taken seriously but was also not important in several other countries. In the study conducted by Kurt (2018) some authors stated that they would not stop publishing with predatory journals for they are not discouraged by their institutions publishing with predatory journals. Thus, in Afghanistan this seems to be a new phenomenon as a large proportion of the participants agreed.

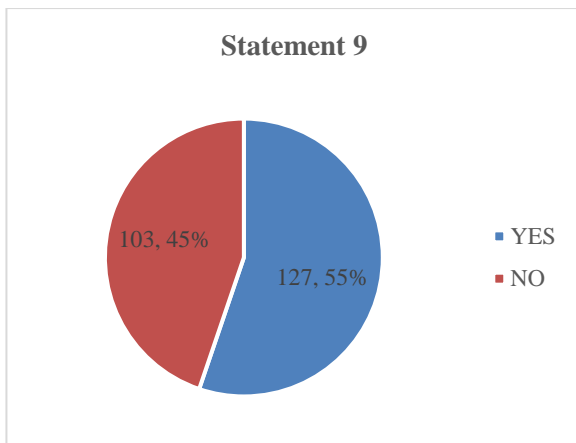


Figure 10: The term predatory is new and exist not or was not important up to now.

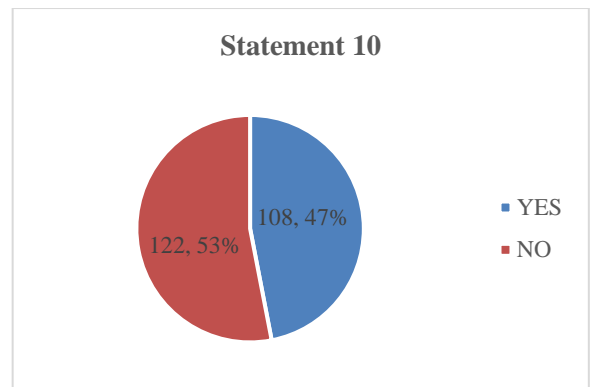


Figure 11: Being part of a popular indexing list is not an important issue in academic journals. (The importance of index is already discussed)

In brief, the grand average of correct answers (5.62) is higher than that of incorrect answers (4.37). Therefore, we can reach to the conclusion that Afghan instructors had a primary knowledge of predatory publishing and an understanding of the traits of predatory journals. However, despite their primary understanding of the characteristics of predatory journals, Afghan researchers have published with these journals indicating that predatory publishing can still be a threat for those who knew not or had little knowledge about predatory journals and/or know but pay little attention to their publication source.

5.2. Why do Afghan university instructors publish in predatory journals? -Part Two

Participants of the study were 230 Afghan university instructors. Their reasons for making false publications emerged in six themes which in turn are: making publication based on advisors’ (guide teachers) or colleagues’ order or recommendation, lack of guidance or standards for identifying predatory journals, higher education institutions pushing instructors to publish continually, lack of knowledge/Not knowing about predatory journals, the difficulty of distinguishing between legitimate and predatory journals, and low publishing costs in predatory journals.

5.2.1. Publishing based on advisors’ or colleagues’ feedback

The results indicated that a huge part; on average of 2.83, of Afghan authors refer to their colleagues and advisors for making publication choices. Seeking feedback from advisors and colleagues is a common practice in academia. This feedback can appear in the form of a suggestion for enhancement, correction, or a recommendation for further investigation. However, the decision to publish a paper is ultimately up to the author, and they are responsible for the content of their work (George, 2022). In Afghanistan, any instructor who wants to get promoted through conducting a study (this can be a research, translation or compilation looking at the type of promotional degree one is receiving) should have an advisor to whom we call لارښود استاد (Advisor or Guide Teacher). The advisors not

only provide feedbacks but also recommendations and suggestions. The same is done by colleagues and friends as well. These advisors are usually assumed more professional by authors and won't reject their offers. Thus, submitting papers without investigating the journal recommended cause authors to publish invalid content as one instructor said:

"The author does not investigate the journal and only does whatever his colleague or advisors says".

A different instructor reported:

"The professors' lack of effort, the advisors' order, and the lack of information facilities from reliable journals or the lack of access to them caused publication in predatory journals".

5.2.2. Lack of Guidance and Standards for Identifying Predatory Journals

The average for this reason was 3.4 indicating instructors had no idea how to spot or what to do to identify predatory publishers. Jeffrey Beal-a librarian and associate professor at the university of Colorado was the first who designed a list of criteria that could help authors recognize predatory journals and publishers in 2010. In addition, think, check, submit website, DOAJ, several popular trustworthy indexing databases, and the Compass to Publish are some other tools which can help authors make appropriate publication choices and find genuine publication sources. However, these are not sufficient and according to instructors the Ministry of Higher Education should provide them with a clear publishing policy, a list of reliable journals or launch workshops and trainings to help them be able distinguish between genuine and predatory publishers. A participant said:

"In my opinion one of the reasons for the fake publication is that there is no proper guidance for teachers. The Ministry of Higher Education should hold seminars in all universities so that the instructors are aware of the reliability or unreliability of publishers. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Higher Education, Directorate of Research, Translation and Compilation should launch an electronic system that allows professors to submit their intended journals and receive confirmation or rejection in no time. This way the problem could be eliminated".

5.2.3. DO or DIE/Publish or Perish

Publishing frequently is a common way to demonstrate academic excellence. The pressure to publish is one reason to publish in predatory journals. Peer-review takes days, weeks and months even. Peer-review is done when a submitted article is evaluated by a proficient in a certain field using strict criteria. If it is not boring, off course it is time-consuming. Researchers may find it tedious for they have to wait for long time before they receive final decision from editor or they may feel frustrated because they received negative, harsh feedback from the reviewer so they look for journals where rapid publication takes place and no peer-review is observed. The responses showed that researchers felt a

lot of pressure to publish, especially from the government and the institutions where they worked. On the other hand, instructors in Afghanistan should get promoted every six years. At the time they pass their promotional cases, they are obliged to publish articles in international journals. Teachers who decide to get promoted in the latest possible moment usually fall into the trap of predators who offer a quick and easy way to get published, without the rigorous peer review process required by reputable journals. On average of 3.17 participants agreed that they were pushed to publish by their hiring institutions.

One participant said that peer-reviewed journals evaluate articles strictly, new researchers, particularly may find it difficult and boring. Thus, looking after journals to accept their papers quickly without paying attention to the quality of the content produced.

Another participant replied:

"Unreliable journals simply accept any type of article without any feedback or correction and publish it quickly"

By the term Do or Die we mean researchers are pushed by their hiring institutions to make constant publications or they may feel compelled to publish their work quickly and frequently as progressive publishing is often seen as a key metric of academic success. According to Richtig et al. (2018), "Young researchers are placed under constant pressure to publish their work to increase their rating and receive funding". Progressive publication is not easy and the pressure to do so may result in deficient or sometimes free of charge; predatory work.

5.2.4. Lack of Knowledge/ Not Knowing About Predatory Journals

The survey results also indicated (on average of 3.39) that several Afghan researchers, especially newly recruited ones are unaware that a research might be invalid or there exist any predatory publishers. Predatory journals send emails and use aggressive advertising techniques to attract researchers into publishing with them (Kurt, 2018).

Dadkhah and Lagezian (2017) attempted to respond to a non-tested hypothesis (unawareness of researchers is the main reason for being duped by predatory journals) in Iran and found: "in short, it can be assumed that the main reason for researchers' tendency towards predatory journals is their lack of awareness about these journals or their inability to identify them", (p.76). Moreover, many researchers may not know how to discriminate between authentic and predatory journals. This lack of awareness can lead Afghan researchers to submit their work to predatory journals, thinking that they are legitimate.

A participant agreed:

"Lack of knowledge of the professors about the authenticity and non-authenticity of journals".

5.2.5. It Is Difficult to Differentiate Between Legitimate and Predatory Journals

Survey revealed (3.52) that instructors, especially inexperienced or novice teachers usually find it difficult to identify predatory journals as they are designed very skillfully. Some researchers may be misled by the deceptive practices of predatory journals. These journals often use misleading names and websites that mimic those of reputable journals, making it difficult for authors to distinguish between legitimate and predatory journals. Richtig et al. (2018) stated,

“Despite the fact that several authors have proposed some criteria, tactics and characteristics such as their high acceptance rate, fake metrics and editorials, typographical errors on their websites, and low quality articles for identifying predatory journals it is still delicate and demanding to differentiate among journals that have newly emerged and use questionable methods to attract paper submissions”.

A university instructor reported:

“One factor of publishing in predatory journals can be that it is difficult for us to distinguish between credited and discredited journals.”

After the discredited journals appeared in 2000s and developed rapidly afterwards, at the same time, researchers tried to show the authors about the deleterious consequences and ways to avoid them, as a result of which numerous lists were produced to make the process of identifying predatory journals easy and prevent fake publication. Using these sources to evaluate the author's desired journal will have its own benefits and its effectiveness cannot be denied. However, these resources provided little details about the publishing practices of authentic, reputable journals and are not sufficient to distinguish credible journals from predatory journals (Happe, 2020).

5.2.6. Low Publication Costs in Predatory Journals

“The factors that cause professors' articles to be published in non-reputable journals can be summarized as follows: 1- Lack of international journals in Afghanistan that are accepted by the Ministry of Higher Education. 2- Imposing exorbitant costs for publishing articles by international prestigious journals. 3- Authors' lack of knowledge about the standards and principles of journals that prove their credibility and etc.”

A different researcher said:

“Rapid publication and low publishing costs causes authors to submit their papers to predatory journals.”

The survey results indicated (3.65) that a number of Afghan university instructor could not afford publishing fee of reputable journals and were after journals which required less publishing costs. According to Vakil (2019) authors from low-to middle-income countries who did not have funds to pay the higher fees required by reputable journals turned to make publications with low quality journals who only seek to drain money and pay little or no customer service.

VI. DISCUSSION

Predatory journals pose a serious threat to the integrity and quality of academic publishing by disseminating false or misleading information, undermining the credibility of authors and institutions, and wasting valuable resources and time. These journals are characterized by their lack of peer-review, low-quality standards, and deceptive business practice practices. They often charge authors exorbitant fees to publish their work and, in return, offer little to no editorial support or quality control.

In addition, some researchers believe that by having a large number of publications they can add value and significance to their curriculum vitae so that it can impress employers; however, attaining a publication in a predatory journal is not just a waste of time, money and effort but also an active demerit damaging the external reputation of all those involved (Clark & Thompson, 2017). On the other hand, according to Clark & Thompson (2017) the number of publications is not important for building academic prestige and reputation, rather, what matters is what you publish and where. In order for researchers to prevent publishing in predatory journals, they are advised to be careful while choosing a journal or consult the experts of scientific journals at the ministry of higher education, directorate of research, compilation and translation to make sure that their choice of publication is authentic.

To manage the process of predatory publishing in Afghanistan some precaution should be taken into consideration. Instructors and researchers must have the knowledge and capacity of segregating authentic from predatory publishers. With the increase of open access, lots of predatory publishers are launched who treat publications without taking care of quality throughout the process. In addition, active workshops should be held where professional individuals and specialists can provide instructors with knowledge and preventive techniques about predatory publishing and show them how to make better choices for publishing their scholarly works. Moreover, institutions and universities can sign cooperation agreements with prestigious national and international publishers and then have their authors publish with those cooperators. However, the problem can easily be managed and solutions should be provided to manage the issue of predatory publishing among Afghan researchers.

The results of the study and the opinions of the participants show that if Afghan university instructors are more aware of predatory journals and are familiar with the techniques that help to distinguish between authentic and predatory journals, they may fall less victims to these journals. It should be pointed that only providing a list of predatory journals may not help authors prevent predatory publishing. Though having a list of predatory journals can be helpful, but authors should be informed about the characteristics of such

journals, because the list is the only thing through which we can find journals that have already been added to it while Knowledge of the traits of predatory journals enable authors to distinguish between credited and discredited journals that are newly launched and have not yet been included in the list of invalid journals. The same was found by Dadkhah & Lagezian (2017):

Participants also believed that the knowledge of English language can be one of the important factors for finding reliable sources. The effectiveness of English language knowledge is considered as one of the important factors in finding authentic journals. English is one of the most widely spoken and technology language in the world. The language of both public indexing databases such as Scopus and Web of Science and specific indexes such as PubMed is English and authors refer to these or other databases to find journals. If a person has a good command of English, he may find it easy to find his desired journal; whereas, if his English is poor, it would be difficult for him to find a good journal. This seems to be a proven fact especially in Afghanistan. Teachers who are in fields like computer science, English literature, engineering, or other fields that are closely related to English are less find their desired journals. Meanwhile, lecturers and researchers from other fields such as Shariah and Law which has less or no connection with English face difficulties finding reliable journals.

One more thing that can be proposed as a solution to prevent publishing works in predatory journals is the payment of publication fees for academic staff members. Majority of the university professors claim that with their low salaries they are unable to pay publication costs required by reputable, high standard journals and this issue cause them find journals with low quality standards. The Ministry of Higher Education should step in and devise plans for publications accepted by reputable journals.

VII. CONCLUSION

Predatory publishing can result in several negative consequences such as damaging individuals and institutions' reputation and career prospects. Thus, authors are advised to mull over their choice of publication and carefully evaluate the authenticity of a journal before submitting their work (Bahnon, 2023). Predatory publishing cannot be said to add to the academia or society or is a contribution to the advancement of knowledge in a certain field. In this article, we discussed factors that shape the publishing motives, decisions, and experiences of Afghan instructors who have published or will probably publish in predatory journals. We have identified three main themes (that can be summarized in six sub themes) that emerged from experts and participants: institutional conditions such as the pressure to publish, making publication based on advisors or colleagues'

recommendation and lack of guidance or standards for identifying predatory journals, conventions of predatory publishing such as being it difficult to differentiate between authentic and predatory journals and low publishing costs in these journals, and lastly the limited capacity of authors such as unawareness.

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QUESTIONNAIRE (APPENDIX)

Dear all, Thank you for your participation! The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out the reasons for publishing in unreliable journals by academic staff members in the country and the effect of fake publication (it is worth noting that the Department of Research, Compilation and Translation wants to find a suitable and comprehensive solution to this controversial issue. In case of any concern please contact adibabdulrahman1@gmail.com.

Part One:

Demographics		
Name	Educational Degree	Promotional Degree
University	Faculty	Department
Teaching experience (Years)		

Part Two:

Please select (Yes) or (No). To check participants' understanding about publishing.

- The field of activity of uncredited journals is not specified.
- Predatory journals are available only in backward countries.
- Only new researchers face fake journals.
- With fake publishing we can get the privilege/credit because there is no blame on the author.

- The difference between reputable and non-reputable journals is only in having a reliable index.
- Unreliable journals do not follow ethical, literary, stylistic or textual principles.
- Unauthorized journals accept any type of articles, i.e. the field of activity is not checked and the language is not valid (accepts articles in any language).
- Only Afghan writers face unreliable publication.
9. The issue of valid and invalid was not discussed in the ministry before or was not important.
10. In a scientific journal, the issue of index is not important.

Part Three:

Which of the following factors causes more fake broadcasting in Afghanistan? Kindly select them from (1) to (5) according to their seriousness.

- Lack of knowledge about predatory journals.
- Forced publication on authors.
- Difficulty distinguishing between valid and invalid journals.
- Lack of rules to identify invalid/fake journal.
- Low publication fees in predatory journals.
- publishing at the recommendation of the guidance teacher.

In your opinion, what are the other factors, especially in Afghanistan, that cause predatory publishing? Please write:

Part Four:

(Experience) Have you ever had an article published in an invalid/fake journal? If yes, please share the specifics of the journal and its factors.

Good Chance!