

Publishing and Perishing? Identification and Avoidance of Predatory Journals

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Abstract

Predatory journals pose a serious threat to the academic community. Pressure to publish, lack of skills to discern legitimate journals from predatory ones and desperation to get published may lure authors to publish with journals deemed predatory. The purpose of this paper is to create awareness on how to identify and avoid predatory journals as well as offer guidance to researchers. Using integrative review of literature published on predatory journals and predatory publishing, the study summarizes the most common characteristics of predatory journals. The main findings are presented in a list of 12 characteristics that may be considered crucial indicators of predatory tendencies. The paper further offers guidance on how to publish in high impact journals. The paper concludes that understanding the characteristics of predatory journals is a critical step towards raising awareness among scholars. The decision an author makes about where to publish can either make them perish or progress in their careers.

Keywords: Blacklists, open access, predatory journals, predatory publishing, whitelists

Introduction

The concept of predatory journals and publishing has been a subject of debate among academics and researchers in the recent past. Globally, there is continued pressure to publish in order to advance educational qualifications, get promotions, maintain employment or get research funds. This has led to the common cliché in research circles ‘publish or perish’ meant to emphasize the need for researchers to publish their work. This pressure is however not backed up by training and resources for researchers and academics to create awareness and enable them make the right decision on where to publish.

Academics in developing countries are faced with a dilemma when it comes to choosing where to publish their articles. As Berger (2017) points out, the acceptance of their manuscripts by world renowned journals is not common due to the different linguistic aspects and content of manuscripts which deal with specific issues in their countries. With the pressure to publish in international journals, the researchers find themselves in an unfavourable position. They can easily be lured to publish with the open access predatory journals which look like they are international. The existence of this large number of active predatory journals calls for research funders, organizations and universities to issue advice on how researchers can avoid publishing in these journals. Some major funders, institutions of higher learning and research organizations have started putting in place measures to penalize and punish those publishing in journals deemed to be predatory.

In Kenya, the Commission for University Education (CUE) issued new guidelines for the appointment and promotion of academic staff. Although the guidelines have since been suspended by the high court of Kenya, they had clear implications on the publishing standards of academics. They laid emphasis on publication in ‘reputable peer reviewed journals’, but the

document did not clearly define what reputable journals entail. The chair of the Commission, Professor Chacha Nyaigoti, on being questioned about where academic staff should publish, stated that articles published in ‘predatory journals’ should not count towards promotions or graduations (Kigotho, 2017). There was no clear guideline on how these journals can be identified hence the burden was left on the universities to keep track of information about which journals are credible and which ones are potentially predatory. This means that researchers, academics and universities need to set the ground for crucial conversations that encourage critical thinking on matters publications and predatory journals. Understanding predatory publishing tendencies can help authors make more informed choices about where to publish. This paper aims to create an awareness of the characteristics and practices of predatory journals as one critical step in the process of promoting integrity in research and reducing the threat.

The paper begins with a discussion on what predatory journals are, then moves on to give a short overview of the history of predatory journals and why the journals should be a concern to the scholarly community. The study is guided by the research question: How can authors identify predatory journals? The paper then presents a list of characteristics commonly identified with predatory journals. The list is compiled from a review of published literature on predatory publishing and predatory journals. Finally, the paper gives a brief guide to tools that can help a researcher publish in high impact journals.

What Predatory Journals are

Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado in Denver was the first to coin the phrase *predatory journals and publishers*. He described them as organizations that publish counterfeit journals to exploit the open access model (Beall, 2012). Beall initiated and hosted a listing of journals and publishers (that were referred to as blacklists) which he deemed potentially predatory from 2012-2017. The reference to the publications as ‘predatory’ by Beall was criticized as a reductionist term that did not aptly capture the complex situation involved in the ‘fake’ publishing (Berger, 2017).

Beall’s list may have been useful but highly controversial. Critics argued that he did not consistently justify his decisions when terming publishers as predatory and that he was biased showing outright dislike for open access publishing (Crawford, 2014) as well as publications from the Global South (Raju, 2018; Nwagwu & Ojemeni, 2015). Even though the list was eventually taken down, it was an important step in jumpstarting thoughtful, critical investigations into predatory journals and predatory publishing.

Cobey et al. (2019) pointed out that the difficulty in the identification of predatory journals is due to lack of a global definition of the term ‘predatory journals’. In 2019, a group of leading scholars and publishers from 10 different countries came up with the most recent definition and termed it as a comprehensive consensus definition of predatory journals:

Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices (Grudniewicz et al., 2019, p. 212).

The term ‘predatory’ therefore refers to journals that are self-serving and which intentionally embrace unethical scholarly practices without providing value to the researchers. They seek to obtain money from authors to publish their papers but fail to uphold standard editorial and other ethical publishing practices that reputable journals do.

The Rise of Predatory Journals

The rise of predatory journals has been attributed to the onset of open access (OA) publishing. Berger (2017) argues that the two conditions that favoured the rise of predatory publishing were the availability of publishing platforms and the potential revenue from the article processing charges (APCs) in OA publishing. The OA publishing movement was formalized in 2002 through the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI). The initiative declared that the literature that should be freely accessible online is that which scholars give to the world without expectation of payment. Since the OA journals could not charge subscription fee or access fee like the traditional subscribed journals, they had to turn to other ways to finance their expenses. Some used funding, got subsidy and grants while others turned to the APCs. The OA journals started operating on an author pays business model, where the author pays to have their research published online.

Open Access has benefits to both authors and readers. It offers a free immediate online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully. It thus helps accelerate dissemination of research to the widest audience. Publishing in OA journals means more readers, more potential collaborations, more citations and ultimately more visibility to the researchers. It also made publication of research easier and faster as compared to the print versions. However, the popularity opened up for less respectable predatory journals that abuse the author-pay model because their main goal is profit. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there are reputable publishers who have set up open access journals and there also exists predatory print journals.

This paper will limit the scope of predatory journals tendencies to the OA journals. It must however be noted that one of the main reasons for the controversy surrounding Beall's List lies in the fact that it focused majorly on OA publishing thereby drawing criticism from the OA community (Bell et al., 2018). Raju (2018) notes that 'Beall's unacademic definition of so-called "predatory" publishing needs to be dispelled and interventions like that of publishing literacy need to be sought and rolled out'. He notes that any intervention contemplated must not be prejudicial to the Global South or to open access as OA is critical to finding solutions to problems that beset Africa and notes that OA is driven by a desire for social justice which is the lifeblood for improved living conditions for Africans. Kravjar and Hladík (2016) further argue that open access must be re-examined since it is important to realize that open access alone cannot be equated to it being predatory.

Why Predatory Publishing is a Concern

The main goal of predatory journals is to make profit. They deceive authors to quick publication for a fee. It is tempting for authors to submit to these journals particularly if they are not aware they are predatory or if they are in a hurry to be published. Unless researchers learn to spot the signs of predatory publishing, research funds and good ideas will go to waste through deceptive publishing practices. The phrases 'publish and perish' and 'publish and vanish' are used to warn researchers against publishing in unrecognized journals. Submitting to such journals may have serious consequences to one's career and research in general.

Predatory journals are a threat to academia because they demolish the credibility of research. One of the most common forms of fraudulent publishing practices is when predatory journals claim to provide peer review yet they actually do not do so. This practice can lead to many other problems in the broader context of scientific progress. Articles with flawed research, communication issues or inaccuracies do not benefit from peer review feedback before publication. When articles like these are published under the false pretence of having received peer review, it can allow misinformation (fake research) to enter the broader research community which in turn can slow or divert effort away from more legitimate lines of investigation (Elmore & Weston, 2020).

Articles published in predatory journals generally generate minimum or no scholarly value for the researcher. Best research ideas remain just that until they are shared and utilized by others. It is when more people access and build upon the latest research that the research becomes more valuable. Publishing in such low-quality fake journals can make one's research harder to find and less likely to be used by others (Elmore & Weston, 2020). Therefore, articles containing important research findings may not be noticed by researchers within one's field of study because they are not indexed in proper databases (Umlauf & Mochizuki, 2018). Many popular credible citation databases do not index predatory journals; this means that anyone searching for research in the same topic will not have access to the work.

Predatory publishing can therefore waste good research ideas. A scholar could be publishing while perishing due to the limited impact of their publications in terms of knowledge creation and uptake in their line of research. A study done by Kwanya (2020) on the publishing patterns of information science academics in Kenya revealed that 42 percent of the published papers have not been cited at all. This indicates low visibility which might have been brought about by publishing in low quality journals.

Researchers could easily lose their work when they do submissions to predatory journals. The goal of predatory publishers is to make profit by getting as many authors as possible to pay while not subscribing to standard publishing practices (Umlauf & Mochizuki, 2018). Sometimes, this includes not actually publishing accepted articles, taking articles or journal websites offline without notice, or publishing submitted articles before authors have signed a publishing agreement (Beall, 2010). As Umlauf and Mochizuki (2018) point out, submitting an article to a predatory publisher can be risky because an author will not get their article back even if they ultimately decide not to publish with them.

As academics in Africa, predatory publishing should be a concern because African scholars have been cited as the greatest contributors to predatory journals. Coan (2017) in a study on the threat posed by predatory journals to academic credibility argues that African scholars form a good portion of contributors to predatory journals. Kurt (2018) similarly states that 70 percent of researchers mostly from the developing world are unaware of the concept on predatory publishing. So, the first step towards breaking away from the predatory publishing trend is creating awareness about predatory publishing characteristics.

Methods

This paper is mainly based on integrative review of recent literature on predatory journals. Integrative review is a broad type of research review that allows for simultaneous inclusion of experiment and non-experiment research to fully understand a complex phenomenon of concern (Jones-Devitt et al., 2017). The review can also combine data from theoretical and empirical literature.

The review for this study included 17 published scientific papers (theoretical and empirical) on predatory journals and predatory publishing. The articles selected were published between 2010 and 2020 and can thus be considered to include current literature. Data was also collected from movements and blogs that have been formed to create awareness on predatory publishing. These include the Think. Check. Submit. Campaign (2018).; the anonymous Stop Predatory Journals Movement; Retraction Watch (2011); and Scholarly Analytic Company Cabell's International (2018). Based on the literature reviewed, the paper analysed and summarized the characteristics of predatory journals mentioned in most of the articles.

Characteristics of Predatory Journals

As a researcher once you identify a journal, you need to do a background check on it looking out for certain pointers to predatory publishing. The characteristics listed and discussed hereafter have been compiled by reviewing 17 published papers that deal with predatory

journals and predatory publishing. To minimize the effects of the argument that perceptions of what is credible or fake are shaped by Northern attitudes about researchers in the global south, the reviewed literature included research on predatory publishing from Africa.

1. **The Journal Website:** Scrutinise the journal's website thoroughly. The website is the first and essential asset of any online presence. It can tell a lot about what the journal is likely to offer. Elmore and Weston (2020) and Shamseer et al. (2017) are in agreement that if a journal has unprofessional standards such as poor use of language and grammatical mistakes on their website, chances are that it is predatory. Other warning signs include a good number of dead links, multiple pages under constructions which might include the past issues and editorial boards, giving scanty or contradictory information on the 'About Us Page' and not allowing web crawlers. Some predatory journals will create websites similar to those of credible journals to impersonate the journals in order to lure authors into submitting to them. These are referred to as hijacked or imposter journals. However, there are exceptions to some of these indicators that concern the website. For instance, if a journal is new, you might find that their website is still under construction and that does not necessarily make it predatory.
2. **The Journal Contact Information:** Check the journal's contact information. The contact information given on the journal's website can help an author in discerning the legitimacy of the journal. It is important to check if there is a verifiable and identifiable physical address given. When there is no verifiable physical address, or if the publisher uses a virtual office or a proxy business, chances are that the journal is predatory. The contact address will also help the author check if it matches the advertised nationality. Bohannon (2013) notes that most predatory journals will state offices in one country (different from the nationality of the journal), and contact and bank details in another country. It is also important to check if the phone number has the correct country code. The email address that the journal is using for correspondence can also be another pointer. Shamseer et al. (2017) point out that if the journal is using a non-professional and non-journal affiliated email; that is if it uses the free or generic emails such as Gmail or Yahoo, then the possibility of it being predatory is relatively high.
3. **Membership to Recognized Professional Bodies and Organizations:** Confirm if they are members of recognized professional bodies and organizations such as Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ, 2018), Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), African Journals online (AJOL) and International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM) among others. Additionally, check if they are indexed by large trusted databases of scholarly works such as: Journal Citation Reports (JCR), Scopus (2018). and Web of Science (2018), among others Berisha (2020) notes that these are some of the credible and highly appreciated databases in the academic world. These associations are reputable and they vet their members for adherence to best ethical publishing standards. Being listed means the journals have passed a review of quality practices and procedures. It must be noted however that a lack of inclusion does not necessarily mean that the journal is predatory (Lain & Winker, 2017). Determining if the journal is indexed is just one step in deciding whether it is predatory or not.
4. **The Manuscript Review Process:** Look at the manuscript review process. This is a very critical step in publishing and every reputable journal should provide some form of adequate and qualified review; it could be peer, editorial or institutional review. In the

publication process, review is a stamp of approval and is important for upholding the quality of research. The minimum review standard for research published in journals is evaluation by an editor and at least two independent experts in the field. A sign that a journal could be predatory is when it misses out on the peer review process (Bohannon, 2013; Lain & Winker, 2017; Umlauf & Mochizuki, 2018). This means the article is published exactly as it was received from the author. Others may have an inadequate peer review where a single reader reviews a manuscript. It could also entail poorly reviewing the manuscript either by having peer reviewers read papers outside their specialization or using a simplified template that limits the reviewer when giving their peer review report. Predatory journals in most cases do not have a clearly stated peer review policy.

Another clear warning sign is when a journal indicates a fast peer review and publication process (Atiso et al., 2019; Berger, 2017; Elmore & Weston, 2020; Masic, 2017; Shamseer et al. 2017; Umlauf & Mochizuki, 2018). Most predatory journals promise a very short turnaround time for the process. Atiso et al. (2019) claim that in Ghana, predatory journals take advantage of academicians' frustrations by offering a quick and easy path to publication as opposed to the long, torturous journey of peer review. Researchers generally agree that any period less than four weeks is unrealistic and shows that the journal is most likely predatory.

5. **The Journal's Publication Practices:** Scrutinise the journal's publication practices. Predatory journals are characterized by substandard practices and lack a description of the publication process. They do not clearly indicate the manuscript handling process. Shamseer et al. (2017) point out that predatory journals do not have a retraction and digital preservation policy. Lack of such policies can lead to instances where the journals sometimes remove articles or entire journals from the web without warning or informing authors (Beall, 2010). Lack of information on how digital content will be preserved is a questionable publication practice because it means that if the journal ceases operations; all content disappears from the Internet.

Predatory journals also lack copyright clarity and /or requesting a transfer of copyright when publishing an open-access article (Shamseer et al., 2017). Many reputable open access journals allow authors to retain their rights and in turn the authors grant the publisher a license to publish the article and identify itself as the original publisher (right of first publication). The authors also grant any third party the rights to use the article freely as long as integrity is maintained and proper citation done. Therefore, if an open access journal requires authors to sign away their copyright to the article, it is most likely predatory. Beall (2012) also notes that predatory journals tend to publish articles submitted before the authors have signed the publishing agreement, then they refuse to take the article down if the author withdraws the submission. Most of them do not specify the licensing policy information on the journals.

6. **Editor and Editorial Board:** As an author, do a check on the editor and the editorial board of the journal. The editorial board for reputable journals is made up of experts in the field who understand and evaluate the manuscripts. The journals clearly state the list of members and their affiliations are also provided. However, there has been a practice to think that Editorials Boards from the Global South may not be good enough. Nwagwu and Ojemeni (2015) point out the fact that an editorial board composed primarily of researchers from the Global South does not necessarily make the journal predatory as may be alluded.

It is also noted that predatory journals will most likely have no editor or editorial board listed on the journal's website while for some, the editors do not actually exist or

are deceased (Shamseer et al., 2017; Sorokowski et al., 2017). Further, predatory journals also have a tendency of creating fake scholars for their editorial boards or listing of eminent scholars without their permission. When very scanty information is given about the academic credentials, expertise, contact details or affiliations of the editorial board members, it is a sign the journal could be predatory. In some cases, these scholars may not even be aware that they are listed in the editorial boards of these journals.

Other warning signs include: same editorial board serving in more than one journal, the founder of the publishing company serving as the editor of all of the journals published by the said company and the editor practising self-publishing especially in cases where there are no co-editors. This problem concerning the editorial team is largely brought about by the fact that the editorial members seem to be offering very limited or no editorial direction; this happens even in some reputable journals. If editorial members get more involved in the journal review and publishing process it would help minimize the 'predator' aspect in publishing.

7. **Article Processing Charges (APC):** It should be noted that because OA is free to the readers, publishers have to charge the author to meet the publication costs. The potential revenue from the APCs is one of the factors associated with the rise of predatory journals. Therefore, this can offer a clear indicator of a potentially predatory journal. Most predatory journals lack transparency about fees related to publishing (Berger, 2017; Bohannon, 2013; Elmore & Weston, 2020; Shamseer et al., 2017). They do not openly state the fees on their website so the authors do not know how much they will be charged until after their article is accepted. Authors also have to pay before the review process just after the initial acceptance; making the fee more of a 'submission fee' and not a publication fee (Umlauf & Mochizuki, 2018). APCs for predatory journals are also way below those of reputable Open Access journals. As Shamseer et al., (2017) point out, most of the OA journals charge roughly about \$150 while 'legitimate' journals charge over \$2000 for open access. However, this charge is quite exorbitant for young scholars, particularly those from the Global South, and this would only discourage them further from publishing in these 'legitimate' journal that are assumed to be non-predatory.
8. **Past Issues of the Journal:** Check past issues of the journal. Before submitting a manuscript, it is important to look out for indicators of predatory journals by reading through past issues of the journal. Predatory journals will publish any and all articles submitted to them even when they do not fit into the journal's specialty. Most of the predatory journals claim to be multidisciplinary with a very wide scope of interest. They lack focus on a particular field or area of interest (Berger, 2017; Bohannon, 2013; Shamseer et al., 2017). If past issues of a journal have many mistakes, are missing or indicated as coming soon, then it is a sign of a predatory journal. Other predatory indicators include: plagiarized articles, similarly titled articles by same author published in more than one journal and same authors published several times in the same journal and/or issue.
9. **Metrics and Indexing:** Predatory journals promote the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and metrics as a sign of quality. They aggressively make statements about their indexing and presence in databases as a way of claiming legitimacy (Berger, 2017). It is important to note that an ISSN is simply an identifier but not a mark of quality. Most predatory journals also have invented or fake metrics sounding similar to established metrics used by reputable journals and a falsified Impact Factor that cannot be verified in journal citation reports such as the Thomson Reuters Impact Factor. Some

use an impact factor based on the index Copernicus value which has been criticized for using unfounded methods of measuring journal impacts (Shamseer et al., 2017). Predatory journals will falsely claim to be indexed in large, trusted databases like the DOAJ.

10. **The Journal's Business Practices:** Check the journal's business practices. Predatory journals have been singled out for the use of aggressive, indiscriminate solicitation emails (Clemons et al., 2017; Shamseer et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2019). The journals send multiple emails within a very short period of time. They look for researchers who have published in respectable journals or who have attended conferences where their names and emails are indicated and flood their emails asking them to submit, review papers or even join the editorial boards. The emails are excessively flattering in tone and even mention researchers' past publications. A clear warning sign is when as a researcher you are invited to a journal whose scope is outside your field of study. Other predatory business practices include emails that do not have the option to unsubscribe to future emails and falsely claims universities or other organizations as partners or sponsors.
11. **Journal Title:** The journal title is another area that can help identify predatory journals. Berger (2017) and Bohannon (2013) note that most of them tend to use a title very similar to that of a reputable journal. They also use prestigious sounding overly generic but potentially vague terms such as 'advanced', 'global', 'international', 'universal' among others. Very often they use the words for legitimacy issues and to convince the authors that the journals have a global outlook.
12. **Reputation:** Check if a journal already has a negative reputation. A number of lists have come up although most of these lists have had a lot of debates surrounding them. However, as already discussed earlier, lists such as Beall's have not been received well by publishers throughout the world. Further accusations have been levelled against some of these lists as being too Eurocentric and showing condescending attitude towards journal published in the Global South which they consider predatory. This is an issue that has been brought forward and discussed by scholars such as Olivarez et al. (2018) who highlight the need for interventions to remedy the insensitive generalization of predatory publishing as particularly advocated by Beall. Other lists that assist in reputation check include Cabell's whitelist and the Directory of Open Access journals (DOAJ) which are discussed further down. The Retraction watch which was founded by Oransky and Marcus in 2010 (Retraction Watch (2011) is an updated blog with a searchable database of retracted scientific papers and is a useful site for scholars. It tracks incidents of retracted scientific papers due to plagiarism, falsified data, failure to obtain approvals and fake or low peer review standards.

Understanding the characteristics and practices of predatory journals is a critical step towards raising awareness of their existence. It is worth noting that there exists a grey zone in some of the characteristics but they may offer a crucial checklist for authors seeking to publish. As an author, it is important to always remember to look out for multiple warning signs rather than a single sign when checking out for predatory journals. Some journals might not meet a few of the mentioned characteristics and still be credible because they might still be new and have not attracted experienced authors.

Tools that Assist to Publish in High Impact Journals

Researchers should not only rely on the blacklist but consult with the whitelist to judge a journal appropriately. Whitelists are credible lists that identify legitimate journals as an alternative to blacklists. They can assist researchers identify recognized journals for their publishing.

Universities and higher education regulators worldwide are producing their own lists of accredited journals. Whitelists maintained by some of the largest credible databases also exist.

Web of science (WOS) is one of the leading databases managed by Clarivate Analytics. According to the journal's website (Web of Science, 2018), the database has information from over 18,000 high impact journals. The list which is updated bi-monthly offers two options: the downloadable form and the online search. The online search can be done using the journal's full name or the ISSN number.

Scopus is considered the second largest database globally (Berisha, 2020). It hosts over 5,000 publishers, over 22,000 indexed journal titles and over 1.4 billion cited references (Scopus, 2018). It is a registered trademark of Elsevier Company and to easily access their lists, one needs to register with Scopus. It offers an updated list of journals as well as a second list that contains journal titles that have been removed from their data base for various reasons.

The most recent database is The Directory for Open Access Journals (DOAJ). It manages one of the most important databases for open access journals. DOAJ currently contains over 12,000 journals from fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences and humanities (DOAJ, 2018). For journals to be indexed, they have to make a request and a rigorous vetting process is used. DOAJ has not been without challenges and authors such as da Silva et al. (2018) have cautioned scholars against relying on any one list including the DOAJ list to avoid repeating the serious errors and misguided approaches that had been witnessed with the past lists.

Another whitelist is the Scholarly Analytic Company Cabell's International (2018) whitelist also known as the Journalytics. The list has over 11,000 verified journals spanning over 18 disciplines to guide researchers. The Cabell's list has however been criticized for being commercial since one has to subscribe in order to access it in order to view its predatory reports. It is however largely useful to authors and publishers.

Apart from the whitelists, the Think. Check. Submit. initiative can be used to help researchers identify credible journals and publishers for their articles. According to their website, it is an international cross-sector initiative that aims to educate researchers, promote integrity and build trust in credible research and publications (Think. Check. Submit., 2018). It has an easy checklist that researchers can use to assess the credentials of a journal or publisher. The prescribed process in the Think. Check. Submit campaign is as follows:

Think are you submitting your research to a trusted journal? Is it the right journal?

Check if your chosen journal is trusted using the checklist given. The checklist contains several questions that you need to respond to.

Submit only if you can answer yes to most of the questions in the checklist.

The tools listed here can go a long way in helping the researcher distinguish credible journals from predatory ones. It is the responsibility of all scholars whether as authors, peers or editors to promote integrity and due diligence in the publication process.

Conclusion

The characteristics identified help to create awareness and serve as a guideline to warn researchers about journals with bad intentions. The threat is unlikely to disappear as long as universities and research institutes use the number of publications a scholar has produced as a criterion for graduation or career advancement. The publish-or-perish culture, a lack of

awareness of predatory publishing and difficulty in discerning legitimate from illegitimate publications fosters an environment for predatory publications to exist. The dynamic nature of predatory journals is also posing a challenge. Players in the industry are quick to adapt to any measure designed to foil them. It means efforts to counter these journals need to be constant and adaptable. Systems of measuring the value and credibility of journals need to be based on the services that the journal is supposed to offer and not just because they are able to publish. For OA to prosper and eliminate predatory publishers, academics and institutions need to come in and establish an open system that is cost efficient.

Ultimately each author has to make a final decision on where to publish and what to expect from their publishers. Publishing in the right journal will raise one's professional profile and help one progress in one's career. The different steps and characteristics discussed should give an author confidence in choosing the right journal for their manuscript. There is however need for an adequate reconceptualization of predatory publishing to ensure that it is not discriminatory to open access or the global south. The idea of bringing the issue of predatory journals to the fore is a great one in ensuring quality publishing. However, there is still need for interventions to remedy the insensitive generalization of predatory publishing that have often been biased when making considerations for the Global South.

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