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Strategies and Ethical Considerations for Scholarly Journals: A Focus on KODISA*

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine the ethical considerations that must be addressed in journals and discern the strategies that will elevate the quality of the journals. **Research design, data, and methodology:** This study utilized the past studies that were conducted in this field. Examples of journals were used to mark some of the key features of reputable journals, as well as the guidelines for KODISA. **Results:** This study has showed the importance of ethical considerations in journals for the best interests of the scholars and journal community as a whole. A clear set of outlines makes the journal a place for scholars to share their knowledge, as well as elevate the journal into a good standing in the academic world. Some of the key strategies in improving KODISA include inviting notable members of a field to share their knowledge and encouraging more scholars to contribute to this network. **Conclusion:** KODISA has a strong set of ethical considerations for the scholars that publish in their journals and will continue to improve its quality for the future. It includes improving its strategies and keeping up to date with the trends in the current field of discipline.

Keywords : Ethics, Strategy, Academia, Scholarly Papers, KODISA

JEL Classification Code : E44, F31, F37

1. Introduction

With the increase in research and span of interdisciplinary fields in the scholarly world, it is becoming more important than ever to set standards and guidelines that will prove to be efficient for the most effective sharing of knowledge in various fields. The regulations and guidelines set in each of the respective journals serves as a mark in which to make sure that the integrity of the publications is kept and maintained. This is also to ensure that the original works and ideas of the

researchers and scholars do not get copied and nor for others to copy off of others' works.

In order for healthy discussions and proliferative collaborations between disciplinary fields and scholars, there is a certain responsibility for the journals to provide a space for scholars to be able to provide their works and contribute in their specialty. A sharing of ideas and works from various scholars across various fields of expertise, the role of the scholarly journals plays a significant role. It is imperative for journals to offer an environment for scholars to share their original works at an excellent quality and prevent plagiarism as well. For this to occur, journals will have to form strict guidelines for the scholars to follow.

There is a clear need for journals to acquire guidelines beneficial to both the authors and the scholarly community. This includes incorporating strategies that will enable journals to be become more prominent and prolific in their chosen fields. Thus, this study will delve deeper into the ways that ethical considerations can be guided in a successful manner and some of the strategies to make KODISA into a better collection of journals for the future.

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2. Ethical Considerations

2.1. Ethics for Journals

As of late, there have been an increase in the number of articles published as well as the number of journals. In line with this, it is becoming more and more important that we consider the plethora of studies pouring into many disciplines from all over the world. With the vast quantity of knowledge that is at hand, there is also a need for a better structure and integrity within the scholars in the community.

As more participants are being included in the race for knowledge and new discoveries, it can be said that there is also a need for the consideration of research ethics and scholarly integrity within the journals (Graf et al., 2007). This is an important aspect to all studies, as in the end, publishes of works from many scholars will depend on trust in all fields. This includes the process that starts in the beginning from research proposals to check if they are ethical, all the way to the ethical considerations of the authors who are willing to publish their studies (Poff, 2009). However, it should be of note that there are many things to be accounted for in the publishing of a paper, and the ethical standard to which journal publishing should be kept to is just the beginning.

Indeed, it is imperative that all points of research to the study publication should be done with scholarly integrity, as is one of the basics of ethical considerations for scholars, but also there are other factors to be kept in mind. Although this is not usually the case for liberal arts articles, in the case of scientific papers, the question of research ethics approval is of a more crucial value in that they should be strictly followed (Poff, 2009).

With the history of research ethics and human participants reaching new protection heights ever since the research taken by the German concentration camps during the time of World War II, there has been a formulation of regulations to protect the human participants. It included things such as informed consent of the human subjects that were partaking in the experiments of the study, as well as respect for human dignity among others. There are many variations of the construction of the Declaration of Helsinki from the World Medical Association and is still being utilized today. In current times, before a review board from the journal can deliberate a submitted manuscript for review of publication to its journal, the scholars have to make sure that their research subjects have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate processes in their institutions regarding the research subjects. This aids in making sure that the research paper was constructed with the least amount of risk, as well as protection of the human participants and informed consent.

Many things are incorporated for good publication practices for journals. They include but are not limited to fair assessments on the part of the journal editorial boards for the ponderation of the publication of a research paper, the formation of a relevant and knowledgeable group of peer reviewers, and also the understanding and non-conflict of other interested parties that might exist in influencing the study or publication of a paper (Graf et al., 2007). As such, there are multifaceted sides to the ethical considerations of the publication of a research paper in a journal, and only through the active promotion of many factors involved in the making of a fair publication will good publication practices be successful.

2.2. Conflict of Interest

It cannot be completely excluded that there will be several studies where there might exist a financial conflict of interest or other general conflicts of interest. Usually, this occurs when from a financial conflict of interest, the people involved in the study stand to gain any sort of financially related aspects with the positive outcome results of the paper. This is inevitable in some cases, but also cause for concern, as it is heavily based on influencing the results of the analysis. This would end in biased reports for research papers and show a proclivity for certain trends although that might not be true for a majority of cases.

One of the major cases where this has been an area of concern is in biomedical clinical research that pertains to drugs in clinical trials. While it is worthwhile to notice that pharmaceutical companies do offer many funding options for research in the medical field that is valuable and much needed, this type of heavy funding could also be a double-edged sword (Baird, 2003). Individuals that are sponsored by companies such as these or institutions could have conflicts of interests and this is where the financial conflicts of interests might play a role in the publication of the research that was conducted (Cho et al., 2000).

This is a tricky factor in the academic world, and one that needs to be delved into a deeper study because there are many sides to this case. It is true that in the form of research that is medicine based, there is no better substitution than the inclusion of human subjects into the samples of the study. But the ethical considerations with which the scholars delve into this topic is a gray area and one that needs to have firm regulations to prevent the bias that could result from financial conflict of interests or other matters. Inevitably, the financial ties that come with the funding to the research or the institutions might have an effect that leans the conclusions and results derived from a study into one that is more favorable to the financially endowed side (Bekelman et al., 20003).

Nowadays, many journals are requiring that scholars who wish to present their work for review disclose whether they had a conflict of interest. As mentioned by Sollitto et al. (2003), there are conflict of interests when there are the added incentives of scholars that wish to deliver on a new technique or a new result that could be a novel form in their respective areas. In line with this, scholars might also be tempted to fabricate data or falsify it. Regardless of the financial conflict of interest in this case, scholars are also driven by the idea of publishing in a renowned journal and having their work shared in a prestigious group of scholarly people. Regardless of the motives for such things, scholars might sometimes be tempted to temper with the data of their results, or even make false results thereof, leading to broken trust and even in some cases plagiarism (Poff, 2009).

But this is not only the problem on the part of the scholars that wish to publish their work in prestigious journals. There have been the issues of the reviewers that look into the work of the other scholars as well. It is important that the journal takes care in making sure that the reviewers in their board are not lacking in the job and complete the work in an efficient and honest manner. According to Israel and Hay (2006), there are cases where the reviewers would not look at the manuscript that was handed to them and disregard them completely, or else reject the papers to fill their interests. These include holding off the publication of a certain paper so that they can publish their findings in a similar field first, or offering their colleague friends that might work in the similar field as the paper they are reviewing some tips and advice on the results of the paper they have reviewed. This will lead to an unfair advantage for the reviewers which would be a case of plagiarism or manipulation because they are able to control in some ways, the publication of the research that they hold in their hands. Thus, there are many sides to the coin of the conflict of interest for journals, and it will need to be heeded in making the guidelines as clear as possible. The journals will need to conduct quality controls and monitor the state of their journal publications.

2.3. Publication Ethics and Responsibilities

As mentioned in the context of the ethical considerations that must be thought in the study of all disciplines, it is important to note that the researcher has responsibility on the study to be conducted in a manner that is ethically sound. Likewise, it is in the best interests of the journals to make sure to carry out and check for the ethical soundness of the manuscripts that are submitted to their collection. It is inevitable that in the pursuit of meaningful progress in research, there will have to involve some sort of ethical concerns. In the case of medical studies, the subjects are human in some or most instances, and there needs to be

proper and strict guidelines in handling these things so that the ethical lines are clear from the beginning. Ethical approval should be at the forefront of all researcher's minds, regardless of which endeavor they intend to seek in the name of greater knowledge. Even in the current times, there are cases where ethical approval might not have been obtained in the process of the study and documented ethics approval is always important for the publication of a paper, in the least because it affirms that it has followed the ethically sound actions for the obtainment of its results from its subjects (Munung et al., 2012; Munung et al., 2011).

This is in line with the assertion that it is in the sole hands and responsibility of the researchers conducting their studies that need to gain the ethics approval that is appropriate depending on its subjects (Bain, 2017). Although journals ask for the and the authors declare the obtainment of ethical approval, in some cases this cannot be confirmed. Thus, measures need to be taken to assure that all the journals partake in the strict adherence for checking the ethical codes for the researchers, and the researchers needing to make themselves sure that they have followed all that was needed in the safe conduct of research for their studies.

There is a total of seven items including social value, fair subject selection, informed consent, scientific validity, independent review, favorable risk-benefit ratio, and respect for enrolled subjects that account the research review ethics (Emanuel et al., 2000). For a protocol review, the Research Ethics Committees (RECs) as well as Institutional Review Boards (ORBs) aid in the ethics considerations and approval for research. Gaining ethical approval should be a crucial part of the researchers and should also be systematically checked by the reviewers in the journals. Verifying the ethical statements from the researchers is important for reviewers since it will drive more scholars to actually seek the verification of the ethical considerations and promote more ethical sound studies in the future (Bain, 2017).

In the case for journals that are affiliated and under the umbrella of KODISA, publication ethics plays an integral part in its practices. KODISA commits to the highest standards for ethical considerations and does not accept plagiarism or otherwise coping of another author's works in any form. The take all measures against publication malpractice and offers a commitment to a fair double-blind peer review as well. These are some of the leads that other journals are making as well to prevent fraudulence in the research community and foster an environment of safe sharing of knowledge for all disciplines. This can mostly stem from the responsibility of the researchers to check all the ethical considerations that must be made on their part,

as well as the guidelines and adherence to the ethical guidelines code for the institution of the journals.

2.4. Ethical Considerations in the KODISA Context

Ethical considerations are an important matter to cover for journals as the articles that they publish should adhere to all the regulations and guidelines as needed. To reestablish the importance of the ethical guidelines for the scholars as well as the reviewers of the journals, KODISA provides membership for the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) which offers a reference point for the peer reviewers and editors and the editorial boards of journals regarding the ethical guidelines. There are cases where the reviewers for the manuscripts that are awaiting possible future publication in the journals are not fully aware of the ethical guidelines or protocols or their obligations. In order to mend this mishap and offer the full integrity of the journals, the guidelines serve as a function to offer steps where reviewers may behave responsibly and ethically in all cases. This is where the journals come in to lead the way for transparency in peer review policies and reviewers follow these guidelines so that they in turn can conduct the reviews of potential manuscripts in a responsible and accountable manner. As always with many parties involved in the publishing process, it is imperative that there is clear communication on all sides between the journals and the reviewers and the authors and that expectations on each other's roles are laid out fully and openly.

2.4.1. Ethical Considerations for Authors of KODISA

For any good practices of ethical considerations in journals, it is important for them to outline the clear roles between the authors and the reviewers. KODISA emphasizes this and offers a set of lists for the authors to adhere to when preparing for the submission and publication of their works. These include the context of reporting standards, data access and retention, originality and plagiarism, multiple, redundant or concurrent publication, acknowledgement of sources, authorship of the paper, hazards in human or animal subjects, disclosure and conflicts of interest, and fundamental errors in published works.

3. Strategies for the Future of KODISA

KODISA is an organization that has grown to include 9 sub journals and was registered into Scopus. It is a non-profit organization where it aims to span multidisciplinary fields and enable knowledge exchange from members

around the world. KODISA is mostly focused on the areas of business and distribution science, as well as management. But it is not limited to these fields and can interconnect to span into other interdisciplinary studies of sustainability and affiliated business areas.

An important aspect in any journals or an organizational group of journals is the sharing of ideas and information. KODISA enables that in its 9 sub journals, where the various disciplines that are covered in the journals means that professionals and academics from various parts of the globe can come together to exchange and collaborate with each other. Studies conducted in one area of discipline is bound to also have significant impact on other areas. By coming together as a collection of journals and interacting with the many members affiliated with this group that represent more than 20 countries, the areas of business, distribution science, and management can flourish into greater depths of study.

KODISA offers a unique platform that is well utilized by the many networking academics from business, consultancies, and public service areas, and in turn is able to play a pivotal role in leading the progressive shifts of paradigm for the fields of distribution science, management and business. With the power of having 9 sub journals under its wing, there are more than 1,000 articles that are being published per year. One of the journals under KODISA, the Journal of Distribution Science, has been indexed in SCOPUS, and another journal, the Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, has also been indexed in SCOPUS as well.

In order to keep up with the large demand and export of information from the various platforms of KODISA, there are annual academic meetings related to the area of business and economics which have yielded fruitful results in terms of bringing academics together from various countries, continents, and disciplines of research. With an amass of platforms and scholars from various disciplines, therein is the important question of articulating how to translate the large repository of knowledge into strategies for KODISA to be thrust to new heights.

There are some common grounds for some of the things that aid in making a journal become more prestigious. Some of these factors include having a system for recognition of contributions in a given field, as well as offering communications channels for scholars, and having the journal become a repository for the contribution of intellectual advances. Moreover, some of the common ground that many of the prestigious journals share includes those of having high impact factors, a long history of publication, as well as having organized websites that are easily accessible. This also includes having a solid team of reviewers and editors to check the quality of the papers for publication in the journal and clear guidelines for which the

authors need to adhere to. This would naturally draw in more distinguished authors to publish in those journals and have a synergy effect of rising both the reputation of the journals and the increased collaboration of more distinguished authors.

There are some examples where this can be exemplified. One of those includes The American Economic Review journal, which was founded in 1911. It has an impact factor of 3.833 and their website is clear and concise for the prospective authors to navigate. The mission statement and their journal history in brief can be seen, as well as useful quick links for the editors, and contact details, and submissions. It can be observed that social media platforms such as Twitter, are also utilized by the journal for connecting with authors and readers. In the case of the Journal of Finance, their impact factor and ranking of the journal can be clearly seen on the website. There are easy to find access quick menu tabs on the left side of the website, and issues for easy access on the main screen. They also offer different multimedia platform updates to keep in contact with its audience and scholars.

The Academy of Management Review was founded in 1976 and their impact factor as well as the ranking of their journal can be clearly seen on the website. Similarly, it is easy to find and access their quick menu tabs on the top of the website and the members services as well as events are shown clearly in the tabs. They also offer different multimedia platform updates. In the case of a science-related journal, Nature, they were founded in 1999 and their website showcases important news highlights in the area of science. The latest cover page of the journal is shown clearly in the website, and in the menu tab the various subdivision journals are shown. There are also links for different countries and the website itself is clearly ordered so that people will be able to navigate it easily. In turn, one of our KODISA journals, the IJIDB (The International Journal of Industrial Distribution and Business) was founded in 2010. The website offers a menu tab on the left side which clearly shows the information that authors and readers need to know. The frequency of the publication is also indicated, as well as the subdivision journals on the left side. The featured articles in the recent journal publications are allowed easy access for scholars as well.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Summary

This current study delved into the ethical considerations that are a pivotal part of the success of the journals and the research papers. There are many elements to be considered when publishing an article in a journal, and in turn, many

considerations on the part of the journals as well. It is imperative that in order to become a journal which scholars will be able to feel inclined to share their work and knowledge, there needs to be several factors in place. It is important for journals to always strive to be better because it offers a system of recognition of contributions in a given field, and also a more active channel for scholars to communicate within. It also offers to be a repository of intellectual advances where scholars can get access to and build improvements on their workplace of field of study.

For the increase and proliferation of new discoveries and knowledge in a safe context, consideration of research ethics and scholarly integrity within the journals is becoming more important than ever before. Trust is required from both the authors and the journals and when the balance is set, can there be a plethora of research in many disciplines.

4.2. Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

As much as this paper strived to concentrate in the ethical considerations of the scholarly papers and journals, it inevitably came across some limitations. As this was a utilization of past studies that were conducted in this field, only examples of other journals as well as papers on ethics were used as reference to gauge and offer a baseline for the standard KODISA should aim for, as well as strategies to further improve its quality. It is suggested that for future studies, perhaps an in depth analysis of a specific area of discipline can be examined to see what kind of improvements are needed for the ethical consideration improvements. There are the common ethics to be considered for all journals in all disciplines, but there are also specifics in terms of the various areas, such as those in the social sciences and those in the medical or the other sciences areas. Further categorizing the fields of study and observing how each discipline can improve its ethical guidelines will prove to be an important step for the authors and journals to improve their research quality.

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