

Educational Research and Predatory Tabloid Journalism:

Authors Beware

Gregory J. Marchant

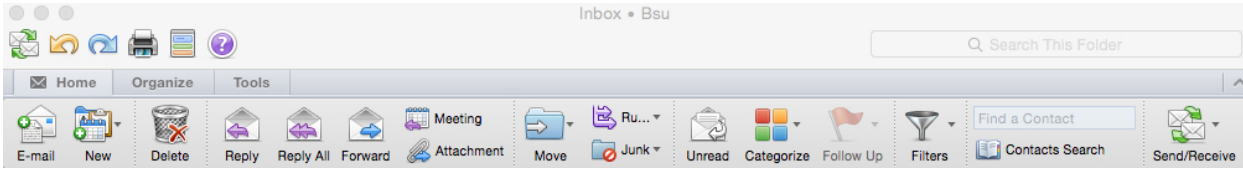
Ball State University

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the
American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL

This paper outlines the nature of predatory open-access journals. These are journals that do not exist as vehicles to promote research or the efforts of scholarly organizations, but exist simply as a means for profit. As with many efforts in education and the social sciences, when financial incentive is the main driving force, quality and professional practice suffer. A narrative case study is presented to exemplify the practices of one journal. The paper is situated within the context of tabloid journalism as a fitting metaphor for the lack of credibility of the publisher and the questionable practices used to “sell” their product to unsuspecting authors. Research authors face a new challenge in the “publish or perish” world of academia publication. The nature of a potential journal, even with an impressive established title or noted editorial board, may exist to attract fees rather than serve the research community.

“You’ve got mail.”



Donation for charity

Greetings to you and sorry if this message came to you as a surprise. My name is Mrs Stella Williams a widow, I found your email address through my late husbands internet dater late Mr. Ron Williams

I am presently admitted at the hospital suffering from a blood cancer and Parkinson diseases. I have only about a few months to live and I want you to Transfer the sum of (\$3,400,000.00) united states dollars to your account so you can assist me Distribute my funds to charity homes in your country ,

I have set aside 20% for you and your family keep while you donate 80% to the less privilage people,

I will give you more details or full story as soon as i receive your reply as the fund was deposited with a bank,

Remain Blessed

Mrs Stella Williams

Abduljamal Ali Deeb
Finance Manager Officer
Al Furat Petroleum Company (AFPC)
Damascus, Syria

Re: Letter of Intent

Dear Esteemed Colleague:

I hope this email finds you in good health.

In view of my correspondence with you, I unassumingly request for your utmost consideration, as this letter serves as a formal notice of my intent to go into a multinational investments with you in your country, please treat with absolute secrecy and personal.

My name is Engr. Mr. Abduljamal Ali Deeb from Damascus Syria. I am 64 years Old, and I am Finance Manager Officer and Saudi Arabia. Al Furat Petroleum Company (AFPC) the leader in the region in Reservoir Management AFPC was established under Service Contract no. 210 ratified by Law no. 43 of 1977 and named as per decree-law no. 12 in 1985. AFPC is a joint venture company between the General Petroleum Corporation (50%) and private shareholders Syria Shell Petroleum Development (SSPD) etc.....

Why i contacted you is that I want you to tell me more about good investment in your country so that i could relocate my investment planning to your beautiful country, out of Syria, Now that Syria security and our Economic independent has been lost to the greatest lower level, and our happiness has been taking away from us, i will like to relocate my family out from Syria, here in my country there is fire on the mountain, i need a foreign partner to enable me transport my investment capital and then relocate with my family, honestly.

Such as buying of properties houses, Building real estate and some tourist places. I will appreciate whatever result you may brief me. Do let me know your idea and knowledge regarding this or any other profitable investment you may suggest, if you willingly accept my proffer I shall provide you with the relevant details for the investment fund and our procedures in sequence.

Furthermore, I want every of my dealings with you to be carried out legally, genuinely and transparent to establish medium to long-term investment and credible business relationship.

Looking forward to hearing from you

Thanks and best regards,
Mr. Abduljamal Ali Deeb
Finance Manager Officer
engrabduljamalalideeb@yahoo.com

Mailbox Message ! 495MB500MB

Due to the strengthening of our security system and improving your mailing experience, We have detected your mail settings are out of date. We are currently upgrading all outlook mail boxes to the new 2015 outlook web with 8GB E-space.

To Complete this procedure, kindly Click Here [<http://appaccountuserwebmail.bravesites.com/>](http://appaccountuserwebmail.bravesites.com/) to upgrade your account to the latest 2015 Outlook Web Apps, login to the outlook admin system [<http://appaccountuserwebmail.bravesites.com/>](http://appaccountuserwebmail.bravesites.com/) and automatically upgrade your mailbox by filling out the requirements correctly.

If your mailbox is not updated today, Your account will be inactive and cannot send or receive messages in less than 24hours.

Sincerely,

ITS help desk
ADMIN TEAM

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Dear Dr. Gregory Marchant,

We hope this mail finds you in good health & activity.

As the Founding Editor of the Journal Clinical Case Reports and Reviews (CCRR), I am pleased to welcome you to join our editorial board.

I would like to develop this journal into one of the most interesting and significant Clinical Case Reports and Reviews publications available to all those working in academics or research or to the wider public who share our interest in this field.

Our aim is to publish high quality original case reports across all medical disciplines contributing greatly to the advancement of health care.

For more details about the journal please visit the journal homepage: [Clinical Case Reports and Reviews](#)

If you are interested, kindly mail your details: biography, research interest and recent photograph to editor.crr@oatext.com

We welcome your feedback and/or constructive criticism.

With best regards,
Andy Goren Founding Editor-in-Chief, CCRR
Robert Rae Editorial Assistant for Prof. Andy Goren
editor.crr@oatext.com

Call for Papers

International Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IJHSS)
ISSN 2220-8488 (Print), 2221- 0989 (Online)

International Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IJHSS) is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed international journal published by [Center for Promoting Ideas, USA](#). The main objective of IJHSS is to provide an intellectual platform for the international scholars. IJHSS aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in humanities and social science and become the leading journal in humanities and social science in the world.

The journal publishes research papers in the fields of humanities and social science such as [anthropology](#), [business studies](#), [communication studies](#), corporate governance, [criminology](#), cross-cultural studies, [demography](#), [development studies](#), [economics](#), [education](#), ethics, [geography](#), [history](#), industrial relations, [information science](#), international relations, [law](#), [linguistics](#), [library science](#), [media studies](#), [methodology](#), [philosophy](#), [political science](#), population Studies, [psychology](#), [public administration](#), [sociology](#), social welfare, linguistics, literature, paralegal, performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies and so on.

The journal is published in both **print and online** versions.

The journal is now indexed with and included in Cabell's, Ulrich's, DOAJ, Index Copernicus International, EBSCO and Gale. Moreover the journal is under the indexing process with ISI, ERIC, Econlit, Scopus and Journalseek.

IJHSS publishes original papers, review papers, conceptual framework, analytical and simulation models, case studies, empirical research, technical notes, and book reviews.

IJHSS is inviting papers for Vol. 5 No. 4 which is scheduled to be published on April 30, 2015. Last date of submission: March 31, 2015. However, an early submission will get preference in case of review and publication process.

Send your manuscript to the editor at editor@ijhssnet.com

For more information, visit the official website of the journal www.ijhssnet.com

With thanks,

Dr. J. Sabrina Mims-Cox

The Chief Editor, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IJHSS)

Contact: editor@ijhssnet.com

Call for Papers

Founded in June 2011, the [American Research Institute for Policy Development](#) serves as a focal point for academicians, professionals, graduate and undergraduate students, fellows, and associates pursuing research throughout the world.

The INSTITUTE publishes the research papers through a number of international journals (all the journals are published in print and online). These journals are led by the world's reputed professors. The quick and double blind review process, rich editorial board, zero tolerance for plagiarism and high respect for publication ethics, a strong commitment for scheduled publication are the key features of the Institute's journals.

The INSTITUTE calls for research papers, review papers, conceptual framework, analytical and simulation models, case studies, empirical research, technical notes, and book reviews for the coming issue of the journals. (The list of the journal is attached at the end of the letter).

The interested contributors are highly encouraged to submit their manuscripts/papers to the executive editor as attachment at editor@aripd.org. As the INSTITUTE follows the central submission policy (same submission e-mail for every journal), the contributors/authors are requested to indicate the name of the journal in the cover letter in which they are interested to publish. If a contributor is not sure about the suitability of her/his paper for a specific journal, she/he should send the paper to the executive editor at editor@aripd.org, the executive editor will decide the journal for her/his paper.

Field	Journal	Submission Deadline	Publication Date	Volume & Issue
Management	Journal of Management Policies and Practices	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Economics	Journal of Economics and Development Studies	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Strategic Management	Strategic Management Quarterly	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Business Law/ Business Ethics	Journal of Business Law and Ethics	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(2)
Accounting	International Journal of Accounting and Taxation	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Marketing	Journal of Marketing Management	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Finance/Banking	Journal of Finance and Bank Management	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Entrepreneurship	Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Human Resources Management	Journal of Human Resources Management and Labor Studies	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
Business Administration	Review of Contemporary Business Research	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	3(3)
International Business /International Economics	Journal of International Business and Economics	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)
MIS/ E-commerce	Journal of Management Information System and E-commerce	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	1(2)
Administrative Sciences	Journal of Administrative Sciences and Policy Studies	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(2)
Tourism	Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(2)
Islamic Banking/Finance	Journal of Islamic Banking and Finance	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(2)
Multilanguage Journal (Published in various languages)	International Multilingual Journal of Contemporary Research	September 15, 2014	October 31, 2014	2(3)

For any additional information, please contact with the executive editor at editor@aripd.org

Regards,

Reazul I. Sagar

Director

American Research Institute for Policy Development

42 Monticello Street, New York, NY 12701, United States.

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N. B. To unsubscribe, forward this email to info@aripd.org with 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line.

If this was your inbox, you might easily identify the first three emails as scams, don't click and don't go there. A professor and educational researcher may view the last three emails as opportunities. There is an opportunity to serve on the editorial board of a journal unrelated to your area of expertise. There are also opportunities to publish in journals where the publication date is one month after the submission deadline. As with most scams, the opportunities are too good to be true.

As would be expected, researchers are driven to publish the results of their efforts. That drive may take the form of merit, tenure, or promotion, or simply the ability to maintain an academic position. There is evidence that publication is the major factor in an academic's life (Backes-Gellner & Schinghoff, 2010). For some academics in some institutions, publication is a matter of counting articles. However, in the academic world of publish or perish, all journal publications are not created equal. Efforts to determine the quality of journals range from acceptance rates to impact factors.

Although it is great to have a manuscript published in a high profile, high impact factor journal, the number of articles in those top journals is relatively small, and library subscriptions to lower level journals tends to be limited (Velterop, 2003). Enter open access journals, holding all of the potential for the increased benefits of quality, accessibility, and immediacy with all of the dangers of tabloid journalism. What could be more appealing to an author or researcher than quick review, broad dissemination, and inexpensive processing fees?

This paper serves as an introduction to the predatory journals that have recently exploded through the advent of open-access journals. It also chronicles the process of this author in dealing with one such journal. The narrative case study begins with my effort to quickly get an article in the professional public domain, and ends at the point where legal action would have been appropriate.

Open-Access Journals

The Directory of Open Access Journals currently lists 9,807 journals from 134 countries containing 1,651,038 articles (2014). Of these, 646 of which are in the subject area of education. In 2011 alone, an estimated 340,000 articles were published by 6,713 open access journals with 49% of these articles requiring an article processing charge (Laakso & Björk, 2012). Open access publication is steadily increasing its share of scholarly journal articles by about 1% annually. Much of this growth is due to the increasing presence of commercial publishers, currently the most common publishers of open access articles. The development of open access geographically reflects a surprising role for Asian countries, Asia now exceeds the publication of North America and Latin America. This shift in publication from scientific and professional associations to commercial publishers is cause for concern, as is the increased dominance of a geographical area not established in scholarly publication.

Tabloid Journalism and Predatory Publishers

Tabloid journalism refers to a form of popular press designed to attract readers to purchase the magazine because of the sensational claims made by the publication. This form of journalism was the antithesis of the *New York Times* model of accurate, reliable, and serious journalism (Tulloch, 2000). Tabloid journalism argued that “old journalism” was inefficient and time wasting. Stunts, competitions, and special services to the reader are the hallmarks of tabloid journalism.

Popular press journals make money by marketing to the readers. In academia, tabloid journals make money by marketing to the authors. Although the author-pays to publish, or page-fees, is not new, new companies have developed to take advantage of the process (Stratford, 2012). They recruit known academics with mass spam emails to lend their names to the editorial board, and adopt journal titles that sound legitimate, and often take a title that is very similar to established journals (see Table 1). To recruit authors they also send mass spam emails.

The terms gutter-press and rag have also been associated with mass-market tabloid journalism; the terms scam, hijacked, and predatory publishing have been associated with academic publishing. Jeffery Beall has become a one-man watchdog project to expose predatory online journals. His website, Scholarly Open Access: Critical Analysis of Scholarly Open-Access Publishing, contains reports and blogs, but most useful is his ongoing list of “potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers” and stand-alone journals. He has established rigorous criteria for determining predatory open-access publishers and journals (see Appendix A).

Table 1

Hijacked and the authentic journal copied (Beall, 2014)

Hijacked Journal	Authentic Journal
<i>Afinidad</i>	<i>Afinidad</i>
<i>Archives des Sciences</i>	<i>Archives des Sciences</i>
<i>Bothalia Journal</i>	<i>Bothalia – African Biodiversity & Conservation</i>
<i>Bradleya</i>	<i>Bradleya</i>
<i>Chemical and Process Engineering</i>	<i>Chemical and Process Engineering</i>
<i>Ciência e técnica</i>	<i>Ciência e técnica vitivinícola</i>
<i>Emergencias</i>	<i>Emergencias</i>
<i>Interciencia Association</i>	<i>Interciencia</i>
<i>Jokull Journal</i>	<i>Jökull</i>
<i>Nationalpark-Forschung in der Schweiz</i>	<i>Nationalpark-Forschung in der Schweiz</i>
<i>Nautilus Journal</i>	<i>The Nautilus</i>
<i>Pensee</i>	<i>La Pensée</i>
<i>Sylwan</i> (English ed.)	<i>Sylwan</i>
<i>VITAE-REVISTA DE LA FACULTAD DE QUIMICA FARMACEUTICA</i>	<i>Vitae, la revista de la Facultad de Química Farmacéutica</i>
<i>Wulfenia, Wulfenia</i>	<i>Wulfenia</i>

Orientation

This narrative report (Labov, 1982) follows the process of the publication of a research conference paper from rejection by two traditional journals, through acceptance and ultimately rejection by a predatory journal.

In the summer of 2012, I had a proposal accepted for a paper to a Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association (2013). The paper compared a statistical approach that is supposed to be used involving specific software with serious limitations with one that is more commonly used. The results were mostly identical. After the presentation, I sought the most appropriate journal for publication, and submitted the manuscript to *Large-Scale Assessment in Education*. The manuscript was rejected without review because it was felt that it promoted bad practice (Kostek-Drosihn, 2013). Because the paper spoke to the “practical” aspect of analyzing the data, the author submitted the manuscript next to *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*. It was also rejected there for pretty much the same reason (Rudner, 2013), “a methodology that is just good enough encourages bad research.”

Complicating Action

It was clear that the study was not being judged by the importance of the research question or the quality of the analysis and results. The rejections were based on the acceptability of the question and the desirability of the results. Frustrated, I simply wanted to get the study “out-there” so it was accessible. On September 12, 2013 he received the following email:

Dear Colleague,

Horizon Research Publishing, USA (HRPUB) is a worldwide open access publisher serving the academic research and scientific communities by launching peer reviewed journals covering a wide range of academic disciplines.

We invite you to submit your papers to our journals.

- 1. Free of Charge - Sept 30 2013** All papers submitted before Sept 30, 2013 will be published free of charge.
- 2. High Quality, Rapid Production** The time between initial screening and online publication is normally around 2 months.
- 3. Peer Review** All new articles submitted must undergo a rigorous review. The review results will be notified within 40 days.
- 4. How to Submit** Please submit your manuscript through our [Online Manuscript Tracking System](#). Also, you can send your manuscript to submission@hrpub.org.
- 5. Register** Customer support is free for registered users.
- 6. Join Us as Reviewers** Please complete the [membership application form](#) and send it to joinus@hrpub.org.

Horizon Research Publishing, USA

I slightly revised and updated the manuscript and submitted it to Horizon Publishing for the *Universal Journal of Educational Research* on September 29 in order to qualify for the free publishing offer. On December 14, I received an email from Daniel Anderson, an editorial assistant, indicating that I needed to revise and resubmit the manuscript. The manuscript appeared to have been reviewed by one reviewer. I made some changes, responded to some concerns, and closed with: *This study pretty much is what it is, and that is a very practical look at the practice of averaging plausible values (a common practice in educational research). This study has implications for anyone using NAEP, PISA, or any other dataset using plausible values. I anticipate that this would be a fairly well cited article. If you have any other specific recommendations, please let me know. I look forward to your decision.*

(Abbreviated) “Publication” Timeline

January 5, 2014 I received an acceptance letter from Daniel Anderson that began:

Your paper has been accepted for publication...The publication fee is \$200. Later dismissed after informing of promotional offer.

January 14, 2014 I received the typeset page proofs.

February 5, 2014 I received an email from John Thompson, the Journal Manager:

We're pleased to inform you that your paper (19501822) has been published. Please refer to the journal's homepage:

http://www.hrpub.org/journals/article_info.php?aid=1434

March 17 & 25 After not being able to find the article online, I sent and received an email from Mr. Anderson: Thank you for your interest in publishing your work in HRPUB. Evaluated by the editor-in-chief, your paper is not suitable for publication. Herewith attached is the review report (see Table 2).

Table 2. Rejection review report 2 ½ months after accepted and “published.”

General Comments	The paper, that presents an interesting topic, argues its positions not scientifically. The explanation is not depth.
Advantage & Disadvantage	The paper is focused on a question relevant for the social education, but it addresses the issue only descriptively
How to improve	It would be necessary to present the whole process of analysis and to extend the discussion on the results. However, this revision needs a structural intervention.

The report closed with the recommendation:

Recommendation

Kindly mark with a ■

Accept As It Is

Requires Minor Revision

Requires Major Revision

Rejected

March 25, 2014I responded with an email with attachments of the typeset manuscript of the article with “Copyright © Horizon Research Publishing. All rights reserved” and the Horizon Research Publishing Corporation webpage chronicling the manuscript’s history:



View / Edit My Manuscript

Journal Title

Universal Journal of Educational Research

Manuscript Title

How Plausible is Using Averaged NAEP Values?

Abstract

Software limitations and difficulty of use have led to some using averaged values instead of plausible values. This study compared the results of plausible values using AM software and averaged values using SPSS for descriptive statistics and multiple regressions using the 2009 4th and 8th grade math and reading NAEP for the total sample and a subsample of Native American students. Gender and poverty and absenteeism and enjoyment of the subject were used in separate equations to predict achievement. The subgroup means were almost identical, but differences were evident in the standard deviations. The regressions yielded similar results for both approaches. The results suggested that averaged values might present a viable, although not preferable approach to plausible values.

Keywords

NAEP, Large-Scale Database, Statistical Analysis, Plausible Values

Copyright

Yes

History Records

Date	Operator	Latest Status	Editor Comment
2014-03-07	Administrator	Manuscript Rejection	
2014-02-05	Administrator	Final Publication	Your manuscript has been published and the electronic version is available online.
2013-12-17	Administrator	Ready for Acceptance	Your manuscript will be accepted for publication
2013-10-06	Administrator	Under Peer Review	Your manuscript meets the general criteria for the journal and has been sent out for peer review
2013-09-30	Administrator	Initial Screening	Your manuscript has been assigned to editors for initial screening. Please check your mailbox for the new message whenever necessary. Please track status of your manuscript through the Online Manuscript Tracking System.
2013-09-30		Submit Success	

Author Feedback

March 26, 2014 I sent an email with publication citation, including the DOI:

10.13189/ujer.2014.020312 and the following:

Please note that your archives are missing the page numbers associated with my article (see below).

The Lily article goes to page 293.

My article was supposed to be 294-298.


The following article begins on page 299

In other words it appears that the problem was that the article simply was not uploaded. Perhaps this helps in the resolution of this issue.

April 9, 2014 I sent a certified letter with tracking and signature requirements to the Horizon Research Publishing office in California. I learned that after two attempts, the Post Office could not deliver the certified letter to the address.

Tracking Number: 70140150000079754046



Product & Tracking Information		
Postal Product:	Features: Certified Mail™	
DATE & TIME	STATUS OF ITEM	LOCATION
April 14, 2014 , 1:32 pm	Notice Left (No Authorized Recipient Available) 	ALHAMBRA, CA 91801
April 12, 2014 , 9:18 am	Notice Left (Business Closed)	ALHAMBRA, CA 91802
April 11, 2014	Depart USPS Sort Facility	CITY OF INDUSTRY, CA 91715
April 11, 2014 , 7:44 pm	Processed through USPS Sort Facility	CITY OF INDUSTRY, CA 91715
April 10, 2014 , 12:24 am	Processed through USPS Sort Facility	INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206
April 9, 2014	Depart USPS Sort Facility	INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206
April 9, 2014 , 9:32 pm	Processed through USPS Sort Facility	INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206

June 6, 2014 Email correspondence offering to pay the \$200 publication fee (just to see if that was the real issue). No response. I give up.

Discussion

“Caveat emptor” is Latin for “Let the buyer beware.” For scholarly authors that admonition is becoming an increasing concern. The advent of open-access online journals has made hanging an attractive shingle on the web too inviting for profiteering entrepreneurs. Authors and institutions need to take another look at how to identify quality in light of these new open-access predatory journals. At this point:

There is no mechanism to identify the quality of the journal articles or the predatory publishers and journals. There is immediate need to develop a mechanism to identify such predatory publishers and blacklist them.

Otherwise, good research and researchers would suffer.

(Raju, 2013, p.1462).

My rejection from a predatory journal seems to be an anomaly. These journals exist for processing fees. Experiences with these journals are beginning to attract attention. “Get me off Your F*cking Mailing List,” a manuscript consisting of the seven word title repeated over and over was accepted for publication by the *International Journal of Advanced Computer Technology* (MacDonald, 2014). A study by Maggie Simpson, Edna Krabappel, and Kim Jong Fun was accepted for publication by two predatory journals (Stromberg, 2014). The most extreme example involved a fake study called “Cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs?” that was accepted by 17 medical journals (Segran, 2015). Perhaps the initial waving of the publication fee was my undoing.

I had not heard of predatory or scam journals, the scholarly equivalent of the tabloid press, when I submitted my manuscript. If I had, I might have consulted’s annually updated list of *Potential, Possible, or Probable Predatory Scholarly Open-Access Publishers* and *Potential, Possible, or Probable Predatory Scholarly Open-Access Stand-Alone Journals* (2015, see Appendix B & C). If I had consulted that list, I would have found Horizon Research Publishing. If I would have explored Beall’s website further, I could have found an article describing Horizon Research Publishing from May of 2013 (Beall). I would have found warnings about the corporation that launched 66 journal titles at once. I would have read questions raised about the lack of location listed in the contact information; and how they identify an office in California, but the web url is registered in China. The website raised concerns about fake names (I always wondered about Mr. “Anderson”). I would have seen Beall’s warning, “I recommend against joining these editorial boards and against submitting any papers to this publisher.” I would have known that not all scam emails involve bogus investment opportunities and not all tabloids are at the supermarket checkout lines. Authors beware, you have been warned.

End note. After revision my manuscript was published in the journal *Comprehensive Psychology* (Marchant, 2015).

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