

Peer Review

Review of: "Navigating the Madness of Academic Publishing"

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"Navigating the Madness of Academic Publishing" addresses a crucial topic for the academic community, shedding light on the challenges and contradictions within the current publishing landscape. It offers a clear and accessible narrative that effectively illustrates the realities researchers face, providing valuable insights, especially for newcomers or those unfamiliar with the complexities of academic publishing. The personal anecdotes integrated into the discussion make the work relatable and engaging. Meanwhile, the focus on issues such as high publication fees (APCs), the misuse of impact factors, and the exploitation of unpaid peer reviewers highlights significant structural flaws.

One of the main strengths of the article is its contextual relevance, especially its focus on the disparities between the Global North and South, which highlights the inequitable nature of the publishing system. The proposed solutions—advocating for society-led publishing platforms, exploring preprints, and recalibrating metrics—offer a necessary framework for envisioning a fairer model. However, these proposals lack depth in analysis, as the article does not sufficiently address the practical challenges and limitations of these approaches. For instance, the financial sustainability of society-controlled journals compared to corporate publishing giants, or the institutional hesitance to fully embrace preprints as a valid evaluation metric, are only superficially discussed.

While the critique of the commercial aspects of publishing is compelling, the lack of empirical data undermines the argument's foundation. Statistical comparisons—such as citation trends, APC fees across disciplines, or the geographic distribution of authors—would enhance the analysis and provide readers with more substance to consider. Furthermore, the discussion on impact factors, although important, does not explore their unintended consequences deeply enough, especially within under-

resourced research ecosystems. Including richer examples or insights based on recent studies would add credibility and nuance to this part of the discourse.

Another limitation is the insufficient exploration of institutional responses and responsibilities. The emphasis seems to be on individual and community-level solutions, neglecting the systemic role that universities, funding agencies, and governments must play in initiating change. Without institutional reforms and policy-level adjustments, the proposed pathways risk having limited scope and impact. Furthermore, the enthusiasm surrounding preprints, while encouraging, appears somewhat unbalanced without a critical acknowledgment of the risks associated with disseminating unverified content or the varied reception of preprints across disciplines.

In summary, this article presents a compelling and articulate introduction to the paradoxes of academic publishing, successfully sparking reflection within the academic community. However, its potential is limited by a lack of supporting quantitative evidence and an insufficiently critical examination of deeply embedded structural issues. While the article effectively emphasizes the need for reform, a more nuanced exploration of challenges, supported by concrete data and broader references, would enhance its overall impact. It is a valuable contribution, but with some refinements, it could become an essential reference point in the ongoing debate about the future of academic publishing.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.