

Redundant Publications

Redundant publication occurs when multiple papers are written:

- without reference in the text,
- share the same text, data or results.

This also refers to the situation that one study is split into several parts and submitted to two or **more** journals.

Why do authors do it?

- To increase their publication count
- To get more recognition
- To achieve faster career progression
- To receive more funding

Types of Redundant Publications

- Duplicate publications
- Overlapping publications/Simultaneous submission
- Salami slicing

a) Duplicate publications

It is the publication of a paper that is substantially similar to a published paper by the same author, without acknowledging the source and without obtaining the permission of the original copyright holder.

There may be superfluous differences between the original and the second paper, such as a new title or a modified abstract, but the data set and findings stay the same.

Why duplicate publication is unethical?

- Republication of a paper without permission is a serious breach of publishing ethics.
- It violates copyright as in most cases.
- If an author has published an article, then the copyright for the paper lies with the journal and not with the authors.
- It is a “sign of poor scholarship”

Role of journal editors

- Academic journals explicitly instruct authors not to submit papers or variations of papers on studies that have already been published elsewhere.
- Journals need to have stringent policies that require authors to send copies of older, related articles along with the submitted paper if the study findings and subjects overlap.

b) Overlapping publishing/ Simultaneous submission

It refers to the “practice of submitting the same manuscript to two or more journals at the same time without informing the journal editor that the manuscript has been submitted elsewhere”. It has also been termed multiple submissions or dual submission

Why overlapping publishing is a problem?

- A copyright violation or a copyright dispute could ensue
- If more than one journal decides to publish the same paper, it leads to a waste of academic and scientific resources as two (or more) journals would spend time and money on carrying out the same work.

c) Salami Slicing

When an author breaks up a large study in to two or more smaller published articles, he is creating “slice” of his work. A single research is divided into “slices”, each of which is a “least publishable unit”.

Why Salami Slicing is unethical?

- Authors can't breakup a study into parts and present them as separate studies
- It is harmful to science. For example readers may believe that each slice, which look independent, and may be the result of studies on different groups of subjects.
- It increases the quantity of scientific literature instead of quality
- It leads to self-plagiarism
- It is an unfair waste of peer reviewer's time.
- It increases only the author's citation record
- It is an unethical means of achieving career progression
- Authors also lose credibility
- Some journals ban the authors for as many as 2 to 5 years.

Tips to publish ethically

Breakup your study in to smaller papers if:

- Your study is a large and addresses many distinct questions
- Your study results are re-analysed from a completely different angles or given a completely different treatment.
- Focus on the quality of publications, not on quantity
- If you are using the data from the articles that you have previously published, make sure you cite them in your paper.

- In case you feel there is an overlap, make sure you declare this at the time of submission.
- In case you have submitted the same paper to another journal, inform the journal editors about it, so that they know that you do not intended to deceive them.

References:

<https://www.slideshare.net/editage/avoid-salami-slicing-and-duplicate-publication>

<https://www.slideshare.net/editage/duplicate-publicationsandsimultaneous-submissions>

Dr B T Sampath Kumar
Professor, Dept. of Library and Information Science
Tumkur University, Tumakuru
sampathkumar.info