

WHERE TO PUBLISH? WHERE NOT TO PUBLISH?

White Paper By BRU-Iscte Scientific Committee

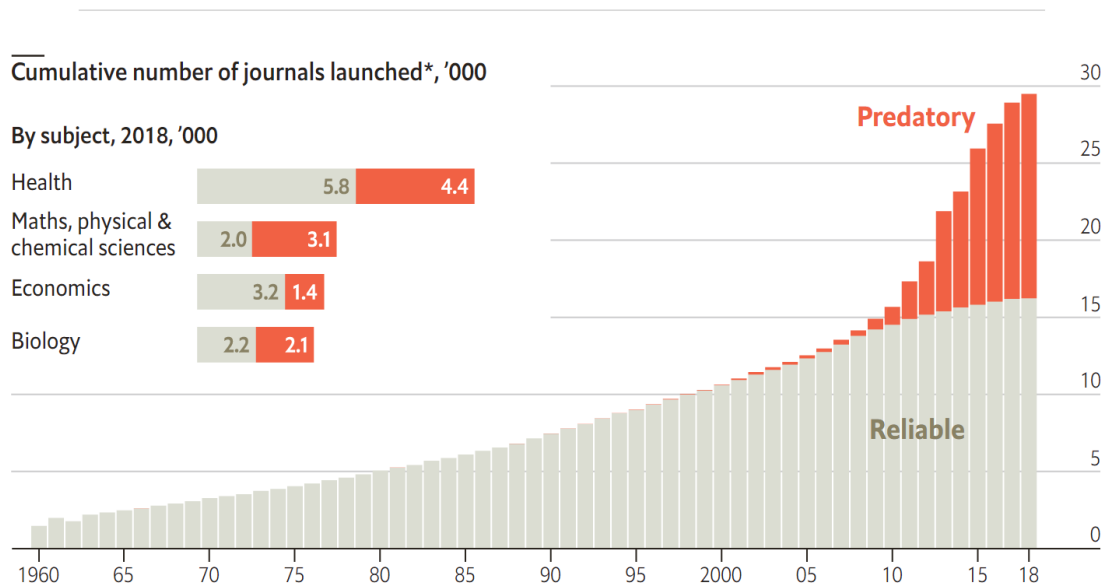
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1. Brief introduction

Over the last decades, the number of research articles and research journals has grown exponentially. The increase in the number of researchers worldwide and the “publish or perish” academic policy explain, at least partly, these trends.

These rising trends have been accompanied by the proliferation of “predatory” journals, as depicted in *Figure 1*. Predatory journals are characterized by their profit-driven nature, minimal or nonexistent peer review, inadequate quality checks, and expedited publication processes.

Figure 1. Evolution of predatory journals.



Source: *The Economist*. How to spot dodgy academic journals. May 30th, 2020.

Predatory journals are suspected to engage in fraudulent/fake peer-reviewing processes, list well-known researchers on their editorial boards, sometimes without their knowledge or consent, and sometimes steal intellectual property through deception. An article published in a predatory journal is a waste of time, effort and money, and will negatively impacts or damages the reputation of researchers and respective affiliated institutions.

2. What is a predatory journal?

There is no universally accepted definition of predatory journal or predatory conference. The most widely accepted definition is provided by Grudniewicz *et al.* (2019): “*Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritise self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterised 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*”.

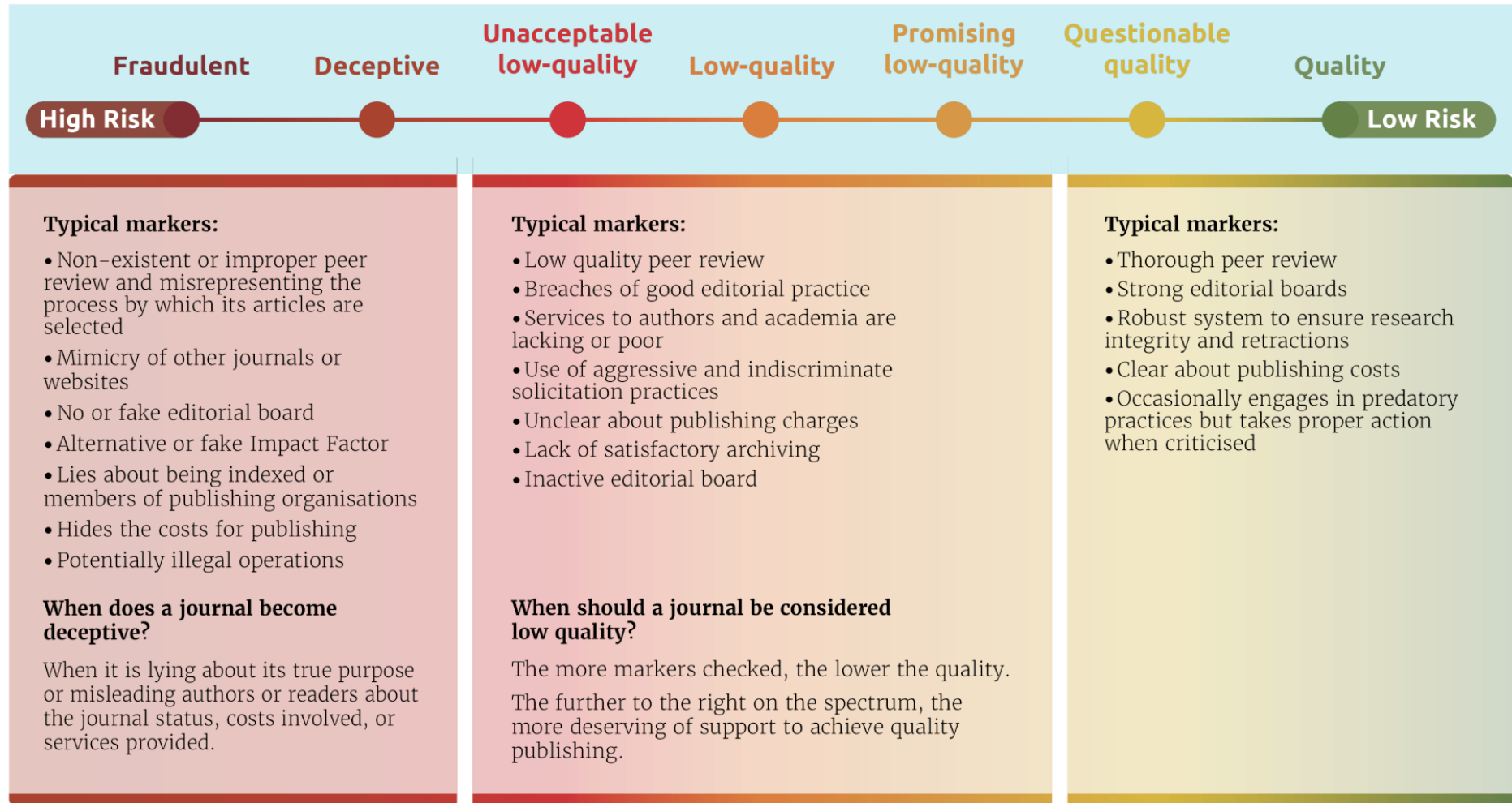
The spectrum of predatory publishing

The term “predatory journal” is nuanced and includes: (a) fraudulent journals and conferences; (b) deceptive and misleading journals and conferences; and (c) low-quality outlets that might or might not willingly disregard good academic practices. *Figures 2 and 3*, proposed by The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) (2020), list common markers to identify predatory journals.

- (a) **Fraudulent journals.** Journals involved in fraud (often via the Internet), including illegal and even criminal activities such as phishing or using false identities to mislead authors. For example, the practice of hijacking or cloning journals, where an impostor journal assumes the identity of a genuine journal with the purpose of stealing its business. It often involves setting up a fake website, making use of the journal name, ISSN, layout and logo, and other information of a reputable journal. Hundreds of journals have been hijacked to-date. Another example is publishers who re-publish articles already in reputable journals without permission from the journal or author. These practices are illegal and criminal in many countries. Avoid these journals at all costs.
- (b) **Deceptive journals.** Journals where the publisher provide false or dubious information about: publishing charges, the peer-review process, indexing or impact factors, the country where the publisher is based, the identity of the owner, the editor or members of the editorial board. These journals are unquestionably unethical even though not necessarily legally fraudulent. Avoid these journals at all costs.

- (c) **Low-quality journals.** Journals with a certain level of unethical and deceptive predatory practices. These journals are more difficult to identify as they vary in the type and number of unethical practices. Avoid these journals.

Figure 2. The spectrum of predatory publishing practices.



Source: *The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), 2020.*

Figure 3. Typical markers or traits to classify predatory journals.

Deceptive journals 'one strike & you're out'	Unacceptably low quality journals 'doing an injustice to science'	Low quality journals – 'cause for concern'
<p>Deception by false family resemblance (mimic legitimate journals web, title, etc.)</p> <p>Sell authorship</p> <p>Give false or misleading information on the extent of peer review, how papers are chosen, selectivity and rejection rate (in fact publishing any article for which the APC is paid)</p> <p>Publish original papers when they are previously published</p> <p>False editorial board</p> <p>False location of the journal, publisher or managing office</p> <p>Falsely state they are indexed in a particular index or a member of publishing organisations or academic societies</p> <p>Falsely state impact factor (or uses a deceptive, alternative IF)</p> <p>Deceptive author fees (or extra costs for colour images, etc.)</p> <p>Poor quality of journal services, e.g. copyediting, proofreading, digital preservation or plagiarism checks</p> <p>Copyright ownership</p> <p>Fraudulent use of ISSNs</p> <p>Relationships with for-profit partner companies.</p>	<p>Rapid, cursory or non-expert peer review; no peer review policy</p> <p>No contact information provided</p> <p>Editorial board members unverifiable or the same over several journals</p> <p>Un-cooperative when misconduct is suspected</p> <p>Reluctant to assist when a retraction is asked for, or asking for a fee</p> <p>Unclear about copyright/licences</p> <p>Not a member of/not following best practice guidelines from ICMJE, OASPA, COPE, CSE, EASE etc.</p> <p>Publish papers unrelated to the journal's scope or papers of very low quality that will only 'pollute science'</p> <p>A substantial level of plagiarism and duplicate publications with other 'predatory' journals</p> <p>Is not indexed in any well-known index</p> <p>Does not allow search engines to crawl the published content, preventing the content from being indexed</p> <p>Copy-proofs (locks) their PDFs, thus making it harder to check for plagiarism</p> <p>Publishes only research results that favour the interests of a particular group or organisation.</p>	<p>Weak editorial board(s)</p> <p>Use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices</p> <p>Website or e-mails present contradictory statements and are low quality (lacking information, dead links, bad formatting, spelling and grammar mistakes, an abundance of ads, etc.)</p> <p>Lack a retraction policy, publication ethics policy, or declaration of ethical approvals, IP, conflicts-of-interest, or study funding</p> <p>Low quality journal services, e.g. copy-editing, proofreading, or plagiarism checks</p> <p>No peer review policy</p> <p>No retractions, corrections or expressions of concern found</p> <p>Lack a digital preservation plan</p> <p>Unclear whether journal makes unauthorised use of images without permission from copyright owners</p> <p>The publisher has an optional "fast-track" fee-based service for expedited peer review which appears to provide assured publication with little or no vetting.</p>

Source: *The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), 2020.*

3. How to recognize a predatory journal or conference?

Beware of invitations soliciting articles (typically by email).

Most obvious signs of predatory journals

Invitations outside your field of expertise

Examples from BRU-Iscte members: “I received an invitation to publish in *Gynecology* and in *Genetics*”.

Unusual language in the field

Address you in superlative terms

Examples from BRU-Iscte members: “*Join Us as the Editorial Board Member or Reviewer Since a deep impression has been left on us by your published paper ...*” [...] “*As you are one of the most distinguished scholars in this field, we would like to extend an invitation for you to contribute a paper...*”.

Invitations sent to you repetitively

Invitations sent massively to thousands of researchers

Email address is suspicious

Examples from BRU-Iscte members: “*Invitation is from email account telviz@wage126.com, not from a well-known publisher or academic institution*”.

Scope of journal is too wide

Examples from BRU-Iscte members: *“The ZZZ journal publishes in more than 20 topics including the economics of innovation, intellectual property, functioning of markets, environmental governance, poverty alleviation, digital economy, data analytics, ethics,...”*.

Offers you money or perks

Examples from BRU-Iscte members: *“The journal is a Gold Open Access journal, online readers don't have to pay any fee. All Article Processing Charges (APCs) are waived until the end of 2024. For each accepted paper in ZZZ, the author will receive a remuneration of 200 US dollars, which will be paid immediately”*.

Fake ISSN and Impact factor

Examples: ISSN is from another journal or does not exist, Impact factor is not the JCR impact factor, inclusion in an Index cannot be verified.

Same editor on multiple disparate journals

Promises submission-to-publication in few weeks

Less obvious signs

Publisher / journal is based on high research country

Website seems professional

VIDEO:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaLluJQ_7r8






Self-help checklists of typical characteristics of predatory journals

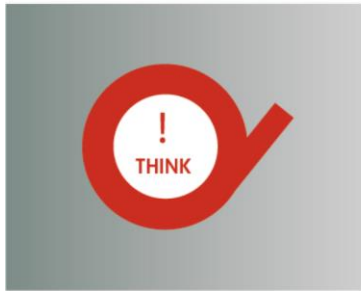
Two popular check lists free of charge for checking predatory journals and conferences are Think. Check. Submit and Think. Check.Attend.

✓ **THINK.CHECK.SUBMIT:** <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>



 Think Are you submitting your research to a trusted journal or publisher? Is it the right journal or book for your work?	 Check Use our check list to assess the journal or publisher.	 Submit Only if you can answer 'yes' to the questions on our check list.
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- ✓ **THINK.CHECK.ATTEND:** <https://thinkcheckattend.org/>



Is it the right conference to attend and present your research?



This check list provides guidance on trusting a conference to attend and present your research.



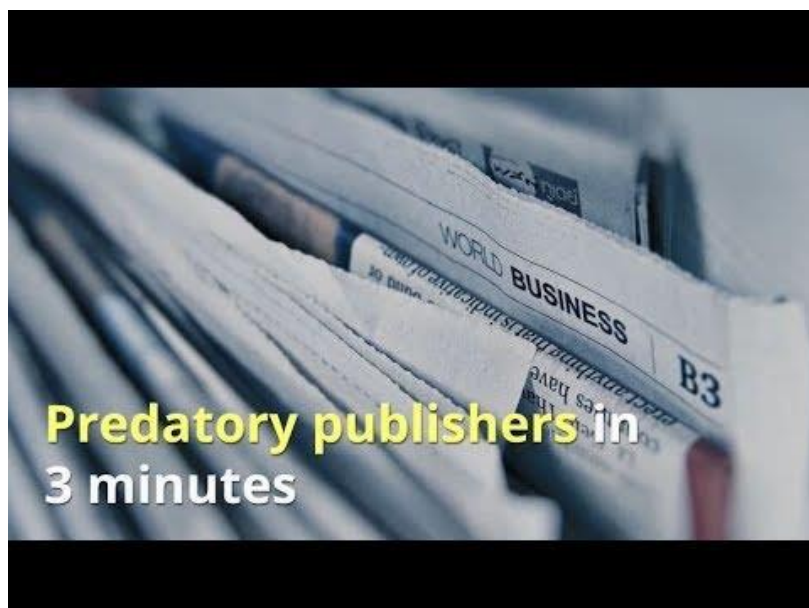
Complete the check list and attend the conference.

- ✓ **Cabell's list:** Cabell's International - About Predatory Reports (cabells.com)
 - Cabells Scholarly Analytics analyses over 70 journal behavioral indicators to keep the community aware of the growing threats and to keep academia protected from exploitative operations;
 - Used by the Responsible Research in Business & Management

RRBM Responsible Research
in Business & Management

Responsible Research in Business & Management, is the leading institution supporting credible and useful research in the business and management disciplines.

VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwUB3oquuRQ>



4. Impact factors, how much should we trust it?

Traditionally, journal rankings such as JCR impact factors and Scimago scores were considered good tools to evaluate the relative quality of journals. But these rankings are influenced by many factors unrelated to scientific quality, such as open access policies. Having a high impact factor does not rule out the possibility of a journal to be predatory or a low-quality journal. To minimize the impact factors problems, it is important to consider expert evaluations of journals such as the **ABS** list prepared by the Chartered Association of Business Schools. The ABS list is widely accepted in world-class business schools to evaluate the quality of business journals.

To illustrate the problems of using solely JCR/Scimago impact factors to evaluate the quality of journals, the *Table 1* shows an example comparing three business journals **Management Science** and **Organization Science**, which are ABS 4* but Q2 in JCR 2022, and **Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management**, which is Q1 in JCR 2022 but ABS1.

- **Management Science** and **Organization Science** have lower impact factor factors and lower quartiles than **Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management**, BUT they are both classified by ABS experts as outstanding journals (ABS4*) whereas **Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management** achieves the lowest ABS classification (ABS1).
- **Management Science** and **Organization Science** are cited by the most reputable academic institutions in the world and by other high-quality (ABS4 and ABS3) journals. In contrast, **Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management** is cited by relatively unknown academic institutions and by low quality journals.

Table 1. Comparison example.

ABS list 2021 Indicator:	Management Science ABS 4* - MANAGEMENT	Organization Science ABS 4* - ORG STUDIES	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management ABS 1 - REGIONAL STUDIES
JCR 2022			
Quartil JCR 2022	Q2 (Management)	Q2 (Management)	Q1 (Business, Env Studies, Management)
JCR Impact factor 2022	5.4	5.4	9.8
JCR IF adjusted for self-citations	5.0	4.5	8.2
Scimago areas 2022	Business, Management and Accounting, Strategy and Management	Business, Management and Accounting	Business, Management and Accounting Environmental Science, Social Sciences
Scimago quartil 2022	Q1	Q1	Q1
Institutions (first 20) with publications in the journal	University Of California 106	Copenhagen Business School 31	University Of Salamanca 21
	Massachusetts Inst.Technology (MIT) 80	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam 17	Sapienza University Rome 20
	Harvard University 75	City University London 15	Comsats University Islamabad 15
	University Of Texas 73	University Of London 15	University Of Naples Federico II 15
	Columbia University 66	University Of Warwick 15	Hazara University 13
	University Of Pennsylvania 63	Grenoble Ecole Management 14	Parthenope University Naples 12
	National Bureau Of Economic Research 62	University Of California 14	University Of Turin 12
	National University Of Singapore 52	Aalto University 13	Chulalongkorn University 11
	University Of London 48	Harvard University 12	Lum Jean Monnet University 10
	Stanford University 44	INSEAD Business School 12	Northwestern Polytechnical Uni 10
	Cornell University 43	University Of Alberta 12	University Of Zaragoza 10
	Duke University 42	Universite De Montreal 11	Univ Della Campania Vanvitelli 9
	University Of Southern California 42	Bocconi University 11	Universitat Jaume I 9
	University Of Michigan 41	University Of Pennsylvania 11	University Of Calabria 9
	University Of Toronto 38	New York University 9	University Of Salento 9
	University Of Georgia 38	University Of North Carolina 9	Universita Ca Foscari Venezia 8
	Carnegie Mellon University 36	Ieseg School Of Management 9	Universiti Sains Malaysia 8
	Insead Business School 36	Udice-French Research Un. 9	University Of Western Australia 8
	Chinese University Of Hong Kong 33	Lund University 8	Ho Chi Minh City Univ 7
	New York University 33	Boston University 8	Leuphana University Luneburg 7

Table 1. Comparison example (cont.).

ABS list 2021 Indicator:	Management Science ABS 4* - MANAGEMENT	Organization Science ABS 4* - ORG STUDIES	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management ABS 1 - REGIONAL STUDIES
Countries (first 20) of authors with publications in the journal	USA 1,057	England 113	Italy 154
	China 256	France 61	China 121
	UK 157	USA 58	Spain 95
	Canada 107	Canada 47	Pakistan 50
	Singapore 96	Netherlands 42	England 41
	Germany 95	Denmark 39	USA 41
	France 85	Australia 38	France 38
	Netherlands 64	Sweden 26	Australia 27
	Australia 46	Germany 22	Germany 25
	Switzerland 42	Scotland 19	Malaysia 25
	Italy 39	Finland 18	South Korea 24
	Spain 30	Austria 17	Taiwan 19
	Israel 28	Spain 17	Canada 18
	Belgium 24	Switzerland 12	Vietnam 17
	South Korea 21	Norway 10	Brazil 14
	Denmark 18	Italy 9	Portugal 14
	Norway 15	China 8	Thailand 14
	Portugal 14	Wales 7	United Arab Emirates 11
	Taiwan 14	Belgium 6	Netherlands 10
	Sweden 11	Ireland 6	Poland 9
Citation sources relevant for impact factor (first 5)	Self-citations 2,070	Self-citations 171	Self-citations 571
	Manufacturing&Service Op M. 1,682 ABS3	Journal of Manag.Studies 36 ABS4	Sustainability 500
	Production and Op. Manag 1,470 ABS4	Human Relations 33 ABS4	Frontiers In Psychology 202 ABS1
	European J. Op Research 1,154 ABS4	Journal Of Business Ethics 25 ABS3	Journal Of Cleaner Production 137 ABS2
	Journal Business Research 667 ABS3	Management Learning 23 ABS3	Envir.Sc. and Pollution Res. 89

5. Some golden rules

Here are some valuable practices to steer clear of “predatory” journals:

A. BRU-Iscte is a top-tier research center evaluated by FCT as “Excellent”. This excellency in research was possible due to the high-quality research criteria of BRU-Iscte. Keep in mind that the best journals to publish your work and the best conferences to present your work are those that meet BRU-Iscte research criteria. Specifically:

- BRU-Iscte eligibility criteria requires that all publications should be from publishers of journals with a ranking of 2 or higher in the ABS Academic Journal Guide 2021 list. Give preference to such publishers.
- BRU-Iscte identifies a list of relevant research areas. Consider only journals that are included in BRU-Iscte research areas.
- BRU-Iscte scientific awards reward publications in top journals. Give preference to journals that meet the criteria for research awards.

B. For journals and conferences that are outside of BRU-Iscte research criteria, consider the following:

- Conduct thorough checks before submitting your work or agreeing to review or edit for a journal, especially if it is not a well-established and internationally recognized journal such as a journal included in BRU-Iscte research criteria.
- Examine the journal’s website, paying attention to its design and content. Reputable journals usually have professional-looking websites with clear instructions for authors, detailed information about the editorial process, and transparent policies on publication fees and copyright.
- Verify the composition of the editorial board, ensuring it consists of internationally recognized academics in the field. Beware of predatory journals that may list renowned researchers without their knowledge or falsely claim affiliations.
- Look for journals that provide clear explanations of their peer-review process and information on how reviewers are selected and managed. Evaluate the peer-review process carefully by comparing it with the process in highly reputable journals. Please keep in mind that predatory journals often boast about offering peer review, but in reality, they provide minimal or no meaningful review. Ask yourself, do top scholars in the field publish in these journals? Would you like to be known in the academic community as someone who typically publishes in low quality and/or predatory journals?

- Compare the indexing of the journal in WoS and Scopus with the classification in the ABS list. Good-quality journals in the business field are typically classified in the ABS list with level 2 or higher.
- Stay cautious about unsolicited emails inviting you to submit your work to a journal, especially if the journal is not included in the BRU-Iscte research criteria.
- In doubt, seek recommendations from trusted colleagues or reputable researchers. They can provide valuable insights and recommendations on good quality journals based on their own experiences with different publishers.
- Always be diligent in your journal selection process to ensure your research is published in trustworthy and reputable outlets.

Remember, these practices are essential to safeguard the quality and integrity of your research publication.

Manage your academic reputation carefully as first impressions are often long-lasting impressions. Be careful about getting "quickie" publications, they will hurt your career in the long-run.

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