# Impact factor adulteration: Dilemma of valid and invalid impact factors

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Academicians are currently dealing with a new issue called impact factor (IF) adulteration. An academic gang of predatory journals and IF agencies has caused uncertainty. I therefore want to use this forum to talk about this crucial subject. Predatory journals and bogus IF agencies are playing from a position of strength since they have taken a proactive step forward in analyzing the supply and demand in the academic market. True academicians must exercise caution while dealing with the racket of legitimate and erroneous influence factors.

This editorial may be useful to writers, readers, academic staff, and especially post-graduate students. The purpose of this activity is to educate academicians about authentic impact factors and false ones sometimes employed by unscrupulous publishers.[1] For academic evaluation purposes, such as selection and promotion, the impact factor (IF) or journal impact factor (JIF) is one of the most significant measures of academic faculty evaluation now utilized by many universities or institutions. By reviewing Journal Citation Reports' master journal list, one can determine whether a publication is included in its index.

An academic publication's impact factor (IF) is a metric that reflects the average yearly number of citations to recent papers published in that journal. Impact factors, or IFs, are frequently used as a proxy for a journal's relative importance within its area; journals with higher IFs are viewed as being more significant. In order to rank scientific publications, Gross and Gross introduced the counting references principle in 1927.[2] In 1955, Garfield advised using the quantity of citations to gauge the "impact" of a journal.[3] Garfield and Sher first used the phrase "impact factor" in 1963.[4] Thus, a science citation index that includes Thomson Reuter's Journal Citation Reports (JCR) was released. The first science citation index was released by Garfield in 1964 as a 5-volume print version that included 613 publications and contained 1.4 million citations.[5,6]

The impact factor (IF) is determined by dividing the total number of articles published in that journal over the two years prior by the number of citations

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received by those articles in that year. A journal that has just been released and is not indexed with Thomson Reuters cannot have an impact factor because it is determined over a period of two years after being indexed by Thomson Reuters.

The Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF), Universal Impact Factor (UIF), Global Impact Factor (GIF), IBI (Info Base Index) Factor, ISIFI (International Services for Impact Factor and Indexing), Cosmos Impact Factor, $I_2$OR Impact Factor, and others are among the "obscure impact factors" that some journals claim to use in place of Thomson Reuters' JCR Impact Factor. As a result of the foregoing debate, it is possible to assert that any impact factor other than the "Thomson Reuters' JCR Impact Factor" reported by any journal is "fake/counterfeit" and will not be taken into account for the purposes of academic evaluation. The "predatory journals" and "bogus impact factor agencies" work in harmonious harmony.[1,7]

Impact factors that are fake or counterfeit resemble authentic impact factors. This factor should be considered while selecting a journal to submit your study to. On payment, private indexing businesses assign fictitious "impact factors" to journals. Such fake IFs pose a serious threat to literature and should be taken seriously.

Eugene Garfield, the man who created the impact factor, warns: "In 1955, it did not seem to me that the effect would one day become so contentious. The impact factor is a mixed blessing, just as nuclear energy. I anticipated that it would be put to good use, but I was also aware that it could be misused."[8]

One of the factors driving this demand may be strict standards for the mandatory dissemination of research articles. The quality of the study has not been given enough consideration in this academic regulatory approach. As a result, quantity was valued more highly than quality. Scientific integrity was sacrificed in favour of unethical behaviour. In a setting that has never been favourable to research, it is impossible to do research on demand.[9-11] Academics' sense of fear about their future employment, selections, and promotions is likely one of the factors that a network of predatory journals and fake impact factor companies has exploited.

Given the aforementioned information, it is imperative that all parties involved comprehend the underlying causes of this phenomenon and put in place a robust system by closing any gaps before it is too late.

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