

# African Research Review

International Multi-Disciplinary Journal

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

AFRREV Vol. 13 (2), Serial No 54, April, 2019: 1-12

ISSN 1994-9057 (Print) ISSN 2070-0083 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrrrev.v13i2.1>

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## **The Storm around Beall's List: A Review of Issues Raised by Beall's Critics over his Criteria of Identifying Predatory Journals and Publishers**

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### **Abstract**

The issue of substandard, or the predatory journals as they are popularly known, flooding the internet has been one of the biggest challenges to quality and ethical scholarship in modern world. One of the most renowned watchdogs of predatory publishers was Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado-Denver, who came up with a blacklist of predatory OA publishers and journals. For several years since the publishing of the Beall's list, there has been increasing concerns about the criteria that Beall used to develop his lists, with some scholars dismissing his lists as inaccurate, misleading and dangerous to academics. A review of literature of studies conducted concerning the predatory journals indicates that there is limited literature on systematic examination of the issues raised by Beall's critics over these lists of predatory journals and publishers. To address this gap, this study sets out to answer this question: What are the major concerns of the critics of Beall's list of predatory journals and publishers? Using a descriptive design that exploited qualitative approach, the researcher analysed 30 purposefully sampled publications. The findings indicate that four key issues are often raised by Beall's critics: methodological flaws; Beall's bias against OA; discrimination against developing economies; and Beall's lists of predatory publishers as an onslaught to academic freedom.

**Key Words:** Beall's list, critics, predatory, journals, publishers

### **Introduction**

The issue of substandard, fake or the predatory journals, as they are popularly known, flooding the internet as OA is certainly one of the biggest challenges to ethical scholarship in modern

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world. My interest in this debate concerning the “predatory journals’ was recently rekindled by some journal articles and discussions I encountered. One was Mouton and Valentine’s (2017), paper titled “*The extent of South African authored articles in predatory journals.*” Reading this article made it clear that the community of academia was still far from that ‘one comprehensive and universal remedy’, to the issue of predatory journals that I was anticipating for.

The highlights on Beall’s criteria flaws, as well as other ethical issues about Beall’s list of predatory journals, in my opinion, point to some deeper flaws with Beall’s approach to confronting this modern scholarly scourge. Despite all these, universities and international publishers have continued to rely on Beall’s list of predatory journals. A review of literature of studies conducted concerning the predatory journals indicates that there is limited literature on systematic review of the issues raised by scholars concerning Beall’s criteria or the list of predatory journals and publishers. This is the gap that this study is addressing. Therefore, the key question that this study seeks to answer is: What are the major concerns of the critics of Beall’s list of predatory journals and publishers?

### Literature Study

The term ‘predatory journals’ is often attributed to Jeffrey Beall an employee in the Auraria Library, University of Colorado, Denver, USA. In 2012 Beall launched a blog called “Scholarly Open Access” and prepared a list of what he termed as “predatory publishers and journals”. Since then Beall continued to update and review this list as well as the criteria used; as well as publish aggressively in both general and specialized journals on the threat of predatory journals to genuine OA journals.

According to Beall, predatory, open-access publishers, unprofessionally exploit the author-pays model of open-access publishing (Gold OA) for their own profit (Beall, 2013). According to Bowman, (2014) the mode of operation of predatory publishing generally takes the form of a publisher distributing e-mails asking recipients to submit articles, or to serve on the editorial board or even as editor of a new publication with a scientific-sounding title. Authors are asked to pay publication costs either before or after submission and are likely non-refundable. The costs may be relatively low to entice unsuspecting scholars (Bowman, 2014). Unlike professional publishing operations, these predatory publishers add little value to scholarship, pay little attention to digital preservation, and operate using fly-by-night, unsustainable business models (Haug 2013).

Since the publishing of this list, Beall has earned himself friends and foes in almost equal measures. There are those who hailed Beall’s effort and advocacy as self-appointed “watchdog against predatory publishing” (Berger - 2015). Beall’s efforts, indeed, were viewed by many as critical starting point in regulating the publishing firms and assuring quality, ethics and sanity among the OA journals. For instance, according to Bowman, Beall’s concerns are not about open-access parse, but about exploitation of the peer-review process and publishing practices (Bowman, 2014). This group of scholars, which celebrated Beall’s efforts has been widely published all over the world.

There is this other group of scholars, who Beall’s work rubbed the wrong way: Beall’s Critics. These groups form the central interest of this study. Beall’s critics feel that his highly publicized, albeit prefixed as *questionable*, *probably*, and *possibly* predatory lists of predatory journals, is discriminatory, flawed and unhelpful in the fight against substandard journals.

Da Silva (2017) observed that Beall's blog may have helped in raising awareness about the malpractices being perpetuated by some unscrupulous publishers. This indeed helped in making the academic institution more vigilant and perhaps helped to increase accountability in science. However, his transformation to activism, and formation of highly subjective criteria to institute a formal ban, on publishers and journals – and more so, limiting that ban exclusively to OA, while ignoring the ills and predatory and/or unscholarly behaviour of some of the larger mainstream publishers was considered clearly out of order.

On 17 January 2017, Beall's website was closed rather abruptly but the closure did not silence the discussion about his role in the fight against predatory journals and publishers. Indeed, Beall's critics began questioning his silence too and lack of a response to global academia, almost three months after his site's closure. Equally, they raised concerns about the failure of his employer, the University of Colorado, Denver, to offer a public opinion or an explanation about the sudden closure of Beall's blog. Da Silva (2017), for instance, perceived this unprecedented silence by both Beall and his employer as a reflection of profound academic irresponsibility and opacity. In the next section, I have described the methodology adopted in the study of Beall's critics.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to conduct a review of criticisms levelled against Beall's criteria of making lists of predatory journals and publishers. A descriptive design was adopted exploiting qualitative approach. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study as it facilitated in-depth examination of the content, and afforded flexibility to respond to unexpected and new development in the data (Yin, 1994). A search for published journal articles, opinion pieces, and editorial comments in various academic databases including JSTOR, Google Scholar, Elsevier, Springer, and Wiley was conducted. The search terms were "Beall", "predatory journals" and "publish". Since the study was about the critique of Beall's work as presented by other scholars, publication authored or co-authored by Beall were not included. A total of 145 articles were downloaded. Then, the publications were purposefully sampled to include only articles that had a critique of Beall's criteria and list of Predatory Journals and publishers. Web articles and blog post were also not included in this study, as the focus of this study was on published peer reviewed content only. Finally, 30 publications were purposefully sampled for this study.

A qualitative content analysis was conducted using NVIVO 11 to establish the various themes emerging from critics of Beall's criteria and list of predatory journals and publishers. The data analysis process of this study was based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) method. Miles and Huberman (1994) break down the analysis of qualitative data into three processes: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions and verification, which are not sequential steps, but happen at the same time and are iterative. The findings are presented in the next section.

### **Findings**

The main objective of this study was to establish the major concerns of the critics of Beall's list of predatory journals and publishers. The following four major themes emerged from the data: i) methodological flaws; ii) Beall's bias against OA; iii) discriminative to developing economies, and iv) Beall's lists of predatory publishers as an onslaught to academic freedom.

The following section provides a detailed description of these themes and subthemes and their exemplification using excerpts from the data.

### 1. Methodological Flaws

Methodological flaws had at least five subthemes: dubious basis for enlisting, lack of transparency, personal opinion and highly subjective, lack of criteria for individual entries, and casting suspicion on start-up publishers. In the next section, some of the dominant sub-themes are discussed and illustrated using excerpts from the publications analysed.

i) Use of dubious basis for enlisting: Many of Beall's critics observed that his over reliance on analysis of publishers' websites rather than detailed discussions with publishers, may have largely contributed to the flawed criteria and could have led to incorrect or premature conclusions about such journals or publishers. Butler (2013) cited an incident of a journal from a major publishing corporation Hindawi.

One of the major weaknesses of Jeffrey Beall's methodology is that he does not typically engage in direct communication with the journals that he has classified as predatory," says Paul Peters, chief strategy officer at Hindawi Publishing Corporation, based in Cairo, and president of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), based in The Hague, the Netherlands. A set of Hindawi's journals appeared on a version of Beall's list because he had concerns about their editorial process, but has since been removed. "I re-analysed it and determined that it did not belong on the list. It was always a borderline case," Beall later said.

The last part of the quotation above in which Beall seemed to make such critical decision (of whether to include or remove a journal from his published list) made many of his critics dismiss his work as highly opinionated. Largely, many critics felt that Beall's criteria for populating these lists were not research based; they were based on standards of library science and personal opinions (Butler, 2013)

In another case that demonstrates the unreliability of Beall's criteria, Mouton and Valentine (2017) in a study in which they analysed 4246 South African papers describe an interesting case of *International Journal of Electrochemical Science* that casts a lot of doubts on Beall's criteria for classifying journals and publishers as predatory:

First, there are clear-cut cases in which Beall has incorrectly 'tagged' a journal as being 'predatory'. Arguably, the best case is Beall's inclusion of the *International Journal of Electrochemical Science* as a predatory journal. When asked in January 2014 why he classified this journal as predatory, Beall responded that the journal had lost its impact factor in Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports in 2012. From this exchange it seems that one of the reasons for including the journal on his list was because Beall discovered that it was 'suppressed by Thomson Reuters in 2012'. However, the current information on the Journal Citation Reports web page reports citation data and specifically journal ranking data for this journal every year since 2013. It is simply the case that Thomson Reuters decided not to report on the journal citation profile in 2012. However, it is in fact standard bibliometric practice by Thomson Reuter's Web of Science to omit citation profile information when a

particular journal does not record a minimum number of citations during a particular year. It certainly should not be interpreted as some fraudulent practice on the part of the journal itself (and Beall should have known this).

Two other dubious bases for enlisting journals and publishers in Beall's list that emerged from the data included: "*poor English grammar*" and "*the fact that the journals charged publishing fees*". Olivarez, Bales, and Sare, (2018) observed that it is indeed reckless to black list a publisher or the whole journal because of one or two grammatical errors. "Imperfect English or a predominantly non-western editorial board does not make a journal predatory." Olivarez, Bales and Sare further observed:

Although English has become the dominant science language in the world, it should be noted that it is a second language to many scholars. The question of the skewed advantages and role of English in the structure of the global science has been described by Hill (2012) *we need to confront and avoid racist innuendos about 'rackets' based 'mainly' in the Global South* as both destructive to science and imperialist.

The analysis of the data largely indicated that most of the scholars felt that Beall was discriminative and insincere for using "publishing fee" as a criterion. As Bowman put it, it would be fair to indicate that many highly respected and completely ethical publishers charge author fees (Bowman, 2014). Indeed all the authors of the reviewed journals seem to agree that both OA and other traditional journals and publishing firms charge the publishing fees, even if traditional journals would not often refer this as publishing fee as it is demonstrated in the following excerpt from Strielkowski, Gryshova and Shcherbata (2017):

Charging a fee does not necessarily make any given journal "predatory" - many reputable journals published by the reputable publishing houses charge publication fees based on their "author pays principle" or offering the authors to grant open access to their published papers (therefore helping to increase downloading and citations) in exchange for hefty sums. One of the most notable examples is the PLoS ONE journal published by the Public Library of Science (PLOS) or Scientific Reports published by Nature (now part of the Springer Nature group): the paper acceptance fee in both journals ranges from \$1500 to \$2000. In spite of the high fees, both journals are loved by many scientists who have to find grants or other means of support to publish their papers in these lucrative publishing outlets.

*ii) Lack of transparency:* Lack of transparency also emerged as a critical thing among many scholars who subsequently dismiss Beall's methodology as flawed. Many critics felt that Beall was not forthright in declaring his interest or conflict of interest if any. They largely felt that the crafting of the criteria as well as the list was shrouded with secrecy and hypocrisy. To illustrate this Teixeira da Silva (2017), in an article titled Jeffrey Beall's "predatory" lists must not be used: they are biased, flawed, opaque and inaccurate" go to a great depth to describe the accomplices in the listing of the OA journals as predatory and their hidden interests:

Beall did list, however, a list of broad criteria based on which entries on those lists were based. On that document, Beall thanks Bill Cohen and Michael Firmin for assistance with the lists in that and earlier versions. One can thus extrapolate that the core architects of the lists were Beall, Cohen and Firmin.

This important information is rarely discussed, but is important because nowhere does Firmin, a forensic psychologist, indicate on his institutional website any link to Beall, Beall's blogs, or assistance with the development of those lists. This constitutes a hidden professional conflict of interest (COI). Cohen is the publisher and editor-in-chief of Harrington Park Press, based in New York. This is important because this makes the relationship with a publisher a hidden conflict of interest, even more so because, on that page, the description for Cohen indicates curious deeper hidden COIs.

Teixeira da Silva is making a critical point here and particularly when this is examined from the business point of view. Along this line of thinking, the author observed:

More importantly, especially in the case of Cohen, it is unclear how much his own publishing interests and/or ties to the for-profit commercial publishing industry may have had an influence on the implementation and expansion of Beall's lists and blog that caused so much potential damage to so many who may have been innocently victimized through Beall's shaming blog.

*iii*) Personal opinion and highly subjective: Largely, most of the critics of Beall's list of predatory journals and publishers dismissed him as individual expressing highly subjective personal opinions as illustrated in the excerpt below from Wadim, Inna, and Maryna (2017):

Although Jeffrey Beall is considered to be an academic expert in questionable publishing practices by many scientists, one has to remember that he always acknowledged himself quite openly that his list included just "potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access journals". The choice of words "potential, possible and probable" speaks for itself – Beall's list never meant to be a definitive list of journals and only served as a reference point, a personal opinion of an individual expressed on his personal blog – and it was and is meant to be treated as such.

The fact that Jeffrey Beall's blog had no affiliation to any governing body or organization accredited to scholarly publishing also seemed to bolster most of the critics' opinions.

*iv*) Lack of criteria for individual entry: The data revealed that most of the critic felt that Beall's lists of predatory journals, was inaccurate, misleading and dangerous to academics, than they are useful. One reason that seemed to cement such sentiments was the fact that Beall's methodology lacked "a clearly defined and quantifiable criteria for each entry in those lists" (Teixeira da Silva, 2017). Teixeira da Silva argued that, had Beall quantified predatory practices for each entry in his list, relative to some mainstream model publishing journals or publishers as the controls, then such lists might have been useful, and could have served as a useful screen for sieving out unscholarly, unreliable or unethical journals or publishers. Contributing to the same point Da Silva, (2017) observed:

Although Beall left his options very wide, by referring to these lists of hundreds of journals and publishers as "potential, possible, or probable", such wide variation and the non-existence of specific lists of criteria for each of those entries invalidated those lists and the conclusions drawn that Beall's entire set of OA journals and publishers were in fact "predatory."

## 2. Beall's bias against Open Access (OA)

The second major theme that emerged from the data was that Beall was out rightly biased against Open Access. Crawford (2014) pointed that Beall's activism is a generalized condemnation of the OA movement for being "*anti-corporatist*," and concludes that Beall's lists "*constitute a sideshow consisting of distorting mirrors, having little or nothing to do with OA as a whole except to serve as a platform for Beall to take pot-shots at OA.*" Indeed, Fiebert suggested that Beall's lists "should be ignored" altogether (Fiebert, 2014).

Beall's alleged prejudice against OA in favour toll-access publishers was addressed by most of the critics from different perspectives. For instance, Crawford (2014) criticized Beall for not clarifying that predatory or low-quality publishing as a phenomenon that *preys OA* too and is not exclusive to OA journals. Strielkowski, Gryshova, and Shcherbata, (2017), in their paper titled "*Predatory Publishing: What are the Alternatives to the Beall's List?*" perhaps brings out this point more clearly:

The main criticism of Beall's list is that Beall made it look like the predatory or low-quality publishing were a phenomenon of Open Access journals and never existed before it. Moreover, it is obvious that Beall favoured toll-access publishers, especially large publishing houses. Additionally, Beall has been accused of having a general problem with the OA movement and therefore might not be the neutral party needed to create and maintain such a list.

According to Crawford (2014) Beall claimed that "*only a few publishers*" employ the gold OA model ethically—and that most of those are cutting corners and lowering standards was a clear signal that he had gone beyond raising alarms about "predatory" publishers to general condemnation of gold OA (published in a gold OA journal). Other critics like Olivarez, Bales, and Sare (2018) believed that this bias is well-expressed in the title and headings in his blog as illustrated in this excerpt:

Additionally, the title of Beall's benchmarking tool, *Criteria for Determining Predatory Open-Access Publishers*, is misleading to the reader. The title's orientation toward only OA journals potentially biases readers against OA publishers and journals. In addition, Beall's use of "*criteria for determining*" in the title of his evaluation tool further muddies the subjective nature of the *Criteria*.

Under this theme, two subthemes also emerged: Beall's campaign is *stigmatizing to OA journals* and *Beall behaving as an academic god*. These two subthemes are discussed below.

i) Beall's campaign was stigmatizing to OA journals: Most of the critics argued that Beall list of the predatory journals and publisher created a permanent negative stigma that is associated with journals and publishers on his lists, even after his blog was retracted. Teixeira da Silva, (2017), for instance, noted that an automatically negative stigma may be attached to a scientist who publishes in any of these journals in Beall's lists, even if their work is perfectly valid, and academically sound. I have referred to this kind of stigma mentioned by Teixeira da Silva, as courtesy academic stigma. In this study courtesy academic stigma is defined as the irrational disapproval evoked as a consequence of associating with a stigmatized individual or group of scholars or a stigmatized journal or publishing firm.

ii) Beall behaving as an academic god: As Teixeira da Silva, (2017) observed the attitude by Beall was somewhat also farcical: expecting the “predatory” journals and publishers to be open and transparent to the public, while Beall himself remained opaque about inclusion and exclusion criteria. It must also be understood that regularly, Beall would review the list add or remove a journal or publisher without much consultation as Richtig et. al., (2018) noted in the following excerpt:

One has to remember and keep in mind that Beall constantly updated his list by adding and removing the journals or publishers. No one agreed on what had to be done with the journals and publishers who used to be on Beall's list but were removed. In fact, Beall's list grew continuously over time and, although Beall offered all journals and publishers the option to appeal their listing, only a minority of these successfully appealed and were removed from the list.

Crawford further observed, it was only Beall who had the right and power to decide who goes in or leaves the list. It was him again who decided whose appeal was successful, and the criteria and when. Beall the “creator” of the lists of predatory journals and publishers played *academic god* in curating these lists and criteria. He was the moral academic cop, prosecutor, and judge all rolled up in one. It was a case of *Beall is right because, Beall says so!* (Crawford, 2014). Crawford further noted:

Beall started with a list of a few “predatory” publishers. The list grew by leaps and bounds, sometimes including long-established publishing houses with the *misfortune* of being headquartered in India (specifically, Hindawi), with Beall acting as prosecutor, judge and jury on who's predatory and who's not. He's the one-man authority on predatory—but only predatory OA—publishing.

### 3. Discriminative to developing economies

Butler, (2013) averred that publishers in developing countries and emerging economies were at particular risk of being unfairly tarred by Beall's brush. According to Butler, this is mainly because:

Many open-access publishers are springing up in India and China, for example, where swelling researcher ranks are creating large publishing markets. Pressure to publish is often intense in developing countries, and vanity presses could attract unscrupulous researchers keen to pad out their CVs. But respectable domestic publishers could have an important role by helping to address local science issues, such as those related to crops, diseases or environmental problems.

The fact that Beall was profiling and perhaps condemning journals and publishing firms from developing economies was not a secret and himself, he was not shy of talking about it. This is well captured in Beall's interview with Butler (2013), as illustrated in the following excerpt:

... Despite the inclusion of journals from various parts of the world in his list of predatory journals, Beall remarked '*Look, when I discover a new publisher from Nigeria, I admit I am more suspicious than I would be were the publisher from, for example, the Vatican*'.

Butler further noted that Nigeria features notoriously in Beall's opinions and analyses about sources of predatory journals, despite the fact that only two of the 23 publishers in Beall's 2012 list originated from Nigeria. Truth (2012) has cautioned that:

We need to confront the real issue of malpractice in journal publishing and avoid racist innuendos about "rackets" based "mainly" in the Global South, particularly West Africa and South Asia, or appealing largely to scholars working there, often under extreme economic hardship.

Contributing to the debate Teixeira da Silva, (2017) observed that editors should always operate a discriminatory editorial policy and the merits or demerits of any paper have to be observed individually, not based on the journal where they were published.

#### **4. An onslaught to academic freedom**

Finally, most of the critics have decried the use of the "term "predatory" which they say is *a loaded and pejorative term* and a threat to academic freedom. Da Silva (2017) observed that:

Authors already have minimum protections when it comes to the predatory publishing practices, and adhering to the flawed Beall's lists criteria will endanger them further and reduce their academic freedoms and choices. Beall's call to ban predatory journals – which he does not even indicate are limited to the OA movement – represents a challenge to the freedom of speech and choice that scientists have in selecting their venue to publish their results.

Wadim, Inna and Maryna (2017) looked at this concern from a slightly different perspective and it is worth highlighting. These authors noted that Beall's list, unfortunately, has been endorsed by some institution as the standard of ensuring quality publishing by faculty:

The sad story of how the Beall's List was used for academic wars and witch hunts can be used as a lesson for those countries that are thinking of or have recently introduced the novel research evaluation criteria. It appears that it would be better to leave it this way since any attempts to create local "lists" would only lead to the situation in which small groups of academic would have the power of sacking or promoting other academics based on their own opinion. This situation is clearly not democratic and violates academic freedom.... This calls into question its indiscriminate use by librarians who provide the list to students and faculty as a resource without explaining the limitations of the list and of the criteria. This is especially important regarding promotion and tenure committees across academic institutions who may use Beall's criteria as a way to disqualify articles published in journals that the committee determined fail some criteria but are not truly predatory.

#### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the concerns raised by critics of Beall's least of predatory journals and publishing firms. The findings indicated that four key topics shaped the discourse of the Beall's critics: methodological flaws; Beall's bias against OA; discrimination against the developing economies and that Beall's lists were an onslaught to academic freedom. The biggest chunk of the critics seems to come from the perceived methodological flaws. These critics highlighted that Beall: used dubious basis for enlisting journals as predatory; lacked

transparency, the lists were highly subjective personal opinions; did not provide criteria for individual entries; lists casted suspicion on start-up publishers

One thing that all the critics seem to largely agree on however, is that there is certainly a problem of diminishing quality in many publishing firms and journals but not necessarily OA. There was a loud consensus in critics' voices that the low-quality journals were everywhere, including among many traditional toll-access publishers. It is certainly not a problem of OA. To use Crawford (2014) words "predatory journals are preying on OA too." As Strielkowski, Gryshova, and Shcherbata noted, Beall's List never provided any clear recommendation on what to do about the journals suspected of predatory practices that were also indexed in reputable citation databases such as Scopus or the Web of Science (Strielkowski, Gryshova, & Shcherbata, 2017).

The sudden disappearance of Beall's lists and his blog altogether on 17th January 2017, literally left the academia fraternity exposed, particularly those from the institutions that had already adopted Beall's list. One basic question that preoccupy scholars from such institutions include: is the list of the predatory journals and publishers still valid. Were all the 1000 journals published in Beall's list predatory? Who or what body was acceptable to publish an alternative list or a publishing ethics committees' guideline now that Beall's list is gone? And if so, who will appoint these committees or who will decide which journals are good and which are bad? One can rightfully ask: "*Who is going to guard the guardians?*" (Strielkowski, Gryshova, & Shcherbata 2017). So far, the opinions are divided about a better alternative.

As noted by some critics, the use of the term predatory, besides being pejorative hides a broad spectrum of scholarly publishing misconduct (Eriksson, & Helgesson, 2018). These authors further noted the term unhelpful, bundles scholarly mischiefs with poor publishing tradition and quality. This is of course bad for the start-ups (that are in experienced) and lack cohesive structures who are unfortunately bundled together with these fraudulent publishers. Speaking from experience, having interacted with many publishers and journals around the world, Smart, (2017) observed that, there lies a continuum from true fraud to ignorance that reveals how assumptions affect our perception. The risks that Beall alluded to were no less than those that exist in traditional journals of established publishing houses that are witnessing a rise in fake or compromised peer reviews, or increasing cases of imperfect and permeable peer review (da Silva, 2017). However, as most of the critics have argued, Beall's lists are inaccurate, and thus misleading and dangerous to academics than they are useful (Teixeira da Silva, 2017). The inaccuracies and flaws in Beall's criteria have been confirmed through scientific analysis by many other scholars including Mouton and Valentine (2017). As such, the publishing organizations as well as the academic institution and other regulatory bodies need to come up with a more universally acceptable guidelines to ensure quality and ethical scientific publication.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, the whole debate around Beall's list and his effort to purge out the "predatory" journals brings a few things to the fore: first all scholars seem to agree that there is a problem - the ever increasing poor quality journals, and something needs to be done urgently; secondly, whatever form of measure that shall be taken, it must be fair, inclusive and universally acceptable.

Finally, the debate has also revealed an important point also noted by (Smart, 2017), that there is a large and prolific group of researchers who cannot be accommodated by the relatively small number of western-published journals. The reason for their exclusion may not be necessarily quality but relevance issues. Regardless of value judgements, the fact that there is such a large cohort of researchers wanting (or needing) to publish their results and cannot all be accommodated by the western published journals, is a factor that cannot be ignored.

It is important to note that as the scholars engage in politics of Beall's criteria and lists, more and more fraudulent publishers are founded every year; more and more scholars continue to get spammed with indiscriminate invitations to academically suspect journals or publishers. Yet, to date, no effective strategy has been devised as to how best to reign in this unscholarly practices, and in some cases, fraudulent activities that are causing considerable chaos in global academia, and which are undermining the efforts of valid researchers to bring their research and intellect to the public (Da Silva, (2017).

This study recommends that there is need for a new journal publishing business and operational model to handle the emerging quality and ethics concerns raised by academics. The politics of Beall's list and criteria should now be put aside, and more energy devoted to strategies of improving quality as noted by Wager (2017). Such decisions should be made by collective academic councils, who would be responsible for scoring a journal or publisher's academic weaknesses, while recognizing academically sound literature, so that each case may be fairly compared, then judged using quantitative measures that can be independently measured, and validated (Smart, 2017).

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