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Lucy Santos Green
University of South Carolina - Columbia, lgreen2@mailbox.sc.edu

Melissa P. Johnston

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Dr. Lucy Santos Green
Professor of Information Science
College of Information and Communications
The University of South Carolina

School of Information Science
Davis College, Room 201
1501 Greene Street
Columbia, SC 29208
803-777-2381
lgreen2@mailbox.sc.edu
(Corresponding Author)

Dr. Melissa P. Johnston
Associate Professor
College of Education
Department of Educational Technology & Foundations

University of West Georgia
125 Education Annex
Carrollton, GA 30118
678-839-6060
mjohnsto@westga.edu

Abstract
In the last decade, one of the most effective tools applied in combating the erosion of public trust in academic research has been an increased level of transparency in the peer review and editorial process. Publicly available publication ethics guidelines and policies are vital in creating a transparent process that prevents unethical research, publication misconduct, manipulation of the communication of research to practitioners, and the erosion of public trust. This study investigated how these unethical practices, specifically those coded as editorial misconduct, bring the authenticity and integrity of the library and information science academic research digital record into question. Employing a multi-layered approach, including key informant interviews, researchers determined the frequency and the content of ethical publishing policies and procedures in library and information science journals; exploring the ways the lack of, or non-adherence to these policies and procedures impacted library and information science researchers in instances of editorial misconduct.

A Contextualization of Editorial Misconduct in the Library & Information Science Academic Information Ecosystem

In 2011, Michael Pemberton, journal editor and a professor of English, was asked by an author to facilitate edits to a published article. While making the minor requested changes to the online publication, Pemberton voiced a developing awareness of the potential pitfalls surrounding editorship of online text: "I was struck by the ease with which such a change could be made, the likelihood it would never be noticed or discovered if I chose not to mark it, and the power I had as an editor to reshape text that already existed in published form" (Pemberton, 2011). While Pemberton's awareness highlights the growing tension present in the relationship between communal knowledge-construction and scholarly discourse within the digital space, a tension commonly reflected in debates surrounding the efficacy of crowdsourced products such as Wikipedia (Pemberton 2011; Teplitskiy, Lu, & Duede, 2017), it behooves us to examine our own practices as information science scholars. In an information environment where digital products lend themselves more easily to treatment as a "living document," it is time to acknowledge and examine our own contributions to a research culture that seeks to shape and direct our participation into forms serving its own interest (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013), all the while eroding public trust in the digital academic record (van den Hoven, 2017).

Publicly available guidelines and policies related to publication are vital in creating a transparent process that prevents unethical research, publication misconduct, the manipulation of the communication of research to practitioners, and most germane to the focus of this article, prevent the erosion of public trust (Kleinert & Wager, 2011). Therefore, the goal of this study

was to investigate how unethical practices, specifically those coded as editorial misconduct, bring the authenticity and integrity of the LIS academic research digital record into question. Employing a multi-layered approach, we determined the frequency and the content of ethical publishing policies and procedures in Library and Information Science journals; exploring the ways the lack of, or non-adherence to these policies and procedures impacted library and information science researchers in instances of editorial misconduct.

Review of the Literature

In the last decade, one of the most effective tools applied in combating the erosion of public trust in academic research has been an increased level of transparency in the peer review and editorial process, as well as the popularization of integrity procedures and policies for corrections and retractions of published works (Bosch et al., 2012). When thoughtfully and consistently applied, these policies address the most known and troublesome behaviors: plagiarism, falsified results, and fabrication (Poduthase et al., 2018). From 2004 to 2015, the number of science and biomedical journals with official misconduct or publication ethics policies increased from 21% to 65%, most likely bolstered by publication of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) 2009 guidelines on retractions, corrections, and expressions of concern. Unfortunately, journals in the social sciences reflect a much lower percentage of adoption, with only 33% housing these types of documents (Hesselmann et al., 2017; Resnik et al., 2010). This is especially troublesome because in addition to plagiarism, falsification and fabrication, researchers admit to "using inadequate or inappropriate research designs; dropping observations or data points from analyses based on a gut feeling; inadequate record keeping; publishing the same data or results in two or more publications; and, finally, inappropriately assigning authorship credit" (Poduthase et al., 2018, p. 86).

The lack of the existence or application of ethical publication policies also enables behavior not as commonly examined in the literature, but discussed anecdotally among researchers so frequently, it is accepted as part of academic culture: editorial misconduct. Editorial misconduct is "the action or inaction of editorial agents ended in publication of fraudulent work and/or poor or failed retractions of such works…editorial misconduct ranges in severity and includes deliberate omission or ignorance of peer review, insufficient guidelines for authors, weak or disingenuous retraction notices, and refusal to retract" (Shelomi, 2014, p. 51). Who owns and edits a journal is also important because the editor, and subsequently the editorial

board, provide their expertise and judgement, serving as gatekeepers, determining what research gets published, and what does not (e.g., Graf, 2018; Marchitelli et al., 2017; Willet, 2013).

The digital age amplified the potential impact of research and editorial misconduct on practice and the public trust for several reasons. First, information seeking is now perceived as a simpler task, and thanks to social media platforms, broad information sharing occurs with ease. Second, public perception and misunderstanding of academic expertise and the research process itself negatively impacts trust, chipping away at the effectiveness of information campaigns, while bolstering the reach of misinformation efforts (e.g. 2021 GOP anti Critical Race Theory in K-12 education messaging). Digital products are more likely to be perceived as living documents, while updates or corrections, can be coded as "censorship" (Gough, 2012). Third, and a factor that threads the two previous assertions together, perceived ease of information access and a proliferation of high-quality designed communication outlets (e.g. social media, blogs, self-publishing) have combined to increase the potential impact of non-expert voices, prioritizing popularity and volume over educational and professional credentials (Nichols, 2017).

In 1998, a study published by *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, claimed a link between autism and the MMR vaccine that was later determined to be funded by "lawyers acting for parents who were involved in lawsuits against vaccine manufacturers" and included disproven and misrepresented information (Eggertson, 2010). The publication of this paper and the subsequent twelve-year delay before editors finally agreed to a retraction (a position now identified as editorial misconduct by medical researchers), is credited with kicking off a large anti-vaxxer movement (Motta et al., 2018). Editorial misconduct in *The Lancet* enabled an explosive combination of internet blogs, misinformation spread through social media, conspiracy theories, and celebrity activism that resulted in one in three Americans opposing mandatory vaccines for K-12 public school students (Joslyn & Sylvester, 2019).

Categories of Editorial Misconduct

Instances of editorial misconduct as identified by the literature, fall under twelve categories: 1) citation coercion, 2) conflict of interest, 3) deliberate and avoidable delay in manuscript review, 4) editorial bias/ confirmatory bias, 5) editorial policies not provided or spelled out, 6) encroachment on authorial integrity, 7) excessive secrecy of editorial office, 8) inappropriate review procedures/ failure to observe due process, 9) incorrect post-publication modification of articles, 10) lack of transparency in dealing with authors, 11) rejection without

reason given, and 12) rewriting of article presented as copyediting. These labels identify the misconduct itself and not the motivation behind the misconduct. Consequently, instances where racial discrimination or microaggressions take place as the motivations behind the misconduct are logged under a general misconduct label without effectively maintaining a record of the discriminatory behavior itself. In other instances, an event may feel "unfair" or "uncomfortable" to the individual that experienced it but may not necessarily be coded as editorial misconduct. Even so, the twelve categories strike an appropriate balance between broad and specific so that editorial misconduct can be effectively examined.

Citation coercion refers to editorial requests that give no indication the manuscript reviewed is lacking anything specific, suggest no articles to be included, and only guide the author to add citations from the editor's journal (Wilhite & Fong, 2012). The language may be gentle, but the message is clear: add citations or risk rejection. It is a practice commonly used to modify a journal's impact factor (Davis, 2018; Fong & Wilhite, 2017). Conflict of interest plays out in different ways. In one instance, an editor may publish a piece they have written without the article undergoing proper peer review (Smith, 2003). In another instance, an editor will hand select peer reviewers and give them instructions on how to review an article to fabricate or heavily influence the results of the review (Teixeira da Silva et al., 2019). Deliberate and avoidable delay in manuscript review is self-explanatory but difficult to pinpoint (Baylis et al., 2017), especially when paired with instances where editorial policies are not provided or spelled out. To clarify, while a journal may have editorial policies posted on a publishing house's page, if there is not a direct link to these policies on the journal's page, then it becomes all too easy for an editor to ignore or misapply these policies, and extremely difficult for authors to push back, advocating for themselves and their work (Al Lily, 2016; Wager, 2012).

Encroachment on authorial integrity occurs when an editor makes significant textual changes, either adding to, removing, or significantly modifying an article before publication, making these changes either a condition of publication, or without the author's knowledge (Gollogly & Momen, 2006). Excessive secrecy of the editorial office is evidenced by no meetings of the editorial board, selection of an editor with no public-facing process, journal changes made without consultation of the editorial board, silent or stealth retraction of articles, and so on (Godlee, 2004; Teixeira da Silva & Al-Khatib, 2017). It enables another self-explanatory category of editorial misconduct: inappropriate review procedures or failure to

observe due process (Shelomi, 2014). Incorrect post-publication of articles happens when the wrong procedure for modification is followed or the wrong label is applied (e.g. *errata* instead of *expression of concern*) (Erfanmanesh & Morovati, 2019; Williams & Wager, 2013). Lack of transparency when dealing with authors results in authors not being aware of where they are in the peer-review process, authors told articles are accepted with revisions but then mysteriously rejected, or articles undergoing multiple rounds of review with no explanation or end in sight (Teixeira da Silva & Costa, 2010).

Rejection without reason given refers to editorial desk rejections versus peer review rejections (Al Lily, 2016; Teixeira da Silva et al., 2019). Lastly, rewriting of articles presented as copyediting differs from encroachment on authorial integrity (a situation where the editor manipulates the text). In this category of editorial misconduct, the copyeditor significantly modifies the article's text by adding, deleting, or demanding rewrites that impact the article's findings and conclusions. In smaller instances, copyeditors edit qualitative data such as interview quotes. In more egregious events, the copyeditor, employed by the professional organization that houses the journal, will work to remove, or modify negative findings that might go against the organization's stance on a particular issue (Baylis et al., 2017; Shelomi, 2014). Again, these labels identify the misconduct itself and not the motivation (e.g. professional bias, racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia) behind the misconduct (Olenoglou, 2011).

COPE and Its Core Practices

COPE (the Committee on Publication Ethics) was founded in April of 1997 in response to growing concern among editors of medical research publications. In 2017 COPE developed Core Practices "for everyone involved in publishing the scholarly literature, with a particular focus on editors and their journals, publishers, and institutions (COPE, 2017, para 2.). It is important to highlight the distinction COPE makes here: **that these core practices should apply to editors as well as authors**. In its introduction of the Core Practices, COPE states "Journals and Publishers should have robust and well-described, publicly documented practices" in ten specific areas: allegations of misconduct, authorship and contributorship, complaints and appeals, conflicts of interest/ competing interests, data reproducibility, ethical oversight, intellectual property, journal management, peer review processes, and post-publication discussions and corrections. The vision COPE lays out is for an eventual shift in publication

culture where journals, editors, and publishers "work towards...a set of professional practices, not just for members of COPE" (COPE, 2017, para. 1).

In support of these Core Practices, COPE provides resources for publishers and editors on ethical issues in publication, and guidance on how to handle these situations, including research conducted in the area, seminars and webinars, sample guidelines, discussion documents, and case studies. Of relevance to editorial misconduct are flowcharts on ethical editorial behavior, including organization of the editorial office in compliance with COPE guidelines, and management of critiques and comments on published works. Several guideline documents also expand on editorial ethics, contextualizing the topic within the typical publication structure: *Guidelines for Managing the Relationships Between Society Owned Journals, Their Society, and Publishers* (2018) addresses "the issue of editorial independence [and that] editorial decisions must be based on the quality of submissions and appropriate peer review, rather than on any political, financial, or personal influences from society staff or volunteer leaders" (COPE, 2018, para. 3). *A Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors* (2019b) addresses editorial independence, handling complaints, and the importance of providing detailed guidance to peer reviewers. Lastly, *Retraction Guidelines* (2019a) and *Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers* (2019) detail editorial misconduct traps in pre and post publication.

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify and contextualize editorial misconduct in the LIS academic information ecosystem, exploring its perceived impact on the authenticity and integrity of the LIS academic research, through the eyes of LIS researchers' personal experiences. Employing a multi-layered approach, researchers determined the frequency and the content of ethical publishing policies and procedures for Library and Information Science journals; chronicling events when the lack of, or non-adherence to these policies and procedures impacted researchers through instances of editorial misconduct.

Phase One: Publishing Ethics Policies

Phase One Data Collection and Analysis

Establishing criteria for inclusion is an essential step in formulating an appropriate search strategy to ensure that the selected items comprehensively address the areas of interest, while minimizing bias (Sheble, 2016). The first criteria of inclusion, English-language, refereed journals, reflecting a wide range of library and information science research fields was generated

using the information science and library science subject categories from Web of Science, the library and information sciences category of the 2019 Journal Citation Reports from February 2020, and the SCImago Journal Rankings. After the creation of an initial list, a comparison of ranking and frequency of publication was used to eliminate journals that had lower numbers but were still represented by the same publishing company, guaranteeing that the top publishing houses for LIS journals were included. Finally, the refereed journals from the major divisions of the American Library Association were also reviewed because LIS subfields such as public and school librarianship research studies are overwhelmingly published in ALA division journals and might otherwise not be included. The review, based on the selection criteria above, resulted in a list of 33 English-language, refereed journals, reflecting a wide range of library and information science research fields, and all major LIS publishing houses (Appendix A).

Both researchers then independently reviewed all journal websites for public-facing publishing ethics policies. If no information was found on the journal website, the parent organization or publisher website was then located and searched. Utilizing the following question protocol adapted from Bosch, Hernandez, Pericas, Doti, and Marusic (2012), we conducted a thorough content analysis of the information collected:

1. Does the journal have a policy related to publishing ethics?
2. If so, what is the source of the policy (e.g., journal, publisher, COPE, etc.)?
3. Does the journal documentation mention the term editorial misconduct or have a policy related to editorial misconduct? And does the journal have a policy in place for responding to/ reporting editorial misconduct?
4. Does the journal include a policy on how corrections and retractions will be handled?

We also noted the source of each journal's misconduct policies to determine if these were from the journal, a professional organization (e.g., ALA), an association like COPE, or from the journal's publisher (e.g., Emerald). Table 1 categorizes journals, in numbered groups, by the location and provider of any identified publication policies.

Table 1

Categorization of Journals Included in the Study

Policy Provider/ Publisher	Number of Journals
Taylor and Francis Journals	9
Professional Organization Journals	6
Emerald Journals	5
University Press Journals	4
Elsevier Journals	3
SAGE Journals	3
Wiley Journals	2
De Gruyter Journals	1

Phase One Findings

Q1. Does the journal have a policy related to publishing ethics?

Of the 33 journals reviewed, 76% (25) mentioned a form of "publishing ethics policy" on the journal site, in the documentation, or linked to information on the overarching publisher site, while 24% (8), all six from professional organizations and 2 from university presses, did not. The six professional organization journals fell under the ALA umbrella. Therefore, the *ALA Policy Manual Section A: Organization and Operational Policies* was reviewed using the same search terms applied in other instances. This search generated a singular general statement: "Consistent with ALA's traditional dedication to the freedom of expression, free flow of ideas, and policies on intellectual freedom and ethics, all member units shall endorse and apply the principles of freedom of the press to their publication program" (ALA, 2019, p. 55). The *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* website did not include any information on publishing ethics, nor did the *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice Publication Manual* (2016). The *Publishing at the University of Alberta Library* website was also reviewed, with no information on publishing ethics found. A search of the *Information Research* site revealed no information on publishing ethics there or at any associated university sites.

Q2. If so, what is the source of the policy?

Twenty three of the twenty-five journals that have policies (92%) are published by

publishers that maintain membership in COPE, and so the COPE framework and materials provide the "ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for publishers, journal editors, and reviewers" employed by these organizations (Taylor & Francis Group, 2020, para. 4). The remaining two journals have statements that are based on the COPE guidelines. For *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* (*JELIS*), the policy statement was generated by the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) with a "publication ethics and publication malpractice statement mainly based on the *Code of Conduct and Best-Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors*" (ALISE, 2016, para. 1); and for *LIBRI*, the publisher stated that "ethics statements for our journal are based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) *Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors*" (De Gruyter, n.d., para. 1). It should be noted here that the *Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Editors* from COPE was retired in 2017 and replaced with the *Core Practic*es because the previous guidelines were frequently misinterpreted as having "regulatory powers" (COPE, 2017, para. 2).

Q3. Does the journal documentation mention the term editorial misconduct or have a policy related to editorial misconduct? And does the journal have a policy in place for responding to/ reporting editorial misconduct?

COPE member journals. Most of the 23 journals with active COPE membership included their own documentation in addition to directing users to the COPE website. All journals in this category housed extensive guidelines and policies addressing author or reviewer misconduct, but except for Taylor & Francis and Emerald's brief directions on steps to take when there are allegations of editorial misconduct, no independent documentation addressing editorial misconduct in detail was found. As previously mentioned, all nine Taylor & Francis journals and all five Emerald journals link to their respective publisher pages where more extensive information on misconduct policies is housed (Emerald Publishing, 2020; Taylor & Francis Group, 2020). All three Elsevier journals link to the publisher website (Elsevier, 2017), where the duties of the editor are outlined along with guidance on policy creation and application. Both Wiley journals house some form of author guidelines with their own text. Neither link to the Wiley website and in this instance, no mention of editorial misconduct was found on either journal page. The Wiley website includes a *Best Practice Guidelines on Research Integrity and Publishing Ethics* section, and a statement claiming all Wiley editors are members of COPE (Wiley, 2020). Editors are encouraged to view the COPE *Code of Conduct*

and Best Practice Guidelines, however as stated earlier, these were retired in 2017. All three SAGE journals state their membership with COPE and link to its website. All also include a section on publication ethics linked to the publisher's page (SAGE Publishing, 2020).

Non–COPE member journals. The six professional organization journals are from ALA divisions, and so the ALA Policy Manual was once again reviewed. The only editorial policy found was for the magazine *American Libraries*. Although no information on editorial misconduct could be located, the manual addresses editorial appointments:

> It is the responsibility of each member unit to appoint editors with experience or training in editorial theory and practice. Such editors, whether headquarters staff, contractors, or volunteers, shall be responsible for determining the content and style of the publication consistent with the goals and policies of the sponsoring unit. The decision as to appropriate material for inclusion in the publication shall rest with the editor guided by the ALA Constitution, its Bylaws, and relevant policies as adopted by the ALA Council and the unit which sponsors the publication. (ALA, 2019, p. 55)

Since the ALA Policy Manual also states, "Divisions exercise editorial and managerial control over their periodicals," the handbook/ policy manual of each ALA division responsible for the journals selected in this study were also reviewed. Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) referenced the above statement from the ALA Policy Manual adding they "affirm their roles of non-interference with editorial decisions, in accordance with the spirit of encouraging units to 'endorse and apply the principle of freedom of the press' articulated in *ALA Policy Manual*" (RUSA, 1991).

The American Association of School Librarians' *AASL Policies & Procedures Manual* contains no information on ethical publishing other than a general statement: "The *School Library Research* Editor's authority is given by the AASL Board of Directors with direct supervision of content by the AASL Executive Director" (AASL, 2017, para. 5). This stands in direct opposition to the editorial independence highlighted in RUSA's policy. Sowing further confusion, the *AASL Publications Manual* (2012) advises that "if issues arise between writer(s) and staff during the editorial or production stages, those issues are referred to the AASL Executive Committee " (p. 4). The Association for Library Service to Children includes the following on its *Children and Libraries* policies and procedures page: "the editor has the final responsibility for the content of CAL within the parameters of ALA and ALSC policies" (para. 6) Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), the division responsible for the *Journal*

of Research on Libraries and Young Adults provides guidance on the duties of the member editor overseeing its content, but no direct mention of editorial misconduct (YALSA, 2018).

JELIS links to the ALISE *Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement* (2016), that contains information on the responsibilities of the editor but no specific mention of editorial misconduct. The University of Toronto Press (UTP) website has its own *Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement*, outlining ethical expectations for editors that for the most part, echo the ALISE statement. However, these include an additional promise to "address reported ethical breaches in a timely manner and from a neutral position" (UTP, 2020, para. 4). The UTP statement also includes a section on "Procedures for Addressing Unethical Behavior" mainly related to author or reviewer misconduct. No information on publication ethics was located on the *LIBRI* site, but De Gruyter maintains a statement on publications ethics where it outlines the duties of the Editors-in-Chief. Again, any mentions of misconduct are directed toward authors and reviewers.

Q4. Does the journal include a policy on how corrections and/or retractions will be handled?

The eight journals identified under question 3 as having no publishing ethics policies did not provide any information on how corrections or retractions would be handled - neither on their websites or in any of the documentation reviewed. Two additional journals from university presses did not include information that addressed corrections and retractions on their websites or in any documentation: *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, and *Information Research*. The remaining 23 journals (with exception of *LQ*), all members of COPE, house their own documentation and policies on corrections and retractions, while also directing users to the COPE website retraction guidelines. All Taylor & Francis, SAGE, Emerald, and Elsevier journals link to the publisher's page with a dedicated section on corrections, retractions, and updates to the version of record, in accordance with COPE. As before, Wiley journals do not house policies on corrections and retractions at their sites but do provide links to Wiley's *Best Practice Guidelines on Research Integrity and Publishing Ethics* (Wiley, 2020). *LQ*, while not housing its own policy, falls under the umbrella of the policy on "Errors and Corrections" in the University of Chicago *Statement on Publication Ethics* (n. d.), including direct reference to COPE professional standards.

ALISE's *Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement* (2016) addresses *JELIS* corrections and retractions in a subsection: "Fundamental Errors in Published Works."

The University of Toronto Press *Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement* directs editors to "have guidelines for retracting or correcting articles when needed…value and ensure the integrity and accuracy of content published in the journal and publish corrections, clarifications, and retractions when necessary" (UTP, 2020). Finding no information on the *LIBRI* website, the De Gruyter *Statement on Publications Ethics* (n.d.) mirrors ALISE's statement almost word for word. In all three instances, the statements imply the responsibility for setting specific guidelines and processes lay with the respective journals, placing the burden of initiating retractions and corrections squarely on the author's shoulders.

Phase Two – Key Informant Interviews

Phase Two Data Collection and Analysis

To gain further insight into the ways lack of, or nonadherence to publishing policies and procedures impacted library and information science researchers in instances of editorial misconduct, key informant interviews were conducted with authors from the LIS field. The key informant interview is a qualitative research method where the researcher conducts in-depth interviews with a select group of individuals most likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on the subject of study (Gilchrist & Williams, 1999; Kaplan, 2013; Tremblay, 2003). In-depth interviews are conducted with a small number of these key informants, usually 15-35, and focus on a topic of which the interviewees have first-hand knowledge. This semi-structured interview with a key informant should have an informal tone, like a conversation (Appendix B). The interviewer probes to elicit more information from the informant throughout the interview. The primary goal is to obtain a qualitative description of perceptions or experiences, rather than measurable aspects of the experience (Gilchrist & Williams, 1999; Kumar, 1989; Tremblay, 2003).

Using snowball sampling, researchers identified 31 participants representative of LIS authors in a broad range of LIS specialties and academic experience (e.g., PhD candidates, tenure-track faculty both non-tenured and tenured at all levels of appointment, teaching faculty). Snowball sampling provided a useful way to recruit participants for this study due to the sensitive nature of the selected topic (Henry, 2009). The LIS world is interconnected, and the researchers were able to use their social networks to communicate with authors of the field who personally experienced an incident of editorial misconduct (Browne, 2005). These participants were then asked if they could recommend any of their colleagues who had also experienced

issues, and therefore could serve as a key informant. This process continued until the target range of 15-35 participants was reached (Kaplan, 2013).

Interviews were conducted using both VOIP and email. The email option became necessary because during a time of increased online meetings due to COVID-19 pandemic workplace restrictions, several respondents cited "Zoom fatigue" and their preference for answering interview questions through text. In these instances, follow-up probe questions were also sent through email to clarify or expand on details.

To aid in-depth and accurate analysis, interviews conducted online were recorded and then transcribed. Researchers independently applied qualitative content analysis to the transcribed interview text engaging in a "subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). In the absence of a theoretical framework to guide coding, a six-step inductive coding approach was applied (Mayring, 2000) with the first three steps completed to establish an initial codebook: a) review of research questions, b) category determination, c) further inductive category development. Once the initial codebook was developed, researchers compared initial codes and then jointly completed the remaining steps: d) category revision, e) final text review, and f) interpretation of results. During the joint qualitative analysis phase, researchers worked through any discrepancies and differences in interpretation until a cohesive agreement was reached and the process of thematic content analysis complete. A secondary analysis was then conducted using the twelve categories of editorial misconduct defined in this paper. This resulted in the identification of 55 instances of editorial misconduct across the 31 collected cases.

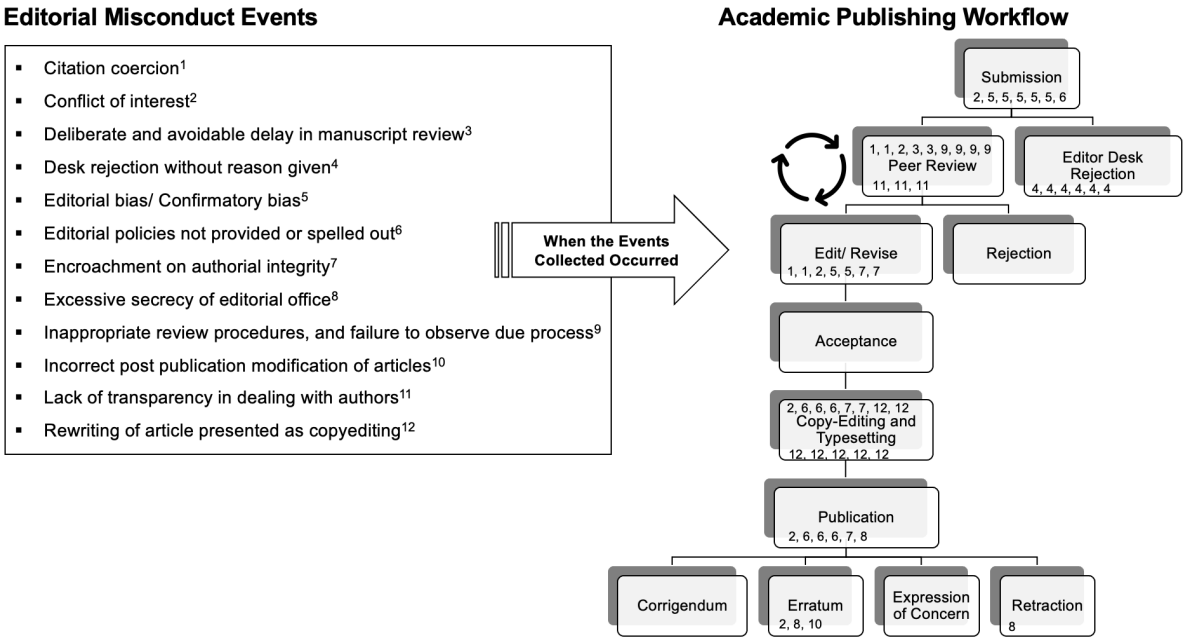
Phase Two Findings

Figure 1 documents all editorial misconduct events identified, flagged where these occurred in the LIS academic publishing workflow. On the left are the events as previously defined. Each event was assigned a numerical code. On the right, is a graph representing the academic publishing workflow. The three circular arrows represent revise/resubmit requests with a second round of peer review. Every time a number is listed, it corresponds to one editorial misconduct event taken from the list on the left, at the time it occurred. For example, under *Submission*, researchers collected evidence of one instance of a "conflict of interest" event, five

instances of an "editorial bias/ confirmatory bias event," and one instance of "editorial policies not provided or spelled out" event.

Figure 1

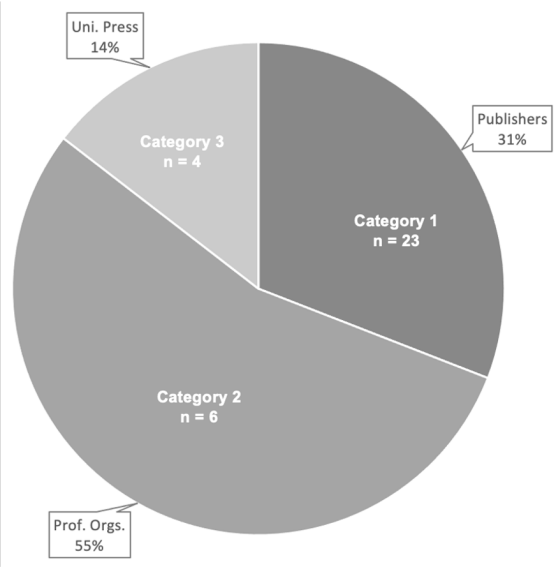
Editorial Misconduct Events in the LIS Academic Publishing Workflow



Instances of editorial misconduct occurred in a slightly larger number before a paper's acceptance ($n^1 = 32$, representing 58%) than after acceptance ($n^2 = 23$, representing 42%). The largest number of editorial misconduct instances occurred during copyediting and typesetting ($n^3 = 13$, representing 24%). Figure 2 documents the amount of editorial misconduct incidents associated with each category of journal represented in the Appendix. Category 1 are journals maintained by publishers (23 journals). Category 1 journals (n=23) were associated with 17 out of 55 incidents (31%). Category 2 are journals maintained by professional organizations (6 journals). Category 2 journals (n=6) were associated with 30 out of 55 incidents (55%). Category 3 are journals maintained by university presses (4 journals). Category 3 journals (n=4) were associated with 8 out of 55 incidents (14%).

Figure 2

Percentage of Editorial Misconduct Incidents in Each Journal Category



Despite Category 2, journals maintained by professional organizations, containing only six publications, this category was responsible for over half of the editorial misconduct incidents collected during this study. It should also be noted that none of the journals in Category 2, nor their respective professional organizations, are members of COPE.

Thematic analysis

A thorough analysis of interview transcripts identified four themes that reflected commonalities in interviewee responses: a) lack of knowledge on editorial misconduct, b) power dynamics in academic gatekeeping, c) misogyny and racism as experienced by LIS authors, and d) copyediting and organizational platforms. These themes were generated by coding interviewee responses using the editorial misconduct events chart described in Figure 1 "Editorial Misconduct Events in the LIS Academic Publishing Workflow." It is important to note these themes are not mutually exclusive since events were often coded to reflect multiple instances of editorial misconduct in different phases of the academic publishing workflow.

Theme 1: lack of knowledge on editorial misconduct. The first theme refers to both interviewee discomfort and lack of specific language when describing their experiences with unethical editorial behavior. Despite interviewees representing a broad swath of academic

experience (e.g., PhD candidates, tenure-track faculty both non tenured and tenured at all levels of appointment, teaching faculty), only one or two cases used editorial misconduct terminology and vocabulary. Instead, interviewees expressed frustration or discomfort, frequently describing the event as "a strange editorial experience":

> Individual 1: I vented on social media as one does...I had a couple of seasoned scholars say, 'this doesn't sound right, you should ask for clarification.' There are never clear guides for how to advocate for yourself in this situation. It's just accepted as normal even though it was clear in my mind that this was not appropriate at all.

> Individual 5: It's a fuzzy area when you are an author of a manuscript in a niche space and there are only a few people that have written about that space, but when a person is reviewing your paper and then says they expected to see themselves in your paper, it doesn't pass the stink test.

Theme 1 also speaks to the lack of familiarity with publishing ethics policies evidenced by many interviewees, as reflected in Individual 3's response who stated: "I didn't check policy and I didn't complain but looking back and knowing what I know now, it doesn't seem like people should be able to do this." Another example highlighted a lack of awareness of specific guidelines or policies relevant to Individual 9's dilemma: "I will say I didn't know there was a formal process for dealing with retraction requests. I just figured the editor was cc'ed and would have to deal with it eventually, so I felt contacting them was the next natural process."

Theme 2: Power dynamics in academic gatekeeping. The second theme was drawn from interviewee descriptions of passive avoidance as a professional coping mechanism, as well as their voiced fear of professional retaliation. In every instance where the interviewee did not locate or apply a journal policy, nor push back on an editorial misconduct event, they voiced the decision to passively avoid that journal in the future: "I've definitely decided that I won't publish with this group again" (Individual 2). A second example demonstrated this passive avoidance while indicating strong feelings remained regarding the event: "I didn't know to check journal policy, but I never submitted to [*journal name redacted*] again and my blood still boils when I think about it" (Individual 17). Still others maintained passive avoidance was a publicly shared, proactive choice until significant changes can be made:

> Individual 22: I never submitted to [*journal name redacted*] again and I don't plan to submit to them in the future unless they go through a massive organizational restructuring.

> Individual 15: I will never publish with this journal again, and I have told many people to be aware of this editor. I've also discovered in doing so that [*the editor*] is fairly well known for this type of behavior.

Several interviewees described a perceived power imbalance that caused them to select passive avoidance to circumvent further professional retaliation: "I never replied or thought about checking policy because I didn't have tenure and I didn't know I could push back on a decision" (Individual 3). In another instance Individual 11 stated: "Many other junior scholars had the same experience and we just refused to submit while [they were] the editor." Individual 1 described how this power imbalance removed their options for pushing back: "I don't have a lot of venues for advocating for myself and others cannot exactly advocate for me either. The [lack of] transparency is so confusing." Individual 30 blatantly declared: "I don't feel comfortable making a big deal about it because you know; I need my job."

Theme 3: Misogyny and racism as experienced by LIS authors. The third theme overlapped with theme 2 since the imbalance of power in higher education is a load-bearing beam for patriarchal privilege and systemic racism (Cooke, 2019; Lopes, 2019). Even so, we separated these themes to highlight the ways LIS authors and researchers interviewed for this study experienced misogynistic treatment, and in other instances, racial microaggressions. In one particularly egregious incident, Individual 29, a woman, described a significant modification of her article by a male editor, discovered in post-publication:

> He accepted my article but said he wanted a section included on [*topic redacted*]. I explained that this was not in line with the topic of the article and refused to add it. He seemed fine with this. When the article was printed, I realized that he added two paragraphs of his own writing on [*topic redacted*]. He added it as if I had written it. I knew then and there he didn't respect me, or my expertise.

In another instance, Individual 12 recalled the price she paid for refusing a male editor's request:

> I know the editor of this journal from my time as a [*redacted*] student. He was a professor at my university, and I took a class under him. He reached out to me to see if I would review a manuscript on [*topic redacted*] and, when I said I no, he pressured me to review. I respectfully declined again. Several months later, I submitted a manuscript to this journal, and it was desk-rejected. I can't help but wonder if the two actions are connected in some way. I did not share my concerns. I assumed that he would deny any connection but would be insulted or react negatively to the implication that he was acting in bad faith. I submitted the manuscript to another journal, and it was published there.

Individual 24 pointed out a consistent lack of attention paid to anonymization and how this may potentially increase discriminatory reviews:

> I have dealt with lead editors not going into properties of documents to remove tags, or remove names in the review they sent back, or they send out manuscripts for review that have not been properly redacted (no name removed or metadata still present, institutional name there). When you are tracking changes as a reviewer, that is also something that can reveal your identity. I feel like if editors are not being careful when sending this out to authors, they are not being careful the other way around.

During another interview, Individual 28 described the impact of a white male who positioned himself as a public LIS editor: "He had a general list of criteria of things that might be warning flags for him, but these were also incredibly racially coded, and a lot of his messaging and his publications were explicitly racist and explicitly sexist. He would almost always attack women online and called certain publishers the *favelas* of publishing." A respondent of color shared: "I pitched an idea for a special issue featuring the experiences of LIS faculty of color. The editor told me [they] wouldn't consider it because 'Americans talk too much about race' (Individual 22)" In another case, Individual 8 described a similar reasoning provided for rejection: "Once I was rejected with 'We don't need to do it again.' These rejections felt racist to me because I frequently received feedback that diversity topics 'bring the quality of [*redacted*] down.' I don't submit to [*redacted*] anymore. I remember the journals that gave me a chance to publish on diversity when it wasn't trendy and those are the ones I prioritize now."

Theme 4: Copyediting and organizational platforms. The fourth theme reflects how the largest number of incidents coded for this study occurred during the copyediting and typesetting phase of the academic publishing workflow, representing the twelfth category of editorial misconduct: rewriting of articles presented as copyediting. In the least egregious cases, copyediting resulted in professional embarrassment when an author's writing quality and voice was affected: "I wrote the manuscript in first person. Without telling me, the copy editor switched the paper from first person to [an] awkward third person. I didn't know until I saw the copy in print. This was a significant rewrite, and I should have had the option to accept or reject it (Individual 31)" In other, more serious instances, copyediting changes threatened the integrity of a paper's qualitative data, as described by Individual 14:

> The copy editor changed direct quotes from participants because they felt the originals were too hard. [*redacted*] said: 'Let's not have a heading that includes a word many readers will find offensive in the context.' I responded I felt really uncomfortable using watered down language to name case studies. It was my goal to use the participant's language because this is exactly how she felt and how she wanted to communicate her story.

This theme revealed a third and highly troublesome pattern among rewriting masked as copyediting: LIS researchers subjected to copyediting requests or unauthorized changes made in attempts to protect organizational platforms: "We submitted an article that was accepted. Once it was reviewed by the copy editor, they tried to add new content to the article. We pushed back letting them know this was unethical and out of line (Individual 3)" In another instance, Individual 26 stated: "The copy editor attempted to change the meaning of our paper's findings. We responded that this was inappropriate for a copy editor, and we rejected the edit." Copyeditors from the same professional organization's journal were responsible for a third incident described by Individual 18:

> I had an article accepted with revisions. After it hit the copy editor's desk, I received an email from the copy editors saying they wanted me to completely redo my findings and discussion sections. Mind you, these were the copy editors. Not the reviewers or the main journal editor. The copy editors didn't like my findings and wanted me to basically rewrite and reframe that whole part of the article. That's not the job of a copy editor, not to mention it's unethical and I was pretty pissed. So, I pulled my article and submitted it to another journal. It was published within six months.

In all three instances highlighted here, the interviewees were tenured faculty whose papers discussed findings that challenged the professional organization's public positions on aspects of the librarianship subspecialty under that organization's umbrella.

Discussion and Conclusion

Compared to research misconduct on the part of authors, there are relatively few (published) accounts of editorial misconduct, and those that do exist are almost exclusively the purview of the hard sciences. This pattern remained consistent throughout the study's examination of LIS literature on journal publishing ethics policy, editorial misconduct, and editorial ethics. Publications reviewed, including LIS textbooks popular with MLIS 'introduction to research' courses, continue to define and discuss research misconduct as behaviors undertaken by authors and researchers, exclusively highlighting the "practices that seriously deviate from commonly accepted practices within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research" (Connaway & Radford, 2017, p. 92). Another frequently cited text, *Research Misconduct* (Altman & Hernon, 1997), addresses the impact of research misconduct on library and information science professional practice, with close attention paid to steps information professionals may take to avoid sharing and promoting such work, focused exclusively on

scientific and medical research. However, the text has not been updated and does not address LIS researchers or LIS journal editors.

Consequently, though LIS educators may cover the misconduct issues student researchers face during the submission and peer review process, this study's findings suggest LIS researchers are not equipped to respond to editorial misconduct events that happen after acceptance, specifically during the copyediting and typesetting part of the academic publishing workflow. Even when talking with seasoned researchers, the incidents logged under copyediting, typesetting, and publication (events where editors have the most forward-facing role) were confusing to participants. These were the events interviewees felt the least confident in addressing, or simply let slide out of a sense of "why bother?" The emphasis on researcher and authorial misconduct was also evident in the journal policies collected for this study. While most LIS journals housed some type of policy either under the publisher, the organization's policy manual, or on the journal website, the absence of policies defining and addressing editorial misconduct, with guidance on how authors should handle such events, was blatantly apparent.

Perhaps the most surprising finding was the complete lack of any publishing ethics documentation, other than author guidelines and one general statement, for journals housed by the American Library Association divisions. The amount of editorial misconduct incidents collected during this study that occurred during interactions with professional organization journals (6 journals responsible for over 55% of incidents) indicate their lack of publishing ethics documentation has had a disproportionate and adverse impact on LIS research. Because of experiences with editorial misconduct, multiple participants applied passive avoidance as a coping mechanism - choosing to no longer publish in these journals. When one further considers the higher level of practitioner access made possible by ALA divisions that house open access publications (e.g., AASL, YALSA), the negative impact of passive avoidance is further amplified, as LIS researchers choose to submit their work to journals behind paywalls, increasing the gap between research and practice.

The relationship between the frequency of editorial misconduct events and a lack of publishing ethics policies as identified in phase one of this study, aligns with previous research that found 64% of Wiley-Blackwell social science editors were unaware of COPE guidelines (Luty et al., 2009; Sarigol et al., 2017; Wager, 2009). The present study's finding that editorial misconduct may have an outsized negative impact on dissemination of research is also supported

by a series of studies examining editorial ethics (Teixeira da Silva 2016; Teixeira da Silva & Al-Khatib, 2017; Teixeira da Silva & Dobránszki, 2017; Teixeira da Silva et al., 2018; Teixeira da Silva et al., 2019). In contrast, "editors addressing obligations to authors, for example, through timely, thorough and fair review processes improve the quality of research that is published within their journal. Thus, the editors contribute to their scholarly field, and even society at large, by publishing quality scientific research" (Thornton et al., 2014, p. 15). The number of LIS journal editors relative to the number of LIS researchers and authors is small. However, it is a small group that holds onto a significant amount of power. Thus, developing and abiding by an editorial ethics policy would potentially improve the academic publishing workflow, and ultimately, dissemination of research (Aguinis & Vaschetto, 2011).

As previously stated, editorial misconduct labels identify and categorize the misconduct itself, but these do not name the motivation (e.g., professional bias, racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia) behind the misconduct. Despite this differentiation, interviewees were quick to name and call out instances of misogyny and racial microaggressions, prioritizing their experience with this characteristic of the misconduct over any underlying professional ethical miss step. A recent public event highlighted the need for further exploration and research into the motivations behind editorial misconduct, and how editorial policies must be revised and updated to directly address and reduce patriarchal and racial micro/macro aggressive interactions. In December 2020, five Black librarians publicly shared they were pulling an accepted editorial from the *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, a university press journal. They described an incident of editorial misconduct eerily like most incidents identified in this study: significant changes in a proof-ready document that went beyond copyediting, provided with no track changes, notification, or author review. The authors concluded JMLA did not "interrogate the systems, processes, and policies in place, and... prepare their editorial staff to navigate works addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion" (Minter, 2020, para. 9).

Membership in COPE demonstrates an organization's commitment to ethical conduct on part of its publishers, editors, reviewers, and authors. Both current and new LIS journals (including ALA division journals) should take advantage of COPE membership and its resources. COPE hosts a training program for editors and editorial board members using the eLearning course available to its members (www.publicationethics.org/resources/e-learning) in addition to sample policies, case studies, glossaries, and other materials. If a journal is already

published by a COPE member, then review publishing ethics policies to ensure these address the ethical responsibilities of journal editors along with reviewers and authors. Systems must be in place to promptly attend to, and resolve all complaints and concerns related to publication ethics, including clearly labeled contact information for the individual who is responsible for handling allegations of editorial misconduct.

The relationship of editors to publishers and journal owners is often complex but should always be based on the principle of editorial independence. Notwithstanding the economic and political realities of the journal, an editor should select submissions based on quality and suitability for readers rather than for immediate financial, political, or personal gain (see COPE's Guidelines for Transparent Relationships Between Journals and Society Owners). Given the complexity of the relationship, it is recommended that editors ensure the terms of appointment are spelled out in a signed, written agreement, prior to appointment. "Ethical Practices of Journal Editors: Voluntary Code of Conduct" expands on COPE guidelines by detailing editorial behaviors, one of which is the decoupling of journal marketing from any peer review or editorial decision-making process. Currently hosted by the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, the code is affirmed by 232 journal editors from a variety of disciplines and serves as an excellent model for public ethical accountability (University of North Carolina-Charlotte, n.d.).

Beyond teaching the research and writing process, LIS educators should ensure students understand the academic publishing workflow and the instances of misconduct that are possible at every step, from the perspective of authors, of reviewers, and of editors. Knowing how to locate a journal's publishing ethics policies and how to interpret that language is not only important for authors, but also for those who review, select, and disseminate research in other ways (Curno, 2016). Knowing how to identify instances of misconduct, understanding the impact misconduct may have on research and practice, and being able to actively respond to misconduct by reviewing, updating, and applying journal publishing ethics policy, is a necessary skill set for every information professional and LIS researcher.

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APPENDIX A
List of Journals

1. Behaviour and Information Technology
2. Cataloging & Classification Quarterly
3. Children and Libraries
4. Collection Management
5. College & Research Libraries
6. Electronic Library
7. Evidence Based Library and Information Practice
8. Health Information and Library Journal
9. Information Research
10. Information Systems
11. International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction
12. International Federation of Libraries Association - IFLA
13. Internet Research
14. Internet Reference Services Quarterly
15. Journal of Documentation
16. Library & Information Science Research
17. Library Hi Tech
18. Library Management
19. Journal of Academic Librarianship -- Elsevier
20. JASIS&T
21. Journal of Education for Library and Information Science
22. Journal of Information Science
23. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science
24. Journal of Library Administration
25. Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults
26. Journal of Web Librarianship
27. Library Resources and Technical Services
28. Library Quarterly
29. LIBRI
30. Public Library Quarterly

31. Reference Librarian
32. Reference and User Quarterly
33. School Library Research

APPENDIX B
Interview Guide

1. What is the title of the journal that you had this experience with?

2. Tell me what happened and why you believe this is a case of editorial misconduct:

3. Did you communicate about this issue or share your concerns with the journal editor, copy editor, or the publisher? If not, why not?

4. If so, what was the response? Were others copied on this communication?

5. Did you look into the editorial policies of the journal to see if there was a policy in place regarding the issue? And if the issue was being handled properly according to policy?

6. What was the resolution of this experience? (What happened?)

7. Anything else you would like to share about this experience?