Re: Complaint letter to the Editor-in-Chief of Communications in Statistics - Simulation and Computation journal

Dear Dr. Balakrishnan:

This is a complaint letter concerning unethical authorship in a paper that was published in your journal on 30 July 2019. The paper titled “The impact of misspecification of nuisance parameters on test for homogeneity in zero-inflated Poisson model: A simulation study” was published in your journal by Siyu Gao, Qianqian Zhang & Jing Yu in 2019. However, the whole article is almost the same (about 99%) as Siyu Gao’s Master Report which was submitted in 2014 to fulfill the requirement of Siyu Gao’s master’s degree at Kansas State University (K-State). As Siyu Gao’s major advisor at K-State, it is very disappointing that I was excluded from the authorship. But, most importantly, I found that the two unknown authors, Qianqian Zhang & Jing Yu, were indeed the unethical authors. I am very sure that they did not meet the criteria for authorship.

During the time of Siyu Gao’s last year at K-State, I gave him the ideas and guided him to conduct this research for his Master Report. I also provided extensive help on the writing, editing and revising of the whole report. It is a shame that this former student did not consult me about this publication or even include me as a co-author. Instead, two unknown authors who had no contribution to this research work were included as a co-author and corresponding author. As strong evidence on this unethical behavior, the paper published in 2019 is almost the same as his Master Report which was already submitted to K-State in 2014. Clearly, Siyu Gao and the two unethical authors just used the whole Master Report directly for publication without any additional editions, and without informing me. This immoral behavior is intended to conceal my contributions and misrepresent the true authorship of the work. I have enclosed his Master Report
and the published paper as evidence with this letter. You can also find his report publicly through the K-State website: https://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/handle/2097/17804.

The unfair inclusion of these unethical authors is truly undermining the integrity of the scientific work and is absolutely unacceptable. As adopted by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/archives/2004_urm.pdf), the key concept of the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts is “If scientists are dishonest about their participation in the study, this undermines confidence in reporting the work itself”. In fact, in this Siyu Gao et al.’s paper, there was a serious misleading mistake that was not identified by these unethical authors. The simulations in the paper were conducted under settings of a two-sided test. However, the one-sided alternative hypothesis was given in the paper (see sec. 2.2). The issue of a one-sided or two-sided test does matter when performing the test of homogeneity for zero-inflated models. Because the null limiting distribution of the score test statistic for the one-sided test is NOT a Chi-square distribution as they mentioned in the paper. **This indicates that they have little to no knowledge of the hypothesis testing under zero-inflated models for this research.** I deeply believe that they cannot even answer any further technical questions regarding this work.

I have consulted with senior faculty in our department and K-State university administration regarding this incidence before I write the letter. They all suggested that I should contact you first.

**I sincerely ask you to review this case as a serious violation of academic and publication ethics. This type of dishonesty should not be tolerated. Please give your full consideration to formally retract or remove this published article.**

If you have any questions or concerns about my complaint, please kindly let me know. I could provide more evidence, such as emails exchanged with Siyu Gao regarding this research work in 2013-2014.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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