Malaysian early career researchers on the ethics of scholarly publishing

A. Abrizah\textsuperscript{1,2}, Nordiana Ahmad Kharman Shah\textsuperscript{1} and David Nicholas\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}Department of Library & Information Science,
Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology,
University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA
\textsuperscript{2}CIBER Research Ltd. UK

\textit{e-mail: abrizah@um.edu.my; dina@um.edu.my (corresponding author); Dave.Nicholas@ciber-research.eu}

ABSTRACT

This paper presents research into the scholarly publishing attitudes and behaviours of Malaysian early-career researchers (ECRs). This research comes from year two of a projected three-year-long study of ECRs from seven countries (China, France, Malaysia, Poland, Spain, the UK, and the US), for which semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with study participants. For the findings reported in this paper, 12 Malaysian ECRs from science and social science disciplines at five research-intensive universities were interviewed during the period from March to May 2017. The interview record was compared with the previous year’s (2016) record to identify changes in interviewees’ responses to a set of questions on their knowledge of ethics in scholarly communication. In addition, contextual data were obtained from the CVs of the ECRs. Our findings indicate that the attitudes and behaviours of Malaysian ECRs in relation to scholarly communication ethics have changed in the passage of one year. We observed noteworthy changes in ECRs’ knowledge of unethical behaviours. As compared with data from 2016, the ECRs are more verbose in their responses on what is generally regarded as ethical and unethical in research and/or publishing practices. Authorship policies, the academic evaluation system, and the scrutiny which will keep the lid on any unethical behaviours are the most important factors bringing about the changes we observed. What remains unchanged for the Malaysian ECRs is the persistent pressure they feel to publish papers in impact-factored journals in order to advance their careers.