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A Malaysian Paper Mill Is Selling Authorship on Chinese Social Media

Earlier this year, the 5GH team found that a Xiaohongshu account (previous ID: 1132185804, recent ID: piyaopiyaoyao) registered by an user in Malaysia was selling authorship of academic papers. Based on its latest post and the information of the paper [1], the 5GH team finally confirmed the person behind this paper mill, which is named as “LYU Paper Mill”:

Physical learning environments and space research-systematic literature review and bibliometric quantitative analysis (SLR-BQA)

Provisionally accepted

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Name: Chunwei Lyu

Affiliation: Universiti Sains Malaysia

Position: Master Student

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According to the author's information in the paper [2], and the list of academic teachers and administrative teachers in his college, the 5GH team believe that Chunwei Lyu is a master student, but not a teacher in his college. However, authors of paper may not always provide reliable information, this conclusion needs further verification.

According to the user's latest post on Xiaohongshu, he is selling authorship of a paper [1] that is accepted by Frontiers in Psychology. In addition to Lyu, this paper currently has two co-authors, namely CHEN You (Wuhan University) and YIN Xiaomin (Zhejiang Shuren University). It is unclear whether the two authors obtained their authorship through purchase or were involved in the fabrication of the paper. Earlier, they co-authored in another paper [3]. However, the topics of the two papers were not overlapped, and they were accepted one after another in less than two months. It can not be ruled out that the two papers were fabricated.

Publications by Chunwei LYU						
DOI	Title	Journal	Co-authors	Submitted	Accepted	Published
10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1389524	Physical learning environments and space research-systematic literature review and bibliometric quantitative analysis (SLR-BOA)	Frontiers in Psychology	CHEN You (Wuhan University), YIN Xiaomin (Zhejiang Shuren University)		2024-04-22	
10.1038/s41598-024-56452-0	Circular design strategies and economic sustainability of construction projects in china: the mediating role of organizational culture	Scientific Reports	CHEN You (Wuhan University), YIN Xiaomin (Zhejiang Shuren University)	2023-12-23	2024-03-06	2024-04-03
10.1016/j.paid.2024.112652	The relationship between smartphone addiction and procrastination among students: A systematic review and meta-analysis	Personality and Individual Differences	CHEN Gao (China University of Mining and Technology)	2023-11-14	2024-03-23	2024-04-03
10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22518	Sports motivation in Chinese college students: A systematic review	Heliyon	Shuao Deng, Xiaoling Zhan,, Jamal Safri Bin Saibon (Universiti Sains Malaysia)	2023-07-05	2023-11-14	2023-11-23
10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e28518	Factors correlated with personal growth initiative among college students: A meta-analysis	Heliyon	JIAO Zun (Qingdao Film Academy), CHEN You (Universiti Sains Malaysia)	2024-01-16	2024-03-20	2024-03-25
10.37502/USMR.2023.6709	Examining the Impact of Fear of Negative Evaluation on Prosocial Behavior	International Journal of Scientific and Management Research				2023-07
10.7769/gesec.v14i10.2790	County-level integrated media center promotes cultural inheritance and innovation with "short video" as the carrier	Revista de Gestão e Secretariado	JIAO Zun (Qingdao Film Academy, PhD Student)			2023-10-09
10.1145/3627377.3627399	Assessing the Impact of Olympic Games: A Study Based on Big Data Mining and Analysis	ICBDT '23: Proceedings of the 2023 6th International Conference on Big Data Technologies	XIAO Xinyu (Qilu University of Technology), AN Sixu (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University), Fusen Guo (Monash University), Xingyan Li (Monash University)			2023-09
10.31893/multirev.2023spe012	Exploration of the influencing factors of independent learning in higher vocational students based on process ability analysis	Multidisciplinary Reviews	JIAO Zun (Qingdao Film Academy)			2024-02-07

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Lyu has published a total of 9 papers [1-9] so far (one of which [1] was accepted by the journal and is not officially online). These papers were published/accepted from the second half of 2023 to the present. The topics of 9 papers are not related to each other, authors from 6 institutions in China (including Hong Kong) co-authored in these papers. These publication records is not realistic to a master student. Among the co-authors, the names of CHEN You (Wuhan University) and JIAO Zun (Qingdao Film Academy, doctoral student [2]) frequently appeared.

According to the user's post, he also submitted a paper to PLoS ONE and the paper was being revised. The 5GH team has no details about this paper, but we urge the publisher to initiate an investigation.

In recent years, the trade of authorship raises the concerns in the scientific community. According to the analysis by the 5GH team, most of these papers involve co-authors from multiple institutions, including but not limited to co-authors from Chinese institutions and institutions in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia. It is necessary for publishers and journals to further check multi-institutional collaboration papers based on this feature, to obtain formal communication records from co-authors, to ensure that these collaborations are genuine.

In addition, selling the authorship in the name of “collaboration” is also common on Chinese social media. But the China’s service providers ignore this, highlighting the platform’s lack of responsibility.

[UPDATE 2024.04.25] (1) The Xiaohongshu user changed its ID to “piyaopiyao” and deleted all his posts today, and (2) in an e-mail to the 5GH team, Dr. Christian Schulz with Heliyon promised to open investigations on the two papers on his journal.

[1] 10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1389524

[2] 10.7769/gesec.v14i10.2790

[3] 10.1038/s41598-024-56452-0

[4] 10.1016/j.paid.2024.112652

[5] 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22518

[6] 10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e28518

[7] 10.37502/IJSMR.2023.6709

[8] 10.1145/3627377.3627399

[9] 10.31893/multirev.2023spe012

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