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Special Articles: Commentary

Challenges to Michael Eisen's bid for US Senate seat in 2018

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Abstract

Dr. Michael Eisen, a prominent molecular biologist at UC Berkeley, announced on January 25, 2017 that he would run for the US Senate in California in November, 2018. That announcement was made via Twitter. That marks a possible new and refreshing trend of scientists turning to politics. Eisen, a co-founder of the open access portal, Public Library of Science, is openly critical of the copyright establishment, which still dominates biomedical and humanities publishing. Another Tweet by Eisen basically encouraged the direct use of Sci-Hub, a pirate site that captures millions of copyrighted texts of multiple publishers, and makes those texts freely available to the public, i.e., black or pirate open access. This paper examines the intersection between science, information, copyright, social media and morals, and questions whether the public encouragement of copyright infringement, compounded by prolific profanity, serves as the best model role as a public servant for prospective politicians. This paper also examines if bad language and slang – as are frequently used by Eisen – represent the best moral example for voters, and if they increase or decrease trust in political candidates. The intersection between science and politics needs greater debate.

Keywords: California Senate, copyright, honesty, information, negative links and views, pirate network, politics, profanity, science, trust.

The value of information in the copyright age

Information is an extremely precious commodity within the public domain because it is based on intellect and knowledge, and the dialogue surrounding what constitutes valid, useful or relevant science is a matter of understanding between scientists, policymakers and public citizens (Penders, 2017). For these reasons, scientific information, including published works, continues to be highly copyrighted, and the control of copyright empowers publishers or other entities that hold it. Powerful publishers that have been able to successfully accumulate copyright over decades, even centuries, hold strong positions in society, thus controlling the rights to scientific information, and its dissemination, is synonymous with societal and political power (Teixeira da Silva, 2011). This ability to hold intellectual power through copyright, with the subsequent commercialization of

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the rights to access that information, has led to the establishment of a highly profitable publishing oligopoly (Larivière et al., 2015). Global academic copyright is continually challenged or threatened, even as the industry transitions towards a state of complete open access (OA).

Sci-Hub's affront to global academic copyright holders

The battle against the rights to copyright by publishing giants reached an important turning point with the rise of Sci-Hub, a pirate academic site created and curated by a Kazakh student, Alexandra Elbakyan, that has captured at least 62 million (Greshake, 2017) copyrighted documents from the sciences and humanities from a wide range of publishers, making those documents freely available to the public*. The fight against Sci-Hub, especially by the powerful publishing industry and its lobbyists, has been intense†. For example, Elsevier won \$15 million in damages caused by copyright infringement caused by Sci-Hub and LibGen (Schiermeier, 2017). However, all of this publicity may be having an opposite reaction: instead of effectively silencing Sci-Hub, it may in fact, through publicity, be promoting it, i.e., a Streisand effect. What was surprising to learn was the wide range of individuals or entities, including academic institutes, basically “everyone”, in developed and developing countries, that were downloading files from Sci-Hub (Bohannon, 2016).

Sci-Hub is one initiative that is “likely to facilitate the evolution of near-universal Green OA” (James, 2016), serving thus as a direct threat to the copyright industry that still dominates a large portion of the biomedical publishing industry. The existence of black or pirate OA sites such as Sci-Hub, despite their lack of sustainability, is that they could make the function of librarians redundant (Gardner et al., 2017). Gardner’s promotion of Sci-Hub as an act of civil disobedience riled the Association of American Publishers‡. The issue of civil disobedience, and conflating the moral value of making information free versus the legal aspect of promoting copyrighted material illicitly, within the context of Sci-Hub, becomes relevant for the ensuing discussion.

The increasing politicization of STEM scientists

Science and politics are deeply criss-crossed, for political and economic reasons, with some claiming that science is political§ while others believing that it is not**, the former reflecting a stream of thought related to the March for Science held globally in April, 2017. What is not that common, however, is to see scientists moving into mainstream politics, although, at least in the USA, this is changing, with action groups such as 314 Action†† supporting and promoting the politicization of scientists or, more accurately of Democratic scientists only, i.e., the politicization of scientists, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), is politically driven. Politically advocating scientists have high perceived credibility within society (Kotcher et al., 2017), as confirmed by results of a Pew Research Center poll held in 2016, at least in the US**, a feature that will undoubtedly be increasingly exploited as STEM and politics become more intertwined. However, Donner (2017) reminds us that “with the power to influence public debate comes the responsibility to carefully consider the impact of statements and actions.”

Introducing a politically ambitious scientist, Michael Eisen

On his blog§§, Michael Eisen describes himself as “a biologist at UC Berkeley and an Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute”. Eisen is not shy from sharing his ideas openly regarding the publishing industry and other political issues that affect science, and he is

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sci-Hub>

† <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/tag/sci-hub/>

‡ <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2016/08/copyright/sci-hub-controversy-triggers-publishers-critique-of-librarian/#>

§ <https://www.theverge.com/2017/1/19/14258474/trump-inauguration-science-politics-climate-change-vaccines>

** <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mental-mishaps/201703/science-is-not-political>

†† <http://www.314action.org/home>

** <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/18/most-americans-trust-the-military-and-scientists-to-act-in-the-publics-interest/>

§§ <http://www.michaeeisen.org/blog/>

passionately defensive of the OA movement while being openly critical of the copyright industry and the current oligopolic publishing establishment, as his blog documents. Several of his ideas are provocative, but valid, and worth reading. Thus, it can be argued that Eisen has a pro-science agenda and is determined at science's fortification through politically-motivated protection.

For example, on his blog, in February of 2017, Eisen claimed that patents – the immediate cousin to copyright in terms of their closed nature – “are destroying the soul of science”, in December of 2016, he openly called for the replacement of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director, Francis Collins, in June of 2016, he claimed that *JAMA*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, is “routinely stealing content from American citizens”, or in May of 2016, he accused Elsevier, one of the oligopolic publishers discussed above, of “tricking authors into surrendering their rights.” Eisen is not one to shy from controversy surrounding either science, or politics, and he is an avid defender of open access information, having been one of the co-founders of the Public Library of Science (PLOS)*, a stable of OA journals, whose star mega-journal *PLOS ONE*, was dethroned in early 2017 as the world's largest OA mega-journal†. One can thus argue that Eisen is deeply involved and invested, both personally and professionally, in the definitive implementation of OA, and not copyright, as the future sustainable research and publishing model for biomedical science. Curiously, Eisen is not one of the candidates endorsed by 314 Action‡.

On January 25, 2017, Eisen announced, via Twitter§, that in 2018 he would be running for the U.S. Senate from California (Fig. 1A) (Reardon, 2017). The US Senate elections will be held in November of 2018 and senators will hold six-year terms, starting in 2019**, thereby overlapping with the pivoting moment in OA's history in STEM publishing, in the form of Horizon 2020, which is self-described as “the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract”††. Unknown to many, and somewhat ironically, several of the organizations of the European Commission that have been commissioned to assess the economic viability of the OA model for STEM publishing are precisely some of the world's largest copyright holders**. So, an academically pro-OA Eisen that pits itself against a commercially pro-OA conglomerate of powerful invested publishing interests, even if on different sides of the Atlantic, may be in global academics' interest, precisely because only through increased political power might authors and STEM-based academics begin to gather power of influence in policy. Eisen is thus an important public figure. According to Eisen's Wikipedia page, his campaign slogan is “Liberty, Equality, Reality”, much in line with his views favoring OA information and his fairly strong anti-publishing establishment stance. His announcement received wide praise, from both the scientific and political spectra. In 2016, Johnston§§ argued in favor of scientists becoming politicians by claiming that they possess the following qualities: vision, the love of structure, systems-based thinking, and partnership. So, Eisen's turn in career from geneticist and OA activist to politics may be the start of a new global trend of the politicization of scientists, which would not be unusual given that science globally is heavily politicized***.

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Eisen

† <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2017/04/06/scientific-reports-overtakes-plos-one-as-largest-megajournal/>

‡ <http://www.314action.org/endorsed-candidates/>

§ <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/8243219764344>

** https://ballotpedia.org/United_States_Senate_elections,_2018

†† <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

** <https://blog.frontiersin.org/2017/10/05/frontiers-participating-in-european-commission-expert-group/>

§§ <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/we-need-to-see-more-scientists-take-the-leap-into-politics-20161017-gs3u5z.html>

*** <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/06/science/donald-trump-scientists-politics.html>

Sci-Hub: Eisen's Achilles' heel 1, or popularity platform?

A Tweet by Eisen, however, on March 2, 2017*, may represent a serious stumbling block, and a possible fatal blow, to his rapid popular rise to that claim to the California Senate seat, for one simple reason: he actively promoted a pirate black OA website in public, Sci-Hub (Fig. 1B). The article he was referring to is by Jamali (2017), published in a journal by Springer Nature – also an oligopolic publisher – *Scientometrics*, that discusses copyright infringement on ResearchGate. In his paper, Jamali claims much copyrighted material is on display, in public, on ResearchGate. Just a few months later, in October of 2017, the Coalition for Responsible Sharing, made up of several of the oligopolic publishers, and including Elsevier and the American Chemical Society (ACS), who had taken Sci-Hub to court, initiated take-down notices for 100,000 papers they claimed were in violation of their copyright but that had been posted as OA on ResearchGate, and, according to The Scholarly Kitchen (TSK), which is the blog for The Society for Scholarly Publishing, filed a lawsuit in Germany against ResearchGate†. A few days later, ResearchGate capitulated to their demands‡, although it is still possible to find ample copyrighted papers in OA format on ResearchGate, leading Elsevier and the ACS to continue pursuing legal action§. Thus, the battle of copyright versus OA in STEM publishing has taken center stage, and is one of the prime issues of our time in academic publishing. This coupled with black or pirate OA, in the form of wildly successful sites such as Sci-Hub, makes Eisen's message all the more important.

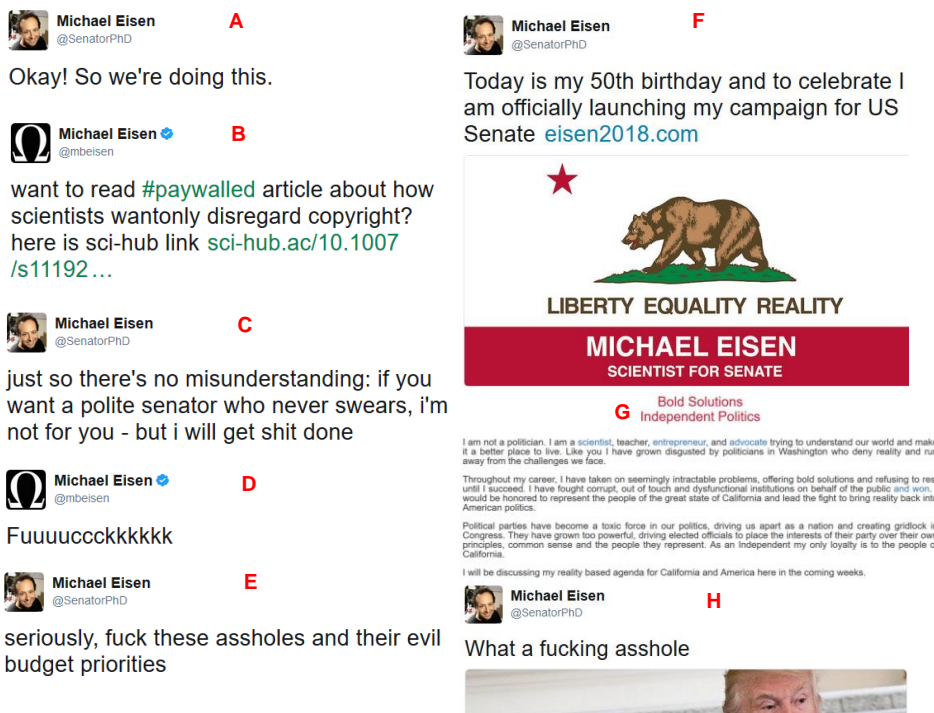


Fig. 1. Eisen's Tweets and post

Notes: Fig. 1. Michael Eisen is a biologist seeking a US Senate seat in California in 2018. His decision was announced by Twitter on January 25, 2017 (A). Using his personal Twitter account, Eisen called publicly to promote the use of the OA pirate website, Sci-Hub (B). Three

* (<https://twitter.com/mbeisen/status/837305142122696704> ("want to read #paywalled article about how scientists wantonly disregard copyright? here is sci-hub link <http://sci-hub.ac/10.1007/s11192-017-2291-4> ..."))

† <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2017/10/06/researchgate-publishers-take-formal-steps-force-copyright-compliance/>

‡ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/10/11/researchgate-bows-publisher-pressure-and-removes-some-papers>

§ <http://www.responsiblesharing.org/2018-04-18-ac-and-elsevier-ask-court-to-clarify-researchgates-copyright-responsibility/>

examples of what appears to be a systemic use of slang and profanity to describe what could be easily described using more politically sensitive language (C-E). Eisen has an anti-government posture (F-H), and is particularly critical of President Donald Trump (H). Sources:

- (A) <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/824321976403513344>
- (B) <https://twitter.com/mbeisen/status/837305142122696704>
- (C) <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/842593032809590784>
- (D) <https://twitter.com/mbeisen/status/844307474152775681>
- (E) <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/842545530269908992>
- (F) <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/852562408316874752>
- (G) <http://www.eisen2018.com/>
- (H) <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/83668711403155457>

Tweet dates: (A) January 25, 2017; (B) March 2, 2017; (C) March 16, 2017; (D) March 21, 2017; (E) March 16, 2017; (F) April 13, 2017; (H) February 28, 2017.

On the same day as that Tweet (i.e., March 2, 2017), I contacted Phil Davis, of TSK, who is the same author of the breaking *PLOS ONE* story, and a strong critic of copyright infringement by Sci-Hub (Davis, 2017), for his opinion. Although he declined to offer formal comment for this paper, he did promise to send out a Tweet about this issue, in response to my request, which he did so on March 6, 2017*. On the same day, Eisen responded on Twitter†. It is not clear if promoting Sci-Hub's affront to copyright holders is the best strategy to dealing with the state of copyrighted knowledge held by these oligopolic publishers. This issue has suddenly taken center stage in 2018, with the newly elected President of the International Publishers Association, Michiel Kolman, of Elsevier, having been elected to this position on January 1, 2017‡, formally declaring battle against pirate OA sites like Sci-Hub in January 2018 at APE (Academic Publishing in Europe) 2018§. The copyright versus black OA battle lines have thus been set, and it is within this context that Eisen's rise to political ambition, pro-Sci-Hub and anti-Elsevier, becomes such an important discussion.

If one day Eisen were to ever clinch the California Senate seat, these Tweets could result in his political downfall because they could be interpreted as a direct support for information piracy and of anti-copyright sites like Sci-Hub, which has been subjected to litigation by Elsevier**. Apart from the legal aspect of downloading copyrighted material from Sci-Hub, which Davis (2017) comments as "no level of illegal downloading is acceptable", it would be difficult for Eisen to argue a morally defensible position, given his own economically superior position, both personally, and in terms of institutional grants and positions.

Slang: Eisen's Achilles' heel 2

It certainly also does not help Eisen's cause and political ambitions to use profanity to explain formal positions, language that the public would not associate with senatorial behavior†† (Fig. 1C). Eisen would probably need to appreciate that some potential voters might be sensitive to such issues, especially his Tweets which John Cohen at *Science* described, in an interview with Eisen on January 27, 2017, as "Eisen's frequent tweets often sizzle"‡‡. In fact, what Cohen was likely referring to, very euphemistically, was the considerable amount of slang and profanity that Eisen uses to express his messages (Fig. 1C-E), when, in fact, simple – and clean and respectful – English could be equally effective in transmitting those ideas. A future political constituency might be more

* <https://twitter.com/ScholarlyChickn/status/838777788589084672> ("Why is US Senate hopeful @mbeisen promoting SciHub?")

† <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/838810943907717120> ("because it's criminal that 25 years into the Internet Age the vast majority of scientific knowledge is locked behind paywalls.")

‡ <https://www.internationalpublishers.org/about-ipa/governance/president-vice-president>

§ <https://publishingperspectives.com/2018/01/ipa-chief-slams-scihub-argues-for-unity-against-scihub-piracy/>

** <http://www.litigationandtrial.com/2016/02/articles/attorney/elsevier-vs-sci-hub/>

†† <https://twitter.com/SenatorPhD/status/842593032809590784> ("just so there's no misunderstanding: if you want a polite senator who never swears, i'm not for you - but i will get shit done.")

‡‡ <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/01/qa-michael-eisen-wants-be-first-evolutionary-biologist-us-senate>

appreciative of a senator that is able to articulate ideas about important issues without having to rely on slang to do so. In a tight senatorial race, it might only be a small difference in the number of votes, or between happy and unsatisfied voters, that differentiates victory from defeat. These concerns have now become real. On April 13, 2017, Eisen Tweeted “Today is my 50th birthday and to celebrate I am officially launching my campaign for US Senate <http://www.eisen2018.com>” (Fig. 1F), confirming his bid for the Senate seat in 2018, and receiving a large number of happy birthday Tweets and Tweets of support. It is curious to note that Eisen uses on his campaign page the Golden State (California) flag for the secessionist movement that seeks to break California away from the rest of the USA, in a movement termed CalExit*.

Finally, Eisen appears to be taking advantage of his political clout and influence to establish new policy for an increasingly politicized movement in science publishing, preprints. In early 2018, Eisen was advocating that the destiny of preprints, as part of his author-driven publishing model, would lie in the hands of a small elite group of specialists, in essence hinting at a post-publication peer review system for preprints – a non-peer-reviewed document – that is not controlled by the oligopolic publishers[†]. As Eisen seeks to expand his political and science-based power and influence, this paper serves as a historical document and reminder that those that listen to the voice, opinion and policy of Eisen and his allies should listen carefully, and cautiously.

Discussion

This paper puts forth several descriptive and empirical suppositions: 1) Are more scientists entering politics? 2) What are the implications or effects of using Twitter in political campaigns? 3) How does encouragement of the use of pirate sites affect the public’s perception of a political candidate? 4) What are the moral or legal implications of would-be politicians if they encourage the use of Sci-Hub in the copyright age? 5) Is the public’s choice of a politician influenced by the use of bad language or slang? 6) How is science affected by these issues? In an attempt to try and address some of these issues, PubMed was searched in order to ascertain how widely these topics had been discussed by academia. A broad discussion follows.

The published literature does not document too many cases of scientists entering the political arena, and even though there have been public calls for scientists to enter politics (e.g., Russo, 2008), there are still not that many high-profile cases. Twitter is increasingly used in political campaigns, primarily by the younger generation (Jungherr, 2016). One reason may be continued focus on the public’s engagement in science (Bensaude Vincent, 2014), but not enough focus on scientists’ engagement in politics. There is also a stigma attached with scientists, a notion that they are not “appropriately” qualified to be politicians (Hsu, Agoramoorthy, 2004), even though they are as or even more qualified, than politicians (Pan, Chiang, 2004). A contemplation of the issue would show that the most appropriate individuals to hold the reigns of science policy would be scientists. Eisen seems to embrace the notion of cosmopolitics, seeking global solutions to common risks (Saito, 2015), in this case the copyright vs OA struggle. Thus, as an example, environmental policy might be best served by environmental scientists who are able to appreciate the intricacies of the issues (Monteiro, Rajão, 2017). Indeed, greater participation of scientists as part of a political structure, either as science advisors or parliamentary science officers, as was suggested for Canada, might advance their needs and aspirations by being able to influence policy, and thus funding (Jones, 2015). Health-related scientists might be better positioned to influence the outcome of health policies if they are involved in politics (Rushton, 2015). And British scientists whose funding may be affected by Brexit (Macilwain, 2017) may be better served if one or more UK scientists hold political sway.

Conclusions

This commentary highlights a crossroad of a few interesting aspects in the information sciences: the rise of a pro-OA activist and prominent biologist, Michael Eisen, to the political arena, the use of Twitter to launch that political campaign, and then the use of the same social medium to promote the direct support for a pirate OA site, Sci-Hub, that has lifted millions of copyrighted texts from the main oligopolic publishers, and others, making them freely available to “everyone”.

* <http://www.yescalifornia.org/>

† <http://asapbio.org/eisen-appraise>

Such Tweets are not censored nor is Eisen's penchant for slang, indicating that "freedom of speech" seems to hold sway, and power, over even potentially career-damaging issues. This small case also highlights that we are truly at the frontier of information science, and in a complex, but fascinating, trajectory of the history of science, information, and publishing. Phil Davis and Michael Eisen were both contacted for comment on March 7, 2017. While Davis responded, Eisen did not.

With the formal launch of the Eisen campaign on January 25, 2017, and with a website (Fig. 1G) on April 13, 2017 (Eisen's 50th birthday) seeking financial donations*, the California electorate would do well to record what has or is being said and what positions are being assumed by Eisen (examples in Fig. 1C-E; 1H) before they elect or reject him, from the US Senate. This is because donations and financial contributions carry with them a moral and ethical weight, baggage that accompanies a senatorial position. As the struggle for science research funding deepens, the representation of scientists' needs by suitably qualified scientists, releasing them from a position of "subordination ... to politics and decision-makers" (Guzzetti, 2016), and placing them within a political position to influence policy, may begin to dominate the discussion.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no financial conflicts of interest.

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* <http://www.eisen2018.com/>

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Abstract

Freedom of speech in academia can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it gives the liberty to express opinions about issues that affect academics, but on the other, such freedoms can also be used against academics, even by other academics. Science finds itself in a state of reform, perhaps even crisis, in which a dense amount of transformational changes are taking place. As the academic playing field transforms itself, one method by which this is taking place is through the correction of the literature via an active process of critical analysis. In peer review, this is generally handled primarily by blinded (i.e., known to the editors) peers, while in a post-publication process, this may also be subjected to anonymous (i.e., unknown identity to authors and editors) critique. One of the more radical end-points of the post-publication process, which may reveal errors or faults, are retractions. Two organizations, Retraction Watch and PubPeer, are leading the way in terms of raising awareness and critique, but are using public shaming to expose science's faults and ills. These science watchdogs have now attracted considerable funding, including from powerful politically-driven US philanthropic foundations. Pressure is placed on scientists and academics by these organizations to be transparent, open and forthcoming about their errors. Scientists should cautiously assess queries made at or by Retraction Watch and PubPeer, directly or indirectly, and reserve their right to offer feedback. This is because what they state in response, either by email or on those blogs, may in fact be used against them on and by these public shaming platforms. The same applies to the blog of Leonid Schneider, another vocal science watchdog. Academia is at a cross-roads between openness and transparency, but at what cost? Academics need to urgently appreciate the importance and risks that Retraction Watch, PubPeer and similar websites pose, before their legends become irreversibly transformed by interaction with such watchdogs. This paper also highlights comment suppression, manipulation or blocking by these science watchdogs, which may indicate a deliberate suppression of freedom of speech.

Keywords: choices, error, fraud, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, philanthropy, post-publication peer review, pressure on academics, public shaming, PubPeer, Retraction Watch.

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Retraction Watch and freedom of speech in journalism

The Retraction Watch blog* is publicly advertised as a platform for “tracking retractions as a window into the scientific process”, even though it frequently deviates from this stated objective. Freedom of speech is offered special protection by the First Amendment of the United States (US) Constitution (Kanovitz, 2010), and journalists rely heavily on wide privileges based on this freedom to explore and express their ideas freely. Such is the case with Retraction Watch whose parent organization, The Center for Science Integrity Inc. (CSI†), is based in New York, in the CSI President’s apartment. The CSI President, Ivan Oransky, and the CSI secretary, Adam Marcus, together with their staff of journalists, have used this journalistic freedom of speech to critically assess a specialized sector of science publishing, namely retractions. However, unlike what is stated as the organizational motto and in the website banner, much more than retractions are assessed. Indeed, there is much to criticize about current academic structures and the sustainability of the scientific and biomedical publishing industry, such as excessive profits at the expense of the exploitation of academics‡, and there are most definitely multiple ills that are now being discovered in this sector. Therefore, an understanding and discussion of these problems is welcomed, by Retraction Watch and by others. Such an understanding can be achieved when there is a broad base that allows for critical discovery, by scientists, journalists, or others, and the freedom to express ideas when such a platform is provided, as is the case at Retraction Watch, where reader commenting is allowed, albeit subject to moderation policies§. However, it is important to set defined parameters between criticism or critical analysis and public shaming, an issue that Retraction Watch has (conveniently) not addressed publicly. To what extent do scientists have to be held accountable to the CSI and its journalists, and should their right to silence be interpreted as opacity if they do not consider the CSI to be a valid academic or ethical entity? Academia, in this volatile period, is seeking to find answers and solutions to multiple problems, and finding a balance between the exploration of the topic of retractions, and the critical assessment of the current academic establishment, is challenging.

Prior to the creation of the CSI by Oransky, apparently in 2014**, the author has the personal experience that commenting was fairly liberal at Retraction Watch. However, after the CSI obtained funding from US philanthropic organizations, comment moderation became stricter, with fewer comments being approved or with fewer opinionated comments allowed. This suggests that freedom of speech by academics on the Retraction Watch blog was and is being curtailed, or excessively moderated. The CSI has now received over 1 million US\$ in funding after obtaining 501(c)3†† status in 2015, although several specific details regarding the balance sheets remain obscure. The largest donors are the Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF‡‡), the MacArthur Foundation§§, and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust***. It is now known that the LJAF – led by an ex-Enron executive, John Arnold – has a publicly stated and established agenda against “bad science”†††. However, in this challenging academic climate, it is difficult to distinguish policies and/or opinions that are anti-science or anti-bad science. Does Retraction Watch, by publicly profiling specific case studies of individual scientists, editors, journals, or publishers, or by collectively clumping them in their retraction database, in any way entrap innocent academics that might not be directly involved with the published Retraction Watch reports?

Journalists, especially in the digital era, are supposed to espouse moral and professional values that comply with established stated journalistic codes of conduct (Díaz-Campo, Segado-Boj,

* <http://retractionwatch.com/>

† <http://retractionwatch.com/the-center-for-scientific-integrity/>

‡ <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jun/27/profitable-business-scientific-publishing-bad-for-science>

§ <http://retractionwatch.com/the-retraction-watch-faq/> (see “Why was my comment not approved?”)

** <http://retractionwatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2015-990.pdf>

†† [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/501\(c\)_organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/501(c)_organization)

‡‡ <http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/>

§§ <https://www.macfound.org/>

*** <http://www.helmsleytrust.org/>

††† <https://www.wired.com/2017/01/john-arnold-waging-war-on-bad-science>

2015). This includes aspects such as open and respectful dialogue and discussion. However, the truncation of perfectly valid comments at Retraction Watch that are respectful in tone, and directly relevant to the discussion at hand, may constitute a violation of readers' first amendment rights, at least in US standards, and thus an abuse of moderation policies. Figure 1 highlights five randomly selected comments from dozens of comments made by the author of this paper that were not approved for publication by Retraction Watch, despite their direct relevance to the topic at hand. It is possible that personal and/or professional animosity between the author and the CSI leadership (see stated conflicts of interest (COIs)) may have a role to play, but this does not remove the fact that the author's first amendment rights have been forcefully truncated, and violated, by Retraction Watch. Have other academics experienced a similar situation?

A

Why was my comment not approved?

We are huge fans of Retraction Watch commenters. They broaden our posts, send us tips, and correct us when we get things wrong. Without them, the site would be a shadow of itself. However, we have recently found ourselves having to edit ad hominem attacks out of comments, unapprove other comments, and contact some commenters to remind them of what's appropriate.

It may not be clear to those who feel the need to resort to such personal attacks that they destroy the discourse that we and others have worked so hard to build on Retraction Watch, but it is abundantly clear to us and many others. The same goes for unfounded allegations and unverified facts.

We will not tolerate these sorts of attacks, allegations, and unverified facts — a category that includes speculation, whether about what might have happened, or about the mindset of the people involved. We will not edit comments, and will not approve any that contain material that violates this policy, even if it is a small part of a larger comment. While that means useful information may not be posted if it is included in a comment that violates these guidelines, users are welcome to rewrite comments so that they conform to our policy. They are also welcome to contact us — using the email addresses provided in our About pages — to ask why a given comment was not approved. If instead they choose to leave a comment asking why another was not approved, we may respond, time permitting, provided that they used a working email address.

B



Jaime A. Teixeira da Silva March 15, 2016 at 11:38 pm

I would like to make three suggestions because it takes time to research, discover and report retractions that RW has not yet covered, or is not yet aware of. Time that commentators spend will be time that RW saves, so there needs to be a compensation, not monetarily, but in terms of recognition and official thanks.

The first suggestion is that RW should at least add a hat tip, even to anonymous contributors. Otherwise it looks as if RW takes all the credit for these discoveries. The entries already made above should thus also be updated to reflect the identity of the person making the report. As a reader, I would like to know who make those reports. If commentators do not want to be thanked, then they should have this choice, but this fact should also be officially indicated.

The second suggestion I would like to make is to add a date when the report was made.

Finally, I suggest organizing the list into some visible structure, for example an alphabetic list of topics, otherwise it becomes simply a meaningless list for the public, but only a free and useful real-time alert system for RW and its staff. If the list is small, the public can scan it for possibly interesting or useful entries, but what happens if the list has 100 or 1000 entries? It becomes impossible to navigate, so there needs to be a somewhat strict structure, e.g. Agriculture, Cancer, Ecology, Hydrology, Plants, Zoology, etc.

I know that I would be able to make a significant contribution, but I would probably only be interested if my efforts were at least recognized officially by RW. The community can be useful in this exercise, but the issue of recognition and organization should be addressed first.

Comment awaiting moderation.

C



Anonymous March 15, 2016 at 11:56 pm

This paper has been retracted, but the fact that it is a retracted paper is not immediately clear when one observes the web-site, only when one opens the PDF file. There is no formal retraction notice and there is no formal explanation why the paper was retracted. Cambridge University Press is a COPE member, but these do not seem to be COPE-compliant retraction measures.

Comment awaiting moderation.

D



Jesus Verde March 22, 2016 at 2:05 pm

This researcher submitted a manuscript to my journal exactly one year ago, listing 10 co-authors. When I asked him to provide email addresses for the co-authors, he gave me 10 email addresses comprised of variations on his name at yahoo or gmail. I told him this was fishy and asked for their institutional emails. I haven't heard back.

Link Quote

Reply

Hide the reply to **Jesus Verde's** comment



Anonymous March 22, 2016 at 2:27 pm

Jesus Verde, when I Googled "Jesus Verde editor board", nothing came up. What journal are you referring to?

Comment awaiting moderation.

E



Anonymous November 7, 2016 at 8:33 pm

Full unedited text still available here:

<http://imsear.li.mahidol.ac.th/bitstream/123456789/141067/1/ijdv12012v78n2p229-5.pdf>

Comment awaiting moderation.

F



Jaime A. Teixeira da Silva November 11, 2016 at 11:20 am

This paper may be of interest to some:

Teixeira da Silva, J.A., Bornemann-Ciment, H. (2016) Why do some retracted papers continue to be cited? *Scientometrics*

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11192-016-2178-9>

DOI: 10.1007/s11192-016-2178-9

Comment awaiting moderation.

Fig. 1. Five randomly selected comments

Notes: Fig. 1 Evidence of five randomly selected comments made between March and November of 2016 that are directly relevant to the topic being discussed, or potentially useful to the public and readers. These comments, which seem to be academically valid, respectful and tone-sensitive, were not approved by Retraction Watch, without any explanation, reasoning, or justification. This action by Retraction Watch appears to be in violation of, or inconsistent with, its own written and established commenting policies (A). The lack of approval of these comments constitutes a violation of freedom of speech, in direct violation of the United States First Amendment Rights, which apply to Retraction Watch, whose parent organization, the Center for Scientific Integrity Inc. (CSI), is based in New York. All comments were made by the author and are only visible to the commentator but invisible to the public, except for approved and published comments. Some comments were made anonymously (C, D, E), whereas others were made by name, i.e., signed (B, F). Red arrows indicate the unapproved (awaiting moderation) status. Even though the author suspects that comments were not approved, possibly because of potential conflicts of interest, such conflicts are not a stated reason for not having comments approved (see A). Relevance of comments to Retraction Watch posts: Retraction Watch specifically asks, in the title of this post "Want to help us report?", but then does not approve some reasonable suggestions made about how academics could assist and support Retraction Watch, while receiving correct and due recognition for their efforts (B); the website of this

Cambridge University Press (CUP) journal's retraction does not indicate to the public that this paper has been retracted, and which was highlighted by Retraction Watch, and which is not a COPE policy for retractions, even though CUP is a COPE member, a fact that my comment indicated (C); a commentator claiming to be "Jesus Verde" making independently unverifiable claims in the comment section could not be traced on Google or on major publishers' data-bases (D); the fact that this paper was retracted for privacy concerns, but the fact that a Google search reveals that a Thai university still had an uploaded, publicly available copy in PDF format seems to be a very important issue relevant to the readers, journal and publisher (E); this blog post involves an interview with Elizabeth Wager about the citation of retracted papers, and the comment posted was to direct readers to a paper I had just published precisely on this topic, and that I felt would be of direct use and relevance to the discussion. Incidentally, Elizabeth Wager is a former COPE Chair (2009-2012) and a co-Director of Retraction Watch's parent organization, the CSI.* Retraction Watch readers and the public can only assume, and expect, that comment moderation policies, and violations, are also the responsibility of the CSI Board of Directors.

Sources and URLs: <http://retractionwatch.com/the-retraction-watch-faq/> (A); <http://retractionwatch.com/2016/03/15/heres-a-sneak-peek-at-what-were-working-on/#comment-988749> (B); <http://retractionwatch.com/2016/03/15/another-paper-by-gm-researcher-pulled-over-manipulation-concerns/#comment-988757> (C); <http://retractionwatch.com/2016/03/21/environmental-journal-pulls-two-papers-for-compromised-peer-review/#comment-994049> (D); <http://retractionwatch.com/2016/11/07/family-decries-publication-of-childs-picture-in-open-access-journal/#comment-1174112> (E); <http://retractionwatch.com/2016/11/01/what-should-you-do-if-a-paper-youve-cited-is-later-retracted/#comment-1177999> (F).

Dates of screenshots: September 16, 2017 (A); March 15, 2016 (B); March 15, 2016 (C); March 22, 2016 (D); November 7, 2016 (E); November 11, 2016 (F).

Why is this issue so central to this paper? Most of the argument about why science or academia is in a state of crisis relates to the lack of transparency and openness, often a result of the inability to hold an open dialogue, or the opacity displayed by one or more parties. Thus, the inability of academics to express clear, relevant and respectful opinions about topics that are relevant to other academics in the comment section of the Retraction Watch blog, which was created precisely for this purpose, is of great concern. An excuse offered by Oransky is that staff is short on time and resources for comment verification and moderation, despite the massive pool of funding. However, comment moderation is apparently controlled exclusively by Oransky himself. One result of excessive comment moderation is a chilling effect on freedom of speech, i.e., the inability to express ideas related to the blog posts and engage in fruitful and passionate debate on topics of importance to academics on the same platform, i.e., academics would then have to establish their own platforms, blogs, etc. to express their views, diluting or decentralizing the conversation. Another fairly obvious reason for reducing the freedom of speech of readers through limited commenting is to limit criticisms about Retraction Watch, its reporting, the CSI, its directors, or its funders. Avoiding criticism reduces the risk of litigation and negative publicity that is associated with the culture of public shaming being employed by Retraction Watch.

Profiling by the science watchdogs Retraction Watch and PubPeer

To a sector of academics, editors or publishers that are profiled by Retraction Watch, a negative image and impression is created of that individual or organization being profiled, simply by being associated with that blog. This is because profiling at Retraction Watch is also an act of public shaming, which was denounced by Susan Fiske, the former President of the American Psychological Society (Fiske, 2016), and even by the former Chair of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Virginia Barbour, ironically at Retraction Watch[†]. Despite the informative nature of many Retraction Watch reports, the association of most scientists whose errors or retractions are profiled at Retraction Watch automatically creates a negative image of them, except on rare

* <http://retractionwatch.com/the-center-for-scientific-integrity/board-of-directors/>

[†] <http://retractionwatch.com/2017/03/23/agreed-listen-complaint-paper-harassment-began/> ("Vilifying authors or editors with public humiliation – driven often by a crowd mentality – seems to be what some in this arena want. As one tweeter said (hopefully ironically)– a "public lashing" may even be expected. We strongly refute this way of thinking. With such a climate it is hard to see how we could ever develop a culture of no blame correction, which is a prerequisite for a reliable published record.")

occasions, for example, in the “doing the right thing” category*. The creation of this category by Retraction Watch implies that those who do not appear on this list are not doing the right thing. In many cases, co-authors of the targets of profiling at Retraction Watch may be innocent bystanders, for example co-authors of multi-author papers, as even exemplified by Retraction Watch†, or editors associated with a journal profiled by Retraction Watch, but who have been negatively labeled, directly or indirectly, by this culture of collective profiling and public shaming, i.e., guilt by association. Googling the name of academics who have been profiled by Retraction Watch shows that their names appear listed higher than positive aspects of that person or their career, most likely because of the powerful search optimization ability of WordPress – the platform used by Retraction Watch to host its blog – to be trawled by Google spiders or “bots”‡. So, a powerful structure has been set up in which public shaming can be easily achieved, having a potentially disastrous effect on a scientist’s reputation and career, even within a short space of time, and even if the Retraction Watch blog post describing their academic predicament may have been shallow, or biased (i.e., imbalanced). One blog describes Retraction Watch as “toxic scientific journalism”§, but the true identity of that blogger is unclear, as are his/her potential COIs. Curiously, during submission of this paper to Springer Nature’s *Journal of Academic Ethics*, which subsequently rejected the paper, peer reviewer 2 had the following to say about Retraction Watch: “Authors deserve kudos for their timely write-up on this draconian handling of so-called ‘retractions’ by laymen who do not understand the deeper workings of the scientific process”, “The researcher community is vulnerable and lacks the political and economic clout to tackle these self-appointed governors of science”, and “Hopefully, articles like these stimulate the scientists to fight together and take a united stance against high handedness of the pseudojournalists.”

This new-found boom-to-bust property of science and academia (Teixeira da Silva et al., 2016) became prominent in 2014-2016 with the rise of Retraction Watch and PubPeer**, the latter being an equally potent post-publication peer review site/blog and science watchdog (Teixeira da Silva, 2016a). Retraction Watch used to apply a draconian pressure-induced 24-hour deadline to respond to queries, leaving the “accused” (aka interviewed) academic or entity little time to reflect, and formulate a carefully balanced opinion and response to the accusations being leveled at them. This policy appears to have changed in recent times, but readers of Retraction Watch are not privy to a full or balanced background to each published blog post. This pressure-induced form of shaming click-bait-based journalism fortifies the risks of placing blind trust in the hands of journalists who then assume the self-appointed role as science watchdogs and then assume that, based on social media popularity, that they are automatically ethicists of sorts.

Has Retraction Watch twisted the rights to freedom of speech by strictly controlling, i.e., exceeding moderation? Public shaming – the core operating principle behind Retraction Watch (Oransky, Marcus, 2016) – by a science-smear blog that purportedly claims to seek academic righteousness through increased transparency and accountability, is currently operating on a basis of unfair and/or biased comment moderation, reducing the opportunity by those being profiled to respond freely to accusations being made, to offer a public defense, or to offer their views on the issue, i.e., the science journalism offered by Retraction Watch is manipulative. So, despite its informative nature, Retraction Watch appears to be violating at least two basic ethical principles of journalism, namely fairness and impartiality††. The excuse used by Retraction Watch that there is insufficient funding or human resources thus no longer applies. Either that, or funding by the philanthropic organizations has been grossly mismanaged. How then do academia and the public hold Retraction Watch accountable for comments that have been unfairly unapproved, excessively moderated, or manipulated, especially when the public is unaware that this is taking place? There is one upside to stricter moderation, namely that vigilantes (Blatt, 2015; Teixeira da Silva, 2016b),

* <http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-reason-for-retraction/doing-the-right-thing/>

† <http://retractionwatch.com/2018/01/11/devastated-researchers-worry-co-authors-use-fake-reviews-hurt-careers/>

‡ https://codex.wordpress.org/Search_Engine_Optimization_for_WordPress

§ <https://sciencetransactions.wordpress.com/2014/12/13/retraction-watch-toxic-scientific-journalism-for-the-wild-web/>

** <https://www.pubpeer.com/>

†† <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/who-we-are/5-principles-of-journalism>

or more radical and impassioned comments, are largely left out of the blog's discussion board, and these tend to be ventilated elsewhere such as on other blogs, social media such as Twitter, or PubPeer, although the latter has also adopted a stricter comment moderation policy, most likely also as a result of having received funding from the LJAF for 2016-2019*. This link between Retraction Watch and PubPeer†, which also constitutes a blatant financial COI, is rarely publicly or openly acknowledged by either organization.

Authors' rights in increasingly militarized academia

What rights do authors and academics have in a system that is increasingly becoming more militarized (i.e., draconian) (Teixeira da Silva, 2016c), and whose freedoms and rights are being increasingly curtailed (Al-Khatib, Teixeira da Silva, 2017)? Even ethical charters that were created to offer protections to authors, such as COPE, cut academics out of the conversation by not considering their grievances related to COPE member journals or publishers (Teixeira da Silva, 2017a). An argument that Retraction Watch and its supporters and allies, including Brandon Stell, PubPeer's co-founder‡, use is that publicly funded research belongs to the public and that, as a result, academics who receive such funding are at the public's mercy. Thus, if they are not willing to be publicly scrutinized or respond publicly to criticisms, then they should not publish in the first place (Oransky, Marcus, 2016). However, why should academics have to answer to Retraction Watch or PubPeer, i.e., what morally or ethically superior standing do these organizations, or their leadership, have that give them the right to demand responses from academics, editors or publishers, and do these entities that they profile not have the right to silence?

Public profiling and screening of academia is now rife on these sites, including on the Leonid Schneider blog "for better science"§, and the Retraction Watch retraction database** provides a potentially discriminative platform. For example, co-authors of a paper in which one author may have been singled out for misconduct, or error, will all automatically be labelled with the same category, by mere association, i.e., collective shaming. One example, Carlo M. Croce of Ohio State University, who in 2017 was ranked 19th on the Google *h*-index list†† – even higher than Albert Einstein who was ranked at 1491st position – and who sued the New York Times for defamation‡‡, has multiple papers – currently 24 – listed on this Retraction Watch retraction database, which also includes, despite not being retractions, corrections and expressions of concern. Academics are apparently not yet questioning why the latter two categories of errata are being archived by Retraction Watch on its "retraction" database, and what image is being projected of co-authors – in some cases more than a dozen in Croce's papers – who may have absolutely nothing to do with the issues plaguing such papers. Retraction Watch's counter-argument might be that one of the responsibilities of all co-authors of a paper is "Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved"§§, and thus shaming of one author is applicable to all co-authors, who share collective responsibility for the published work. How does a researcher like Croce – or co-authors associated with this public shaming – deal with profiles created for and about them by Retraction Watch*** and PubPeer†††? This issue merits urgent discussion since the number of authors profiled by Retraction Watch rose sharply from 31 in April, 2015 to 764 on September 11, 2017 (Figure 2), i.e., public profiling and shaming is intensifying. Both Retraction Watch and PubPeer are vociferously trying to promote this new culture in academia, with solid

* <http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/grants/> (listed under "Research Integrity")

† <http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-journal/pubpeer-selections/>

‡ http://www.biomedicale.parisdescartes.fr/physiocer/?page_id=2983

§ <https://forbetterscience.com/>

** <http://retractiondatabase.org/RetractionSearch.aspx>

†† <http://www.webometrics.info/en/node/58>

‡‡ <http://retractionwatch.com/2017/09/08/carlo-croce-ohio-state-researcher-facing-misconduct-allegations-suing-new-york-times-defamation/>

§§ <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

*** <http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-author/>

††† <https://www.pubpeer.com/search?q=Croce> (readers are cautioned that other academics with the surname "Croce" may also be listed, and not only Carlo M. Croce)

financial support by philanthropic organizations such as the LJAF, among others.



Fig. 2. Number of profiled and shamed authors

Notes: Fig. 2 In just two years, at Retraction Watch, a science-shaming science watchdog blog, the number of profiled and mostly shamed authors, indicated by red ovals, has risen exponentially from 31 in April of 2015 to 764 in September of 2017. Sources and URLs: [https://web.archive.org/web/20150424174050/http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-author/\(A\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20150424174050/http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-author/(A)); [http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-author/\(B\)](http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-author/(B)). Date of screenshots: September 11, 2017 (A, B).

The greater danger of this mission is that it is also being projected as an “open science” or “open data” quest, such that public profiling and shaming are becoming equated with openness and transparency. This is reinforced by the fact that the Retraction Watch database was developed and built by the Center for Open Science (COS)*, headed by Brian Nosek, a partnership that began in late 2015†. COS also receives funding from the LJAF, approximately US\$ 17.6 million from 2013-2019‡ (Figure 3).

Correction of errors is under intense scrutiny and pressure

In the scientific literature, errors should no doubt be corrected, but through what channels should this take place, and following what procedures? Should academics consider Retraction Watch and PubPeer to be valid keepers of the integrity of the published literature, and who would be responsible for conferring such a privileged status to these organizations? An argument made by Blatt (2015) is that a pitchfork culture, or a discussion based on coercion, as is espoused by

* <https://cos.io/>

† <https://cos.io/about/news/center-open-science-and-center-scientific-integrity-announce-partnership/>

‡ <http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/grants/>

A	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2013 - 2015	\$204,729	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2013 - 2017	\$5,250,000	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2013 - 2017	\$250,000	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2013 - 2017	\$1,926,750	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2014 - 2017	\$528,500	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2014 - 2017	\$589,690	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2015 - 2016	\$77,952	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2015 - 2018	\$77,310	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2015 - 2019	\$1,225,000	↓
	Center for Open Science, Inc.	2016 - 2018	\$7,500,000	↓
B	The Center for Scientific Integrity, Inc.	2015 - 2017	\$300,000	↑
To support the expansion of Retraction Watch, an online website and database that promotes transparency and integrity in scientific research.				
C	The PubPeer Foundation	2016 - 2019	\$412,800	↑
To provide general operating support.				

Fig. 3. Funding sources to Retraction Watch and PubPeer

Notes: Fig. 3 The Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF), which also finances Retraction Watch and PubPeer, including their shaming policies, has also injected approximately US\$ 17.6 million into the Nosek-headed Center for Open Science from 2013-2019 (A), thereby solidifying the notion that open science cannot progress without public shaming. Retraction Watch's CSI (The Center for Scientific Integrity, Inc.) and The PubPeer Foundation received US\$ 300,000 (B) and US\$ 412,000 (C), respectively from the LJAF. Source: <http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/grants/> (under "Research Integrity")

Oransky and Marcus* (Teixeira da Silva, 2017b), is not conducive to offering a fair and/or balanced discussion, especially if one party wears an anonymous mask. This is because one side prods without scrutiny while the scrutinized party is prodded without fair recourse to defense, or is not offered an opportunity of defense under the biased moderation policies in place at Retraction Watch and PubPeer. A classic case that shows the legal (defamatory) risk of anonymous critique of the published literature is of Paul S. Brookes[†] of the University of Rochester Medical Center, who was ousted as the mastermind behind science-fraud.org[‡], a site that was forced to shut down by legal threats, and where Brookes often blatantly associated errors made by scientists with fraud (Pain, 2014). Pro-Retraction Watch and -PubPeer proponents such as Brookes (Brookes, 2014) will likely counter-argue that the identity of the commentator is not important, to evade responsibility for them, and that factually accurate statements, even if they cast the individual or organization

* <https://www.statnews.com/2017/04/06/research-parasite-award-data-analysis/> ("We agree that collaboration is better than coercion. But that's the whole point: We need coercion precisely because so many scientists are loath to collaborate on any terms other than their own, if at all.")

[†] <http://www.psblab.org/>; <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/people/23781238=researchers>

[‡] <http://www.science-fraud.org/>; partially archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20170719031229/http://www.science-fraud.org/>

being profiled in a negative light, cannot be considered to be accusatory, or defamatory, even if they are shamed. This is largely the argument that Leonid Schneider offers, despite appealing two court decisions that provisionally found him guilty of libel, a decision that he is challenging*.

However, do those who have been profiled on these platforms feel the same way? Thus, sites like Retraction Watch and PubPeer may be serving as accusatory platforms that attempt to force the hand of academics, editors or publishers to offer an explanation and thus force errata, corrections, or retractions. And in some cases, such actions may have irreparable consequences for authors and the publisher†. Does forceful or pressured public pressure that results from public profiling and shaming, in order to extract a response, or that results in a retraction, constitute duress‡? If so, is this in the true academic spirit of correcting the scientific literature (Teixeira da Silva, 2016d)? Such corrections and retractions, which are increasingly emerging as a result of whistle-blowing taking place at PubPeer, then feed into the Retraction Watch blog, and then archived in the COS-supported retraction database thus serving as a powerful link between these three organizations, the CSI, the PubPeer Foundation and COS, with communal LJAF funding. The issue of anonymous whistle-blowing, as part of the post-publication peer review and academic integrity, has been poorly debated, and little published literature exists on this topic.

The shaming factor behind hidden masks

Being profiled at or by Retraction Watch and PubPeer is an act of shaming because faults, errors, or retractions – all negative aspects, but several of which may be made in genuine error – are pointed out with limited background context, and without pointing out any positive aspects of the individuals or organizations being profiled, i.e., they are unbalanced. Therefore, readers of any blog post at Retraction Watch or entry at PubPeer are mostly left with a negative and skewed impression of the individual or organization being profiled. The fact that comments are unfairly moderated, or not published at all, as exemplified in Figure 1, fortifies the notion that recourse to a fair, open and transparent rebuttal (i.e., a possible kangaroo court§ where the accused is “guilty” by mere association and listing in a crude and unfair mass trial) is not always possible on these platforms. Discussion is thus truncated and controlled at Retraction Watch while the identity of the PubPeer moderator remains unknown, with cryptic clues left as to his/her identity via Twitter**. Those in defense of Retraction Watch may say that this is simply a sensationalist facet of journalism, and that shaming and critical analysis would go hand in hand in post-publication peer review (Galbraith, 2015). However, it is likely that those who have been profiled at or by PubPeer or Retraction Watch would offer a very different perspective. In extreme cases such as data fabrication or outright fraud, when proved after a thorough institutional investigation, public shaming could in fact have a useful effect, and maybe serve as a deterrent. In such a system, the message would be that if you cheat, you may be publicly profiled and shamed.

Retraction Watch and PubPeer appear to offer special and exceptional support and protection to pseudonymous (Teixeira da Silva, 2017c) and anonymous critics such as *Clare Francis*††, *fernandopessoa*, *Neuroskeptic*, *Smut Clyde* and/or *herr doktor bimler*, who may themselves have hidden agendas and COIs, and who may or may not be the same individuals, i.e., sock-puppetry. However, since their true identities are masked, it would be impossible to make a fair and balanced assessment whether their critiques on these sites is fair and free of COIs. On these sites, since parties are first shamed, and then only given an opportunity to rebut the claims made, if at all, the presumption of innocence until proved guilty is annulled, i.e., there is an almost automatic presumption of guilt by association. So, as an example, if there is an error as a duplicated figure, incorrectly attributed text (possibly plagiarism) that is profiled at or by Retraction Watch and/or PubPeer, it immediately creates an automatic association with

* <https://twitter.com/schneiderleonid/status/949994610734051329>

† <http://info.cmsri.org/blog/has-snoyes-been-snoyed-will-retraction-watch-retract>

‡ <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Duress> (defined as “Unlawful pressure exerted upon a person to coerce that person to perform an act that he or she ordinarily would not perform”)

§ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangaroo_court

** <https://twitter.com/PubPeer/status/853005531572834304>;

<https://twitter.com/PubPeer/status/852949240892588034> (as two examples)

†† [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clare_Francis_\(science_critic\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clare_Francis_(science_critic))

misconduct, or guilt because that is what these sites have come to symbolize. This negative association may result in automatic reputational damage. Are Retraction Watch and PubPeer in fact about correcting the literature or are they about shaming academics, editors and publishers as the core modus operandus to correct the literature? The notion that there is an almost automatic association between errors and fraud was fortified in an interview given to the Canadian media, Quebec Science, in which Oransky was described as a some sort of a superhero tracking “illegal” (i.e., fraudulent) scientists*.

Philanthropy and ethics in the mix

So, if Retraction Watch and PubPeer moderate out valid academic comments (e.g., Figure 1), share communal and substantial funding from at least one philanthropic organization without transparently indicating precisely how this funding is being used, and leave academics’ reputations stained even before they have had an opportunity to respond, then what is the correct procedure to deal with these issues? Formal bodies that should investigate claims of misconduct or oversee the effectiveness of the process related to possible errors or claims of misconduct are inconsistently failing their responsibilities, such as COPE (Teixeira da Silva, 2017a) and COPE member editors or journals, despite new punitive measures for non-compliant COPE members[†], leading Retraction Watch, PubPeer and other science watchdogs to take a more critical and liberal stand. A possible argument, which is valid, could be that they are filling in a gap of the need for science watchdogs which currently does not exist. Thus, authors are in many ways the victims of a dysfunctional system that failed quality control at many levels during traditional peer review, but are now also victims of a new culture of public shaming. Is there a middle ground to this situation and how can Retraction Watch and PubPeer be held more accountable? If academics stay silent, they may be accused of avoiding to deal with the issues presented publicly, even by masked individuals, but if they respond, their actions and even words may be used against them, i.e., to shame them (e.g., Oransky, Marcus, 2016). To avoid a fallout and become another boom-to-bust case, academics may seek to do the right thing, and issue errata, corrigenda or retractions. Such a process should be a simple, straightforward and natural part of publishing, and should not be associated with shame. However, by introducing the shaming factor, possibly with a punitive objective, as occurs in many cases at Retraction Watch and PubPeer, the process is neither fair nor balanced, and may have negative scarring psychological effects (Pinto-Gouveia et al., 2014). Post-publication peer review, as a natural part of the publishing process, has only truly begun to be recognized as a natural need of publishing in the past few years (Teixeira da Silva, 2015). So, it is likely that this initial phase of transition will incur victims and clashes, some of them physically aggressive (Oransky, 2014a), some of them tragic (Oransky, 2014b), and some of them legal challenges, such as to Retraction Watch (e.g., Marcus, 2013) and PubPeer (Teixeira da Silva, 2018).

Perception and pressure are important aspects of the Retraction Watch and PubPeer mission to achieve “success”. These organizations have tapped into unique unexplored niches and have received considerable philanthropic funding as a result. However, with money comes increased responsibility and the need to be fully transparent, allowing the public and academia to be critical of these organizations. In Doshi (2015), Oransky is on record stating that “transparency is vital”, silence is part of the “typical scientific playbook”, and “[i]t has certainly been our experience that journals and researchers and institutions can be incredibly stubborn about failing to retract a paper, about ignoring calls, or not responding favourably to calls to retract.” However, if placed under pressure, if freedom of speech is only partially allowed, and if the outcome of an interview (e.g., by email) may result in public shaming or profiling, which academic would want to speak out at or against Retraction Watch and PubPeer? An extreme case of this new culture of shaming and public castigation takes the form of the Retraction Watch leaderboard[‡].

Conclusions

The fields of publishing ethics and reform are in a highly volatile and fluid state at present. The current publishing platforms are imperfect, and many as-yet undisclosed and undiscovered

* <http://www.quebecscience.qc.ca/actualites/homme-qui-traque-les-scientifiques-hors-la-loi>

† <http://retractionwatch.com/2017/12/19/official-journals-behave-badly-punishment/>

‡ <http://retractionwatch.com/the-retraction-watch-leaderboard/>

errors and faults likely exist. Sites such as Retraction Watch and PubPeer have identified these weaknesses, and have explored them to raise awareness and expand the discussion. In general, this is a good thing. However, the manner in which they operate does not encourage the majority of academics to want to engage voluntarily or to correct faulty literature because they may be publicly profiled and shamed, because what they do or say tends to be used against them, and because association with these sites is almost an automatic association with misconduct or guilt. Editors or publishers* who feel constantly negatively profiled by Retraction Watch and PubPeer might not perceive these organizations to be a positive and constructive force in academia's reform, despite their rapid rise to the status of "ethicists" or publishing "specialists", as exemplified by the presence of the Retraction Watch and PubPeer leadership in many ethics and related meetings, such as the 2017 5th World Conference on Research Integrity[†]. As these organizations gain traction and begin to become part of ethics and publishing policy-making, seeking political power and gains through government-based recognition, for example serving as "expert witnesses" of scientific integrity[‡], academics need to assess them critically and place pressure when aspects of these platforms may appear to be infringing upon authors' rights. Initially starting as hobbies, Retraction Watch and PubPeer have become registered companies with a charitable status, attracting sizeable funding, so the issue of a financial COI will now always exist. Academics must learn to be able to hold these organizations in check as they gain increased status, power of policy making, and influence.

Disclaimer and conflicts of interest

The author is not associated with any academic institute, blog or web-site. The author was profiled by Retraction Watch and PubPeer. The author has been banned from commenting on the Leonid Schneider blog and on PubPeer, as a signed commentator in the latter case. In the case of Retraction Watch, no comments have been approved for publication in 2017, suggesting that the author has also been banned from commenting at Retraction Watch.

Abbreviations: COI, conflict of interest; COPE, Committee on Publication Ethics; COS, Center for Open Science; CSI, The Center for Science Integrity Inc.; LJAF, Laura and John Arnold Foundation.

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* <http://retractionwatch.com/category/by-publisher/> (top two publishers profiled by Retraction Watch: Elsevier = 598 entries; Springer Nature = 334 entries; data accurate on September 16, 2017)

† <http://wcri2017.org/07fa5bb9f2b74830a7c18326c32538d5?platform=hootsuite> (Ivan Oransky and Boris Barbour represented)

‡ <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/science-and-technology-committee/research-integrity/written/48704.html>

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Articles and Statements

Stages of Naval Education Development in Ukraine (the 18th Century – Latter Half of the 20th Century)

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Abstract

This article substantiates the very notion of the term “periodization”. Based on analyzed sources, periodization of military-naval education in Ukraine was developed from the beginning of the 18th century to the latter half of the 20th century. The historical events that took place in this development are described in six stages. The first stage is the pre-Peter epoch (from the beginning of navigation to 1701). In this stage, the attainment of knowledge, skills and experience by sailors took place in the process of practical activity that corresponded to the content level of their trade. The second stage also marked the generation of the net of educational institutions for training fleet specialists. 1701 is considered by most scientists as the year of signing the “Highest Order” that founded military-naval education. This period commenced the opening of the first military-naval school, together with the creation of regular Russian fleet at the “Northern war”. The third stage of the development of military-naval education (1798–1877) is connected with specialization of training of fleet officers at the expense of differentiation of military-naval educational institutions. The beginning of the fourth stage (1877–1917) introduced the formation of multi-level military-naval system and naval technical education. This gave rise to additional professional education for re-training and staff professional development. The fifth stage of the military-naval education development brought the reproduction of the system of military-naval education (1918 – early 1950-ies). This phase is also brought the opening of the schools for fleet commanding staff. It is notable that the first military-naval educational institution of the Soviet period was built in 1918. Finally, the sixth stage introduced the creation of the remaining specialized educational institutions of the Navy (50–90-ies of the 20th century). Historians have characterised it as the deepening of scientific and technological education. Clearly, this gave rise to an increase in engineering and atomic nuclear science development.

Keywords: development stages, educational institutions, historical events, military-naval education, periodization.

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Introduction

It is commonly known from numerous sources that maritime education has come an exciting and complicated way. Starting from seafarers' training at vocational schools in the 18th century through to well-organized, multi-level system of professional education in the 21st century (Davy, Noh, 2016; Ryabukha, 2018). Though the priorities of maritime training in Ukraine were determined with regard to society development tendencies and scientific knowledge, they were always based on the previous successful experience (Bezlutska, 2017). The analysis of scientific references showed that a great attention was paid to the periodization of naval education development, though there is still a definite sphere for studies.

Periodization has been defined by academic literature as a method of classifying different stages or periods of some process with some specific reference. It also describes the various stages of societal development into periods that can be distinguished by certain characteristics or principles" (Pylypenko, Bilan, 2018; Usenko, 2017). For historical and pedagogical processes, this notion can be specified as a special arrangement that implies conditional division of some definite process into separate chronological periods, that contain events, significant in quality and quantity, according to some criterion of periodization. Additionally, periodization also looks into the logical distinction and the qualitative characteristic of classified periods (Smoly, 2011).

Being supported by the abovementioned definitions, periodization of the development of Ukraine's maritime education is an intelligent way to arrange the amount of information from the beginning of the 19th century up to the beginning of the 21st century. This approach offers a deeper knowledge about the changing states of the theoretical framework and implementation of maritime education in the south of Ukraine. Again, it is essential to choose the periodization criterion for historical and pedagogical events within this period of time in order to identify the periods of maritime education development. It is essential to note that periodization of various aspects of human development have been studied in Ukraine. Nonetheless, there is a paucity of scientific reviews on maritime education, especially on the south of Ukraine since ages (Issurin, 2010; Horak, 1975; Kernyakevych-Tanasiychuk, 2016). With regard to specifics of the subject of research, this paper analyzed the national reforms in the sphere of education. It also reviewed the sociopolitical changes that affected the content or framework of maritime education as a component of production sphere and vocational education system. Additionally, scientific and technical sphere development, the theory and practice of shipbuilding were also analyzed. Making reference to the famous historian's viewpoint "the development of education" is tightly connected to "social and political changes in the life of average Ukrainians" (Veselago, 1893). The scientific novelty of the study is embedded in the periodization of the historical development of naval-maritime education in Ukraine, beginning from the 18th century up to the latter half of the 20th century.

Stages of naval education development in Ukraine

The first stage consisted of the period before Peter the Great (from the very beginning of seafaring up to the year of 1701). During this stage of the development, the process of gaining knowledge, skills and experience by the seafarers (workers who served on vessels of war) resulted from their practical activities as skilled tradesmen (Pavlyk, 1997). It should be noted that majority of Russian historians consider Peter the Great to be the founder of the Russian fleet. In 1721, Peter the Great had proclaimed the Russian Empire (Hluzman, 1997). Peter the Great also divided the country into governorates, which consisted of provinces. Active and civil services were put on record in the "Ranking chart" by 1722 (Anderson, 2014; Okenfuss, 1973).

In the beginning of the second stage, there appeared a network of educational institutions that trained specialists especially in naval training. Majority of scientists refer this stage to the year of 1701. This marked the year of signing the "Imperial Edict" that established naval education (Hluzman, 1997). The 18th century is generally considered to be the end of this stage. It should be noted, that the first educational institution that established unreligious education and at the same time trained naval officers, was Moscow School of Mathematics and Navigation. This school was opened in January 1701 in Moscow and relied mostly on textbooks, equipment and teachers from other European countries. In 1712, the school was expanded when additional engineering and artillery classes were founded. Thus, 1715 saw the establishments of Maritime Academy called the

Great Naval Corps in St Petersburg. Up until 1715, this school was the only educational center of physico-mathematical and technical sciences (Gritsai, Van der Wusten, 2000; Skal'kovskiy, 1887).

In 1793, the Artillery School was founded in Kherson. Children of noble families studied there and on graduation they became petty officers. Starting from 1837, the school was recognised as the first professional institution in the city. The first director of the Black Sea Navigational School was Admiral Voinovich. Similarly, the School of Naval Architecture was founded in that same year the Artillery School began but only existed for five years. However, it was discontinued and the students were sent the College of Naval Architecture in St Petersburg by 1803 (Hupan, 2002). It is obvious that up to the end of the 18th century in the territory of the Russian Empire, there were several educational institutions where specialists for fleet were trained. These included the School of Naval Architecture (Moscow), the Naval Guard Academy and Sea Cadet Corps (St Petersburg), Artillery and Navigational Schools in Kherson and Nikolaev. Though there was no unified educational system within this period of time, the essential framework was established for further development of professional education.

The third stage of naval education is between 1798 and 1877. Scientists connect this period with special training of fleet officers. During this period, naval educational institutions were differentiated. Seafaring to distant destinations and sea fighting required a well-grounded and qualified training for navigators and shipbuilding engineers. This led to the establishments of two Navigational colleges in 1798 – for the Baltic and the Black sea fleet and two Schools of Naval Architecture for St Petersburg and the Black Sea Admiralties (Hluzman, 1997). In 1786, the Artillery School was also founded in Kherson. During 1807, Fleet School was founded in Nikolaev for the children from the families of sailors and soldiers. This school existed up to 1852. It is worth noting that this was the first time such a school was established in the territory of Ukraine in the cities of Kherson and Nikolaev to train naval fleet specialists, marine specialists, and merchant fleet specialists.

In 1826, the Black Sea Navigational Company was founded, where children of noblemen, officers and civilians were trained to be naval officers. Additionally, Marine Cadet Corps for the Officers class was also founded in 1827. This school also provided the needed academic training for Russian Fleet officers. In 1862, the class was rearranged into Academic Course of Naval Science with three specialities. These included shipbuilding, hydrography and engineering. The Academic Course of Naval Science was later transformed to the Nikolaev Maritime Academy (Hupan, 2002). The second maritime educational institution was established in 1837 for the training of seamen (four fleet companies) and artillery men. Here, they taught mathematical sciences, naval science and foreign languages (the English language, the French language).

Again, the Artillery Company was disbanded in 1847. Though a new School of Fleet Junkers was founded in 1852, this school was transformed into the Garde Marine Company in 1855. From 1860, the Garde Marine Company was renamed as the Black Sea Company of Fleet Cadets. Unfortunately, the reduction of the Black Sea Fleet due to the Treaty of Paris of 1856 to stop the establishment of naval or military arsenals on the Black Sea coast negatively affected these schools. In 1862, this Company and other Maritime schools were closed (Barbashev, 1959). After the London Conference of 1871 on the Black Sea coast, the building of armoured fleet began with corresponding arrangement for a new system of naval and marine education institutions on the south of Ukraine. Consequently, Junker Classes were established at Nikolaev in 1874, while the Mine Officers Cadet School was founded at Kronshat for marine and naval specialists were trained for merchant and naval ships. Under the auspices of Prince Grigory Aleksandrovich Potemkin-Tavricheski, the first educational maritime institution was established in the South of Ukraine. This was called the Maritime Cadet School.

As can be seen from the above, by the end of the 19th century a number of naval maritime educational institutions in the Russian Empire they are as follows: Maritime Cadet School with Officers Class and preparatory department, the College of Naval Architecture, Navigators college, the Maritime Artillery School, Junker Classes, maritime colleges, engineering, artillery and other schools. At the end, almost half of these schools were located in the territory of present day Southern Ukraine (the territory where the Black Sea fleet was based).

The fourth stage began in 1877 and ended in 1917. This period is marked by the establishment of continuous multi-level naval and maritime technical education. It also provided additional vocational education as well as refresher course and advanced professional training for officers.

In January 1896, affiliated with Nikolaev Maritime Academy, the naval science programme was opened. The curriculum contained maritime strategy and tactics, naval history and naval statistics and geography and maritime international law. These subjects provided the students with sufficient knowledge to solve different problems when handling weapon and controlling fleet (*Sovetskiy Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar, 1980*). In 1896, the ratification of the Academy Regulations and Statute were finalised.

At the beginning of the 20th century, variety of maritime educational institutions and other multiple-level system were opened in Ukraine. These institutions provided the ground for the establishment of naval educational institutions network in Ukraine. These educational network included vocational educational (navigational, engineering, artillery schools, maritime cadet schools) of maritime and naval training. Also, it included higher maritime education institutions for the training officers for specific skills needed onboard and for service ashore. Additionally, higher maritime education institutions offered refresher courses and advanced professional training for officers. These networked academies also provided training fleet management personnel. However, before the beginning of the First World War, officers training system was formed into a structural framework of naval education.

The fifth period of the naval educational development began in 1918. This phase experienced the reconstruction of naval educational system. According to historians, courses were mounted in 1918 for maritime officers at the first maritime educational institution of the Soviet Union era. The establishment of the Maritime Academy by a new Statute indicated the mandate of the institution to make maritime training proper and efficient (*Barbashev, 1959*). It is obvious that the academy played the key role in the system of qualified maritime education. In 1919, new naval educational institutes and academies were opened as a response. At the time of the People's Commissariat, the Maritime division was formed at the base of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Empire. This created The Black Sea Fleet of the Ukrainian Republic. In 1929, there were six naval academies and three naval-maritime colleges in the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The most common type of naval educational institutions at that time were military schools. Between 1933 and 1939, seven more maritime educational institutions were founded. During this period, there was a differentiation of cadets into those who were trained to work on board vessels and on board submarines in accordance with three specialties: navigational, artillery and mine-torpedo (*Podsoblyayev, 2002; Rohwer, Monakov, 1996; Sherr, 1997; Torbakov, 1996*). Thus, 1943 saw the establishment of Maritime School in Mariupol and other maritime colleges at Leningrad, Odessa, Vladivostok in 1944. These maritime colleges later became Higher Engineering Maritime Schools, and then Maritime Academies [for example, Krylov-Shipbuilding Research Institute was founded in 1945] (*Sovetskiy Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar, 1980*).

Finally, the sixth stage saw the creation of specialist educational establishments for naval service. This innovation began from the 1950s. Historians refer this period as the era of maritime engineering development and training of fleet personnel of all the categories and specialties. Also, this period is attributed to the rise in Nuclear Naval technologies. By the middle of the 1970s, naval education could be divided into advanced naval education and higher vocational naval training. By the end of 1980, naval education and training were offered at fourteen educational institutions at different levels in the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. By 1991, the rehabilitation of Ukrainian fleet and the establishment of national educational institutions, where marine specialists and officers can gain qualification, was also established.

Conclusion

The following aim and objectives were achieved within this research. First, historical, social, cultural, economical and political factors were analyzed on the above mentioned topic. Second, the significant stages of development of the country, ideological concepts and pedagogical doctrines regarding naval and maritime training were also identified. Third, the historical periodization of naval education (nascent stage and development stage in Ukraine from the 18th century – up to the latter half of the 20th century) was specified and explained. In respect to this historical review, it should be mentioned that periodization of maritime training, like any other periodization analysis, can be considered as relative since it is determined by the peculiarities of the research object and subjective viewpoints. However, this paper provides a base for further study of

processes and cause-and-effect relationships with reference to the development of naval education in the south of Ukraine.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no financial conflicts of interest.

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A Legislative Chamber or Retirement Cocoon? Nigeria's National Assembly and Former Executive Heads

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Abstract

It has become a familiar trend in Nigeria that many state governors see the national assembly as a retirement ground after an eight-year-tenure as heads of the executive arm. To many of these ex-governors, the Senate is another platform through which they could continue to be relevant and actualize their political goals as far as local and national politics are concerned. Though nothing is wrong with former governors aspiring to be senators, what is important is whether they are in the Senate to serve the interest of their constituencies or their own interest. The latter however, features prominently in the study's findings.

Keywords: executive, governors, law-making, legislature, retirement.

Introduction

Democracy is entrenched in a complex architecture of norms which is also embodied in, and implemented by, an ensemble of institutions. These include multiparty system, independent judiciary, free press, and electoral system. The stability of a democratic order in any country is ultimately determined by the extent to which such institutions are able to function in a sustainable manner (Ninsin, 2006). The state – as a political entity in which those institutions are entrenched – continues to function as the macro governance ecology within which people strive for self-fulfilment through its institutional mechanisms or arrangements. These institutional arrangements and apparatuses of democratic governance include the horizontal organs of government. Without these organs (i.e. executive, legislature and judiciary), the *raison d'être* of democracy and governance would be a mirage (Akindele, Adeyemi, Aluko, 2012). Yet, studies on consolidation of democratic governance in developing countries place less prominence on the significance of the legislature in addressing challenges of democracy. This may be due to the perceived declining role of this institution of politics. Ideally, “democratic governance operates with democratic institutions like political parties, the judiciary and the legislature, which are adduced by classical democratic theory as bulwarks of democracy. The dominant role of the legislature in democratic governance is much stressed” (Lafenwa, 2009).

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Explicitly, modern democracies are characterized by shared decision-making by the legislative and executive branches. Generally, a country's constitution formally structures this interaction. The legislature constitutes a cardinal part of the major pillars of the governance process in the democratic political systems of today's world (Gidado, 2018; Kashyap, 2018). According to Loewenberg, Patterson and Jewell (1983), legislature is a body which promulgates laws, which authenticates and legitimises commands as to what citizens of a state can do or cannot do. Basic components or characteristics of legislature include: equal status of members, law-making and representation based on free and periodic elections.

Despite the need for strong legislatures, many legislatures are overwhelmingly dominated by the executive branch. This problem is especially prevalent in emerging democracies. While democratic elections in these countries may result in multiparty legislatures, they rarely yield strong democratic institutions (Whaley, 2000). In addition to this observation, as aptly applicable to Nigerian democratic governance, there is a new trend of former state governors' desire to extend their power tentacles to the parliament- by direct participation, having in many instances, sponsored their cronies to the national assembly in previous elections while holding sway as chief executive officers in their respective states. Consequently, it has become almost predictable that most governors want to transit from government houses to the upper legislative chamber at the expiration of their terms. The growing trend has made many analysts and political observers come to the conclusion that the c has become 'a haven for retired, but not tired politicians.' Some of these state helmsmen, in the past succeeded in their mission, while others did not (Baita, 2014).

This trend is now generating concerns among Nigerians who question the real intentions of the governors going to the Senate. The bone of contention is whether the mission of the ex-governors is indeed for active law-making or a mere move to secure a platform for continuous relevance, either on the national scene or in their respective states (Ogunmade, 2013). Even though it is backed by the 1999 constitution, many believe that it is a trend seemingly obtainable only in a country like Nigeria - where continuous occupation of public offices and posturing for consistent political relevance is placed above merit and performance (Eme, Okeke, 2015). As a consequence, the purpose of this paper is to unravel the rationale for the concerns being expressed by these *analysts and political observers*, and the actual intention of the former governors within the contexts of law-making, representation and legal framework.

The Nigeria's National Assembly: A general assessment

Democracy is all about ensuring popular participation and control of the process of government. Since all the people cannot participate and individually control their government at the same time, they entrust these rights and duties to an elected few among them known as legislators. The legislature is one of the basic structures of any political system. It is known by a variety of names in different countries. Some states identify their legislature as Congress, Parliament, Duma or Knesset. Others designate it as Diet, Assembly, etc. The National Assembly of any country is a binding force that transforms the politics and governance of that state into a scenario that maximally addresses the yearnings and aspirations of the downtrodden. Hence, the National Assembly dictates the operational mechanism of democracy, with certain sharp contradictions arising from defined self-interest instead of democracy dictating the operations of National Assembly. The organ that epitomizes the concept of democracy is the legislature (Ninsin, 2006; Whaley, 2000).

Sagay (2010) avers that "it is the place where the public sees democracy in action in the form of debates, and consideration of motions, resolutions and bills". The legislature is a fundamental component of democratic government. Indeed, the need for strong legislatures is reflected in the very meaning of democracy: "rule by the people." In order for the people to rule, they require a mechanism to represent their wishes—to make (or influence) policies in their name and oversee the implementation of those policies. Legislatures serve these critical functions. They replicate in its ranks a broad perspective of the national political view (Norton, 2013). The legislature also serves as the primary outlet for political participation and expression. Again, it serves as a symbol of equitable representation. Even though the representatives are often unable to influence the policy outcomes of the government, they do provide their constituents with access to the system and a voice in the process, whether it be in support or dissent.

The Nigeria's National Assembly is made up of the Senate called the Red Chambers with 109 Senators and the House of Representatives called the Green Chambers with 360 Honorable Members (Reps). It is categorized, on the basis of republic, as follows: First Republic National Assembly (1960-1966), Second Republic National Assembly (1979-1983), Third Republic National Assembly (1990-1991/2), Fourth Republic National Assembly (1999-2003), Fifth National Assembly (2003-2007), Sixth National Assembly (2007-2011), Seventh National Assembly (2011-2015) and Eight National Assembly (2015-2019). The Third Republic National Assembly (1990-1991/2) was a diarchic parliament put in place by the Gen. Ibrahim Babangida's military regime, which was ousted by the Sani Abacha military coup of 1993. The core legislative power of the National Assembly consists of the power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Federation or any part thereof with respect to any matter included in the exclusive legislative list set out in Part 1 of the second schedule to the Constitution; and any other matter with respect to which it is empowered to make laws in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. The phrase "peace, order and good government" has been described as a legal formula for expressing the widest plenitude of legislative power exercisable by a sovereign legislature (Kazeem, 2013).

The National Assembly, like many other organs of the Nigerian government, is based in the federal capital territory, Abuja. In Nigeria, the constitutional responsibilities of the legislature include making laws for the peace, progress and good governance of the country. The two houses also influence government policies through motions and resolutions. However, some responsibilities are exclusive to the Senate. These include the screening and confirmation of both members of the federal executive, (known as ministers), and ambassadorial nominees. On the account of these exclusive responsibilities, the Senate is regarded as the Upper House of the National Assembly, and the House, the Lower. The Senate president is the chairman of the National Assembly. Though the Presidential system of government draws a clear line between the legislature and executive under the principle of separation of powers, members of the legislative arm have been struggling since the introduction of the presidential system of government in 1979 to be "more relevant" among their constituents by being able to bring home amenities to help in improving their quality of life. They have often run into odds with the Executive branch because constituency projects are seen as a Legislative trespass into an area reserved for the Executive. While assessing the performance of the legislature in the present fourth republic, Akomolede and Akomolede (2012), posit that majority of the members are driven more by selfish desires of wealth accumulation than the patriotic desire of leaving enduring legislative legacies by taking cue from other advanced jurisdictions of the world.

As observed by Umeagbalasi, Oguejiofor and Onwuatuegwu (2015), the lawmakers at times, arrogate to themselves the executive functions through constituency projects execution and callous demand for the sack of head of any government agency that dares to question their overbearing influence. As a result of these, the National Assembly and the State Houses of Assembly in Nigeria, fathered by the Fourth Republic National and State Legislative Chambers, have turned into business enterprises and parliamentary bazaar chambers. Notably, Okoosi-Simbine (2007) stated that, "if Nigeria is to sustain democratic rule, one of the important institutions to pay attention to at all levels of government is the legislature, the organization through which citizen opinion acquires political significance in a democratic government." However, as important as the function of the legislature in the realization of the democratic process of a nation, the Nigerian Legislature is yet to enhance democratic practice in the country. Instead, the legislators in Nigeria have dissipated so much energy on securing better condition of service for their members in cash and kind to the detriment of the people who elected them into office (Gberevbie, 2014). The financial recklessness of the houses and the near lack of decorum in which the activities are conducted have also smeared the image of the legislature such that one begins to wonder whether or not its role is supportive of good governance. Leaders of the house have been accused and indeed impeached for financial scam while on a number of occasions, the law-makers had resorted to self-help on the floor of the house to settle issues of serious legislative importance (Akomolede, Akomolede, 2012). It is often rumoured that bills hardly sail through the legislature until members have had their hands greased (Akomolede, Akomolede, 2012; Oyewo, 2007). Consequently, debates on such bills either at the plenary or committee levels cannot be subjected to thorough scrutiny in the best interest of Nigerians who are the objects of such bills eventually when they become laws.

Since the beginning of the current republic, the national assembly seems to constantly represent an assemblage of politicians with unrivaled exploitative tendencies when compared with other parliaments globally. Obasanjo opines that apart from shrouding the remunerations of the National Assembly in opaqueness and without transparency, they indulge in extorting money from departments, contractors and ministries in two ways, on the so-called oversight responsibility. According to Obasanjo, they do so while on visits to their projects and programmes and in the process of budget approval when they build up budgets for departments and ministries for those who agree to give it back to them in contracts that they do not execute. They do similar things in their so-called inquiries ([Premium Times, 2014](#)).

In spite of these shortcomings, there are a number of times the national assembly has proved to be a stabilizing factor in the political trajectory of the country. At the peak of the power tussle that ensued during the late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administration, the National Assembly of Nigeria on February 9, 2010, by a resolution adopted by both Chambers of the National Assembly, following a request by the Governors' Forum, empowered the Vice-President of Nigeria to act as the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces following the protracted illness of the substantive president who could not be able to discharge the function of the office as required by the constitution. The doctrine of necessity was adopted by the National Assembly as a political solution to the constitutional logjam created by the failure of the president to follow the constitutional process and to avoid the lacuna created by his long absence from office. The doctrine was also used as a necessary measure to save Nigeria from imminent collapse in the face of the constitutional blockage and human contributions to the constitutional flaws. Perhaps, the doctrine of necessity applied by the Senate could be regarded as one of the greatest achievement of Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as an institution.

Why ex-governors prefer the National Assembly after Tenure

Political scientists have explained why politics, which is a vocation, has become a career for the 'professional' politicians. While some aspirants perceive their next political office as a call to service to the state, others perceive the corridor of power as an avenue for private accumulation. The former works hard to erect lasting legacies. The latter merely strives for relevance and pecks of office ([Salaudeen, 2013](#)). After eight years of glamorous tenure in their respective states, the Senate has suddenly become a new found vocation for the ex-governors. For this reason, they have always employed every means to ensure their bids for the Senate to materialize during elections, while they are still sitting as governors ([Adebayo, 2011](#)). In the 2011 elections for instance, virtually all the governors who were rounding up their eight years' tenure offered themselves for the senatorial election in a bid to continue their political adventure at the Senate. While some succeeded, others failed due to possible intra party crisis which did not favour them because of the sudden overwhelming influence of the opposition parties in the states where such governors contested the election like the cases of Oyinlola, Daniel and Fayose in Osun, Ogun and Ekiti States respectively.

In nearly all democracies, leaders of the executive branch (i.e., presidents, prime ministers, cabinet ministers) typically command much of the political power, control the financial resources, possess staff dedicated to developing policies and implementing laws. They also produce the bulk of legislation, manage government contracts and administer government programs. So, after wielding such enormous power and influence, usually after eight years, why do Nigerian executive governors target the national assembly to further their political adventurism? As explained by Oke (2015), before the 2007 elections, the idea of governors running to the Senate after governing their states looked unattractive but the trend has since changed. This was possible because between 1999 [when the country returned to democracy] and 2007, the first round of constitutionally guaranteed two-term tenure of eight years has been completed. For instance, the 6th National Assembly (2007-2011) had five former governors, namely: George Akume [former Governor of Benue State], Chimaroke Nnamani [former Governor of Enugu State], Adamu Aliero [former Governor of Kebbi State], Bukar Ibrahim [former Governor of Yobe State] and Ahmed Makarfi [former governor of Kaduna State].

The seventh National Assembly witnessed more former governors joining the fray in addition to Bukar Ibrahim, George Akume and Ahmed Makarfi. This cohort was joined by former Governor of Kwara state [Bukola Saraki], former Governor of Gombe State [Danjuma Goje] and former Governor of Nasarawa State [Dr Abdullahi Adamu]. Presently, in the Nigerian Senate –the upper

chamber that has become alluring to the ex-governors- there are sixteen of them: Theodore Orji [Abia], Godswill Akpabio [Akwa Ibom], Jonah Jang [Plateau State], Aliyu Wamako [Sokoto State], Sam Egwu [Ebonyi State], Adamu Aliero [Kebbi State], Isiaka Adeleke [Osun State], Joshua Dariye [Plateau State], Kabiru Gaya [Kano State], AbbaBukar Ibrahim [Yobe State], Danjuma Goje [Gombe State], Abdullahi Adamu [Nasarawa State], Ahmed Sani [Zamfara State], Bukola Saraki [Kwara State], George Akume [Benue State] and Shaaba Lafiagi [Kwara State]. Considering the increasing presence of former governors in the Senate, many Nigerians have expressed the view that the Red Chamber may soon become an exclusive reserve for these state helmsmen if unchecked. In a statement by Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora, who was in the Senate between 2003 and 2007, “it has become the habit of former governors to see the Senate as their retirement ground. It will get to a time that the Senate will become the assembly of former governors” (Baita, 2014). Similarly, a group under the aegis of *Friends in the Gap Advocacy Initiative*, once expressed worry over the increasing number of these former state chief executives. The Executive Director of the group, George Oji, states that the trend, if not put under control, would lead to the complete hijack of the upper chamber by the former state governors. Oji notes that, “it is our further concern that rather than provide quality legislation in the Senate, the former governors see the red chamber as a platform to play all manners of ethnic and regional politics. We are seriously concerned that if the growing trend of the invasion of the Senate by ex-governors is not immediately halted, the leadership of the Senate may be finally hijacked by them, the ex-governors will form a serious power block (sic) in the Senate and the country may begin to witness the formation of another strong cartel that will continue to perpetrate their interest at the detriment of legislative functions (Information Nigeria, 2015).

In other climes, the Senate is revered for its ambience of dignity and honour, attracting men of higher virtue and decorum with the main objective of serving the people. The general view in Nigeria however, is that “they are not in the Senate to serve the people as expected but rather they are there to fulfill a personal political interest” (Adebayo, 2011). The former governors, having completed their tenure, and often feared they are likely to be made irrelevant by their successors in the politics of the state, may decide to go to the Senate where they can continue to service their political machinery and still play a major role in state and national politics without being boxed into a corner by the sitting governors. The ex-governors may have discovered that the Senate offers them a convenient platform where they could still maintain relevance in politics since politics of godfatherism does not seem to work out any more.

In addition, some of the ex-governors with corrupt charges against them while in power find the parliament (though with no personal immunity) as a safe haven- where a realignment can be made to pacify the ruling political class at the centre-rather than being private citizens. Jubril (2016) observes that there are currently 16 former governors with ongoing corruption cases in the 8th Senate. The ex-governors, according to him, form the largest trade group in the National Assembly, perhaps far more in number than manufacturers, bankers, medical doctors and professors. Hence, the inundation of their ilk in the Senate has underscored the widely held belief that they cannot survive outside politics. Jubril (2016) explains further that, when these governors leave government house, they automatically lose their immunity as stipulated by the constitution. Such immunity accompanied with the office cloaks them from prosecution. As soon as they leave the office however, the anti-corruption agencies swoop in on them. Alas, as soon as the ex-governors scale the fence from the Executive to the Legislature, the investigations lose steam and pace, going cold of all a sudden. With quite a number of such ex-governors now turned “distinguished” carrying on with liberal bail conditions from trials that have no end in sight, have given credence to the widely held perception that the former governors turned parliamentarians have found a safety-net around themselves, making it almost impossible for the anti-corruption agencies and the law-courts to deal decisively with them.

It is also argued that the presence of most former governors in the Senate is not service oriented but most likely they derive honour and prestige in being referred to as senators after completing their tenure as governors. In Nigeria, politicians do not have any consideration for hierarchy in political offices if such offices will sustain their relevance in the interim. It is always feared that being out of power could be very disastrous to their political career. In the United States of America for instance, which has set the pace for the practice of the presidential system, the practice is that governors and senators would want to become President. In terms of hierarchy, the

senator is senior to the governor. The reverse is the case in Nigeria. Many factors are responsible. The political culture of zoning, which is not backed by the 1999 Constitution, often excludes many governors from the presidential race, if it is not the turn of their geo-political zones. Yet, as party leaders in their respective states, the governors control the party structures. They personalise power and use their enormous financial muscles to a maximum advantage by dictating who gets what, where and how during elections. Since 2003, except in few instances, no governor, federal and state parliamentarian, minister and council chairman has emerged without the input and endorsement of the governor (Salaudeen, 2013).

Between law-making and money-making: Ex-governor-senators and their preference

In Nigeria, the legislature has the mandate to initiate debate and show concern on matters affecting the generality of people in the country. Expectedly, such activities should be directed toward reversing declining economy, stabilizing the polity and integrating society with the overall aim of enhancing national development. In spite of the significance of the legislature to national development, it is clear from the Nigerian experience that it fails to play such role with expected level of success (Edet, Amadu, 2014). Though a fictional account of the activities in Nigeria's House of Representatives is given by Okediran (2010), it shows a pathetic reflection of the failure of a legislature overwhelmed by graft, greed, lack of enlightenment, viciousness and alienation from the people they are supposed to represent.

In all these, if the executive is not absolutely above board, the offending members of the National Assembly resort to subtle or open threat, intimidation and blackmail of the executive. When the executive pays the hush money, normally in millions of dollars, all is quiet in form of white-washed report and reports that fail to deal effectively with the issue (Obasanjo, 2014). As noted by Ezea (2011), "constituencies have become instruments of official corruption, fraud and lubricant of primitive accumulation for lawmakers, as constituencies across the country have never had the impact of constituency projects fund that had been given to lawmakers yearly". The two chambers are fast transforming into discredited institutions of the Nigerian state where lawmakers violate every known elements of civilized democratic principles. The responsibility of law-making is no longer the remit of prudent and honourable men, but of those who engage in profligacy and depravity. More worrisome is that fact that the cost associated with the performance of their duties does not match with actual performance. Thus, cost effectiveness, efficiency, economy, productivity and quality is lacking especially when viewed against the backdrop of their remunerations or compensation packages (Udoete, 2011). The fact that these negative legislative traits continue in the National Assembly is, according to Akindele, et al (2012), worrisome in the sense that there have been "recirculation of members of the National Assembly over the years and, one expects membership attrition and corrupt practices to have reduced in the legislative arm of the nation's democratic governance process given the fact that Legislators with such shabby political inclination must have left the Assembly through electoral defeats". The point here however, remains that such expected major defeats still remain a herculean task for the electorate. Having observed a lot of fraudulent activities in the electioneering process, they (voters) now respond with disenchantment, apathy, and lethargy towards the whole political process.

Suffice it to say that the nation's electoral process is inherently tainted with fraud and illegalities that frequently frustrates politicians with good intentions while it throws up those with questionable character. With so much at stake, candidates in previous governorship and parliamentary elections have often played dirty. Ballot box snatching and shootings marred the process in several states. It is noticeable that electoral fraud gives rise to dysfunctional constituents. When members of the electorate vote and their votes do not count, the constituencies become dysfunctional. They lose interest in voting as they feel that the election will always be rigged (Omodia, 2009). Though to win a Senatorial district out of the three in each state would not be a problem for any incumbent governor, but with the level of the people's disenchantment, one cannot comprehend why many of the governors scaled through the voters' anger at the polls and found their ways back to the National Assembly. At least, the power of the people to reject unwanted representatives at the polls was demonstrated in some states where four governors were defeated in the 2015 senatorial elections.

It could also be inferred that second term governors who do not contest for Senate are either skeptical of their chances because they underperformed as state governors or will face stiff opposition from an incumbent Senator in the district (Ilevbare, 2015). Those who made it to the upper chamber simply go into oblivion as soon as they realise that they no longer call the shots, but mere part of a wider debate. Their interest therefore, lies in what is materially accruable to them like other members. As a matter of fact, the penchant for wealth accumulation among the lawmakers is a public knowledge; a phenomenon that, in no small measure, contributes to the high cost of governance in the country. For instance, the former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Lamido Sanusi, revealed that 25 percent of the Federal Government's expenditure on overheads is consumed by the parliament. Prof. Itse Sagay provided facts and figures on the ridiculous salaries and allowances of the federal lawmakers. According to him, in 2009, a senator earned N240 million (US\$1.7 million) in salaries and allowances, while his House of Representatives counterpart earned N203 million (US\$1.45 million). In sharp contrast, a United States senator earns \$174,000 per annum, while a British parliamentarian earns US\$64,000 per annum (The Punch, 2011 cited in Udoete, 2011). Nevertheless, this package was applicable to Nigeria's sixth National Assembly (2007 – 2011). But due to pressure from the National Assembly for increased remuneration for its members (Senate and House of Representatives), an upward review of their salary and allowances was effected from July 2009, in line with remuneration package for political, public and judicial office holders approved by the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission, RMAFC (Udoete, 2011). Yet, the senators have not been able to justify their huge remunerations. Thus, they lent credence to the advocacy by many notable groups and individuals that the nation's lawmakers should be engaged on a part-time basis; and should be paid per sitting.

Again, what baffles Nigerians is that while the country is groaning under economic recession due to the fall of the naira and the fluctuating price of crude oil, Senators who once served as governors are receiving a double income. A report by *Daily Trust* (Cited in Omotayo, 2016) reveals that in spite of the fact that states had to receive bailout funds from the federal government due to their inability to pay salaries, millions of naira in pensions are transferred to the accounts of former governors. Some of these governors are simultaneously receiving salaries as Senators. For instance, the law in River State provides 100 percent of annual basic salaries for the ex-governor and deputy, one residential house for the former governor "anywhere of his choice in Nigeria"; one residential house anywhere in the state for the deputy, three cars for the ex-governor every four years and two cars for the deputy every four years. In Lagos, a former governor will get two houses, one in Lagos and another in Abuja, estimated at N500 million (US\$ 1.4m) in Lagos and N700 million (US\$ 1.9m) in Abuja. Others are six brand new cars replaceable every three years; furniture allowance of 300 percent of annual salary to be paid every two years, and a close to N2.5m (US\$ 6,950) as pension. He will also enjoy security detail, and free medical care for them and their immediate families. Other benefits are 10 percent house maintenance, 30 percent car maintenance, 10 percent entertainment, 20 percent utility, and several domestic staff (Abdallah, 2016).

Also, in Kwara state, the law allows Senator Bukola Saraki, former governor of the state, to get two cars and a security car to be replaced every three years, a "well-furnished 5-bedroom duplex," furniture allowance of 300 per cent of his salary; five personal staff and three officers of the State Security Service. Yusuf Olaniyonu who is the media aide to Saraki confirmed that the governor receives all the benefits but said the money goes in scholarships to students of Kwara. He said the Senate president "directed that a special account should be opened into which the money should be paid and that it should be used for a scholarship and education programme to be administered by a Board of Trustees" (Omotayo, 2016). A former governor of Akwa Ibom State and spouse are entitled to N100m for medicals annually, while a former deputy governor and spouse are also entitled to a maximum of N30m (US\$ 83, 000). Widows or widowers married to former governors while in office are entitled to N12m (US\$ 34,000) medical allowance in a year, while those of deputy governors will take N6m (US\$ 17,000) (Adesomoju, 2016).

Other benefits in Akwa Ibom State include: Annual Basic Salary of 100 percent of annual basic salaries of the incumbent governor and deputy. Accommodation includes a house not below 5-bed maisonette in either Abuja or Akwa Ibom for the former governor; 500 percent annual basic for the ex-deputy. Transport: One car and one utility car every four years for ex-governor and deputy. Furniture also include 300 percent of annual basic salary, every four years. House maintenance: Nil. Domestic staff include an amount not above N5 million (US\$ 14,000) for

ex-governor and N2.5 million for ex-deputy to employ cook, chauffeurs and security. Medical care includes free treatment for ex-governor and spouse not exceeding - N100 million per year while N30 million (US\$ 83, 000) is allocated for ex-deputy (this provision will soon be reverted to “free” without limit following outcry). Car maintenance: 300 percent of annual basic salary. Entertainment: 100 percent of annual basic salary. Utility: 100 percent of annual basic salary. Drivers: Amount not above N5 million (US\$ 14,000) for ex-governor and N2.5 million (US\$ 6,950) for ex-deputy to employ cook, chauffeurs and security. Severance gratuity: 300 percent annual basic salary ([Pointblank News, 2014](#)). These are just three out of the 16 senators receiving pensions as ex-governors. And the question remains: how many years did they serve their states as governors to be entitled to such outrageous pensions for life?

Though the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) Act does not prohibit the former governors from drawing dual remuneration simultaneously. There are concerns on the financial implications on the states, particularly in a situation where 27 states are struggling to pay salaries. While this indicates that the Senators may not have breached any law, it is believed that it is morally condemnable to be getting a pension while they are still on active service. Undeniably, one may not be far from the truth to conclude that the preference of the ex-governors, going by this trend, is for wealth accumulation rather than being law-makers for the good of their constituents.

Requisite for building a strong legislature

It can be argued that, serving in the legislature of presidential systems with weak legislatures, can often impede rather than assist one’s career in politics. For instance, aspiring Mexican politicians often have little interest in running for legislative office where they may languish in relative obscurity, and instead opt for positions in the executive branch at the federal or state level ([Camp, 2000](#)). This cycle can become self-perpetuating; the legislature remains weak because it cannot attract talented politicians to strengthen it. Just like many other democracies where democratic institutions, including the legislature, are weak, the Nigerian experiment is a source of worry to many political observers and scholars alike. Suffice it to say that the National Assembly has been unable to attract vibrant and goal-oriented politicians beyond the fault-lines of partisanship, ethnic and religious affiliations, and of course, mere personal political ambition. How has this trend impacted on governance/democratic institutions in the country?

In their analysis, Johnson and Nakamura ([Lafenwa, 2009](#)), pointed out that effective legislatures contribute to effective governance by performing important functions necessary to sustain democracy in complex and diverse societies. To them, “democratic societies need the arena for the airing of societal differences provided by representative assemblies with vital ties to the populace. They need institutions that are capable of writing good laws in both the political sense of getting agreement from participants, and in the technical sense of achieving the intended purposes”. By the legislature, during its early history, the best wisdom of the country would be gathered according to Bryce (1971) as cited in Edet and Amadu (2014) into deliberative bodies whose debates would enlighten the people, and in which men fit for leadership could show their power. In most countries across the world, this is no longer the case. Today, there is decline in the culture and personality of the legislature. A seat in it confers less social status, and the respect felt for it has waned. The best citizens are less disposed to enter the chamber. Yet, they are needed to strengthen the legislature through quality debates and legislation bordering on political stability, orderliness, social welfare among others. This is much desirable in Nigeria today.

Ordinarily, if put into good use and backed with patriotic intentions, the experiences of the former governors in managing the affairs of their states for eight years would have been a great asset to the national assembly as a democratic institution requiring such. Even though they were not lawmakers in their respective states, it could be argued that the business of law-making goes beyond the mastering of legislative procedure or stages of bill passage. Rather, it requires vision, service-to-humanity spirit, experience from both private and public sectors, patriotism and undiluted commitment. Thus, the country’s dire situation requires lawmakers who are genuinely committed to finding solution to problems and making life worth living for the citizens. Perhaps, that is why in its editorial, *The Guardian* (2015) enjoins Nigerians “to be more careful about those they elect to represent them. For them to have effective representation that would better their lot, Nigerians must choose those with the right qualities, those who understand and have the capacity

for the rigour of law-making that would redound to national development and bring an improvement in the lives of the citizens”.

The three arms of government may be separate in functions but united in goals, through the system of checks and balances. It is a public knowledge that the system of checks and balances allows each of the arms of government to defend its position in the constitutional framework of government. As earlier deduced in this paper, a strong and independent legislature is vital to make democracy to succeed, although there appears to be an inexorable tendency toward executive centrism in modern democracy. Expectedly, in democracies where its formal adoption of the principles of separation of powers is adhered to, the presidential system appears to provide that kind of independent and strong legislature. Hence, the principle of vesting the exercise of the three powers of government - the Legislature, the Executive and the Judicial- in three distinct organs, which Willoughby has called an organic separation of powers as distinct from a personal separation, is fundamental to the efficient working of government.

Though it should be noted that there is no absolute separation of powers anywhere –indeed, complete separation of powers is neither practicable nor desirable for effective government. Nevertheless, the overbearing influence of the executive over other arms of government is too glaring to ignore and it calls for concern in Nigeria if that institution of government is to be strengthened. The experiences of these former governors would have therefore, been more desirable in times like this but for the fact that many of them also dominated all democratic institutions in their states- the legislature in particular- like emperors while in power. Resisting such unwanted tendency from the national executive, after their elections into the Senate, becomes a moral burden. While Senators represent electoral districts, members of the House of Representatives represent constituencies. Representation, law-making, policy-making, and oversight, especially the last three, are activities that occur within the legislature and require acts of collective action on the part of all the members. The essence of strengthening the legislative institution therefore, is to make it become stronger, more effective, democratic institution and this can be done through programmes and activities which are designed to increase transparency and accountability, public participation and representation. Thus, for legislatures to properly perform the above mandated functions and responsibilities, enabling environments are required with a view to supporting efforts to create a constitutional and legal framework and building broad public support for the legislature through working with civil society and media groups.

Conclusion

The governors in the Senate may act as agents of political stability and compendium of knowledge of administration and governance. If the craving for wealth is not their goal, they can make impact as statesmen and fathers of the nation in the National Assembly. As alluded to in this paper, there is nothing wrong about former governors desiring to be senators after eight years of stewardship to their states because there is no law which says they cannot do so. What is important is whether they are in the Senate to serve the interest of their constituencies or their own interest. Judging from the statutory functions of the legislature, as enunciated in this paper, it could be pointed out that the Senate is not for people who are on holiday or for people who think it will only make them relevant as former governors. It is meant for people who are ready for the rigorous legislative duty. However, from what could be seen in the last few years of this republic, the influx of retiring governors to the Senate portends that their elections into the National Assembly are for reasons far from the desire of the people for qualitative representation and effective legislation. In a democracy, a balance must be found between competing values; and political actors must cooperate in order to compete. To be effective and stable, there must be the belief in the legitimacy of democracy, tolerance for opposition parties, a willingness to compromise with political opponents, pragmatism and flexibility are vital. Also, there should be trust in the political environment, cooperation among political competitors, moderation in political positions and partisan identifications, civility of political discourse and efficacy and participation based on the principles of political equality (Enu, Eba, 2014; Kperogi, 2016; Simbine, 2014; Udoete, 2011).

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Development of Students' Cognitive Motivation for Studying English

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Abstract

The idiosyncrasies of developing motivation for learning English Language as a foreign language are revealed in the article. The authors emphasize that the question of how to help students to overcome the language barrier as soon as possible and to incite their interest for a foreign language is relevant and not completely resolved. As practice shows, foreign language teachers working at schools are in dire need of improving the communicative foreign language teaching methods and forming the interests and motives for learning the language among students. The authors give a description of modern aids of increasing students' motivation to learn a foreign language, taking into account all the gains.

Keywords: foreign language, motivation, motive, students, studying.

Introduction

The effectiveness of the classroom work of the English teacher depends on knowledge and taking into account the age-related psychological characteristics of students. The teacher needs to understand the psychological essence and the origins of this state and in every possible way, support and intensify the interests in successful study of English (Nikolaev, 2002). Not only will the children get excellent marks in the school discipline, but they could also freely use the language in their daily lives (Sweller, 2017). As in any other case, for studying English, a child needs a positive motivation – that is, the desire to be engage, the need for this and of course the interest. Without all these parents and teachers' efforts will be doomed to failure: the child will either not study or study only not to be punished (negative, destructive motivation), and in the latter case, knowledge will be superficial and quickly forgotten (Simming et al., 2015).

The problem of the development of the motivation for studying has always been relevant in psychological and pedagogical literature. It is well known that the content of studying, its significance is the basis of the motivational sphere for the student (Nikolaev, 2002). The student's orientation and the motivation for studying, depends on the studying content. The motive of learning is the student's focus on different aspects of learning activities. Thus, there is a connection

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between different types of the students' attitudes to studying with the nature of their motivation and the state of educational activity (Skuratsky, 2005).

It should be mentioned that there are five types of attitudes towards studying. These include negative, indifference or neutral, positive amorphous, positive cognitive [conscious], and positive responsible personality. The characteristics for the negative attitude of student to studying are: poorness and narrowness of motives; cognitive motives are limited by the interest in the result, undeveloped ability to set goals and overcome difficulties, educational activity is not formed, there is no ability to perform an action according to the expanded instruction of the adult and there is no orientation to finding different ways of action. In the positive (amorphous) attitude, there are unstable experiences of novelty, curiosity and spontaneous interest, the emergence of the first benefits of some educational subjects to others, broad social motives of duty and understanding the primary reflection of the goals determined by the teacher. Also, positive (cognitive) attitude of students to learning motivation is characterized by: the introduction of new goals, the birth of new motives and understanding the ratio of their motives and goals. Educational activities include not only the reproduction of tasks and methods of action, but also the emergence of self-identified goals, as well as the implementation of actions by their own initiative (Sapolovych, 2013). There is a mastery of the ability to plan and evaluate students' educational activities prior to its implementation, to check and control themselves at each stage of the lesson.

The positive (personal, responsible) attitude of the student to motivation is characterized by the stability and uniqueness of the motivational sphere, the ability to set up perspective, non-standard goals and implement them and the ability to overcome obstacles to achieve the goal. In educational activities, the search for non-standard ways of performing the study task, the flexibility and mobility of the methods of action, learning the actions and skills to the level of skills and habits of the culture of work, the exit from educational activities to self-education and the transition to creative activity is observed (Simming et al., 2015).

Ways of positive motivation of students

The most effective methods of developing students' motivation for studying include integrated lessons, game technologies, the development of cognitive motivation through the relationship of studying material with life, demonstration of the consequences of actions, developing a sense of duty, responsibility, career guidance, learning with computer support, the use of educational programs; textbooks, visual-oriented environments, engagement of students in the management of the educational process (research projects) and evaluative activity as a reception of the development of social motivation (Sapolovych, 2013; Skuratsky, 2005).

It should be noted that visibility is the first thing that every teacher uses as the means of increasing interest and is one of the methods of forming motivation. Visibility fulfills its functions as the means of knowledge, illustration of thought, development of observation and better memorization of material. In order to maintain and develop the students' motivation, teachers need to train students to work intensively and cognitively, to develop their perseverance, willpower and purposefulness, to encourage the implementation of tasks of increased difficulty, to define goals, tasks and criteria of assessment clearly. The most significant methods of social motivation may include; the establishment of relationships between a teacher and a student and involving students in the organization of the educational process in evaluative activities (Taber, 2015). The main aim is not to lose their initial motivation, but rather to intensify it in every possible way.

This can be achieved in two ways (Bartashanikov, Bartashnikova, Zelena, 2002; Jacobs, Tsien, 2017). The first way is to see successes but not failures. After all, the failure leads to disappointment – disappointment leads to a lack of motivation – the lack of motivation leads to a direct refusal to make another attempt. Conversely, success leads to victory – victory leads to motivation – motivation leads to a desire to win –and desire to win leads to new successes. The second way is to "teach through play" or "to play and teach", because playing is a lifestyle and activity of a child. Playing is always fun and interesting. During a game, a child unconsciously absorbs a lot of information. Recently, the method of the unconscious study of foreign languages is becoming increasingly popular –the method of the so-called "25th frame effect", according to which information is often, but unobtrusively and incidentally, almost imperceptible for consciousness (Shpika, 2007).

Playing creates similar conditions when foreign words, letters, rules of reading and conversions are acquired involuntarily by frequent repetition at a time when the child is captured by the game's own process. Whatever techniques and methods of developing the motivation of studying, increasing interest in educational work and the activation of cognitive activity, we did not use in the classroom and outside, it is necessary to remember that all our work should be aimed at the development of the personality of students and their self-determination.

Overall, it may be noted that students in the lesson should be tuned to an effective process of learning, have a personal interest in it and understand what and why they will do it. To achieve the needed result a teacher can use a variety of techniques for the development of cognitive motives.

Techniques for the development of cognitive motives

1. Motivation through conversation.

In the warming-up part of the lesson, the teacher outlines the range of issues that will be viewed in the lesson. This involves the knowledge and subjective experience of students, presents interesting examples and paradoxical situations, demonstrates the connection between material that is currently being studied and previously studied material. The teacher points to the practical significance of the topic under consideration.

2. Motivation of the educational activity by creating a problem situation.

Putting the questions, demonstrating the experiment or giving students a logical contradiction, for solving and explaining a phenomenon of which students have lack of knowledge.

Methods to create problem situations include the following approaches:

First, student face contradictions between new facts or phenomena and available knowledge, if necessary, theoretical explanation and the search for ways to use them.

Second, student face the need to select the right information (situation with excess information).

Third, the use of contradictions between the students' knowledge and practical tasks.

Fourth, the use of incentives for comparison, comparison and contrasting of facts, phenomena, rules and actions and their generalization.

Fifth, the use of the contradictions between existing technical solutions and the new requirements put forward by the practice.

Sixth, the use of incentives for students to identify internal and inter-subject connections and relationships between phenomena.

Motivation of educational activity by using "brainstorming" technology

The essence of the method is in the collective creative work on solving a certain complex problem. All students combine a collaborative effort to find the truth. Reflecting on a certain problem, complementing each other, picking up and developing some ideas and discarding others.

Model of sequence of actions.

a. Problem formulation.

Setting tasks, defining the terms of consideration of proposals.

b. Statement of judgments, ideas.

Writing ideas on the board.

c. Substantiation of ideas by their authors.

General discourse around presented ideas: correctness, feasibility and originality.

Choosing the best idea. Justification of the final choice. Making up of work outs (Matyukhina, 1984).

d. Motivation of educational activity by working out texts of periodicals.

In order to enhance the work and interest of students at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher distributes newspapers, magazines or pages of these publications, which contains information relevant to the topic of the lesson. The teacher asks the students to pay attention to specific information, emphasizing its importance for each student and the possibilities of its everyday use.

e. Motivation according to technology - "Unfinished sentence".

Students are given the pages of the essay - "My Thoughts" and explain that everyone has to complete the proposed sentences on their own. The proposed sentences refer to the lesson topic and students have enough knowledge and personal experience to express their own thoughts. After

having finished the work, students read their sentences to the whole class. It should be mentioned that students have to be ready to discuss the friend's response or ask him to reason his variant of the ending.

f. Motivation of educational activity by making self-made visual materials.

At the beginning of the study, the students receive a list of visual materials that they can make. In the classroom students demonstrate self-made tools, models, drawings that explain a particular natural phenomenon, maps of ancient settlement, described in the textbook, explaining the idea of creating and the features of their proposed manuals. Especially valuable are the tools that students have invented themselves and which correctly reflect the content of the material being studied. In the classroom there is a permanent exhibition of self-made visual aids, which enables all students to get acquainted with the creative achievements of classmates. The use of self-made visual aids in the lessons promotes increased interest in learning, develops research skills, increases the productivity of teaching work, fills the lesson with the elements of interest and causes students to feel involved in the events of the lesson (Bozhovich, 1972).

g. Motivation of educational activities through the use of creative tasks

Students are asked a question like: "What will happen if ...?"

In these issues, paradoxical situations are considered. Students can independently pick such questions, ask their classmates, discuss, defend their position, using knowledge of the subject, create crossword puzzles, scan words, riddles, think of artistic tasks, for example, "How do I imagine ...". Here you can offer both a natural phenomenon, a scholar and an event. Write fantastic stories, essays and poems using knowledge of the subject.

h. Motivation through the usage of the fiction and popular scientific literature.

Use of excerpts from works is possible to illustrate the material of setting a question and consolidate knowledge. The use of fiction and popular scientific literature in the process of studying school subjects, contributes to the intensification of cognitive activity and the consolidation of a holistic view of the surrounding world.

i. Motivation of educational activity by creating a situation of success.

Experience has shown that it is very difficult to work with slow learners. To make the process of learning new material easier for them, we offer such a method, as the dosage of the presentation of the educational material, that is, the submission of its individual small semantic doses with mandatory consolidation. At the beginning of the new topic, reproductive learning methods are used to ensure that students are convinced of the ability to reproduce material, and then creative methods are already used.

Students carry out tasks using a tooltip, acting on an algorithm, and so on. In this case, there is a problem: as, for example, evaluate the elementary (in the teacher's opinion) student action – the reproduction of a small dose of the material, the solution of an easy task, the implementation of easy independent work [6]. Given that for some students this training was as affordable as possible, learning outcomes should be evaluated not only on average, but sometimes on a higher score. This method justifies itself, as the students begin to believe in their own strength and subsequently all are better captured with the material of the subject.

j. Motivation that is based on the activity approach to studying.

1. Educational activity under the guidance of a teacher. Possible options of the tasks for students:

-What exactly will be the result of your work in the classroom?

-What are the ways in which you can achieve the effectiveness of your work in the classroom?

-Are there other ways to work?

2. Independent educational activity.

This is done in the case when the individual stages of work or work are generally performed by an apprentice without the teacher's assistance. It is possible to use the algorithm in the lesson or most of the lessons on a specific topic. The teacher acts as a consultant.

3. Self-education activity of the student

The student manages his cognitive activity independently, performing it according to his knowledge, goals and motives.

k. Motivation of educational activity with extrapolation.

Methods of extrapolation are based on the function of the brain to predict. The ability to transfer existing knowledge skills and ways of working in a different situation is a vivid sign of creative thinking. The methods of extrapolation include: transferring the object to an imaginary future, arbitrary transfer of parameters, the use of paradoxes, transferring oneself to an imaginary future and forecasting the development of events in view of this future, conducting the competition of the proposed theories, consideration of the object from different sides and a holistic view of the problem. Such a method is expedient, for example, when considering issues related to the environment.

l. Motivation through cognitive games and gaming situations.

Here are some examples of gaming situations: the use of games and gaming situations which does not require a significant amount of time either for preparation or for conducting. However, they contribute to a significant revival of students' activity in the lessons.

- Crocodile: It is advisable to use recurrence and generalization of educational information in the lessons. The class is divided into several teams. The leader of each team in a whisper tells the contents of the task. With the help of facial expressions and gestures, the content of the request is communicated to the whole class so as not to lose the substantive subject proposed for the object's identification.

- Ping pong: Used to test the homework. Two pupils are called to the board. They alternately ask each other prepared at home questions. The class appreciates the quality of questions and answers. The originality, ingenuity, humor, and the depth of answers are considered.

- Chain: Chains can be different: a chain of thoughts, a chain of answers to questions, a chain of formulas, a chain of tasks, selected so that the answer to the previous problem is the condition of the following problem. This method can be used during the frontal survey- ascertaining the level of the assimilation of a new material, solving tasks, performing ex-pertinent tasks. The proposed game situation contributes to the development of the attention.

- Word Jumble. The task is to compile words-meaning from the syllables written on cards, explain their meaning and basic characteristics.

For example: ne-pho-cs-ti – phonetics.

Students are given task-cards with written sentences, words in which are confusing. The task is to construct sentences correctly and to explain what kind of phenomenon or concept it refers to. Reception can be used during generalization of the studied material (Vdovenko, 1993).

m. Motivation through the usage of the methods of work with the text to find the error.

Students are given short texts with the frivolous text that directly relates to the material being studied. Then the teacher collects texts and invites students to read the same text on the screen, but make some changes (preferably false). Students should compare text with the previously read and identify errors and inaccuracies. Evaluation of students' activity can be done by checking their notebook, or in the process of discussion. Thus, the motives are the main forces driving didactic progress. They rank first among the factors that determine their productiveness. The study and proper use of existing motive, the formation of the necessary, leading the development of the person and its movement – the core of pedagogical work.

Conclusion

Thus, motivation has a great importance in learning foreign languages in order to develop learning and cognitive skills and requiring such activity based on their needs. It should be noted that in general terms, motivation has a two-way character. First, it can be external and act as a requirement of curricula, programs, educational institutions, teachers or parents. Secondly, it can be conditioned by the inner feelings of the student, which is connected with personal interests, beliefs, intentions, dreams, and ideals, formed by earlier instructions.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no financial conflicts of interest.

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Helping Behaviour and Self-Esteem of the Helped in Inclusive Schooling: A Double-Edged Sword?

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Abstract

Despite the plethora of studies that have attempted to examine self-esteem in a variety of contexts, few studies have focused on investigating the self-esteem of students with visual impairments as a function of receiving help from their sighted peers within the context of inclusive schooling. Employing a qualitative approach, this study examines the ways sighted students assist their peers with visual impairments in an inclusive secondary school setting in relation to the self-esteem of the help-recipients. It does so, by highlighting the decision for seeking help and threat to self-esteem models. The findings have indicated that, sighted peers assisted their friends with visual impairments in a number of ways despite the fact that, some of the help-recipients were unsatisfied with the help given. Generally, students with visual impairments were comfortable seeking assistance from their sighted peers, with high self-esteem levels despite the concerns raised. Finally, discussions of these findings and recommendations are provided.

Keywords: helping behaviour, inclusive schooling, qualitative study, self-esteem, visual impairment.

Introduction

There has been global consensus that inclusive education is the appropriate education practice in the contemporary world. The reasons underlying this conclusion include, but are not limited to, the need for appreciation of individual differences and enhancing social cohesion among students with a view to making educational ends meet. This is because, whether in regular or in inclusive schools, the aim of schooling signified by the existence of schools, has always been facilitating students' learning (Santrock, 2006). In many countries, including Tanzania, learning for students with disabilities has had been confronted by many challenges (Blacket al., 2015; Espelage et al., 2015; Spooner, Browder, 2015; Tuomi et al., 2015; Westbrook, Croft, 2015). Thus, efforts towards addressing such challenges are important in order to achieve equity in education in Tanzania. As a means of achieving this educational goal, an emphasis on nurturing positive social behaviours among

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key education stakeholders such students cannot be underestimated. The positive social behaviours have the potential for developing positive social view of others, useful social skills, a sense of individual differences, and caring for one another which may bring about supportive relationships among students in schools. Helping behaviour is one of those useful social behaviours for human existence as social beings (Lefevor et al., 2017; Melis, 2018; Paley, 2014).

The existence of helping behaviour among students in this era of inclusive schooling may contribute to efforts required to achieve education for all more successfully. Arguably, in order to make students with disabilities have equal access, participation and finally succeed in education in inclusive schools like those without disabilities, support, which may be realized through the help from their peers and teachers in the context of learning, remains significant. In this context, nurtured with helping behaviour, students without disabilities would be in a position to assist their disabled counterparts in the course of learning. The context of understanding this study, that was conducted to find out how the sighted students assist their peers with visual impairments in an inclusive secondary school in Tanzania. Also, it was the aim of this research to uncover the level of self-esteem among the students being assisted.

The available social psychological literature indicates that, both seeking and receiving help can be regarded as a double-edged sword as, under certain conditions they may be threatening experiences to the help-recipient. This is because, people may be grateful for receiving help and on one hand they may experience negative feelings when they are helped, including lowered self-esteem (Horowitz, Bordens, 1995; Feigin et al., 2014). Fisher et al. as cited in Horowitz and Bordens (1995) point out to four possible negative outcomes of receiving help; creation of inequitable relationship between the helper and help-recipient, threatened freedom of the help-recipient, making negative attributions about the intent of the helpers by the help-recipient and a loss of self-esteem of the help-recipient.

The threat to self-esteem model states that, individuals may refuse accepting help because doing so threatens their self-esteem (Horowitz, Bordens, 1995). This experience is determined by various factors such as the type of task requiring help (easy vs difficulty), and the source of the help (friends vs strangers) (Bordens, Horowitz, 2008). Like helping; seeking help involves incurring some costs (Bordens, Horowitz, 2008; DePaulo, Fisher, 1980). Simply put; someone is more likely to seek help when their needs are low, he or she seek help from a friend when the cost involved is high. Help-seeking may be associated with some form of social stigma coupled with feelings of failure. Given such circumstances, like when a person decides to give help to someone, in deciding whether to seek for help, an individual undergoes a series of decision making processes which involve self-questioning (Bordens, Horowitz, 2008). Gross and McMullen, as cited in Bordens and Horowitz (2008), contend that a person asks three questions before seeking help; a) Do I have a problem that help will alleviate? b) Should I seek help? c) Who is most capable of providing the kind of help I need? Generally, one's decision to receive help is determined by both situational and personality variables.

Various researches and in different contexts have examined self-esteem, which is generally referred to as how people perceive themselves, as persons in which those with a high level of it possess a positive view of themselves and vice-versa (Trautwein, Lu¨dtke, Ko¨ller, Baumert, 2006), from time to time in areas of psychological and educational sciences. Peleg (2009) explored differences in test anxiety and self-esteem between adolescents with learning disabilities and those without them and generally found that those with learning disabilities had higher levels of test anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem as compared to their nondisabled peers.

In another study, Ales, Rappo and Pepi (2012) found that children with dyslexia, reading comprehension disabilities, and mathematical disabilities had lower ratings of self-esteem at school and employed more self-handicapping strategies than children whose learning was normal. On the other hand, Klein (2017) who conducted a study testing whether helping other people can increase helpers' perceptions of meaning in life and found that, individuals' personal worth and self-esteem which enhanced their view of having meaningful life was linked to their prosocial tendencies.

Further to that, literature has shown the correlation between students' self-esteem and their school achievements. Self-esteem is related to academic achievement and social functioning of individuals (Hisken, 2011; Prihadi, Chua, 2012). Low self-esteem is likely to prevent students from tackling difficult issues or feel satisfied with their progress and success (Hisken, 2011). Baumeister,

Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) report that, it is not always the case that students' high self-esteem leads to good school performance but rather high self-esteem is partly the result of good school performance. But generally, people's high self-esteem enhances their self-initiatives and pleasant feelings towards some tasks (Baumeister et al., 2003).

Based on the brief review of literature, this study extends on studying helping behaviour and self-esteem in educational settings by considering disability issues and inclusion. It was of interest to determine the level of self-esteem of the students with visual impairment in relation to the assistance they receive from their sighted peers. It also sought to find out whether students with visual impairment were comfortable seeking and receiving help from their sighted peers in an inclusive secondary school setting. To this end, the study addressed four questions;

1. What types of assistance do sighted students offer their peers with visual impairment in an inclusive secondary school setting?
2. How is the helping behaviour of the sighted students towards their peers with visual impairment enhanced in an inclusive secondary school setting?
3. How comfortable are students with visual impairment receiving assistance from their sighted peers in an inclusive secondary school setting?
4. What level of self-esteem do the helped students with visual impairment have in an inclusive secondary school setting?

Methods

Type of study, sample and sampling techniques

This study used a qualitative approach employing an embedded single case study research design. Case studies are advantageous in that, they can be used to bring out the details of a phenomenon from the view points of the participants by using multiple sources of data as determined by the situations in which the data is collected (Denscombe, 2007; Tellis, 1997). The use of case study designs enhances the rigour of a study through triangulation (Denscombe, 2007). Denscombe views the case study approach as relevant to small-scale studies that concentrate on one or a few research sites. The present study was conducted in one secondary school. This enhanced an in-depth analysis of the helping behaviour of the sighted students in that setting through interviews and focus group discussions.

The participants included teachers, students with visual impairment and sighted students. Specifically, the headmaster provided information about sighted students' prosocial behaviour and the strategies used by the school to promote them in his school. Both regular and special education teachers provided information about the strategies they use, and that used by the school, in enhancing students' helping behaviour in this school.

Involving students with visual impairment was central to this study. These students experience several challenges in inclusive school while accessing education. This, unquestionably, makes them seek assistance from their sighted peers. In this study, they provided information pertaining to their comfort level in seeking and receiving help from their sighted peers. They also provided information about their self-esteem levels within the inclusive settings. Should there be any costs incurred by these students while seeking assistance from their sighted peers, the students with VI were important sources of this information.

To select the participants for this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed in which two types of purposive sampling technique were used; *criterion* and *snowball* sampling. Whereas criterion sampling occurs when a researcher samples all units (cases or individuals) that meet a particular criterion and snowball sampling is done when a researcher uses few initially sampled participants to mention other participants relevant to the research in question (Bryman, 2012). Through criterion sampling, the researcher selected the headmaster, regular and special education teachers and students with visual impairment. On the other hand, snowball sampling technique was used to select the sighted students who participated in this study. The students with VI were employed in carrying out this exercise.

Data collection methods and procedures involved

Interviews and focus group discussions

It is worth noting that the first author was involved in collecting all the data in the field. As a data collection method, interviews are highly useful in gathering information, if a study involves

exploration of more complex and subtle phenomena (Denscombe, 2007). In this study, semi-structured and unstructured face-to-face personal interviews were used to collect data from the headmaster, the teachers and the students in order to make them free to express their views to maintain confidentiality. Specifically, the following necessitated the use of personal interviews.

First, given his position, the headmaster was interviewed individually. Secondly, students with visual impairment were interviewed individually to ensure anonymity. Ensuring the anonymity of these respondents was important because it was thought that they would still need the help of their sighted counterparts after the study. Thirdly, the teachers were interviewed individually so that they could feel free to express their views about the sighted students' attitudes towards the visually impaired students, especially if the former offered help to the latter when asked to do so. This took the form of *unstructured interviewing* in order to allow flexibility in gathering the required data. Unstructured interviewing was also used to probe the sighted students on similar issues as the teachers.

Focus group discussions enable a researcher to collect data from a group of people, typically four to six (Creswell, 2012). Like interviews for example, focus groups discussions are flexible and appropriate in gathering data on social phenomena. The focus group discussions were held with the students with visual impairment for practically all of them experience similar challenges at the school. They provided information on how they were helped by and interacted with the sighted peers. The comfort that the students felt was also looked into. Two focus group discussions were held, each consisted of five participants. The criterion used in selecting the participants was how the visually impaired students related to each other. To ensure anonymity of their views, the participants were insisted upon not to name or imply any of their sighted peers during the discussions. It may be pointed out that, the interviews and focus group discussions allowed flexibility in what could be discussed or asked, as it was possible to rephrase the questions.

All the interviews and focus group discussions were held at the school where the study was conducted. They were conducted in Kiswahili so that, the respondents could participate fully. Appointments with the teachers were made because they had overcharged calendars. The researcher interviewed the teachers in their offices, school corridors and in the resource room for the visually impaired students. Eight interviews were held with teachers, because it was noted that no new data could be collected. Indeed, with qualitative research, a researcher can be satisfied with the amount of data collected when a saturation point is reached when collecting data (Bryman, 2012; Kumar, 2005).

The interview with the headmaster was held in his office. Most of students' interviews were conducted in the resource room for the visually impaired students. Other interviews were conducted in selected places outside the classrooms. These places were conducive for the purpose. Eight interviews were held with the students. This was because with the eight interviews, redundancy in the data being gathered was noticed. Note books and a voice recorder were used to record data during the interviews and focus group discussions. After interviews and focus group discussions, the data were arranged in meaningful formats to ease further analysis.

Observation

Observation is a research technique used to verify or nullify information provided in face-to-face encounters (Hancock, 1998). Yin (2011) contends that, observations increase the chance for the researcher to obtain a valid and realistic picture of the phenomenon being studied. In qualitative research, observations rely on words to describe the setting, the behaviours and the interactions with a view to understanding them (Ary et al., 2010). The researcher used non-participant observations to collect data on how the students with visual impairments were being helped. During the fieldwork, in-class and out-of-class observations were made for a period of two weeks. The school time table determined the time of making in-class observations. The observations were made so as to determine helping behaviour of the sighted students. In particular, the researcher observed, among others, the kind of help that the sighted students provided to their peers with visual impairments, overall interactions and relationships between the two groups of students.

Questionnaires

After consultation with the headmaster and introductory remarks to students, 11 questionnaires were distributed to students with visual impairments. The sighted students helped them complete the questionnaires. At the end of the exercise, all the questionnaires were collected. Closed-ended questionnaires were used in this study. Creswell (2012) notes that closed-ended questionnaires are effective means of obtaining useful information for supporting theories and concepts reviewed in a given study. To determine whether students with visual impairments were comfortable asking the sighted students for help and their levels of self-esteem, the students completed a closed-ended questionnaire. Their comfort was measured using Likert scale questionnaires that consisted of seven items.

The students were asked to either agree or disagree with what had been stated in each item on a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). If a student agreed with items 1, and 7 and disagreed with items 2, 3 and 5 (as they appear in the results section), then the student was comfortable asking the non-visually students for help. On the other hand, if the student disagreed with items 6 and 7 and agreed with items 2, 3 and 5 (as they appear in results section), then the student was not comfortable asking the sighted students for help. If a student agreed with item number 4, then the student was uncomfortable asking the sighted students for help and vice versa. To measure or assess the students' levels of self-esteem, students with visual impairments completed a questionnaire with seven statements. The statements were adapted from a *global self-esteem questionnaire* (Larsen & Buss, 2005). According to Larsen and Buss (2005), 'high scores on self-esteem are obtained by answering items 1 to 4 as *true* and items 5 to 7 as *false*' (p. 453), which implies higher self-esteem for the individual. In this study, the students were asked to indicate whether a statement was true or false. If a student indicated that items 1 to 4 were true and items 5 to 7 false, then the student's level of self-esteem was high and vice versa.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data obtained through interviews and observations were thematically analyzed, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke have identified six phases of data analysis; familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. The data presented in this study was analyzed following the six phases. In the first phase, the data were transcribed and re-read. Then, the transcribed data were carefully coded and potential themes were collected and grouped based on their relationships. At this stage, the grouped themes were reviewed in order to generate a thematic map of the analysis. After that, definitions and names for each theme were produced. Finally, the most relevant data was selected and an informative report was produced. It should be pointed out, however, that the phases overlapped in some instances.

The data collected through interviews, focus group discussions and observations was first written in Kiswahili and then translated into English. After being translated, the data were meaningfully classified and cross-checked for errors. The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. After collecting the completed questionnaires, the researcher assigned identification numbers to the questionnaires for easy reference. Then, the data was entered on the SPSS computer software. When the exercise of entering the data was complete, the frequencies and percentages were determined which were then interpreted as the findings of the study. These findings were presented using tables. To ease analysis and discussion of the findings, responses from the questionnaires were accordingly combined. That is, because of their similar semantic implications, responses for '*strongly disagree*' and '*disagree*' were taken to mean '*disagree*', and those for '*agree*' and '*strongly agree*' meant '*agree*' as they are used throughout in findings/results section.

Results

Theme 1: Types of Assistance Provided to Students with Visual Impairments

This study sought to establish the ways through which sighted students assist their peers with visual impairments in an inclusive school. After the analysis, the following themes emerged as the types of assistance sighted students offer their peers with visual impairments.

Subtheme 1: Mobility assistance

All the interviewed teachers pointed out that, the sighted students helped those with VI in a number of ways, including mobility assistance. This involved movement within the school

environment such as moving from the dormitories to the classrooms and vice versa, from the classrooms to the resource room and vice versa, from the dormitories to the resource room and vice versa and movement outside the school environment. When asked on the types of assistance that the sighted students offered those with VI, one teacher noted that:

They walk together and when they are in class they sit together. The sighted students assist those with visual impairment in class and in the dormitories. After class hours, they go to the resource room where the sighted students read for the students with VI (Responses from an interview).

Subtheme 2: Assistance in academics

With respect to academics, teachers' narratives were similar to the views expressed by some of the students with VI. The students talked about how they were assisted academically by their sighted counterparts. The students said that, very few sighted day students were willing to help their classmates with VI. The following are some of the accounts given by some of the students with VI on the academic assistance they received from their sighted peers:

They simply don't like to read for us. The situation has been like that since I came to this school. There were two students who helped us read notes and books. Unfortunately, one of them has moved to another school. The other problem is that the sighted students don't lend us exercise books timely. One of our teachers talked to them about this issue but they haven't changed. If we get an exercise book, we work alone. Nobody assists us, I mean. Sometimes, if a teacher comes to teach us, we ask him/her for teaching notes, write and then return it (Responses from a Focus Group Discussion).

The same student continued saying as follows:

Yes, teachers say that those without visual impairment should help us read out notes. But if you ask someone to read for you she agrees reluctantly. Hence she reads things that are not accurate. That being the case, we decide to read the notes ourselves. I mean, the students with albinism do so for us (Responses from a Focus Group Discussion).

Subtheme 3: Daily living assistance

During the face to face interviews, most of the teachers and students indicated that the sighted students helped their counterparts with VI put on their clothes and clean their bedrooms. With regard to this kind of help, one of the teachers noted that:

They assist them in many ways. For example, a sighted student can help a student with visual impairment put on her clothes. But nobody washes clothes for them. Just to make them aware that they should appear properly dressed before others (Responses from an interview).

It was further capitalized by teachers that, sighted students and those with VI noted that students with VI were being assisted by their sighted counterparts while performing recreational activities within the school; *Recreational-related assistance*. It was noted that, during graduation ceremonies for example, the sighted students and those with VI composed poems, songs and drama plays together. This suggests that the former helped the latter.

Subtheme 4: Social and emotional support

Through interviews, it was further found that sighted students provided social and emotional support to their peers with VI. This made them see the general school atmosphere as positive to them. Additionally, the sighted students accompanied the students with VI to hospital. On this particular issue, one of the interviewed teachers noted that:

Generally, the sighted students assist those with VI when in their dormitories. When it happens that one of the students with VI is sick, it is usually the sighted students who report to teachers. They also volunteer themselves to accompany the sick ones to the hospitals (Responses from an interview).

Theme 2: Strategies Used to Enhance Helping Behaviour of Sighted Students in Inclusive Secondary School Settings

Subtheme 1: Strategies by students with visual impairments

Overall, the visually impaired students did not do anything that would make the non-disabled students help them. However, they believed that good relationships with their counterparts helped live peacefully and work together. Good relationships involved the students respecting each other; using good language and the like. The visually impaired students said that they always respected their non-disabled counterparts. Further, one of the students with visual impairment pointed out that more education should be given to the non-disabled students so that they can live peacefully with the visually impaired students. Specifically, the student said that, ‘...because some of the non-disabled students don’t have helping behaviour should be given seminars about how they can improve their relationships with us visually impaired students’ (Responses from an interview).

Subtheme 2: School level and teachers’ strategies

Helping behaviour of the sighted students, as practiced in the school, is in fact taken as a matter of every day routine. The behaviour exists in the school. During the interviews, most of the teachers and students said that there was no strategy in place to promote the prosociality of the non-disabled students. However, some of the teachers and students referred to the school’s provision of material rewards to the students who helped the students with disabilities. The rewards such as certificates were given during graduation ceremonies. For example, one of the teachers noted that the rewards motivated the students without disabilities to assist their visually impaired counterparts.

It was also pointed out that most teachers equated motivation for students who acted prosocially towards their visually impaired counterparts with monetary incentives, even though the school had no money to give the students. The school administration tells the students during *school barazas* to recognize their individual differences and ask them to help each other.

Additionally, most of the teachers said that they used the strategies below to make the students without disabilities to help those with disabilities.

Subtheme 3: Advising and encouragement: Advising and encouraging the non-disabled students to assist those with disabilities, including the students with visual impairment was among the ways used by the teachers to make the students without disabilities help those with disabilities. It involved educating the non-disabled students on the importance of helping their visually impaired counterparts. For example, one of the teachers said, “*In order to enhance helping behaviour among the non-disabled students, I underscore the importance of helping the students with disabilities.*”

This view is similar to the view expressed by another teacher who said he instilled help-giving attitude in the non-disabled students. The teacher said, “*I help the students develop a positive attitude towards their fellows with visual impairment. I also tell them not to stigmatize the visually impaired students.*”

As a means of promoting helping and/or humanistic virtues among the non-disabled students such as patience, tolerance and sympathy, one of the teachers said, “*I insist to the non-disabled students when helping the students with visual impairment that they should be patient, tolerant and sympathetic towards their friends*”

Yet another teacher pointed out that:

We talk to them on the importance to assist those with visual impairment. Usually the teacher in charge of the dormitories talks to them, especially to those who are willing to help the students with disabilities. We usually tell all students that they should regard those with disabilities as normal students, and that they should not stigmatize them. We do this in order to make the students live together peacefully, it reduces a sense of segregation among them (Responses from an interview).

It was further reported that during orientation period non-disabled students were informed of the existence of visually impaired students in the school so that they could develop a positive attitude towards them. In relation to this, one of the teachers said, “*I counsel them and tell them that they may also have disabilities.*”

Subtheme 4: The kind of comfort felt by students with visual impairments

This study analyzed the self-esteem of students with visual impairment in inclusive setting. It sought to establish whether the students with visual impairment were comfortable seeking the help of their sighted counterparts. The aim was to find out the patterns of behaviour and acceptability of the visually impaired students to their sighted counterparts. It was hoped that the comfort or discomfort the students felt would enable to establish how the sighted students assisted their peers with visual impairments.

Table 1 summarizes the results regarding the comfort of the students with visual impairments felt.

Table 1. Visually impaired students’ kind of comfort derived from the assistance they get from the sighted students (N=11)

Item	Response			
	Disagree		Agree	
	Number	%	Number	%
1. I am comfortable seeking academic assistance from any sighted student.	-	-	11	100
2. I sometimes feel indebted to a student who may have offered me assistance.	8	72.7	3	27.3
3. I sometimes feel inferior when seeking and receiving assistance from sighted students.	8	72.7	3	27.3
4. I sometimes feel bad when I am not able to reciprocate the assistance provided to me by a sighted friend.	1	9.1	10	90.1
5. I hesitate to ask someone to help with something even when I face difficulties.	6	54.6	5	45.4
6. I usually seek assistance from specific students, and not everybody.	4	36.4	7	63.7
7. I deserve to be assisted by my friends; so I feel good when they assist me.	1	9.1	10	90.1

Theme 3: Level of self-esteem among students with VI in inclusive settings

The data regarding the level of self-esteem for students with visual impairments were gathered using questionnaires. The summary of data gathered to determine the level of self-esteem for these students in inclusive secondary school settings is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Responses of Self-Esteem among Students with VI (N=11)

Item	Response			
	True		False	
	Number	%	Number	%
1. I feel good about myself in this school.	11	100	-	-
2. I feel I am a person of worth, the equal of other students in this school.	11	100	-	-
3. I am able to do things as well as most other students.	7	63.6	4	36.4
4. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	9	81.8	2	18.2
5. I certainly feel useless at times.	2	18.2	9	81.8
6. At times I think am not good at all.	1	9.1	10	90.9
7. I think I do not have much to be proud of.	2	18.2	9	81.8

Discussion

This study has attempted to establish how sighted students assist their peers with visual impairments in an inclusive secondary school setting. In line with the research questions to which the study addressed itself, a number of things have been revealed.

Firstly, it has been indicated that sighted students assisted their peers with visual impairments in academics, social and emotional aspects. However, it has been found that the majority of sighted students were, at times, unwilling to assist their peers with visual impairments. It can be learned that the assistance that sighted students offer their peers with visual impairments is insufficient. This constrains learning for students with visual impairments in those settings, especially when such students do not report many of the cases when their peers do not assist them. With regard to these findings, contradictory views are observed between students' and teachers' narratives (Kef, Deković, 2004).

The findings showed that some of the students, who were not assisted by their sighted counterparts, did not report the problem to the school administration. It is clear that while sighted students reported some undesirable behaviours of students with VI cases, when students with VI missed assistance were hardly reported. It is logical to establish that many students with VI could not report such cases because the assistance was voluntarily given (part of the findings have been reported elsewhere). Interestingly, students with visual impairments were taking initiatives in carrying out some social roles and tasks on their own with minimal assistance if need be. Consequently, it might be correct to argue that the students with VI do not depend solely on their sighted counterparts. Indeed, they need to be trained on a number of things. Training would make them independent than they are. This is not to say, however, the students should not be helped.

Secondly, various strategies by students with visual impairments, teachers and the school administration have been found to enhance helping behaviour of sighted students in inclusive settings. For instance, the students with visual impairments developed good relationships with their sighted counterparts as a means of sustaining assistance from their sighted peers. However, most of the students with disabilities may lack appropriate social skills within inclusive schools. This is likely to make such students less popular and have fewer friends with minimal participation in groups to which they are members (Frostdad, Pijl, 2007). Having appropriate social skills is one of the essential factors for selecting friends and being accepted in groups of educational value in inclusive schooling (Pijl et al., 2011). It is important that special training on these skills to these

students must be initiated and promoted in inclusive schools. Such trainings in fact should be extended to students without disability for better results as it has been found that such students too lack similar skills in such settings congruent with regarding the need for interventions geared towards addressing the social behaviours of all students in order to make schools more inclusive (Schwab et al., 2015).

Generally, the school administration and the teachers made use of advice and encouragement to promote cooperation and interaction between the sighted students and those with visual impairments. In this case, some teachers reported that in trying to make the sighted students help their peers with visual impairments employed teaching approaches that allowed the students with visual impairment work together with those without disabilities; cooperation and social interaction enhancement strategy. This was a means of making sure that the students cooperated in various activities. The finding suggests that despite the challenges relating to the teaching of inclusive classes, teachers have to realize the need of adjusting their teaching methods to suit inclusive teaching and learning situations. Cooperative learning which is among the strategies advocated for teaching inclusive classes should be emphasized among teachers as it increases social interactions among the students (Kamps et al., 1994). It also enhances learners' academic achievement in inclusive classrooms (Kamps et al., 1994; Fuchs et al., 1997).

There is some evidence that cooperative learning improves the self-esteem of special and remedial students (Jenkins et al., 2003). Arguably, this may partly explain the existence of higher levels of self-esteem among students with visual impairments; it is therefore worth promoting in inclusive teaching. Ultimately, students' helping behaviour and their academic achievements would also be enhanced. However, it is crucial to underline here that teachers are likely to make use of cooperative learning strategies if they are exposed to both the theoretical and practical experiences of these strategies during their initial teacher training (Duran et al., 2017). This reiterates the need for making the strategies an integral component of teacher preparation in Tanzania.

Generally, most of the teachers said that, they usually advised and encouraged the sighted students to assist their peers with visual impairments. Such advice and encouragement consolidated the prosocial behaviour of the helping students in some ways. Also, some of them pointed out that, to some extent, the school administration had played an important role to this end. Insistently, developing inclusive educational leadership and culture is of particular significance in Tanzania, especially with regard to promoting helping behaviour of all those involved in inclusive schools. The development and sustainability of inclusive education practices are partly dependent upon effective inclusive educational leadership and culture. The reason being that the development of more inclusive approaches requires collaborative efforts within particular organization in which leaders are essential in building organizational culture which allows for social learning which supports inclusive education best practices (Ainscow, Sandill, 2010; Zollers, Ramanathan, Yu, 1999). Promoting helping behaviour among students is one step, based on this paper, towards achieving inclusive education in its broader sense in the country.

Thirdly, this study assessed the comfort level of students with visual impairments resulting from being assisted by their sighted peers. The findings have indicated that the students with visual impairments were comfortable seeking assistance of their sighted counterparts. However, the data also show the majority of the students indicated that, their failure to reciprocate the assistance given to them made them feel bad, implying that such students were not comfortable seeking assistance from their sighted peers. There might be some other factors contributing to students being uncomfortable seeking assistance from their peers and even other members within the school and wider community. For instance, it is established that one's willingness to seek help can be affected by the way help-givers react to help-seekers. Certainly, those experiencing negative reactions from help-givers are likely to be less willing to seek assistance in future and thereby compromising further opportunities to provide needed services to such students as reported by Hartman-Hall and Haaga (2002).

While the former observation contradicts the data which was obtained through interviews, during which some of the students claimed that the majority of the sighted students were not willing to offer help to their peers with visual impairments, the latter observation signals the effects of the existed asymmetrical relationships between visually impaired students and the sighted ones. It should be kept in mind that, the nature of the students (those with partial vision and boarding

students; part of the results reported elsewhere) who willingly assisted the students with visual impairments may be one of the reasons why there is a contradiction between the two kinds of data.

Finally, regarding the level of self-esteem among students with visual impairment, the findings have indicated that, the majority of these students had high levels of self-esteem except a few of them. It may be argued that, the high levels of self-esteem shown by these students imply that they understand and accept their disabling condition. Also, it is possible that the help they received from their sighted counterparts and from the students with albinism made them accept their condition, for it is said that peers influence each other's self-esteem. It is also possible that the academic performance of the students with visual impairment will be good, for it said that a positive self-esteem helps enhance one's academic performance (Hisken, 2011).

However, the findings have indicated that some of the students with visual impairment have low self-esteem as such students indicated that at times they felt as being useless with nothing to be proud of. This has two implications; the existence of some form of negative attitudes towards students with visual impairment and inability of students with visual impairment to accept their condition. Therefore, the school administration should bear in mind that although there are good students devoted in assisting those with visual impairment, the implicit forms of undesirable behaviours of some other sighted students towards their peers with visual impairments exist in the school. Deliberate efforts should be taken against such behaviours if a more inclusive school community has to be developed. One way of achieving this, is through the promotion of values of equity and social justice in schools and wider community. When developed, as highlighted by Ballard (2013), social justice values are likely to enhance supportive and caring school environment for all leading to a sustainable future of inclusive education in the country.

Conclusion

Inclusive education is supported and implemented in many countries. It is indisputable that its implementation is faced with a number of challenges in Tanzania, but the helping behaviour of students in inclusive settings may lead to the success of the education for all initiatives. The present study sought to analyze the helping behaviour of sighted students in relation to the help they offer their peers with visual impairments in inclusive secondary school settings. Generally, the findings have indicated that sighted students helped their peers with visual impairments in a number of ways, and the helped were comfortable seeking assistance from their sighted peers which in turn made them have high levels of self-esteem. While this might not be the sole determinant of students' self-esteem in the study context, the study capitalizes on the need to understand students' social behaviour for a better understand of social factors that might facilitate or impeded learning of students in inclusive schooling contexts. Unquestionably, this is one of the few studies that have ever focused on social behaviour of students at that level of education in the country

Thus, the study informs the readers on the kinds of assistance that sighted students provide to their visually impaired counterparts. It has revealed the strategies used to enhance helping behaviour of the sighted students and the comfort and self-esteem levels of students with visual impairments in inclusive settings. Despite its strengths, the study suffers from two main limitations. The first is, its limited sample size which could not allow sophisticated statistical analyses procedures to determine the effect of and/or the relationship between receiving help and the self-esteem of help-recipients. The second is that the study did not investigate the self-esteem of the sighted peers (helpers) in the inclusive schooling context in relation to their help-giving behaviour which could have provided more insights into the *double-edged* nature of such behaviour.

Recommendations

In light of the noted limitations and the general findings of this study, the following are recommended;

1. This study was conducted in one research site with a smaller sample size, thus, a quantitative study is recommended in future to address similar issues. In such a study, the self-esteem of those providing help should be examined as well.
2. Students with visual impairment completed questionnaires with the help of their sighted friends. It could have been better if the questionnaires were in form of braille print that could allow these students complete the questionnaires on their own, because doing so could make them feel

free in completing them. Therefore, future research should be done in similar contexts addressing this shortfall.

3. The helping behaviour among sighted students has been found to be important in increasingly diverse classrooms. Therefore, it is important to have clearly stated mechanisms of promoting this type of behaviour to students and other members of school community in order to develop a sense of helping, which in turn will stimulate the appreciation of individual differences in educational settings.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no financial conflicts of interest.

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