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WHEN SOCIAL SCIENCE MEETS COMPUTER SCIENCE...

Webinar of Computational Social Science Laboratory (CSSL@CUHK)

The Rise of the Low-quality Journals: The Case of MDPI

19 March 2026 (Thursday), 09:30 - 11:00 (UTC+8, HKT)

Abstract

The past decade has witnessed an explosive growth of research productivity in China. Despite the impressive gains, some Chinese scholars seek to publish in low quality journals, or even paper mills and utilize unscrupulous agents due to various reasons. Founded in 2010, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI) is a publisher of open-access scientific journals. Due to its business model that prioritizes operational speed and business interests, many of MDPI journals are considered low-quality journals.

Utilizing articles published by MDPI between 2014-2023, the current study explored the characteristics and dynamic evolution of the Chinese authors' co-authorship network in MDPI's journals. Our results indicated that there is a dramatic expansion of academic collaborations over the past decade with distinct topological characteristics. Besides the substantial increase in size over years, coauthor clusters tend to be stable, overlapping, but non-merging, suggesting a transition process from "leech off" to "branch out" among coauthors.



Prof. Tianji Cai
Professor
Department of Sociology
University of Macau

Biography

Tianji Cai received his PhD degree at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2010. His research interests concentrate on new forms of data and new methods of analysis. His work has appeared leading international journals including Journal of Computational Social Science Sociological Methodology, Sociological Methods & Research, etc.



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