
From: Pickett, Justin <jpickett@albany.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2019 12:18 PM
To: Gary Ostrander
Cc: Diana Key
Subject: Stewart Data
Attachments: CountyGraph.docx; Johnson et al. (2011) Data.dta

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Vice President Ostrander,

On June 10th, 2019, I sent your office data and files suggesting Professor Eric Stewart falsified data and findings in at least two published articles (Johnson et al, 2011; Stewart et al., 2015), one of which I coauthored. On the same day, I also forwarded your office two emails where Professor Stewart told me he had destroyed the original data (dropped respondents, changed variables, and saved over the initial file), after Diana Key told us not to. On July 9, 2019, I sent your office additional data (attached) and a 27-page reanalysis report showing more evidence of falsification. Risking my reputation and career to do the right thing, I also posted my reanalysis report publicly (<https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/9b2k3/>) and asked the journal to retract the article I coauthored.

I understand that your office has not sequestered data from Professor Stewart, and instead has only asked him to explain the discrepancies, which he explained as honest error. However, the data I provided on July 9 are inconsistent with his explanations, and strongly suggest research misconduct. For example, Dr. Stewart explained the county-number discrepancy— [REDACTED] is impossible, as the attached Figure ("CountyGraph") demonstrates. The Figure graphs all of the counties in the data, and reveals that [REDACTED] still yields 176 counties and county clusters. Indeed, in addition [REDACTED] there are 109 counties (red in the Figure) that are isolated from the borders of any other counties, and thus that [REDACTED]. Similarly, Dr. Stewart initially said he [REDACTED] accidentally, but my reanalysis showed that it is impossible to get the numbers (means, regression coefficients) in the article [REDACTED]. He then changed his story and said he [REDACTED]. However, on July 9, I provided an email from the Research Network (Appendix B in the report I sent Ms. Key) where they said [REDACTED].

Additionally, many of the other specific explanations Professor Stewart has offered do not hold up to cross-examination. For example, he wrote in a memo to Dean Blomberg that "Although there generally weren't a lot of zeros in the 3rd decimal place, I [REDACTED]. However, this cannot explain the absence of zeros in

the third decimal place, because it only applies to the small handful of numbers with two leading zeros (e.g., .007). It would not explain the absence of numbers like .250 or .660.

There is an evidence-based way to clear this up unequivocally. If this is honest error, Professor Stewart should be able to provide the data and replicate the reported findings in all five articles, especially the articles where he did the analysis recently (Mears et al., 2019; Stewart et al., 2018, 2019). But if this is research misconduct, as I believe it is, he will be unable to do that. He has already admitted he cannot do that for the 2011 and 2015 articles, because he destroyed the original data in early June, after your office notified him of the allegations. As I understand it, this is why your policies say to sequester data as early as possible, either before or concurrent with notification—to prevent the destruction of the original data files.

For this reason, I am asking you to sequester and independently examine whatever data remain for all five of the articles in question. I hope I am wrong, but if I am correct, simply asking for the data will end the investigation, because Professor Stewart will not be able to provide the data for the 2013 survey described in the three most recent articles (Mears et al., 2019; Stewart et al., 2018, 2019). I believe it is unlikely that the 2013 survey was ever conducted, given that the articles do not list a survey organization or a funding source, and that the Research Network was closed in 2010. I asked Dr. Stewart [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (I have this email if you want it.) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This exceeds even what leading pollsters, like Pew and Gallup, can do. And an online search shows that Dr. Stewart is the only person publishing articles using that 2013 sample. [REDACTED] why haven't they also published articles using the data?

If the five articles are fraudulent, it is important to correct the literature. It is also important to clear Professor Stewart unequivocally if he is innocent of wrongdoing. Only your office has the ability to determine for certain whether this is fraud or honest error. Given all of the data I have provided, a firm conclusion would seem to necessitate an independent analysis of Dr. Stewart's data. Personally, I would be happy to be proved wrong by such an analysis. All I am seeking is the truth.

I am happy to answer any questions, and to provide any files or emails that your office needs.

Best,

Justin

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