

Dear Retraction Watch Team,

With regard to your Article published on your website on 8 November 2023, the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi ("IBA"), deems it necessary to formally address the inaccuracies as noted in the Article and mention reservations on the contents of your Article. Outlined below are the specific details that necessitate your attention and corrective action at your end:

Whistle Blowing:

Firstly, it would be prudent to highlight that the classification of Dr. Mohsin Butt as a whistle-blower is flawed in itself. One must take note of the fact that no personal benefits were conferred upon the author(s) of the alleged journal. It is also vital to highlight that any inquiries regarding Dr. Butt's whistle-blower status should have been directed to the IBA's HR for substantiating evidence, rather than relying on individuals involved in the grievance.

Claim about Dr. Mohsin Butt, a much better and proper investigative journalism would have been to request evidence from the IBA rather than asking for opinion of such claims from Dr. Mohsin Butt, clearly a conflict of interest of the person providing his counter in self-interest and devoid of facts.

Dr. Mohsin Butt had serious behavioral issues which were mostly driven to get out of line or against IBA's policy benefits. Matters such as housing, room in our Visiting Faculty Residence facility, salary equity, transport, hiring of faculty, his own workload, performance management ratings, false data, and many such areas. Dr. Mohsin Butt's services were not terminated because of one issue as already highlighted. Our HR department and legal department prepared all the transgressions, which were duly submitted to our HR Committee of the BoG before being eventually presented at the BoG level.

"Retraction" added to the database:

1. The Journal Editor and the Editor-in-Chief have already issued a clarification and posted it on the official website of the IBA *Business Review* which is publicly available. The text is reproduced for your reference:

Please be informed that IBA *Business Review* has never released or archived any Case Studies/SPECIAL EDITION. All officially released volumes and issues of the journal since its inception in 2006 are accessible at <https://ir.iba.edu.pk/businessreview>, archived at Portico, and indexed in IDEAS, REPEC, JEL, EBSCO, DOAJ, and CrossRef.

2. As per COPE guidelines, it is the prerogative of the Editor of the Journal to issue a retraction, a committee can make a recommendation or make an observation but it does not mean that it is binding on the Journal editor or the Journal editorial board to accept such recommendations. The Journal team has the right to counter such findings and/or observations, which it did in a timely manner and in response we posted the notice mentioned in point number 1 above. Attaching the relevant extract from the COPE retraction guidelines below to substantiate our concern further:

"In some cases, retractions are issued jointly or on behalf of the journal's owner (eg, a learned society or publisher). However, since responsibility for the journal's content rests with the editor, they should always have the final decision about retracting material. Editors may retract

publications (or issue expressions of concern) even if all or some of the authors do not agree. Who is retracting the article should be clearly identified within the retraction notice”

As can be illustrated through the extract above, it is evident that a retraction notice, in accordance with the prescribed guidelines, should have been issued, accompanied by the requisite recommendation. The visible absence of these essential requisites implies that no such action transpired initially. Therefore, echoing such a claim (of retraction) in your article based on a confidential and internal report which was never officially verified from the institute (IBA Karachi) is unethical, uncalled for and deviates from your own organization’s purpose.

3. As an institution we have had informal conversation with COPE, which says explicitly that it cannot be a case of retraction. Of course, one can only retract what is available to the readers. The conversation may have been informal, but the content and guidelines are crystal clear. The editor-in-chief made the decision to withdraw and destroy the print which was internally circulated. Never added to any database, repository or anywhere online. Email from COPE is also attached for your reference.

4. In your own retraction database, “the alleged journal” is inaccessible for the readers. Obviously so, as none is there. What is retracted see under the heading of Original Paper/Date/PubMedID/DOI, there is no information. What is under Retraction or Other Notices Date/PubMedID/DOI, there is no information. But then suddenly under “Nature of Notice you have put, “Retraction”. There is no justification for this, and your own database keep records differently. This is very unusual and uncalled for.

It is therefore submitted that kindly remove the unpublished articles from the database and also remove the word "Whistle Blower" from the headline of your article as we have clearly established that this was not the case.

S Akbar Zaidi

Executive Director, IBA
Chairperson Board of Governors, IBA
Editor-in-Chief, *Business Review*