

Ethical Guidelines for the Author(s)

The following ethical guidelines are obligatory for all author(s) violation of which may result in application of penalties by the editor, including but not limited to the suspension or revocation of publishing privileges.

Reporting Standards

- It is the author(s)' responsibility to ensure that the research report and data contain adequate detail and references to the sources of information in order to allow others to reproduce the results.
- Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Originality and Plagiarism

- It is the author(s)' responsibility to ascertain that s/he has submitted an entirely original work, giving due credit, by virtue of proper citations, to the works and/or words of others where they have been used.
- Plagiarism in all its forms constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is not acceptable.
- Material quoted verbatim from the author(s)' previously published work or other sources must be placed in quotation marks.
- As per HEC's policy, in case the manuscript has a similarity index of more than 19%, it will either be rejected or left at the discretion of the Editorial Board for the purposes of a conditional acceptance.

Declaration

- Authors are required to provide an undertaking / declaration stating that the manuscript under consideration contains solely their original work that is not under consideration for publishing in any other journal in any form.
- Authors may submit a manuscript previously published in abstracted form, for e.g. in the proceedings of an annual meeting, or in a periodical with limited circulation and availability such as reports by the Government agencies or a University.
- A manuscript that is co-authored must be accompanied by an undertaking explicitly stating that each author has contributed substantially towards the preparation of the manuscript in order to claim right to authorship.
- It is the responsibility of the corresponding author that s/he has ensured that all those who have substantially contributed in the manuscripts have been included in the author list and they have agreed to the order of authorship.

Multiple, Redundant and Current Publication

- Authors should not submit manuscripts describing essentially the same research to more than one journal or publication except if it is a re-submission of a rejected or withdrawn manuscript.
- Authors may re-publish previously conducted research that has been substantially altered or corrected using more meticulous analysis or by adding more data.
- The authors and editor must agree to the secondary publication, which must cite the primary references and reflect the same data and interpretation of the primary document.

- Concurrent submission of the same manuscript to more than one journal is unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

Acknowledgment of Sources

- A paper must always contain proper acknowledgment of the work of others, including clear indications of the sources of all information quoted or offered, except what is common knowledge.
- The author(s) must also acknowledge the contributions of people, organizations and institutes who assisted the process of research, including those who provided technical help, writing assistance or financial funding (in the acknowledgement).
- It is duty of the author(s) to conduct a literature review and properly cite the original publications that describe closely related work.

Authorship Credit

- Authorship of the work may only be credited to those who have made a noteworthy contribution in conceptualization, design, conducting, data analysis and writing up of the manuscript.
- It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to include the name(s) of only those co-authors who have made significant contributions to the work.
- The corresponding author should ensure that all co- authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication. Others who have participated in certain substantive aspect of the research should be acknowledged for their contribution in an "Acknowledgement" section.

Privacy of Participants

- Authors must respect the privacy of the participant of research and must not use any information obtained from them without their informed consent.
- Authors should ensure that only information that improves understanding of the study is shared.
- Authors must ensure that in instances where the identity of the participant needs to be revealed in the study, explicit and informed consent of the concerned party is obtained.
- In the case of the demise of a participant, consent must be obtained from the family of the deceased.

Data Access and Retention

- If any question arises about the accuracy or validity of the research work during the review process, the author(s) should provide raw data to the Editor.

Images

- The author(s) should ensure that images included in an account of research performed or in the data collection as part of the research are free from manipulation,
- The author(s) must provide an accurate description of how the images were generated and produced.

Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

- The potential and relevant competing financial, personal, social or other interest of all author(s) that might be affected by publication of the results contained in the manuscript must be conveyed to the editor.
- The author(s) should disclose any potential conflict of interest at the earliest possible stage, including but not limited to employment, consultancies, honoraria, patent applications/registrations, grants or other funding.
- All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed alongside a brief overview of the role played, if any by the responses during various stages of the research.

Copyright

Authors may have to sign an agreement allowing the journal to reserve the right to circulate the article and all other derivative works such as translations.

Manuscript Acceptance and Rejection

- The review period can last between 1-2 months or longer and during this period the author(s) reserve the right to contact the Editor to ask about status of the review.
- Once the review process has been completed, the author will be informed about the status of the manuscript which could either be an acceptance, rejection or revisions. In the case of rejection, the author(s) reserves the right to publish the article elsewhere.
- In case of revisions, the author(s) must provide an exposition of all corrections made in the manuscript and the revised manuscript should, then, go through the process of affirmation of revisions and be accepted or rejected accordingly.
- In case of dissatisfaction over the decision of rejection, the author can appeal the decision by contacting the Editor.