



Policy Document
Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education

Faculty of Education
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Policy Section 1

Writing and Formatting Guidelines for Authors

(1) File Format for Manuscript

Please provide editable source files for your entire submission including figures, tables, and text graphics. Here are some guidelines:

- (i) Save your files in an editable format, using .doc/.docx for MS Word files. A PDF is not acceptable as a source file.
- (ii) Format the text in a single column.
- (iii) Check the file contents for spelling and grammar to avoid errors.

(2) Submission of files for Double anonymized peer review

JECCE follows a double anonymized review process which means author identities are concealed from reviewers and vice versa. To facilitate the double anonymized review process, Authors should provide the **title page** (including author details) and **anonymized manuscript** (excluding author details) separately in the submission.

The **anonymized manuscript** should contain the main body of your paper including:

- References
- Figures
- Tables
- Acknowledgements

It is important that the anonymized manuscript does not contain any identifying information such as author name(s), email(s) or affiliation(s).

(3) Title Page

Title page is a separate file in addition to main file containing the article text. Make sure to include the following details on your title page:

- (i) **Article Title:** The title should be concise and informative. Avoid abbreviations and formulas unless they are well-known (like DNA).
- (ii) **Author Names:** List the full first and last names of all authors. The order of the names should match the submission system. Double-check the spelling of all names. If needed, you can include your name in your native script in parentheses after the English version.

- (iii) ***Affiliations:*** Below the author names, list the affiliation addresses where the work was done. Use a lowercase superscript letter after the author's name to link it to the corresponding address. Include the full postal address for each affiliation, including the country, phone number and the email address of each author.
- (iv) ***Corresponding Author:*** Clearly indicate who will handle all communication related to the article during and after publication. This person will be responsible for answering any questions about the results, data, methods, and materials. Make sure their phone number, email and contact information are up to date.
- (v) ***Present/Permanent Address:*** If an author has moved since the work was done, or was visiting during that time, you can include a "present address" (or "permanent address") as a footnote to their name. However, the main affiliation should remain the address where the work was conducted. Use superscript Arabic numerals for these footnotes.

(4) Abstract

Provide a concise and clear abstract that briefly outlines the purpose of your research, key findings, and main conclusions. Here are some guidelines:

- (i) The abstract should be able to stand alone since it may be presented separately from the full article.
- (ii) Avoid using references. If it is absolutely necessary, include the author(s) and year(s).
- (iii) Avoid using non-standard or uncommon abbreviations. If you must include them, define them when they first appear in the abstract.

(5) Keywords

Provide 4-7 keywords for indexing purposes. Keywords should be in English language and try to avoid using phrases with multiple words (like 'and' or 'of'). Use abbreviations in keywords only if they are well-known and commonly used in your field.

(6) Tables

- (i) Submit tables as editable text, not as images.
- (ii) Place tables next to the relevant text or on separate pages at the end of your article.
- (iii) Cite all tables in the manuscript text and number them in order of appearance.

- (iv) Provide captions for each table, and place any notes below the table body.
- (v) Avoid using vertical lines or shading in table cells.
- (vi) Use tables sparingly and avoid repeating data that is already described elsewhere in the article.

(7) Figures, Images, and Artwork

- (i) Submit figures, images, diagrams, and other graphical media as separate files along with your manuscript.
- (ii) Cite all images in the manuscript text and number them in the order they appear.
- (iii) Name image files logically (e.g., Figure_1, Figure_2).
- (iv) Provide captions for each image in a separate file. Captions should include a brief title and a description, with minimal text on the image itself. Explain any symbols or abbreviations used.
- (v) Text graphics can be embedded in the text at the appropriate location.

(8) Generative AI and Images

In certain situations where authors use AI in any part of the paper, they must describe it in detail in the relevant section and cite it appropriately. The author(s) must disclose the use of Generative AI or AI assisted technologies in the writing process by adding a statement at the end of their main paper file. If authors have not used it, then they can mention the same in the following statement.

Statement: During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used [NAME TOOL / SERVICE] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

(9) Supplementary Material

- (i) Use supplementary materials like applications, images, and sound clips to enhance your research.
- (ii) Cite all supplementary files in the manuscript text.
- (iii) Submit supplementary materials with your article, noting that they will appear online as submitted, without additional formatting.
- (iv) Include a brief, descriptive caption for each supplementary file.
- (v) Update supplementary files if you need to make changes during the publication process, but do not annotate or correct a previous version.
- (vi) Disable "track changes" in Microsoft Office files to prevent them from appearing in the published version.

(10) Article Structure

Divide your article into clearly defined sections: Title, abstract, introduction, review of related literature, Research objectives, research questions/hypotheses if any, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion. Subsections may have brief headings, which should appear on a separate line.

(i) Introduction: The introduction should clearly state the objectives of your work. Provide an adequate background but avoid a detailed literature overview or summary of results.

(ii) Literature Review: Literature review includes detailed literature related to the problem covered by the paper.

(iii) Theoretical/Conceptual Framework: Explain theoretical and/or conceptual framework (whichever is applicable) of the study. It can be added on the basis of existing theories or models from the literature or a diagram.

(iv) Research Methodology: Provide sufficient details to allow your work to be reproduced by an independent researcher. If quoting directly from a published method, use quotation marks and cite the source. Describe any modifications made to existing methods.

(v) Results: Present results clearly and concisely. Refer to sections in this guide on tables, artwork, supplementary material, and sharing research data.

(vi) Discussion: Explore the significance of your results without repeating them. You may combine results and discussion into one section if appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature.

(vii) Conclusion: Present the main conclusions of your study. The last paragraph of the conclusion must consist of recommendations of the study for further actions and future research work.

(viii) References

References within text:

- Ensure all references cited within your article are also present in your reference list and vice versa.
- Cite references in your abstract in full.
- Avoid including unpublished results and personal communications in your reference list; mention them in the text.
- References cited as "in press" imply acceptance for publication.

- Correct reference data allows linking to indexing services like Scopus, Crossref, and PubMed.
- Use DOIs for permanent links to electronic articles.
- JECCE uses APA reference style (7th Edition) in the paper.
- Include author names, journal/book titles, article/chapter titles, publication years, volume numbers, and DOIs where applicable, as per APA reference style (7th Edition).

(ix) Abbreviations: Use only standard abbreviations; use of nonstandard abbreviations can be confusing to readers. Avoid abbreviations in the title of the manuscript. If abbreviations are essential in your paper, define them in parentheses at first mention unless the abbreviation is a standard unit of measurement. Review your use of abbreviations to ensure consistency.

(x) Acknowledgements: Include individuals/organizations who provided help during your research (e.g., research work, data collection, language, writing, proofreading) in the acknowledgements section. Include acknowledgements only at the last page.

(xi) Author Contributions (CRediT Taxonomy): Corresponding authors must acknowledge co-author contributions for roles like conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, etc. Not all roles will apply to every manuscript, and authors may contribute through multiple roles. Read more about CRediT taxonomy and check an example of a CRediT author statement. A statement on authorship must be added in the main article file.

(xii) Funding Sources:

- Disclose any funding sources that provided financial support for the research or article preparation.
- Declare the role of sponsors, if any, in study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, report writing, and publication submission.
- List funding sources in a standard way to comply with funder requirements.
- Please supply all details required by your funding and grant-awarding bodies as follows:

For single agency grants

“This work was supported by the [Funding Agency] under Grant [number xxxx].”

For multiple agency grants

This work was supported by the [Funding Agency #1] under Grant [number xxxx]; [Funding Agency #2] under Grant [number xxxx]; and [Funding Agency #3] under Grant [number xxxx].

- If funding sources were not involved, state it in your submission. If no funding was provided, include the statement: "This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors."

Policy Section 2

Ethical Guidelines for Authors

(1) Submission declaration

When authors submit an article to JECCE, it is implied that:

- (i) All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript being submitted
- (ii) The work described has not been published previously except in the form of a preprint, an abstract, a published lecture, academic thesis or registered report.
- (iii) The article is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- (iv) The article's publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out.
- (v) If accepted, the article will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright-holder.

To verify compliance with our journal's publishing policies, we may check your manuscript with our screening tools.

(2) Declaration of Interests

A conflict of interest or competing interest refers to situations where a professional judgment about something important, like the validity of research, could be influenced by another interest, such as financial gain.

- (i) A ***Declaration of Interest*** (also known as a Disclosure Statement) is a notification from the author indicating whether or not they have any financial or personal interests that could affect the objectivity of the research paper. If there is a potential conflict, the author must state what it is and where it comes from. To avoid confusion, authors need to clearly declare whether they have any competing interests, even if there are not any.
- (ii) ***Funding Source Declaration*** is a statement listing any funding or research grants received during the study, including where the funding came from. A
- (iii) ***Permission Note*** is a statement confirming that permission has been obtained to use any material in the manuscript, such as figures, that is not original content.

(iv) ***Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process:*** During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used [NAME TOOL / SERVICE] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the published article.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process does not apply to the use of basic tools such as tools used to check grammar, spelling and references. If you have nothing to disclose, you do not need to add a statement.

(3) Authorship

All authors should have made substantial contributions to all of the following:

- (i) The conception and design of the study, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data.
- (ii) Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content.
- (iii) Final approval of the version to be submitted.

All authors should agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work to ensure that the questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

(4) Change of Authorship

The editors of JECCE generally will not consider changes to authorship once a manuscript has been submitted. It is important that authors carefully consider the authorship list and order of authors, and provide a definitive author list at original submission. The policy of this journal around authorship changes:

- (i) All authors must be listed in the manuscript and their details entered into the submission system.
- (ii) Any addition, deletion or rearrangement of author names in the authorship list should only be made prior to acceptance, and only if approved by the journal editor.
- (iii) Requests to change authorship should be made by the corresponding author, who must provide the reason for the request to the journal editor with written confirmation from all authors, including any authors being added or removed, that they agree with the addition, removal or rearrangement.

- (iv) Only in exceptional circumstances will the journal editor consider the addition, deletion or rearrangement of authors post acceptance.
- (v) Publication of the manuscript may be paused while a change in authorship request is being considered.
- (vi) Any authorship change requests approved by the journal editor will result in a corrigendum if the manuscript has already been published.
- (vii) Any unauthorised authorship changes may result in the rejection of the article, or retraction, if the article has already been published.

(5) Use of Inclusive Language

Inclusive language respects and acknowledges diversity, treats everyone with respect, and promotes equal opportunities. Authors should ensure that their work uses inclusive language throughout and does not suggest that any person is better than another based on:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Sexual orientation
- Disability or health condition

Avoid describing personal characteristics unless they are necessary and relevant. Aim for gender-neutral language by using plural nouns like "clinicians" or "patients/clients" instead of "he" or "she."

Do not make assumptions about readers' beliefs, and keep your writing free from bias, stereotypes, slang, or cultural assumptions. These guidelines are meant to help you choose appropriate language, but they are not exhaustive or definitive.

Policy Section 3

Peer Review Process

Peer review refers to the review and assessment of the paper's quality and its suitability for publication. The review process provides constructive feedback to the authors for improving the paper. It also helps the editor to refine the quality of the papers and to make decisions about the submitted papers.

All the papers submitted to the journal undergo initial editor screening and the double blind peer review by two independent, anonymous experts. Once a paper has been assessed for suitability by the editor, it is sent for peer review. The reviewers assess the paper's strengths, improvement areas, and overall merit. They provide detailed feedback and constructive criticism to help authors improve their work. The review process results in one of the following four decisions: Reviewers may recommend acceptance, revision, or rejection of the paper.

- **Acceptance:** The paper is accepted for publication without further revisions.
- **Minor revisions:** The paper requires minor changes before it can be accepted. Authors are usually given a specific timeframe to make these revisions.
- **Major revisions:** The paper requires significant changes or additional experiments before it can be accepted. Authors are usually given a specific timeframe to make these revisions.
- **Rejection:** The paper does not meet the journal's standards and is rejected for publication.

Once the review report from the reviewers is received, it is shared with the author(s) by the journal team through OJS. The author(s) incorporate the observations of the review report and submit the revised paper through OJS to the editor. The editor will ensure the incorporation of all the observations/review comments in the paper by the author (s).

For the sake of transparency, if the reviewers demand to read the revised manuscript, we resend the research paper in the second round of reviews. If they recommend the article for publication with minor changes, our editorial staff ensures that all the changes are incorporated (along with any editorial suggestions) by the author(s) before the publication of an article.

OJS serves as a platform for the review process, communication of the review report with the author(s) by the editor, and submission of revised paper to the journal by the author(s).

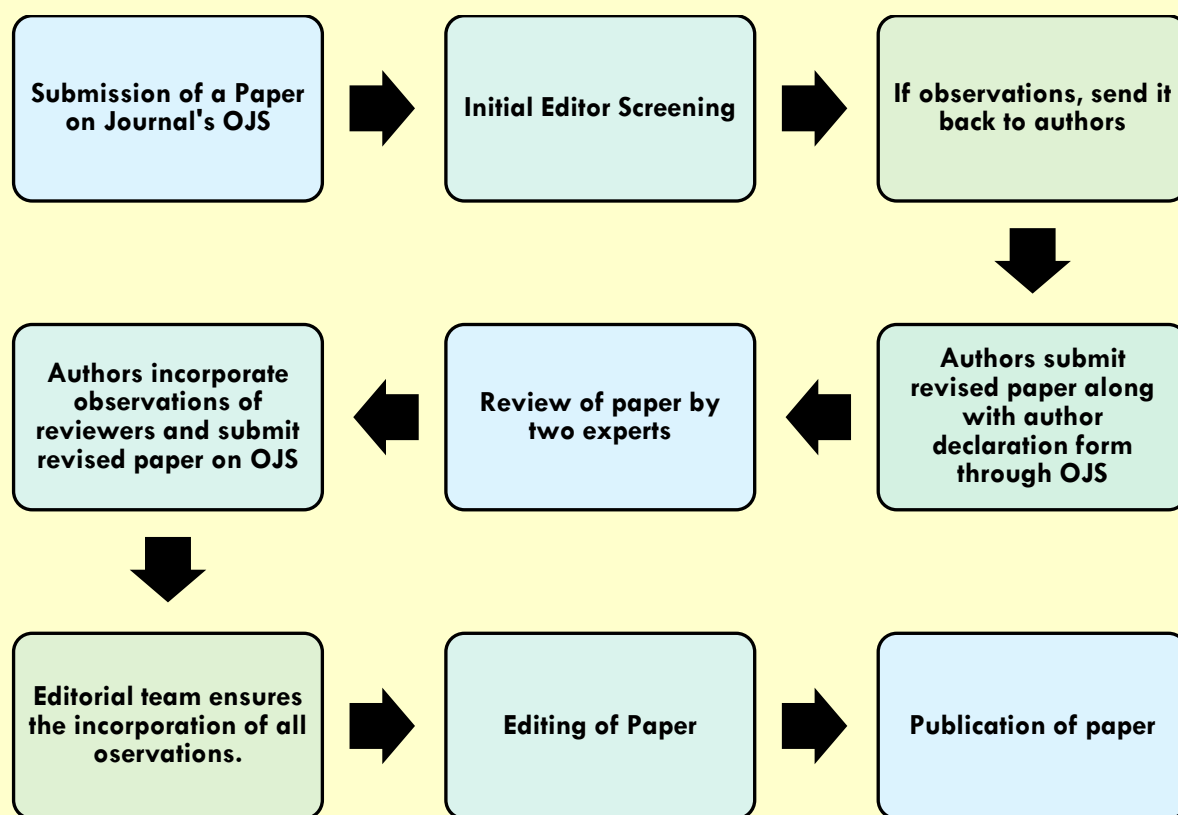


Figure 1. Stages of processing of a submitted paper

Policy Section 4

Preparation of Peer Review Report

Following guidelines must be followed by reviewers for preparing the peer review report.

(i) Format

When writing a review, follow the journal's guidelines. The review must be submitted through *Article Evaluation Form* through *OJS*. Be objective and constructive, offering feedback that helps the authors improve their work. Make sure your critique is specific and backed up with evidence, including relevant references. Be professional; avoid being hostile or making personal attacks or baseless accusations.

(ii) Appropriate Feedback

The editor needs a fair, honest, and unbiased review of the manuscript's strengths and weaknesses. JECCE allows you to give confidential comments to the editor, as well as comments that the authors will see. Make sure your comments to the editor align with those given to the authors. Confidential comments should not be used to criticize or make false accusations. Please ensure that your recommendation for a paper (accept, revise, or reject) matches your comments. A review report must be prepared after reviewing the entire paper.

(iii) Language and Style

Remember that it is the authors' work, so do not try to rewrite it in your style if it is already clear. However, a reviewer should suggest changes if they improve clarity. Be mindful that the authors might be writing in a language that is not their first language, so give your feedback with respect.

(iv) Suggestions for Further Work

The job of a peer reviewer is to assess the quality and thoroughness of the work. If something is unclear because of missing information, point it out and explain what additional analyses are needed. However, do not suggest expanding the work beyond its current scope. Be clear about which additional investigations are necessary to support the manuscript's claims and which ones would just enhance it.

(v) Accountability

Write the review report yourself. Avoid making unfair negative comments or unjustified criticisms of competitors' work mentioned in the manuscript. Do not suggest that authors cite your work just to boost citation counts; recommendations should be based on solid academic or technical reasons. Do

not intentionally delay the review process by submitting your review late or asking for unnecessary additional information.

Policy Section 5

Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers


Peer reviewers must follow these ethical guidelines when reviewing for JECCE articles:

1. Reviewers must give unbiased consideration to each manuscript submitted. They should judge each on its merits, without regard to race, religion, nationality, gender, seniority, or institutional affiliation of the author(s).
2. Reviewers must declare any conflict of interest before agreeing to review a manuscript. This includes any relationship with the author(s) that may bias their review.
3. Reviewers must keep the peer review process confidential. They must not share information or correspondence about a manuscript with anyone outside of the peer review process without the explicit permission of the editor.
4. They must not enter unpublished manuscript files, images or information into databases or tools that do not guarantee confidentiality, are accessible by the public and/or may store or use this information for their own purposes (for example, generative AI tools like ChatGPT).
5. Reviewers must prepare their report by themselves. They must also not impersonate others during the review process.
6. Reviewers must not use artificial intelligence tools to generate manuscript review reports including LLM based tools like ChatGPT.
7. Reviewers should provide a constructive, comprehensive, evidenced, and appropriately substantial peer review report. Reviewers are responsible for ensuring any references included within their report are accurate and verifiable.
8. Reviewers must avoid making statements in their report which might be interpreted as questioning any person's reputation.
9. Reviewers should make all reasonable effort to submit their report and recommendation on time. They should inform the editor if this is not possible.
10. Reviewers should call to the journal editor's attention any significant similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any published paper or submitted manuscripts of which they are aware.

Policy Section 6

Open Access Policy

Open access (OA) refers to free and unrestricted online access to scientific and scholarly information and makes published academic research freely and permanently available online. Pakistan Journal of Distance and Online Learning (JECCE) has adopted Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

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Authors may photocopy and use their articles without any permission/fee for noncommercial purposes as specified by the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. For using work for commercial purpose, please contact on editor.JECCE@aiou.edu.pk.

Please note that some materials such as figures, tables or text in articles may be from other publications. In this case, you should inquire with the original copyright holder (usually the original publisher or authors) whether or not this material can be re-used.

Policy Section 7

Archiving Policy

To ensure that all articles will be permanently preserved and available a full archival copy of all articles published in the journal are deposited on Open Journal System- Public Knowledge Project (OJS PKP) for JECCE. The electronic version of the published papers is also saved in the Google Scholar profile of JECCE.

Authors are encouraged to self-archive the final version of their published articles along with its APA citation into institutional and public repositories. For this purpose, authors are strongly encouraged to use the final PDF version published on the website of the journal.

Policy Section 8

Repository Policy

A repository policy is a set of guidelines that govern how authors can make their journal articles available online, such as in institutional repositories. AIOU Library serves as a repository for the published papers of JECCE. Repository policy of JECCE encourages authors to deposit their published pdf version of the article in any repository of their choice.

Policy Section 9

Plagiarism Policy

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (<https://publicationethics.org/category/keywords/plagiarism>) defines *plagiarism* as follows:

“When somebody presents the work of others (data, words or theories) as if they were his/her own and without proper acknowledgment”. Copying even one sentence from someone else’s manuscript, or even one of your own that has previously been published, without proper citation is considered plagiarism, and may violate copyright laws.

Office of Research Integrity (ORI) defines *plagiarism* of ideas as follows:

“Appropriating someone else’s idea (e.g., an explanation, a theory, a conclusion, a hypothesis, a metaphor) in whole or in part, or with superficial modifications without giving credit to its originator.”

The ORI provides here (<https://ori.hhs.gov/acknowledging-source-our-ideas>) some good examples of the plagiarism of ideas, including the phenomenon of unconscious plagiarism (i.e., cryptomnesia). These documents (<https://ori.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2019-02/Tips%20for%20Avoiding%20Plagiarism.pdf> & <https://ori.hhs.gov/28-guidelines-glance-avoiding-plagiarism>) can be helpful for further study.

Why to avoid plagiarism?

Authors should be properly credited for their work if that work is being re-used in another’s article. This is in accordance with international copyright laws and ethical conduct guidelines. Plagiarism detected in a paper can damage the trust and integrity expected by readers in the articles published by JECCE.

How to detect the Plagiarism?

JECCE uses Turnitin Similarity Check and Turnitin AI Similarity Check to screen for unoriginal material. Authors submitting their article to JECCE should be aware that their paper may be submitted to Turnitin Similarity Check at any point during the peer-review or production process. If the similarity overlap is found in the article, the results of the Similarity Check will be examined by the journal to establish whether it constitutes plagiarism.

What happens if plagiarism detected?

The editor, editorial board members and the reviewers of the journal, following the COPE guidelines, will investigate any allegations of plagiarism or self-plagiarism/text-recycling made to a journal through online form ([link of form here](#)). If the allegations appear to be founded, we will contact all named authors of the paper and request an explanation of the overlapping material. Investigations into this type of plagiarism will usually require the involvement of other parties, such as independent expert reviewers and/or institutions where the work was carried out.

Based on the investigation and reply from the author(s), the journal will decide how to proceed, using COPE flowcharts where applicable. This may result in the following actions being taken, depending on the nature and severity of the case:

- If a paper is still in peer review, it may be returned to the author with a request that they address the issues through appropriate citation, use of quote marks to identify direct quotes, or re-writing.
- If the similarity between the manuscripts is too extensive for revision, it may be rejected.
- If the paper is already published online, a correction*, expression of concern or retraction may be published.
- The author's institution may also be informed.

*Please note that a correction can be published for minor similarities only where there is no misattribution or deliberate lack of attribution of work (e.g., to add in a missing full citation/ reference to the source material). A correction notice cannot be used to effectively 'fix' or rewrite the plagiarized sections.

How to avoid plagiarism?

When citing others' (or your own) previous work, please ensure you have:

- 1) Clearly marked quoted verbatim text from another source with quotation marks.
- 2) Attributed and referenced the source of the quotation clearly within the text and in the Reference section of the paper.
- 3) Obtained permission from the original publisher and rightsholder when using previously published figures or tables.

Policy Section 10

Copyright and Licensing Policy

JECCE uses the open access model for publication. All the articles are published by JECCE under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. Readers can read, use and distribute the article after it is published in JECCE issue, subject to citation of the original source in accordance with the terms of the license under which the work was published (please check the license statement here <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/deed.en>). No permission is required from the authors or publisher in this case. Appropriate attribution can be provided by citing the original article, for example, “The Version of Scholarly Record of this Article is published in (JOURNAL TITLE) (year of publication), available online at: <https://doi.org/> (Article DOI).” For any reuse or redistribution of an article, users must also make clear the license terms under which the article was published and retain all copyright notices and disclaimers.

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- You will not compromise the author’s moral right to the integrity of their work and you will make proper attribution of the work but not in any way that suggests that you or your use of the work are in any way endorsed by the author or JECCE.
- This permission does not cover any third-party copyrighted work which may appear in the work requested. Where content in JECCE articles is identified as belonging to a third party, you will be responsible for obtaining all necessary permissions and consents to any reuse from any such third party.

Policy Section 11

Privacy Statement

JECCE uses the open access model to process and publish the papers. The personal data of the authors such as their institution they are affiliated with and their email address, are included in the published article of those authors. Importantly, we will only do this post publication to ensure there is no bearing on the evaluation of your submission prior to acceptance of the paper.

When a user visits our website, a quick overview of the data processing activities that are undertaken on our website are mentioned below:

- When you visit our website for informational reasons without setting up an account, only limited personal data will be processed to provide you with the website itself.
- If you are identified as belonging to a customer organisation then we collect information in order to be able to provide usage reporting to that customer.
- In case you register for submission of a paper, use the submission and peer review systems or subscribe to JECCE issues, further personal data will be processed in the scope of such services.
- Furthermore, your personal data will be used to provide you with relevant journal related information and for statistical analysis that helps us to improve our website. Additionally, we improve your website experience with third party content.

Under the legislation applicable to you, you may be entitled to exercise certain rights with regard to the processing of your personal data. You can make a request to JECCE in case you have entered some wrong information related to you or want to update your personal information, make a submission of wrong file.

Customer service

If you contact us by either

- e-mail or physical mail
- telephone or fax
- Chat/messaging support
- through a website communication or submission form

We will process the personal data you provide to process and fulfil your request.

Usage Reports

We may disclose anonymous aggregate statistics about users of the website in order to describe our services to prospective partners and other reputable third parties and for other lawful purposes, but these statistics will include no personal data.

Security of Data

We have reasonable efforts and measures in place to protect against the loss, misuse and alteration of personal data under our control. For example, our security and privacy policies are periodically reviewed as necessary, and only authorized personnel have access to the personal data of website users. Whilst we cannot ensure or guarantee that loss, misuse or alteration of information will never occur, we use all reasonable efforts to prevent it.

You should bear in mind that submission of information over the internet is never entirely secure. We cannot guarantee the security of information you submit via our website whilst it is in transit over the internet and any such submission is at your own risk.

Data retention

We strive to keep our processing activities with respect to your personal data as limited as possible. In the absence of specific retention periods set out in this policy, your personal data will be retained only for as long as we need it to fulfil the purpose for which we have collected it and, if applicable, as long as required by statutory retention requirements.

Note: We reserve the right to change this policy from time to time by updating our website respectively. Please visit the website regularly and check our respective current privacy policy. This policy was last updated on September 23, 2024.

Policy Section 12

Data Retraction Policy

A journal's data retraction policy is a set of guidelines for removing, replacing, or correcting articles that contain erroneous or flawed data. The purpose of a retraction is to ensure the integrity of the literature and to alert readers to publications that they should not rely on. For JECCE, retraction of a publication may be requested by an article's author(s), by an institution, by readers, or by the editor through email (editor.JECCE@aiou.edu.pk). After receiving the email, the editor will contact the author(s) for further details. If required, a data retraction notice for a publication will be issued on JECCE website. 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 (such as editor, authors) will be clearly identified within the retraction notice.

Editorial Board of JECCE consider retracting a publication if:

- There are clear evidence that the findings are unreliable, either as a result of major error (e.g., miscalculation or experimental error), or as a result of fabrication (e.g., of data) or falsification (e.g., image manipulation).
- It constitutes plagiarism.
- The findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper attribution to previous sources or disclosure to the editor, permission to republish, or justification (i.e., cases of redundant publication).
- It contains material or data without authorisation for use.
- Copyright has been infringed or there is some other serious legal issue (e.g., libel, privacy).
- It reports unethical research.
- It has been published solely on the basis of a compromised or manipulated peer review process.
- The author(s) failed to disclose a major competing interest (aka, conflict of interest) that, in the view of the editor, would have unduly affected interpretations of the work or recommendations by editors and peer reviewers.

Notices of retraction will be displayed on JECCE website along with the reason for retraction. This notice will be freely accessible to all readers.

Policy Section 13

Complaint Policy and Procedure

In order to ensure transparency of editorial and publishing process implementation of ethical guidelines and, the Editorial Board of JECCE have taken appropriate measures and strictly adhering to complaint policy and its specified procedure.

In order to ensure that complaints and grievances by readers, authors, reviewers, editorial members, or any external and internal person/body are resolved in a transparent manner, one member of the Editorial Board is nominated to be the Complaint/Grievance Committee who can be contacted for any complaint, or concerns related to submission, review, conflict of interest and publication process. This committee is responsible to receive all such complaints by email and set up the hearing and resolve of the issue within 20-25 days of receipt of the complaint.

What is a complaint?

Any expression of dissatisfaction by the readers, authors, reviewers, editorial members, or any external and internal person/body about the decision of the editorial board and act of publishing (out of scope of the journal, genuineness and originality of the research work, behaviour of any of member of the editorial board, publishing process, etc.) will be considered as a complaint.

How to make a complaint?

Complaints should be submitted in writing to the editorial office via email at editor.JECCE@aiou.edu.pk. Alternatively, complaints can be submitted through the online submission system, with "Complaint" selected as the category.

Complainants are required to provide a detailed description of the complaint, including specific instances, and supporting evidence if available. Contact information (active email and WhatsApp number) should be provided for effective communication, Anonymous complaints will be considered only if the documentary proofs are provided.

How to address complaint?

The journal will maintain the confidentiality of complainants to the extent possible, respecting their anonymity if requested. However, as anonymous

complaints may limit the ability to investigate fully and address the concerns raised, such complaints will only be entertained if the proof is given.

Once a complaint is received, the editorial office will acknowledge its receipt promptly and assign responsibility for investigation to the appropriate individual or committee. Investigations will be conducted impartially and thoroughly, with due consideration given to all relevant evidence and parties involved. The individual/committee will be required to submit their report within 25 days of assigning the complaint.

Submission Checklist for Author(s)

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| 1. | <p>I have studied the aims and the scope of the <u>journal</u>. (It will help you to submit your research paper to the journal suitable for your work).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) My paper is relevant to the journal's audience. <input type="checkbox"/> ii) My paper type is appropriate for the journal. (i.e., If I am submitting a book review to a journal, whether the journal accepts the book reviews?) <input type="checkbox"/> iii) My paper is not very similar to the already published papers in that journal. (The journal may not accept your paper if it has too many similarities with already published papers in that journal. So, your paper must have some original content that offers value for the audience.) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | <p>I have attached a <u>cover letter</u> with my research. The cover letter contains the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Editor's name (it can be found in "Editorial Team" on the journal webpage. <input type="checkbox"/> ii) Your manuscript's title. <input type="checkbox"/> iii) Name of the journal I/we are submitting my/our paper to. <input type="checkbox"/> iv) Statement that my paper has not been previously published and is not currently under consideration by another journal. <input type="checkbox"/> v) Brief description of the research I/we am/are reporting in my/our paper, why it is important, and why I/we think the readers of the journal would be interested in it. <input type="checkbox"/> vi) Contact information for me and the <u>co-authors</u>. <input type="checkbox"/> vii) Confirmation that I/we have no <u>competing interests</u> (personal, professional, intellectual or financial interests) to disclose. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | <p>In the <u>title page</u>, along with the paper title, I have clearly mentioned about the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Corresponding author for the paper, his/her email, ORCiD and the institutional affiliation. <input type="checkbox"/> ii) Co-Authors in an appropriate order as per their contribution if the paper is written by a group of authors. <input type="checkbox"/> iii) The email address, ORCiD and the institutional affiliation of all the co-authors is mentioned. <input type="checkbox"/> iv) A short biographical note for each author is provided (no more than 200 words). <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| 4. | Full-length research paper is submitted through the OJS of the journal. (The submissions through email and abstract of the report are not acceptable.) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | The research paper is in MS Word format. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Abstract of the paper is one paragraph containing 200-250 words including brief and clear information about the purpose, methodology and results of the study. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | The research paper contains atleast 4-7 keywords for making my paper discoverable online. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | The research paper contains 4000-8000 words. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | Similarity index of the paper is 18% or below . | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | The paper is in Times New Roman font style. The font size for the text is 11 and for the headings, it is 14. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. | The research paper follows the guidelines for formatting of the paper as mentioned in the MS Word template. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. | APA referencing style (7th Edition) is used for in-text and detailed referencing of paper. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. | The reference list and in-text citation match with each other for the resources used for writing the paper. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. | Acknowledgements | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. | Statement about the source of Funding: [Please supply all details required by your funding and grant-awarding bodies as follows: <i>For single agency grants</i> “This work was supported by the [Funding Agency] under Grant [number xxxx].” <i>For multiple agency grants</i> This work was supported by the [Funding Agency #1] under Grant [number xxxx]; [Funding Agency #2] under Grant [number xxxx]; and [Funding Agency #3] under Grant [number xxxx]. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. | The paper has been proofread for language and grammar, and inclusivity of language. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| 17. | Permission has been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Internet) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. | Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process’: I have added a statement about it at the end of my main file of research article. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. | Statement about Research Ethics: I have added a statement in my main article file that “My submission conforms to the COPE 'Responsible research publication: International standards for authors' (https://publicationethics.org/files/International%20standards_authors_for%20website_11_Nov_2011.pdf).” | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. | A Statement on Authorship. I have added a statement in the main file that the manuscript has been read and approved by all the authors, that the requirements for authorship as stated earlier in this document have been met, and that each author believes that the manuscript represents honest work if that information is not provided in another form | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. | Abbreviations and Symbols I used only standard abbreviations; use of nonstandard abbreviations can be confusing to readers. I avoided abbreviations in the title of the manuscript. The spelled-out abbreviation followed by the abbreviation in parentheses were used on first mention unless the abbreviation is a standard unit of measurement. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. | Declaration of Interest Statement: I have added a statement about it at the end of my main file of research article. (check ethical guidelines for authors) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. | My main article file include the following sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Title Page <input type="checkbox"/> ii) Abstract <input type="checkbox"/> iii) Keywords <input type="checkbox"/> iv) Introduction <input type="checkbox"/> v) Literature Review <input type="checkbox"/> vi) Theoretical Framework <input type="checkbox"/> vii) Research Objectives/Questions <input type="checkbox"/> viii) Research Methodology <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| x) | Discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| xii) | Contribution to the Field | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| xv) | Figures with caption(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| xvii) | Acknowledgments | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| xviii) | Declaration of Interest Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| xix) | Funding Source(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| xx) | Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| xxi) | Statement about Research Ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| xxii) | Statement on Authorship | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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