

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN OPEN DISTANCE AND E-LEARNING (JC-ODEL)

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

A Publication of DOLPAK | ISSN: 3078-6142

journals.dolpak.or.ke

Welcome to JC-ODEL! We are glad that you are considering submitting your work to our journal. This document provides all the information of which you should be aware before preparing your manuscript. It describes how to structure your paper, how to format your references, what fees for publishing are applicable for our journal, and where to find the necessary documents to pay for them. We kindly advise you to review this document carefully and entirely before starting to prepare your manuscript for submission.

About the Journal

The Journal of Contemporary Issues in Open Distance and E-Learning, commonly referred to as JC-ODEL, is a scholarly peer-reviewed publication from the Distance, Open and E-Learning Practitioners' Association of Kenya (DOLPAK).

The journal promotes research and discussions on open, distance, and technology-supported learning, while bringing together scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and educators from Africa and other parts of the world who are committed to improving learning through flexible and innovative educational approaches. The journal features articles on innovations in delivery techniques used in open and distance learning; the influence of technology on learner interaction; challenges associated with conducting open and distance education; ethics and cultures of learning at a distance; and future directions of open, distance, and e-learning education.

JC-ODEL strives for academic excellence, diverse scholarly perspectives, and improvement in learning outcomes. All manuscripts will be reviewed by at least two independent reviewers via a double-blind review process, with each manuscript being reviewed in terms of scholarly rigour, relevance, and adherence to the guidelines below.

Who Should Submit

Articles by academicians, researchers, practitioners, and students whose work deals with open, distance, and e-learning in the widest possible terms are welcome for submission JC-ODEL.

Types of Articles the Journal Accepts

Before preparing your article for submission, confirm that your manuscript fits one of the following accepted article types:

a) Original Research Articles

These represent the main contribution type of the journal. Research articles present results from empirical research studies regardless of whether they are based on quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methodologies, and provide new insights into open, distance, or e-learning. These articles are expected to have a clearly formulated research problem, a well-substantiated methodology, a sound analysis, and significant findings for the field. Article length: 5,000–6,000 words, not counting references/bibliography.

b) Review Articles

Literature review articles that summarize previous studies of an important theme within open learning, distance education, or e-learning are invited for submission. These articles need to go beyond just describing existing information; they need to identify trends, discrepancies, gaps, and implications. We would expect review articles to use a transparent methodology and process. Expected length of literature review: 6,000 to 10,000 words, not counting references/bibliography.

c) Conceptual and Theoretical Papers

These are theoretical contributions aimed at advancing and/or critiquing theories pertinent to our discipline and are highly valued here. They need not be based on new empirical findings but should show evidence of careful scholarship and provide some conceptual insights. Length range: 5,000 - 6,000 words, not counting references/bibliography.

d) Case Studies

JC-ODEL accepts case studies that offer a comprehensive study on particular programmes, institutions, policies, or practices used in open learning, distance learning, or e-learning. The case studies may be from institutions in Africa or in other parts of the world. Acceptable case studies should not merely describe; they should also critique what was effective or not, and

explain the reasons. The acceptable article should also expound on general lessons derived from the case study. Length: 4,000 to 5,000 words, not counting references/bibliography.

e) Policy Analysis and Commentary

These are articles that discuss open, distance, and/or e-learning policies from a critical perspective. They can be a review of current policies, a discussion on differences between policy approaches in different contexts, or recommendations on what future policies should be like. Articles should have some evidence-based approach and critically engage with the literature. Word Count: 3,000 to 5,000 words, not counting references/bibliography.

f) Practice Reports and Innovation Notes

Practice and innovation papers should provide an opportunity for teachers and other stakeholders to document their experiences of implementing or evaluating programmes, tools, or methods. They must be based on some evidence or systematic reflection rather than anecdote. Length: 2,500 to 5,000 words, not counting references/bibliography.

g) Book and Resource Reviews

Acceptable book and resource reviews in JC-ODEL should offer succinct, critical reviews of the latest published books, reports, websites, and other pertinent resources related to the open, distance, and eLearning field. The reviews should provide an objective critique, rather than mere descriptions of what the resource contains. Length: 800 to 1,500 words, not counting references/bibliography.

Preparing Your Manuscript

Please prepare your manuscript in Microsoft Word format using Times New Roman font, size 12, and 1.5-line spacing throughout the document. Kindly note that submissions should not be sent as PDF files, as the editorial system requires a Word document for the review process. The main text of the article, from the introduction to the conclusion, including all in-text citations, should be between the specified lengths for each category of the article as indicated above. The abstract and reference/bibliography list are excluded from this word count. Manuscripts that fall significantly below or exceed the required word limit may be returned to the author for revision before being considered for peer review.

The structure of your manuscript should be done using the following order:

- i. Title page: Your title page must contain a brief running title and the complete names of all authors, the institutional affiliation of each author, and the e-mail address of the corresponding author. The corresponding author should be identified with an asterisk.
- ii. Abstract: The abstract should not exceed 300 words. This section will summarize your purpose, methods or approach, findings, and conclusions in brief. Three to six keywords related to the content of your paper must be indicated at the end of the abstract.
- iii. Introduction: This section should contain the introduction to your topic, background information, and an overview of the literature relevant to your paper. It should also clearly define the scope of your work and what you are setting out to accomplish with it. What research problem or question are you addressing, and what makes it important?
- iv. Methods: This section should include detailed descriptions of the methodology used in your study, including design, participants, and source of data, data collection, and analysis.
- v. Results: This section should provide a report of the results of the study in an organized and logical way. Graphs, figures, and tables should only be used when they enhance the presentation of your data. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, where applicable, must be included.
- vi. Discussion: This section should provide a clear discussion on how your results answer your research questions and compare your results with the reviewed literature. It should answer questions such as: What is the significance of your research in the field? What are the limitations of your study? Where do you think more work needs to be done in the future?
- vii. Acknowledgements: It is important to acknowledge any financial, organizational, or personal support for your work. You should also include grant numbers and amounts, if any.
- viii. References: For details required in this section, kindly refer to the citations and references section below for guidance.
- ix. Tables: Number all tables sequentially, provide a caption for each table, and position it near the portion of text referring to it. Include any footnotes below the respective tables.
- x. Figures: Figures should be provided in good quality electronic format. Figures must be numbered, accompanied by captions, and located near where they are mentioned in the text.

xi. Appendices: If there is additional pertinent material, yet not detailed enough for inclusion in the body of the paper, an appendix can be included. Supplementary materials can be provided as separate files.

Language and Writing Style

The language of the essay must be academic, direct, and comprehensible. You should not use overly complicated sentence structure or technical language that people unfamiliar with your field will struggle to understand. JC-ODEL is aimed at a wide range of readers, including academics, educators, practitioners, and policy-makers, and, therefore, the most successful writing for JC-ODEL will be the one that is intelligible to everyone. An author may employ either American, British English, or other varieties of English in his or her work, provided that the style is strictly observed throughout the article. Specific stylistic conventions include:

- Use 'ize' endings rather than 'ise' — for example: 'realized', 'organized', 'theorized'. This applies even to shorter words where both forms are in common use.
- Do not use 'whilst'. Write 'while' instead. Do not use 'amongst'. Instead, write 'among'.
- Do not use 'spelt' or 'learnt'. Instead, write 'spelled' and 'learned'.
- Ellipses should be written as three dots with spaces between them, before them, and after them: . . . and not the single typographic character ...
- Two spaces may be used after a full stop and after colons, but one space is equally acceptable provided you are consistent throughout.
- When a name ends in the letter 's', form the possessive by adding an apostrophe and a further 's'. For example: Jesus's, Moses's.
- Use double quotation marks around direct speech and around the titles of articles. Use single quotation marks for speech within speech, and for words used in a special or technical sense.
- Use hyphens (-) for compound terms and hyphenated names. For example: 'self-confidence', 'twenty-one', 'old-fashioned'.
- Use en-dashes (–) for numerical and date ranges. For example, pages 37–38 or years 1998–2016.
- Use em-dashes (—) to indicate a strong break in thought within a sentence — functioning similarly to parentheses.

- Use the Oxford comma in lists: place a comma before the final 'and' in a series of three or more items.

Citations and References

JC-ODEL uses the American Psychological Association (APA) citation style, either the 6th or the 7th edition. You may use either edition, but you must be fully consistent. Do not mix elements from both editions within a single manuscript. If you are unsure which edition to use, the 7th edition is recommended.

For in-text citations, use the author-date parenthetical format throughout the body of your text. Below are examples of correct in-text citation formats:

- Single author: (Flavin, 2012)
- Single author, more recent work: (Munyao, 2023)
- Three or more authors: (Miller et al., 2020)

At the end of your manuscript, provide a complete reference list. All entries must appear alphabetically by the surname of the first-named author. Do not number your references. Every source cited in the body of the text must appear in the reference list, and every entry in the reference list must be cited somewhere in the text. Below are examples of correctly formatted reference entries for the most common source types:

Journal article with volume and issue:

Flavin, M. (2012). Disruptive technologies in higher education. *Research in Learning Technology*, Vol. (Issue No.), page range.

Edited book — single editor:

Munyao, M. (Ed.). (2023). *Online learning, instruction, and research in post-pandemic higher education in Africa*. Lexington Books.

Edited book — multiple editors:

Miller, G. E., Ives, K. S., & Moore, M. G. (Eds.). (2020). *Leading the eLearning transformation of higher education: Leadership strategies for the next generation*. Stylus Publishing.

For journal articles that have a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), include the DOI as a full URL at the end of the reference entry. For online documents that do not have a DOI, include the full URL and, where relevant, the date on which you accessed the page.

Tables, Figures, and Graphics

All tables and figures have to be included in the main body of the paper where they first appear in the text. They cannot be placed at the end of the paper unless they are part of the appendix.

Tables must be numbered in sequence using the following format: Table 1, Table 2, and so forth.

Figures have to be numbered sequentially using the following format: Figure 1, Figure 2, and so forth. A caption must be provided for both the figures and tables. Tables must include any footnotes under the table; figures must include the caption under the figure. Figures should be submitted in an excellent electronic form with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi. The figures submitted should be labeled, numbered, and described in such a way that all elements of the figures would be clearly visible when printed at the chosen sizes. Try to use the most explanatory labels, descriptions, and captions in order not to leave readers with questions about what is depicted in each figure. Ideally, one should not need to look for answers elsewhere in the manuscript.

If one wants to use the images that were originally published elsewhere, written permissions from the respective copyright owners have to be received before submission. Figures and tables should stand alone and provide comprehensible information to the readers.

Ethical Declarations and Responsibilities

All authors are expected to make a statement about any possible conflicts of interest at the time of submission. Conflicts of interest include any financial, professional, institutional, or personal relationships that may have affected your research or results. Even where you believe that such relationships had no bearing on your research, disclosure is necessary. Disclosure will not prevent your paper from being published; nondisclosure in the case of a conflict, however, will result in rejection.

If your research includes human subjects, it is important to mention this in your paper. Include the names of the institutions that approved your study, along with the approval number/code provided by the institution. You must be sure that the research conducted has been in line with the relevant ethical standards in your profession and geographical location.

If external funding has been received for the research, indicate this in the Acknowledgements. State clearly whether the funding organization was involved in any way in the conduct or reporting of the research.

By submitting an article to JC-ODEL, you agree that the manuscript is wholly your original creation, that it has never been published elsewhere in any language (unless as a conference abstract or thesis), and that it is not being considered by another publication. The simultaneous submission of manuscripts to two publications is not allowed.

How to Submit Your Manuscript

All submissions should be made electronically. There are two ways of making submissions:

- Submitting to the journal's online submission system available on. If you do not already have an account, you will have to create one and register with the site free of charge. All necessary steps to submit are as guided by the site.
- Submission by e-mail to journals@dolpak.co.ke. Attach the manuscript in a MS Word format together with a cover letter specifying the title of the manuscript, type of the article, confirmation of its originality, and non-reviewing in other publications.

If you have trouble with the submission process, contact the editorial team at journals@dolpak.or.ke for assistance.

At the time of submission, please ensure your complete submission package includes the title page with full author details and affiliations; an abstract of no more than 300 words, followed by keywords; and the main text within the indicated range for each type of article as provided. Include all tables and figures embedded in the text; a complete reference list; a PDF of your proof of payment; and, where applicable, written evidence of copyright permissions for any previously published images or figures.

What Happens After You Submit

Once the JC-ODEL editorial department accepts your manuscript, it is evaluated based on our submission requirements. Manuscripts that fail to satisfy the minimum submission requirements (such as manuscripts that are well beyond the word count limit, which utilize the incorrect citation format, or which lack the documentation of payment) will be sent back to the author at this stage, before entering the process of peer review. It should be noted that this does not

constitute a rejection of your manuscript; rather, you have been allowed to revise it and submit it again.

If your manuscript successfully passes our initial screening, then it enters the double-blind peer review process, whereby you and the reviewers of your manuscript will remain anonymous throughout the review process. Normally, two or more peer reviewers will evaluate your manuscript and offer you written comments regarding their findings.

Possible editorial decisions are: accept as submitted; accept pending minor revisions; revise and resubmit (meaning significant revisions are required before a final decision can be made); or reject. You will be notified of the decision and will receive the reviewers' comments. The journal aims to complete the initial review process on time and will communicate with you if there are any unexpected delays.

If you are asked to revise your manuscript, you will be given clear guidance on what is required and a deadline for resubmission. When you resubmit a revised manuscript, include a separate document in the form of a response letter that addresses each reviewer's comment point sequentially, explaining what changes you made and where in the manuscript to find them, or providing a reasoned explanation if you chose not to make a particular change.

Publication Fees

JC-ODEL charges a publication-processing fee to support the costs of peer review administration, editorial management, typesetting, and online hosting. The fees that apply are:

- Distance. Open and eLearning Practitioners' Association of Kenya (DOLPAK) members: Free
- Distance. Open and eLearning Practitioners' Association of East Africa (DOLPA-EA) members: Free
- Non-members: USD 25

Payment must be made at or before the time of submission. You are required to generate a PDF of your payment confirmation and upload it as part of your submission package. Manuscripts submitted without evidence of payment cannot be processed by the editorial system.

Payment may be made through either of the following methods:

M-PESA Paybill: Send payment to Paybill number 247 247 and enter Account Number 028381 as the account reference. Once the transaction is confirmed, save the M-PESA confirmation message as a PDF for upload.

Bank Deposit: Deposit to Equity Bank, Ongata Rongai Branch. Account name: Distance Open and E-Learning Practitioners Association of Kenya. Account number: 0610283816126. Scan or photograph your deposit slip and save it as a PDF for upload.

If you have questions about which fee category applies to you, or if you need assistance with payment, contact the editorial team at journals@dolpak.or.ke before submitting.

Privacy and Use of Your Information

The names, institutional affiliations, and email addresses you provide when registering on the journal's system and submitting your manuscript will be used solely for the purposes of managing your submission, communicating with you about the editorial process, and, upon publication, identifying you as an author of published work. Your personal information will not be shared with any third party, used for commercial purposes, or made available to any other organization without your explicit consent.

Contact the Editorial Team

The editorial team is available to answer questions about these instructions, the submission process, payment, peer review, or any other aspect of publishing in JC-ODEL.

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Journal Website:

We welcome your submission. The JC-ODEL is made possible by the willingness of individuals within the community of open and distance learning research, teaching, and practice who are ready to share their ideas, findings, and experience for the good of learners and institutions globally.