

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN OPEN DISTANCE AND E-LEARNING

(JC-ODEL)

PUBLICATION ETHICS AND MALPRACTICE STATEMENT

JC-ODEL maintains its dedication to ensuring high levels of publication ethics through all stages of the editorial process. The scholarly record's integrity is not just an administrative ritual; it forms the basis of trust within research, reading communities, and society as a whole. This statement serves as an outline of the ethical rules that define the behavior of all involved parties in relation to publication in JC-ODEL, such as authors, peer reviewers, editors, and the journal's publisher.

All of the policies set forth by JC-ODEL regarding publication ethics are aligned with those established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). In addition, all parties should be acquainted with and follow those international standards of responsible scholarly publishing.

JC-ODEL Commitment to Ethical Publishing

Publication ethics are a priority for us at the JC-ODEL's editorial team, editorial board, and publishing house. Our team is dedicated to taking prompt action should any questions arise regarding publication ethics – whether prior or following publication – as well as maintaining consistency, fairness, and objectivity in the process. We feel that handling such issues is just as important as publishing excellent papers.

Responsibilities of Authors

By submitting to JC-ODEL, the authors commit themselves to fulfilling certain critical obligations.

- i) All authors are expected to portray their work accurately and thoroughly, such that others can independently reproduce their work. Any fabrication or falsification of results, or selective representation of data in a manuscript, constitutes severe research misconduct and will be dealt with by rejecting the paper immediately, even if the manuscript has previously been published.
- ii) All authors need to declare that the manuscript being submitted to JC-ODEL represents original material and has not been published before, either in full or in significant part, in any language. The manuscript must not be concurrently submitted to another journal or publication at the time of submission. Submitting a paper to multiple journals at once is unethical behavior and will definitely lead to its rejection. If parts of the paper have been presented elsewhere

before, whether in conferences, in working papers, or in theses, the authors need to acknowledge this fact in both the cover letter and the manuscript.

iii) Publication entails the credit but also the accountability of authorship. According to JC-ODEL, a good practice in authorship determination is one that stipulates that all the authors listed on a paper are supposed to have contributed intellectually in some meaningful way, which can be conceptually, designed, conducted, or interpreted. Gift or honorary authorship refers to listing a person who did not substantially contribute to the work, whereas ghost authorship refers to omitting people who contributed substantially.

iv) All authors should come to a consensus as to the list of authorship before submission and must ensure that everyone listed has provided consent. Any alteration of authorship after submission, whether it is a change of order, addition, or subtraction, must receive approval from all the authors, and the request should be directed to the editor-in-chief. Corresponding authors have the obligation to ensure that all co-authors have reviewed, read, and approved the final copy of the manuscript.

v) For more detailed information to authors, please review our “Instructions to Authors” and “Authorship Policy.”

Plagiarism

The JC-ODEL policy towards plagiarism is very strict. Plagiarism involves passing off another person's thoughts, wording, information, or expressions as one's own work without due acknowledgment, and it goes against the principle of scholarship in all ways. It negatively affects the authors who are plagiarized, the readers of such content, and the scholarly records themselves.

All submissions to JC-ODEL undergo preliminary checking for plagiarism through standardized methods before peer review. Any manuscript found guilty of plagiarism shall be summarily rejected by JC-ODEL and the respective authors informed. The expectation from the authors is that all sources used to write any paper should be cited, and quotations from other writers must be done using quotation marks and proper citation. Paraphrasing without giving credit to the original writer constitutes plagiarism.

If plagiarism is detected in a manuscript after acceptance or publication, JC-ODEL will retract the article.

Self-plagiarism

The act of reusing one's own published writing without proper attribution is considered misconduct. It is common for researchers to build upon their previous works; however, the use of one's previous writing in one's new work without giving due credit is inappropriate and the article may be retracted at the discretion of the editors.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when an individual's responsibilities within the academic process might be, or might seem to be, threatened by personal, financial, professional, or institutional considerations. As per JC-ODEL, conflict of interest does not constitute grounds for exclusion from participation in research; however, conflicts of interest should be revealed.

Researchers should provide, during the act of submitting the manuscript for publication, any potential financial interest, funding agency, institution, advisory or consultancy position, intellectual commitment, or any personal relationship that might be viewed as likely to affect the research or its interpretation. These include commercial funding, governmental grants, private funding agencies, investments, patents, employment, consulting activities, or personal ties with individuals whose contributions or ideas would potentially be biased in their evaluation.

Peer reviewers who come across a conflict of interest due to personal connection with the authors, professional rivalry, institutional competition, or monetary interest in the topic should disclose it immediately to the handling editor and refuse to review the article.

In case an editor comes across any conflict of interest with respect to the submission, he or she should resign from editing that particular submission and pass it along to another editor.

All conflicts of interest will be made public upon publication of the paper. In case there is a conflict of interest that has not been disclosed, JC-ODEL has the right to rectify the situation through necessary measures.

Peer Review Integrity

The Journal of Contemporary Issues in Open, Distance and eLearning, (JC-ODEL) follows a strict policy of double-blind review, where both parties, the authors and reviewers, maintain anonymity. Double blind peer review is important for the objective evaluation of the manuscript based on its academic worth. Peer reviewers are supposed to provide fair, confidential, and unbiased reviews. They should critically assess the manuscript and suggest improvements to

authors through constructive and specific comments, irrespective of whether or not it is published.

Peer reviewers must maintain the confidentiality of all manuscripts. Any discussion or publication using information obtained from an unpublished manuscript without the consent of the editor amounts to a violation of the code of conduct for peer reviewers. It will also constitute a violation if any attempt is made by the reviewer to benefit academically at the cost of the author.

Reviewers who find that they lack the expertise to evaluate a submission adequately, or who cannot complete their review within the agreed-upon timeframe, should inform the editor promptly so that an alternative reviewer can be found. Editors are responsible for selecting reviewers who are genuinely qualified to assess the work and who do not have undisclosed conflicts of interest.

For more detailed information about the peer review process and responsibilities, please see our “Peer Review Policy.”

Duties of Editors

It is the editors at JC-ODEL who are liable for all papers published in the journal, and they take this responsibility seriously. Decisions regarding manuscripts by editors are taken solely based on quality, suitability, and ethical aspects of the paper. The political, financial, and personal considerations of any person, even the publisher, do not enter into this decision-making.

All submitted manuscripts are regarded as privileged documents, and information therein is only shared with the authors and reviewers associated with them. The review process is fair, reviewers are chosen objectively, and authors are informed of the progress of the manuscript in an accurate manner. Should there be any issues of ethics involved in any paper, before or after its publication, any investigation and resolution will be at the direction of the head editor in consultation with the associate editors.

Retractions

JC-ODEL strives to maintain the integrity of the publication process. In the case where it is revealed that there are some significant errors contained within an article, the research was conducted unethically, and the article itself was published in violation of ethical guidelines, then a retraction will be issued by JC-ODEL. Retractions are a serious step that is rarely taken, but

necessary to maintain integrity within academia and to avoid potential harms that may occur as a result of the article being distributed.

In the case of a retraction, a retraction notice will be posted explaining what the article is and why it is being retracted in language that is accessible to the average reader, and which links back to the original article so that the retraction can be found easily. The retraction notice will be published regardless of any disagreement by the author(s). Retractions may be initiated by the authors themselves, by the editor, or following a formal investigation by an institution or funding body. JC-ODEL will cooperate fully with such investigations and will take appropriate action based on its findings.

Corrections and Errata

Inaccuracies, such as mistakes in calculations, typos, citations, and descriptions that do not undermine the results and honesty of a published article in any significant way, are dealt with using corrections and errata. An author who detects inaccuracies within his published paper must immediately alert the journal editor. The journal will release a correction notice indicating the original article, the error found within it, and the corrected information. Corrections are different from retractions because a correction deals with honest errors, while a retraction deals with flaws or breaches of integrity.

In cases where inaccuracies or errors in data analysis and reporting exist in such a way that they influence the results of a published article significantly, the editors will determine if corrections can be enough or if a retraction is necessary. Authors are highly encouraged to inform the journal of such errors in their published papers.

Data Transparency and Research Integrity

JC-ODEL requires that authors ensure that their research data, whenever possible and permitted by law, is made accessible to other researchers. If authors cannot make their data accessible owing to certain issues, such as confidentiality requirements for research participants, this should be specified in the manuscript. Fabrication, manipulation, or selective reporting of data to justify a predetermined result is not acceptable. Where research ethics approval is necessary for a study, the same should be declared in the manuscript.

Alignment with COPE Principles

As an open-access journal, JC-ODEL adheres to all the ethical standards set forth by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). COPE offers internationally recognized standards

and guidance in dealing with misconduct issues related to research and publications, and all members of our editorial board adhere to COPE's guidelines and flowcharts when dealing with any ethical issue encountered during the editorial process.

Therefore, in case any such issues occur relating to plagiarism, double submission, disputes over authorship, fabrication of results, undisclosed conflicts of interest, or any other unethical behavior, then JC-ODEL will employ an evidence-based process to deal with such issues based on the information provided. The website of COPE provides a wide range of useful information regarding ethical misconduct, which can be accessed at.

Moreover, should any party have reason to believe that JC-ODEL engages in any kind of misconduct and/or malpractice regarding ethics, such claims can be forwarded to the relevant authorities within COPE. JC-ODEL DOES NOT encourage any kind of retribution against persons who report ethical misconduct.

Reporting Concerns

Should there be an issue regarding ethics in any paper, author, reviewer, or editor related to JC-ODEL, it is encouraged that you get in touch with the Editor-in-Chief immediately. All such issues shall be treated confidentially and shall be investigated appropriately. The JC-ODEL journal adheres to being transparent with regard to handling ethical issues and communicating the results of investigations.

The above statement on publication ethics and malpractice is reviewed regularly and kept up to date according to new best practices in academic publishing. It applies to all papers submitted to, and published in, the Journal of Contemporary Issues in Open, Distance and eLearning.