

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice
Statement From
Indian Journal of Social Work Education and Practice (IJSWEP)

1. Research and Publication Ethics

1.1. Publication Ethics Statement

We fully comply with the Code of Conduct and the Best Practice Guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). The editors of IJSWEP take the responsibility to ensure high-quality scientific publications that meet standards of academic excellence and to enforce a rigorous peer-review together with strict ethical policies and standards in the field of scholarly publication. In case of an ethical issue, all requisite action is taken. Ethical issues that might be raised by readers of the journal will be examined by the editorial office following procedures in line with COPE guidelines.

COPE guidelines are shown in the

link: <https://publicationethics.org/files/u7141/1999pdf13.pdf>

1.2. Ethics in Publishing

IJSWEP abides by the COPE's Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing as a COPE member, among other things. For handling potentially unethical behavior by authors, reviewers, or editors, our journal adheres to COPE's policies. All editorial staff members at IJSWEP have received training in spotting and handling ethical issues.

The directions for authors of journals include information on ethical considerations for submitting manuscripts (see here, for example). Please refer to our Updating Published Papers Policy. The editorial staff will investigate any ethical concerns brought up by journal readers using the COPE-recommended processes. The Editorial Board can resolve disagreements over the reliability of research reported in articles that have been published. When appropriate, we will submit disagreements regarding authorship, data ownership, author misbehaviour, etc. to external bodies like a university ethics committee. Authors are urged to address any claims that have been made against them with evidence. We adhere to COPE principles, notably How to Spot Authorship Problems, when handling authorship disputes. Usually, the authorship can be altered via a Correction if all authors agree. If not, we need a credible declaration concerning who is eligible for authorship from the institution(s) of the authors.

2. Copyright Notice and Licensing

In case of acceptance, IJSWEP will publish the author(s) contribution on the Journal's website (<https://ijswep.socialwork.du.ac.in/>). The author(s) may publish the contribution on his/her personal Web page or any other web page if he/she creates a link to the mentioned volume of IJSWEP. Similarly, IJSWEP may publish the contribution in other databases and web pages provided that a link to the mentioned volume of IJSWEP is created.

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3. Editor Code of Conduct

Our Editorial Team comply with the code of conduct and COPE guidelines to advance knowledge within the journal's fields of research. The editors ensure this essential role by:

1. Maintaining and improving the quality of manuscripts published by the journal and the integrity of its peer review process,
2. Supporting the journal's authors and reviewers,
3. Maintaining and improving the journal's reputation in collaboration with the journal's wider editorial team.

Issues related to participation of human subjects (e.g., IRB approval) and vulnerable populations (i.e., children, parent/guardian consent) we ensure that authors comply with the institutional review board guidelines as presented in the link: <https://irb.byu.edu/the-irb-process>

3.1. Publication Decisions

The editor is responsible for deciding which of the papers submitted to the journal will be published. The editor will evaluate manuscripts without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy. The decision will be based on the paper's importance, originality and clarity, and the study's validity and its relevance to the journal's scope. Current legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism should also be considered.

3.2. Confidentiality

The editor and any editorial team must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

3.3. Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted paper will not be used by the editor or the members of the editorial board for their own research purposes without the author's explicit written consent.

4. Editorial Process

4.1. Pre-check

The managing editor of IJSWEP will conduct an initial inspection immediately after submission to determine: overall manuscript suitability for the journal, section, or special issue; high academic requirements of rigor that must be met by the manuscript in order to be eligible for additional review. The academic editor, who will be notified of the submission and invited to conduct a check and recommend reviewers, will be the Editor-in-Chief in the case of regular submissions, the Guest Editor in the case of submissions for Special Issues, or an Editorial Board member in the case of a conflict of interest and of regular submissions, if the Editor-in-Chief permits. Academic editors have the discretion to seek amendments prior to peer review, reject a submission, or continue with the peer review process. The only capacity in which the Guest Editor may participate in the review process is that of an author. Similarly, Editors-in-Chief, and other members of the Editorial Board are not permitted to observe the review of their manuscripts other than in their capacity as authors.

4.2. Peer Review

4.2.1. General Guidelines for Peer Review and Editing

All submissions to be considered for publication in our journal are expected to meet standards of academic excellence and are subject to rigorous, well-established, fair, and unbiased double-blind peer-review performed by professionals (this includes original research and review articles, spontaneous submissions, invited papers, case reports and case series). Upon arrival, the paper will undergo an initial review by the journal's managing editor to determine its acceptability and compliance with journal guidelines. Editors may discuss with experts before deciding on appropriate actions, including but not limited to recruiting reviewers with specific expertise, assessment by additional editors, and declining to further consider a submission.

The Editorial Office will then plan the independent experts' peer-review process and gather at least two review reports for each submission. Peer reviewers' identities will remain anonymous to the authors. Before making a judgment, the editors will require sufficient modifications from the authors (and, if necessary, a second round of peer review).

The academic editor (often the Editor-in-Chief or Academic Editor) makes the final choice. We only publish articles that have been approved by highly qualified reviewers with expertise in a field appropriate for the article. The articles that have been accepted are copy- and English-edited.

4.2.2. Peer-review Process

All submitted manuscripts are expected to meet standards of academic excellence and are subject to initial appraisal by the Editor and, if found suitable for further consideration, to peer review by independent, anonymous expert referees.

No paper will be automatically rejected on the ground of being too applied or too theoretical; technically skilled papers from any field of economics are encouraged. Authors are required to present their scientific findings in a clear manner and inspire a broad academic debate on the subject explored in the paper.

IJSWEP journal operates double-blind peer-review, where in addition to the author not knowing the identity of the reviewer, the reviewer is unaware of the author's identity. The conference journals operate a different peer review standard. For conference volumes, the peer review process is handled by the conference committee, and the review method as well as reports number are decided by the conference organizers' requirements; For standalone papers, the procedure is conducted by academics and researchers as a single-blind evaluation with at

least one independent reviewer, with an Advisory Board Member making the final acceptance/rejection decision.

For every article that is submitted, at least two review reports are gathered. The academic editor has the option to suggest reviewers during pre-check. In addition, qualified members of the Editorial Board, qualified reviewers from our database, or fresh reviewers found through online searches for similar articles will all be used by the IJSWEP editorial team.

Potential reviewers may be recommended by authors. The IJSWEP core editorial staff checks for any conflicts of interest and disqualifies people who may have them. During the initial submission of their paper, authors have the option to provide the names of potential peer-reviewers they do not want to be considered for the manuscript's peer-review. As long as they do not obstruct the editorial team's ability to conduct an unbiased and complete evaluation of the submission, the editorial team will abide by these requirements.

All reviewers undergo the ensuing checks:

- have no financial ties to any of the authors;
- should not be affiliated with the authors' institution;
- should not have co-authored a publication within the last three years with the authors;
- possess appropriate expertise and a track record of publications in the topic represented by the submitted article (Scopus, ORCID);
- are seasoned academics in the subject matter of the research submitted;
- own a recognized and approved academic affiliation.

Reviewers who agree to examine a paper should:

- have no ties to any of the authors;
- possess the required knowledge to assess the level of a paper;
- throughout peer review, deliver high-quality review reports and show responsiveness;
- uphold moral and professional norms.

After accepting a review invitation, reviewers have 10-20 days to complete their reviews on our online platform. Requests for extensions will be considered.

Reviewers are asked to provide their report for the evaluation of a revised article within ten days. On request, extensions may also be given.

We may consult experts and the academic editor before deciding on appropriate actions, including but not limited to recruiting reviewers with specific expertise, assessment by additional editors, and declining to further consider a submission.

From submission to final decision or publication, one dedicated Associate Editor member coordinates the review process and serves as the main point of contact for authors, academic editors, and reviewers.

IJSWEP employees handle all correspondence with authors, reviewers, and the external editor in order to support academic editors. Academic editors have access to the status of papers, the names of reviewers, and the ability to communicate with Ronak Publication employees about manuscript review at any time.

4.2.3. Option for Open Peer Review

The open peer-review process used by IJSWEP publications gives authors the choice to publish reviewer feedback and author answers alongside their published work (often referred to as open reports). In addition, if the review is published, reviewers have the option to sign their reports, in which case the reviewer's name appears on the review report (referred to as open identity). Reviews are submitted anonymously by default, and authors and reviewers must both want to share their work in this manner. No information will be published if an article is rejected. Open peer review offers the advantage of improving review process transparency and giving curious readers more details about the publication.

4.3. Revision

The IJSWEP team will ask the author to modify the article if only minor or large changes are needed before sending it to the academic editor. Before deciding whether to offer adjustments to authors when there are conflicting review reports or when there are one or more rejection recommendations, the academic editor requests input. Academic editors may at this point ask for more reviewers or more review reports.

Depending on whether the reviewer requested to see the revised version, revised versions of manuscripts may or may not be supplied to reviewers. By default, the amended paper will be given to reviewers who ask for significant adjustments or urge rejection.

4.4. Editor's Choice

After peer review, the academic editor can decide whether to accept a manuscript after receiving at least two review reports. An academic editor makes acceptance decisions (the Editor-in-Chief, a Guest Editor, or another suitable Editorial Board member). Guest editors are not permitted to make judgments regarding their own papers; instead, an appropriate Editorial Board member will be designated to do so. We anticipate that the academic editor will look at the following before deciding:

The appropriateness of the chosen reviewers' criticisms and the author's answer, as well as the paper's overall scientific quality.

The academic editor has the choice of accepting the work in its present form, accepting it with minor changes, rejecting it and declining resubmission, rejecting it but encouraging resubmission, asking the author to make improvements, or asking for a second reviewer.

The Editors-in-Chief or academic editors are free to disagree with the reviewers' recommendations. If they do, they ought to include an explanation of why for the benefit of the authors and reviewers.

Sometimes a decision to accept a manuscript is supported by an academic editor despite a reviewer's suggestion to reject it. Before sending a final decision to the authors, IJSWEP staff will request a second, independent opinion from an Editorial Board member or the Editor-in-Chief.

An academic editor is the only person who can approve an article for publication. Before sending a final decision to the authors, IJSWEP staff will request a second, independent opinion from an Editorial Board member or the Editor-in-Chief.

An academic editor is the only person who can approve an article for publication. After that, employed IJSWEP staff informs authors. Staff members of the IJSWEP never decide whether to accept papers.

Editors-in-Chief and other members of the Editorial Board at IJSWEP are not involved in the processing of their own scholarly work. At least two impartial reviewers are assigned to them, and their contributions are edited by them. Other Editorial Board members who don't have a conflict of interest with the authors make the decisions.

4.5. Editorial Impartiality

All publications published by IJSWEP are subjected to peer review and evaluation by our independent Editorial Boards; IJSWEP staff members are not involved in the selection of manuscripts for publication. We anticipate the academic editor to decide exclusively on the basis of the appropriateness of the chosen reviewers' criticisms and the author's answer, as well as the paper's overall scientific quality.

IJSWEP rules are influenced by the objective to make science and research findings open and available as broadly and quickly as possible.

5. Ethical Guidelines for Authors

- Only those who have significantly contributed to the manuscript and claim authorship should be included as authors.
- Conflict of interest specks should be disclosed in the paper prior to submission.
- Simultaneous submission of manuscripts to more than one journal is not acceptable.
- Original research outcome must be novel and not previously published.
- Appropriate funding statements need to be included in the manuscript.
- Appropriate acknowledgments are made within the manuscript.
- Research errors are disclosed immediately to journal editors.
- Informed consent and responsible conduct are ensured to protect research participants' rights.

5.1. Authors' Duties

5.1.1. Reporting Standards

Authors of original research reports should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

5.1.2. Data Access and Retention

Authors could be asked to provide the raw data of their study together with the paper for editorial review and should be prepared to make the data publicly available if practicable. In any event, authors should ensure accessibility of such data to other competent professionals for at least ten years after publication (preferably via an institutional or subject-based data repository or other data Centre), provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and legal rights concerning proprietary data do not preclude their release.

5.1.3. Originality, Plagiarism Policy, Data Fabrication, and Image Manipulation

The journal publishes only original peer-reviewed articles.

Plagiarism is not acceptable. In case of plagiarism, the manuscript is rejected, and necessary action is taken in line with the Publication Ethics Guidelines.

Plagiarism can occur in two forms: 1) authors intentionally copy someone else work and claim it as their own, or 2) authors copy her or his own previously published material either in full or in part, without providing appropriate references – also called as “self-plagiarism” or “duplicate publication”.

IJSWEP will judge any case of plagiarism on its own merits. If plagiarism is detected, either by the editors, peer reviewers or editorial staff at any stage before publication of a manuscript –before or after acceptance, during editing or at page proof stage, we will alert the author(s), asking her/him to either rewrite the text or quote the text exactly and to cite the original source. If the plagiarism is extensive - that is, if at least 20% of the original submission is plagiarized - the article may be rejected, and the author's institution/employer notified.

Every manuscript submitted for publication is checked for plagiarism after submission and before being sent to an editor for editorial review. IJSWEP uses *Turnitin Software* to detect instances of overlapping and similar text in the submitted manuscript. Authors will submit only entirely original works and will appropriately cite or quote the work and/or words of others. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work should also be cited.

Data presented and used in the research endeavour must be original and not any how fabricated. Image files must not be modified in any way that could cause misinterpretation of the information provided by the original image. In case such modification is detected, the manuscript is rejected. Authors should only use images and figures in their articles if they are relevant and valuable to the scholarly work reported.

5.1.4. Using Third-Party Material

As a warranty authors must obtain the necessary written permission to include material in their article that is owned and held in copyright by a third party, including – but not limited to – any proprietary text, illustration, table, or other material, including data, audio, video, film stills, screenshots, and any supplemental material.

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Where the text or image/illustration, table, or any other material is taken from other sources (including the author's previous published manuscripts) the source should be clearly indicated and cited, and that appropriate permission is obtained. Authors must avoid excessive and inappropriate self-citation or prearrangements among author groups to inappropriately cite each other's work, as this can be considered a form of misconduct called citation manipulation. Please check the COPE guidance on citation manipulation. The author(s) of a non-research article (e.g., a Review or Opinion) should ensure the references cited are relevant and provide

a fair and balanced overview of the current state of research or scholarly work on the topic. References should not be unfairly biased toward a particular research group, organization, or journal.

5.2. Conflict of Interests

All authors must disclose any relevant relationship or interest that could affect their work.

Authors can declare any potential conflicts of interest via the online submission system during the submission process. In cases where no conflicts exist, the authors should state: “Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest”.

If applicable, authors must declare current or recent funding (including article processing charges) and other payments, goods or services that might influence the work. All funding, whether a conflict or not, must be declared in the ‘Funding Statement’. If there is no funding role, please state “The funders had no role in this study”.

The involvement of anyone other than the authors who 1) has an interest in the outcome of the work; 2) is affiliated to an organization with such an interest; or 3) was employed or paid by a funder, in the commissioning, conception, planning, design, conduct, or analysis of the work, the preparation or editing of the manuscript, or the decision to publish must be declared.

Conflicts can include but are not limited to the following:

- Financial — funding and other payments, goods and services received or expected by the authors relating to the subject of the work or from an organization with an interest in the outcome of the work
- Affiliations — being employed by, on the advisory board for, or a member of an organization with an interest in the outcome of the work
- Intellectual property — patents or trademarks owned by someone or their organization
- Personal — friends, family, relationships, and other close personal connections
- Ideology — beliefs or activism, for example, political or religious, relevant to the work
- Academic — competitors or someone whose work is critiqued

5.3. Competing Interests

A competing interest can occur where the author(s) (or the author’s employer, sponsor or family/friends) “have a financial, commercial, legal, or professional relationship with other organizations, or with the people working with them which could influence the research or interpretation of the results”.

Competing interests can be financial or non-financial in nature. To ensure transparency, the author(s) must also declare any associations which can be perceived by others as a competing interest.

5.4. Authorship

Authors listed on an article must meet all the following criteria:

1. Made a significant contribution to the work reported, whether that's in the conception, study design, execution, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation, or in all these areas.
2. Have drafted or written, or substantially revised or critically reviewed the article.
3. Have agreed on the journal to which the article will be submitted.
4. Reviewed and agreed on all versions of the article before submission, during revision, the final version accepted for publication, and any significant changes introduced at the proofing stage.
5. Agree to take responsibility and be accountable for the contents of the article and to share the responsibility to resolve any questions raised about the accuracy or integrity of the published work.

5.5. Corrections and Retractions

When errors are identified in published articles, the editors will consider what action is required and may consult the associate/academic editors and the authors' institution(s).

Errors of the authors may be corrected by a corrigendum and errors of the journal by an erratum. If there are errors that significantly affect the conclusions or is evidence of misconduct, this may require retraction or an expression of concern following the COPE Retraction Guidelines. All authors will be asked to agree to the content of the notice. An author name change after publication will be made to the article and any citing articles published without requiring documentation, a corrigendum notice, or informing any other authors, following a request to the journal.

6. Reviewers' Ethics and Responsibilities

6.1. Contribution to Editorial Decisions

The peer-reviewing process assists the editor and the editorial board in making editorial decisions and may also serve the author in improving the paper.

6.2. Promptness

Any selected referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and withdraw from the review process.

6.3. Confidentiality

Any manuscript received for review must be treated as confidential document. They must not be disclosed to or discussed with others except as authorized by the editor.

6.4. Standards of Objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

6.5. Acknowledgement of Sources

Reviewers should identify cases in which relevant published work referred to in the paper has not been cited in the reference section. They should point out whether observations or arguments derived from other publications are accompanied by the respective source. Reviewers will notify the editor of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.

6.6. Disclosure and Conflict of Interest

Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage. Reviewers should not consider manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions associated with the papers.

7. Open Access Policy

7.1. IJSWEP Open Access Information and Policy

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7.3. Meaning of Open Access

In line with major definitions of open access in scientific literature (namely the Budapest, Berlin, and Bethesda declarations), IJSWEP defines open access as follows:

- There is no need for subscription or payment in the case of peer-reviewed,
- Published material can be re-used without obtaining permission on the ground that an appropriate citation to the original publication is given.

7.4. Advantages of Open Access for Authors

The unlimited accessibility of the publication over the Internet vouches for the High Availability and Visibility of the IJSWEP open access articles.

The popularity of open access articles leads to a Higher Citation Impact.

Open access publishers (including IJSWEP) offer Lower Publishing Costs.

Articles are more rapidly published in open access journals (including IJSWEP).

8. Legal Notice

Neither the IJSWEP journal, nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use to which information contained in the articles published may be put, nor for any errors which may appear despite careful preparation and checking.