EAST AFRICAN NATURE & SCIENCE ORGANIZATION

OFFICE OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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GENERAL REVIEWERS' GUIDELINE

1. Introduction

The peer review process is very critical to the maintenance and enhancement of the integrity of any scholarly record to the benefit of authors, publishers, and readers. This process entirely depends on the trust, willingness, and dedication of our reviewers to ensure each article passing through their hands is thoroughly read to the letter. As a reviewer, you have to make recommendations by objectively, constructively and intentionally commenting on areas that the author(s) should improve and generally recommending to the Sectional Editors whether the article should be rejected or accepted for publication.

2. Basic Principles

You are required to abide by our basic principles for peer review that expect you to:

i. only agree to review articles for which you have the subject expertise required to carry out a proper assessment and which you can assess in a timely manner;

ii. respect the confidentiality of the peer-review process and not reveal any details of an article or its review, during or after the peer-review process, beyond those that are released by our hosted journals;

iii. not use information obtained during the peer-review process for your own or any other person's or organisation's advantage or to disadvantage or discredit others;

iv. declare all potential conflicting interests and seek advice from the Editorial Secretariat if you are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest;

v. not allow your reviews to be influenced by the origins of an article, the nationality, religious beliefs, political beliefs, gender or other characteristics of the authors, or by commercial considerations;

vi. be objective and constructive in your reviews, refraining from being hostile or inflammatory and from making libellous or derogatory personal comments

vii. acknowledge that peer review is largely a reciprocal endeavour and undertake to carry out your fair share of reviewing and in a timely manner;

viii. provide our journals with personal and professional information that is accurate and a true representation of your expertise;

ix. recognise that impersonation of another individual during the review process is considered serious misconduct;

x. accept to track all changes made to the articles and make all necessary comments in the Review pane in Microsoft Word.

3. General Guidelines

1. The review process is subjected to a double-blind peer review where both the reviewers and the authors will not know the identity of each other and in cases where this might be revealed, the reviewers have the responsibility to keep the authors' identity confidential and review the article with utmost integrity.

2. All articles forwarded to reviewers for review are edited and formatted to the Journals' primal specifications by the Editorial Secretariat, thus the only task for the reviewers is to read and review the articles to the letter.

3. As noted in item (x) of the basic principles, all changes made by the editors and the reviewers will be tracked for the authors' perusal.

4. When reading and reviewing an article, reviewers are expected to:

   a. Correct common grammatical and sentence structure errors to the best of their knowledge. In cases where reviewers do not understand or feel the authors need to expound, detailed comments seeking clarification or advice should be provided for the authors to address.

   b. Provide only comments that are objective, constructive, articulate, direct and most importantly polite and considerate.

   c. Read and scrutinise the entire article to ensure that every angle of the author(s) is understood and validated.

   d. Provide two types of comments whenever necessary as follows:

      i. Comments on a specific issue in the article, which are provided using the comment section in the Review Tab of Microsoft Word.

      ii. General comments regarding the article; reviewers should provide their general perception toward the article, state areas that the authors require to improve and lastly recommend whether the article should be rejected or accepted for publication.

e. Ensure that the in-text citations and references adhere to the APA 7th Edition formatting guidelines. We have an exception, in cases where an author has used an alternative referencing style (MLA, Chicago, IEEE, OSCOLA etc.) but consistently and accurately throughout the article, the used style overrides the APA style. However, in cases where there is inconsistency, the authors should be advised to update their in-text citations and references as per the APA style.

5. Keep note of the following sections of an academic article:

3.1 Title of an Article

Reviewers are allowed to make adjustments to the title of an article or recommend to authors to adjust the title to resonate with the presentation of their content. There are some cases where the title will be vague, failing to resonate with the content, while in many other cases, the title might be missing a word or two that need your input. Reviewers' discretion is expected when adjusting the article. Take note that this should not be based entirely on your expectation but must be drawn entirely upon the authors' work. When a title change is made that is not a result of grammatical errors, please add an in-text comment explaining to the authors what necessitated the change.

3.2 Abstract

An abstract should be approximately 300 words. There are cases however when this can be more or less depending on the uniqueness of the article. Whenever necessary, advise the authors to ensure that the abstract does not exceed 300 words. The most important aspect however is ensuring that the abstract deliberately and concisely provides an accurate synopsis of the article. In cases of research articles, the abstract should most of the time capture the purpose of the study, study area, research methods, results, and conclusion. The summarized information must also be reflected in the subsequent contents of the article. This is because, in many cases, authors fail to adequately edit abstracts of articles extracted from dissertations and theses ending up with inconsistencies between the abstracts and the full text.

3.3 Introduction/Background Information

Each article should have an introductory section; advise the authors to include it in cases where there is none. Sometimes, this section divides into subsections such as a statement of the problem, research purpose/objective, research questions/hypothesis, the scope of study and significance. Always ensure the content presented is relevant, objective, and constructive.

3.4 Literature Review

Many articles, more so field research articles, have a distinct literature review section which might also have empirical literature, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework. Most desk reviews, systematic reviews and meta-analyses do not have these sections. Nonetheless, a reviewer must ensure all the information presented is accurate and objective. One common issue reviewers might find in this section is a lack of consistency between the abstract and some content in the section such as theoretical frameworks mentioned in the abstract but not discussed in this section.

3.5 Research Methodology

This section requires utmost keenness to ensure the information provided in the abstract resonates with the discussed methodology as well as is well-presented in the results and discussion sections. Authors tend to provide more or less than needed information in this section such as stating they used questionnaires and interviews to collect data but end up only presenting data from one of the methods. They also fail to provide sampling frames, sampling methods, data analysis etc. and in some cases state they used multiple analyses such as both descriptive and inferential analysis but fail to present the results of the inferential analysis. Ensure the information provided in this section is accurate and resonates with the results sections.

3.6 Results Sections

Ensure the results presented are accurate and resonate with the objectives of the article as well as the research methodology. This is the heart of the research dissemination as readers are expected to refer to the results for decision-making. For this and more reasons, ensuring the results are accurate, valid and reliable is of utmost importance. This section must be scrutinised because there are authors whose target is just getting published rather than the quality of the article. The reviewers must ensure that all our authors publish quality articles.

3.7 Discussions

Ensure the discussion of the article aligns with the objective(s) of the study, literature review, and research results. One common issue noted is the tendency of authors to copy-paste the content of their literature review into the discussion instead of discussing the results with respect to their literature review. In other cases, authors will copy-paste sections from the results section into the discussion, which fails to meet the goal of the discussion section.

3.8 Conclusion and Recommendations

Ensure the conclusion and recommendations are well articulated and resonate with the research objective, results, and discussions of the article. Whereas recommendations are not a must, all articles should have a summative conclusion.

3.9 Intext Citations and Referencing

As noted earlier, EANSO uses the APA 7th Edition referencing style for all its journals. Reviewers are expected to ensure all in-text citations and references adhere to the APA 7th edition guidelines. Always consult Google Search in cases where you are not sure what to do regarding the referencing style.

Even though APA 7th Edition is the default referencing style, there are exceptions where an author has used an alternative referencing style (e.g., Chicago, OSCOLA, IEEE, MLA etc.) correctly and consistently throughout the article. In that case, the used style overrides APA hence review should be based on the guidelines of the used style. Consult Google Search for guidelines of the style used.

There are several points and issues to note in this section:

a) Many authors fail to correctly format their in-text citations by omitting commas, wrong use of parenthetical and narrative citations, and including authors' initials in the citation, among others. We expect our reviewers to edit and correct such issues as they read through the article instead of asking the authors to do unless the issues are gross and reflected in the entire article.

b) Be aware of forgery and manipulation of in-text citations by authors. Some authors forge and manipulate citations such as using an old reference but updating it with a recent date, say the original article was published in 2005, but the author cites and references it to have been published in 2015 to seem to have used recent data. Therefore, always compare the provided in-text citations and references against the original sources.

c) Another issue you may come across is forgery and manipulation of citations by in-text citing sources that do not correspond with the discussed content. In some cases, you will find an author discussing that a certain study was conducted in a certain region, but when crosschecked with the cited source, the cited information is not in the cited source. This extends from information such as statistical data to the general content of the article. Therefore, always ensure the cited content in the article corresponds with the information in the cited source.

d) Regarding in-text citations and references, ensure all in-text cited sources are referenced and all references are in-text cited.

    i. In cases where a source has been cited but not referenced, ask the author to add it to the reference list.

    ii. In cases where a reference is listed but not in the text cited, delete the reference from the list.

    iii. In cases where the in-text citation and the reference have a year or date mismatch, the number of authors mismatch, the order of authors mismatch or other mismatched inconsistencies, write a comment so that the author(s) can take note and correct accordingly.

e) Always ensure the references are formatted correctly in accordance with APA 7th Edition style or the alternative referencing style correctly and consistently used. You can help the author in updating the references except in cases where there are many issues and you have to advise the author(s) to update the information accordingly.

3.10 Format of Tables, Figures and Graphs

All tables, figures and graphs should be presented in editable formats, more so in the Results section. Advise author(s) to use editable tables and figures in cases where you find an editable version is most appropriate. Editability of these elements increases the quality of the final article during the typesetting and publishing process. This also means that you should make sure that the figures and plates provided are of quality resolution and relevant to the context derived.

3.11 General Comments

After a complete review of the article, the reviewers should provide general comments highlighted in red at the end of the article. The comments should appear as follows:

General Reviewers' Comments

Having read and reviewed your article, I am content the article meets /does not meet the scope of the journal hence I recommend its acceptance/rejection for publication. The author should note the following: [here provide your general view about the article, anything in general].

If you recommend the article for publication, include the following:

The article should proceed to the next publication stage provided the author(s) address the following issues: [list the issues you noted in the article that need to be addressed, these can be grammar, forgery of references, advice to update their references as per APA 7th edition etc.]

4. Conclusion

This guideline provides an overview of what is expected from our reviewers and what to expect when reviewing the submissions from our scholars. The review entirely depends on our reviewers' knowledgeability, expertise, keenness, and decisiveness. The scenarios our reviewers will encounter are extremely diverse and cannot be exhaustively covered in this guideline. This just provides a scope you can adopt as a starting point towards the adventure of peer reviewing the assortment of articles we receive from our scholars from around the world every day. As a publisher, we ask for your utmost dedication, diligence, and confidentiality in achieving the goal of advancing humanity through research. We finally wish you all the best during the review process and appreciate your kindness in working with us to change the world.