
Original Paper

Peer- Review Process- The Role Authors, Editors and Reviewers

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Abstract

It is said peer learning is a very effective tool in the process of sharing & knowledge building. In this context, the current chapter focuses on the peer review process where the roles of the three stakeholders are seen. These three stakeholders are the authors, editors & the reviewers. As an author the lead author has published more than 100 articles, 5 books, 5 book chapters till the end of 2023, the chapter encompasses all the modalities that an author should look into the process of peer review.

The feedbacks that the lead author has received as an author from the editors have been the backbone of the chapter regarding the role of editors in peer review. Similarly, the role that the lead author has demonstrated as a reviewer since 2018 have become the base regarding the exploration & description of the role of reviewers in the peer review process.

Instead of writing a rhetoric chapter just like any & only content focus chapter regarding peer review process, the chapter is a complete reflection of the processes that the lead author of the chapter has gone through. However, some theoretical concepts have been captured as well to augment the essence of the current chapter. In short, it is an amalgamation of the reflections & experiences in the art & craft of writing scientific papers.

The chapter primarily bases upon the art & craft of writing papers in the domain of social science while touching upon medical writings.

Keywords: Peer Review, COPE guidelines, SWOT, PRISMA

Introduction

Professionals working in the same field as the author are the peer of the author for that article. When we put the author into the peer review process, the ‘peer-review’ word becomes a verb in the dictionary. Similarly, when we just say the word ‘peer-review’ it is a noun as we are naming the process. Wikipedia defines the process ‘as the evaluation of work by one or more people with similar competencies as the publisher of the work or the author’¹.

Henry Oldenberg, a German born British philosopher who lived from 1619 to 1677 is considered as the father of modern scientific peer review process.^{2,3,4}

The chapter has three primary sections. The first section deals with the role of authors in the peer review process. It initiates with the thought process that the author goes through in the beginning before writing on the subject. Followed by this, the author needs to focus on the content exclusively. Finally, the author should reflect on the entire process till he/she thinks that he/she is satisfied with the outcome.

The second section focuses on the role of editors. The role of editors is primarily based on the adherence to the operational guidelines of the journal or a book in which the chapter or article is intended to be published. The role should also include the perspective of the author & the context in which the article or the chapter to be published.

If the author & the editor are the part of a circle, the reviewer is the tangent to the circle. The tangent just touches the circle & is not a part of the circle itself. Similarly, the reviewer should touch those areas where the content of the article or chapter is augmented so that the quality of the article or chapter is enhanced.

In short, the three stake holders are expected to work in tandem, work vertically but they are to be seen horizontally in their collective effort in the entire peer review process.

Role of Author before sending the document

The first thing that the author should do is to brood over the areas under the SWOT frame work. These are to analyze one’s Strength, Weakness, Opportunity & Threats. Based upon this framework, the author needs to think of a topic that is based upon the author’s strength & he/she needs to build ideas around that topic. The topic’s contents should build upon his/her weaknesses as identified by previous peer reviews or other formal/informal type of reviews. The next step is to ensure that the topic opens up further opportunities to write that emerges for him/her. The last is to reduce the threats. The threat component includes the ability to do away from doing major revisions in the article or chapter that emerges through the peer review feedback process.^{5 to 10}

The author needs to read the operational guidelines of the intended journal or book towards writing a chapter or article. The author needs to have clarity about the type of article or chapter that is being written. Here, it means whether it is a research article, review article, case study, summary, short communication, commentary, brief, historical perspective, current perspective or a future perspective.^{5 to 10}

Given below is a table having the outline of a chapter or an article. All authors need to adhere to in order to get a favorable peer review. The components of the outline are given below.

Box 1- Suggested Outline of an Article or Chapter^{5 to 10}

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Title of the article or chapter depicting the dependent & the independent variable.2. Name & Affiliation of the authors3. Abstract with Key Words4. Introduction5. Reviews in the past & current regarding the topic under the literature review section |
|---|

6. Research Methodology- Sampling (probability sampling, non probability sampling, sampling method, techniques, Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) frame, 30 cluster sampling, sampling stages, n & N of respondents, type of respondents, inclusion & exclusion criteria, methods used in data collection, research design, research sub designs), Research tool (piloting details, details of the sections, type of tool, flow among the sections, statistical applications (descriptive, analytic, interpretative, qualitative data, quantitative data), Objective & research questions of each objective, Hypothesis- H_0, H_1, H_2 , Variables, Likert scales, Guttman scales), Ordinal data, Nominal data, Discrete variable, Continuous variables, logical framework, input output analysis, conceptual framework, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews & Meta Analyses (PRISMA) flow chart for systematic reviews & meta analysis. Lambda & Kappa for analysis of opinion related qualitative data.
7. Data Analysis (qualitative through Atlas Ti, quantitative through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)).
8. Descriptive statistics (Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, Central Tendency, Dispersions, Range, Associations, Risk, Assessments, Assumptions, Attributions, Strength of associations)
9. Analytical statistics (t test, Chi Square test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Co-efficiency of relations & co-relations, regression analysis, variables)
10. Data presented in tables, boxes, figures, other forms like vein diagram & in descriptive paragraphs
11. Discussion on results
12. Interpretation of results
13. Description of results
14. Findings from the results
15. Summary of results through discussion of achievement of objectives through research questions of each objective
16. Recommendations
17. Suggestions
18. Conclusions
19. Acknowledgement
20. Role of each of the authors
21. Declaration
22. Funding if any for writing the chapter or article
23. Conflict of Interest
24. Ethical considerations of the study
25. References (American Psychiatry association (APA) style if the chapter or article is social science based & Vancouver style if Medical based)
26. Stick to the journal or book guidelines for in text citations e.g. in super scripts or the reference numbers in brackets, Name of the author & year in brackets. .

Following the completion of writing the chapter or article, upload the files in the website as per instructions or mail the article or chapter to the intended destinations.

Role of Author after receiving feedback from reviewers

After submission of the article or chapter, the reviewers send the comments through the peer review process. The comments should be taken positively while seeing the process as an improvement process.

Every journal or book follows a pattern in which the process in the article, content of the article, flow of thoughts in the contents & time context regarding the topic should be seen. The author should see the area in which most comments are mentioned. Accept each of the comments & address these comments in the various components of the article or chapter.^{5 to 10}

Those areas where the author thinks that the comments are outside the domain of the article or can be addressed differently, the author can put in her/his comments in the sections dedicated to address the author's comments. The author needs to strictly adhere to the prescribed format or guideline that needs to be adhered towards publication. There has to be a balancing approach towards addressing the comments. The basic thought process has to be that it is a process to improve the quality of the article.^{5 to 10}

Role of Editors before the peer review

The website of the journal or the publisher should display the specialized area of the journal or the book. The editor should ensure that there should be a editorial board for the journal or the book. The editor should display the review process that the journal follows to review the article or the document. The average time period of the entire review process should also be displayed.^{5 to 10}

The impact factor of the journal based on the previously published books & articles are to be displayed. The names & affiliations of the editorial board members should also be displayed so that the authors get clarity of the domain that they are due to enter. All the modalities of the Article Publishing Charges (APC) should be mentioned in detail. The proforma or the format for the Copy Right Agreement (CRA) should have been uploaded in the website. The indexing of the journal in the various databases should also be mentioned.^{5 to 10}

All these issues should be addressed in the website so that appropriate & contextual articles or documents are submitted for publications.

Role of Editors during & after the peer review

The main role of editors is to maintain & safeguard the integrity of the entire process of the peer review during the review. The editor also sees through the suitability of the document for publication. The editor sends the document to the reviewers & asks for the review comments from the reviewers through a prescribed format. If the document is sent to invite comments to more than one reviewer, the editor should compile the comments & send the compiled comments in one format only. This will help the authors to have clarity.^{5 to 10}

The lead author submitted an article to a journal in 2020. The editor's comment received by the lead author & the co-authors is attached here to comprehend the entire process. The editor should provide criteria for evaluation of the document through a review report. Based on the report, appropriate actions should be taken by the author as follow up to complete the review process.^{5 to 10}

Attachment- 1

Tridibesh Tripathy*, Prof D. R. Sahu, Dr. Umakant Prusty,

Dr. Chintamani Nayak

(*Corresponding Author)

Manuscript No: CCIJHSS-129-2020

Manuscript Title: - Exclusive Breast Feeding Of Infants Of Recently Delivered Women Of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I take pride and pleasure to inform you that our reviewer has reviewed and recommended your Manuscript for publication in Volume-6, Issue-6 (Jun, 2020) in following Journal.

Journal Information

Cross-Currents: An International Peer-Reviewed Journal on Humanities & Social Sciences

ISSN: 2394-451X (Print) & Open Access

Frequency: Monthly

Publisher: East African Scholars Publisher, Kenya

Website: <https://crosscurrentpublisher.com/>

Major Indexing: Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, World Cat, Eurasian Scientific Journal Index (ESJI), Open Academic Journals Index (OAJI) and Progress in others.

Article History

Article Received	Date of Acceptance	Proposed date of Publication
18/05/2020	09/06/2020	30/06/2020

Review Report

Category	Criteria
A	Strongly Recommended
B	Acceptable (as written with no need for any revisions)
C	Acceptable (with minor revisions/Editorial correction)
D	Ask for revisions and continue with a second review
E	Rejection (Do not accept for publication)

Final Decision: Category A

Attachment 2

The attachment has the details of the role of the lead author as a reviewer for an article submitted to a journal. A reviewer is also chosen or appointed by the editor of the journal or book. The job of a reviewer is also the domain of an editor.

As one can see here, the editor should look into some critical issues as well. These are issues like importance of the document for the scientific community, suitability & comprehension of the article, quality of language, appropriateness of the contents & references, ethical issues, competing interest, status of the article regarding plagiarism, whether the article is time contextual & updated.

The editor should receive an undertaking from the reviewer that there is no competing interest of the reviewer in the document. The summary of the review should be displayed in the review report at the end of the report.

Review Comments

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment <i>(If agreed with the reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. Authors must write his/her feedback here)</i>
Is the manuscript important for the scientific community? Please write a few sentences explaining your answer	Yes, Diabetic Epidemic is an important issue & India is a huge catchment area	
Is the title of the article suitable? Do you have any alternative Title in your mind?	No, T2D through GWAS & Current Clinical Advances	
Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? If your answer is No, please provide suggestions	It seems the abstract is 12 years old. It should capture few sentences on how the Human Genome Project has helped in the last 21 years. (2003-2024)	
Do you think the English quality of the article is suitable for scholarly communications? If your answer is No, please provide suggestions	Language wise Yes & Content wise No, The content needs to be updated while capturing the progress of last 12 years.	
Please provide your comments regarding the appropriateness of different sections of the manuscript.	One of the section should describe the advances in T2D from 2012 to 2024, a period of 12 years or else the chapter becomes 12 years old. Link the chapter to issues like GLP-1 levels, Gut Microbiome, Cardiac Arrhythmic Death Syndrome, Neuropathy, Non Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy, Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy, Encephalopathy & Diabetic Ketosis.	

<p>Do you think that the references in the manuscript are proper, recent and sufficient? If you have any suggestions, please write here.</p>	<p>Same with the references also. The latest references made in the chapter is the year 2012. Clearly, the references are 12 years old. The chapter is to be published in 2024. This means the authors are implying that there has been no advances in T2D in these 12 years. They have to track on the genetic advances with T2D or else the chapter will have few readers.</p>	
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	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment(If agreed with the reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. Authors must write his/her feedback here)
<p>Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?</p>	<p><u><i>(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in detail)</i></u> Yes, there are issues. After conclusion, there should be sections like author's declaration, acknowledgement, funding sources, contribution of each authors.</p>	
<p>Are there competing interest issues in this manuscript?</p>	<p>All genetic issues are embedded with ethical & social issues & that too with an perennial NCD like T2D.</p>	
<p>Do you think the article is plagiarized? If yes, please justify your answer and send us some proof.</p>	<p>The heading says beyond GWAS where as it is primarily about GWAS. Please ensure that your plagiarism data base shows that there is no similarity between the GWAS report. Primarily, all these should be para phrased.</p>	

<p>Do you think a Disclaimer is required to explain the history of this manuscript? (As in most cases chapters of reference books are extended versions of previously published articles in some journals)</p>	<p>Yes, it is a 12 year old article that is being reproduced only. Ideally, it should capture the progress of last 12 years. (2012-2024)</p>	
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Declaration of Competing Interest of the Reviewer:

Here reviewer should declare his/her competing interest. If nothing to declare he/she can write “I declare that I have no competing interest as a reviewer”
I declare that I have no competing interest as a reviewer.

Objective Evaluation:

Guideline	MARKS of this manuscript
<p>Give OVERALL MARKS you want to give to this manuscript (Highest: 10 Lowest: 0) <u>Guideline:</u> Accept As It Is: (>9-10) Minor Revision: (>8-9) Major Revision: (>7-8) Serious Major revision: (>5-7) Rejected (with repairable deficiencies and may be reconsidered): (>3-5) Strongly rejected (with irreparable deficiencies.): (>0-3)</p>	<p>7-8</p>

Attachment 3

The attachment has the details regarding the role of the lead author as a reviewer in an international journal on social science. The topic was based on the nation of Uganda.

<p>Compulsory _____ REVISION comments</p> <p>1. Is the manuscript important for scientific community? (Please write few sentences on this manuscript)</p> <p>2. Is the title of the article suitable? (If not please suggest an alternative title)</p> <p>3. Is the abstract of the article comprehensive?</p> <p>4. Are subsections and structure of the manuscript appropriate?</p> <p>5. Do you think the manuscript is scientifically correct?</p> <p>6. Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestion of additional references, please mention in the review form.</p> <p><u>(Apart from above mentioned 6 points, reviewers are free to provide additional suggestions/comments)</u></p>	<p>1. As it relates to Uganda, it would be better if the authors link the history to the brutal past and reach to the current situation. Yes, it is important for the scientific community. Refer the time limit for the study in Kampala city.</p> <p>2. No, it should be ‘ Crimes and Rapid Urbanisation in Kampala City, Uganada</p> <p>3. Yes</p> <p>4. No, the research tool for FGD is FGD protocol which is not mentioned. They have also not mentioned about the N of each category of sampling.</p> <p>5. Needs improvement. The table they have given is from the police of Kampala. What about the tables of the respondents. They have simply clubbed things. The discussion is also not there along with the given table.</p> <p>6. Give some references of the nation when it was in a transition from poor governance to good governance.</p>	
<p>Minor REVISION comments</p> <p>1. Is language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Optional/General comments</p>	<p>The research methodology section needs clarity and improvement. They should show then stages. It is basically an qualitative research. It would be better to see some case studies.</p>	

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)
Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?	<i>(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)</i> No	
Are there competing interest issues in this manuscript?	No	
If plagiarism is suspected, please provide related proofs or web links.	No	

Declaration of Competing Interest of the reviewer

Here reviewer should declare his/her competing interest. If nothing to declare he/she can write "I declare that I have no competing interest as a reviewer"
I do not have any competing interest as a reviewer.

Objective Evaluation:

Guideline	MARKS of this manuscript
Give OVERALL MARKS you want to give to this manuscript (Highest: 10 Lowest: 0) Guideline: Accept As It Is: (>9-10) Minor Revision: (>8-9) Major Revision: (>7-8) Serious Major revision: (>5-7) Rejected (with repairable deficiencies and may be reconsidered): (>3-5) Strongly rejected (with irreparable deficiencies.): (>0-3)	7-8. Revise the methodology section.

Role of the Reviewer before the peer review

The reviewer should have the experience of publishing & being reviewed by others for his/her publications. It is important to be in the same situation before so that one can develop the sensitivity & appropriateness for others/peers when they are or will be in the same situation in which the reviewer was associated in the past.^{5 to 10}

The reviewer should read the article fully & in detail. Similarly, read the prescribed review format & start putting your comments in the reviewer's section. The principle behind the review should be to improve the quality, flow, content, process & whether the document is keeping touch with the current times. At times, reviewers come across situations where authors propose to convert a published article

into a book chapter. Often, it is seen that the authors forget that a decade has passed since the article was published. The article will not find readers if it is not updated & does not capture the advances in the past decade. The reviewer should help the authors to comprehend that their article or document is being proposed to be converted into a chapter in the current situation & the authors cannot just republish the same document after a gap of a decade.^{5 to 10}

Role of the reviewer after the first stage of the peer review

After the peer reviewer sends the first report with his/her comments as the reviewer, the author addresses the comments & the editor sends the report back to the reviewer. The reviewer should ensure that the comments are addressed in right spirit. The destination should be to improve the quality of the document while incorporating the comments from the stakeholders.^{5 to 10}

The editor should be the pivotal point of the reviewer while the author is the perimeter of the circle. The editor should send the final comment of the reviewer to the editorial board towards finalization & publication of the article.^{5 to 10}

Conclusion

Medical science or clinical science is not public health or community medicine. Application of health in social science is under the domain of public health. There are so many instances where articles or documents are rejected on the premise that such issues have been covered in the journal through articles in the past. The editor should know that issues can be same but the studies can be in different settings or communities at different times.¹²

The motivational speaker says ‘winners do not do different things but they do things differently’. These things happen because of inherent biases in the triad, the authors, editors & reviewers. Innate or inherent biases are a stubborn obstacle in the transparencies of the stakeholders.¹¹

In short, it should be a functional alliance between the three stakeholders of the peer review process to make it an occasion of quality improvement.

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