

**ADOPTION OF GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES BY JOURNAL  
EDITORIAL TEAM FOR ACADEMIC PUBLISHING IN AHMADU BELLO  
UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA.**

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**APRIL, 2021**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES,  
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER IN LIBRARY AND  
INFORMATION SCIENCE (MLS) DEGREE**

**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE,  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,  
ZARIA, NIGERIA**

**APRIL, 2021**

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation titled “**ADOPTION OF GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES BY JOURNAL EDITORIAL TEAM FOR ACADEMIC PUBLISHING IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA.**” has been carried out by me in the Department of Library and Information Science. The information derived from the literature was duly acknowledged in the in-text and list of references. No part of this work was previously presented for the award of any degree to the best of my knowledge, at this or any other institution.

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**SABITU, Shafiu**  
**P16EDLS8178**

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**Date**

**CERTIFICATION**

This dissertation titled: “**ADOPTION OF GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES BY JOURNAL EDITORIAL TEAM FOR ACADEMIC PUBLISHING IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA**”, by Shafiu Sabitu meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master in Library Science (MLS) at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parent Alhaji Sabitu Abubakar and Hajiya Saratu Halliru Balarabe.

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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines on Academic Publishing by Journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Six research objectives guided the study. They were to identify the components of Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors that the Editorial Team were aware of, to determine the competencies possessed by Journal Editorial Team, to uncover the extent to which the Journal Editorial Team used editorial policies, to find out the information that the Journal Editorial Team communicate to article writers, to ascertain the extent to which Journal Editorial Team adopt Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors and to determine the challenges faced by journal Editorial Team in adopting Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors on Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Quantitative method and survey research design were used, the population of the study comprised all journal editors in ABU Zaria, who published between 2015 to 2019, totaling (38) in number. The whole population was used. A structured questionnaire containing closed-ended questions and follow-up interview were used as instrument for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study, among others revealed that majority of the journals do not use editorial policy on adding or removing an author and that of using an anti-plagiarism checker for article verification. Most of them also do not publish erratum or retraction of the already published articles. It was also found that most of them do not have any provision for maximum plagiarism accepted from the article writers. The study concluded that there is a possibility of an editorial team to publish redundant articles and their activities need to be enhanced. The study recommended that these journals should adopt the use of antiplagiarism checker for article verification, they should be publishing erratum or retraction of the already published articles for authors and should adopt plagiarism checking, publishing the journals online, taking responsibility of published articles among others.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Academic publishing is a means through which academics offer the output of their researches to the public. Most of the scholarly works are published in journals, conference proceedings, books, dissertations, or theses after peer review or editorial processes (Xiao & Askin, 2012). The avenues for publishing academic works largely depend on the field and sub-fields. Most established academic disciplines have their journals. Since the Internet's introduction, scholarly publishing has been undergoing significant changes, transitioning from traditional paper access to electronic access in an online environment. In the open access publishing model, the journal papers are made freely available on the web.

Academic staff in the educational environment aim to publish their article paper in a journal one of the verifiable scholarly communication sources. In light of this, Swan (2016) affirmed that journals had become the primary and formal means through which scholars communicate their work results to the public. It has become a means through which academics establish their right to the intellectual property reported in their articles, and also by which they claim originality of their research work and findings.

Academic publishing depends on trust because editors must trust peer reviewers to provide fair assessments; authors must trust editors to select appropriate peer reviewers. Academic publishing also occurs in an environment of influential intellectual, financial, and sometimes in a situation where political interests may collide or compete. Right decisions and robust editorial processes designed to manage these interests foster a sustainable and efficient publishing system, which benefit academic societies, journal editors, authors, research funders, readers and publishers. Good

publication practices do not develop by chance; they are established only by active promotion (Chris, Elizabeth, Alyson, Suzan, Diane, and Andrew, 2017).

There are many advantages of academic publishing some of which make the work credible, transparent, evidence for claims, research options, broaden one's perspective, and many more as outlined by Asia Pacific Institute of Advanced Research APRIA, (2017).

Academic publishing represents one of the most significant aspects of the work of faculty members and postgraduate students. One's success in scholarly publishing fundamentally determines one's success in higher education. It exists in many forms such as; Books and Monographs, Edited Book, Journal Article, Theses/Dissertations, Book Chapters, Book Reviews, Conference Proceedings, Technical Reports/Scientific, Reports/White Papers and Op-eds, Columns, and other Publications for the Public(European Commission, 2019).

In Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria, the academic and research staff are expected to conduct and publish their research works as part of their promotion requirements and that has given birth to the establishment of many scholarly journals that are released by professional associations, departments and faculties as asserted by Gbaje (2010). These academic journals have Editorial Team headed by editors-in-chief appointed by the body that established them. The researcher's preliminary investigation revealed that there are thirty-eight (38) existing scholarly journals published in Faculties and Departments of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, from 2015 to 2019. The researcher did not include the journals in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria that are no longer in existence since 2015. The editors-in-chief of these journals publish the journals themselves without the involvement of any commercial publisher. As part of the editorial procedure, many journal editors charge a non-refundable fee for peer-review of articles submitted

to them in case it would eventually be published. For accepted items, the editors charge a publication fee to cover production costs (Gbaje, 2010).

Furthermore, a series of conferences occur within the University, and the organizers publish conference proceedings to that effect. Consequently, many academic staff members engage themselves in either complete book writing or partly participate in the copy of a particular book, which is all part of scholarly publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Thesis and Dissertations are daily routines among postgraduate students and staff in training. Reviews to journal articles and editing are almost every day routine among senior academics. These give a picture of how academic publishing forms part of day-to-day university activity.

The term 'Editorial Team' is used by most journals' publication to describe their academic editorial board. The make-up and responsibilities of the board vary enormously from journal to journal and often change with time. Still, an energetic and proactive Editorial Team must support a healthy and vibrant journal to ensure it meets both author's and reader's expectations. Some of the wide variety of roles that Editorial Team can and should play include peer review, acting as journal ambassadors, and contributing to editorial strategy and journal development (Hill, n.d).

Journals operate under the guidance of an Editorial Team; they provide expert advice on content, attract new authors, and encourage submissions. The Editorial Team formation is done by incorporating global experts with excellent academic track record and expertise in the respective journal subject. There is no restriction on the number of Editorial Team members but they must fulfil the following significant facts: Should have PhD Degree in the relevant discipline; must have good publication record and hold some academic positions in Universities, Research Institutes or other such organizations (Elsevier, 2019 and PubMed, 2019). Editors are responsible for managing any crisis that may arise from what they have published. They reconcile all dispute, publish

retraction or erratum in the case of conflict of interest or error in the printed items. They virtually control all activities in the aspect of academic publishing.

Ahmadu Bello University (A.B.U) Zaria is an academic environment where researchers conduct researches daily. Naturally, one will find academic publishing playing a significant role in that environment. The researchers offer such publications to the public through journals, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, textbooks and other means. Journals exist when the Editorial Team of such journal put their effort in place to meet the authors (contributors or article writers) and the readers alike. Preliminary investigation by the researcher discovered that the compositions of journal Editorial Team in A.B.U Zaria are a combination of many experts from within and outside the University, and Nigeria such as: professor J. O Ojo of Tennessee University of Technology, Cookeville, U.S.A, Professor U. O. Aliyu of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi and many more of this kind. Some are homogeneous (all within the University), while others are heterogeneous (within and outside altogether).

It is imperative to assess these Editorial Teams of different academic journals' activities to ascertain the extent to which they adapt to available Global Best Practice Guidelines. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) developed these Guidelines. COPE is a forum for editors and publishers of peer-reviewed journals to discuss issues related to the integrity of work submitted to or published in their journals. It supports and encourages editors to report, catalogue and instigate investigations. Several major publishers (including Elsevier, Wiley–Blackwell, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Palgrave Macmillan and Wolters Kluwer) have signed up their journals as COPE members.

The guidelines developed by COPE for journal editors summarily include: taking responsibility for everything they publish, making fair and unbiased decisions independent from commercial consideration, ensuring a reasonable and appropriate peer review process, adopting

editorial policies on checking redundant articles, using plagiarism checker, transparency and honest reporting, issuance of corrections and retractions of published articles when needed, checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct, checking reviewer and editorial misconduct, telling peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them, having appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest and making publication visible online.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There should be best practice guidelines in every professional activity that one engages in, either formal or informal. Hence the publishing activities have their own best practice guidelines. Unless those best practice guidelines are adopted, there will be challenges here and there in any publication devoid of best practice in line with Global Guidelines. Similarly, international organisations exist that foster the responsibility of putting best practice guidelines for academic publishing activities and that organization is Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Adherence to such Global Best Practice Guidelines will harmonize all publications to a single entity and give them a uniform format. These Global Best Practice Guidelines are subject to review from time to time. A document published under such best practice guidelines has recognition and worldwide acceptability. The reputation of universities whose journal publications adhere to the provided best practice guidelines are also safeguarded. This reputation is one of the essential indices being considered in University ranking across the globe, as asserted by (Torres-Samuel, Vásquez, Cardozo, Bucci, Vilorio, & Cabrera 2019).

However, despite the existence of academic publishing Global Best Practice Guidelines, it is identified by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) top universities ranking (2019) that ABU Zaria is not

among the best 5 universities in Nigeria at 2019 global ranking of universities despite the publication output of the faculty members and postgraduate students. Couple with this, the University Central A & PC (Appointment and Promotion Committee) sub-committee on Journal Verification of A.B.U. Zaria has identified 417 print journals and 749 electronic journals across disciplines as unaccepted journals for academic staff promotion in the 2019 promotion exercise (A&PC, 2019). The committee identified Elsevier and Springer as part of the accepted publishers for staff promotion. Based on the researcher's preliminary investigation, the Elsevier and Springer publishers have complied with Global Best Practice Guidelines developed by COPE. Gbaje (2010) further stated that most academic journals in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria are not visible online. Sequel to this, the researcher observed and affirmed that previous researches on academic publishing dwelled much on the gender gap in scholarly writing (Redden, 2017), open access scholarly publishing (Musa, Sanusi, Shuga and Musa, 2015), scholarly communication (Swan, 2016), Open access journal publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria (Gbaje, 2010), and many more. None of the identified researches focused on adopting Global Best Practice Guidelines by Editorial Team for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Editors make Journals; the more competence the editors are, the more sound and authentic the journals will be. It is, therefore, imperative to assess their activities with regard to proven Global Best Practice Guidelines.

Based on the above, the researcher seeks to assess the Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines by Journal Editorial Team for Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What components of global best practice guidelines for Editors the Journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, are aware of?
2. What competencies do the journal Editorial Team possess for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
3. To what extent do the Journal Editorial Team use editorial policies for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
4. What information does the Journal Editorial Team communicate to article writers for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
5. To what extent do the Journal Editorial Team adopt the components of Global Best Practice Guidelines for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
6. What challenges do Editorial Team face in adopting Global Best Practice Guidelines for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The following objectives guided the study:

1. To Identify the components of global best practice guidelines for editors that the Journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria are aware of.
2. To determine the competencies possessed by Journal Editorial Team for Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
3. To uncover the extent to which the Journal Editorial Team use editorial policies for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
4. To find out the information that the Journal Editorial Team communicate to article writers for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
5. To ascertain the extent Journal Editorial Team, adopt Global Best Practice Guidelines on Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

6. To determine the Journal Editorial Team's challenges in adopting Global Best Practice Guidelines for Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study.**

The study is significant to journal Editorial Team in A.B.U Zaria, because it will create awareness on the Global Best Practice Guidelines for academic publishing to journal editors which will give them opportunity to update their skills and the quality of review and attract the interest of other academics to their journal. It is also significant to all the academic staff of A.B.U Zaria and other universities. This awareness created will lead to adherence to the Global Best Practice Guidelines in all papers and articles. Subsequently, A.B.U Zaria Appointment and Promotion Committee would also find this work of great importance to advise the editors. The Editorial Team will become aware of the academic publishing guidelines, adjust their activities, and enhance the university's research output. It will make them compete with other academic journal publications across the globe. The University Management will benefit from this work as it raises the university research output's reputation, which plays an essential role in the university ranking across the globe. Finally, this work is beneficial to future editors in equipping them with the editorial processes' knowledge and skills.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on the Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines by the Journal Editorial Team for Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (2015 to 2019). The researcher did not include any journal that did not publish a volume since 2015. Those included are considered to be current journals. The study was also limited to only the Departments, Business School, College of Health Sciences and Faculties in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria that publish a journal. The selection was based on the researcher's conveniency and the similar features shared

by the selected areas that allow generalization. The study was also limited to the journal aspect of academic publishing as it is the domicile for most scholarly communication.

### **1.7 Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined operationally based on the context of this research:

**Academic Publishing** refers to the only journal aspect of academic publishing which mostly includes peer-reviewed articles submitted by academics to the related journal owners for review and subsequent publication.

**Adoption** is the domestication and use of the proposed COPE guidelines by academic journals in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

**Best Practice Guidelines** is a proposed guideline upon which academic publishing abide.

**Component of Global Best Practice Guidelines** is the content of the best practice guidelines developed by COPE, called Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors or International Standard for Editors.

**Editorial Team** also called the editorial board or advisory team: these are a group of experts assigned to manage a particular journal publication's affairs. It is typically chaired by editor in chief who in most cases is a senior academics.

**Global Best Practice Guidelines** means best practice guidelines developed by the committee of publication ethics (COPE) for its fellow members to adhere to when publishing their research outputs.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the review of related literature based on the following headings:

- 2.2 Concept of Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors
- 2.3 Components of Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors
- 2.4 Competencies Possess by Editorial Team for Publishing
- 2.5 Use of Editorial Policy in Academic Publishing by Editorial Team
- 2.6 Communication Between Editorial Team and the Authors for Publishing
- 2.7 Editorial Team Adoption to Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors
- 2.8 Challenges in Adoption of Best Practice Guidelines
- 2.9 Review of Empirical Studies
- 2.10 Summary of the review

References

#### **2.2 Concept of Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors**

Global Best Practice Guidelines is a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context (International Organization for standardization, 2012). The Global Best Practice

Guidelines conduct should communicate to members clear message so that staff can grasp and adopt the principles. These Global Best Practice Guidelines should reflect a strong commitment to compliance and fair dealings, as well as a dedication to avoiding conflicts of interest (Glasel, 2017).

Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors are sets of editorial policies, processes, principles and guidelines that editors should follow to ensure the research record's integrity (Wager & Kleinert, 2011). These guidelines are a starting point and aim at journal editors in particular. They should encourage authors to strive and adhere to the highest best practice guidelines of publication ethics.

### **2.3 Components of Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors**

Editors regard themselves as part of the wider professional editorial community, keep themselves abreast of relevant policies and developments, and ensure their editorial staff is trained and kept informed of related issues. The Global Best Practice Guidelines suggested components for editors mainly aimed to foster research and publication integrity (Wager & Kleinert, 2015). Therefore, the best practice guidelines according to Wager & Kleinert (2015) have the following components upon which editors need to be adopting: accountability of the journal contents, editorial independence and integrity, editorial confidentiality, general editorial policies, responding to criticisms and concerns, editorial policies relevant only to journals that publish research in humans or animals, editorial processes and lastly editorial decision-making independence of commercial consideration as developed by Committee on Publication Ethics.

Similarly, Global Journals (2018) identified the same components as practice guidelines for editorial work but added taking action to doubtful activities with checking either the reviewer or the research misconduct to effect (Global Journal, 2018).

Journal Publishing Practice Standard (JPPS), Africa Journal Online (AJOL) and INASP jointly published a handbook for journal editors in 2018 and incorporated all the COPE developed components of the guidelines as the accepted guidelines for their editors and any other person interested in editorial process and practice (INASP, 2018). They further added, to the COPE guidelines, editorial structure, including editorial responsibility, editorial agreement, and working with Editorial Team. All of which signifies that the guidelines are existing and accepted worldwide. Still, there has not been any research on academic journal editors in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in line with the adherence to the COPE guidelines. It is pertinent to investigate the awareness of the Editorial Team to these guidelines.

According to Torres-Samuel, Vásquez, Cardozo, Bucci, Vilorio & Cabrera (2019), the world university ranking represents different evaluation systems that emphasize criteria ranging from publication quality, citation index, academic excellence, innovation capacity, web visibility of the research output and social relations. Base on this view, research visibility is an essential aspect of the academic activity by which university contribution, innovation and development are known and used in ranking across the globe.

#### **2.4 Competencies Possess by Editorial Team for Publishing**

A competency is defined as a capability or ability. It is a set of related but different sets of behaviour organized around an underlying construct, which we call the "intent". The behaviours are other manifestations of the intent, as appropriate in various situations or times (Boyatzis & Boyatzis, 2008). Core competencies are capabilities that are important for success in employment and life. They are transferable; in other words, they can be used in other contexts or jobs. Other terms used for core competencies can be key competencies, essential skills, transferable competencies, core skills or soft skills (International Labour Organization, 2015).

International Labour Organization, (2015) further stated that, core competencies are collecting skills, knowledge and attitudes that are needed for all editors to operate effectively. These competencies, also known as soft competencies, or soft skills, are in high demand in workplaces worldwide. The industry adapts to the changes brought about by globalization, increased competition and international mobility.

Moher (2016) equally identified the core competencies required by all journal editors as; training in diplomacy/interpersonal relations, training in research integrity, knowledge of switched outcomes, understanding the difference between being an investigator and editor, and extensive knowledge of reporting guidelines.

From their point of view, (Galipeau et al., 2016) identified editors' competencies by skills of the editor in the study titled "A scoping review of competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals". The skills include; demonstrate experience and broad knowledge of the field(s) covered by the journal and of the people working in those fields, demonstrate the ability to work in a team, delegate/divide the workload, communicate clearly with others, effectively summarize manuscripts in fields outside your experience, possess a doctorate or master's degree in the related content area, demonstrate an academic education that includes science training or experience in a research environment, demonstrate experience and aptitude in conflict resolution, demonstrate excellent organizational, project, and time management skills, including the ability to work under considerable time pressure, maintain part-time professional practice, maintain membership in learned societies and editing-related associations, be recognized as a distinguished scholar in one's field, maintain an active research portfolio/is employed in a research-oriented university or institute.

Subsequently, others are having access to an excellent academic network or have the potential to grow one, demonstrate patience when dealing with authors and reviewers, demonstrate knowledge of processes related to the Editorial Team, respond promptly to complaints, act with integrity and accountability, engage with social media to reach out beyond the usual specialist audiences, demonstrate knowledge of the parts, purposes, and characteristics of manuscripts, demonstrate knowledge of open access models (Galipeau et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it is significant to identify the required knowledge, skills, and characteristics, or the existence of any formal core competencies for deciding which articles to publish in their journals as identified " by Moher et al (2017) in the study titled "Core competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals: consensus statement. However, according to Moher et al (2017) the minimum set of core competencies for scientific editors contain 14 key core competencies divided into three major areas. Each competency has a list of associated elements or descriptions of more specific knowledge, skills, and characteristics that contribute to fulfilling the associated core competency. These competencies are:

**1. Editorials qualities and skills:** Editors should be able to:

- ii. demonstrate experience and broad knowledge of the field(s) covered by the journal.
- iii. synthesize information and views from a wide range of sources and make informed decisions
- iv. practice lifelong learning related to their role as an editor and within their area(s) of expertise
- v. communicate clearly and effectively manage communications and relationships with authors, peer reviewers, other editors, staff (if applicable), readers, journal owners, publishers, and other relevant individuals or groups.

vi. act with leadership and integrity and be accountable to authors, peer reviewers, fellow editors, readers, journal owners, publishers, and other relevant individuals and groups (Moher et al., 2017).

**2. Publication ethics and research integrity:** Editors should be able to:

ii. demonstrate knowledge related to research and publishing integrity and apply best practices in dealing with research or publication misconduct, misbehaviour, and questionable practices. iii. identify and uphold the principles of ethical research involving humans and animals when appraising manuscripts iv. articulate and apply their responsibilities and rights as a journal editor

**3. Editorial Principles and Processes:** Editors should be able to:

- ii. identify and use trustworthy resources. iii. select journal content that reflects the goals and scope of the journal.
- iv. analyze journal policies, practices, and performance metrics to improve journal performance.
- v. evaluate the scientific rigour and integrity of manuscripts and make editorial decisions after consideration of reviewers' and other editors' comments vi. apply best practices for research and other manuscript presentation when evaluating and requesting a revision of manuscripts.
- vii. manage and assure the integrity of the peer-review process.

In a nutshell, Moher et al., (2017) tried to harmonise the 225 competencies identified by Galipeau et al., (2016) and came up with the identified and explained 14 core competencies that they grouped into three as listed above.

The competencies are necessary because they allow the editors to give their best. They can also incorporate consulting or seeking help from an expert or ask the right colleague in the case of

insufficient and unclear understanding of a concept, training and experiences are also included in this broad knowledge. In this regard, the Global journal (2018) supported these competencies. Directory of Open Access Journal (2015) has further identified all these as part of the required skills for journal editors. The Council of Science Editors (2012) aligned with the provided skills, the same as that of the Committee on Publication Ethics. COPE added that joining a professional body of editors, maintaining current knowledge and setting a personal goal in expanding an editors knowledge in editorship are paramount. The Journal of Publishing Practices and Standard (2018) also supported the competencies in their guidelines for editors.

The value an editor can add to the journal will be determined by his skills and competencies. These editors' competencies/skills are necessary when looking for the practices and activities of journals. Despite this importance, it appears that researches that assess the competencies of the journal editors in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria are either lacked or rarely found and inadequate to reflect the real competency of editors.

## **2.5 Use of Editorial Policy in Academic Publishing by Editorial Team**

Editorial policy forms an essential aspect of the COPE Global Best Practice Guidelines, and the following were identified by (Wager & Kleinert, 2015) for COPE members:

### **General editorial policies**

Encourage maximum transparency and complete and honest reporting to advance knowledge in scholarly fields; it is crucial to understand why particular work was done, how it was planned and conducted and by whom, and what it adds to current knowledge. To achieve this understanding, maximum transparency and complete and honest reporting are crucial(Wager & Kleinert, 2015).

## **Authorship and responsibility**

Journals should have a clear policy on authorship that follows the Global Best Practice Guidelines within the relevant field. They should give guidance in their information for authors on what an author is expected to do. For multidisciplinary and collaborative research, it should be apparent to readers who has done what and who takes responsibility for the conduct and validity of the research aspect. Each part of the work should have at least one author who takes responsibility for its validity. When there are specific authorship changes for appropriate reasons, editors should require that all authors (including any whose names are being removed from an author list) agree on these in writing. Editors should then act on the findings, for example, by correcting authorship in published papers (Wager & Kleinert, 2015).

## **Conflicts of interest and role of the funding source**

Editors should have policies that require all authors to declare any relevant financial and non-financial conflicts of interest and publish at least those that might influence a reader's perception of a paper, alongside the paper. The research funding source should be declared and published, and the role of the funding source in the conception, conduct, analysis, and reporting of the research should be stated and published. Editors should clarify their information for authors in certain sections of the journal (e.g., commissioned commentaries or review articles) inevitable conflicts of interest preclude authorship (Wager & Kleinert, 2015).

## **Full and honest reporting and adherence to reporting guidelines**

Among the most important responsibilities of editors is to maintain a high standard in the scholarly literature. Although best practice guidelines differ among journals, editors should ensure that all published papers make a substantial new contribution to their field. Editors should discourage so-called 'salami publications' (i.e., a publication of the minimum publishable unit of research), avoid duplicate or redundant publication unless it is fully declared and acceptable to all (e.g., publication in a different language with cross-referencing), and encourage authors to place their work in the context of previous work (i.e., to state why this work was necessary/done, what this work adds or why replication of previous work was required, and what readers should take away from it). Although devised to improve reporting, adherence to reporting guidelines also makes it easier for editors, reviewers, and readers to judge the research's actual conduct. Digital image files, figures, and tables should adhere to the appropriate best practice guidelines in the field. Images should not be altered inappropriately from the original or present findings in a misleading way. Editors should require authors to adhere to relevant national and international laws and best practice guidelines, for example, when undertaking animal research. Editors should encourage registration of clinical trials (Wager & Kleinert, 2015).

## **Screening of plagiarism, duplicate or redundant publication**

Plagiarism is a disease that needs to be killed to safeguard intellectual property. According to Association of Medical Editors (WAME) (2011) as cited in (Abad-García, 2018) "Plagiarism is the use of others' published and unpublished ideas or words (or other intellectual property) without attribution or permission, and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an existing source". Similarly, COPE, (2015) as cited in Abad-García, (2018) further defined plagiarism as the unreferenced use of others published and unpublished ideas under new authorship

of a complete paper, sometimes in a different language. Batane, (2010) asserted that plagiarism becomes a world challenge because of the introduction of World Wide Web and many electronic resources because it becomes more comfortable in copying text and pasting it in another place, unlike textbooks that one needs to read and then type.

### **Types of plagiarism**

As a plagiarism checker company, Turnitin identified the following as types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe as cited by Abad-García, (2018). They are:

**A clone** is an act of submitting another's work, word for word, as one's own.

**Ctrl-C** is a written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.

**Find-Replace** is the act of changing keywords and phrases but retaining the source's essential content in a paper.

**A remix** is an act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.

**Recycle** is the act of borrowing generously from one's previous work without citation; to selfplagiarize.

**Hybrid** is the act of combining correctly cited sources with copied passages----without citation-- in one paper.

**Mashup** is a paper that represents a mixed of copied material from several different sources without proper citation

**404 Error** is a written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources.

**Aggregator** the "aggregator" includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.

**RE-Tweet** this paper includes proper citation but relies too closely on the text's original wording and structure.

Editors as stated by Wager & Kleinert, (2015) also consider screening for plagiarism, duplicate or redundant publication using anti-plagiarism software, or image manipulation. If plagiarism or fraudulent image manipulation is detected, this should be pursued with the authors and relevant institutions. Similarly, according to Sakamoto & Tsuda (2019) in their study titled "A Detection Method for Plagiarism Reports of Students" asserted that plagiarism had become a social problem which must be fought to stand still and therefore recommended the use of antiplagiarism checker to convert the menace and discourage growing generations from indulging into such practice.

In conclusion, therefore, adopting the best policy to journal publishing activities will block any holes that might cause the downgrade in the integrity of the journal, its staff and its host institution. In Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, the study that assessed the adoption of such policies to journal publishing activities by the Editorial Team is not or rarely found. Therefore, this study intends to bridge that gap by coming up with current recommendations and adoption findings.

## **2.6 Communication Between Editorial Team and the Article Writers**

Verbal and written communication should be professional, encouraging and supportive of authors who choose to submit. They aim to ensure that, the authors retain the high regard for the journal, regardless of the outcome of their submission (Rynes, 2018).

Here are some points to bear in mind when contacting an author whose paper is under review:

- While rejection is unpleasant, one can minimize negative feelings after rejection by ensuring the communication is polite and professional, and quick.

- A personal touch can be applied when using an electronic editorial office; editors best letters should be polite and respectful, whether accepting or declining manuscripts.
- Monitor the time to first decision and set goals for fast turnarounds, especially for papers which will be 'triaged' (i.e. not sent out for external review). Authors appreciate a rapid speed to the first decision about their manuscript, particularly if it is rejected.
- Aim to maintain a high quality of reviews. Authors appreciate well-reasoned and thoughtful responses to their work. If an editor receives an unnecessarily rude or offensive reviewer report, remove those comments before sending to the authors.
- Leave authors of declined papers with positive regard for the journal. Do not discourage them. Assuming a mentoring position for these authors (even if declining to publish) and showing a 'friendly face' to them can mean that they return later in their careers, read the journal, cite the journal, and recommend the journal to colleagues.
- Try to avoid the term 'rejected' concerning papers when communicating with authors. Instead, use 'declined' or 'deemed unsuitable for publication'.

### **Responding to criticisms and concerns**

Reaction and response to published research by other researchers is an integral part of scholarly debate in most fields and should generally be encouraged. In some fields, journals can facilitate this debate by publishing readers' responses. Criticisms may be part of a general scholarly debate and highlight transgressions of research or publication integrity.

**Ensuring integrity of the published record – corrections:** When readers point out genuine errors in published work, authors, or editors, which do not render the work invalid, a correction (or erratum) should be published as soon as possible. The editors correct the paper's online version

with the date of correction and link to the printed erratum. If the error renders the work or substantial parts of it invalid, the paper should be retracted with an explanation as to the reason for retraction (i.e., honest error).

### **Ensuring the integrity of the published record – suspected research or publication**

**misconduct:** if readers raise serious concerns, reviewers, or others, about the conduct, validity, or reporting of academic work, editors should initially contact the authors (ideally all authors) and allow them to respond to the concerns. If that response is unsatisfactory, editors should take this to the institutional level. If the Editors are convinced, they can decide to retract a paper that serious misconduct has happened even if an institution or national body's investigation does not recommend it. Editors should respond to all allegations or suspicions of research or publication misconduct raised by readers, reviewers, or other editors. Editors are the recipients of information about concerns and should act, even in the case of an unaccepted paper or rejected. Beyond the specific responsibility for their journal's publications, editors have a collective responsibility for the research record. They should act whenever they become aware of potential misconduct if at all possible. Editors themselves can assess cases of possible plagiarism or duplicate/redundant publication. Furthermore, in most other cases, editors should request an investigation by the institution or other appropriate bodies (after seeking an explanation from the authors first and if that explanation is unsatisfactory). Editors should retain retracted papers online, and they should mark it as a retraction in all online versions, including the PDF, for the benefit of future readers.

**Encourage Scholarly Debate:** All journals should consider the best mechanism by which readers can discuss papers, voice criticisms, and add to the debate (in many fields this is done via a print or online correspondence section). Authors may contribute to the debate by being allowed to respond to comments and criticisms where relevant. Such scholarly debate about published work

should happen promptly. Editors should clearly distinguish between criticisms of the limitations of a study and criticisms that raise the possibility of research misconduct. Any criticisms that raise the possibility of misconduct should not just be published but should be investigated even if received a long time after publication.

## **2.7 Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors**

Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors developed by COPE recorded high turnout. Many academic databases have signed up to be COPE members and adhere strictly to the guidelines and developed the organisation's best practice guidelines. International academic families that house many academic journals have embraced the best practice guidelines as we can see from the following discussion.

Wiley Publishers (an international Academic family) asserted that they have over 1,600+ academic journals across all subject areas worldwide (Wiley, 2019). All these journals agreed and abode by the code of ethics and best practice guidelines. Wiley and Sons is one of the international academic families that signed up with COPE as a member and participated in all its activities and programs. Wiley has been duly represented and accented to the updates in all the reviews and updates in the best practice guidelines. One would conclude that all these 1600+ academic journals that are members to Wiley Academic family have highly adopted the Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors. However, it is clear that "All Wiley journal editors are members of COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics), which provides a Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for editors. COPE offers advice to editors and publishers on all aspects of publication ethics and, in particular, how to handle cases of research and publication misconduct. It also provides a forum for members to discuss individual cases.

Furthermore, Elsevier has offered all its journals membership of COPE, the Committee on Publication Ethics, since 2008 – a demonstration of Elsevier's commitment to providing guidance and support to our editors in handling actual or suspected infringements of publication ethics. This membership gives editors a further important source of advice and support for such issues and complements our other ethics resources (Tara, 2019). Being members of COPE affords our editors many benefits including advice on ethics cases from the quarterly COPE Forum. Our editors also have the facility obtain confidential advice on sensitive ethical issues (Elsevier, 2019). However, it is important to note that all Elsevier affiliate journals have fully adopted the Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors developed by COPE. The above deduct that they highly adopt Global Best Practice Guidelines. The Elsevier Journals cut across all continent around the world. Similarly, according to Tara (2019), Elsevier provides several highly useful resources and tools, including their recently revised short guide to ethical editing for new editors by COPE.

Springer is another international Publishing and academic environment with 3,596 academic journals spread across the globe and available in 6 international languages (Springer, 2014). Springer is one of the academic families that signed up with COPE as members. They are involved in all the review and updates to the best practice guidelines. All the 3,569 academic journals which are members to the Springer have fully adopted the best practice guidelines developed by COPE.

Also, Taylor & Francis Group publishes more than 2,600 journals (Taylor & Francis Group, 2019). It is one of the international academic community that signed up with the COPE as members and are duly involved in the activities and operation of a code of ethics for editors under the auspices of COPE. Deductively, all the 2,600 academic journals abide fully by the Global Best

Practice Guidelines for editors. Therefore, it is asserted that the editors of such more than 2,600 journals comply with the best practice guidelines.

## **2.8 Challenges in Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines**

Guideline implementation is the process of changing a formulated draft into reality. It provides the operational area of function in carrying out the public practice developed by a competent authority (Ajulor, 2016). Similarly, any formulated guidelines' success is to be adopted or employed fully, but this success cannot be achieved fully because of some of the challenges experienced. Some of these challenges, among others, include; improper planning, political instability, and bureaucratic bottleneck, the deliberate imposition of policy, complete alteration to the draft if it is not favourable to the implementers.

Globalization and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has prompted a rise in integration from the obvious operation mode and reduced the world to a global village. This affects almost all sectors of human endeavour not to talk of information and knowledge sharing that academic publishing seeks to achieve. Many challenges bedevil this objective's achievement to include lack of training, lack of awareness, Internet accessibility, and infrastructural challenges (Badamasi & Hussaini, 2018). These factors affect service value and the staff's productivity because the knowledge and experience they ought to know might have been lost, and the staff are underutilized.

Subsequently, other challenges as identified by (Ggoobi, 2016) are an interpretation of the guidelines, an imposition of policy, lack of management, inability to involve the target beneficiaries in developing the guidelines and lack of propagators of the plan. However, the new trends in Africa now are to adopt foreign-made solutions to its plethora of problems. The

implementation of such policy often undermines local intellectual resources' capacity to act on local issues(Ajolor, 2018). These tend to deepen the underdevelopment of local talents and deprive them of the opportunity to master the problem on their terms.

## **2.9 Review of Empirical Studies**

Buba conducted a study in 1999 on the trends and patterns of publications output of the University of Maiduguri Lecturers. The researcher focused attention on publications output in terms of numbers, collaborative publications output and factors affecting publications output. The researcher employed interview, documentary analysis, and questionnaire as instruments for data collection. The researcher quantified and tabulated the data collected. The researcher revealed significant differences in the publications output, collaborative publications output and factors affecting publications output, among lecturers of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Applied Science of the University of Maiduguri. Lotka' s law was applied to lecturers' publications output in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Applied Sciences. Lotka' s law revealed a significant difference in the application of the law in the four broad areas of knowledge. The investigation outcome suggests that lecturers encounter many problems that made some of them publish and others do not. A knowledge of such problems formed the basis for the recommendations for this study. These include the University providing physical and nonphysical resources, providing publishing programmes, subsidizing its presses, establishing administrative measures to coordinate research and publications among lecturers and organizing a better regional campaign on promoting research and publications in the University of Maiduguri (Buba, 1999). The study was concerned only with the number of publications; therefore, it did not look at the journals or the editors and the Global Best Practice Guidelines adoption.

Furthermore, Bowman (2014) published an opinion paper in 2014 on Predatory Publishing, Questionable Peer Review, and Fraudulent Conferences. The researcher pointed out that Openaccess is a model for publishing scholarly, peer-reviewed journals on the Internet that rely on funding sources other than subscription fees. Some publishers and editors have exploited the author-pays model of open-access, publishing for their profit. Submissions are encouraged through widely distributed e-mails on behalf of a growing number of journals that may accept any or all submissions and subject them to little, if any, peer review or editorial oversight. The results of these less than ethical practices might include loss of faculty member time and money, inappropriate article inclusions in curriculum vitae, and costs to the college or funding source.

Oyadonghan and Kakiri (2019) jointly conducted a study on International Standard and Legal Deposit Compliance. Legal deposit is an essential tool for a nation's intellectual preservation. The researchers indicated that despite the National Library of Nigeria's issuance, some publishers are not adapting to the legal deposit law. The study finally recommended that National Library should organize more seminars and workshops to educate publishers and sensitize them on the importance of ISBN/ISSN and legal deposit laws should be reviewed and enforced more stringently, the researchers recommended that legal deposit should be tied to ISBN/ISSN since, ISBN/ISSN identifies the edition, title, and can be used to track materials published, authors/publishers that fail to deposit copies of publications should not be issued ISBN/ISSN for further publications, National bibliography should be made readily available to librarians, Book Vendors and everybody in the book trade, that will help make a quick market for those that deposited and defaulters should be religiously disciplined through established legal procedures.

In another way, Familusi and Ajayi (2017) conducted another research on Utilization of

Local Journals by Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities: A Critical Review. The researchers set objectives of the study as an assessment of the level of the utilization of local journals, the proliferation of local journals, the problems confronting academic staff in accessing and utilizing local journals, the researcher used questionnaire, observation and interview as an instrument for the study. The methodology used for data analysis was a simple percentage, and summation weighted index (SWI). The results revealed that the local journal's frequency usage was 37.8 per cent, while 42.3 per cent have access to local journals. Local journals continue to be an important source of information for academic staff in Nigeria. However, there is a proliferation of local journals to the detriment of quality intellectual contents. The researchers recommended that peer reviewers be encouraged and make space for advertisements like seminars, workshops, conferences, and reviewers to improve their review process for prompt publication.

In addition to the above studies, Beall (2015) conducted a content analysis study titled "Criteria for Determining Predatory Open-Access Publishers" taking two criteria developed by COPE which are; "Code of Conduct for Journal Publishers" and "Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing". He took some scholarly open-access publishers and journals which he did not mention their names. At the end of the analysis, the study revealed that some journals have no single individual identified as specific journal's editor; some journals do not identify formal Editorial Team; some have no academic information provided regarding the editor or editorial staff; the researcher further stated that evidence exists showing that some editors do not possess academic expertise to reasonably qualify them to be publication gatekeepers in the journal's field. He further discovered that two or more journals have duplicated Editorial Team; other problems identified include little, or no geographical diversity among the Editorial Team members, especially for journals that claim to be international in scope or coverage and the Editorial Team records gender bias.

Beall (2015) further stated that some publishers lack transparency in publishing operations; some have no policies or practices for digital preservation meaning that if the journal ceases operations, all of the content disappears from the Internet. Some provide insufficient information or hide information about author fees and offer to publish an author's paper while locking their PDFs, thus making it harder to check for plagiarism. Subsequently, regarding the journal's integrity, he discovered that the name of a journal is incongruent with the journal's mission and the name of a journal does not adequately reflect its origin. This researcher also used COPE guidelines as a benchmark.

Subsequently, (Galipeau et al., 2016a) conducted another study titled "A scoping review of competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals". This study is restricted to only biomedical, so it does not cover other areas like humanities and physical sciences. The study aimed to conduct a scoping review to determine what is known on the competency requirements for scientific editors of biomedical journals. The method of the study was searching the MEDLINE, Cochrane Library, Embase, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and ERIC databases (from inception to November 2014) and conducted a grey literature search for research and non-research articles with competency-related statements (i.e. competencies, knowledge, skills, behaviours, and tasks) on the role of scientific editors of peer-reviewed health-related journals as well as environmental scan, searched the results of a previous environmental scan, and searched the websites of existing networks, major biomedical journal publishers, and organizations that offer resources for editors. The result found 1,566 statements possibly related to core competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals and later collated to 203 statements which later grouped to 7 themes. They are authors dealings, reviewers' dealings, journal publishing, journal promotion,

editing, ethics, and editors' qualities. The study, therefore, did not consider physical journals' editors' competencies and that of other disciplines apart from biomedical sciences.

In support of the above literature, Moher et al., (2017) came up with paraphrased (Galipeau et al., 2016) study and came up with the 14 competencies in his paper titled "Core competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals: consensus statement" what motivated him to conduct that research was deciding which articles to publish in the journals by editors or not and lack of documented skills and knowledge by the editors. At the end of the study, 14 key competencies divide into three groups were identified out 203 statements propounded by (Galipeau et al., 2016). They believe that those core competencies are a baseline of the knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed to perform a scientific editor's duties competently.

Similarly, Musa, Sanusi, Shuga, & Musa, (2015) conducted another study titled "Open Access Scholarly Publishing: A Chance for Maximization of Research Productivity among Academics in Nigerian Federal Universities" They use research metrics to collect, manage and showcase a permanent record of the research output and impact of the university. They found that Lack of research skills in modern methods, lack of equipment for carrying out state-of-the-art research, overloaded teaching and administration schedules which leave little time for research, difficulty in accessing research funds and diminishing ability of seasoned and senior researchers to mentor junior researchers due to brain drain as the main factors responsible for the decline. They concluded by recommending librarians and other academics alike to embrace publishing in open access because it provides global visibility for researchers. Their research output can be accessed globally free of charge. This open-access will, in turn, give room for easy-share of ideas, results and inventions to build. However, this study did not look at the adoption of best practice or the Ahmadu Bello University Academics or the journal activities in specific.

Furthermore, Gbaje, (2010) conducted a study on "Open access(OA) journal publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria" he studied scholarly publishing aspect with particular emphasis on journal publications. He employed a survey research method using a questionnaire and purposive sampling as an instrument and sample. His study revealed that only 2(9.5%) out of the 21(100%) of scholarly journals published in Ahmadu Bello University are open access journals. Lack of awareness of the potentials of open access journals and concern over copyright issues are some of the challenges identified by the study hindering the adoption and transition of closed journals to open-access journals by publishers of scholarly journals in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. This study also highlights some of the strategies that can be adopted to promote open access journals amongst publishers of scholarly journals in Ahmadu Bello University and Nigeria at large which include; sensitization workshop be organized for editors-in-chief to highlight the advantages of transforming their closed journals to open access journals, open access initiative awareness and advocacy workshop be organized for the scholarly community in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The University should exploit the potentials of her ICT infrastructure fully, by extending its services to hosting scholarly journals published within the university. From this study, it was deduced that the researcher was concerned only with the visibility of the publication especially in open access environment such as Africa Journals Online (AJOL) but adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines in the publishing of the journal articles was not investigated.

In another development, Mohammed & Garba, (2018) conducted another study on "Awareness and Use of Open Access (OA) Scholarly Publications by Postgraduate Students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (ABU), Kaduna State, Nigeria" the study was aimed at determining the level of awareness of Open Access publications among postgraduate students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, determining the awareness channels of Open Access Publications among postgraduate students of Faculty of Science in

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, finding out the reasons for using Open Access publications by postgraduate students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Also, determining the impediments of using Open Access publications by postgraduate students of Faculty of Science at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. They use a questionnaire as an instrument, and the result revealed that postgraduate students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria are not fully aware of the significant sources of OA publications; surfing/searching through the Internet haphazardly is the primary channel through which they became aware of OA publications; postgraduate students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria predominantly use OA publications to support their theses/dissertations; the majority of the students encountered challenges such as excess irrelevant information while using OA publications.

The researchers finally recommended that libraries should organize training on interval basis to both staff and postgraduate students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria on importance of OA publications; postgraduate students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria should also be trained in Internet searching skills; faculties should guide and encourage their students on the need for publishing in OA journals among others. However, this study covered only open access, but the researchers have not investigated the adoption of the best practice guidelines in the publishing of the journals.

## **2.10 Summary of the Review**

Literature was reviewed based on the concept of Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors which is a set of editorial policies, processes, principles and guidelines that editors should follow to ensure the research record's integrity. Similarly, the component of Global Best Practice Guidelines for editors was also reviewed which includes: It contains being accountable and taking responsibility for everything they publish, making fair and unbiased decisions independent from

commercial consideration and ensure a fair and appropriate peer review process, adopting editorial policies that encourage maximum transparency and complete and honest reporting, guarding the integrity of the published record by issuing erratum (corrections) and retractions when needed and pursuing suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct, pursuing reviewer and editorial misconduct, assessing the ethical conduct of studies in humans and animals, telling peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them, having appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest.

The adoption of these Global Best Practice Guidelines was reviewed in which many international publishers have adopted the guidelines in fullest as described by (Wiley, 2019), (Elsevier, 2019), (Springer, 2014), (Taylor & Francis Group, 2019) and other international database publishers. Furthermore, the use of editorial policy by Editorial Team was reviewed, policies are used in encouraging maximum transparency and complete and honest reporting, authorship and responsibility statement: requiring all the authors to write their consent for the appropriate changes in authorship, declaring and publishing of funding sources of the research, ensuring that all published papers make a substantial new contribution to their field, avoiding predatory, duplicate or redundant publication and screening of plagiarism, duplicate or redundant publication by using anti-plagiarism software, or for image manipulation. Competencies possessed by the editorial team were also reviewed. There are 14 key core competencies which are: ability to demonstrate experience and broad knowledge of the field(s) covered by the journal, ability to synthesize information and views from a wide range of sources and make informed decisions, ability to practice lifelong learning related to their role as an editor and within their area(s) of expertise, ability to communicate clearly and effectively manage communications and relationships with authors, peer reviewers, other editors, staff among others. The information in

which editors communicate with the authors was reviewed which include; Information on acceptance or rejection, Response to criticism and concern, Erratum publishing (error in previously published work), Retraction publishing (withdrawal of previously published work), Encouraging scholarly debate (between authors, reviewers and editors). Finally, challenges facing the implementation or adopting a plan were reviewed, including the imposition of policy, the developers' inability to involve the audience in the development of the plan, unawareness, unsuitability, and host of others.

The gap in the reviewed literature indicated that there are number of researches conducted on many aspect of academic publishing but the area of journal aspect of publishing has not been covered sufficiently and literature treating Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria could rarely found to the best of researcher's knowledge. Hence, this study investigated the Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines by Journal Editorial Team on Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discussed the method and procedure adopted for the study. The major headings in this chapter are;

- 3.2 Research Method Adopted for the study
- 3.3 Population of the Study
- 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique
- 3.5 Instrument for Data Collection
- 3.6 Validity of the Instrument,
- 3.7 Reliability of the Instrument
- 3.8 Procedure for Data Collection
- 3.9 Procedure for Data Analysis.

### **3.2 Research Method adopted for the Study**

This study adopted a quantitative research method and descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research has been defined as “the research strategy where one collects data from all or part of a population to assess the relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations of naturally occurring variables”(Connaway & Powell, 2010). It is a technique through which a

researcher identifies and explains his or her findings in a tabular form using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. It is also a procedure of quantitative research in which one administers copies of questionnaire, to a target group of people to identify trends in attitudes, behaviours, opinions, or characteristics of a large group of people (Creswell, 2012). The survey design is considered most appropriate and convenient in undertaking a study of this nature because it involves observing, describing and assessing feelings, opinions, and the situation with a large population. Since it employed the quantitative method, it allows the representation of data in summary form and making generalizations across the entire population.

### 3.3 Population of the Study

This study's population was the Editorial Team of the academic journals in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria that made publication from 2015 to 2019. Table 3.1 is the distribution of the population according to their respective faculties:

**Table 3.1** Population of the Study

S/N	Faculties	No of Departments that Journal		No of Journals publish published by Departments
1.	Administration	3	3	
2.	Agricultural Science	2	2	
3.	Art	5	5	
4.	Business School	0	0	
5.	College of Medical Sciences		1	2
6.	Education	7	8	
7.	Engineering	1	2	
8.	Environmental Design		2	3
9.	Law	3	3	
10.	Life Science	1	2	
11.	Pharmacy	1	2	
12.	Physical Sciences	1	1	
13.	Social Science	2	3	
14.	Veterinary Medicine		1	1

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(Source: Desk officers of the Departments/Faculties)

See appendix III for more details

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The sample size for the study was all the 38 journals under study. Therefore, the study had no sample. The reason for the choice is because Bernard (2012) opined that if the study population in research is less than two hundred (200), the researcher should use the entire members of that population. Only editors identified by the researcher were used according to the number of the existing journals chosen for the study. No two editors were used from the same journals; therefore, each respondent represented a specific journal.

### **3.5 Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire and a followup interview based on the questionnaire's content. The questionnaire consisted of a set of questions presented to respondents to answer. The researcher administered copies of questionnaire to editors of academic journals at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The questionnaire contained a closed-ended response. It was sub-divided into eight sections. Section "A" was on demographic information. This demographic information gave the researcher an insight on the background information about the respondent. Equally, it allowed the researcher assessed the qualities of an editor as identified by (Moher et al., 2017), while section "B" was on the research questions on the awareness to the component of Global Best Practice Guidelines which the respondents answered by ticking as many options as possible.

Section "C" contained information on competencies the respondents possessed. The next was Section "D" on editorial policy usage in the academic journal editorial process. Then followed by Section "E" asked about plagiarism screening and acceptance. Section "F" inquired about the

information in which editors communicate with authors. Provision made for the option not listed among the available ones for the editors to write. Section “G” asked about the extent of adoption in which respondents selected their level of adoption followed and finally, Section “H” asked about the challenges which the respondent encountered from the range of options and wrote freely the ones that the instrument did not capture.

### **3.6 Validity of the Instrument**

The researcher subjected the questionnaire to the supervisors, and senior colleagues to ascertain its validity. According to Ibrahim (2013) validating research instruments by experts in a particular field where the research is being carried out is an effective way of validating such an instrument. The researcher also used face and content validity to validate the instrument. The validation is necessary to align the contents of the questionnaire and the research questions of the study. Each question was scrutinized and modified until the researcher and the supervisors were satisfied that it accurately measured the desired content.

### **3.7 Reliability of the Instrument**

To establish the instrument's consistency, the researcher conducted a pilot study in Usman Danfodio University Sokoto, using ten (10) copies of the questionnaire. Split-half method of reliability estimate was used together with Spearman-Brown Formula by splitting the administered copies of questionnaire into two sets after numbering them in order of odd and even numbers. The result of the reliability co-efficient obtained was 0.87, which indicated that the instrument is reliable.

### **3.8 Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher collected an introductory letter from the Department of Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and used the letter to administer the questionnaire to the respective respondents with two trained research assistants. The researcher targeted the chief editors of the identified journals. If the chief editor was not found, the assistant editor or any member of the editorial team was used by the researcher and the responses were achieved. No two (2) respondents from the same journal were used. Three weeks were also used to distribute and retrieve the questionnaire in the selected Faculties and Departments.

### **3.9 Procedure for Data Analysis**

The data collected for this research were analyzed using descriptive statistics to obtain the relevant answers to the research questions. In this regard, frequency distribution tables and simple percentages were used to analyze the research questions' collected data. Mean, and standard deviation were also used for research questions 3 and 5 with the benchmark of 3.00 mean value.

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## CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the data collected, analyzed and discussed according to the research questions raised using the following headings:

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Response Rate

4.3 Data presentation, analysis and discussions

### 4.2 Response Rate

This section presented and analyzed the collected data on the number of copies of the questionnaire distributed and the number returned and used for the analysis as indicated in table 4.1 **Table 4.1: Response Rate**

S/No	Response Rate	Questionnaire	Questionnaire
		Administered	Retrieved
1	Editorial Team	38	30
	Percentage	100%	79%

Table 4.2 presented the number of copies of the questionnaire distributed and the number of copies of the questionnaire retrieved. Thirty (30) copies out of 38 distributed, representing 79% were retrieved and used for the analysis and discussion. The researcher achieved a positive response because of the researcher's insistence and patients in following up the respondents to fill and return the copies of the questionnaire and the use of research assistants.

### Qualification of the Respondents

Table 4.2 presented the collected data based on the qualification of the respondents and discussions made

**Table 4.2 Qualification of the Respondents S/No Qualification Frequency Percentage**

1	PhD	28	93%
2	Masters	2	7%
3	Others	0	0%

Table 4.2. indicated that 28, which represents 93% of the respondents have PhD, and two, which represents 7%, have Masters degree and no other respondents had any other qualification. This result implied that the editors of academic journals in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria were qualified to be editors. This finding is in line with Elsevier and PubMed 2019, who asserted that journal editors must possess a PhD in their subject field. Similarly, on their part, contrary to the view of Elsevier and PubMed, Galipeau et al., 2016 stated that an editor must possess a PhD or Masters degree in his/her area of specialization. The findings indicated that all the editors of academic journals in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria have the minimum required qualification for being editor, which is masters.

### **The rank of the Respondents**

Table 4.3 presented the collected data based on the rank of the respondents.

**Table 4.3 Rank of the Respondents S/NO Rank Freq Percentage**

1	Professor	18	60%
2	Reader	4	13%
3	Senior Lecturer	6	20%
4	Lecturer I	2	7%

Table 4.3 indicated that highest number of academic journals editors in Ahmadu Bello University were professors with 18 representing 60% of the respondents. Similarly, 4 representing 13% were readers and 6 representing 20% were senior lecturers. In contrast, academics at the rank of Lecturer one, were least among the editors with 2 editors representing 7% which indicated that

all the editors, except these two, were senior academics from Senior Lecturer to Professor. This finding implies that all the editors of academic journals in Ahmadu Bello University satisfied one of the requirements for editorship as identified by Galipeau et al., (2016) that an editor must be recognized as a distinguished scholar in one's field. In support of this, the Elsevier and PubMed 2019 declared that an editor must have an excellent publication record and hold some academic position. However, it is apparent that academic staff can never be a professor or senior lecturer without good publication record and from the data collected, 93% of the respondents were from senior lecturer and above, which means that they all have good publication record. From the researcher's follow-up interview with the respondents, none was not holding any academic position ranging from university wise, faculty or department. Some are presently Deans of their respected faculties like Faculties of Physical science, Law, Social science, Veterinary Medicine, Agriculture and Administration. Others were either Head of Departments or Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator or faculty examination officers, all of whom were academic.

### **Years Spent in Editorship**

Table 4.4 presented the collected data base on the years of the respondents in editorship.

**Table 4.4 Years Spent in Editorship S/NO    Years Spent    Frequency Percentage**

1	Less than a year	0	0%
2	1 to 5 years	12	40%
3	6 to 10 years	8	27%
4	Ten years and above	10	33%

Table 4.4 showed that the period spent in editorship by the respondents were between one to five years with the frequency of 12 representing 40% of the respondents, those with ten years and above had 10 representing 33%, 6 to 10 years had 8 representing 27% and less than a year scored no response which is 0%. This finding implies significant growth in the number of young editors which signifies a brighter future for the journal editorship. According to Spitzer (2002) an

editor's success depends on the number of younger editors he/she mentored. From the analyzed data, we can deduce that there were many younger editors undergoing mentorship in editorship, which is in line with the Spitzer view.

### 4.3 Data Analysis

This section presented the data collected and analysed using descriptive statistics. The data analysed in this section was collected using the six (6) research questions which guided this study. The computation used frequency and percentages and mean and standard deviation, for the data collected and analysed in this section.

#### 4.3.1 Awareness of Editors on the Components of Global Best Practice Guidelines

Table 4.5 presented the collected data based on the respondents' awareness on the component of the global best practice guidelines.

**Table 4.5 Awareness of the Components of Global Best Practice Guidelines S/NO  
Components Freq %**

1	Taking responsibility for everything published	10	33%	
2	Making fair and unbiased decisions independent of commercial consideration	26	87%	
3	Ensuring a fair and appropriate peer review process	28	93%	
4	Adopting editorial policies that encourage transparency and honest reporting	14	47%	
5	Issuance of corrections and retractions of published articles when required	10	33%	
6	Checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct	11	37%	
7	Checking reviewer and editorial misconduct	11	37%	
8	Telling Peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them	25	83%	
9	Having appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest	9	30%	
10	Making the journal visible online	16	53%	

Table 4.5 indicated the respondents' awareness on the components of Global Best Practice

Guidelines for editors with ensuring a fair and appropriate peer review process having the highest frequency of 28, representing 93%. Similarly, 16 representing 53% of the respondents indicated that they were aware of making journals visible online as one of the best global practices as it has numerous advantages. Having appropriate policies for handling editorial conflicts of interest had the least frequency of 9, representing 30% and taking responsibility for the published articles followed with the frequency of 10, representing 33%. Making fair and unbiased decision has the frequency of 26 representing 87% of the respondents. Encouraging honest reporting has 14 representing 47% and telling authors what is expected from him has the frequency of 25 representing 83%. Similarly issuance of erratum/retraction has 10 representing 33%.

Making journal visible online had dramatically improved. This result is probably because the level of ICT availability and usage among academics had improved greatly. In the study conducted by Gbaje (2010) identified unawareness as the main challenge to the editors in making their journals visible online in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. This implies that the Editorial Team in Ahmad Bello University Zaria has improved their awareness of the need for their journals to be visible online since previous research to date. On the side of policies for handling conflict of interest, 21 respondents are not aware of it as best practice guidelines. In the same vein, the editors were less aware in taking responsibility for everything published by a journal. This finding implies that most editorial teams were not adopting it because they are not aware of it. This finding was in contrary to the provision of COPE (2015), Willey (2019), Elsevier (2019), Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) 2018), Global Journal (2018) and other reputable publishers across the globe.

#### **4.3.2 Competencies Possessed by Journal Editors on Academic Publishing**

Table 4.6 presented the collected data based on the respondents' competencies.

**Table 4.6: Competencies Possessed by Journal Editors**

S/NO	Competencies	Freq	%
1	Demonstrate experience and broad knowledge of the field	26	87%
2	Synthesize information and views from ranges of sources	18	60%
3	Practice lifelong learning related to the role of an editor	6	20%
4	Communicate and manage communications and relationships with authors	21	70%
5	Act with leadership and integrity and be accountable to authors	22	73%
6	Demonstrate knowledge related to the integrity of research and publishing		20
	67%		
7	Apply best practices in dealing with research misconduct	14	47%
8	Identify and uphold the principles of ethical research	22	73%
9	Articulate and apply the responsibilities and rights as a journal editor	17	57%
10	Identify and use trustworthy resources.	19	63%
11	Select journal content that reflects the goals and scope of the journal.	23	77%
12	Analyze journal policies, practices, and performance	13	43%
13	Evaluate the scientific rigour and integrity of manuscripts	21	70%
14	Apply best practices for research and other manuscript presentation	23	77%
15	Manage and assure the integrity of the peer-review process	24	80%
16	Others, (please specify)	1	3%

Table 4.6 showed the competencies and skills possessed by journal editors in carrying out their activities. The data revealed that demonstration of experience and broad knowledge to the

field had the highest frequency of 26, representing 87%. The table also indicated that Practice lifelong learning related to the role as an editor has the least frequency of 6 representing 20%. This finding may not be unconnected to the series of academic activities engaged by the editors. This finding implied that they do not set a goal for life-long learning and are liable to be left out in the update of their knowledge regarding the latest development in the area of journal editing. Analyzing Journal policy, Practice, and performance have 13 representing 43%. This finding is also in contrary site. When a journal is published, analyzing its performance and practice are less considered by the journals. Similarly, apply best practices in dealing with research misconduct has 14, representing 47%. This finding means that editors are not adopting this guideline for handling misconduct of either reviewer or the editor.

Another thing identified by the respondent which was prompt response to queries by article writers. This finding implied that most editors in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria were lacking or ignoring three things as indicated above, contrary to the provision of Global Journals (2018) who identified these competencies as a prerequisite for their journal Editors. In Support of this, COPE, (2015) reviewed the competencies of 2011 and updated them. This finding contrasts with the findings of (Moher et al., 2017) where they arrived at these 14 core competencies needed for every editor. An Editor identified prompt response to queries as one of the competencies aligned with Cumming & Harris (2018) in their handbook for Editors.

#### 4.3.3.1 Having Written Editorial Policy

Table 4.7 presented the collected data based on the respondents' availability of written editorial policy.

<b>Table 4.7 Written Editorial Policy S/NO</b>	<b>Having Written Editorial Policy</b>	<b>Freq</b>
<b>Percentage</b>		
1	Yes	9 30%

Table 4.7 indicated that 19 respondents representing 63% do not have editorial policies upon which they use in carrying out the editorial activities while nine respondents representing 30% have. However, from the researcher's follow-up interview, almost all the editors interviewed confirmed that they do not have written editorial policies. It is just like *modus operandi*, which is known to everyone but was not documented. This finding contradicted the provision of Global Best Practice Guidelines as identified by (Wager & Kleinert, 2015), JPPS (2018) and Cumming & Harris (2018) which require the existence of, and adherence to the policy on different issues including handling the article presented by a member of the editorial team. Lack of written editorial policy is disastrous in case of editorial team leadership transition from one set to another. This challenge may lead to inconsistency in the journal operation.

**4.3.3.2 The extent of Editorial Policy Usage by Journal Editors in A.B.U Zaria**

Table 4.8 presented the collected data based on the respondents' extent of editorial policy for journal editorship.

**Table 4.8: Extent of Editorial Policy Usage**

S/N	Editorial policies	Extent of Use					Total	Mean	SD
		Highly Used	Rarely used	Not used	Undecided	Used			
O		Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq			
a.	The policy that encourages maximum transparency and complete and honest reporting	18	10	0	1	1	30	4.43	0.79

b.	Policy on adding or removing author of a submitted manuscript	6	6	1	15	2	30	1.97	1.13
c.	Declaring and publishing of funding sources of the research (clinical)	3	5	2	18	2	30	1.63	0.66
d.	Ensuring that all published papers make a substantial new contribution to their field	10	17	1	1	1	30	3.13	1.14
e.	Avoiding predatory, duplicate or redundant publication	16	9	1	3	1	30	3.20	1.10
f.	Screening of plagiarism, duplicate or redundant publication by using anti-plagiarism software.	11	6	1	11	1	30	2.50	1.12

Table 4.8 showed the extent of editorial policy usage with the policy that encourages maximum transparency and complete and honest reporting having the highest mean value of 4.43. Similarly, declaring and publishing funding sources of the research (clinical) with the least mean value of 1.63. This finding could be so because it applies to only clinical journals which are only three from the selected population. Policy on adding or removing the author of a submitted manuscript has a 1.97 mean value which signifies that few editors are using this policy in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Screening of plagiarism, duplicate or redundant publication by using antiplagiarism software also has 2.50 mean value which signifies that it is on the negative side.

From the above-analyzed data, the implication is that most journals have no policy on adding or removing authors which is very important in most international journals and databases

where even the individual contribution to the conceptualization of the article submitted must be presented, and they call it authorship statement. In the follow-up interview, when the researcher asked some editors what the journals normally do in case of any mistake in the already published paper, the responses were no action taken because the journal is already released out, but would be very careful in the future publications. Most of the journals have never published a retraction or erratum on any article already published. When asked, has any article writer complained about the authors in the publication? The reply was that most or all the complaints were not written; therefore, no action was taken.

Another implication for the above-analyzed data is that most journal editors do not screen the articles using anti-plagiarism software. This finding will pave the way for the redundant articles' publication, especially that in Table 4.7 most journals are visible online with more than 50%. It is evident that avoiding redundant and predatory publication is almost impossible without the use of any machinery

#### 4.3.3.3 Use of Anti-plagiarism Checker for Article Verification

Table 4.9 presented the collected data based on the use of plagiarism checkers of the respondents.

**Table 4.9: Use of Anti-plagiarism Checker for Article Verification**

S/NO	Anti-plagiarism check	Freq	Percentage
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1	Yes	12	40%
2	No	18	60%

Table 4.9 indicated anti-plagiarism checker for article verification by the editors in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Most editors do not use anti-plagiarism checkers for article verification with the frequency of 18 representing 60% while 12 (40%) of the editors use the software for article

verification to ascertain the originality and authors' contributions before publishing the submitted articles. This finding implies that only a few of the editors are using it. However, from the researcher's follow-up interview when he further asked the editors about their plan, most of them revealed their plan to start using it soon. The software some of the editors plan to use are Turnitin and advanced Grammarly. In contrast, others only declare their intention to start using it without stating the specification and the time. In the real sense from the researchers understanding in his discussion with the editors, most of the journals are not using a plagiarism checker. This finding is contrary to the stand of (Wager & Kleinert, 2015) who believed in using anti-plagiarism checker in article verification. It has also corresponded with the recommendation of Sakamoto & Tsuda, (2019) in their studies where they recommended the use of plagiarism checker to curb the menace of plagiarism among students and faculty members.

#### 4.3.3.4 Percentage of Plagiarism Accepted

Table 4.10 presented the collected data based on the percentage of plagiarism (similarity index) accepted for publication by the editors.

**Table 4.10: Percentage of Plagiarism Accepted**

S/NO	percentage	Freq	Percentage
1	Below 10%	1	3%
2	11 to 15%	2	7%
3	16 to 20%	9	30%
4	21 to 25%	5	17%
5	26 to 30%	2	7%
6	No provision for that	11	37%

Table 4.10 presented the percentage of Plagiarism accepted by the editors compared to the authors' contribution to the article submitted. The higher number of editors in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, had no provision for the accepted percentage of Plagiarism (similarity index) with 11 representing 37%. In comparison, 16% to 20% accepted Plagiarism followed with the frequency of 9 representing 30%. Similarly, 26% to 30%, 11% to 15% and 10% and below recorded the least responses of 1 and 2 to each between 11% to 15% and 26% to 30%. This finding implies that some journals do not have provision for any plagiarism percentage which confirmed the findings of Table 4.9.

#### 4.3.4 Information Communicated to Article Writers by Journal Editors

Table 4.11 presented the collected data based on the information communicated to article writers by the journal editorial team and discussions.

**Table 4.11: Information Communicated to Article Writers**

S/N	Information	Freq	Percentage
1	Information on acceptance or rejection	28	93%
2	Response to criticism and concern	18	60%
3	Erratum publishing (error in previously published work)	7	23%
4	Retraction publishing (withdrawal of previously published work)	8	27%
5	Encouraging scholarly debate (between authors, reviewers and editors)	14	47%
6	Others (please specify)	2	7%

Table 4.11 presented the information shared or communicated to the article writers by the editors. Information on acceptance and rejection of articles is the highest number of information shared with article writers by almost all the journals with 28, representing 93% of the respondents. Response to criticism has 18 representing 60%, encouraging scholarly debate has 14 representing 47%. From the stated options, erratum and retractions were information least shared between editors and article writers with the frequency of 7 and 8 representing 23% and 27% respectively.

Other information shared with the article writers identified by some respondents are detail corrections on the already reviewed articles, information on the updated statistical method and acknowledging the receipt of the payment from the article writer. The above-analyzed data implied that publishing erratum and retraction of the already published paper communicated less to the article writers.

### 4.3.5 The extent of Adoption to the Global Best Practice Guidelines by the Journal Editors

Table 4.12 presented the collected data based on the extent of adoption to the global best practice guidelines by the journal editors.

**Table 4.12 Extent of Adoption to the Global Best Practice Guidelines**

S/N O	Global best practice guidelines	Highly adopted	Adopted	Rarely adopted	Not adopted	Undecided	Total	Mean	SD
		Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq			
a.	Taking responsibility for everything you publish	6	6	2	11	5	30	2.90	0.54
b.	Making fair and unbiased decisions independent from commercial consideration	16	9	1	3	1	30	4.20	1.10
c.	Ensuring a fair and appropriate peer review process	17	10	1	1	1	30	4.37	1.15
d.	Adopting editorial policies that encourage transparency and honest reporting	16	9	1	3	1	30	4.20	1.10
e.	Issuing corrections and retractions on published articles when needed	6	6	1	13	4	30	2.90	1.16
f.	checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct	2	9	1	11	7	30	2.60	1.38
g.	checking reviewer and editorial misconduct	4	7	3	13	3	30	2.62	0.35
h.	Telling Peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them	18	5	2	4	1	30	4.17	0.47
i.	Having appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest	6	6	2	10	6	30	2.87	0.55
j.	Making the journal visible online	8	8	1	12	1	30	3.33	1.13

Table 4.12 presented the extent of adopting global best practice guidelines to the journal publishing. The table indicated that ensuring a fair and appropriate peer-review process is the most adopted guideline with a mean value of 4.37. Similarly, checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct and checking reviewer and editorial misconduct had the least adoptions with the mean value of 2.60 and 2.62, respectively. Others having appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest with the mean value of 2.87, taking responsibility for the published papers, erratum and retraction publications have 2.90 each as the mean value. This finding deduced that reasonable number of the journal editorial team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, had not adopted some of the guidelines that include checking misconduct, taking responsibility which is different from the copyright, erratum and retraction publications. All the benchmarks less than 3.0 for all the options indicate rejection. From the researcher's follow-up interview, the respondents interviewed admitted that they never published a retraction, which means that the circumstances that warrant the publishing of retraction have not emerged. Nonadoption of these guidelines by the journal editorial team is contrary to the provision of COPE (2015) and Cumming & Harris (2018).

Furthermore, making journals visible online has witnessed significant development when looking at the findings of Gbaje, (2010). Only 9% of the journals in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria are visible online as at 2010 compared to 60% as at 2019. As at 2010, there were 21 academic journals in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria while as at 2019, there are 38 journals.

### 4.3.6 Challenges Faced in Adopting the Global Best Practice Guidelines

Table 4.13 presented the collected data based on the challenges faced in adopting the global best practice guidelines by the respondents.

**Table 4.13 Challenges Faced in Adopting the Global Best Practice Guidelines**

S/N	Challenges	Freq	%
a.	Lack of awareness	15	50%
b.	Non-flexibility of the Best Practice Guidelines	7	23%
c.	The unsuitability of the Best Practice Guidelines to our environment	5	17%
d.	Conflict of interest	7	23%
e.	Imposition of policy	5	17%
f.	Policy changing	7	23%
g.	Interruption of editorial leadership	12	40%
h.	Difficulty in accessing the guidelines locally	6	20%
i.	Others (please specify)	5	17%

Table 4.13 indicated that lack of awareness of the global best practice guidelines' existence forms the most significant challenge with the frequency of 15, representing 50% of the responses. Interruption in editorial leadership forms the second biggest challenge with 12, representing 40% of the responses. This finding means that the mode of operation of editor "A" may not be the same as that of editor "B" when he becomes the chief editor. This interruption forms the challenge to the adoption of such guidelines. This finding corresponded with that of Gbaje (2010) who identified lack of awareness to some of the guidelines explicitly making journal visible online as the main challenge to the editors of an academic journal in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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## CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarized the entire research, conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings.

## 5.2 Summary of the Study

This study focused on Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines by Journal Editorial Team on Academic Publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Inadequate exploration of the activities of journal editors and their performances compared to the existing global best practice guidelines by the researchers and the itemization of many journals by the university promotion committee were the motive behind conducting the research. The study raised six (6) research questions and six (6) objectives. The objectives were to identify the components of global best practice guidelines for editors that the Editorial Team are aware of in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to determine the competencies possessed by Journal Editorial Team for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to uncover the extent which the Journal Editorial Team use editorial policies for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to find out the information that the Journal Editorial Team communicate to article writers for academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to ascertain the extent which Journal Editorial Team adopt global best practice guidelines for editors on academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to identify the percentage of citations accepted by the Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to determine the challenges faced by journal Editorial Team in adopting global best practice guidelines for editors on academic publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Related works of literature were reviewed based on the variables of both the title and the research questions raised which include; the concept of global best practice guidelines, the awareness to the existing global best practice guidelines, competencies of the journal Editorial Team, the use of editorial policies, percentage of citations acceptance, communication between the editors and article writers, adoption of the global best practice guidelines and finally the challenges in adopting the guidelines.

The researcher adopted a quantitative research method and a descriptive survey design, respectively. The study population comprised all the journals' editors in ABU Zaria who made a publication from 2015 to 2019, totalling (38) in number spread across thirty (30) departments. Because the population was small, there was no sampling; the researcher used the whole population. The researcher used a structured questionnaire containing closed-ended questions and follow-up interview. Data collected from the research questions were analyzed using frequency and percentage and mean and standard deviation.

Data collected were presented in tables and interpretations made beneath each table. Discussions were also made beneath all the interpretations. The study was finally summarized with its significant findings, recommendations and conclusion were made.

### **5.3 Summary of the Major Findings**

The following were the major findings of the study based on the data collected and analyzed:

1. The Journal editors in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria were aware with some of the components of Global Best Practice Guidelines that includes: Making fair and unbiased decisions independent of commercial consideration, ensuring a fair and appropriate peer review process, adopting editorial policies that encourage transparency and honest reporting, checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct, telling peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them and making the journal visible online.
2. The journal editors in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria possessed all the following competencies: demonstrating experience and broad knowledge of the field, synthesizing information and views from ranges of sources, communicating and managing communications and relationships with authors, acting with leadership and integrity and be accountable to authors, demonstrating knowledge related to the integrity of research and

publishing, applying best practices in dealing with research misconduct, identifying and upholding the principles of ethical research, articulating and applying the responsibilities and rights as a journal editor, identifying and using trustworthy resources, selecting journal content that reflects the goals and scope of the journal, applying best practices for research and other manuscript presentation and managing and assuring the integrity of the peerreview process.

3. The significant number of the Journals Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria do not have a written editorial policy and are not significantly using policy on adding or removing an author from the already submitted articles and the use of anti-plagiarism software for article verification before publishing. They also have no provision for the maximum percentage of plagiarism accepted from the article writers.
4. The information communicated to article writers were Information on acceptance or rejection, response to criticism and concern and encouraging scholarly debate (between authors, reviewers and editors). In contrast, the majority of the journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria do not communicate erratum and retraction of the already published articles.
5. The journal Editorial Team in A.B.U Zaria, adopted some of the Global Best Practice Guidelines which include: Making fair and unbiased decisions independent of commercial consideration, ensuring a fair and appropriate peer review process, adopting editorial policies that encourage transparency and honest reporting, checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct, telling peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them and making the journal visible online. In contrast, they did not adopt taking responsibility for the published journals, policies on handling editorial conflict of interest, and checking both reviewer's misconduct, editor and the author.

6. The challenges faced by the journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, include lack of awareness of the guidelines and interruption in the editorial leadership.

#### **5.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

The study has succeeded in the following

1. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the journals in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, has no written editorial policy. Therefore, this study succeeded in developing a proposed written Editorial Policy for journal editorial team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. See appendix III
2. The study established that most of the journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria do not use anti-plagiarism checker for article verification which implies that there is every possibility of publishing redundant or predatory articles that will affect the reputation of both the university and the journal itself.
3. The study, aside from adding to the insufficient number of literature, on journal publishing in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, established that there are 38 existing journals in faculties and the university department that make a publication between 2015 to 2019.
4. The study also established a significant growth in the number of young editors where we found those with one to five years in editorship are significantly growing, which implies the brighter future of the journal editorship.

#### **5.5 Limitation of the study**

The limitations of this study comprised the researcher's challenges in administering the pilot study questionnaire at Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto with the distance of more than 350 kilometres, the researcher could not get back the 10copies of questionnaire within a week. This delay created a challenge to the timely computation of the reliability test. The end of the year and

the new year breaks (2019/2020) affected the two weeks earlier slated for the administration and retrieving of the questionnaire. Difficulty in accessing the respondent because of their tight schedule at their respective offices was another challenge.

Collecting the article clearance from room 316 senate building was another challenge.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

From the analysis and summary of the findings of this study, it was concluded that the Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, are aware of the Global Best Practice Guidelines and adopt some of the guidelines without consciously knowing that it was developed by COPE for the journal Editorial Team and are adopting the guidelines unconsciously. It was also concluded that most Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, are at the verge of accepting and publishing predatory and redundant publications because of lack of any machinery to screen and vet the submitted article for publication and this will no doubt affect the reputation of that particular journal in the eyes of the world. This plagiarism screening will further affect the journal acceptance to the university's promotion committee and by implication affecting all staff members that publish their articles in such journals.

## **5.7 Recommendations**

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria should form a forum to meet and discuss issues related to the journal editorial process. They should also organize seminars and workshops to acquaint themselves with Global Best Practice Guidelines across the globe.
2. The journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria should set a life-long learning goal to improve their knowledge and skill on editorship. They should use best

- practice in dealing with research misconduct and from time to time analyze the performance of their journal's policies and practices. This goal will make the editors equip themselves with the ability to paraphrase their policies and practice and update their skills.
3. The journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria should have written editorial policy that will serve as a guide in case of leadership transition. There should also be policies in place in handling authorship conflict for adding or removing an author. This policy will solve problems of snatching an article where an individual writes an article and give to a colleague to vet and pay for the publication. Still, at the end, that second colleague will use his name as the first author without the consent of the original contributor. If this policy is in place, this type of problem will be reduced to the barest minimum. They should also employ the use of anti-plagiarism software checker for article verification. Turnitin, advanced Grammarly are some of the software to use, among others.
  4. The journal Editorial Team of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria should employ the publishing of erratum or retraction of the already published articles. This publishing will give the article writers peace of mind that even after publication in case of article snatching or redundant publication when noticed, could be retracted or erratum published.
  5. The journal Editorial Team of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria should boldly and take responsibility for the content of their publication, they should also adopt all the Best Practice Guidelines for editors by COPE and those that are not making their publication visible online should try to make it so that the knowledge and information in that journal will be shared to the larger society across the globe.
  6. The journal Editorial Team of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria should sign up their journal or as an individual editor to COPE to be aware of all the progress in editorship. When signed up, the Editorial Team should often be meeting to share the new development to

other editors. When the chief editor is replaced, the successor should come from the members of that same Editorial Team to reduce the differences in leadership interruption.

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## APPENDIX I

**APPENDIX II**

Department of Library and Information Science

Faculty of Education

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

18<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Dear Respondent,

**REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

I write to request your pleasure to fill the attached questionnaire based on your capacity as a member of an academic journal's editorial team. I am a postgraduate student of Library and Information Science Department researching “**Adoption of Global Best Practice Guidelines on Academic Publishing by Journal Editorial Team in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.**”

All information provided will be treated confidentially and mainly for this Research.

Thank you in anticipation for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Shafiu Sabitu  
P16EDLS8178  
(08065365150)

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JOURNAL EDITORS**

**Section A Demographic Information**

- 1. Faculty/Department/Unit .....
- 2. Highest Qualification
  - PhD { }
  - Masters { }
  - Others { }
- 3. Rank
  - Professor { }
  - Reader { }

- Senior Lecturer { }
  - Lecturer I { }
  - Lecturer II { }
  - Assistant Lecturer { }
4. Years spent in editorship
- Less than one year { }
  - 1 to five years { }
  - 6 to 10 years { }
  - 10 years and above { }

**Section B: AWARENESS OF THE COMPONENTS**

5. What Components of Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors are you aware of? Please tick as many as applicable

- a. Taking responsibility for everything you publish { }
- b. Making fair and unbiased decisions independent from commercial consideration { }
- c. Ensuring a fair and appropriate peer review process { }
- d. Adopting editorial policies that encourage transparency and honest reporting { }
- e. Issuance of corrections and retractions of published articles when needed { }
- f. Checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct { }
- g. Checking reviewer and editorial misconduct { }
- h. Telling Peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them { }
- i. Having appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest { }
- j. Making the journal visible online { } **Section C:**

**COMPETENCIES POSSESSD BY EDITORS**

6. What competencies do you possess for editorship in journal publishing? Please tick as many as applicable

- Demonstrate experience and broad knowledge of the field { }
- Synthesize information and views from range of sources { }
- Practice lifelong learning related to your role as an editor { }
- Communicate and manage communications and relationships with authors { }
- Act with leadership and integrity and be accountable to authors { }
- Demonstrate knowledge related to the integrity of research and publishing { }

- Apply best practices in dealing with research misconduct { }
- Identify and uphold the principles of ethical research { }
- Articulate and apply your responsibilities and rights as a journal editor { }
- Identify and use trustworthy resources. { }
- Select journal content that reflects the goals and scope of the journal. { }
- Analyze journal policies, practices, and performance { }
- Evaluate the scientific rigor and integrity of manuscripts { }
- Apply best practices for research and other manuscript presentation { }
- Manage and assure the integrity of the peer review process. { }
- Others, please specify .....

**Section D: USE OF EDITORIAL POLICIES**

Do you have a written Editorial Policy for your journal?

Yes { } No { }

**7. To what extent do you use the following editorial policies for academic publishing?**

S/N O	Editorial policies	Highly Used	Used	Rarel y used	Not used	Undeci ded
a.	The policy that encourages maximum transparency and complete and honest reporting					
b.	Policy on adding or removing author of a submitted manuscript					
c.	Declaring and publishing of funding sources of the research (clinical)					
d.	Ensuring that all published papers make a substantial new contribution to their field					
e.	Avoiding predatory, duplicate or redundant publication					
f.	Screening of plagiarism, duplicate or redundant publication by using anti-plagiarism software.					

**Section E: PERCENTAGE OF PLAGIARISM ACCEPTANCE**

Do you use anti-plagiarism software for article verification?

a. Yes { } b. No { }

What maximum percentage of citations do you accept from the article writers?

- Below 10% { }
- 11 to 15% { }
- 16 to 20% { }
- 21 to 25% { }
- 26 to 30% { }
- No any provision for that { }

**Section F: COMMUNICATION WITH ARTICLE WRITERS**

8. What information do you communicate with article writers?

- Information on acceptance or rejection { }
- Response to criticism and concern { }
- Erratum publishing (error in previously published work) { }
- Retraction publishing (withdrawal of previously published work) { }
- Encouraging scholarly debate (between authors, reviewers and editors) { }
- Others, please specify .....

**Section G: EXTENT OF ADOPTION TO THE GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

9. To what extent do you adopt Global Best Practice Guidelines for Editors in publishing your academic journal?

S/N O	BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES	Highly adopted	Adopte d	Rarely adopted	Not adopte d	Undecide d
a.	Taking responsibility for everything you publish					
b.	Making fair and unbiased decisions independent from commercial consideration					
c.	Ensuring a fair and appropriate peer review process					
d.	Adopting editorial policies that encourage transparency and honest reporting					
e.	Issuing corrections and retractions on published articles when needed					
f.	checking suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct					
g.	checking reviewer and editorial misconduct					

h.	Telling Peer reviewers and authors what is expected of them					
i.	Having appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest					
j.	Making the journal visible online					

**Section H: CHALLENGES FACED IN ADOPTING THE GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

10. What challenges do you face in adopting Global Best Practice Guidelines for academic publishing?

- Lack of awareness { }
- Non-flexibility of the Best Practice Guidelines { }
- Unsuitability of the Best Practice Guidelines to our environment { }
- Conflict of interest { }
- Imposition of policy { }
- Policy changing { }
- Interruption of editorial leadership { }
- Difficulty in accessing the guidelines locally { }
- Others, please specify .....

**APPENDIX III POPULATION  
SIZE BY FACULTIES/DEPARTMENTS**

	<b>Faculties</b>	<b>Dept.</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Last publication year</b>
1	Administration	Department of Business Administration	Journal of Business Administration	2015
2	Administration	Department of local Government	ABU journal of policy and Development Studies	2015
3	Administration	Public Administration	ABU Journal of Public Administration	2016
4	Agricultural Science	Department of Agronomy	Journal of Crop Research Agroforestry and Environment	2018
5	Agricultural Science	Department of Soil Science	Nigerian Journal of Soil and Environmental Research	2017
6	Art	Department of African Languages	HARSHE (10) Journal of African Languages	2016
7	Art	Department of English and Literature Studies	KUKA Journal of National Association of Students English and Literature Studies	2018
8	Art	Department of French	ABUDOF Journal of Humanities	2016
9	Art	Department of Philosophy	FALSAFA Journal of Philosophy	2018
10	Art	DEPT. OF ARABIC.	AL- MI'EYAR INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARABIC STUDIES.	2017
11	College of Medical Sciences	Dental Surgery	Archives of International Surgery	2018

12	College of Medical Sciences	Deans Office	Sub – Saharan Africa Journal of Medicine (SSAJM)	2018
13	Education	Art and Social Science Education	Journal of Research in Art and Social Science Education	2017
14	Education	Deans Office	Journal of Educational Research and Development	2017
15	Education	Educational Foundation and Curriculum	Zaria Journal of Studies in Education (ZJSE)	2016
16	Education	Human Kinetics and Health Education	Journal of Health, Physical Education, Sports and Leisure Studies	2017
17	Education	Library and Information Science	Samaru Journal of Information Studies	2018
18	Education	Psychology and Counselling	ABU Journal of Educational Psychology and Counselling	2017
19	Education	Science Education	Journal of Studies in Science and Mathematics	2018
20	Education	Vocational and Technical Education	JOVTED Journal of Vocational and Technical Education	2018
21	Engineering	Electrical and Computer Engineering	Zaria Journal of Electrical Engineering Technology	2018
22	Engineering	Faculty of Engineering	Nigerian Journal of Engineering	2019
23	Environmental Design	Department of Fine Arts	Journal of Arts	2018
24	Environmental Design	Department of Industrial Design	Nigerian Design Review	2016

25	Environmental Design	Deans Office	Journal of Environmental Studies.	2016
26	Law	DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC LAW	JOURNAL OF Islamic and comparative Law	2016
28	Law	GENERAL LAW	Ahmadu Bello University Law Journal (A. B. U. L. J)	2015
29	Law	Public-law	Human Rights review an international human Rights journal	2016
30	Life & Physical Science	Faculty of Science	Nigerian Journal of Scientific Research	2017
31	Life Science	Biological Science	Journal of Tropical Bioscience	2018
32	Pharmacy	Deans Office	Nigerian Journal Of Pharmaceutical Sciences	2018
33	Pharmacy	Pharmacology And Therapeutics	Journal of Pharmacology And Tropical Therapeutics	2017
34	Physical Sciences	Geography	Zaria Geographer	2018
35	Social Science	Political Science and International Studies	Nigerian Journal of Political Science	2018
36	Social Science	Sociology	Zaria Sociology Journal	2015
37	Social Science	Deans Office	Zaria Journal of Social Science	2018
38	Veterinary Medicine	Center For Veterinary Teaching Hospital	Veterinary Clinical Practice Journal (VCPJ)	2018

Source: Desk officers/Heads of Department/Postgraduate coordinators (2019)

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **A PROPOSED WRITTEN**

## **EDITORIAL POLICY FOR ACADEMIC JOURNALS**

The following Draft of Policy was an adaptation from the Mediterranean Centre of Social and Educational Research (Rome, Italy). The journals to adopt the suggested policy have the liberty to adjust the content to the tune of their journal taste. This editorial policy is based on the Committee on Publication Ethics Best Practice Ethics statement.

### **Editorial Policy**

#### **Publication decisions**

The editor is responsible for deciding which of the articles submitted to the journal should be published.

#### **Fair play**

An editor at any time evaluates manuscripts for their intellectual content without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the authors. **Confidentiality**

The editor and any editorial staff 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.

### **Screening of article**

The submitted articles would be subjected to plagiarism check before forwarding to reviewer and the similarity index must not exceed maximum of 25% (depending on the decision of the editors).

### **Disclosure and conflicts of interest**

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an editor's own research without the express written consent of the author.

Article submitted by journal's own editor should be handled by the other editors independent from the author, and the author should not interfere in the decision regarding his/her article.

### **Duties of Reviewers**

#### **Contribution to Editorial Decisions**

Peer review assists the editor in making editorial decisions and through the editorial communications with the author may also assist the author in improving the paper.

#### **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 excuse himself from the review process.

#### **Confidentiality**

Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. They must not be shown to or discussed with others except as authorized by the editor.

#### **Standards of Objectivity**

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate.

Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

#### **Acknowledgement of Sources**

Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.

## **Duties of Authors**

### **Authorship of the Paper**

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Where others have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be acknowledged or listed as contributors.

The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors and no inappropriate coauthors are included on the paper, and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

If an authorship dispute or discrepancy comes to light before publication (for example, changes to the list of authors are proposed after submission), editors should take care to explain the journal's authorship policy to the corresponding author and to establish that all authors agree to the change before proceeding with publication.

If an authorship dispute emerges after publication (for example, somebody contacts the editor claiming they should have been an author of a published paper, or requesting that their name be withdrawn from a paper), the editor should contact the corresponding author and, where possible, the other authors to establish the veracity of the case.

If genuine errors are established, editors should consider publishing a correction in the case of such errors.

### **Reporting standards**

Authors 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.

### **Data Access and Retention**

Authors can be asked to provide the raw data in connection with a paper for editorial review, and should be prepared to provide public access to such data. If practicable, and should in any event be prepared to retain such data for a reasonable time after publication.

### **Originality and Plagiarism**

The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others that this has been appropriately cited or quoted.

### **Multiple, Redundant or Concurrent Publication**

An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and is unacceptable.

### **Acknowledgement of Sources**

Proper acknowledgement of the work of others must always be given. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work.

### **Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest**

All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial or other substantive conflict of interest that might be construed to influence the results or interpretation of their manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

### **Fundamental errors in published works**

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal editor or publisher and cooperate with the editor to retract or correct the paper.

### **Article Retraction**

In the event that ethical misconduct (e.g. misrepresentation/falsification of data, pervasive errors, plagiarism, multiple submission, etc.) is determined to have occurred in a manuscript published in the journal, the editors reserve the right to issue a public retraction of the manuscript in question. The retraction will come in the form of a note published in a subsequent issue of the journal. The article's citation will be labeled as "Retracted" in all databases and the electronic version of the manuscript file will be clearly marked as "Retracted."

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