



Rules of Publication in the Arab Educational Journals

First Version (Updated)

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With the participation of delegates from Arab Educational Journals

Risalat Ul-Khaleej Al-Arabi Journal; The Journal of Education and Psychology (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia); The International Journal for Research in Education (United Arab Emirates); Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences (Bahrain); The Journal of Arab Children (Kuwait); Journal of the Association of Arab Universities and The International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education (Jordan); The Journal of Educational and Psychological Studies (Sultanate of Oman); The Palestinian Journal of Open Education (Palestine); The Arab Journal For Quality Assurance in Higher Education and The International Journal for Talent Development (Yemen)

Updated at Shamaa Seminar held in Beirut December 1-2, 2017, with the participation of delegates from Arab Educational Journals:

Psychological & Educational Studies Review (Algeria), Journal of Faculty of Education in Khartoum University (Sudan), Recherches pédagogiques (Lebanon), Journal of Education Science, Fayoum University Review for Educational and Human Sciences, Review of Educational & Psychological Sciences (Zaqaziq University), Journal of faculty of education Assiut University, New Perspectives in Adult (Ain Shams), Review of Faculty of Education at Portsaid University, Journal of Counseling, Journal of the Faculty of Education-Alexandria University (Egypt), Sciences de l'éducation, Al-Madrassa Al-Maghribiya, Cahiers de l'éducation et de la formation, Attadris (Morocco)

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INTRODUCTION

The development of these standards is a result of a series of studies conducted by the Shamaa team over consecutive phases. These studies highlighted the existence of serious problems in the quality of articles published in Arab educational journals. The studies covered three axes; in the first axis research articles published in Arab journals and that dealt with specific topics (science education; teaching history; educational management; early childhood education; equity and education) were reviewed to identify trends of research that were compared with research trends in research published in international journals. In the second axis, commonly utilized reference and documentation styles in articles were investigated. In the third axis, comparison of research methods was drawn between published articles in the educational field and in sociology. Comparisons were also drawn between published articles in Arab countries and the international journals regarding educational administration in the Arab countries

In parallel, the Shamaa team tracked specialized education journals (given that there are periodicals in humanities that publish educational articles) in search of their types and extent of their circulation as well as regarding the publication standards used by these journals in terms of policies and procedures and publication. In a subsequent phase, a survey was conducted on 32 periodicals about publication review processes and mechanisms, research topics and methodologies; quality issues; rules of integrity; human resources; financial resources; circulation; impact, and internationalization.

These studies remain under discussion between the members of the team; and the subject of the workshops and the seminars held by Shamaa with other colleagues and representatives of editorial boards at Arab education journals. The studies will be completed and published in the early part of 2018.

The studies have provided clear evidence regarding the weaknesses in the management of the review and publishing process (the rules applied by the journals) and in the quality of the articles and their scientific and international value (what is published by the journals). At this stage, it is difficult to be certain about the historical cause of the weaknesses inherent in the published research: Is it due to the quality of the articles or the quality of management of the journals? However, there are ample evidence to suggest that improvement must be initiated at the level of the journals' management to improve the rules of review and publication, with the hope that this would positively impact the quality of published articles.

The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) kindly provided a grant to support this project which is being implemented by Shamaa in cooperation with the Kuwait Society for the Advancement of Arab Children. The project has undergone several consultative phases with Arab educational researchers working in or outside the region t and a relatively large number of representatives of Arab educational journals.

The project was planned and implemented with a collaborative approach. Moreover, the standards (or rules) that have been developed must be continuously reviewed in the same manner. Managing and coordinating these efforts is one of the roles undertaken by Shamaa that aim to make a difference in the quality of Arab educational research and move it to an international level.

The work continues.

Beirut, December 17, 2017

Adnan El-Amine,
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Section One: Started Rules for Readers and Writers

I. Ethics of Publishing

1. Integrity - The authors shall abide by the ethics of scientific publishing and the manuscripts will be subject to a plagiarism detection review. Any article that does not comply with the ethics of publishing shall be rejected. Furthermore, any manuscript that is subsequently submitted by an author whereby it is proven that it does not comply with the ethics of publishing shall be rejected.
2. Copyright
 - At time of acceptance of his or her article, the author shall sign an agreement allowing the journal to publish it while reserving his right to self-archive the article and deposit same in digital repository.
 - OR
 - The author shall sign an agreement to open source publishing with the journal that utilizes this system.
3. Conflict of Interest
 - The principle of non-conflict of interest shall be adopted in the review process, particularly in the form of a blind review along with the selection of reviewers not affiliated with the institution in which the author works and/ or from outside the country.

II. Procedures and Stages

4. Submission of the Manuscript
 - Manuscripts along with annexes thereto are sent to the journal via electronic mail.
 - OR
 - The manuscript is uploaded electronically to the website of the journal and the author is provided with a code allowing him to track the status of the manuscript in the system.
 - The author shall be notified about the receipt of the article.
 - The manuscript shall be accompanied, in a separate file, with a brief profile of the author, his place of work and email address.
5. The Review
 - 1) Preliminary Examination
 - Every manuscript shall be subject to a preliminary examination in terms of its format and topic based upon which a decision is made whether to include it in the review process or reject it.

- The author shall be informed of the preliminary examination results (rejection; needed amendments; eligibility for review).

2) The Review

- Every manuscript shall be subject to a dual blind review performed by peers,
- The editorial board shall inform the author of its decision, a summary of its remarks, required amendments if needed. This is accompanied by the reviewers' reports or summaries thereof.
- The reviewers shall remain anonymous in the report sent to the author.

3) Introducing Modifications

- The author shall make the necessary modifications to the manuscript based on the results of the review process and shall resend it to the journal showing the modifications in "track changes".
- The author shall indicate in a separate file that accompanies the modified manuscript his responses to all the points raised in the editorial board's letter and the reports submitted by the reviewers.

4) Acceptance and Rejection

- The journal shall reserve the right to accept or reject the manuscript based on the author's adherence to the publication requirements and the requirements of the journal's editorial board.

III. Formal Rules (Preliminary Examination)

6. Topic Relevance

- The topic of the manuscript shall fall within the academic focus of the journal (as reported by the journal)

7. The Text

- The title and the author's full name shall be in both Arabic and a foreign language (the family name comes first).
- The manuscript shall include:
 - An abstract in a single paragraph (150 to 200 words). The abstract describes the topic, methodology, the main findings, and the conclusion.
 - Three to six key words.

- The abstract and key words shall be presented in Arabic and a foreign language.
- The text shall be fluent and linguistically correct.
- There shall be no reference made to the name of the author in the manuscript, the title, body, and footnotes or endnotes.

8. References

- The text shall comply with the publication rules established by the journal regarding formatting and references type.
- The author shall write the names of authors, journals and institutions correctly.

9. Tables and Charts

- The tables, figures and charts shall be prepared as required by the formatting and style guide adopted by the journal.

10. Size

- The text shall comply with the minimum and maximum limits in terms of the number of words required by the journal.

IV. Content Rules

11. The Scientific (theoretical) Framework

- There is a research problem worthy of investigation. It shows that one or more aspects of the fact under study are not known by the scientific community (literature) and that they need to be revealed.

12. The Methodology

- The research method shall be suitable to the problem under investigation.
- The research methods are rigorous, accurate and logical.
- Data analysis procedures shall be logical and should provide opportunities to answer the questions and extrapolate the results to new situations.
- The manuscript shall provide information and ideas that constitute an added value in its field or in the approach to the research problem.

1) In quantitative research

- Includes a thorough review of Arabic and international literature that covers major works and justifies investigating the research topic and questions. The review shall be presented as an

academic/ intellectual argument (and not as a consecutive list of summaries), that reflects the author's intellectual position and serves to situate the research in a suitable scientific framework.

- The research questions shall be academic/ intellectual in nature logically derived from a theoretical framework and a literature reviews and aimed at investigating a novel aspects worthy of investigation.
- The hypotheses are presented as preliminary responses to the research questions and are logically derived from literature review and contextual information.
- The samples shall be justified and/or representative, the used tools are reliable, valid, and appropriate for answering the research questions.
- The data shall be presented in a precise way.
- There is alignment among the title and literature review, data collection and analysis. While avoiding veering from the study topic to the public's "point of view" thereof.

2) In Qualitative Research

- "Materials" under study (documents, texts, observations, statements, responses, etc.) should be significant and credible and the selection of such material shall be justified.
- The research type (ethnographic, philosophical, historical...) and methodology (based on content analysis, case study, observation, or seeking to reach a grounded theory) should be clearly identified and described.
- The author shall describe her or his background and position regarding the topic under study in order to assist others understand the choice of investigated topic, the choice of research methods, and the interpretation of results.

13. The Results

- Clearly respond to the research questions and provide added value in the field of research.

14. The Conclusion and Discussion

Here, the author summarizes the main results and provide that these results add to the knowledge base on the research topic as compared with previous literature and in relation to educational theories and discusses differences and areas of consensus within the research context.

15. The Recommendations

- Recommendations should refer to matters that need further research.

16. The Context

- The research should be related to a specific social and culture context in terms of the investigated problem and the results and their interpretation.

Section Two: Rules of the Journal

I. Ethics of Publishing

1. Integrity

- The journal commits to insuring the integrity of the manuscript by adopting clear procedures in this regard.

2. Copyright

- The journal shall state whether it requires acquiring copyright from the authors for publication or it adopts a policy of free access and it thus declares the type and conditions of such access.
- The editorial board shall comply with applying all the approved rules to readers and authors in regarding copyright issues.

3. Conflict of Interest

- In order to ensure that there is no conflict of interest, the editorial board shall not select any reviewer who has a relation to or interest with the author or any of the authors, the institution or any institution in the author is a member. In all cases, blind review is to be adopted.

4. Transparency

- The journal shall declare the rules or standards that it observes somewhere in the body of the journal and it shall also indicate all pertaining details on its website.
- The journal shall declare the scope and field (or fields) of its publication's topics.
- The journal shall declare the types of articles it publishes as well as any other publication types (book reviews, conference papers, position papers, etc....).

II. Procedures and Stages

5. Submission of the Manuscript

- The journal shall make available an email address dedicated to the submission of manuscripts and annexes and interacting with the authors.

OR

- The journal shall make available to authors a mechanism to upload their manuscripts and annexes and provide them the opportunity to follow up on the status of their manuscripts from submission to the final decision.
- The journal shall send a receipt confirmation to the author.

6. The Review

1) Preliminary Examination

- The editorial board shall examine the manuscript to determine whether it is in compliance with the formal publishing rules and whether it is eligible for the review process.
- In the preliminary examination, the editorial board applies rules such as: suitability of the subject for the journal; type of paper (research paper or otherwise); language accuracy; documentation relevance (according to rules approved by the journal); observance of the ethics of scientific publishing; absence of any reference in the manuscript to the name of the author in the title, body of the manuscript and bibliography/reference list and any other formal publishing rules declared by the journal.
- The author shall be notified upon receipt of the manuscript and the result of the preliminary examination.
- The journal may add a phase labeled "Completing and Improving the Research" in the event that the journal decides that the manuscript is promising however, it is in need on improvements prior to entering the review process. In such a phase, the journal shall provide the author with guidance and recommendations that would lead him onto the path of such improvement that will assist in ensuring the "eligibility" of the manuscript for the review process.

2) The Review Process

- There shall be two review reports submitted about the manuscript regarding it's the appropriateness for publication and the requested amendments. If the two reports differ in the decision regarding the article, it is the prerogative of the chair of the editorial board to support one of the decisions or seek the opinion of a third reviewer.
- The journal shall maintain an updated list of peer reviewers. New reviewers can be invited from the list of authors who publish in the journal.
- The reviewers shall be specialized in the subject of the manuscript and have published quality research in the specialty field in refereed journals.

- The editorial board shall provide the reviewers the list of publication rules of the journal; rules that pertain to form and content.
- The journal shall provide reviewers with an evaluation form to guide them in the review process and in preparing review reports. The evaluation form should help reviewers judge the appropriateness of the manuscript for publication along with justifications for acceptance, rejection or making modifications.
- The journal may provide a training session to guide the peer reviewers. This review session could be posted in YouTube and on the journal's website.
- The editorial board shall review the reviewer' reports, prepare a summary of the results for the review process in particular in terms of the modifications that must be made and transmit them to the author.
- The editorial board shall transmit along with abovementioned summary a copy of the reports submitted by the reviewers.

3) Making Modifications

- The editorial board shall prepare a set of rules for making modifications and acceptance thereof that include a time frame, the minimum level of modifications that the author must commit to and appoints someone to verify that such modifications have been introduced and propose the necessary steps to be taking regarding the status of the manuscript.

4) Acceptance or Rejection

- The journal shall inform the author of the final decision (acceptance or rejection) and shall also inform him about the time of publication.

III. Formal Rules (Preliminary Examination)

7. Relevance of the Topic

- The compatibility of the topic of the manuscript with the focus of the journal and the subjects published therein shall be ascertained.

8. The Text

- The editorial board shall prepare and publish the formal publication rules in one of the journal's pages in a brief manner and refer the readers to the details and samples that are available on its website.
- The editorial board of the journal shall carry out an additional edit of the manuscript once it has been accepted in line with journal's suitable style for publishing and with consultation with the author.

9. Sources and References

- The journal shall declare the system that it observes in terms of recording the sources and references in the body of the text and in the bibliography/reference list and it is best that said system is an international one (such as the APA) (currently, efforts are underway to adapt this system to the Arabic language). Further, the journal shall publish on its website detailed instructions on how to apply the adopted system.
- The editor shall audit the list of references and sources for their formats on the one hand and the names of authors and journals on the other.

10. Tables and Charts

- The journal may require the authors to provide extra tables and charts in a separate file to facilitate the layout process. The journal may adopt a specific system such as the APA for inclusion of extra tables and charts.

11. Size

- The journal shall specify the minimum and maximum number of words in a manuscript.

IV. Content Rules

12. Quality

- The editorial board shall exercise prudence through the appointment of capable specialists that undertake the review process and through the editor-in-chief in providing high quality articles in line with international standards and attracting varied research methodologies.
- The journal shall declare the rules pertaining to content in all its issues and shall detail these rules on its website.
- The editorial board shall commit to apply the content rules that are declared for readers and authors.

V. Management of the Journal

13. The Editorial Board

- The journal shall have an editorial board whose members shall be academics.
- The editorial board shall include an editor-in-chief who is responsible for the scientific aspects of the journal and who interacts with the academics.

- The editorial board shall include an assistant editor to assist the editor-in-chief with his/her tasks,
- The editorial board shall include consulting members who participate in making decisions regarding the acceptance and rejection of manuscripts in addition to nominating potential reviewers.
- The editor-in-chief and his/her assistant shall make the final decision regarding the acceptance or rejection of the manuscript based on the reviewers' reports and upon consultation with the members of the editorial board.
- The editor-in-chief and his/her assistant shall dedicate time for their work at the journal. If they were college professors, they shall be granted partial release from their academic duties in return for carrying out the tasks required for running the journal based on the frequency and size of its publications.
- The journal shall have a secretary who performs conducts archiving tasks, records minutes of meetings and undertakes electronic correspondence.
- The journal shall publish the names of all editorial board members or consultants and their titles in addition to providing detailed information about these individuals on its website or electronic print version.
- The journal shall have copy editors who edit the manuscripts, supervise the production of the journal, and insure compliance with all publication requirements prior to submitting the journal for print.

14. Publishing

- The journal shall state its name in both the Arabic and foreign languages.
- The journal shall state the frequency of its publication, property rights or creative commons license for open access, the international publishing serial number, the name of the publisher, country of origin for publishing, and indexing databases.
- Each article shall have a Digital Object Identifier (DOI).
- A short biography of the author and his/her email shall be presented in the footnote of the first page of the article.
- The journal strictly commits to abide by the conditions and standards that it declares and shall abide by the publishing dates of its issues.