

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Asian Journal of Biodiversity (AJOB)* maintains listing and indexing with esteemed agencies such as the Clarivate, ASEAN Citation Index, Philippine E-Journals, Google Scholar, EBSCO Publishing, Crossref, and Gale: Cengage Learning. These affiliations underscore *AJOB's* commitment to scholarly excellence and global dissemination of research findings.

AJOB welcomes contributions from scholars worldwide seeking publication in a rigorously peer-reviewed journal. Interested authors can access submission guidelines and relevant information on the journal's website: www.asianscientificjournals.com. The Editorial Board actively engages guest editors and peer reviewers, both locally and internationally, for each issue to ensure scholarly rigor and diversity in perspectives.

Regarded as a leading journal in the field, *AJOB* specializes in publishing peer-reviewed higher education research. Its audience comprises scientists, academicians, graduate students, and other stakeholders invested in advancing research boundaries. The primary criterion for publication in *AJOB* is the substantial contribution an article makes to the existing body of knowledge.

The editorial review process's efficiency and effectiveness hinge on the collaborative efforts of authors and reviewers. Authors are accountable for meticulously preparing their research papers for evaluation by independent reviewers, which involves subjecting the manuscript to rigorous scrutiny and necessary revisions before submission. It is important to note that the review process does not serve as a means for preliminary feedback or guarantee publication acceptance.

Reviewers and editors provide constructive and timely feedback on submitted research papers based on their scholarly significance, analytical rigor, and presentation quality. Their contributions uphold *AJOB's* standards of excellence and contribute to fostering a vibrant scholarly discourse in higher education research.

Open Access and Copyright Policy

The *Asian Journal of Biodiversity (AJOB)* operates as an open-access journal, granting unrestricted access to all published content without cost to users or institutions. Readers are permitted to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles without prior authorization from the publisher or authors. The presentation of contributions to *AJOB* is facilitated through copyright transfer from authors to *AJOB*. Moreover, all elements of the journal, including its name, structure, and organization, are safeguarded by copyright and are the property of Liceo de Cagayan University.

Policy on Retraction

Retraction is the process initiated by the editorial office to remove a published article from the digital archive. This action is taken in response to the discovery of fraudulent claims in the research, instances of plagiarism, or significant errors in methodology that were overlooked during the quality assurance process. Retraction is prompted by complaints from third-party researchers, which are thoroughly validated by the editorial board before initiating the retraction process. It is important to emphasize that retraction procedures begin only after informing the authors and providing them with an opportunity to present their perspective, thus ensuring adherence to due process standards.

Policy on Digital Preservation

Digital Preservation involves systematically storing electronic files in multiple formats such as compact discs, cloud computing, Google Drive, email accounts, and external hard drives. This preservation strategy aims to safeguard files against potential risks, including web server crashes, natural disasters, fires, and other human-induced destructions.

Policy on Handling Complaints

Upon receiving a complaint alleging copyright infringement, intellectual property rights violations, inaccuracies, libelous content, or other unlawful material in any contribution to the journal, *AJOB's* editorial board undertakes a thorough investigation. This process may entail requesting substantiation of claims from involved parties. The editorial board of *AJOB* will then determine

whether to remove the disputed material in good faith, documenting its investigation and decision-making process. If found liable after investigation, the article may be subject to retraction.

Policy on Conflicts of Interest

AJOB mandates that authors disclose all potential conflicts of interest before publication.

The Peer Review System

Definition: Peer review, also known as refereeing, involves subjecting an author's scholarly work, research, or ideas to scrutiny by experts in the same field. This normative process, essential for both grant funding and scholarly publication, ensures adherence to disciplinary standards, facilitates the identification of weaknesses, and encourages improvement.

Type: The journal employs the double-blind review process, wherein both the reviewer and author remain anonymous to each other.

Recruiting Referees: The editorial board assumes responsibility for selecting referees, who must possess exemplary credentials and expertise in the relevant field. Authors may suggest potential referees subject to editorial approval, with strict adherence to criteria ensuring impartiality and expertise.

Manuscript: Referees are chosen based on their track record in research, awards, and peer review experience while avoiding conflicts of interest. The editorial board may consider authors' recommendations for potential referees, prioritizing expertise and impartiality.

Peer Review Process: The editorial board conducts an initial review of manuscripts, requiring revisions as necessary before external review. Manuscripts are then distributed to expert referees for evaluation, typically comprising two specialists in the research topic and one experienced in research methodology and statistics. Referees provide constructive feedback and recommendations for improvement, which the editorial board considers in its decision-making process. Reviewers' identities remain undisclosed to authors to ensure impartiality, except under special circumstances.

Criteria for Acceptance and Rejection

A manuscript undergoes a rigorous evaluation process to determine acceptance or rejection based on specific criteria:

1. Endorsement by 2 or 3 referees recommending publication.
2. Substantial compliance with reviewers' instructions.
3. Originality score of at least 80 in plagiarism detection tests.
4. English readability score below 60 in the Flesch Reading Ease test and a Gunning Fog Index of at least 12.
5. Correctly formatted literature citations verified by reference checker software.
6. Valid formulas confirmed by formula checker software, and adherence to spelling and grammar standards verified by "Grammarly" software and human academic writing experts.

Editorial and Paper Acceptance Decisions

After a thorough evaluation of the papers, there will be four (4) decisions to arrive at, as follows:

1. Acceptance with Minor Revision (25%):

- Paper mostly meets academic and research requirements.
- Sound and publishable with minor corrections, like adding citations or refining arguments, discussions, recommendations, and implications.
- Changes should be marked for reviewer attention, but no major alterations are needed.

2. Conditional Acceptance with Major Revision (50%):

- Academic and research fundamentals are sound, but significant improvements are required.
- Needs substantial changes in literature, theory, research model, methodology, and argument enhancement.
- Authors must provide a detailed response to reviewers' comments.
- The paper undergoes another round of review with a chance of acceptance.

3. Deferred Acceptance:

- Addressable issues (70% of the paper) through major revisions.
- If major revisions may resolve concerns related to academic quality, novelty, or contribution, deferment is recommended.

- Requires a new submission and review process should the researcher desire so. The editor retains the right to reject if revisions are insufficient.

4. Rejection:

- Manuscript lacks the necessary quality, novelty, or significance for publication.

In cases of substantial disagreement among referees regarding a manuscript's quality, the editorial board employs various strategies to reach a decision:

- Soliciting additional reviews as tie-breakers when receiving vastly opposing reviews.
- Inviting authors to respond to referee criticisms and allowing compelling rebuttals to influence decision-making in tie situations.
- Seeking input from the original critic referee or engaging authors and referees in a constructive dialogue, without allowing referees to confer with each other.

The goal of these deliberations is not consensus but a thorough and fair assessment of the manuscript's quality and scholarly contribution, ensuring alignment with *AJOB's* standards and objectives.

Editorial Policy Enhancements

English Writing Readability. Readability tests gauge the comprehension difficulty of academic English passages. To aid educators and researchers in selecting articles appropriate for varied comprehension levels, contributors are advised to utilize the Flesch Kincaid readability test, specifically the Flesch Reading Ease test. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

90.0 – 100.00: Easily understood by an average 11-year-old student.

60.0 – 70.0: Easily comprehensible by 13 to 15-year-old students.

Below 30.0: Best comprehended by university graduates

The Gunning Fog Index, developed by Robert Gunning in 1952, assesses English writing readability by estimating the years of formal education needed for initial understanding. A fog index of 12 corresponds to a reading level akin to a US high school senior (approximately 18 years old) or a first year university student in the Philippines.

Plagiarism Detection. Authors are encouraged to use plagiarism detection software to increase acceptance probabilities. The editorial office employs licensed software for screening research articles, with an 80 percent originality standard to pass the plagiarism test.

Appropriateness of Citation Format. Contributors should adhere to citation formats specified by the American Psychological Association (APA) and relevant disciplines. Software tools for different style formats facilitate adherence.

Citation Strength for Quality of Reference. Citation strength reflects the frequency of a reference's citation by other authors, indicating credibility. Authors can verify citation counts through Google Scholar to ascertain a source's reliability.

Traceability. Online sources are preferred for improved traceability, allowing editors to access original content via provided URLs. Authors must include URLs and the date of retrieval for online sources, along with Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs).

example: to be placed inside the Bibliographic Entry

Lubos, L. C. (2023). Students' Instructional Participation and Awareness on Biodiversity Conservation In the Sawaga River as Historical Landmark and Sacred Site of Bukidnon. *Asian Journal of Biodiversity*, 14(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7828/ajob.v14i1.1549>

Word Count, Spelling and Grammar Checks. Authors are advised to conduct word counts for abstracts (around 250 words) and full texts (approximately 5000 to 8000 words). Spelling and grammar checks using tools like Grammarly are required before submission.

Journal Impact Factor and Author's Research Track Record. The editorial office monitors article and author citations on Google Scholar monthly, computing Journal Impact Factors two years from publication. The author's research track records in recognized indices like Clarivate (ISI), Scopus Elsevier, Google Scholar, Open Researcher, and Contributor I.D. (ORCID), and the Hirsch Index are valued, influencing selection for editorial board roles, peer review, and journal contributions.

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice

The journal upholds stringent publication ethics, prohibiting self-plagiarism and duplicate publication. Authors must disclose conflicts of interest. The journal ensures objective double-blind peer review and addresses any conflicts promptly and transparently under the Editor-in-Chief's oversight.

AJOB is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity throughout the publication process, encompassing the roles of authors, peer reviewers, and editors.

Authors submitting their manuscripts are expected to adhere to the following guiding principles:

- Originality by ensuring that their work is unpublished, both in partiality and totality.
- Simultaneous submission of the same manuscript to multiple journals is considered unethical, as is any form of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, or duplication.
- Declaration of any conflicts of interest and provide clear acknowledgments of data sources, data availability, reproducibility, citations, and references used in the manuscript development.
- Any modifications made to the manuscript after submission must be promptly communicated to the Editor-in-Chief.

Peer Reviewers are tasked to do the following with utmost confidentiality and ethical manner:

- Providing constructive comments based on the intellectual content of the paper, without consideration of factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, or political values of the authors.
- Maintaining confidentiality and avoid conflicts of interest during the 'double-blind' review process.
- Justifying publication acceptance or rejection decisions clearly, objectively, and constructively to the Editor.

Editors uphold integrity in scholarly research and its publication by adhering to the following:

- Fairness and impartiality in evaluating manuscripts, regardless of authors' personal characteristics or beliefs.
- Confidentiality of manuscripts and reviewers' identities is paramount,