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The Journal of Transcultural Studies

Ethical Guidelines

1. Preamble

The Journal of Transcultural Studies is committed to high ethical standards that must be adhered to by all parties involved in the publication process: authors, editors, reviewers, and publishers. Our statement of ethical guidelines is based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Best Practice Guidelines for Scientific Journal Editors.

2. Obligations of the editors

2.1 Manuscript acceptance and editorial independence

The editors of *The Journal of Transcultural Studies* decide independently which submitted articles will be published. They are responsible for the entire content of the journal, and for the timing of publication. They act in consultation with their respective institutes or societies. The importance and relevance of the submitted articles are paramount. The editors review submissions solely for their academic merit (importance, originality, validity, clarity) and relevance to the journal, regardless of the origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, ethnicity, citizenship, or political persuasion of the authors. The editors ensure that all those involved in the publication process are fully aware of the requirements placed on them.

2.2 Peer Review

The editors ensure that the peer review process is fair, unbiased, and is concluded within the agreed timeframe. Scientific articles are evaluated by at least two external and independent reviewers. If necessary, the editors will seek one or more additional opinions. They select reviewers who have appropriate expertise in the field. They use established best practices to ensure that unsound peer reviewers are not selected.

The editors check all recommendations made by the reviewers for potential conflicts of interest, including suggestions for self-citation.

2.3 Confidentiality

The editors will only pass on information about submitted contributions to the authors of the contribution and their potential reviewers.

Unpublished material will not be used by the editors for their own research unless the authors have given explicit written permission. Confidential information or ideas

generated through peer review will be kept confidential and will not be used for personal gain.

2.4 Conflict of interest declaration, transparency

Members of the journal's editorial board who are asked to evaluate a contribution by authors, companies, or institutions to which they are not neutral due to an existing cooperation or a competitive relationship, decline the evaluation and assign it to another member of the editorial board in order to prevent conflicts of interest.

The editors will not ask authors to refer to other contributions in the journal unless this is necessary for scientific reasons. Authors will not be compelled to refer to contributions or offers of the editors, or those in which the editors have a vested interest.

2.5 Plagiarism check

Plagiarism can take many forms, from submitting someone else's work as the author's own, to copying or paraphrasing substantial parts of someone else's work (without reference), to appropriating and presenting someone else's research as one's own work. Plagiarism in all its forms constitutes unethical behavior and is unacceptable.

For the publication of manuscripts, the editors use professional plagiarism software that compares the original text with source texts from an extensive database. In addition, text passages that deviate conspicuously from the author's own style are checked. Editors who are confronted with valid evidence of misconduct should contact the author and coordinate with Heidelberg University Library as soon as possible, to initiate further checks and to agree on the publication of a correction, a retraction, or an appropriate correction.

3. Obligations of the reviewers

3.1 Participation in editorial decisions

Peer review makes an important contribution to quality assurance. The evaluations of the reviewers help the editors to correctly assess the strengths and weaknesses of the article and to decide whether to accept or reject it. Authors benefit from professional criticism, which they can respond to and thereby improve their contribution. Criticism should however always remain professional, and personal criticism is not appropriate. As a general rule, reviewers should treat authors and their work as they themselves would like to be treated.

If it is impossible for the reviewer to conduct a rapid review, he or she should decline to participate in the peer review process. All of the following provisions also apply to reviewers who decline an evaluation.

3.2 Confidentiality

Every manuscript received for review must be treated as a confidential document. It may not be forwarded to or discussed with anyone outside the process, unless the editors have agreed. Reviewers may not contact authors directly without the explicit permission of the editors.

Reviewers may not use the material under review in their own research unless they have the express written consent of the respective authors. Confidential information or ideas generated by the peer review must be kept confidential and may not be used for personal gain.

3.3 Awareness of scientific misconduct

Reviewers should look for indications that the article violates the rules of good scientific practice and report this to the editors. This includes, for example, if there is a clear similarity or overlap between the reviewed manuscript and another published article. Each reference must be substantiated with a corresponding reference.

3.4 Conflicts of interest

Reviews should be carried out objectively. Reviewers shall express their opinions clearly and provide appropriate arguments. Selected reviewers who do not feel qualified to review the research presented, who feel personally biased or have a conflict of interest must inform the editors.

If a reviewer suggests to the author that references be made to the work of the reviewer (or his/her collaborators), this must be done for scientific reasons only and not with the intention of increasing the number of citations or the visibility of the work of the reviewer or his/her collaborators.

4. Obligations of the authors

4.1 Reporting standards

Authors should present their innovative research carefully and discuss its scientific significance objectively. Underlying data should be fully and accurately cited in the paper. The paper should contain enough references to enable others to cross-reference the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate representations constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

If work and/or wording by others is used, it must be appropriately labelled or cited and permission must be obtained where required. Publications that have influenced the submitted paper must be cited and contextualized in the scientific context.

Information obtained privately, for example in conversations, correspondence or discussion with third parties, may not be used without the explicit, written permission of the source.

Manuscripts describing essentially the same research should not be published in more than the primary journal. Exceptions, such as lectures or translations, must be agreed with the editors. The first publication must be cited in the second.

4.2 Access to and storage of data

Authors may be asked to provide their research data related to the article for editorial review. If necessary, they should make the data publicly available and keep it for an appropriate period of years after publication. For this purpose, heiUP provides its authors and journal editors with the repositories heiDATA (research data), heidICON (research media), and heiARCHIVE (long-term archiving), which meet the storage requirements.

4.3 Authorship of the contribution

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, implementation, or interpretation of the reported study. They take public responsibility for the content. All those who have made substantial contributions should be listed as co-authors. No unauthorized co-authors should be listed. If there are others who have contributed to certain aspects of the content of the paper (e.g. language editing or technical writing), they should not be listed as authors, but should be mentioned in a separate section, for example in the acknowledgements. All co-authors must have seen and approved the final version of the paper and agreed to its submission for publication.

4.4 Hazardous substances and human/animal studies

If the paper involves the use of chemicals, processes, or equipment that pose unusual hazards, the authors must describe these in detail in the manuscript.

If the paper involves the use of animal or human research subjects, the author should ensure that the manuscript includes a statement that all procedures have been carried out in accordance with relevant laws and institutional policies, such as data protection and animal welfare, and that the relevant institutional committees have approved them.

Authors must keep written consents and be able to produce them on request.

4.5 Conflicts of interest

Authors should inform the editors of potential conflicts of interest as early as possible (see 2.4. "Conflict of interest declaration"). In their manuscript, authors should disclose any financial or personal relationships with other individuals or organizations, such as sponsors, that could make their work appear biased or influenced. In particular, any

sources of financial support for the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the article, as well as personal or professional relationships, should be disclosed.

4.6 Fundamental errors in a published paper

If an author finds significant errors or inaccuracies in his/her own work, he/she is obliged to notify the editors or the publisher immediately. The editors will, if necessary, withdraw or correct (in the form of an erratum) the contribution.

The author is also obliged to cooperate with the editors if the editor or publisher is informed by a third party of errors in a work that has already been published. This also includes the provision of proofs if these are requested.

4.7 Integrity of the images used

It is not permitted to enhance, obscure, move, remove or insert any particular feature of an image unless this manipulation is part of the scientific argument and is labelled accordingly. Adjustments to brightness, contrast, or color balance, including to improve clarity, are acceptable if and as long as they do not obscure or remove any information contained in the original.

Authors are expected to secure permission for images used, and provide copyright information to the editors.

4.8 Transparency of clinical trials

Heidelberg University Library (heiUP) supports the transparency of clinical trials. For the corresponding journals, authors are expected to make an effort to register and present clinical studies according to the valid standards.

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