

Journal Policy



Business & Economic Review
Research Journal of
Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar

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1. Approval Certificate

I certify that I have read the revised journal policies, and provide my consent for their implementation.

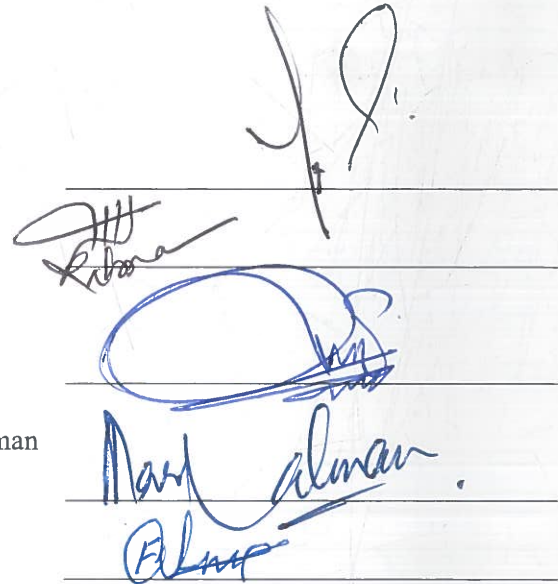
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The image shows four horizontal lines with handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is at the top right, above the 'Approved By' line. The second signature is on the left, above the 'Chief Editor BER' line. The third signature is in the middle, above the 'Associate Editor BER' line. The fourth signature is on the left, above the 'Reviewed By' line. The fifth signature is at the bottom left, above the 'Prepared By' line.

2. About the Journal

The **Business & Economic Review** (B&ER), ISSN 2519-1233 (Online), ISSN 2074-1693 (Print), is a semi-annual publication of the Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar, Pakistan. B&ER is recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan in the 'Y' category.

The journal aims to provide a focus for worldwide expertise in the necessary techniques, practices, and areas of research. It also aims to present a forum for readers to share common experiences across a wide range of industries and sectors where business and economic research is conducted.

The B&ER is devoted to the publication of papers that advance knowledge of the practical and theoretical aspects of management, economics, and social sciences. B&ER welcomes empirical, conceptual, and review papers with strong methodologies from these disciplines.

The journal welcomes papers in the areas of:

- ❖ Business management and strategy
- ❖ Economic theory and policy
- ❖ Finance and banking
- ❖ Marketing and consumer behavior
- ❖ Organizational behavior and human resources

The journal is committed to maintaining the highest editorial standards, ensuring that all published research is original, rigorous, and contributes meaningfully to the field. Each manuscript undergoes a thorough peer-review process, with feedback provided by experts in the relevant areas of study.

The journal is widely distributed to academic institutions, libraries, and individual subscribers, both within Pakistan and internationally. By providing open access to its online content, the Business & Economic Review (B&ER) ensures that its research is accessible to a global audience, fostering the exchange of knowledge across borders.

3. POLICIES

Business & Economic Review is dedicated to maintaining research integrity and promoting transparency and best practices in scholarly publishing. The journal aligns its policies with the standards set by respected organizations such as the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA).

Business & Economic Review adheres to the following policies.

1. Open Access Policy
2. Copyright & Licensing Policy
3. Publication Ethics Policy
4. Editorial Policy
5. Author Policy
6. Peer Review Policy
7. Plagiarism Policy
8. Artificial intelligence (AI)
9. Reviewer Policy & Selection Guidelines
10. Data Sharing Policy
11. Self-Archiving Policy
12. Article Processing Charge (APC) Policy
13. Repository Policy
14. Conflict of Interest Policy
15. Correction & Withdrawal Policy
16. Complaints Policy

1. Open Access Policy

1.1 Preamble

Open Access (OA) stands as a cornerstone in advancing scientific knowledge, education, innovation, and public engagement. By removing access barriers and enabling unrestricted online availability of scholarly work, Open Access supports equitable participation in the global exchange of ideas.

As access to scholarly literature becomes increasingly costly and limited, Open Access offers a transformative solution that benefits researchers, educators, policy makers, and the public alike. It promotes transparency, fosters collaboration, and accelerates the translation of research into real-world solutions.

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* establishes this Open Access Policy to reinforce its commitment to openness, knowledge equity, and academic excellence. The policy ensures that intellectual contributions from BER's authors are made freely accessible to maximize visibility, reuse, and long-term impact.

Licenses that allow authors to define how others may use their work, from full reuse (CC BY).

1.2 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- ❖ All authors, researchers, editors, and contributors affiliated with BER or submitting to the journal.
- ❖ All scholarly outputs funded by public or private grants requiring Open Access dissemination.
- ❖ The following research outputs:
 - Peer-reviewed journal articles
 - Conference papers
 - Technical reports and working papers
 - Research datasets and supplementary materials

1.3 Policy Provision

1.3.1 Deposit Requirements

Authors are required to deposit an electronic version of the final peer-reviewed manuscript into an institutional or subject repository:

- ❖ Upon acceptance, or
- ❖ No later than 12 months from the date of publication (unless funder policy requires earlier deposit).

1.3.2 Supported Versions

Preferred versions for deposit include:

- ❖ Author Accepted Manuscript: Post-peer-review version prior to publisher formatting.
- ❖ Version of Record: Final published version, if permitted under the publisher's terms.

1.3.3 Licensing

- ❖ Authors are encouraged to apply a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license.
- ❖ Authors should retain rights through publisher agreements or author addenda to meet these requirements.

1.3.4 Data Sharing

- ❖ Associated research data should be deposited in recognized repositories.
- ❖ Data must comply with FAIR principles:
 - ***Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable.***
- ❖ Authors must respect ethical, legal, and contractual obligations in data handling.

1.4 Implementation and Support

1.4.1 Training and Capacity Building

- ❖ BER, in collaboration with partner institutions, will offer workshops, online resources, and support materials on:
 - Open Access practices
 - Copyright and licensing
 - Repository submission
 - Funder compliance

1.4.2 Publisher Negotiations

- ❖ BER supports institutional efforts to negotiate transformative agreements (e.g., read-and-publish models) with publishers to lower access and publishing costs while advancing Open Access goals.

1.5 Roles and Responsibilities

1.5.1 Researchers and Authors

- ❖ Ensure timely deposit of scholarly works.
- ❖ Retain rights to make work openly available.
- ❖ Comply with funder and publisher Open Access requirements.
- ❖ Seek support from the editorial team or affiliated institutions for licensing and deposit.

1.5.2 Editors and Editorial Board

- ❖ Enforce adherence to BER's Open Access policy.
- ❖ Promote awareness among authors and peer reviewers.
- ❖ Ensure license clarity for each published article.

1.5.3 Library and Repository Managers

- ❖ Maintain repository systems and metadata quality.
- ❖ Provide guidance on copyright, deposit policies, and publisher permissions.
- ❖ Monitor deposit activity and compliance.

1.5.4 Research Office and Administration

- ❖ Align internal research strategies with Open Access mandates.
- ❖ Coordinate Open Access initiatives and training programs.
- ❖ Track OA outputs for funder reporting and impact assessment.

1.6 Legal and Ethical Considerations

- ❖ All deposits must respect copyright, intellectual property rights, and privacy laws.
- ❖ Works containing confidential, sensitive, or proprietary data may be exempted or require restricted access.
- ❖ Authors are solely responsible for ensuring rights clearance prior to publication and deposit.

1.7 Monitoring and Compliance

- ❖ BER will monitor policy implementation via annual audits.
- ❖ Compliance reports will include:
 - Deposit rates
 - Repository access metrics
- ❖ Non-compliance will be addressed through:
 - Author outreach and reminders
 - Corrective guidance
 - Institutional reporting (if needed)

1.8 Review and Amendments

- ❖ This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by changes in legal frameworks, funding mandates, or publishing standards.
- ❖ Revisions will be made in consultation with authors, editors, and institutional stakeholders and will be published on the BER website.

1.9 Benefits of Open Access

BER recognizes that Open Access provides numerous advantages for individuals and society:

- ❖ Increased visibility and readership beyond academic circles.
- ❖ Higher citation rates and broader academic engagement.
- ❖ Global accessibility, supporting inclusion across geographies and income levels.
- ❖ Public return on investment for publicly funded research.

1.10 Institutional Commitment

As a journal, BER is committed to:

- ❖ Fostering a transparent, inclusive, and sustainable Open Access environment.
- ❖ Collaborating with global and regional partners to advance OA best practices.
- ❖ Supporting research integrity, digital preservation, and educational equity.
- ❖ Leading by example in promoting open scholarship, open data, and responsible publishing.

2. Copyright & Licensing Policy

What is copyright & licensing?

2.1 Copyright

At *Business & Economic Review (BER)*, we are committed to protecting the intellectual property rights of authors while promoting broad accessibility and responsible reuse through Open Access models and standardized licensing mechanisms. This policy outlines the legal frameworks, licensing options, and rights management procedures used by BER.

2.2 BER's Copyright Policy

BER adheres to a copyright policy designed to empower authors while enabling legal reuse of scholarly work:

- ❖ Authors retain full copyright of their submitted and published content.
- ❖ Upon acceptance, authors grant BER a non-exclusive license to:
 - Publish the work
 - Distribute it in print or digital form
 - Index it in databases
 - Archive it for long-term preservation

This non-exclusive license allows BER to disseminate the work widely while authors maintain the right to reuse or republish their work elsewhere with proper citation.

2.3 Default License at BER

By default, all articles published in *Business & Economic Review* are licensed under: Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0)

This license allows others to:

- ❖ Copy, redistribute, remix, transform, and build upon the work
- ❖ Use the work for commercial and non-commercial purposes
- ❖ Do all of the above with proper attribution to the original author and source

2.4 Author Rights Retention

At BER, authors:

- ❖ Retain full ownership of their intellectual property
- ❖ May share, archive, and reuse their work without restriction
- ❖ May include the article in institutional repositories or personal websites
- ❖ May use the article in teaching, presentations, or subsequent research

Authors are advised to retain a rights retention statement in their manuscript, such as: "The author retains the non-exclusive right to make this article available in an open-access repository under a Creative Commons license as per BER's Open Access policy."

2.5 Publisher Responsibilities

BER commits to:

- ❖ Ensuring transparency in copyright and licensing terms
- ❖ Clearly displaying licensing information on each article's webpage and PDF
- ❖ Making metadata and license terms machine-readable for indexing services
- ❖ Responding promptly to rights-related inquiries or disputes

2.6 Legal Compliance and Dispute Resolution

All licensing and reuse activities under this policy must:

- ❖ Comply with international copyright law
- ❖ Respect moral rights (right of attribution and integrity)
- ❖ Avoid unauthorized or unethical use of content

In case of disputes or potential infringement:

- ❖ Authors and users should first contact the BER editorial office
- ❖ Disputes will be addressed in line with BER's policies and COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) recommendations.

3. Publication Ethics Policy

3.1 Ethics

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct in scholarly publishing. Publication ethics are essential to maintaining the integrity of academic work, fostering trust in research, ensuring credibility of authorship, and protecting the public record of knowledge.

This Publication Ethics Policy outlines the responsibilities and ethical principles expected of all participants in the publishing process—authors, reviewers, editors, editorial board members, and the publisher. It adheres to internationally recognized guidelines, including those set by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

3.2 Principles of Ethical Publishing

BER supports ethical publishing based on the following core principles:

- ❖ Honesty in research and reporting
- ❖ Transparency in authorship and conflicts of interest
- ❖ Integrity in the peer review process
- ❖ Accountability for corrections, retractions, and clarifications
- ❖ Respect for intellectual property, data privacy, and publication norms
- ❖ Fairness and equality in editorial decisions, regardless of race, gender, nationality, or institutional affiliation

3.3 Responsibilities of Authors

Authors submitting to BER must adhere to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.

3.3.1 Originality and Plagiarism

- ❖ All submitted work must be original and free from plagiarism.
- ❖ Proper citations and references must be provided for all sources, including paraphrased or summarized content.
- ❖ Self-plagiarism (reuse of significant portions of one's own previously published work) must be clearly identified and justified.
- ❖ BER uses plagiarism detection tools (Turnitin) to screen submissions.

3.3.2 Authorship and Contributions

- ❖ Only individuals who made substantial contributions to the research should be listed as authors.
- ❖ All listed authors must have:
 - Contributed to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the work.
 - Approved the final version for submission.
 - Agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

3.3.3 Data Accuracy and Availability

- ❖ Authors must present accurate, verifiable data and methods.
- ❖ Fabrication, falsification, or selective reporting of data is unethical and prohibited.
- ❖ Authors should retain raw data and may be asked to provide it during the editorial process.

3.3.4 Redundant or Duplicate Publication

- ❖ Manuscripts must not be under review elsewhere or previously published in substantially similar form.
- ❖ If overlapping content exists, authors must provide transparent disclosure and appropriate citation.

3.3.5 Acknowledgment of Sources and Funding

- ❖ Authors must acknowledge all sources of funding, institutional support, and relevant prior research.
- ❖ Contributions from individuals who do not meet authorship criteria should be listed in acknowledgments.

3.3.6 Conflicts of Interest

- ❖ Authors must declare any financial, institutional, or personal relationships that could influence the research or its interpretation.
- ❖ BER requires a formal disclosure statement upon submission.

3.4 Responsibilities of Editors and Editorial Board

The Editors of BER have a duty to oversee the integrity and fairness of the editorial process.

3.4.1 Editorial Independence

- ❖ Editors make decisions based on academic merit and the manuscript's contribution to the field, not personal, institutional, or commercial interests.
- ❖ Editorial decisions are independent of advertising or sponsorship.

3.4.2 Confidentiality

- ❖ Manuscripts and reviewer identities are treated as confidential information.
- ❖ Editors must not disclose information about submissions to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, and journal staff.

3.4.3 Fair and Impartial Decision-Making

- ❖ Editors ensure that all submissions receive an unbiased, timely, and rigorous review.
- ❖ Discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, nationality, or affiliation is strictly prohibited.

3.4.4 Handling of Misconduct

- ❖ Suspected cases of plagiarism, fabrication, duplicate publication, or unethical behavior are investigated thoroughly.
- ❖ When necessary, editors will retract or correct published articles in accordance with COPE guidelines.

3.5 Responsibilities of Peer Reviewers

Peer review is a central element of academic publishing. BER uses double-blind peer review to ensure fairness and objectivity.

3.5.1 Confidentiality

- ❖ Reviewers must treat manuscripts as confidential documents.
- ❖ They may not share, discuss, or use the material for personal advantage.

3.5.2 Objectivity

- ❖ Reviews should be conducted objectively and constructively, offering suggestions for improvement.

- ❖ Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate and unprofessional.

3.5.3 Timeliness

- ❖ Reviewers should respond to invitations promptly and complete reviews within the specified timeline.
- ❖ If unable to review, they should notify the editor immediately.

3.5.4 Disclosure of Conflicts

- ❖ Reviewers must disclose any conflicts of interest that may affect their objectivity, including relationships with authors, institutions, or competing interests.

3.6 Ethical Issues in the Publication Lifecycle

3.6.1 Plagiarism and Misconduct

BER takes a zero-tolerance approach to plagiarism, data fabrication, and other forms of misconduct. If confirmed, actions may include:

- ❖ Rejection of the manuscript
- ❖ Retraction of the published article
- ❖ Notification to the author's institution or funder
- ❖ Blacklisting of authors in severe cases

3.6.2 Retractions and Corrections

- ❖ Articles may be retracted if serious errors or misconduct are found post-publication.
- ❖ Minor errors may result in corrections or errata, published in the next journal issue.
- ❖ All such notices are clearly marked and linked to the original article.

3.6.3 Complaints and Appeals

- ❖ Authors may appeal editorial decisions by providing clear, reasoned arguments.
- ❖ All complaints are handled according to COPE's flowcharts and guidance, ensuring due process.

3.7 Human Subjects and Ethical Approval

If research involves human participants, authors must confirm that:

- ❖ The study was approved by an appropriate Ethics Review Board or committee.
- ❖ Informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- ❖ Confidentiality and data protection practices were followed in accordance with legal and ethical standards.

3.8 Intellectual Property and Copyright

Authors must ensure that:

- ❖ All included content (tables, figures, images) is either original or used with appropriate permission.
- ❖ Copyrighted material is cited accurately and used under fair use, license, or with direct permission.
- ❖ Reuse rights are consistent with BER's Copyright & Licensing Policy and Creative Commons terms.

3.9 Conflicts of Interest and Financial Disclosures

All participants in the publishing process—authors, editors, and reviewers—must declare any real or perceived conflicts that could influence the outcome of publication.

This includes:

- ❖ Financial ties to organizations with a vested interest in the content
- ❖ Employment or consultancies
- ❖ Grants or funding
- ❖ Personal relationships

BER publishes conflict-of-interest statements with each article when relevant.

3.10 Data Transparency and Sharing

Authors should strive for **transparency in data and methodology**, and where possible:

- ❖ Share datasets in public repositories under FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable)
- ❖ Provide replication codes or supplementary materials to support reproducibility
- ❖ Clearly state limitations or restrictions on data sharing (for privacy or legal reasons)

3.11 Post-Publication Responsibilities

3.11.1 Sharing and Reuse

BER encourages authors to:

- ❖ Deposit their final published article in institutional or subject repositories
- ❖ Use the work in teaching and presentations
- ❖ Share on academic social networks (e.g., ResearchGate), respecting copyright and licensing terms

3.11.2 Post-Publication Critique

- ❖ Readers may submit letters to the editor or formal critiques.
- ❖ Authors have the right to respond to criticism, provided it is conducted respectfully and with scholarly evidence.

3.12 Responsibilities of the Publisher

BER's publisher supports ethical publishing by:

- ❖ Maintaining digital archiving and access systems
- ❖ Upholding transparency in fees, licensing, and policies
- ❖ Supporting editorial independence
- ❖ Enforcing legal and ethical compliance in response to misconduct or legal concerns

3.13 Compliance with International Standards

BER's Publication Ethics Policy is aligned with:

- ❖ COPE Core Practices
- ❖ Open Access publishing principles

These frameworks provide a global benchmark for ethical publishing and are referenced when making decisions about disputes or misconduct.

4. Editorial Policy

4.1 Editorial

Business & Economic Review (BER) is a peer-reviewed, Open Access journal dedicated to publishing high-quality research in Business, Economics, Finance, and related disciplines. To ensure fairness, transparency, academic rigor, and editorial independence, BER maintains a formal Editorial Policy. This policy guides the operations of the editorial board, outlines the peer review process, and ensures ethical standards in all aspects of manuscript handling.

The Editorial Policy reflects internationally accepted publishing norms and aligns with guidelines from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

4.2 Editorial Objectives

The editorial goals of *BER* include:

- ❖ Upholding academic excellence in the fields of Business and Economics
- ❖ Ensuring impartial and rigorous Peer Review
- ❖ Maintaining transparency and consistency in editorial decisions
- ❖ Supporting Open Access and knowledge dissemination
- ❖ Preventing editorial bias and unethical publishing practices
- ❖ Facilitating continuous improvement in the editorial process

4.3 Editorial Structure

The editorial operations of *BER* are overseen by the following roles:

4.3.1 Editor-in-Chief

- ❖ Provides strategic direction for the journal
- ❖ Oversees the editorial process and ensures compliance with ethical standards
- ❖ Makes final decisions on manuscript acceptance or rejection
- ❖ Represents the journal in academic and professional forums

4.3.2 Associate/Assistant Editor(s)

- ❖ Manage manuscripts within specific subject areas
- ❖ Assign reviewers, assess reviews, and recommend decisions
- ❖ Ensure quality control within their domains

4.3.3 Editorial Board Members

- ❖ Serve as ambassadors for the journal
- ❖ Provide expert advice and assist with peer review
- ❖ Contribute to special issues and editorial initiatives

4.3.4 Editorial Assistant

- ❖ Handle day-to-day operations of manuscript submission and tracking
- ❖ Communicate with authors, reviewers, and editors
- ❖ Coordinate production and post-acceptance workflows

4.4 Editorial Responsibilities

All editorial team members are expected to:

- ❖ Treat submissions with confidentiality and impartiality
- ❖ Ensure timely and transparent communication with authors and reviewers

- ❖ Disclose any conflicts of interest that may affect editorial decisions
- ❖ Base editorial decisions on the scholarly merit of manuscripts
- ❖ Avoid discrimination based on race, gender, institutional affiliation, or personal belief
- ❖ Maintain editorial independence from commercial interests

4.5 Editorial Independence

BER maintains full editorial independence. Editorial decisions are not influenced by:

- ❖ The publisher's commercial interests
- ❖ Advertising or sponsorship
- ❖ Political, institutional, or personal agendas

All editorial decisions are based solely on the manuscript's academic quality, relevance to the journal's scope, and the outcome of peer review.

4.6 Editorial Decision-Making Process

Manuscripts submitted to BER undergo the following editorial workflow:

- i. Initial Screening/Desk Review: The editorial office checks for scope, format, and plagiarism using standard tools.
- ii. Editorial Assignment: The Editor-in-Chief assigns the manuscript to an Associate Editor or Assistant Editor.
- iii. Reviewer Invitation: Qualified, impartial reviewers are invited to evaluate the manuscript.
- iv. Peer Review Completion: Reviewer comments are collected and synthesized.
- v. Editorial Decision: Possible decisions include:
 - Accept
 - Minor revisions
 - Major revisions
 - Reject
- vi. Revision Cycle: Authors are invited to revise based on reviewer feedback.
- vii. Final Decision: The Editor-in-Chief makes the final decision based on all input.
- viii. Copyediting & Production: Accepted manuscripts proceed to copyediting, formatting, and publication.

4.7 Editorial Ethics and Integrity

BER's editorial team upholds the highest ethical standards. Responsibilities include:

- ❖ Identifying and addressing research misconduct (plagiarism, data fabrication)
- ❖ Ensuring publication of corrections, retractions, or expressions of concern when needed
- ❖ Promoting ethical authorship practices and accurate reporting

Editorial misconduct or bias is taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly.

4.8 Retractions, Corrections, and Editorial Notices

4.8.1 Retractions

Articles may be retracted for:

- ❖ Data fabrication or falsification
- ❖ Plagiarism
- ❖ Ethical breaches
- ❖ Major errors affecting results or conclusions

Retractions are published with a clearly labelled notice explaining the reason.

4.8.2 Corrections and Errata

Minor errors that do not affect the interpretation of results may lead to:

- ❖ Corrections (for factual errors)
- ❖ Errata (for publisher-related errors)

These are published promptly and linked to the original article.

4.8.3 Editorial Expressions of Concern

Where investigations are ongoing, BER may issue an expression of concern to alert readers about potential issues with a published article.

5. Author Policy

Business & Economic Review (BER) is committed to publishing high-quality, original research in the fields of Business, Economics, Finance, and Management. To ensure integrity, transparency, and accountability in academic publishing, BER has established Authors' Policy. This policy outlines the responsibilities, rights, and expectations of authors at every stage of the publication process—from submission to post-publication.

5.1 Scope and Applicability

This Authors' Policy applies to all individuals who:

- ❖ Submit manuscripts to Business & Economic Review (**bereview.pk**)
- ❖ Are listed as co-authors on any submission.
- ❖ Interact with the journal editorial office in the capacity of authors, contributors, or corresponding authors.

All authors must comply with this policy as a condition of manuscript consideration and publication.

5.2 Authorship Criteria

BER follows the authorship standards established Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data.

- ❖ Drafting the work or revising it critically for intellectual content.
- ❖ Final approval of the version to be published.
- ❖ Accountability for all aspects of the work, ensuring questions related to accuracy or integrity are appropriately investigated.

5.3 Authors' Responsibilities

Authors submitting to BER must:

- ❖ Ensure that their work is original and has not been previously published.
- ❖ Accurately represent all data, methodologies, and findings.
- ❖ Disclose any conflicts of interest or funding sources.
- ❖ Follow ethical guidelines for research involving humans or animals.
- ❖ Submit their work using BER's online submission system and adhere to all formatting and documentation guidelines.
- ❖ Respond promptly and thoroughly to editorial and peer review comments.

5.4 Order of Authorship

Order of authorship should reflect the relative contributions of each author. Corresponding author is responsible for:

- ❖ Communicating with the journal during the submission and review process.
- ❖ Ensuring all co-authors have reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
- ❖ Managing revisions, proofs, and publication agreements.

Any changes to authorship after submission require:

- ❖ Written consent from all listed authors.
- ❖ Justification to the editorial office.

5.5 Plagiarism and Originality

BER has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism, including:

- ❖ Direct copying of text or data from other works without attribution.
- ❖ Self-plagiarism (reusing significant portions of one's own previous work without citation).

- ❖ Inappropriate paraphrasing.

All submissions are screened using plagiarism detection software (Turnitin®). Submissions found to contain plagiarized material will be rejected, and authors may be banned from future submissions.

5.6 Conflicts of Interest and Funding Disclosure

Authors must disclose:

- Financial relationships (grants, consulting fees, stock ownership).
- Non-financial interests (personal or professional relationships).
- Institutional support or organizational affiliations that could influence the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest statement will be published with the article.

5.7 Manuscript Types Accepted

BER accepts the following categories of submissions:

- ❖ Original Research Articles: Empirical studies with novel findings.
- ❖ Review Articles: Comprehensive evaluations of existing literature.
- ❖ Conceptual Papers: Theoretical frameworks or models.
- ❖ Policy Papers: Research with direct relevance to policy-making.

Each manuscript type has specific formatting and length requirements, detailed in the Author Guidelines on the journal's website.

5.8 Submission and Review Process

5.8.1 Submission

Authors must:

- ❖ Submit manuscripts through BER's official submission platform(**bereview.pk**)
- ❖ Include all required elements (cover letter, title page, abstract, keywords, references).
- ❖ Format the manuscript per BER's submission guidelines.

5.8.2 Peer Review

All manuscripts undergo:

- ❖ Initial editorial screening for scope, quality, and plagiarism.
- ❖ Double-blind peer review by at least two independent reviewers.
- ❖ Editorial decision-making based on reviews and author revisions.

The editorial team reserves the right to reject manuscripts at any stage.

5.9 Revisions and Resubmissions

Authors receiving a "revise and resubmit" decision must:

- ❖ Respond to all reviewer comments point-by-point.
- ❖ Highlight changes made to the manuscript.
- ❖ Submit the revised manuscript within the specified timeframe.

Failure to comply may result in withdrawal of the manuscript.

5.10 Acceptance and Proofing

Upon acceptance:

- ❖ Authors will receive a proof version for review.
- ❖ Minor edits, formatting corrections, and reference checks will be made.
- ❖ Major changes are not permitted at this stage without editorial approval.

The corresponding author must approve proofs within the provided deadline to avoid delays.

5.11 Copyright and Licensing

BER supports Open Access publishing under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0):

- ❖ Authors retain full copyright.
- ❖ Others may reuse content (even commercially) with proper attribution.
- ❖ Authors grant BER a non-exclusive license to publish and distribute the article.

Authors are encouraged to deposit their articles in institutional repositories, following BER's Open Access Policy.

5.12 Post-Publication Responsibilities

5.12.1 Corrections

If an error is discovered post-publication:

- ❖ Authors should notify BER immediately.
- ❖ A correction or erratum may be issued.

5.12.2 Retractions

Articles may be retracted in cases of:

- ❖ Proven plagiarism
- ❖ Data fabrication
- ❖ Ethical misconduct

A retraction notice will explain the reason and remain linked to the original article.

5.12.3 Post-Publication Engagement

Authors are encouraged to:

- ❖ Promote their research through social media, academic networks, and conferences.
- ❖ Respond to comments, critiques, and post-publication discussions respectfully and professionally.

5.13 Appeals and Complaints

Authors may appeal:

- ❖ Rejection decisions
- ❖ Alleged editorial or peer review misconduct

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Editor-in-Chief with detailed justification. The decision after appeal is final.

5.14 Author Misconduct

Author misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- ❖ Plagiarism
- ❖ Data manipulation
- ❖ Ghost authorship
- ❖ Undisclosed conflicts of interest
- ❖ Misrepresentation of author contributions

Consequences may include:

- ❖ Manuscript rejection or retraction
- ❖ Notification to the author's institution or funder
- ❖ Temporary or permanent ban from future submissions

6. Peer Review Policy

To uphold the highest standards of scholarly integrity, BER implements a rigorous, ethical, and transparent peer review process.

The Peer Review Policy outlines the principles, procedures, and responsibilities guiding the peer review process at BER and provides clear expectations for authors, reviewers, and editors.

6.1 Purpose of Peer Review

Peer review aims to:

- ❖ Assess the scientific quality and rigor of submitted manuscripts
- ❖ Ensure originality and contribution to the field
- ❖ Provide authors with constructive feedback
- ❖ Support editorial decision-making
- ❖ Maintain the integrity and credibility of the academic record

6.2 Peer Review Model at BER

BER uses a double-blind peer review process:

- ❖ Authors and reviewers remain anonymous to one another
- ❖ At least two independent reviewers evaluate each manuscript
- ❖ Reviewers are selected based on expertise and absence of conflict

6.3 Scope of Peer Review

All scholarly submissions to BER undergo peer review, including:

- ❖ Original research articles
- ❖ Review papers
- ❖ Theoretical/conceptual articles
- ❖ Policy papers
- ❖ Case studies

6.4 Review Process Overview

6.4.1 Submission Screening

Upon submission, manuscripts are initially screened for a 'Desk Review' by the editorial office for:

- ❖ Relevance to the journal's aims and scope
- ❖ Adherence to formatting and submission guidelines
- ❖ Originality (via plagiarism detection tools like Turnitin®)
- ❖ Ethical compliance

Manuscripts that do not pass initial screening are returned to the authors or rejected without review. Those that pass the Desk Review stage are forwarded for a full-text review process. See policy # 3.

6.4.2 Reviewer Response

Invited reviewers must:

- ❖ Accept or decline the invitation promptly (usually within 5 days)
- ❖ Declare any potential conflicts of interest
- ❖ Agree to confidentiality and ethical review conduct

6.4.3 Review Duration

- ❖ Reviewers are generally given 2 to 3 weeks to complete a review.
- ❖ Extensions may be granted upon request.

6.5 Reviewer Responsibilities

Reviewers are expected to:

- ❖ Maintain confidentiality of the manuscript and peer review process.
- ❖ Provide objective, constructive, and respectful feedback.
- ❖ Assess:
 - Originality and contribution
 - Clarity and organization
 - Theoretical/methodological rigor
 - Validity of results and conclusions
 - Relevance and completeness of references
- ❖ Avoid personal or discriminatory comments.

6.5.1 Ethical Conduct

Reviewers must:

- ❖ Refrain from using unpublished information for personal gain.
- ❖ Disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- ❖ Notify the editor if they identify ethical concerns, such as:
 - Plagiarism
 - Data fabrication
 - Redundant publication
 - Undisclosed conflicts of interest

6.6 Reviewer Anonymity and Confidentiality

- ❖ BER does not reveal reviewer identities to authors or other reviewers.
- ❖ Manuscripts under review are confidential documents and may not be shared or discussed with third parties.
- ❖ Reviewers are not permitted to contact authors directly.

6.7 Editorial Decisions

Based on reviewer recommendations, the Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor makes one of the following decisions:

- ❖ Accept: The manuscript is suitable for publication with minimal or no revisions.
- ❖ Minor Revision: The manuscript requires small changes; typically, not sent for further review.
- ❖ Major Revision: Significant changes are needed; revised manuscript is typically re-reviewed.
- ❖ Reject and Resubmit: The manuscript may be reconsidered in a substantially revised form as a new submission.
- ❖ Reject: The manuscript is unsuitable for publication in BER.

Editors may consult additional reviewers or editorial board members in complex cases.

6.8 Revision and Resubmission

Authors receiving a revision decision must:

- ❖ Submit a revised manuscript within the specified timeframe.
- ❖ Provide a detailed response letter addressing each reviewer comment.
- ❖ Highlight changes in the manuscript (tracked changes or annotated version).

Revised manuscripts may undergo further review or be assessed by editors directly, depending on the extent of changes.

6.9 Appeals and Complaints

Authors may appeal editorial decisions by:

- ❖ Submitting a formal appeal letter to the Editor-in-Chief
- ❖ Providing a clear rationale and evidence (e.g., misinterpretation of data or reviewer bias)

Appeals are reviewed independently by another editor or a member of the editorial board. The decision on appeal is final.

6.10 Reviewer Recognition

BER acknowledges the critical role of peer reviewers by:

- ❖ Offering reviewer certificates upon request
- ❖ Encouraging reviewers to register their reviews on platforms like Publons
- ❖ Including active reviewers in the annual reviewer acknowledgment list

6.11 Conflicts of Interest

All parties involved in the review process must declare any potential conflicts that may affect the objectivity of the evaluation.

6.11.1 For Reviewers:

Conflicts may include:

- ❖ Personal or professional relationships with the authors
- ❖ Recent collaboration with the authors
- ❖ Financial interests related to the manuscript

6.11.2 For Editors:

Editors must recuse themselves from handling manuscripts where conflicts exist and transfer editorial responsibility to a neutral party.

6.12 Reviewer Misconduct

BER takes reviewer misconduct seriously. Examples include:

- ❖ Breaching confidentiality
- ❖ Using manuscript content for personal research
- ❖ Delaying reviews deliberately
- ❖ Providing unconstructive or biased feedback

Consequences may include removal from the reviewer database and notification to the reviewer's institution.

6.13 Post-Publication Review and Corrections

In the event of errors identified after publication:

- ❖ BER may issue corrections, retractions, or editorial notices.
- ❖ Peer reviewers may be consulted in post-publication investigations if necessary.
- ❖ BER supports post-publication discussion and critique, provided it follows academic standards of civility and evidence-based argument.

6.14 Transparency and Best Practices

BER is committed to transparent peer review by:

- ❖ Publishing reviewer guidance and expectations on the journal website.
- ❖ Providing authors with full reviewer comments unless confidentiality is requested.
- ❖ Adhering to COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers.

7. Plagiarism Policy

This Plagiarism Policy outlines what constitutes plagiarism, how BER detects and addresses it, and the consequences for authors found to have plagiarized. It applies to all submissions and published content in BER and aligns with the ethical standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

7.1 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- ❖ All submissions to BER, including original research, reviews, conceptual papers, case studies, and editorials.
- ❖ All authors, whether first author, corresponding author, or co-author.
- ❖ Pre-publication (manuscript submission and review), and post-publication (discovered after publication).

7.2 Author Responsibilities

Authors are responsible for:

- ❖ Submitting only original work that has not been plagiarized in whole or in part.
- ❖ Ensuring that all sources are properly cited, including direct quotations, paraphrased content, data, and figures.
- ❖ Disclosing any previous publication of the same or similar content.
- ❖ Obtaining permission for the use of copyrighted material (figures, charts, lengthy excerpts).
- ❖ Avoiding self-plagiarism by citing previously published work and clearly stating its relationship to the current submission.

Failure to adhere to these responsibilities may result in rejection, retraction, or sanctions.

7.3 Acceptable Similarity Thresholds

BER uses plagiarism detection software (Turnitin®) to screen all submitted manuscripts. An article having a similarity index of 14% in total and/or 4% with a single source will be rejected.

7.4 Detection and Screening Process

7.4.1 Pre-Publication Screening

- ❖ All manuscripts are automatically screened for similarity upon submission.
- ❖ Editors review the similarity report and assess whether overlap constitutes plagiarism.
- ❖ If potential plagiarism is found, the manuscript is placed on hold, and the corresponding author is contacted for clarification.

7.4.2 Manual Checking

- ❖ In addition to automated tools, editors and reviewers may detect plagiarism during peer review.
- ❖ Any concerns raised during the editorial or review process are investigated thoroughly.

7.4.3 Post-Publication Discovery

If plagiarism is discovered after publication, BER follows COPE guidelines for investigation and correction.

7.5 Handling Suspected Plagiarism

7.5.1 Initial Assessment

When a case of suspected plagiarism is identified, the Editor-in-Chief or a designated ethics committee will:

- ❖ Review the similarity report and flagged content.
- ❖ Compare the manuscript with the original sources.
- ❖ Determine the extent and intent (e.g., minor citation issue vs. deliberate copying).

7.5.2 Author Notification

If plagiarism is suspected:

- ❖ Authors will be contacted and given an opportunity to respond.
- ❖ A written explanation and, if applicable, evidence of permissions or citations may be requested.

7.5.3 Investigation Outcomes

After investigation, the editorial team will take one of the following actions:

- ❖ No action: If similarities are minor or properly cited.
- ❖ Request for revision: If citations are missing but no deceptive intent is found.
- ❖ Rejection: If plagiarism is confirmed before publication.
- ❖ Retraction: If plagiarism is discovered after publication.
- ❖ Author sanctions: In severe or repeated cases.

7.6 Consequences of Plagiarism

The consequences depend on the severity and stage at which plagiarism is detected.

7.6.1 Before Publication

- ❖ Minor overlap: Authors asked to revise and add proper citations.
- ❖ Significant plagiarism: Manuscript rejected, and authors warned.
- ❖ Severe or intentional plagiarism: Immediate rejection and author(s) may be blacklisted.

7.6.2 After Publication

If plagiarism is discovered in a published article:

- ❖ A retraction notice is issued, linked to the original article.
- ❖ The article is marked as “Retracted” in indexing databases.
- ❖ The authors’ institution may be notified.
- ❖ The authors may be banned from submitting to BER for a defined period (e.g., 3–5 years or permanently).

7.7 Self-Plagiarism Policy

Self-plagiarism (also called text recycling) occurs when authors reuse their own previously published content without acknowledgment. Authors cannot use self-citations more than 5 times in a single paper.

7.8 Avoiding Plagiarism: Best Practices for Authors

To ensure originality:

- ❖ Always use quotation marks for direct quotes and cite the source.
- ❖ When paraphrasing, use your own words and cite the original idea.
- ❖ Use writing assisting tools (e.g., Grammarly) before submission.

- ❖ Maintain a record of references and citations used during manuscript preparation.
- ❖ Do not copy from your own previous papers without citing them.

7.9 Citation Integrity

Accurate and responsible citation practices are essential to avoid plagiarism. Authors should:

- ❖ Cite primary sources where possible, not only secondary summaries.
- ❖ Avoid citation manipulation (excessive self-citation or irrelevant references).
- ❖ Follow BER's citation style guide consistently (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).

7.10 Ethical Use of AI and Automated Tools

BER recognizes that authors may use AI-based tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly) to assist in language editing. However:

- ❖ AI-generated content must not substitute scholarly reasoning or analysis.
- ❖ Authors are fully responsible for all content, including any material created or modified by AI.
- ❖ AI-generated text must be properly edited, cited (if applicable), and checked for accuracy.
- ❖ AI must not be used to summarize, paraphrase, or copy from third-party research without proper attribution.

Failure to disclose inappropriate AI use may result in retraction or sanctions.

7.11 COPE Guidelines and Ethical Framework

BER adheres to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) flowcharts and principles for:

- ❖ Handling plagiarism during the review process
- ❖ Addressing post-publication plagiarism
- ❖ Issuing corrections, retractions, or expressions of concern

All cases are handled with fairness, confidentiality, and due process.

7.12 Education and Author Support

BER is committed to supporting authors through:

- ❖ Author guidelines and templates that highlight citation expectations
- ❖ Webinars and writing workshops on academic integrity
- ❖ Editorial guidance on ethical manuscript preparation
- ❖ Access to ethical publishing resources (e.g., COPE, ORI)

Authors unsure about proper attribution practices are encouraged to contact the editorial office for clarification.

7.13 Institutional Notification

In serious or repeated cases of confirmed plagiarism, BER may notify:

- ❖ The authors' institution or department
- ❖ Research funders or sponsoring agencies
- ❖ Ethics committees or professional associations

Such action is taken in accordance with COPE guidelines and only when there is clear evidence of unethical behavior.

7.14 Retraction and Correction Procedures

When plagiarism is discovered in a published article:

- ❖ A retraction notice is published in the next journal issue.
- ❖ The notice includes the article title, author names, date, and reason for retraction.

- ❖ The original article remains online but is watermarked or labeled as Retracted.
- ❖ If minor plagiarism is involved, a correction or erratum may be issued instead.

7.15 Policy Review and Updates

This Plagiarism Policy is reviewed **every two years** or in response to:

- ❖ Changes in industry standards
- ❖ Updates to software tools
- ❖ Technological advancements (e.g., AI detection)
- ❖ Feedback from authors or editors

Updates are published on BER's website and reflected in the submission portal.

8. Artificial intelligence

The growth in Generative AI presents both opportunities and challenges in academic writing. BER believes in transparent academic writing along with a justified use of AI through its AI policy. Following are the acceptable / nonacceptable AI-based activities that authors must abide by, and it should clearly be stated if those activities were undertaken.

8.1 Acceptable AI activities:

- ❖ Language improvements within the manuscript.
- ❖ Translation of an author's original work into a secondary language for inclusion in the manuscript.
- ❖ Refinement of the presentation of data reported in the manuscript.
- ❖ Generation of images, figures, or other diagrams in the manuscript for illustrative purposes only.
- ❖ Visualization or refinement of research data/results in the manuscript. It also includes refinement of the presentation code used in the research process.
- ❖ Suggest references to include in the manuscript's bibliography.

8.2 Nonacceptable AI activities:

- ❖ Using AI tools to generate text from prompts or generate summaries of text.
- ❖ Using AI tools to analyze or summarize textual documents as part of the research process.
- ❖ Translation of materials (such as source documents) as part of the research process, unrelated to manuscript preparation
- ❖ Using AI tools for data manipulation, i.e., any generation, correcting, or editing of data used as part of the research process
- ❖ Editing of visualizations of actual data or results, portraying generated images as research outputs in themselves or as representing research outputs.
- ❖ Using AI tools to generate new code for use in research processes, or alter the functionality of code used in research processes before manuscript submission.
- ❖ Using AI tools to generate plausible-sounding references that do not exist.

9. Reviewer Policy & Selection Guidelines

Who can become a Reviewer for BER?

A person who has the degree of PhD in the relevant field OR have the completed Master in relevant field and have minimum 5-year experience in the same field.

Advantages for become a Reviewer

- ❖ Reviewers are important to us; BER's aims to engage Reviewers and reward them for the work they do.
- ❖ Reviewer get remuneration for the reviewing research article.
- ❖ We are appreciating reviewer's time and effort very much in reviewing article for us to publish the best quality papers in 'Business & Economic Review'. We pay **Rs. 5000** as an honorarium for a local review, and US dollars equivalent to **Rs.10,000** for a foreign review.
- ❖ Getting involved in the peer review process can be a highly rewarding experience that can also improve your own research and help to further your career.
- ❖ Reviewer got the certificate from the BER.
- ❖ Improve your reputation and increase your exposure to key figures in the field.
- ❖ Stay up to date with the latest literature, and have advanced access to research results.
- ❖ Develop critical thinking skills essential to research.
- ❖ Advance in your career – peer review is an essential role for researchers.

How to become reviewer/Referral for BER?

- ❖ Please visit our website and fill in the available from here. (bereview.pk)
- ❖ Reviewer will receive notification for submitting the request to BER by provided his/her email id. The journal will evaluate the request.
- ❖ Upon acceptance, the reviewer will be assigned a Reviewer ID that can be used in our Reviewer Management System.

9.1 Reviewer Policy

Peer reviewers play a crucial role in safeguarding the quality, credibility, and academic integrity of research published in the *Business & Economic Review (BER)*.

The policy applies to all reviewers participating in the peer review process and is informed by best practices from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

9.2 Reviewer Roles and Responsibilities

Reviewers are responsible for:

- ❖ Assessing the quality, originality, and relevance of submitted manuscripts.
- ❖ Providing timely, constructive, and unbiased feedback to authors and editors.
- ❖ Identifying ethical concerns, such as plagiarism, data manipulation, or conflicts of interest.
- ❖ Maintaining confidentiality and refraining from sharing manuscript content.

- ❖ Declining to review if they are not qualified or have a conflict of interest.

9.3 Reviewer Selection Criteria

Reviewers are selected based on the following criteria:

9.3.1 Subject Matter Expertise

- ❖ Must hold relevant qualifications and/or academic experience in the manuscript's subject area.
- ❖ A demonstrated track record of peer-reviewed publications or relevant professional expertise is preferred.

9.3.2 Academic and Professional Standing

- ❖ Reviewers should hold at least a master's degree (preferably a Ph.D.) in a relevant discipline.
- ❖ Preference is given to individuals affiliated with recognized academic or research institutions.

9.3.3 Ethical Conduct History

- ❖ Reviewers must have a reputation for ethical scholarly conduct.
- ❖ BER avoids assigning reviewers with a history of misconduct or unprofessional behavior.

9.3.4 Diversity and Inclusion

- ❖ BER is committed to selecting reviewers from diverse geographic regions, gender identities, career stages, and institutional backgrounds to ensure a balanced and inclusive evaluation process.

9.4 Reviewer Selection Process

The reviewer selection process involves several steps:

9.4.1 Editor Recommendation

- The Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor recommends potential reviewers based on expertise and topic match.

9.4.2 Database Search

- ❖ The editorial office uses:
 - BER's internal reviewer database
 - Author-suggested reviewers (with validation)
 - Research indexing platforms (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science, Publons)
 - ORCID and academic profiles

9.4.3 Conflict of Interest Check

- ❖ Editors review potential conflicts before inviting a reviewer.
- ❖ A reviewer is not assigned if they have:
 - Collaborated with the author in the last 3 years
 - Supervised or been supervised by the author
 - Personal or institutional affiliations likely to compromise impartiality

9.5 Reviewer Database Management

BER maintains a confidential, secure reviewer database that tracks:

- ❖ Areas of expertise
- ❖ Review history and quality

- ❖ Response times
- ❖ Recommendations and outcomes
- ❖ Performance feedback (editorial rating)

The database is regularly updated and reviewed to:

- ❖ Ensure accuracy
- ❖ Retire inactive reviewers
- ❖ Recognize high-performing reviewers

9.6 Reviewer Ethics and Conduct

Reviewers are expected to adhere to the COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers, which include:

9.6.1 Confidentiality

- ❖ Manuscripts must be treated as confidential documents.
- ❖ Reviewers must not share or discuss the manuscript with others.
- ❖ Content may not be used for personal research or publication.

9.6.2 Objectivity

- ❖ Reviews should be based on scholarly merit, not personal bias or competitive motives.
- ❖ Criticism must be professional and focused on content—not the author(s).

9.6.3 Constructiveness

- ❖ Reviews should offer clear, respectful, and actionable feedback.
- ❖ Vague or hostile comments are unacceptable.

9.6.4 Conflict of Interest Disclosure

- Reviewers must inform the editor of any real or potential conflicts.
- Reviewers should recuse themselves when a conflict is present.

9.7 Reviewer Performance Standards

9.7.1 Timeliness

- ❖ Reviews should be completed within the agreed-upon timeframe (typically 2–3 weeks).
- ❖ Delays should be communicated promptly to the editorial office.

9.7.2 Review Quality

Editors evaluate reviews based on:

- ❖ Depth of analysis
- ❖ Clarity of comments
- ❖ Relevance to the manuscript's content
- ❖ Constructiveness of suggestions

9.7.3 Communication

- ❖ Reviewers must use respectful, inclusive, and academic language.
- ❖ Review forms must be completed fully, including comments to both authors and editors.

9.8 Reviewer Feedback and Support

BER supports reviewer development by:

- ❖ Providing editorial feedback on review quality when needed.
- ❖ Sharing editorial decisions with reviewer's post-review.

- ❖ Offering reviewer guidelines, sample reviews, and ethical resources.
- ❖ Inviting experienced reviewers to mentor early-career researchers through co-review opportunities.

9.9 Anonymity and Identity Disclosure

9.9.1 Double-Blind Peer Review

BER operates a **double-blind** review process:

- ❖ Reviewers do not know author identities.
- ❖ Authors do not know reviewer identities.

9.9.2 Optional Identity Disclosure

If both parties consent post-publication, BER may consider transparent acknowledgment of reviewer contributions (e.g., through platforms like Publons). However, identity remains protected unless explicitly agreed.

9.10 Special Cases in Reviewer Selection

9.10.1 Author-Suggested Reviewers

Authors may recommend reviewers during submission, but:

- ❖ Suggested reviewers must have no conflict of interest.
- ❖ Editorial teams verify qualifications and independence.
- ❖ The editor is under no obligation to use suggested reviewers.

9.10.2 Blacklisted Reviewers

Reviewers found to have committed misconduct, breached ethics, or delivered fraudulent reviews may be blacklisted and barred from future participation.

9.11 Reviewer Training

BER aims to strengthen the peer review ecosystem by offering:

- ❖ Webinars and training resources on:
 - Ethical reviewing
 - Constructive feedback
 - Identifying research misconduct
- ❖ Reviewer manuals and evaluation checklists
- ❖ Opportunities for editorial mentorship

9.12 Policy Review and Updates

This Reviewer Policy & Selection Guidelines document is reviewed every **two years** or earlier if:

- ❖ New ethical guidelines are introduced by COPE or other bodies
- ❖ Reviewer performance or feedback suggests needed changes
- ❖ Technological or procedural changes occur in the peer review system

Updates are published on BER's website and distributed to active reviewers.

10. Data Sharing Policy

10.1 Data Sharing

As part of its commitment to transparency, academic rigor, and reproducibility, the *Business & Economic Review (BER)* encourages and, in some cases, requires authors to share the data underpinning their published research. The Data Sharing Policy outlines the expectations, procedures, and ethical responsibilities related to research data submitted to or published in BER. It applies to all manuscript types that include empirical analysis or generate original datasets.

10.2 Policy Objectives

The primary objectives of this policy are to:

- ❖ Promote research transparency and accountability
- ❖ Enable reproducibility and validation of results
- ❖ Encourage reuse and reanalysis of data for new discoveries
- ❖ Align with the **FAIR** Data Principles:
 - **Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable**
- ❖ Comply with funder, institutional, and international mandates on data availability

10.3 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- ❖ All empirical research articles submitted to BER
- ❖ Authors whose research relies on:
 - Quantitative or qualitative datasets
 - Survey or interview data
 - Economic indicators or financial reports
 - Simulation data
 - Proprietary or open-access databases

Authors of theoretical, conceptual, or review articles are exempt from data deposit but are encouraged to cite relevant data sources where applicable.

10.4 Types of Data Covered

This policy encompasses a wide range of research data, including:

- ❖ Raw data (e.g., numerical datasets, audio files, video recordings)
- ❖ Processed data (e.g., cleaned or normalized datasets)
- ❖ Derived data (e.g., econometric models, indicators)
- ❖ Supplementary material (e.g., codebooks, interview transcripts, survey instruments)
- ❖ Analytical tools or code (e.g., R scripts, Python code, Stata .do files)

10.5 Data Availability Statement (DAS)

A Data Availability Statement must be included in the submission and clearly indicate:

- ❖ Whether data is publicly available
- ❖ The repository name and persistent link (e.g., DOI)
- ❖ Access conditions or restrictions (if applicable)
- ❖ Contact information for obtaining restricted data (if not public)
- ❖ Reasons for any exceptions to data sharing (e.g., privacy, security)

Example DAS Formats

- ❖ Public Data:
“The dataset generated and analysed during this study is publicly available in the Harvard Dataverse repository at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/XXXXXX>.”
- ❖ Restricted Data:
“The data supporting the findings of this study are available from [name], but restrictions apply due to commercial sensitivity, and are not publicly available.”
- ❖ No Data:
“This study did not generate any new data.”

10.6 Ethical and Legal Considerations

BER recognizes that some data cannot be openly shared due to:

- ❖ Confidentiality agreements
- ❖ Privacy laws (e.g., GDPR, HIPAA)
- ❖ Commercial sensitivity
- ❖ National security or intellectual property concerns

In such cases, authors must:

- ❖ Provide justification for non-disclosure
- ❖ Share anonymized or aggregated data if possible
- ❖ Offer a redacted dataset or synthetic data
- ❖ Ensure that informed consent included permission for data sharing, where applicable

10.7 Code and Analytical Tools

In addition to datasets, authors are encouraged to share:

- ❖ Analysis scripts, code, or macros used to generate findings
- ❖ Software environments (e.g., R, Python packages)
- ❖ Detailed replication instructions

10.8 Review and Verification of Data

10.8.1 Editorial Assessment

During peer review and editorial processing:

- ❖ Editors verify that the Data Availability Statement is included
- ❖ Reviewers may be asked to assess the clarity and sufficiency of the data and its availability
- ❖ In rare cases, reviewers may be granted access to private datasets under strict confidentiality

10.8.2 Post-Publication Audits

BER may conduct random audits or respond to complaints about data accessibility post-publication. If data is found to be unavailable or falsified:

- ❖ A correction, expression of concern, or retraction may be issued

10.9 Exceptions to Data Sharing

BER acknowledges that in specific cases, open data sharing may not be feasible. Valid exceptions include:

- ❖ Legal restrictions or court orders
- ❖ Human subject data without proper consent
- ❖ Proprietary data under license or trade secrets

Authors must explain any such restrictions clearly in the Data Availability Statement. Editors may request documentation to verify such claims.

10.10 Data Citation Practices

Authors should cite datasets using standard referencing formats, including:

- ❖ Author(s)
- ❖ Year
- ❖ Title of dataset
- ❖ Repository name
- ❖ Version
- ❖ DOI or persistent URL

Example Data Citation:

Smith, J. (2023). Consumer Behavior Survey Data (Dataset). Harvard Dataverse.
<https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/ABC123>

Data citations must appear in both:

- ❖ The main reference lists
- ❖ The Data Availability Statement

10.11 Benefits of Data Sharing

BER encourages data sharing due to its benefits for:

- ❖ Researchers: Increases citation, credibility, and collaborative opportunities
- ❖ Reviewers: Facilitates deeper evaluation of methodological rigor
- ❖ Readers: Enhances transparency and understanding
- ❖ Policy Makers and Practitioners: Enables evidence-based decision-making
- ❖ The Public: Ensures public access to publicly funded research

10.12 Enforcement and Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with the data sharing policy may result in:

- ❖ Manuscript rejection
- ❖ Delayed publication
- ❖ Retraction of published articles
- ❖ Reporting to funders or institutions (in case of serious ethical violations)

Authors are responsible for ensuring that their data availability commitments are fulfilled post-publication.

10.13 Policy Review and Updates

This Data Sharing Policy is reviewed every **two years**, or sooner if:

- ❖ New ethical, legal, or technical standards emerge
- ❖ Funder mandates change
- ❖ Open science practices evolve

All changes will be published on BER's website and reflected in the Author Guidelines and Submission Portal.

11. Self-Archiving Policy

11.1 Archiving

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* recognizes the importance of self-archiving in promoting open scholarship, academic visibility, and equitable access to knowledge. As part of its Open Access mission, BER supports and encourages authors to deposit their scholarly works in institutional, subject-specific, or general-purpose repositories—a practice commonly known as self-archiving.

This Self-Archiving Policy defines the versions of articles that may be archived, the conditions under which self-archiving is permitted, the rights retained by authors, and the responsibilities of all involved parties.

11.2 Purpose of the Policy

The primary objectives of BER's self-archiving policy are to:

- ❖ Support global access to research regardless of paywalls.
- ❖ Enhance the visibility, discoverability, and citation of scholarly works.
- ❖ Facilitate compliance with funder and institutional mandates.
- ❖ Align with the principles of Open Science and the FAIR data movement.
- ❖ Clarify authors' rights concerning their submitted and published works.

11.3 Versions Permitted for Archiving

BER permits the self-archiving of different versions of a manuscript under the following conditions:

11.3.1 Preprint (Submitted Version)

- ❖ Definition: The original version submitted to the journal before peer review.
- ❖ Archiving: Permitted anytime, anywhere.
- ❖ Repositories: Any non-commercial repository.
- ❖ Conditions:
 - Must include a statement that it is a preprint.
 - Should link to the eventual published version when available.

11.3.2 Post print (Accepted Manuscript)

- ❖ Definition: The version accepted for publication, after peer review but before typesetting.
- ❖ Archiving: Permitted immediately upon acceptance.
- ❖ Repositories: Institutional, funder, subject, or personal repositories.
- ❖ Conditions:
 - Must include the following text:
“This is the author's accepted manuscript. The final published version is available at (10).”
 - Must credit *Business & Economic Review* as the publisher.

11.3.3 Version of Record (Published Version)

- ❖ Definition: The final typeset, formatted, and published version.
- ❖ Archiving: Permitted immediately under the article's Creative Commons license (CC BY 4.0 by default).
- ❖ Repositories: Any platform that supports Open Access compliance.

- ❖ Conditions:
 - Must retain all publisher branding, DOI, and citation details.
 - Must not be altered or reformatted.

11.4 Licensing for Archived Versions

BER publishes under Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license by default, which allows:

- ❖ Sharing and redistribution
- ❖ Commercial and non-commercial reuse
- ❖ Adaptation and transformation

All archived versions must:

- ❖ Retain the license terms.
- ❖ Include proper attribution to the original work and publisher.
- ❖ Link to the Version of Record with the DOI.

Authors requesting an alternative CC license (e.g., CC BY-NC or CC BY-ND) must receive editorial approval during submission.

11.5 Repository Recommendations

BER encourages authors to archive their work in reputable, long-term repositories, such as:

Repository Type	Examples
Institutional	DSpace, EPrints, university libraries
Subject-Specific	RePEc, SSRN, EconStor
General	Zenodo, Figshare, OSF, Dryad
National/Funder	PubMed Central, Europe PMC
Personal/Profiles	ORCID, Google Scholar, Academia.edu (with caution)

Repositories should support:

- ❖ Persistent identifiers (e.g., DOI, handle)
- ❖ Metadata harvesting (e.g., OAI-PMH)
- ❖ Long-term preservation

11.6 Citations and Metadata

When archiving any version, authors must:

- ❖ Include a full citation to the published article (once available), including:
 - Article title
 - Author(s)
 - Journal name (*Business & Economic Review*)
 - Year
 - Volume/issue/page numbers
 - DOI
- ❖ Add metadata that ensures discoverability by search engines and indexing services.

11.7 Responsibilities of Authors

Authors are responsible for:

- ❖ Ensuring compliance with this policy at all stages.
- ❖ Choosing appropriate repositories and upload formats.

- ❖ Including required disclaimers, attribution, and links.
- ❖ Informing co-authors of self-archiving actions.
- ❖ Respecting third-party copyright restrictions (e.g., tables, figures).

Failure to comply may result in editorial follow-up or correction notices.

11.8 Publisher Support and Responsibilities

BER supports authors by:

- ❖ Publishing all articles under Open Access licensing.
- ❖ Providing clear metadata and DOIs for each article.
- ❖ Maintaining a version history to ensure citation consistency.
- ❖ Offering automated sharing options through platforms like CrossRef, ORCID, and Dimensions.
- ❖ Registering the journal's self-archiving policy with SHERPA/ROMEO and DOAJ.

11.9 Self-Archiving of Supplementary Materials

Authors may also archive:

- ❖ Datasets
- ❖ Multimedia files
- ❖ Code and scripts
- ❖ Appendices and survey instruments

These may be deposited separately or alongside the manuscript in the same repository.

Authors must ensure:

- ❖ Proper licensing (e.g., CC0 or CC BY)
- ❖ Clear documentation
- ❖ Citation of both the article and the supplementary files

11.10 Monitoring and Compliance

BER does not impose technical restrictions on self-archiving but reserves the right to:

- ❖ Review public archives for compliance
- ❖ Request corrections in citations or versions
- ❖ Issue notices for non-compliant archiving if the version is misrepresented

Authors found to misrepresent or alter the published article may face sanctions, including future submission bans.

11.11 Post-Publication Corrections

If an article is corrected, retracted, or updated:

- ❖ Authors must ensure the repository version reflects the update.
- ❖ Links must point to the corrected Version of Record on BER's website.
- ❖ Older versions should include a disclaimer about the changes.

12. Article Processing Charge (APC) Policy

12.1 APC

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* is an Open Access (OA) academic journal committed to advancing research in business, economics, finance, and related fields. As an OA journal, BER provides immediate and unrestricted access to its published content.

BER does not charge any processing charges from its authors**. It does, however, charge a publication fee, from local authors for accepted articles. There is no publication fee charged from international authors.

****Authors who have immediate publication needs are required to pay the reviewing fee (Rs. 5000 to local, plus \$100 (or equivalent) to the foreign reviewer) to the journal to avail simultaneous reviews from all the reviewers. Paying this fee does not guarantee publication. This fee is paid to the reviewers.**

12.2 Publication fee amount

The publication fee for local authors is PKR 4000. There is no publication fee charged from international authors. This fee is flat-rate and applies regardless of article length, number of authors, or type of empirical analysis. This fee is reviewed annually and may be adjusted with prior public notice.

12.3 When is the publication fee charged?

- ❖ The fee is only payable upon final acceptance of the manuscript, after peer review.
- ❖ Authors are not charged at submission or during the review process.
- ❖ No fees are required for articles that are rejected at any stage.

Upon acceptance:

- ❖ A payment request is sent to the corresponding author.
- ❖ Payment must be completed before publication.
- ❖ Once payment is confirmed, the article proceeds to copyediting, layout, and publication.

Accepted Payment Methods

- ❖ Bank/wire transfers
- ❖ Online payments

12.4 Payment Timing and Deadlines

- ❖ Publication fee should be paid within 10–15 working days from the initial request.
- ❖ Articles may be delayed or removed from the publication schedule if payment is not received.
- ❖ Authors may request extensions in special cases.
- ❖ Failure to pay without notice may result in withdrawal of acceptance

12.5 Refund Policy

BER may consider partial or full refunds under the following conditions:

- ❖ Duplicate payment or transaction error
- ❖ Editorial withdrawal due to publisher-side mistakes
- ❖ Failure to publish the article after payment due to a technical issue or journal error

No refund will be issued if:

- ❖ Authors withdraw the manuscript after acceptance
- ❖ Articles are retracted post-publication due to author misconduct
- ❖ All refund requests must be made in writing within 30 days of payment.

12.6 Policy Review and Updates

Publication fee policy is reviewed annually and revised based on:

- ❖ Inflationary adjustments
- ❖ Operational cost changes
- ❖ Industry best practices
- ❖ Author feedback

Any changes are published in advance on the BER website and communicated through newsletters and submission system updates.

13. Repository Policy

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* supports the open dissemination, discoverability, and preservation of scholarly content. As part of its Open Access and long-term archiving strategy, BER actively promotes the deposit of published articles and associated research materials in reputable digital repositories.

This Repository Policy outlines the principles, procedures, and requirements for the deposition, archiving, and reuse of BER content in institutional, subject-specific, general-purpose, and national repositories. It also explains how authors, readers, librarians, and indexing services can access and preserve journal content in line with international best practices.

13.1 Objectives of the Policy

The goals of this policy are to:

- ❖ Ensure long-term digital preservation of published content
- ❖ Maximize global discoverability and access to BER articles
- ❖ Support self-archiving by authors and institutions
- ❖ Align with Open Access mandates from funders and institutions

13.2 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- ❖ All peer-reviewed articles published in BER
- ❖ Associated materials (e.g., datasets, figures, appendices, supplementary files)
- ❖ Metadata records (e.g., title, author names, abstract, keywords, DOI)
- ❖ Articles published under Creative Commons licenses

13.3 Types of Repositories Covered

BER supports and encourages archiving in the following repositories:

13.3.1 Institutional Repositories

Examples:

- ❖ University or departmental libraries
- ❖ Faculty research archives

13.3.2 Subject-Specific Repositories

Examples:

- ❖ RePEc (Research Papers in Economics)
- ❖ SSRN (Social Science Research Network)
- ❖ EconStor (ZBW)
- ❖ AgEcon Search
- ❖ SocArXiv

13.3.3 General-Purpose Repositories

Examples:

- ❖ Zenodo
- ❖ Figshare
- ❖ Open Science Framework (OSF)
- ❖ Dryad

- ❖ Mendeley Data

13.4 Versions Eligible for Deposit

BER allows the archiving of the following versions of scholarly work, in accordance with its Self-Archiving Policy:

13.4.1 Preprint (Submitted Version)

- ❖ Allowed anywhere at any time
- ❖ Must include a disclaimer that it has not been peer-reviewed

13.4.2 Post print (Accepted Manuscript)

- ❖ May be deposited immediately upon acceptance
- ❖ Must include a citation to the final published version

13.4.3 Version of Record (Published Version)

- ❖ Can be deposited immediately under the article's Creative Commons license
- ❖ Encouraged for maximum visibility and compliance with funder mandates

13.5 Licensing and Copyright

All articles published in BER are released under Creative Commons licenses, most commonly:

- ❖ CC BY 4.0 (Attribution): Allows sharing and reuse for any purpose, with attribution
- ❖ Other CC licenses (e.g., CC BY-NC or CC BY-ND) may be applied upon request

Authors and repositories must:

- ❖ Include license information in metadata
- ❖ Attribute the original publication to Business & Economic Review
- ❖ Link to the article's DOI on the journal website

13.6 Metadata Requirements

To ensure discoverability and interoperability, deposited items must include the following metadata:

- ❖ Title of the article
- ❖ Author names and affiliations
- ❖ Journal name (Business & Economic Review)
- ❖ Volume, issue, year, pages
- ❖ DOI or permanent URL
- ❖ Abstract and keywords
- ❖ License type
- ❖ Publication date
- ❖ Version (preprint, post print, published)

13.7 Persistent Identifiers and Interlinking

All articles published in BER are assigned a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) through CrossRef. Authors must:

- ❖ Include the DOI in all repository entries
- ❖ Ensure that deposited versions link back to the Version of Record on the BER website

Repositories should support persistent identifiers like DOIs, Handles, or ARKs.

13.8 Use on Academic Networking Sites

Authors may share their published or accepted articles on:

- ❖ ResearchGate
- ❖ Academia.edu
- ❖ ORCID
- ❖ Google Scholar Profiles

13.9 Monitoring and Compliance

BER reserves the right to:

- ❖ Monitor repository entries for accuracy, attribution, and license compliance
- ❖ Request corrections if repository versions are improperly cited, licensed, or linked
- ❖ Contact repository managers regarding metadata errors or unauthorized deposits

14. Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy

14.1 Conflict of Interest

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and objectivity in all stages of the publishing process. A key element of this commitment is the proper disclosure and management of Conflicts of Interest (COIs). This policy defines what constitutes a COI and outlines the responsibilities and disclosure requirements for authors, editors, reviewers, and journal staff to ensure impartiality throughout the editorial and peer-review process.

14.2 Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:

- ❖ Promote transparency in the publication process
- ❖ Identify and manage any financial or non-financial interests that may influence scholarly judgment
- ❖ Protect the integrity and credibility of BER's editorial decisions
- ❖ Ensure compliance with international publishing standards (COPE)
- ❖ Guide all stakeholders in declaring, evaluating, and mitigating potential COIs

14.3 Definition of Conflict of Interest

A Conflict of Interest (COI) exists when a personal, financial, professional, or institutional interest may:

- ❖ Influence or appear to influence a person's objectivity in conducting, reviewing, editing, or publishing research
- ❖ Undermine the credibility of the research or the publication process

COIs can be:

14.3.1 Financial

- ❖ Employment or consultancies
- ❖ Stock ownership or options
- ❖ Honoraria, speaker fees, or travel funding
- ❖ Research funding or grants from commercial or political entities
- ❖ Royalties or intellectual property rights

14.3.2 Non-Financial

- ❖ Personal relationships (family, romantic, mentorship, close colleagues)
- ❖ Academic competition or rivalry
- ❖ Political or religious affiliations
- ❖ Strong intellectual or ideological commitments
- ❖ Institutional affiliations

Even the perception of bias can be damaging and must be disclosed.

14.4 Responsibilities of Authors

Authors must disclose all potential conflicts of interest that may influence:

- ❖ The conduct of the research
- ❖ Interpretation of results
- ❖ Manuscript preparation or submission
- ❖ Research funding and sponsorship

14.4.1 Author Declaration

A formal Conflict of Interest Statement must be included:

“The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.”

If a COI exists, authors must detail:

- ❖ Nature of the relationship (e.g., funding, employment)
- ❖ Involved parties or organizations
- ❖ Relevance to the submitted manuscript

14.4.2 Funding Disclosure

Authors must clearly indicate all sources of funding and the role of funders in:

- ❖ Study design
- ❖ Data collection or interpretation
- ❖ Writing the manuscript
- ❖ Publication decisions

14.5 Responsibilities of Editors

Editors (including the Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editors) must **avoid handling manuscripts** where a COI exists or may be perceived. Examples include:

- ❖ Manuscripts submitted by colleagues, students, mentors, or collaborators
- ❖ Submissions from their own institution
- ❖ Articles that align closely with their ongoing research or ideologies

14.5.1 Editorial Recusal

Editors with a COI must:

- ❖ Recuse themselves from editorial responsibility
- ❖ Transfer the manuscript to another editor without COI

All editorial decisions must be based solely on academic merit, without influence from:

- ❖ Author identity
- ❖ Institutional affiliation
- ❖ Political or commercial pressure

14.6 Responsibilities of Reviewers

Reviewers must disclose any potential COIs before accepting a review assignment. They should decline if:

- ❖ They have a recent or current collaboration with the authors
- ❖ They share an institutional affiliation with the authors
- ❖ They have a personal relationship with the authors
- ❖ They have a financial interest in the manuscript's acceptance or rejection

13.6.1 Confidentiality and Integrity

Reviewers are expected to:

- ❖ Evaluate the manuscript objectively
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality throughout the review process
- ❖ Avoid using manuscript content for personal gain

14.7 Journal Responsibilities

The journal's editorial team is responsible for:

- ❖ Ensuring full transparency in COI disclosures

- ❖ Publishing all disclosed COIs with the article
- ❖ Investigating potential undisclosed COIs
- ❖ Enforcing COI-related sanctions when necessary
- ❖ Maintaining clear and accessible COI policies on the journal website

14.8 Handling Undisclosed Conflicts of Interest

If a COI is discovered after publication, BER will take appropriate actions, which may include:

- ❖ Issuing a correction or editorial note
- ❖ Publishing an expression of concern
- ❖ Retraction of the article in severe cases
- ❖ Barring authors from future submissions or notifying affiliated institutions (if warranted)

All investigations follow COPE flowcharts and guidance.

14.9 COI and Sponsored Content

If BER publishes special issues or sponsored supplements, additional safeguards will be in place:

- ❖ Guest editors must declare any COIs with authors or sponsors
- ❖ Articles must undergo independent peer review
- ❖ Sponsorship details must be clearly stated in the publication
- ❖ Sponsored content is subject to the same editorial standards as regular articles

14.10 COI and Peer Review Transparency

To protect the impartiality of peer review:

- ❖ Reviewers' identities are anonymized under the double-blind process
- ❖ Reviewers and editors do not access any information about COIs until decisions are finalized
- ❖ COI management logs are kept confidential within the editorial system

15. Correction & Withdrawal Policy

15.1 Corrections

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* upholds the integrity, accuracy, and transparency of the scholarly record. As part of this commitment, the journal maintains clear policies for managing corrections, withdrawals, retractions, and expressions of concern when errors or ethical issues are identified in published content.

This Correction & Withdrawal Policy outlines the principles, procedures, and criteria used to determine and address changes to the academic record after publication. It applies to all contributors, including authors, editors, and third parties.

15.2 Policy Objectives

The key aims of this policy are to:

- ❖ Maintain the credibility and reliability of the journal
- ❖ Correct factual inaccuracies, honest errors, and ethical breaches
- ❖ Comply with international publishing standards (COPE)
- ❖ Ensure that corrections and retractions are visible, permanent, and linked to the original article
- ❖ Prevent the spread of misinformation

15.3 Definitions

15.3.1 Correction (Erratum or Corrigendum)

A Correction is issued when a minor or major error is discovered in a published article that:

- ❖ Does not invalidate the main conclusions
- ❖ Was introduced either by the author (corrigendum) or the publisher/editor (erratum)

15.3.2 Retraction

A Retraction is issued for published articles that are found to contain:

- ❖ Plagiarism or data fabrication
- ❖ Serious errors invalidating findings
- ❖ Unethical research practices
- ❖ Duplicate publication

15.3.3 Withdrawal

Withdrawal refers to the removal of a manuscript prior to formal publication (before assignment of volume, issue, or DOI), due to author request or editorial concern.

15.3.4 Expression of Concern

An Expression of Concern is published when an article is under investigation and a final decision is pending. It informs readers of potential issues without prematurely retracting content.

15.4 Correction Policy

15.4.1 Grounds for Corrections

Corrections may be issued for:

- ❖ Errors in author names, affiliations, or correspondence details
- ❖ Inaccurate tables, figures, or data points
- ❖ Omitted acknowledgments or funding information

- ❖ Reference list issues
- ❖ Errors in units, statistical calculations, or formulae

15.4.2 Procedure for Correction

- ❖ Authors must contact the editorial office with the correction request
- ❖ The editorial team reviews and verifies the correction
- ❖ If approved, a correction notice is published in the next issue
- ❖ The notice is linked to the original article and includes:
 - Full citation of the original paper
 - Description of the correction
 - Indication of whether the correction affects conclusions

15.4.3 Publisher Responsibility

If the error was introduced during copyediting, typesetting, or publication, an erratum will be issued and marked accordingly.

15.5 Retraction Policy

15.5.1 Grounds for Retraction

Retractions are issued in cases involving:

- ❖ Plagiarism (text, figures, data)
- ❖ Fabrication or falsification of data
- ❖ Duplicate publication without disclosure
- ❖ Unethical research or lack of informed consent
- ❖ Legal or copyright violations
- ❖ Author conflict of interest not disclosed

15.5.2 Retraction Procedure

- ❖ Concerns may be raised by authors, reviewers, editors, or third parties
- ❖ The editorial board conducts a preliminary investigation
- ❖ The author(s) are notified and given a chance to respond
- ❖ If misconduct is confirmed or the article is invalid, the Editor-in-Chief issues a retraction
- ❖ The retraction notice includes:
 - Title and DOI of the article
 - Reason for retraction
 - Who is retracting the article (authors, editors, or both)

Note: The original article is not deleted, but clearly marked as “Retracted” with a link to the retraction notice.

15.5.3 Partial Retractions

If only part of an article is unreliable (e.g., a figure or section), a partial retraction may be issued with an explanatory note.

15.6 Withdrawal Policy (Pre-publication)

15.6.1 Author-Initiated Withdrawals

After the successful desk review, authors are required to submit a copyright and declaration form affirming their consent to the journal’s copyright policies. At this stage, the authors may withdraw a manuscript subject to following conditions:

- ❖ Withdrawal requests must be submitted in writing by the corresponding author
- ❖ Include justification for withdrawal
- ❖ Withdrawal request should be signed by all co-authors.

If the authors wish to withdraw their manuscript during the peer review process, they may be charged reviewer fees as per the following criteria:

- ❖ **PKR 5000** if the withdrawal is made after the first review.
- ❖ **PKR 10000** if the withdrawal is made after the second review.

Unethical withdrawal—such as submitting elsewhere during peer review—may result in a ban from future submissions.

15.6.2 Editor-Initiated Withdrawal

The editorial team may withdraw a manuscript due to:

- ❖ Plagiarism discovered pre-publication
- ❖ Authorship disputes
- ❖ Failure to respond to editorial queries after multiple attempts
- ❖ Breach of journal policies

In such cases, authors are notified with reasons, and the manuscript is removed from the submission system.

15.7 Expression of Concern Policy

15.7.1 When to Issue

An Expression of Concern may be issued if:

- ❖ There is inconclusive evidence of misconduct
- ❖ An institutional investigation is underway
- ❖ The journal has credible concerns, but the full case is unresolved

15.7.2 Expression Format

- ❖ Published alongside the original article
- ❖ Includes a description of the concern
- ❖ Linked to the article's DOI
- ❖ Updated when the investigation is complete

If findings confirm misconduct or error, the article will be retracted or corrected accordingly.

15.8 Post-Publication Responsibilities

15.8.1 Authors

Authors are obligated to:

- ❖ Report significant errors discovered post-publication
- ❖ Cooperate with editors during investigations
- ❖ Notify the journal of author name or affiliation changes if relevant

15.8.2 Editors

Editors must:

- ❖ Investigate all ethical or factual concerns raised by any party
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality during the investigation
- ❖ Issue retractions, corrections, or expressions of concern as needed

15.8.3 Readers and Third Parties

BER encourages readers, scholars, and institutions to report suspected errors or ethical breaches by contacting the editorial office with:

- ❖ A description of the issue
- ❖ Evidence or citation to the original article
- ❖ Contact details (anonymous reports are also accepted and investigated)

15.9 Visibility and Transparency

- ❖ All correction and retraction notices are freely accessible
- ❖ Linked to the original article with a clear label (e.g., "This article has been corrected/retracted")
- ❖ Displayed prominently on the article landing page
- ❖ Timestamped and signed by the responsible party (author, editor, or both)

15.10 Consequences of Ethical Violations

If a correction, retraction, or withdrawal results from misconduct:

- ❖ The author(s) may be banned from future submissions (temporary or permanent)
- ❖ BER may notify the author's institution or funding agency
- ❖ In extreme cases, BER reserves the right to publicly disclose sanctions in accordance with COPE guidance

Authors can withdraw the manuscripts submitted to BER without being charged with any withdrawal penalty. It is to note here that the withdrawal request should be placed within seven working days of submission. However, the article cannot be withdrawn — unless inevitable — once it enters the peer-review phase; the editorial board will decide on the withdrawal request. The author may be charged with the withdrawal penalty in these cases. All withdrawal requests will be accommodated only if received from the corresponding author who is expected to have taken on board the co-authors before submitting. The submission should be considered and treated as ‘withdrawn’ only after receiving official notification of withdrawal from BER. All correspondence in this regard will be made from the principal email ID (ber@imsciences.edu.pk).

16. Complaints Policy

16.1 Complaints

The *Business & Economic Review (BER)* is committed to maintaining the highest standards of editorial integrity, transparency, and ethical publishing. BER values constructive feedback and takes all complaints and concerns seriously, whether they come from authors, reviewers, readers, or third parties.

This Complaints Policy outlines the procedures for lodging, addressing, and resolving complaints related to:

- ❖ Editorial decisions
- ❖ Peer review processes
- ❖ Author, reviewer, or editor conduct
- ❖ Alleged misconduct or policy violations
- ❖ Publication ethics and academic integrity

BER ensures that complaints are handled fairly, transparently, and without retaliation.

16.2 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to complaints concerning:

- ❖ Unfair editorial decisions
- ❖ Delayed or non-responsive peer review
- ❖ Conflicts of interest not disclosed
- ❖ Plagiarism or duplicate publication
- ❖ Misconduct by authors, editors, or reviewers
- ❖ Authorship disputes
- ❖ Errors in published content
- ❖ Breaches of confidentiality
- ❖ Violations of journal policies

Note: Complaints regarding commercial issues (e.g., billing for APCs) are handled under the APC Policy.

16.3 Who Can Submit a Complaint?

Complaints may be submitted by:

- ❖ Authors (current or former contributors)
- ❖ Peer reviewers
- ❖ Editorial board members
- ❖ Readers
- ❖ Librarians, institutions, or funders
- ❖ Third-party observers or whistle-blowers

Anonymous complaints are accepted but must include sufficient detail to allow investigation.

16.4 How to Submit a Complaint

16.4.1 Method of Submission

Complaints must be submitted in writing via:

- ❖ **Email:** ber@imsciences.edu.pk, or
- ❖ www.bereview.pk

16.4.2 Required Information

To ensure timely investigation, the complaint should include:

- ❖ Complainant's full name and contact information (unless anonymous)
- ❖ Description of the issue
- ❖ Names of individuals involved (if applicable)
- ❖ Relevant manuscript or article ID, title, and DOI
- ❖ Supporting evidence (emails, screenshots, documents)

16.5 Complaint Investigation Process

16.5.1 Initial Review

Upon receipt:

- ❖ The complaint is logged by the Managing Editor
- ❖ A confirmation email is sent to the complainant
- ❖ The issue is assessed for validity and scope

16.5.2 Investigation

If the complaint is actionable:

- ❖ It is assigned to a senior editor or ethics panel
- ❖ Both parties (complainant and respondent) may be contacted for further information
- ❖ Editorial records, peer review reports, and email correspondence may be examined
- ❖ Confidentiality is maintained at all stages

16.5.3 Resolution

Depending on the outcome:

- ❖ An explanation, apology, or corrective action may be offered
- ❖ For complaints involving misconduct, further steps may include:
 - Retraction or correction of a published article
 - Removal of a reviewer or editor from duties
 - Notification of author institutions or funders

All parties are informed in writing of the final decision.

16.6 Appeals Process

If a complainant disagrees with the resolution:

- ❖ They may submit an appeal to the Editor-in-Chief within 30 days of the decision
- ❖ Appeals must include new evidence or reasoning for reconsideration
- ❖ A separate independent editor or external advisor may be consulted
- ❖ The final appeal decision is binding and communicated within 3–4 weeks

16.7 Complaints Related to Editorial Decisions

Authors who believe an editorial decision was:

- ❖ Biased,
- ❖ Unjustified, or
- ❖ Based on a flawed review process

...may file a formal complaint. BER will:

- ❖ Re-evaluate the decision internally
- ❖ Consider independent editorial review
- ❖ Allow resubmission or transfer (if appropriate)

Editorial judgment on manuscript merit remains the editorial board's final prerogative unless procedural error is identified.

16.8 Complaints Related to Review Delays

Authors concerned about unusually long review times may:

- ❖ Inquire about the manuscript status
- ❖ File a complaint if no substantive response is received after repeated contact

The editorial office will investigate and respond within 5–7 business days, including reasons for delay and steps taken to expedite the process.

16.9 Confidentiality and Protection

BER ensures that:

- ❖ All complaints are treated confidentially
- ❖ Whistle-blowers are protected from retaliation
- ❖ Investigations are impartial and based on evidence
- ❖ Outcomes are documented securely

Complainants may remain anonymous, but doing so may limit the scope of investigation if supporting documentation is lacking.

16.10 Misuse of the Complaints Process

While BER welcomes constructive complaints, it does not tolerate:

- ❖ Malicious, abusive, or harassing communication
- ❖ Intentionally false allegations
- ❖ Attempts to manipulate editorial decisions

Such conduct may result in:

- ❖ Dismissal of the complaint
- ❖ Restriction from future submissions
- ❖ Notification to affiliated institutions (if serious)

16.11 Institutional Cooperation

In complex or unresolved cases involving academic misconduct, BER may:

- ❖ Request assistance from the author's institution or funder
- ❖ Share evidence confidentially with research integrity officers
- ❖ Cooperate with institutional investigations and implement their recommendations

16.12 Annual Review of Complaints

- ❖ BER reviews complaint trends annually
- ❖ Findings are reported to the Editorial Board
- ❖ Improvements to policies, editorial training, and review procedures may be implemented in response to complaints

PUBLICATION ETHICS DECLARATION FORM

Name of Corresponding Author: _____

Title of Manuscript: _____

Manuscript ID: _____ Manuscript Submission date: _____

Institution / Organization address of the Corresponding Author: _____

Email Address of Corresponding Author: _____

Mobile No. of Corresponding Author: _____

UNDERTAKING

The author(s) acknowledge that the manuscript submitted is his/her/their own original work; all authors participated in the work in a substantive way and are prepared to take public responsibility for the authors have seen and approved the manuscript as submitted; the manuscript has not been published and is not being submitted or considered for publication elsewhere; the text, illustrations, and any other materials included in the manuscript do not infringe (plagiarism) upon any existing copyright or other rights of anyone.

- The entire manuscript is an original creation of the Author(s), it has not been formally published in any other peer-reviewed journal, it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, it has not been accepted for publication elsewhere in any print/electronic.
- It does not infringe any copyright or any other third-party right; I/We have not assigned, licensed, or otherwise transferred any right or interest in the manuscript to anyone.
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[https://bereview.pk/journal/index.php/ber/Correction Withdrawal Policy](https://bereview.pk/journal/index.php/ber/Correction%20Withdrawal%20Policy)
- I/We permit editors to publish the said paper in the journal of in any other means with editorial modification, if any.
- In case of publication of the article in the journal, I/We hereby assign copyright to the (article title Bold) _____ to **BER** for its publication in any form/language including all media (print and electronic, or presently unknown), and exclusive right to use the matter for the life of the work (no time restriction on re use of matter).

S. No	Detail of Author(s)		Author(s) Signature
1	Author(s) Name		
	Author(s) Affiliation		
	Author(s) Email		
	Mobile No.		
2	Author(s) Name		
	Author(s) Affiliation		
	Author(s) Email		
	Mobile No.		

Date: _____

Note: Your manuscript will not be process unless the typed duly original signed scanned copyright form has been received.

COMPLAINTS SUBMISSION FORM

Purpose of this Form:

This form is intended for authors, reviewers, readers, or any stakeholder to formally submit a complaint regarding editorial decisions, peer review, publication ethics, or other concerns related to the *Business & Economic Review (BER)*.

SECTION 1: Complainant Details

- **Full Name:** **Phone (optional):**
 - **Email Address:**
 - **Affiliation/Institution:**
 - **Are you the:**
 - Author
 - Reviewer
 - Reader
 - Editorial Member
 - Librarian
 - Third-party observer
 - Other:
 - **Would you like your identity to remain confidential?**
 - Yes
 - No
-

SECTION 2: Complaint Information

- **Title of article or manuscript (if applicable):**
- **Manuscript ID or DOI (if known):**
- **Date of submission/publication (if known):**
- **Category of Complaint (check all that apply):**
 - Editorial decision
 - Peer review delay or misconduct
 - Authorship dispute
 - Ethics violation (e.g., plagiarism, data manipulation)
 - Conflict of interest
 - Retraction/Correction issue
 - Publication error
 - Other:

SECTION 3: Description of Complaint

Please describe the issue in detail. Include relevant dates, names, and supporting facts. Attach documentation if necessary.

.....
.....
.....
.....

(Use additional pages if required)

SECTION 4: Supporting Evidence

List and attach any relevant documents (emails, screenshots, reports, submission confirmations, etc.)

- Attached File 1:
 - Attached File 2:
 - Attached File 3:
-

SECTION 5: Desired Outcome or Resolution

What resolution or response are you seeking?

.....
.....

SECTION 6: Declaration

I confirm that the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that this complaint will be handled confidentially and in accordance with the *Business & Economic Review's Complaints Policy*.

Signature: **Date:**