

## **Journal of Consumer Research Policy and Procedures Regarding Author Misconduct Revised 9-1-2020**

### **1.0 Overview**

As a premier peer-reviewed journal, the *Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)* requires all submissions to adhere to the highest professional standards and best practices in scholarly publishing. All writing and research submitted to *JCR* are expected to present completely accurate and authentic information and to properly cite all content referenced from other materials and articles in order to ensure scientific integrity of the scholarly record.

The *JCR* Policy and Procedures Regarding Author Misconduct closely follows the guidelines set by COPE (Committee on Publication and Ethics; <http://publicationethics.org>), which provides the gold standard for best practices in publication ethics.

All submitting authors must acknowledge that they have read the *JCR* Policy and Procedures Regarding Author Misconduct, and must agree to the terms.

### **2.0 Overlap**

The value of a publication depends on its incremental contribution. Therefore, it is inappropriate for authors to submit articles with substantial overlap with papers already published, in the review process, or in preparation for submission to another journal. The same applies to knowingly failing to acknowledge other scholars' work that has substantial overlap with the authors'. This overlap can result from the use of the same data or analyses, or the same or very similar conceptual framework, or when providing parallel substantive or theoretical results, or when testing already published theory without noting that it is a replication. When there is a question about defining overlap, particularly that which arises from their own work, it is the authors' responsibility to notify and alert the assigned Editor of *JCR*. The Editor will make a binding decision whether a manuscript submitted to *JCR* is too similar to an article already published in *JCR* or elsewhere, regardless of the quality, access, or language of the journal.

When writing a paper, it is important for authors to define its incremental contribution by referencing relevant work on which the paper builds. Submitting a paper that is substantially the same as a previously published paper by the same authors is considered a serious breach of professional ethics, which would warrant a sanction. Authors are expected to search for and

reference the related work by other scholars. If authors are deemed to knowingly fail to acknowledge other scholars' work, this too will be considered a serious breach of professional ethics that warrants a sanction (see section 6.0).

### **3.0 Multiple Submissions**

It is unacceptable for authors to submit manuscripts to *JCR* that they have previously published elsewhere in any language. It is the authors' responsibility to inform or notify the assigned Editor upon submission if there is any doubt whether a manuscript may violate any of these terms.

### **4.0 Falsification of Data/Misreporting of Data**

*JCR* expects all submissions to include data that are honestly and accurately reported according to the accepted best practices of scholarly publishing. The authors are expected to provide an explanation in the web appendix of any efforts leading to the paper that may constitute selective reporting (e.g., reporting only a subset of the measures collected, failing to disclose results that contradict the main thrust of the paper).

### **5.0 Plagiarism**

As defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, to plagiarize is “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own,” “use (another’s production) without crediting the source,” or to “present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize> Accessed February 19, 2020). *JCR* considers other forms of plagiarism to include “self-plagiarism”—instances in which an author borrows from his or her own previously published work without the proper citation.

### **6.0 Detection, Investigation, Retraction, and Penalty**

In any instance of suspected misconduct (e.g., misrepresentation/falsification of data, plagiarism, multiple submission), *JCR* will be obliged to carry out the process of detection, investigation, and determination of any penalty, and to do so with fairness and confidentiality during the internal investigation. The process for detection, investigation, retraction, and penalties for suspected misconduct is as follows:

#### 6.1 Detection

The *JCR* Editor-in-Chief, along with the Co-Editors, Associate Editors, Editorial Board, and non-Editorial Board reviewers, may serve to detect instances of potential misconduct. Others, including editors of other journals, may also notify the Editor(s) if instances of misconduct are suspected. Complaints such as failure to replicate findings or “I just don’t believe the result” would *not* constitute sufficient cause for consideration as an instance of misconduct. If the Editor(s) determines that there is potential for misconduct, s/he will inform both the President of the Policy Board and the Managing Editor and provide a detailed account of the possible violation or misconduct.

## 6.2 Investigation

6.2.1 Initiation and the investigatory committee. When informed by the Editor, the President of the Policy Board will consult the Ethics Committee members serving on the Policy Board to determine whether further investigation is required. The President will then assemble a confidential review committee consisting of at least one member of the Ethics Committee, one of the editors, and possibly outside scholars to determine the nature and extent of the suspected misconduct. Each individual investigation may require/involve the assembly of a new confidential ad hoc committee. The President and the Ethics Committee members will determine if any committee member has a conflict of interest as determined by [the \*JCR\* conflict of interest policy](#). If there are conflicts, the committee member will recuse herself/himself from the process.

6.2.2 Notification and author response. If it is determined that an act of misconduct may have been committed, the President of the Policy Board will inform the author(s), in writing, with a description of the alleged offense. The President of the Policy Board will offer the author(s) an opportunity to respond to the allegations. In the event that more than one author is involved, the authors may collaborate on their responses or respond individually.

6.2.3 Timing. Authors(s) will have two weeks to respond to any allegations. If more time is needed to provide a complete response, a timetable that is mutually agreeable by the investigatory committee and the authors will be arranged. In the case that no response is received from the author(s) within the initial two-week window, the investigatory committee may interpret this as a plea of no contest in response to the allegations.

6.2.4 Scope of investigations. In order to conduct a full and fair investigation, authors may be required to provide materials that go above and beyond *JCR*'s [Data Archiving](#) and [Data Maintenance Policy](#). If the authors are unable to provide requested data or materials that the investigatory committee deems central to their investigation, the committee may conclude that the research findings cannot be verified. This would hold regardless of the reason for being unable to provide data, such as non-disclosure agreements signed by the authors or lost data.

6.2.5 Time limits to investigations. Any work that is either currently under review or that has been previously published in the journal is subject to potential investigation. As such, investigations do not have a time limit. The one exception arises in requests for data: while under section 6.2.4 the investigatory committee may request data that were gathered prior to the data archiving limit, a failure to produce such data cannot be considered prejudicial in the committee's assessments.

6.2.6 Confidentiality. All information provided will be used solely for the purpose of conducting the investigation. All information will remain private and will not be distributed to any third parties beyond the investigatory committee. There is also no time limit beyond which an investigation for a published article can no longer be conducted.

6.2.7 Conclusions and recommendations. At the conclusion of the investigation, the findings and recommendations of the investigatory committee will be relayed to the Editors and the Policy Board. If the committee concludes that no offense has been committed, no further action will be taken, and all authors will be notified by the President of the Policy Board that the investigation is closed. If the committee recommends retraction of an article, the final decision will be made by the Editor(s) who will inform the authors (see section 6.3). If the committee recommends other penalties, the final decision will require a majority vote of the Policy Board. Author(s) will be contacted about the penalties by the President of the Board (see section 6.4).

### 6.3 Retractions

Decisions involving the retraction of articles and/or the suspension of a review process will be made by the Editor(s), who are responsible for the scientific integrity of work appearing within

the journal. Retractions may be based either on a recommendation of the investigatory committee of the Policy Board (as described above) or a request by the author(s).

If the request for retraction comes from the author(s), the author(s) must indicate to the Editor(s) the basis of the request. If the request comes from a subset of the authors, the author(s) not party to the request will be informed by the Editor(s) and given two weeks to respond. Failure to respond may be taken by the Editor(s) as an election not to contest the request for the retraction.

If the co-author(s) not party to the retraction request contest(s) the retraction, the Editor(s) may refer the dispute to the Policy Board, who may then undertake an investigation as described in section 6.2.

If a paper is retracted, the editors will inform each author's institution, as well as the editors of the primary journals of the eleven associations represented by members of the JCR Policy Board.

#### 6.4 Penalties

In the event that an author (or authors) is found to have engaged in some form of misconduct, s/he will be subject to potential sanctions, the nature and extent of which will be determined by a majority vote by the Policy Board based on the recommendation by the investigatory committee and in consultation with the Editor(s). The sanctions will be commensurate with the nature of the offense and may include a ban on publishing in *JCR* for a certain period of time. Any ban on publishing would apply to new submissions as well as revisions.

All co-authors are deemed to be responsible for the integrity of the work on which their names appear unless there are mitigating factors that warrant special consideration. In the event this is the case, the investigatory committee is empowered to recommend customized sanctions for each individual author in instances in which multiple authors are involved.

Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the President of the Policy Board and investigatory committee reserve the right to inform an author's institution of issues raised by the author's work. The board also reserves to the right to inform the author's institution and the journals of the eleven member associations of any penalties decided on by the board.