

Journal of Consumer Research
Policy and Procedures Regarding Author Misconduct
Revised May 26, 2023

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 the scientific integrity of the scholarly record.

The *JCR* Policy and Procedures Regarding Author Misconduct are informed by guidelines set by COPE (Committee on Publication and Ethics; <http://publicationethics.org>), which provides 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 Research Overlap

It is inappropriate for authors to submit manuscripts with substantial overlap with manuscripts by one or more of the authors already published, in the review process, or in preparation for submission to another journal. Such overlap can result from the use of the same data or analyses, or the same or very similar conceptual frameworks, 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 regarding whether a manuscript submitted to *JCR* is too similar to an article already published in *JCR* or elsewhere, regardless of the quality, accessibility, or language of the journal.

Failing to acknowledge prior overlapping work will be considered a breach of professional ethics that may warrant a sanction (see section 6.0).

3.0 Previously-Rejected Manuscripts

For transparency of the review process and fairness to other authors, any manuscript previously rejected by *JCR* that is resubmitted as a new submission must be clearly identified as such upon resubmission. In addition to completing the appropriate fields on the manuscript submission portal during the submission process, in the cover letter to the editor, the authors must include the previous manuscript's submission number and explain in detail how the new manuscript is substantially different from the previously rejected version, thereby justifying consideration as a new manuscript. Failure to disclose a previous submission and rejection of a prior version of a manuscript will be considered a breach of professional ethics that may warrant a sanction (see section 6.0).

4.0 Falsification of Data/Misreporting of Data

JCR expects all submissions to include data that are truthfully and accurately reported according to the accepted best practices of scholarly publishing. Authors are expected to disclose and explain (e.g., in supplementary materials) any actions they have taken, or failed to take, in connection with the manuscript that may constitute selective reporting (e.g., reporting only a subset of the measures collected, excluding certain observations from the reported analyses, failing to disclose results that contradict the main thrust of the manuscript).

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” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize>; last accessed May 26, 2023). *JCR* includes “self-plagiarism”—instances in which an author borrows from their own previously published work without the proper citation—as a form of plagiarism.

6.0 Detection, Investigation, and Adjudication

In any instance of suspected misconduct (e.g., misrepresentation/falsification of data, plagiarism, duplicative submissions), *JCR* is required to carry out a specific investigation process and determine any sanction, if necessary. This process is to be followed with (a) the utmost care and due diligence, (b) strict confidentiality during the internal investigation, and (c) fairness to all parties involved. The process for the detection, investigation, and adjudication of suspected misconduct is as follows:

6.1 Detection and Initiation

The *JCR* editor in chief, along with the co-editors, associate editors, Editorial Review Board members, and non-Editorial Review Board reviewers, may serve to detect instances of potential misconduct. Others, including editors of other journals, may also notify the editor(s) of suspected instances of misconduct.

Given the gravity of these issues, any suggestion or assertion of scientific misconduct should be advanced with the utmost care and discretion. Therefore, anonymous allegations and hearsay will not be considered by *JCR*. Similarly, mere complaints of failing to replicate specific findings or not believing certain results will not be considered sufficient cause for initiating an investigation of misconduct.

Should issues of suspected misconduct be raised, the editor(s) will make an initial determination of whether these issues merit further investigation. To inform this initial determination, the editor(s) will contact the manuscript’s authors to obtain any information (e.g., clarifications, additional methodological details) that might help assess the merit of the issues.

If after this initial assessment, the editor(s) determine that the issue does merit further investigation or that there is indeed potential misconduct, they will inform the president of the Policy Board and the managing editor, and they will provide a detailed account of the possible violation or misconduct, along with relevant materials.

6.2 Investigation

6.2.1 Initiation and Investigatory Committee. When informed by the editor(s), the president of the Policy Board will consult with the Policy Board members serving on the Research Integrity and Ethics (RIE) Committee to determine whether further investigation is required.

If further investigation is required, the president will assemble a confidential Investigatory Committee (IC) to evaluate the nature and extent of the suspected misconduct. The IC will consist of at least one member of the RIE Committee, one of the editors, and possibly outside scholars, all determined to have no conflict of interest with respect to the case. Determinations of conflicts of interest will be made by the president and the RIE Committee members in accordance with [the JCR conflict-of-interest policy](#).

6.2.2 Notification of the Author(s). If it is determined that suspicions of misconduct need to be investigated, the president of the Policy Board will formally notify the author(s) in writing, with a description of the alleged offense and an opportunity to respond to the allegations. If more than one author is involved, the authors may collaborate on their responses or respond individually.

6.2.3 Timing. Depending on the nature of the issues, authors(s) will be given a reasonable time frame to respond to any allegations. If more time is needed to provide a complete response, a timetable that is mutually agreeable by the IC and the authors will be arranged. In the case that no response is received from the author(s) within a reasonable timeframe despite follow-ups, the IC may interpret the lack of response 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 IC deems central to their investigation, the committee may conclude that the research findings cannot be verified. This may 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 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 IC may request data that were gathered prior to the data archiving limit, a failure to produce such data after the expiration of the archiving limit 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 IC.

6.2.7 Conclusions and Recommendations. At the conclusion of the investigation, the findings and recommendations of the IC 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 further sanctions, the final decision will require a majority vote of the Policy Board. Author(s) will be contacted about any sanctions 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 in the journal. Retractions may be based either on a recommendation of the IC of the Policy Board (as described above) or on 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. Should the co-author(s) not party to the retraction request choose to contest 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 manuscript is retracted, the editors will inform each author's institution.

6.4 Sanctions

In the event that an author (or authors) is found to have engaged in some form of misconduct, they 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 IC and in consultation with the editor(s). The sanctions will be commensurate with the nature of the offense.

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