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BTTN Journal



Balochistan Think Tank Network

Mapping Pathways for Sustainable Policy Solutions

Prof. Dr. Zahid
Executive Director
Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN)

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Balochistan Think Tank Network



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Policy Document

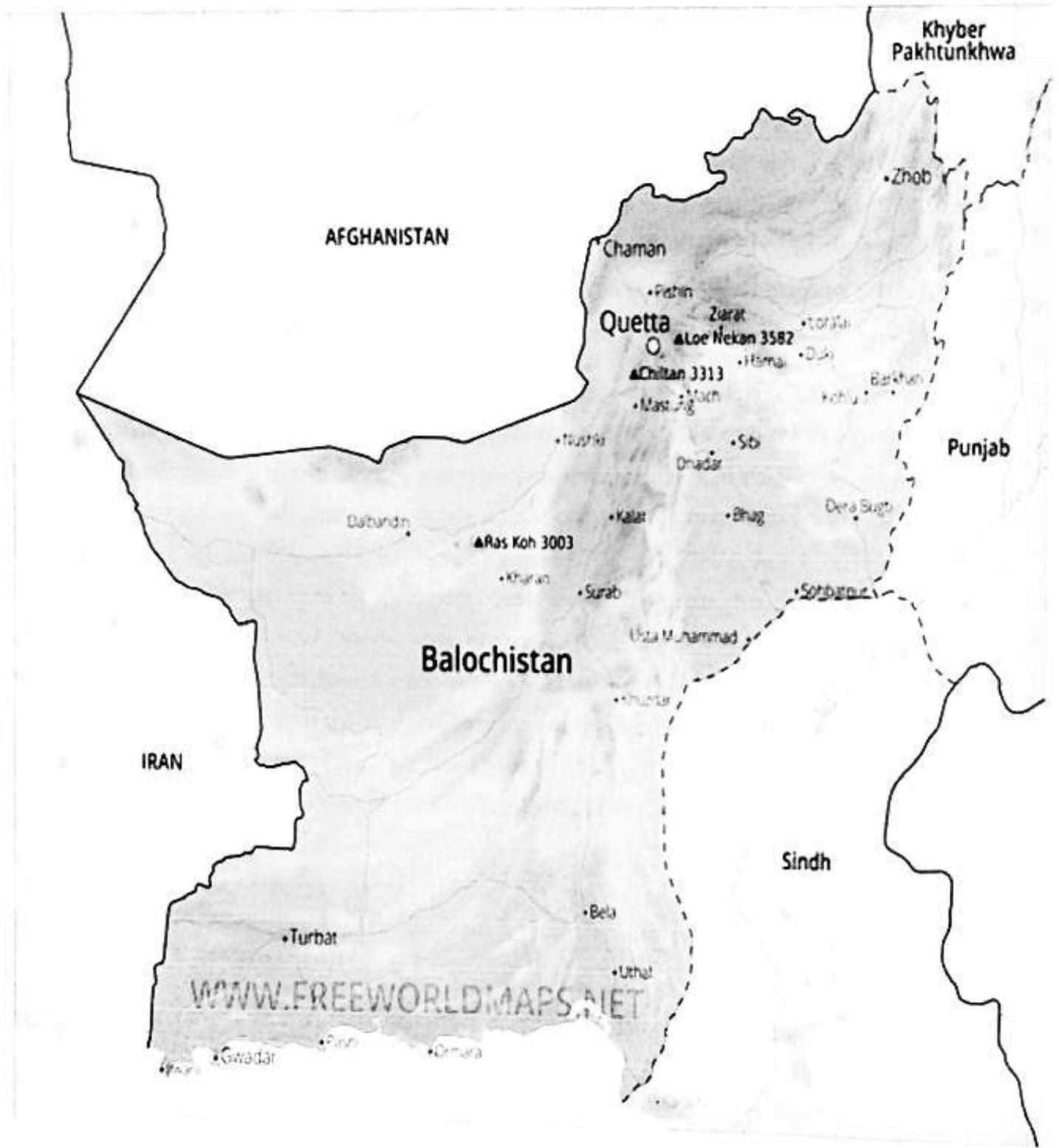
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By

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[Signature]
Director
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 Muhammad Khan
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Introduction

Balochistan, having a history of barely 500 years, that too rather scanty, with a diverse semi-desert arid landscape encompassing 43% of Pakistan's landmass, is the southwestern province of Pakistan and is home to some 12 million people. Due to the traditional sparsity of precipitation, the land has remained unproductive since ancient times, holding an equally sparse population in relentless poverty. The semi-desert, mountainous terrain, vast distances without water, harsh climate, and extreme temperatures have, however, made the people living here hardy, determined, and conditioned to face challenges and develop despite the limitations of geography.

Academic growth in Balochistan began slowly, initially with a few high schools, from the time of Independence in 1947 to universities from 1973 onwards. The Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) is the newest addition to the Province's academic landscape, being the first Research Center. It was created barely a year ago with a vision to become the leading research-oriented, credible policy Think Tank. The BTTN aims to promote a research culture focused on socio-economic development, stability, and national integration by mapping pathways to sustainable policy solutions for decision-makers. It pursues quality research based on investigation, literature review, ground realities, and the gathering of unbiased knowledge through investigation and interaction with stakeholders. Its goal is to earn credibility amongst the academia, intellectuals and opinion / decision-makers of Pakistan in general and Balochistan in particular. Accordingly, in line with its vision and mission, BTTN launched its Research Journal (BTTN Journal) in December 2021.

About the Journal

Aims and Scope

BTTN Journal is a bi-annual peer-reviewed research journal that accepts high-quality and original research with value addition in accordance with the policy research guidelines of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. It is a purely research-oriented policy journal published by Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) at BUITEMS, Quetta. BTTN Journal remains broader in scope and applicability across various domains of the social sciences, applied sciences, policy papers, and the arts and humanities, about traditional and non-traditional security fields of


Prof. Dr. Zafar Khan
Balochistan Think Tank Network, Quetta

scientific enquiry. It helps provide broader research perspectives in an interdisciplinary approach that welcomes contributions, not limited to Pakistan affairs, but rather potentially covers the broader contours of International Relations, International Politics, Strategic Studies, Political Science, Political Economy, Economics, Energy & Development, Defense & Security Studies, Nuclear Policy, Non-Proliferation, Arms Control & Disarmament, Geo-strategy, Emerging Technologies, Sociology of Development, Provincial Issues of Balochistan and evolving competing strategies between the major powers and their implications on the smaller states. BTTN Journal helps provide research opportunities for researchers, scholars, policymakers, and analysts to contribute their research articles for consideration and publication.

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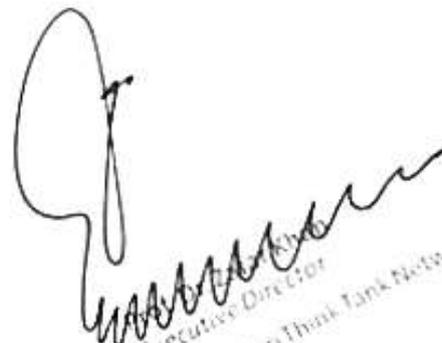
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Current Issue

The current issue of the BTTN Journal comprises research articles published more recently, both online and in print versions. Research articles in the PDF version are displayed on the BTTN Journal Website and printed by BTTN.

Archives

Research articles from different volumes and issues already published in the BTTN Journal are archived.

Submission Guidelines

It is imperative to note that BTTN Journal accepts original, authentic, data-proven, evidence-based, theory-supported, cutting-edge, quality, and research-oriented papers that add value to the existing literature on the given topic of inquiry. Papers must have some form of novelty, clarity of argument, methodology, theory-based questions, and rigorous policy recommendations that are workable and applicable to the given working environment within the scope of the BTTN journal.

BTTN Journal is committed to rigorous, blind peer review to maintain academic integrity and uphold the highest standards of review. Therefore, it is for the authors' information that articles submitted to the BTTN Journal will initially undergo the editorial board's initial screening. After passing through the editorial review stage, the papers will be peer-reviewed by independent, anonymous field experts on the submitted themes. The review process will take at least 6 to 8 weeks for the editorial board's final decision on whether to accept or reject for publication in the BTTN Journal. In the third stage, the accepted papers will be sent to authors with blind review comments/feedback, and, upon the authors' acceptance of reviewers' recommendations/feedback, the accepted papers will be included in the publication volumes and issues of the BTTN Journal as the final published version. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the entire review process may take a little longer than expected.

Authors must read, understand, and follow up the following guidelines before submitting articles for consideration and publication purposes:


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 Executive Director
 Pakistan Bank Link Network, Quetta

1. A typical research article for this journal should be between 6000 and 8000 words, including abstract, footnotes, tables, captions, and figures.
2. An abstract must not exceed 200 words. It should have at least five keywords.
3. Although it is preferable to have a single-authored paper submission, the article should not exceed more than three authors, each of whom has a justifiable research contribution in the paper. No conflict of interest among the authors is integral to the paper submitted to the BTTN Journal.
4. The responsibility of research and academic ethics is 100% relying on the author(s) of the submitted paper. The editorial board has a zero-tolerance policy for educational and/or academic dishonesty in any part or whole of a research paper/article/piece submitted for publication to the BTTN Journal.
5. To maintain originality of the written piece for publication to the BTTN Journal, the editorial board follows 100% originality ethics ever designed by the academic world and/or scientific communities for scholarly publications. Thus, academic fraud solely relies upon the author(s).
6. The originality of the research article matters. BTTN Journal will undertake a plagiarism test for each article submitted. The paper should not exceed a similarity index of 19% and should not exceed 2% from any single source. Please follow up on the BTTN Journal Plagiarism Policy in accordance with the HEC rules and regulations of the Plagiarism Policy.
7. BTTN Journal believes in stamping out bad research inquiry practices and gives guidelines for original pieces of production by the authors. So, it is the responsibility of the authors to know and follow the retraction guidelines and to abide by the academic/research norms and/or ethics of the educational/research piece of paper(s) submitted to the BTTN Journal. For guidelines, consider following the link: <https://publicationethics.org/retraction-guidelines>



Dr. Zafar Khan
BTTN Journal
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8. Papers should be submitted anonymously with no marks of indication. However, authors should submit their short bio and institutional affiliation separately on the title page while submitting their manuscript to the BTTN Journal.
9. Papers once submitted to the BTTN Journal must not have been printed elsewhere and/or should not be under consideration in other journals. Authors cannot withdraw papers once they have been accepted for publication by the BTTN Journal. However, the retraction policy helps guide the authors to consider following the link: <https://publicationethics.org/retraction-guidelines>
10. Articles should be submitted in MS Word with 12 font size, Times New Roman, and bearing 2.0 space in between the lines. The footnotes should be 10 font size of Times New Roman.
11. BTTN Journal only accepts American English spelling.
12. BTTN Journal follows the footnoted references according to the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition. Please follow the link: [Chicago-Style Citation \(https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html\)](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).
13. No sophisticated formatting is required for the citations. Footnote citation should be simple. For a more comprehensive look at Chicago's two systems of source citation and many more examples, see [chapters 14 \(https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed17/part3/ch14/toc.html\)](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed17/part3/ch14/toc.html) and [15 \(https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed17/part3/ch15/toc.html\)](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed17/part3/ch15/toc.html) of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
14. In addition to research articles, BTTN Journal also accepts Book Reviews in accordance with the Aims and Scope of this journal. Book Reviews should not exceed a 1200-word limit. The related BTTN Journal editorial team evaluates book reviews.
15. The editorial team of BTTN Journal may decline research articles/book reviews if they do not comply with the guidelines of the journal.

16. The final decision regarding articles/book reviews will be notified through email after passing all the stages of the initial screening, blind-peer review processes, and after accommodating reviewers' comments/feedback are complete.
17. The BTTN Journal announces a Call for Papers twice an academic year and publishes two issues and one volume an academic year, starting from June 2022.

Abstracting and Indexing Agencies

BTTN Journal is in the process of getting covered by various abstracting, indexing, and citation services nationally and internationally in accordance with the guidelines of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan.

Ethical Guidelines

Ethical Guidelines for Editors

The Editor of a research journal plays a vital role in establishing and maintaining the professional standards. Publication of a paper in an HEC-recognized journal is expected to be a reflection of the quality work of the author (s) and the affiliating institution (if any). The Editor is expected to fulfill their responsibilities to the journal in all aspects and at various stages, i.e., from receiving an article to publishing it. Keeping this in view, it is the prime responsibility of an editor to apply the following guidelines when publishing papers in his/her research journal.

1. The Editor's Responsibilities

The Editor of a research journal should be responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining the quality of the journal by publishing quality papers in his/her journal.
- Promotion of freedom of expression within the cultural, constitutional/legal framework.
- Providing integrity and credibility of the research contributions.
- Meeting the needs of authors and readers.
- Maintaining ethical standards of their journal.



Executive Director
Baluchistan Think Tank Network, Quetta

2. Good practices for their job would include:

- Encourage new ideas and suggestions of authors, peer reviewers, members of the editorial board, and readers for improving the quality of his/her journal.
- Apply the process of blind peer review in actual letter and spirit.
- Promote innovative findings in the respective field and publish them on priority.
- Promote an anti-plagiarism policy.
- Educate contributors (authors) about ethical practices in research, and
- Implement the journal's policy without institutional pressure and revise the policy from time to time.

3. Formation of Editorial Board

- The Editor must ensure that the Editorial Board comprises prominent scholars of the field who can adequately promote the journal,
The Editorial Board should comprise and be responsible for the following:
- An Editorial Committee, which will be responsible for providing logistics, and an Advisory Committee, which will be responsible for reviewing the submitted research articles; this committee should have at least 50% representation of scholars from abroad.
- May appoint Editorial Board members for a prescribed duration and add or revise the constitution of the Board if required.
- The Editor should inform new board members about ethical guidelines and their expected role and update the Editorial Board members about development, challenges and any changes made in the journal policy.
- The Editorial Board should maintain quality of the journal because an assigned category by the HEC (e.g. W, X, Y, and Z categories) will depend on the quality of published papers in it. It is the professional duty of the Board members to select credible research work.
- To ensure smooth functioning of the journal, the Editors are responsible for conducting the Editorial Board meetings on regular basis (at least twice a year).


 Prof. Dr. Zafar Khan
 Executive Director
 Higher Education Commission, Quetta

4. Fair play and Impartiality

- The criteria for the selection of research papers must be impartial, and the Editor should select academically and scientifically sound articles.

The Editor should:

- Promptly respond to the author (s) of the papers submitted for publication, and
- Assign a specific number to an article submitted for processing, and pay impartial consideration to all research papers submitted for publication.
- To ensure the evaluation of the content of research papers is impartial.
- Disregard the discriminating factors, e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, cultural sentiments, political affiliation, seniority, and/or institutional association of the author(s) while selecting articles for publication.
- To ensure impartiality of the review process by informing the reviewer (s) that s/he need to disclose any conflicts of interest regarding the submitted research paper.

5. Confidentiality

- The Editor must ensure confidentiality of the author(s) and reviewers during the process of double-blind peer review.
- The Editor should not disclose information of a research paper to anyone except the author(s), reviewer(s), and editorial board members.
- Upon deciding on a research paper, only the Editor may disclose or announce the title of the study and the name of the author(s) who have been accepted for publication. Any other information may only be disclosed with the prior approval of the author(s)
- Confidentiality of the participants of the research should also be ensured by protecting personal information (e.g., identifiable personal details, images, and/or individual results). The editor should provide clear guidelines to contributors (authors) regarding the confidentiality of individual participants.
- Before publication, the content of the manuscript should be kept confidential; neither the Editor nor the reviewer(s) will share or use any part of the work.

6. Editing and Formatting Guidelines



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 Head of the Department of Education
 Quetta University of Education, Quetta

- The Editor should prepare clear guidelines about preparing and formatting a paper and print these guidelines in each issue of the journal,
- The guidelines should cover information related to 'content' and 'format' of a research paper.
- Any preferred manual of style (e.g., APA, Chicago Manual, MLA Style, etc.) should be declared as a policy decision.

7. The Review Process

- Details about the review process should be declared,
- Editor should ensure that all published papers have gone through a double-blind peer review, and at least one of the reviewers is from outside the country.
- The Editor should ensure that peer-review is masked in both directions and as such the identity of the author is removed from the manuscript before its review to protect the confidentiality and privacy.
- The Editor should provide sufficient guidelines to reviewers, including necessary information about the review process and offer them a reviewer comment form for recording his/her comments.
- The Editor must ensure that peer review process is prompt, nondiscriminatory and highly professional.
- The Editor should develop a system of confidentiality of research papers undergoing the review process.
- The Editor is required to send reviewers' comments to author(s) promptly and should ensure that the corrections suggested by the reviewers are incorporated by the author(s) in true letter and spirit.
- The Editor to critically evaluate peer review practices regularly and make improvements, if, require.
- The Editor should maintain a database of competent and qualified reviewers. For this purpose, s/he may use various sources other than personal contacts to identify new reviewers (e.g. referring by author (s), citations and references section in a book/journal),
- The Editor should refer troublesome cases (e.g. in case of one acceptance and one rejection or any conflict arisen after review) to Advisory Committee in order to resolve the matter amicably.



 Prof. Dr. Zafar Khan
 Executive Director
 Higher Education Research Network (HERN)

8. Dealing with Misconduct

- The Editor should encourage reviewers to comment on ethical issues and possible research and publication misconduct (e.g., inappropriate research design, incomplete detail on participants' consent, data manipulation, and presentation).
- The Editor should encourage reviewers to comment on the validity of the submitted research paper and identify 'subtle (simply copy-paste)' and/or 'blatant (paraphrasing)' type of plagiarism, if practiced by the author(s).
- The Editor should confirm plagiarism (carry out an objective check through Turnitin) and/or searching for similar titles to the submitted research paper, and
- The Editor should be prepared to publish a corrigendum, remove and retract a plagiarized article if it comes to his/her knowledge after its publication.

9. Transparency

- The Editor must ensure that multiple papers as a principal investigator submitted by an author should not be published in the same issue.
- Only ONE co-authorship is allowed for those authors who also contribute a research paper as a principal investigator in the same issue.,
- For the members of the Editorial Board (including the Editor), it will only be limited to ONE paper per issue either to submit research paper as a principal investigator or co-author, and
- The Editor should adopt authorship or co-authorship policy that will set an example in the scientific community and strictly discourage any misconduct (e.g. forcible inclusion of a name in the author list). Authorship should only be given to those individuals who have substantially contributed in the said article.

10. Conflict of Interest

- The Editor should not edit a submitted paper for those author(s) and/or institution against which s/he has any conflicts of interest (e.g. resulting from competitive, collaborative and/or professional standing).
- The Editor should also apply this guideline on their reviewers and Editorial Board members.



Prof. Dr. Zahartha
 Head of the Department of Information Systems
 Faculty of Information Systems, Quetta

- To ensure unbiased review, the Editor should declare a clear cut policy for his/her own submission and a research paper submitted by an Editorial Board member, and
- The Editor must publish a list of common interests (e.g. financial, academic and/or any other type) for all Editorial Board members and editorial staff. This list should be updated from time to time.
- To ensure unbiased review, the Editor should declare a clear cut policy for his/her own submission and a research paper submitted by an Editorial Board member.
- In case of article (s) submitted by the Editor, the decision pertaining to the editor's submitted article/s, one of the Associate Editors must take responsibility for the evaluation of the article and information pertaining to reviewers should be kept confidential.

11. Disclosure

- The Editor must not use any unpublished information/data from the submitted research paper without the permission of the author(s), and
- Any information received after the peer review process must be kept confidential and not used for personal gains.

12. Publication Decisions

- The Editor should only shortlist research papers which have relevance to the scope of the journal clearly stated in the Journal, using his /her judgment, but without any personal bias.
- After completion of the reviewing process, the submission of revised manuscript, and assessing the quality and validity, the Editor has a right to accept or reject a research paper.
- The Editor's decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based purely on merit, academic standards and professional demands of the journal.
- The Editor must justify the reason (s) of rejecting a research paper to author(s). This may include:
 - Failure to fit in the scope of the journal (may be communicated after preliminary review).
 - Insufficient depth of content.
 - Major errors related to design, analysis, write up and format.
 - Any misconduct or conflicting factors (e.g. plagiarism, copyright infringement, legal issues, fake data, authorship issues).



Prof. Dr. Amir Khan

- The Editor is required to timely communicate the editorial decision to the author(s).
- The Editors should not reverse decisions in favor or against author(s) on their own.

13. Establishing a Procedure for Appeal

The Editor is responsible for establishing a proper mechanism for appeals launched against:

- The rejection of a research paper.
- Objections to publications causing harm to any party.
- Infringement of Ethical boundaries in any manner.

(HEC Policy, prepared by Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Kausar, Director Institute of Applied and Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore).

Ethical Guidelines for Reviewers

Review of the manuscript by reviewers is not only an essential component of formal scholarly engagement but also a fundamental step in the publication process, as it aids the Editor in editorial decision-making. It also allows author(s) to improve their manuscript through editorial communications. Scholars who accept the responsibility of reviewing a research paper have an ethical obligation to complete this assignment professionally. The quality, credibility and reputation of a journal also depend on the peer review process. The peer review process depends on trust, and demands that a reviewer fulfill their ethical responsibilities. These professionals are the momentum arm of the review process, but they may perform this role without any formal training. As a consequence, they may be (especially young professionals) unaware of their ethical obligations. The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, wants to list down 'Ethical Guidelines for Reviewers' so that all reviewers provide their valuable services in a standardized manner.

1. Suitability and Promptness

The Reviewers should:

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 Executive Director
 Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
 Quetta

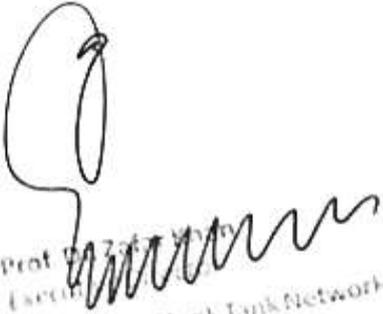
- Inform the Editor, if they do not have the subject expertise required to carry out the review and s/he should inform the Editor immediately after receiving a request.
- Be responsible to act promptly and submit review report on time.
- Immediately inform the Editor of any possible delays and suggest another date of submission for a review report, and
- Not unnecessarily delay the review process, either by prolonged delay in submission of their review or by requesting unnecessary additional data/information from the Editor or author(s).

2. Standards of Objectivity

- The reviews should be objectively carried out with a consideration of high academic, scholarly and scientific standards.
- All judgments should be meticulously established and maintained in order to ensure the full comprehension of the reviewer's comments by the editors and the author(s).
- Both reviewers and author(s) in rebuttal should avoid unsupported assertions,
- The reviewer may justifiably criticize a manuscript, but it would be inappropriate to resort to personal criticism on the author(s), and
- The reviewers should ensure that their decision is purely based on the quality of the research paper and not influenced, either positively or negatively, by any personal, financial, or other conflicting considerations or by intellectual bias.

3. Disclosure and Conflict of Interest

- A reviewer should not, for the purpose of his/her own research, use unpublished material disclosed in a submitted manuscript, without the approval of the Editor.
- The data included in the research paper is confidential and the reviewer shall not be allowed to use it for his/her personal study.
- A reviewer must declare any potentially conflicting interests (e.g. personal, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious). In such situation, s/he will be required to follow the journal's policies.


 Prof. Dr. Zafar Khan
 Editor
 Baluchistan Think Tank Network, Quetta

- A reviewer should be honest enough to declare conflicts of interest, if, the research paper under review is the same as to his/her presently conducted study.
- If the reviewer feels unqualified to separate his/her bias, s/he should immediately return the manuscript to the Editor without review, and justify to him/her about the situation.

4. Confidentiality

- Reviewers should consider the research paper as a confidential document and must not discuss its content on any platform except in cases where professional advice is being sought with the authorization of the Editor.
- Reviewers are professionally and ethically bound not to disclose the details of any research paper prior to its publication without the prior approval of the Editor.

5. Ethical Considerations

- If the reviewer suspects that the research paper is almost the same as someone else's work, s/he will ethically inform the Editor and provide its citation as a reference.
- If the reviewer suspects that results in the research paper to be untrue/unrealistic/fake, s/he will share it with the Editor.
- If there has been an indication of violating ethical norms in the treatment of human beings (e.g. children, female, poor people, disabled, elderly, etc.), then this should be identified to the Editor, and
- If the research paper is based on any previous research study or is replica of an earlier work, or the work is plagiarized for e.g. the author has not acknowledged/referenced others' work appropriately, then this should be brought in the Editor's knowledge.

6. Originality

For evaluating originality, the reviewers should consider the following elements:

- Does the research paper add to existing knowledge?

Prof. Dr. Jafar Khan
Executive Director
Baltistan University of Health Sciences
Quetta



- Are the research questions and/or hypotheses in line with the objective of the research work?

7. Structure

If the layout and format of the paper is not according to the prescribed version, the reviewers should discuss it with the Editor or should include this observation in their review report. On the other hand, if the research paper is exceptionally well written, the reviewer may overlook the formatting issues. At other times, the reviewers may suggest restructuring the paper before publication. The following elements should be carefully evaluated:

- If there is serious problem of language or expression and the reviewer gets the impression that the research paper does not fulfill linguistic requirements and readers would face difficulties reading and comprehending the paper. The reviewer should record this deficiency in his/her report and suggest the editor to make its proper editing. Such a situation may arise when the author(s)' native language is not English.
- Whether the data presented in the paper is original or reproduced from previously conducted or published work. The papers which reflect originality should be given preference for publication.
- The clarity of illustrations including photographs, models, charts, images and figures is essential to note. If there is duplication, then it should be reported in the review report. Similarly, descriptions provided in the "Results" section should correspond with the data presented in tables/figures, if not then it should be clearly listed in the review report.
- Critically review the statistical analysis of the data. Also check the rational and appropriateness of the specific analysis.
- The reviewers should read the "Methodology" section in detail and make sure that the author(s) has demonstrated the understanding of the procedures being used and presented in the manuscript.
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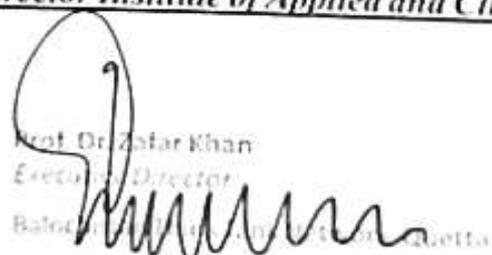
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(HEC Policy, prepared by Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Kausar, Director Institute of Applied and Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore).

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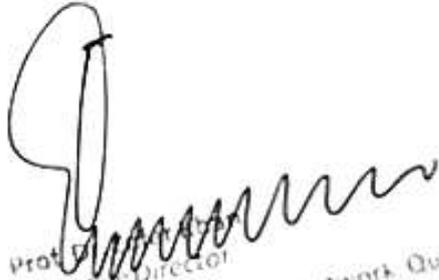
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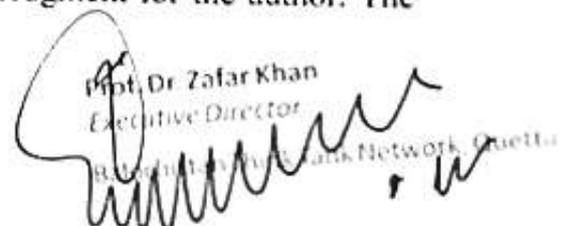
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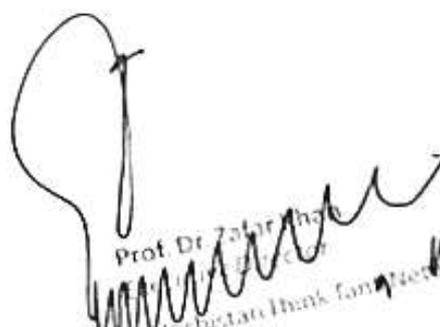
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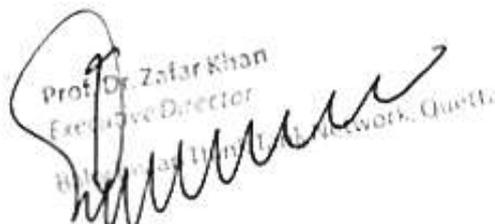
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