

## Editorials

### **An Overview of the First Volume: Issue I and Issue II: Salale Journal of Social and Indigenous Studies**

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#### **I. A Brief of the Publication Process**

*Salale Journal of Social and Indigenous Studies* is an open access peer-reviewed journal published bi-annually in both printed and online versions. It was public ally inaugurated in 2023 participating different stalk holders and other known individuals from the surrounding society. The journal has been publishing original research as well as review articles in the field of Indigenous and social studies, and its allied domains. It aims at providing a platform for the research community to share their findings, insights and views about all aspects of social sciences, humanities, linguistics, learning and teaching issues in all the aforementioned disciplines.

The mission of the Journal is, thus, to publish and disseminate high quality research work output from the diverse fields of social sciences and indigenous studies and also allied disciplines. Moreover, any related topics from other field of studies like agriculture, natural sciences, health, technology and others are acceptable for publication in the journal.

Manuscripts can be submitted in the form of full-length original research, review articles, book reviews, pilot studies, commentaries, and editorial policies, news and comments or letters to the editor. It is a trilingual publishing journal as it employs three languages as the medium of researching and publication: English Language, Amharic and Afan Oromo. This gives opportunity not only to authors from disciplines that employ English language as a medium of researching but also to those who use the other two languages.

The manuscripts on an issue are proportionally taken from those written in the three languages. Thus, based on the number of manuscripts submitted for an issue, the allotted number for publication may vary. Moreover, attempts are made to get at least one article from those

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manuscripts written in the three languages per an issue and get published. Language editor/s/ is/are assigned for each of the three languages based on the standardized usage of each language.

The publishing process was/is accomplished going through several steps. First, an office for the journal was set up equipping it with necessary furniture and infrastructure. Based on the legislation of the university, different concerned bodies like editorial and advisory board committee, responsible for establishing the Journal, were assigned. Then, the journal policy and guidelines were prepared considering the global and domestic experience. Following this, they were critically evaluated by internal and external evaluators for their effectiveness. Based on these policy and guidelines, a reviewing format with clear criteria are prepared and distributed to external and internal reviewers, following up the incoming research manuscripts. The journal has been registered in ISSN international centre for ISSN number.

The next step was preparing guidelines and disseminating them to authors for calls for manuscript-submission for both the first and the second issues. From this perspective, various platforms were used to call for papers or manuscripts, inviting authors from different disciplines for volume I issue II. Moreover, independent website ([www.sjsis.edu.et](http://www.sjsis.edu.et)) of the journal has been developed

For the first issue of Volume I, twenty-six manuscripts were collected from various researchers from which ten of them were rejected, ten of them are in progress and the best six were selected for publication. Then, the first issue of the journal has been released both in online and print versions. The hard copy was published and it was made ready for the readers. The International center released the ISSN number. After the publication of volume, I, issue I, the ISSN numbers are: 30788951 for the print version and 3078896X for the online version

By the call for papers made for the second round, thirteen manuscripts have been submitted through the journal website and e-mail plat forms. In addition to these manuscripts, the former ten manuscripts, which were in progress, are being processed for Volume I Issue II. Very recently, three manuscripts from English version and three of them from Amharic and a total of six manuscripts have been selected for publication.

Finally, to monitor the publishing process, inputs are secured from editorial board members of the journal through undertaking regular meetings.

### ❖ *Challenges Encountered*

### ***A. V I, Issue I***

As reported in V I, Issue I the first and basic challenge was from the author's side: most of the manuscripts submitted by the authors lack quality for publication. From the internal aspect, it was reported that not all editorial board members and associate editors are committed to participate in the journal work. Delays of the results of the reviewing process, from some of the internal and external reviewers' side were the other challenge. In some cases, some reviewers withdraw from the reviewing process which in turn caused a delay of the publication. Finally, a lack of a timely release of budget for the journal activities, the lack of resources such as printer, scanner machine, and a lack of training for associate editors were some other challenges to accomplish the publication activities in time.

### ***B. V I, Issue II***

The major challenge encountered during processing the second issue was somewhat similar to the ones reported in Issue I. First, most of the manuscripts submitted by the authors still lack the expected quality for publication: Few of them follow the guidelines enacted to them, they poorly discuss their findings in relation to others' together with the implications for their particular discipline, their ideas are poorly acknowledged and substantiated by up-to-date insights, and most of their work look a duplication of the existed ones. The second challenge is the work-loads on some associate editors which include leading other office works together with the teaching and researching loads. Finally, the lack of enough resources like printing and scanning machines and a lack of training for associate editors are still some other challenges to accomplish the publication activities in time.

## **II. Challenges in Publishing an article**

Contemporary academic publishing approaches are filled with new opportunities and complex challenges now, contending with the rise of open access models, the ethical use of artificial intelligence, regional disparities, data privacy concerns, and much more. Following is the discussion of these academic publishing challenges and their implications for researchers, institutions, and publishers.

### ***a) The Struggle for Open Access and Sustainable Funding Models***

Open access publishing makes research findings freely available to all in terms of accessibility. However, its standardized form is financially challenging where it requires article processing charges that shift costs to the authors. Academic publishers, funder, and institutions are thus

tasked with finding innovative funding structures that allow for the growth of open access while maintaining fairness and inclusiveness for all researchers.

*b) Battling the Rise of Predatory Journals and Their Impact on Research Integrity*

The sudden increase in predatory journals is a contemporary academic publishing challenge in that it exploits the pressure on researchers to publish by offering rapid and often superficial publication in exchange for fees. Predatory journals undermine the credibility of genuine academic work making it difficult for readers to discern reputable research. Thus, it requires creating clearer criteria for assessing the journal credibility.

*c) Overcoming the Pressures on the Peer Review System*

Peer reviewing provides a system of checks and balances that helps to ensure the quality and credibility of research. However, the system demands the reviewers volunteer their time and it may result in publication delays. This challenge not only discourages qualified experts from participating but can also lead to inadequate reviews. To address this challenge, publishers should explore ways to support reviewers by offering financial incentives and creating streamlined workflows.

*d) Navigating the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Publishing*

Artificial intelligence (AI) assists in peer review and detects plagiarism. However, the ethical implications of AI use present significant challenges. The reliance on AI for editorial decisions raises concerns about transparency and accountability. Thus, researchers, publishers, and institutions must work together to ensure that AI applications uphold ethical standards, respect author rights, and avoid compromising the quality of academic publishing.

*e) Balancing Digital-First and Traditional Publishing Models*

A publisher has to prioritize online distribution over traditional print formats as it offers numerous advantages, including greater accessibility, faster dissemination, and easier data integration. However, an academic community may value print publications for their perceived credibility. This division challenges publishers who must balance the demand for digital innovation with the desire for traditional formats. Thus, finding a model that accommodates both digital and traditional formats without compromising quality or accessibility remains a pressing issue.

*f) Addressing Copyright and Intellectual Property Complexities*

Copyright and intellectual property (IP) issues have become increasingly complex in academic publishing, especially with the rise of open access and digital content. As more researchers use copyrighted materials and share data, the potential for copyright infringements increases. This challenge is further compounded by AI training models, which sometimes use copyrighted content without clear permissions, raising ethical and legal concerns. To address these complexities, publishers and institutions are developing clearer copyright policies and exploring models that protect researchers' IP rights while allowing for appropriate content sharing and reuse levels. Transparency, open communication, and a commitment to fair use of principles are essential for building an academic publishing environment that respects copyright without stifling innovation or collaboration.

*g) Managing Globalization and Addressing Regional Disparities*

As academic publishing becomes more globalized, significant disparities may persist between nations/regions in terms of funding, access to reputable journals, and publishing opportunities. Researchers from developing countries, for example, may face limited resources to publish in top-tier journals, which often carry high cost. Thus, by focusing on inclusive policies and partnerships, a publisher can work towards a more equitable academic publishing environment that provides fair access to resources and opportunities for researchers worldwide.

*h) Ensuring Data Privacy and Security Amid Digital Growth*

Digital platforms demand publishers to collect and store vast amounts of data related to authors, reviewers, and readers, making them responsible for safeguarding sensitive information. International regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe require publishers to comply with stringent data protection standards, further complicating the task. To tackle this challenge, publishers and institutions must invest in robust data protection protocols and adopt best practices for handling and storing data securely.

*i) Upholding Research Integrity and Reprehensibility Standards*

Maintaining research integrity and reprehensibility is a long-standing challenge in academic publishing. Thus, fostering an ethical research culture where transparency is prioritized over the pressure to publish will be essential in addressing these challenges and rebuilding confidence in the academic publishing process.

*j) Keeping Pace with Technological Advancements*

Technological development in AI and data analysis enhances peer review transparency and enables advanced trend analysis across research fields. However, keeping pace with these rapid developments can be challenging for publishers. Adopting and integrating these tools demands publishers' investment, staff training, and a willingness to overhaul traditional workflows. Publishers have to ensure that staff members are adequately trained and that new technologies are integrated to benefit authors, reviewers, and readers alike.

### **Conclusion**

Although the goal of a research activity is disseminating the knowledge for the intended readers/audience, establishing and running a journal is not an easy task. It needs the collaboration of various bodies like management bodies working at different levels, editorial board, advisory board, authors, assistant editors, reviewers, ICT personals and the readers. Firstly, running a journal requires a high commitment from all officials in fulfilling all the facilities and careful follow up activities. This requires timeliness. Secondly, the editorial board members such as the editor-in-chief, managing editor and associate editors have to strictly monitor the actual process of the journal activities and then realize the publishing process. More specifically, the board has to check whether or not the manuscript under review is appropriate for the journal. In the case it deviates from the journal's mission, which means no need for an in-depth review, the editorial board has to state this in the author comments. Moreover, the board has to explain the rationale for rejection in the confidential comments to the editor.

Thirdly, based on the global and national experience, an advisory board should monitor the overall activities of the journal and give constructive feedback for improvement. This helps to improve the overall activities in the journal process in general and may develop the skills of all the participants working at each level of the journal activities. Fourthly, assistant editors and /or reviewer play great roles in reviewing the manuscript and giving an advice for the improvement of the journal. They are expected to state the comments clearly and friendly in a positive manner. In the reviewing process of a manuscript, there are many tasks done by the editorial board in general and by the reviewers in particular. Reviewing is not just proof reading or editing, it is rather scrutinizing the content, the methodology the data and the dissection of certain topic based on the professional knowledge and skills the reviewers have already gained from their past experiences. Finally, the authors should contribute quality manuscripts and respond timely to the comments given by the reviewers. They should have clear vision in contributing a drop of content

in the largest amount of knowledge in his/her profession. Then, they should present the content selectively and write up it clearly. This should be followed by careful proof reading before submitting to the journal. To put it in a net shell, the very nice presented article that can be published in a given journal is a result of a rigorous collaboration of all the aforementioned parties in the journal, that is, the authors, the editorial bodies and the reviewers.