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Journal



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1. About the Journal

Strategic Leadership and Business Management Journal (SLBMJ) is an open-access, double-blind, peer-reviewed, biannual scholarly journal committed to the publication of high-quality research in the areas of strategic leadership, business management, and organizational studies. The journal serves as an academic platform for publishing original theoretical, empirical, and applied research that contributes to the advancement of management and leadership knowledge across diverse organizational and institutional contexts and adheres to internationally recognized standards of academic publishing. The journal upholds transparency, integrity, and rigor throughout its editorial and peer review processes. Submitted manuscripts are assessed based on originality, methodological rigor, theoretical and practical contribution, and relevance to contemporary leadership and management challenges.

The journal welcomes contributions addressing a wide range of topics, including but not limited to strategic management, leadership and governance, organizational behavior, human resource management, entrepreneurship, innovation and change management, corporate strategy, business ethics, sustainability, and policy-oriented management research. Both for-profit and not-for-profit organizational perspectives are encouraged. SLBMJ is committed to ethical publishing practices and follows the principles and guidelines recommended by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). The journal ensures long-term digital preservation and accessibility of all published content to support scholarly communication and global knowledge exchange.

1.1 Aims of the Journal

SLBMJ is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that publishes original research in the fields of strategic leadership, business management, and organizational studies. The journal aims to advance theoretical knowledge and practical understanding of leadership and management by disseminating high-quality empirical, theoretical, and applied research relevant to contemporary organizational contexts.

SLBMJ seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by encouraging evidence-based and interdisciplinary research that informs strategic decision-making, leadership effectiveness, organizational performance, and sustainable business practices. The journal welcomes contributions addressing management and leadership challenges across public, private, and non-profit organizations at local, regional, and international levels. The journal publishes original research articles, review papers, conceptual studies, and case-based analyses that demonstrate methodological rigor, ethical research practices, and clear relevance to leadership and business management scholarship.

1.2 Scope of Journal

SLBMJ is published by Physio Rehab and Research Center (Pvt) Ltd, follows the whole publication process in accordance with HEC rules & guidelines, and international guidelines and standards for research journals. Journal uses Open Journal System (OJS) for all types of communications and publication processes to ensure transparency, integrity, and efficiency. Journal aims to be indexed with reputed international indexing agencies, such as DOAJ, EBSCO, J-Gate, ProQuest, DRJI, etc as per HEC guidelines. The journal has its Editorial and Advisory Board. The Editorial Board is comprised of the Chief Editor, Editor, and Managing Editor. The Advisory Board comprises reputed national and international subject specialists. The journal covers a broad and multidisciplinary range of topics within strategic leadership, business management, and organizational studies. The journal welcomes high-quality theoretical, empirical, and applied research that examines leadership and management issues in diverse organizational, institutional, and economic contexts.

SLBMJ encourages submissions from academicians, researchers, industry professionals, and policymakers that offer original insights, methodological rigor, and practical relevance. Interdisciplinary research and studies addressing contemporary challenges in business and leadership, particularly within emerging and developing economies, are especially welcomed. The scope of the journal includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Business and Management
- Strategic Management and Leadership
- Organizational Studies and Human Resource Management
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Corporate Governance and Public Administration
- Marketing, Business Ethics, and Consumer Studies
- International Business and Global Management
- Digital Transformation, Analytics, and Performance Management

1.3 Procedure for Publication

The journal uses the Open Journal System (OJS) for submission of manuscripts, review process, and publication of issues and volumes of the journal. All authors, reviewers, and editors must register on OJS after accepting the terms and conditions in the declaration. The Journal follows its double-blind peer review policy to ensure research quality and transparency of the process. Call for papers shall be published on the journal website. All manuscripts will be received electronically through the Open Journal System. Please read sections related to “Guidelines” and the “Policies of Journal” for further details, and publication process illustrated in Annexure B.

2. Guidelines

2.1 Author Guidelines

SLBMJ invites high-quality submissions in the fields of strategic leadership and business management. Authors are expected to submit original, evidence-based research work, including research articles, reviews, policy papers, case studies, and letters to the editor/editorial. All submissions must strictly follow the journal's guidelines, which are aligned with internationally recognized standards set by COPE and DOAJ. Compliance ensures ethical research conduct, transparency, and the integrity of the peer review process. Authors are encouraged to review these guidelines carefully before submission to facilitate a smooth and efficient editorial process.

Conflict of Interest: To prevent the information on potential conflict of interest for authors from being overlooked or misplaced, that information must be part of the manuscript. It should therefore also be included as a single line in the manuscript.

Submission declaration and verification: Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract, a published lecture, or academic thesis, that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright holder. If additional papers have or will be published with any overlap of the current dataset, it is the authors' responsibility to notify the editor at the time of submission.

Changes to authorship: Authors are expected to consider the list and the order of authors before submitting their manuscript and provide the definitive list of authors at the time of the original submission. Any addition, deletion, or rearrangement of author names in the authorship list should be made only before the manuscript has been accepted and only if approved by the journal editor. To request such a change, the Editor must receive the following from the corresponding author: (a) the reason for the

change in the author list and (b) written confirmation (e-mail, letter) from all authors that they agree with the addition, removal, or rearrangement. In the case of the addition or removal of authors, this includes confirmation from the author being added or removed. The editor can consider the addition, deletion, or rearrangement of authors after the manuscript has been accepted only in exceptional circumstances. While the editor considers the request, the publication of the manuscript will be suspended. If the manuscript has already been published in an online issue, any requests approved by the editor will result in a corrigendum.

Authorship Letter: The corresponding author has to submit an authorship letter at the time of submission of the manuscript, duly signed by all co-authors, along with a description of their contributions, affiliations, and email addresses. Declaration of any potential conflict of interest, transfer of copyrights, and funding will also be mentioned in it.

Open Access: This is an open-access journal; all articles are published under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#), will be free for everyone to read, permitting unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction with proper attribution.

Double-Blind Peer-Review: This journal operates a double-blind review process. All contributions will be initially assessed by the editor for suitability for the journal. Manuscripts deemed suitable are then typically sent to two independent expert reviewers (one national and one international) to assess the scientific quality of the paper. The Editor is responsible for the final decision regarding the acceptance or rejection of articles. The Editor's decision is final.

Editorials

SLBMJ publishes editorials on the journal's scope of publication fields. Editorials are usually commissioned; however, anyone wishing to write an editorial should contact the Journal Editor for discussion about the topic. Editorials should be no more than 1500 words with a maximum of three authors and 20 references. Commissioned

editorials are not formally peer-reviewed, but may be subject to informal review. Non-commissioned editorials will be formally peer-reviewed.

Types of Manuscripts Accepted

SLBMJ accepts the following types of manuscripts:

- **Original Research Articles:** Empirical studies contributing original findings to leadership and business management.
- **Review Articles:** Systematic or narrative reviews synthesizing existing research.
- **Conceptual/Theoretical Papers:** Development of models, frameworks, or theories.
- **Case Studies:** Analytical studies of organizations or managerial practices.
- **Policy & Practice Papers:** Evidence-based analyses informing management and governance.
- **Short Research Communications:** Brief reports of novel or preliminary findings.
- **Methodological Papers:** Studies on research methods and analytical techniques.
- **Letter to the Editor / Editorials:** Short, focused commentaries or viewpoints on previously published articles, current trends, emerging issues, or important developments in leadership and business management.

Submission Process

- **Register/Login:** Create an account or log in to the submission portal.
- **Upload Files:** Submit the manuscript and supplementary materials.
- **Metadata:** Provide all required information (e.g., author details, corresponding author, keywords).
- **Acknowledgement/Declarations:** Acknowledgement of Copyrights Statement, AI Usage Declaration, and Conflicts of Interest.

You may refer to the “Submission Process Guide” on the journal website. Once you have submitted the article, all correspondence will be sent by email. In case of any submission-related queries, please send an email to editor@slbmj.com

Submission Requirements

- **Originality:** Manuscripts must be original, unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere.
- **Language:** All submissions must be in English (British or American spelling is acceptable, but should be consistent).
- **Submission Platform:** Manuscripts must be submitted via the SLBMJ website submission portal.
- **Supplementary Materials:** Authors may include datasets or any additional files as part of their submission.
- **Acknowledgements & Declarations:** AI Usage Declaration, Copyrights, and Conflict of Interests must be submitted at the time of submission.
- **Authorship Letter** (available in downloads)
- **Authors undertaking** form submission (available in downloads)

Submission Preparation Checklist

As part of the submission process, authors are required to check off their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors who do not adhere to these guidelines.

- The submission has not been previously published, nor submitted before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided in Comments to the Editor).
- The submission file is in OpenOffice, Microsoft Word, or RTF document file format.
- Where available, URLs for the references have been provided.
- The text adheres to the stylistics and bibliographic requirements outlined.
- A maximum of six authors is allowed in a manuscript.
- A maximum of four tables/figures is allowed, but we may consider more depending on data analysis and its importance.

Formatting Guidelines

- **Font and Spacing:** Use Cambria, size 12, single-line spacing, justified alignment.
- **Figures and Tables:** All illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.
- **Abbreviations:** Define at first use and include a list at the end of the manuscript.
- **Word Count:**
 - **Original Research Articles:** up to 5,000 words
 - **Review Articles:** up to 6,000 words
 - **Conceptual / Theoretical Papers:** up to 4,000 words
 - **Case Studies:** up to 3,000 words
 - **Policy & Practice Papers:** up to 3,500 words
 - **Short Research Communications:** up to 1,500 words
 - **Methodological Papers:** up to 4,000 words
 - **Letter to Editor / Editorials:** up to 1500 words

This word count excludes abstract, references, tables, and figures. All manuscript types are double-blind peer reviewed. Slight deviations may be permitted at the discretion of the Editor.

Manuscript Preparation

Title: The title should be concise and informative. Titles are often used in information-retrieval systems. Avoid abbreviations and formulae where possible.

Running title: Write a short running title on the title page.

Author names and Affiliations: Please clearly indicate the given name(s) and family name(s) of each author. Present the authors' affiliation addresses (where the actual work was done) below the names. Provide the full postal address of each affiliation, including the city and country name, and the e-mail address of each author.

Corresponding author: Indicate who will handle correspondence at all stages of refereeing and publication, also post-publication. Ensure that the e-mail addresses and contact numbers are given. The corresponding author details should be included on the title page.

Abstract: The structured abstract should comprise the following: Background, Objective, Methodology, Results, Conclusion. A concise and factual abstract is required of a maximum of 300 words. The abstract should state the purpose of the research briefly, the principal results, and the major conclusions. An abstract is often presented separately from the article, so it must be able to stand alone. For this reason, references should be avoided. Also, non-standard or uncommon abbreviations should be avoided, but if essential, they must be defined at their first mention in the abstract itself.

Keywords: Immediately after the abstract, provide 4 – 6 keywords and avoid general and plural terms and multiple concepts (avoid, for example, ‘and’, ‘of’). Only abbreviations firmly established in the field may be eligible. These keywords will be used for indexing purposes.

Units and Abbreviations: This journal does not favor abbreviations in the text. However, commonly used terms do not require spelling out in full at first mention (they would usually appear within parentheses), but even when presented outside of parentheses, they do not require defining. The journal uses an approved list of units and abbreviations.

Introduction: State the objectives of the work and provide an adequate background, avoiding a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.

Methodology: Provide sufficient details to allow the work to be reproduced by an independent researcher. Methodologies that are already published should be summarized and indicated by a reference. If quoting directly from a previously published methodology, use quotation marks and also cite the source. Any modifications to existing methods should also be described.

Results: Results should be clear and concise. Present key findings using tables and figures where appropriate.

Discussion: This should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature. Interpret findings, acknowledge limitations, and compare with existing research.

Conclusion: The main conclusion of the study should be presented in a short concluding paragraph after the end of the discussion section. Summarize the study's significance and implications.

Conflict of Interest: To prevent the information on potential conflicts of interest for authors from being overlooked or misplaced, that information must be part of the manuscript. It should therefore also be included after the conclusion.

Tables & Figures: Ensure that each figure has a caption that comprises a brief title or a description of the illustration. Keep text in the illustrations themselves to a minimum, but explain all symbols and abbreviations used. Please submit tables as editable text and not as images. Write captions below the table and place them next to the relevant text in the article. Number the tables consecutively following their appearance in the text and place any table notes below the table body. Ensure that the data presented in them do not duplicate results described elsewhere in the article. The maximum number of tables/figures to be included is 4; however, in some cases, additional ones may be considered due to their importance.

References

- Follow Vancouver style with a minimum of 20 references.
- Number references sequentially as they appear in the text.
- For three authors or fewer, list all; for more than three, use “et al.”
- Use the full journal title or “non-abbreviated journal name”.
- All references mentioned in the reference list are cited in the text, and vice versa.

- Permission has been obtained for the use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Internet).

Reference Examples

- Journal Article: Porter ME. What is strategy? Harvard Business Review. 1996;74(6):61–78.
- Online Sources: Kotter JP. Leading change: why transformation efforts fail. Harvard Business Review [Internet]. 2012 [cited 2024 May 10]. Available from: <https://hbr.org>
- Reports/Institutional Publications: World Bank. World Development Report 2022: Finance for an Equitable Recovery. Washington (DC): World Bank Publications; 2022.
- Conference Proceedings: Eisenhardt KM, Graebner ME. Theory building from cases. In: Proceedings of the Academy of Management Annual Meeting; 2007 Aug 3–8; Philadelphia, USA. Briarcliff Manor (NY): Academy of Management; 2007. p. 25–30.
- Book: Robbins SP, Judge TA. Organizational Behavior. 18th ed. Boston (MA): Pearson Education; 2022.
- Chapter in an Edited Book: Hambrick DC. Upper echelons theory. In: Tsui AS, Walsh JP, editors. The Oxford Handbook of Management Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2013. p. 96–122.

Ethical Considerations

- **Consent for Publication:** Obtain written consent for any identifiable information, including case reports.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Declare all financial and non-financial competing interests.
- **Funding Transparency:** Disclose all funding sources and their roles in the study.

Post-Acceptance Process

- **Proofreading and Copyediting:** Manuscripts are reviewed for language, clarity, and formatting.

- **DOI Assignment:** Each article is assigned a unique DOI for permanent access.
- **Proof Approval:** Authors must review and approve final proofs before publication.

Final Submission Checklist

The following list will be useful during the final checking of an article before sending it to the journal for review. All necessary files have been uploaded. Ensure that the following items are present:

- One author has been designated as the corresponding author with contact details:
 - Institution affiliation
 - E-mail address
- Keywords
- All figure and table captions
- All tables (including title, description, footnotes)
- Further considerations
- The manuscript has been spell-checked and grammar-checked. References are in the correct format for this journal.
- All references mentioned in the reference list are cited in the text, and vice versa
- Permission has been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Internet)

2.2 Reviewer Guidelines

SLBMJ strictly follows the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers. Reviewers play a vital role in maintaining the scientific quality, ethical integrity, and academic credibility of the journal.

Ethical Responsibilities and Confidentiality

- All manuscripts submitted to SLBMJ are treated as the intellectual property of the authors. Any misuse, reproduction, or disclosure of unpublished material is considered unethical and unlawful.

- Reviewers must maintain strict confidentiality and must not use any part of the manuscript for personal research, future publications, or professional activities.
- Author identities and affiliations must remain confidential. Reviewers are strictly prohibited from contacting authors directly under any circumstances.
- Discussion of manuscript content with subject experts or colleagues is permitted only after informing the Editor, and confidentiality must be preserved at all times.

Conflict of Interest and Review Timelines

- If a reviewer is unable to evaluate a manuscript impartially due to a conflict of interest or any other reason, the manuscript should be returned to the Editor within seven (07) working days, along with a clear explanation.
- Once a reviewer accepts the review assignment, a comprehensive review should be completed within two (02) weeks. If additional time is required, the reviewer must inform the Editor in advance.

Role of the Reviewer

- The final decision regarding acceptance, revision, or rejection of a manuscript rests solely with the Editor.
- Reviewers should not state acceptance or rejection decisions in comments intended for authors. Confidential recommendations may be communicated separately to the Editor, clearly referencing the manuscript ID.

Criteria for Manuscript Evaluation: Reviewers are requested to assess manuscripts based on the following criteria:

- Scientific reliability and professional depth of knowledge
- Relevance of the research question to the journal's scope of research areas
- Originality and contribution to existing knowledge
- Adequacy and clarity of the abstract and appropriateness of keywords
- Suitability of the research design and methodology, including statistical validity

- Clear description of inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Relevance, credibility, and presentation of results
- Sound interpretation of data and justification of conclusions
- Relevance and depth of the discussion in supporting the authors' claims
- Accuracy, relevance, and currency of references, including identification of major omissions
- Clarity, relevance, and proper labeling of tables and figures
- Compliance with ethical standards in research
- Overall organization, clarity, and adherence to SLBMJ author guidelines

Professional Conduct and Constructive Feedback

- Reviews must be objective, unbiased, and independent of the authors' geographical location or institutional affiliation.
- A fair evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript is essential. Constructive criticism supported by clear reasoning and references, where appropriate, is strongly encouraged.
- Reviewers should not recommend citation of their own work solely to increase personal citation counts. References may be suggested only when academically relevant.
- Discourteous, dismissive, or abrasive language must be avoided. All comments should be professional, respectful, and well-documented.
- While reviewers are not required to correct grammatical or language errors, any assistance in improving clarity and readability is appreciated.
- If additional insights arise after submission of the review report, reviewers may communicate them to the Editor via email.

Editorial Discretion: The Editor values reviewers' recommendations; however, editorial decisions are based on multiple expert evaluations and journal policies. Reviewers should not expect every recommendation to be reflected in the final decision.

3. Journal Policies

Journal policies are guidelines and regulations established by academic and professional journals to ensure the integrity, quality, and ethical standards of the publications they produce. These policies typically cover a range of topics, including submission guidelines, peer review processes, authorship criteria, plagiarism checks, and conflict of interest disclosures. They are designed to maintain transparency and fairness in the publication process, ensuring that all submitted work is evaluated based on merit and adheres to ethical research practices. Additionally, journal policies may include open access options, data sharing requirements, and guidelines for addressing errors or retractions. By adhering to these policies, journals aim to uphold the credibility of the scientific and academic community, fostering trust among authors, reviewers, and readers alike.

3.1 Editorial Policy

SLBMJ is an international peer-reviewed journal dedicated to advancing knowledge in strategic leadership and business management domains. The journal welcomes high-quality submissions that contribute to evidence-based research related to the field of strategic leadership and business management. The journal publishes a wide range of article types, including original research, review articles, conceptual/theoretical papers, case studies, policy & practice papers, short communications, methodological papers, letters to the editor, and editorials. All submissions must be written clearly enough to be understood by a broad readership and should contribute to the overall context of the research areas of the journal.

Manuscripts submitted to SLBMJ must be original, unpublished, and not under consideration by any other journal. The journal follows the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) in all matters of authorship, ethical conduct, peer review, and publication integrity. Authors are encouraged to review COPE guidelines at www.publicationethics.org

Authorship Criteria: Authorship confers credit and has important academic, social, and financial implications as well as accountability for published work. It is the moral obligation of an editorial board to ensure that individuals making significant contributions to a paper are given credit for it, but also to ensure that the authors understand their role in taking responsibility for their publication. SLBMJ follows the recommended COPE authorship guidelines based on the following four criteria:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

All those designated as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, and all who meet the four criteria should be identified as authors. Those who do not meet all four criteria but have made a substantive contribution to the research should be acknowledged in the acknowledgment section of the article. We accept publications/articles from both National and International Authors. It is important to note that:

- Funding agencies, data collectors, and biostatisticians do not justify authorship.
- Once the authorship certificate is submitted, no further changes will be allowed in the sequence and/or addition of new authors.

Authors' Contributions: An author contribution statement defining each author's contribution to the article should be provided. This must be done in two forms: by filling out the authors' undertaking and authorship letter, which can be downloaded from the journal website. For review articles, where individual statements are less applicable, a statement should be included that clarifies who was responsible for the ideation, who performed the literature search and/or data analysis, and who drafted and revised the work.

Deceased Authors: Deceased authors would be included with a death dagger (†) next to the author's name and a footnote stating that the author is deceased, along with the date of death.

Submission of Manuscript: Authors should prepare their manuscript according to the specifications provided in the journal's author's guidelines. All manuscripts submitted through the appropriate channel will be entertained for review. Manuscripts sent to the editor's email should not be accepted.

Authors listed on the manuscript should have met the requirements for authorship specified above. Without final acceptance from the corresponding author, no manuscript will be published. Once the document is submitted to the journal, it is expected that all the authors have been accepted and they will be bound to the terms and conditions of the journal. The contact information of all authors and the Declaration of Conflicts of Interest should be stated in the manuscript.

Manuscript Withdrawal Policy: The corresponding author has to inform the Editor-in-Chief through email of the intent to withdraw the submitted article. A manuscript withdrawal form will be sent to the authors' email, following which all the respective authors should sign and express their interest in withdrawal. Upon receiving the completed form from the corresponding author, further processing of the article will be stopped. The processing charges are not refunded in case of withdrawal.

Conflict of Interest: Conflicts may be due to personal reasons, financial relationships, or academic competitions. It may be due to intellectual passion also. Whatever the reason for conflicts of interest, the credibility of the journal, author, and research itself will be influenced from null to high potential. These influences may affect the scientific judgment of the research carried out. It is very important to disclose the conflicts of interest that occurred during the process of research. This will help the evaluators, critics, and readers to understand the situations and the research that took place.

Research and Publication Misconduct: SLBMJ adheres to the guidelines established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for addressing research and publication misconduct. Duplicating existing publications, a high level of plagiarism, fraudulent or fabricated data, changes in authorship, and not disclosing a conflict of interest can be

listed under research and publication misconduct. However, in suspected cases of misconduct, a manuscript may be revealed to members of the university/organization who may require it for the resolution of the misconduct.

Role of Plagiarism Committee: All the submitted articles are scanned with Turnitin, and the similarity report should be less than 19%. Upon completion of the plagiarism scan, they analyze the quality of the manuscript and report to the editor, after which the manuscript is assigned for the review process. A plagiarism report is created, which is emailed to the author along with a review report. The committee looks into plagiarism-related issues and deals with them according to COPE guidelines.

Acknowledgment: Acknowledgment should cover the persons other than those who claim authorship, especially individuals who worked for manuscript development, funding agency, or persons who provided resources, organizations that provided support for the smooth run of the research.

Confidentiality: SLBMJ will not disclose any research paper submitted to it. Once the original research is submitted to the journal will be treated as the most confidential material, and maintaining its confidentiality is our responsibility. We will share the article with manuscript developers, reviewers, and editors in various stages of processing after the submission is confirmed.

Review of Articles: Submitted manuscripts are reviewed for originality, significance, adequacy of documentation, reader interest, and composition. Manuscripts not submitted according to instructions will be returned to the author for correction before beginning the peer review/process. Revised manuscripts are judged on the adequacy of responses to suggestions and criticisms made during the initial review. Each manuscript will be checked for technical, statistical, ethical, and language corrections. All parts of accepted manuscripts are subject to editing for scientific accuracy and clarity by the office of the Editor. The editorial board of the journal holds the right to a final decision of accepting or rejecting any article for publication in the journal, at any stage, including the editorial review.

3.2 Editorial Structure and Workflow

SLBMJ maintains a rigorous and transparent editorial process to ensure the publication of high-quality, evidence-based research. Every manuscript undergoes structured evaluation at multiple stages, guided by ethical standards and best practices in scholarly publishing. The following roles and responsibilities define the journal's editorial workflow:

Editorial Office: The Editorial Office conducts the initial administrative screening of all submissions to ensure completeness of required documentation, including author forms, ethics approval, and fee receipts, etc. Submissions found to be incomplete are returned to the authors for correction before further processing.

Editor / Handling Editor: The Editor or Handling Editor evaluates each manuscript for technical quality, relevance, originality, and scholarly content merit. They make preliminary editorial decisions, which may include rejection, return for revision, or progression to peer review. Responsibilities also include selecting and inviting suitable peer reviewers, assessing reviewer reports, and providing final recommendations regarding acceptance, revision, or rejection. All editorial decisions are conducted in compliance with COPE and ethical standards.

Editorial Board Members: Editorial Board Members may contribute as subject-matter experts during the initial triage or peer review process. They provide guidance to the Editor-in-Chief on journal policies, scope, and publication standards, and may assist in rapid reviews or in resolving conflicting reviewer evaluations.

Chief Editor: The Chief Editor holds ultimate responsibility for all editorial decisions, including manuscript acceptance or rejection. They safeguard editorial independence, maintain the integrity of the journal, and ensure compliance with established policies. The Chief Editor also oversees the resolution of ethical concerns and complaints, following COPE-recommended procedures.

Managing Editor: The Managing Editor oversees the operational aspects of the journal's editorial workflow. They coordinate the smooth progression of manuscripts from submission to publication, maintain communication with authors, reviewers, and

editors, and ensure adherence to timelines, journal policies, and ethical standards. While editorial decisions are finalized by the Chief Editor, the Managing Editor ensures their efficient implementation.

Copyeditor / Production Team: Following acceptance, the copyeditor and production team ensure manuscripts meet formatting, grammatical, and technical standards. They prepare final galley proofs and coordinate author approval before publication to ensure high-quality, error-free output.

3.3 Publication Ethical Policy

SLBMJ adheres to a transparent, timely, and fair editorial process at every stage, ensuring ethical standards, research integrity, and high-quality publication practices. The journal strives to uphold the highest standards of ethical research, transparency, and integrity in all stages of manuscript submission, peer review, and publication. Authors are expected to comply with the ethical guidelines set by the **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)** at <https://publicationethics.org/> and other internationally recognized standards. All research involving human participants must have prior approval from the relevant ethical review board/research committee of the institution, and ethical considerations, including informed consent and the management of control groups, must be clearly addressed. For studies involving previously published tables, figures, or photographs, written permission must be obtained from the original author(s) and publisher, and identifiable information must be fully anonymized unless consent is provided.

All submitted manuscripts undergo an initial desk review by the Editorial Committee to ensure compliance with the journal's scope, formatting guidelines, research methodology, language quality, and conceptual clarity. Manuscripts failing these criteria may be rejected at this stage. For accepted manuscripts, the similarity index report is generated in line with HEC policy, and papers may be accepted or rejected based on the findings. Accepted papers are then sent to two reviewers selected from a regularly updated, editorial board-approved reviewer panel. The journal does not allow in-house institutional reviewers. Authors must disclose any conflicts of interest, financial or

otherwise, as well as any sponsorship or material support related to their work. Prior approval and declarations must be included.

Upon final acceptance, including reviewer feedback and editorial proofreading, manuscripts are published in online format. SLBMJ aims to publish at least five articles per issue, with efforts to include seven to ten articles. At least one-fourth of the published articles should have international authorship, and no more than 5% of publications may be self-institutional as per HEC policy. Immediate family members of the editorial team may publish no more than one paper in three consecutive issues.

3.4 Ethics and Malpractice Policy

The journal that follows the COPE recommendations for publication of scholarly work, it is expected of authors, reviewers, and editors that they follow the best-practice guidelines on ethical behavior contained therein. A selection of key points is included below, but you should always refer to the three documents listed above for full details.

Duties of Editors

Fair play and editorial independence: Editors evaluate submitted manuscripts exclusively based on their academic merit (importance, originality, study's validity, clarity) and their relevance to the journal's scope, without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, citizenship, religious belief, political philosophy, or institutional affiliation. Decisions to edit and publish are not determined by the policies of governments or any other agencies outside of the journal itself. The Editor-in-Chief has full authority over the entire editorial content of the journal and the timing of publication of that content.

Confidentiality: Editors and editorial staff will not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

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Contribution to editorial decisions: Peer review assists editors in making editorial decisions and, through editorial communications with authors, may assist authors in improving their manuscripts. Peer review is an essential component of formal scholarly communication and lies at the heart of scientific and research endeavors.

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Disclosure and conflicts of interest: Any invited referee who has conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the manuscript and the work described therein should immediately notify the editors to declare their conflicts of interest and decline the invitation to review so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

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Reporting standards: Authors of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed and the results, followed by an objective discussion of the significance of the work. The manuscript should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Review articles should be accurate, objective,

and comprehensive, while editorial ‘opinion’ or perspective pieces should be clearly identified as such. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

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Duties of the Publisher

Handling of unethical publishing behavior: In cases of alleged or proven research misconduct, fraudulent publication, or plagiarism, the publisher, in close collaboration with the editors, will take all appropriate measures to clarify the situation and to amend the article in question. This includes the prompt publication of an erratum, clarification,

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Access to journal content: The publisher is committed to the permanent availability and preservation of scholarly research and ensures accessibility by partnering with organizations and maintaining our own digital archive.

3.5 Conflict of Interest

Disclosure of Interests by Authors

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- **Editors:** Undeclared conflicts will be managed according to COPE procedures.

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3.6 Peer Review Policy

The journal follows a double-blind peer review process in which neither the authors nor the reviewers know each other's details. The submitted manuscripts will be reviewed for originality, scientific significance, and adequacy of documentation. Further, reviewers are also required to disclose any conflict of interest regarding the manuscripts they will review. In case of any serious conflict of interest, another reviewer of the same discipline will be chosen for the review. Authors are required to submit a complete list of byline authors, their affiliations, and contact details in a separate file along with the manuscript file. All the manuscripts submitted will be initially scrutinized within a week for completeness and formatting by the editorial staff. The manuscripts not prepared according to the instructions will be returned to the authors for any corrections/modifications before sending them for peer review.

While manuscripts prepared according to the prescribed guidelines will be sent for peer review to at least two independent subject experts (one national and one international). The manuscripts will be accepted or rejected, or sent for modifications, according to the reviewers' recommendations. In case of a difference of opinion among both subject experts, the manuscript will be sent to a third reviewer. All parts of accepted manuscripts are subject to editing for scientific accuracy and clarity by the office of the Editor. The manuscripts will undergo copyediting (including modifications in the text, table, figures, etc.) and layout formatting by the editorial staff. Final articles will be sent to the corresponding authors for proofreading and acceptance of changes made by the editorial staff. The names of the reviewers will be strictly kept confidential and will not be disclosed at any point. Reviewers are expected to keep the scientific data strictly

confidential and shall not keep their records or share them with any other colleague. Reviewers must also not use/quote data from the manuscript under review before its publication.

3.7 Peer Review Process

The journal follows a rigorous, transparent, and ethical peer review process to ensure the quality, integrity, and scientific value of published work. The journal operates a double-blind peer review system in accordance with COPE and DOAJ recommendations.

Initial Editorial Screening

- Relevance to the aims and scope of SLBMJ.
- Compliance with submission guidelines and journal policies.
- Ethical compliance, including plagiarism screening using Turnitin (similarity threshold should be less than 19%, excluding references).
- Basic scholarly quality, including language, structure, and referencing style.

Only manuscripts meeting these criteria proceed to peer review.

Selection of Reviewers: Each manuscript is reviewed by at least two independent experts (one national and one international) selected based on:

- Subject-matter expertise.
- Absence of conflicts of interest (COPE).
- Diversity to ensure balanced and unbiased evaluation.

Reviewers must provide objective, constructive feedback, maintain confidentiality, declare conflicts of interest, and comply with COPE reviewer guidelines.

Reviewer Assessment Criteria

- Originality and contribution in the field of strategic leadership and business management.
- Methodological rigor and validity of results.
- Clarity and coherence of presentation.
- Ethical compliance, including informed consent and data transparency.

Reviews must be constructive, specific, and submitted within the assigned timeframe.

Peer Review Process and Editorial Decision

Reviewer Recommendations: Accept, Minor Revision, Major Revision, or Reject.

Revisions: Authors must respond point by point and resubmit within the specified timeframe. Revised manuscripts may be re-reviewed.

Final Decision: The editorial team makes the final decision, taking into account reviewer input and ethical considerations.

Double-Blind Review and Editorial Oversight: Author and reviewer identities are concealed throughout the review process to ensure impartiality. Editors oversee the process to ensure fairness, address ethical concerns, and prevent manipulation by verifying reviewer credentials and avoiding conflicts of interest.

Editorial Workflow before Publication

Submission Stage

- Online submission via OJS with required metadata and declarations.
- Initial checks for scope, guidelines, and ethics.

Review Stage

- Double-blind peer review by two reviewers.
- Author revisions based on reviewer feedback.

Copyediting Stage

- Language, style, and technical editing.

- Final author approval.

Production Stage

- Formatting and layout design.
- DOI assignment.
- Proof review and issue scheduling.

Transparency, Timeliness, and Ethics

- Peer review policies are publicly available.
- Standard review timeframe: 4–6 weeks.
- Reviewers may receive anonymized certificates.
- An independent editorial panel handles the appeals.
- Post-publication scholarly discussion is encouraged.

SLBMJ is committed to publishing high-quality, ethical, and impactful research through a structured OJS-based peer review system.

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3.11 Plagiarism Policy

In the wake of fundamental improvements being introduced in the system of Higher Education in Pakistan, the credit, respect, recognition of research and scholarly publications, career development, and financial gains are now linked with such original works accomplished without replicating the efforts of other researchers. It has therefore become necessary that the menace of plagiarism be highlighted and curbed through exemplary punitive actions. On the other hand, we must also guard against bogus or false complaints in order to prevent victimization, which may make researchers and scholars shy away from research simply because of the fear of prosecution. A Plagiarism Policy has therefore become necessary to create awareness, define various forms in which Plagiarism exhibits itself, present a methodology of investigation, provide for punitive action proportional to the extent of the offense, and even address the issue of false or spurious complaints. HEC has comprehensively defined plagiarism in its 'Plagiarism Policy'. The excerpt of the said HEC policy is reproduced as under:

According to Oxford Dictionary, plagiarism is defined as **“taking and using the thoughts, writings, and inventions of another person as one’s own”**. This, or various similar definitions found in recognized publications/documents, are very broad and can be used to create awareness about plagiarism, but are not practical enough to apply to ascertain guilt or innocence in specific cases. To establish the violation of ethical norms, or academic or intellectual dishonesty resulting from Plagiarism and to take punitive actions in this regard, the variety of forms in which Plagiarism manifests itself must be known. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Copying or purposely paraphrasing portions of another author’s paper or unpublished report without citing the exact reference.
- b. Copying elements of another author’s paper, such as equations or illustrations that are not common knowledge, or copying or purposely paraphrasing sentences without citing the source.
- c. Copying portions of another author’s paper or from reports by citing but not clearly differentiating what text has been copied (e.g., not applying quotation marks correctly) and /or not citing the source correctly.
- d. The unacknowledged use of computer programs, mathematical / computer models/algorithms, computer software in all forms, macros, spreadsheets, web pages, databases, mathematical deviations and calculations, designs/models/displays of any sort, diagrams, graphs, tables, drawings, works of art of any sort, fine art pieces or artifacts, digital images, computer-aided design drawings, GIS files, photographs, maps, music/composition of any sort, posters, presentations and tracing.
- e. Self-plagiarism, that is, the copying or re-use of significant portions of “one’s own copyrighted work without citing the source.”

Adoption of HEC Policies: As mentioned earlier, all anti-plagiarism policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines provided by HEC shall be adopted and fully implemented university-wide in letter and spirit. HEC also issues notifications from time to time as an ongoing activity. Therefore, all such notifications shall be deliberated at the appropriate forum(s) of SLBMJ for adoption/adaptation in the light of the journal’s structure/settings.

Turnitin: Turnitin is an internet-based plagiarism detection service, used globally to check plagiarism. It helps students, faculty, researchers, etc., to determine a similarity index of the submitted documents. HEC is incessantly advising to use Turnitin for checking plagiarism in assignments, papers, reports, etc. SLBMJ has already been making use of this extremely useful plagiarism detection software and shall continue to use this software in an official capacity.

Anti-Plagiarism Code of Conduct: The students/Researchers are expected to:

- Ensure the observance of the universal moral principles of research.
- Abide by all SLBMJ & HEC research policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines, etc.
- Follow local and international applicable research policies and established practices.
- Avoid immoral research practices.
- Apply suitable and relevant research methods.
- Conclude based on a critical analysis of the evidence.
- Report completely and correctly the findings of the research.
- Keep clear, complete, and accurate records of all research.
- Acknowledge the individuals who made contributions to the research.
- Obtain informed consent from the respondents/unit of analysis, for example, surveys in the case of Social Sciences, a declaration to the respondents/unit of analysis on the assurance of confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time before data collection.
- Keep privacy/secretcy when reviewing others' work.
- Avoid plagiarism of all kinds.

Duty to Report: All SLBMJ community members have the implicit duty to report to the authorities concerned, in good faith and without fear, any suspected research misconduct like fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, etc., and/ or any incident where known facts indicate a possibility of a code or policy violation.

3.12 AI Usage & Disclosure Policy

General Principles of AI Usage: In accordance with COPE Core Practices on **Integrity, Confidentiality, Transparency,** and **Editorial Oversight,** SLBMJ affirms that:

- Responsibility and accountability for all published content rest solely with **human authors, editors, and reviewers.**
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- Manuscripts, peer-review materials, and editorial communications are **confidential intellectual property** and must not be shared with third-party AI systems.
- Editorial and peer-review decisions must be based on **human expertise, independent judgment, and ethical reasoning.**
- AI technologies may be used only when they do not compromise **research integrity, originality, data protection, or ethical publishing standards.**

AI Policy for Editors: In line with COPE Core Practices on **Editorial Oversight and Independence:**

- **Editorial Responsibility:** Editors are accountable for safeguarding the integrity of the scholarly record. Editorial decisions must not be delegated to, generated by, or influenced by generative AI systems.
- **Prohibited Use of AI:** Editors must not upload, input, or process any confidential material into generative AI tools, including:
 - Manuscript text and supplementary files
 - Peer-review reports
 - Editorial correspondence and internal deliberations

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Reviewer Responsibility: Peer review must be conducted exclusively by the invited reviewer. Reviews must reflect the reviewer's independent expert judgment.

Confidentiality and AI Restrictions: Reviewers must not upload, share, or process any manuscript content using generative AI tools, including abstracts, figures, tables, methods, or supplementary materials. Confidentiality obligations apply indefinitely, regardless of editorial outcome.

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AI Policy for Authors: In alignment with COPE principles of **Accountability, Transparency, and Research Integrity:**

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- **Author's Accepted Manuscript (AAM):** Peer-reviewed version accepted for publication.
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The financial management of a journal is governed by Physio Rehab and Research Center (Pvt) Ltd, based in Lahore, Pakistan. Local and international reviewers will be paid honorarium as approved by the Editorial Board. The cost of printing administrative expenditure will be covered by the research center if not funded by HEC. Journal only charges a processing fee but does not charge a publication fee from authors, as per approval of the Editorial Board.

3.15 Article Publication Charges

All manuscripts submitted to SLBMJ by local authors are only charged an article processing fee of Rs. 5,000; international authors are charged USD 25. These charges help to cover some portion of the editorial, administrative, and operational costs of the journal. Manuscripts are processed **only after receipt of the APC**. There are no publication charges of acceptance manuscripts, which are published free of cost.

Payment Methods: Payments for processing and publication can be made via online bank transfer or bank deposit. **Cheques are not accepted.**

Bank Details for Local Payments (Pakistan):

- **Bank Name:** Meezan Bank
- **Branch:** Karim Block
- **Account Title:** Physio Rehab & Research Center (Pvt) Ltd.
- **Account #:** 02840106834789
- **SWIFT Code / IBAN:** PK39MEZN0002840106834789

International Payments: Authors may pay in **USD** using the bank IBAN provided.

Payment Confirmation: For online deposits of processing charges, a copy of the receipt should be emailed to editor@slbmj.com

Note: A maximum of six authors is allowed.

3.16 Waiver Policy

SLBMJ only charges a very minimal article processing fee at the time of submission. Since there are no publication fees involved, there is no waiver policy.

3.17 Advertising Policy

SLBMJ maintains a strict policy regarding advertisements to preserve the integrity and independence of its scholarly content. The journal does not accept or publish advertisements from companies, commercial organizations, or any other external entities.

This policy ensures that all content published in SLBMJ remains unbiased, evidence-based, and free from commercial influence.

3.18 Corrigendum, Addendum & Retraction Policy

The journal is committed to maintaining the integrity, accuracy, and transparency of the scholarly record. This policy outlines procedures for handling corrigenda, addenda, and retractions in alignment with COPE Core Practices and international publishing standards.

Corrigendum (Correction)

Definition: A corrigendum is issued to correct significant errors in a published article that do not invalidate the overall findings or conclusions.

Scope:

- Author names, affiliations, or acknowledgements.
- Errors in data, tables, or figures that do not alter study conclusions.
- Minor textual or methodological errors.

Procedure:

- Authors or readers notify the editorial office of the error.
- Editors evaluate the error and determine if a corrigendum is appropriate.
- A corrigendum is published and linked to the original article.
- The corrigendum clearly describes the correction, its date, and the responsible parties.

Responsibilities:

- **Authors:** Report errors promptly and provide accurate correction details.
- **Editors:** Ensure corrections are clear, transparent, and maintain the integrity of the scholarly record.

Addendum

Definition: An addendum is published to provide additional information, clarification, or supplementary material that was not included at the time of publication, without correcting errors.

Scope:

- Additional methodological details.
- Clarifications of interpretations.
- Supplementary datasets or analyses relevant to the original work.

Procedure:

- Authors submit the addendum to the editorial office.
- Editors assess relevance and ensure it does not alter conclusions.
- Approved addenda are published and linked to the original article.

Key Principles:

- The original article remains unchanged.
- The addendum enhances transparency and completeness.

Retraction

Definition: A retraction is issued when a published article is seriously flawed or unreliable, due to honest error or research misconduct, and its findings cannot be relied upon.

Grounds for Retraction:

- Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism.
- Duplicate or redundant publication.

- Ethical violations in research conduct.
- Major errors invalidating results or conclusions.
- Undisclosed conflicts of interest compromise reliability.

Procedure:

- Retractions may be initiated by authors, editors, or the publisher.
- Editors investigate using COPE flowcharts and guidelines.
- Retraction notices are clearly labeled, linked to the original article, and explain the reason for retraction.
- The original article remains accessible but marked as retracted.

Responsibilities:

- **Authors:** Cooperate with investigations and acknowledge errors or misconduct.
- **Editors:** Ensure decisions are fair, transparent, and documented.

Editorial Oversight and Transparency

- All corrections, addenda, and retractions are handled consistently to preserve trust in the journal.
- Editors maintain clear documentation of decisions and communications.
- Notifications about changes to published articles are provided to readers and indexed databases where appropriate.
- The integrity of the scholarly record is prioritized over reputational or commercial considerations.

Compliance and Ethical Standards

- This policy aligns with COPE Core Practices and DOAJ Principles.
- Failure to comply with correction or retraction procedures may result in additional actions, including institutional notification.

- SLBMJ encourages proactive reporting of errors to ensure ethical accountability and scholarly rigor.

Post-Publication Amendments

- SLBMJ supports transparent post-publication amendments and encourages readers and authors to notify the editorial office of errors or omissions.
- All amendments are permanently linked to the original article, ensuring full traceability.

Summary: SLBMJ is committed to maintaining an accurate, transparent, and trustworthy scholarly record. Corrigenda, addenda, and retractions are issued promptly, responsibly, and in alignment with international best practices to uphold the integrity of scientific publishing.

3.19 Withdrawal Policy

SLBMJ upholds the highest standards of publication ethics and adheres to international guidelines, including those set by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Authors are expected to follow the procedures outlined below if they wish to withdraw a manuscript during the review or editorial process.

Ethical Considerations: Manuscripts submitted to SLBMJ must not be under consideration by any other journal simultaneously. Submitting the same manuscript to multiple journals is considered unethical and constitutes a breach of publication ethics.

Withdrawal Procedure

- Authors who wish to withdraw a manuscript must submit a formal request via email to the editorial office, stating the intention to withdraw the manuscript.

- Upon receipt of the request, the editorial office will provide a Manuscript Withdrawal Form, which must be signed by all listed authors. Electronic signatures are not accepted.
- The completed and scanned form must be returned to the editorial office for processing.

Confirmation of Withdrawal

- A manuscript is considered officially withdrawn only after the editorial office issues a formal withdrawal confirmation.
- Until this confirmation is received, the manuscript remains under SLBMJ's consideration, and any attempt to submit it elsewhere will be regarded as a breach of publication ethics.
- The processing charges are not refunded in case of withdrawal of the manuscript.

Exceptions and Editorial Discretion

- In rare cases, the editorial office may deny a withdrawal request if significant resources have already been expended in the peer-review process.
- SLBMJ reserves the right to report unethical withdrawal attempts to relevant authorities or professional bodies if necessary.

3.20 Appeals & Complaints Policy

SLBMJ is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, and accountable editorial process. This policy outlines the procedures for handling appeals and complaints related to editorial decisions, peer review, or other aspects of the publication process.

Scope and Definitions

- **Appeals** are requests for reconsideration of editorial decisions, typically submitted by authors or reviewers, based on concerns regarding fairness, objectivity, or accuracy.
- **Complaints** express dissatisfaction with any aspect of the editorial or publication process, including ethical concerns, conflicts of interest, delays, or procedural errors.

Submission Procedure

- Appeals and complaints must be submitted in writing via email to the Chief Editor, clearly detailing the nature of the concern and providing any supporting documentation.
- Author and reviewer appeals should include the reason for reconsideration and reference relevant correspondence or reviews.
- Reader complaints should describe the issue in detail and provide evidence where possible.

Confidentiality and Impartiality

- All appeals and complaints are treated with strict confidentiality.
- The editorial team ensures that submissions are reviewed impartially, without influence from any parties involved in the original decision.

Review Process

- The editorial board is responsible for evaluating all appeals and complaints.
- In complex or specialized cases, independent external experts may be consulted to ensure an objective assessment.
- A formal response is typically provided within two weeks of receipt, with updates communicated promptly if additional time is required.

Outcomes and Documentation

- Decisions regarding appeals and complaints are communicated clearly to the complainant or appellant, including any actions taken or recommendations.
- Records of all appeals and complaints, and their resolutions, are maintained internally for quality assurance and continuous improvement of editorial processes.

Continuous Improvement: Feedback from appeals and complaints is used to refine journal policies, editorial practices, and peer review procedures, ensuring that SLBMJ maintains high standards of transparency, accountability, and ethical publishing.

Annexure A – Editorial & Advisory Board

Editorial Team

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The SLBMJ receives and publishes manuscripts that conform to the international guidelines and principles of scholarly journals as defined by COPE and DOAJ.

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Annexure B – Publication Process

