



Thai Journal of Nursing Research

Editorial: Ethics in Publishing Scholarly Work

With increasing globalization, nurses around the world are engaging in more scholarly, collaborative, cross-cultural activities, such as publishing, than ever before. Experienced nurse authors are well aware of the complexities of developing a piece of original work, be it research, education or clinically-based. However, those who have not written for publication, especially in an English language journal, often do not know where to begin, or the ethical issues that need to be considered, when preparing a manuscript. To create a scholarly paper involves time, planning, drafting, writing and numerous re-writes of one's thoughts. One, especially a first time author, may have numerous false starts before producing a manuscript that is of sufficient quality to share with the greater world of nursing.

Regardless of culture, there are a number of basic ethical principles, related to publishing, all members of the health care disciplines, worldwide, should follow. Thus, we, as, Editors of the *Thai Journal of Nursing*, feel a need to address a few of these principles in this editorial. The issues we will address include: (a) plagiarism; (b) inappropriately putting a person's name on a manuscript; (c) using copyrighted research instruments for which no permission for it's use or translation was obtained; and, (d) submitting a manuscript to more than one journal at a time.

Plagiarism involves the act of taking the work of another person and passing it off as one's own work. In other words, plagiarizing is no different than pirating, imitating, forging or stealing. **Once a scholarly work is published, it is considered to be copyrighted and exclusively owned by the person or company that holds the copyright to the published work.** For example, once an author(s) submits a manuscript to the *Thai Journal of Nursing Research*, and that manuscript is accepted and published, it no longer belongs to the original author(s). The article, upon its publication, is considered to have been copyrighted by the *Thai Journal of Nursing Research*. In other words, the ownership of all words, tables and figures within the article belongs to the journal, once it has been published by the journal. Therefore, neither the original author(s), nor anyone else, has the legal right to copy anything from the published work, or place it into another paper, unless appropriate citation is provided, even if he/she is the one who wrote the words. **Thus, copyright does not mean the "right to copy" any published papers, manuscripts, tools, instruments, tables, figures, charts or graphs as one desires.**

For the same reason, putting a person's name on a manuscript without his or her knowledge is both legally and scholarly unacceptable and inappropriate. In the same manner, putting someone's name on a manuscript, without his or her knowledge, is being deceitful. The deceit is toward the journal's scholarly community of readers, as well as toward the person who has not given approval to attach his or her name to the given manuscript.

Internationally, it is assumed, by the editors of professional journals, that whenever an article is submitted to a journal for consideration for publication, all authors listed on the paper are in agreement with the contents of the manuscript. In fact, many professional journals, including the *Thai Journal of Nursing Research*, require all authors listed on the manuscript to sign a legal document indicating they have read and are in agreement with the contents of the manuscript prior to the manuscript being published.

Placing someone's name on a manuscript, to which he/she did not make any contribution, also is an act of unethical scholarship. It is inappropriate for anyone to think that they should be listed on a scholarly paper, or other material, when they have made no significant contribution to that work. The amount of contribution made to a scholarly paper, by multiple authors, will vary. **Thus, the ordering of the authors' names on a manuscript should be listed in accordance with the amount of contribution made, starting with the author who made the greatest amount of contribution and ending with the author who made the least amount of contribution.**

To avoid conflict among scholars, who are working on a single manuscript, it is advisable to come to an understanding, before a manuscript is written, as to what each author will contribute and, subsequently, agree as to the ordering of the authors' names. **Again, the ordering of names should be based upon the actual level of contribution made by each author.**

Using a copyrighted instrument, when conducting research, for which permission has not been granted for its use or translation, is both illegal and unethical. Approval to use or translate a copyrighted instrument must come from the owner of the instrument, which may be an individual or a company.

Permission to use a copyrighted instrument cannot come from someone who already has used the instrument in their research. Even though another researcher may have obtained permission to use the copyrighted instrument, he or she does not have the legal right to tell someone else they can use the copyrighted instrument. To do this is the same as committing forgery, or theft, of the intellectual property of the original developer of the instrument. Because this type of unethical practice has become an ever increasing ethical infraction, some companies who own copyrighted instruments are beginning to deny researchers, especially students, use of the instruments they own.

Translating someone else's written work, into another language, and then taking credit for that work, as if it was your own, also is a serious violation of ethical scholarship. Such an act is referred to as a violation of one's "intellectual property rights." While most authors consider it a compliment and feel honored to have their thoughts translated into other languages, for the purpose of sharing their work worldwide, they are not pleased to learn that someone else has taken credit for their original thoughts. The original developer of the instrument(s) is the one who spent numerous hours thinking, researching, writing and testing their thoughts before developing a useable product. **Please be ethical in all that you do and do not who steal from those who developed what you are using!**

Once permission, has been granted by the owner of the instrument to use and translate an instrument into another language, it requires significant time and effort to accomplish the needed translation and back-translation of the instrument before it is used in the chosen language. Thus, the person performing the translation, as well as whoever back-translates and compares it with the original instrument to make sure the meaning has not been changed, should receive appropriate compensation. This compensation may appropriately involve monetary payment or having one's name listed as the last co-author of the written document. Remember that the arrangements made between the lead person of the scholarly endeavor and the person doing the translation of the instrument need to be done *prior* to the beginning of the translation process. Keep in mind that prior to translating any published work (i.e. article, book or survey instrument); the holder of the copyright (such as a publishing company) must grant approval, to the person who actually will use the instrument, for the published work's translation.

Submitting a single manuscript to more than one professional journal at a time also is an **unethical practice**. Whenever a manuscript is submitted to a journal, it is the understanding of the editors of the journal that the author(s) of the submitted paper are giving the journal the exclusive right to review, and, possibly, publish, the submitted work.

Reviewers of journal manuscripts spend many hours reviewing and making comments and suggestions to the author(s) regarding all components of the submitted paper. The reviewers for most English language nursing journals, including the *Thai Journal of Nursing Research*, perform their duties for the journal as a contribution to their profession, and are not paid by the journal.

In addition, the editors of most English language nursing journals, including the *Thai Journal of Nursing Research*, spend numerous hours, days and even weeks, reviewing, editing and revising submitted manuscripts to make them sufficiently readable and scholarly to publish and share with the international world of nursing. Many of the editors of the English language nursing journals personally know one another and serve as reviewers for different nursing journals. Thus, the editors communicate together and become very distressed when they recognize that someone has submitted the same paper to more than one journal at the same time. **Such recognition is readily disseminated among the editors, the offending author(s) is considered to be professionally unethical and any future paper on which his or her name appears may not be considered for publication by the editor(s) of some of the journals.** Thus, many professional journals, including the *Thai Journal of Nursing Research*, require the lead author to submit a letter or sign a legal document indicating that no part of the submitted manuscript currently is under review by another journal. **Please follow the journal's Instructions to Authors and do not submit your manuscript to more than one journal at a time.**

Remember, having one's written work reviewed by a panel of peers and, subsequently, accepted for publication is a wonderful sense of accomplishment. It is a mark of acceptance by others that

what you have produced is worthy of sharing among your peers and the respective community of scholars. **Thus, to be an ethical author, one must be cognizant of his/her actions and avoid engaging in any form of unethical scholarly behavior.**

We are glad you are a reader and, hopefully, a contributor to the *Thai Journal of Nursing Research!* We look forward to considering the manuscripts you and your colleagues submit for consideration for publication.

Vickie A. Lambert, DNSc, RN, FAAN

Clinton E. Lambert, PhD, RN, CS, FAAN

Editors, *Thai Journal of Nursing Research*

Example 1: Thai Journal of Nursing Research: Qualitative Research Manuscript

Manuscript Number _____ Reviewer's Identification Number _____ Date _____

Please address the following points when reviewing the attached manuscript. Points listed are generic and may not all apply to parts of the manuscript being reviewed. Please write comments and suggestions for each aspect of the manuscript and return, as a Word document, to the Editors, by the stated deadline.

TITLE

Does it accurately describe the contents of the manuscript?

ABSTRACT

Does it provide an accurate overview of the content of the manuscript?

Does it summarize the major points of the manuscript?

Does it follow the same order of content as the manuscript?

INTRODUCTION SECTION

Does it entice the reader to continue reading the manuscript?

Does it establish a need for the paper?

Does it provide a thorough, yet concise and synthesized presentation of relevant literature?

Is the literature current and are publications considered "classics" included?

Are the ideas and material presented in an organized, logical and meaningful manner?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS/AIMS/PURPOSE

Are the research questions, aims and purpose of the study clearly delineated?

METHOD SECTION

Is the type of qualitative method used clearly described?

If the qualitative method used is not well known, is a sufficient discussion of the method presented?

Is how the data were collected described?

Is the sampling technique described?

Is the procedure for obtaining data described?

Is evidence provided regarding how information was gathered about key events?

Are the ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality addressed?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION SECTIONS

- Is sufficient data presented to support and defend the researcher's classification of the data?
- Is an adequate discussion of what the data suggest provided?
- Are the data presentation and the interpretation of findings consistent with the method used?
- Is the terminology consistent?
- Is reference made to prior research?
- If appropriate, do the tables and diagrams used assist in explaining the data and its meaning?
- Are suggestions for future research given?

LIMITATIONS SECTION

- Are the limitations based upon the design used and specific circumstances related to the study?

CONCLUSIONS SECTION

- Are the important components and contributions highlighted?
- Does the presentation fit logically with the introduction section of the manuscript?

REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATION: Please mark all that apply.

Accept

Needs editing

Needs revisions

Reject

Example 2: Thai Journal of Nursing Research: Quantitative Research Manuscript

Manuscript Number _____ Reviewer's Identification Number _____ Date _____

Please address the following points, when reviewing the attached manuscript. Points listed, on both pages, are generic and may not all apply to parts of the manuscript being reviewed. Please write comments and suggestions for each aspect of the manuscript and return, as a Word document, to the Editors, by the stated deadline.

TITLE

Does it accurately describe the contents of the manuscript?

ABSTRACT

Does it provide an accurate overview of the content of the paper?

Does it summarize the major points of the manuscript?

Does it follow the same order of content as the manuscript?

INTRODUCTION SECTION

Does it entice the reader to continue reading the manuscript?

Does it establish a need for the paper?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE SECTION

Does it provide a thorough, yet concise and synthesized, presentation of relevant literature?

Is the literature current and are publications considered "classics" included?

Are the ideas and material presented in an organized, logical and meaningful manner?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Are the research questions, aims and hypotheses clearly stated?

METHOD SECTION

Is the research method clearly described and does it match the hypotheses/research questions?

Are the sampling strategies and sample described?

Is the procedure clearly delineated?

Is the measurement of the variables valid?

Are the instruments used identified and clearly described?

Are the ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality addressed?

RESULTS SECTION

- Are the findings adequately and accurately described?
- Are the findings related back to the aims/hypotheses/ research questions and data analyses?
- Are the types of analyses conducted indicated?
- Are the tables sufficient and accurate?
- Are the figures and appendixes effectively presented?
- Is the content presented in the tables not repeated in the narrative?

DISCUSSION SECTION

- Are interpretations of the findings provided and NOT simply repeat what has already been presented in the results section?
- Is reference made to prior relevant research studies?
- Is consistent, understandable terminology used throughout the context of the manuscript?
- Are suggestions for future research provided?

LIMITATIONS SECTION

- Are the limitations based upon the design used and specific circumstances related to the study?

CONCLUSIONS SECTION

- Are important components and contributions highlighted?
- Do the conclusions fit logically with the introduction section of the manuscript?
- Are the implications provided, based on the nature of the study, related to nursing research, practice, education or administration?

REFERENCES

- Are the references current and cited according to the journal's Instructions to Authors?
- Are the references listed the same as those cited in the body of the manuscript?
- Are all citations referenced in the body of the manuscript listed?

REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATION: Please mark all that apply.

Accept **Needs editing**

Needs revisions **Reject**

Example 3: Thai Journal of Nursing Research: Education/Practice/Issues Manuscript

Manuscript Number: _____ Reviewer's Identification Number _____ Date _____

Please address the following points when reviewing the attached manuscript. Points listed are generic and may not all apply to parts of the manuscript being reviewed. Please write comments and suggestions for each aspect of the manuscript and return, as a Word document, to the Editors, by the stated deadline.

TITLE

Does it accurately describe the contents of the manuscript?

ABSTRACT

Does it provide an accurate overview of the manuscript?

Does it summarize the major points within the manuscript?

Does it follow the same order of content as the manuscript?

INTRODUCTION SECTION

Does it entice the reader to continue reading the manuscript?

Does it establish a need for the paper?

BODY OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Does the "story" have interest and meaning?

Are the ideas organized in a logical and meaningful manner?

Are appropriate headings and subheadings provided throughout the text to facilitate the flow of ideas and readability?

Is sufficient information provided under each heading/subheading?

If applicable, is a discussion of actions proposed?

If tables or diagrams are used, do they compliment what is said in the narrative?

Is the terminology used throughout the body of the text consistent and understandable?

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SECTION

Is a summarization of the key points of the text provided?

If appropriate, are recommendations made?

Does this section fit logically with the introduction section of the manuscript?

REFERENCES

Are the references current?

If appropriate, are publications which are considered "classics" included?

Do the references cited in the text match the reference the reference section?

Are the references cited according to the journal's Instructions to Authors?

REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATION: Please mark all that apply.

Accept Needs Editing

Needs revisions Reject