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Reviewer Guidelines

How to review for AJATE under double-blind peer review

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Thank you for reviewing for the *African Journal of Applied and Theoretical Economics*. Independent, expert and constructive peer review is the foundation of the journal's quality. These guidelines explain what we ask of reviewers and how to write a useful report.

1. Before Accepting an Invitation

Please accept only if you can answer "yes" to all of the following:

☐ The manuscript is within my area of expertise.

☐ I can complete the review within 14 days (or by the requested date).

☐ I have **no conflict of interest**: for example, I have not co-authored with, supervised or worked in the same department as an author in the last five years; I have no financial or personal interest in the outcome; and I am not reviewing the same paper for another journal.

If you must decline, please do so promptly and, if possible, suggest alternative reviewers. If you think you know who the authors are, tell the editor, who will decide whether you should continue.

2. Confidentiality and Ethics

- Treat the manuscript and all related material as **strictly confidential**. Do not share it or discuss it with anyone without the editor's permission.
- **Do not upload any part of the manuscript, or your report, to generative AI tools** (e.g. ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini). Doing so breaches author confidentiality.
- Do not use any information from the manuscript in your own work before it is published.
- Do not contact the authors directly or try to identify them.
- Do not ask authors to cite your own work unless it is clearly essential.
- Report suspected plagiarism, duplicate publication, data fabrication or other ethical concerns to the editor confidentially.

3. What to Evaluate

Criterion	Key questions
Relevance and originality	Does the paper fit AJATE's scope? Does it ask a new question, use new data or methods, or provide new evidence? Is the contribution clearly stated?

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Literature	Is the theoretical framework appropriate? Is the empirical review current, critical and complete? Are important studies missing?
Methodology	Is the model well specified and grounded in theory? Are the variables well defined and the data sources reliable? Is the estimation technique appropriate (e.g. unit-root and cointegration tests, endogeneity, choice of ARDL/ECM/GMM/panel methods)? Are diagnostic and robustness tests reported?
Survey research	Is the sampling technique and sample size justified? Is the instrument valid and reliable? Are ethics approval and consent addressed?
Results	Are the results correctly interpreted, including the economic (not only statistical) significance? Are the tables clear and properly formatted?
Conclusions and policy	Do the conclusions follow from the evidence? Are the policy recommendations specific, feasible and supported by the findings? Are limitations acknowledged?
Presentation	Are the title and abstract accurate? Is the paper well organised and clearly written? Do the references follow APA 7th style, and are they accurate?
Integrity	Is there any sign of plagiarism, duplicate publication, data manipulation or fabricated references?

4. Writing the Report

Please use the **AJATE Reviewer Evaluation Form**. A good report includes:

1. **A brief summary** of the paper's aims, methods and main findings in your own words. This shows the editor and authors how you understood the paper.
2. **An overall assessment** of the paper's strengths and its contribution.
3. **Major comments**, numbered: substantive issues with the research question, theory, data, methods or interpretation that must be addressed. Explain *why* each is a problem and suggest how it might be fixed.
4. **Minor comments**, numbered: presentation, clarity, tables, references and typographical points, ideally with page or line numbers.
5. **Confidential comments to the editor** (not shared with the authors), including your recommendation and any ethical concerns.

Be specific, courteous and constructive. Write as you would wish your own work to be reviewed. Avoid sarcasm and personal remarks. Do not put your recommendation (accept/reject) in the comments to the authors, as the editor may reach a different decision.

5. Recommendation Categories

Recommendation	Use when…
Accept	The paper is ready for publication as it stands, or needs only trivial editorial changes.
Minor revision	The paper is sound, but needs small clarifications, additional citations or presentation improvements that do not require re-analysis.
Major revision	The paper has potential, but needs substantial changes, e.g. re-estimation, additional tests, a stronger literature review or reframed conclusions. You will usually be asked to review the revision.
Reject	The paper has fundamental flaws in its design, data or methods; makes no meaningful contribution; is outside the journal's scope; or raises serious ethical concerns.

6. Reviewing a Revised Manuscript

Check the authors' point-by-point response against your original comments. Focus on whether your concerns have been adequately addressed, rather than raising new issues that could have been raised in the first round, unless the revisions have introduced new problems.

7. Recognition

- Reviewers receive a **certificate of reviewing** on request.
- Reviewers may record their AJATE reviews on their ORCID record or on Web of Science Reviewer Recognition, without disclosing the manuscript.
- AJATE publishes an annual list thanking its reviewers in the December issue.
- Outstanding reviewers may be invited to join the Editorial Board.

> Questions? Contact the handling editor or the Editorial Office at editor@ajate.org.