

Compliance of Sri Lankan humanities and social sciences journals' author guidelines with the EASE checklist

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Sri Lankan humanities and social sciences (HSS) journals often lack international visibility, highlighting the need to enhance their quality by aligning with international standards. This study aims to measure the criterion compliance of author guidelines of Sri Lankan journals in humanities and social sciences field with the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) framework. All Sri Lankan journals related to HSS stream, appearing in the Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) platform (n=74) were selected for the analysis. The criterion compliance was measured using quantitative content analysis approach. Thirty-six (36) criteria mentioned in EASE framework were used for the analysis. Both strengths and weaknesses in the author guidelines of Sri Lankan HSS journals were observed. The average criterion compliance was 42% (ranging from 100%: authors' affiliations to 5.4%: date of last update). Encouragingly, clear instructions on plagiarism policies (71.6%) and referencing styles (86.5%) showed a higher criterion compliance reflecting the concern on academic integrity. However, many journals showed a gap in data/artifact sharing guidance (33.8%), contributor roles (25.7%), and gender equity considerations (18.9%) which are areas increasingly prioritized by global editorial bodies. Considering the gaps identified through the study, it is suggested to develop further improved tailor-made guidelines, based on EASE framework to provide clear instructions for authors in the scholarly journals related to HSS field in Sri Lanka. It is also recommended to organize capacity building workshops for authors and editors in the HSS field to support the implementation of these improved guidelines. Maintaining a balance between international standards and local constraints should also be taken into consideration. The EASE framework which was last updated in 2021 does not mention AI transparency statements, yet it should also be considered when developing tailor-made author guidelines for Sri Lankan scholars in the HSS field.

Keywords: *Author guidelines, EASE checklist, HSS journals, Criterion compliance*