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EDITORIAL

Giving and Responding to Feedback: Guidelines for Authors and Reviewers

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ABSTRACT

This article offers guidelines for enhancing scholarly discourse in academic publishing, focusing on effective feedback mechanisms. We present two structured frameworks: REVIEW for reviewers and REACT for authors. The REVIEW framework guides reviewers in providing constructive and insightful feedback, emphasizing thorough reading, theoretical and methodological evaluation, verification of claims and sources, identification of strengths and shortcomings, critical engagement, and clear, constructive writing. The REACT framework assists authors in systematically responding to feedback, covering review, evaluation, addressing feedback, clear communication of revisions, and thanking reviewers. These frameworks aim to improve the quality and impact of scholarly work by fostering productive interactions between authors and reviewers. This latest issue of *Activities, Adaptation, and Aging* also features eight studies that exemplify the successful application of these guidelines, highlighting their importance in advancing dignified and purposeful living for older adults. The frameworks and accompanying studies demonstrate the journal's commitment to promoting rigorous peer review and responsive manuscript development in academic publishing.

Introduction

Feedback, within the scope of academic publishing, represents a critical and structured assessment designed to enhance the quality, rigor, and impact of scholarly work (Dolnicar, 2021; Lim, 2021). This form of assessment, referred to as "peer review feedback," is more than mere criticism; it is a constructive dialogue where both the giver and receiver engage in a process of mutual learning. Such a dynamic is crucial to the peer review system, where feedback stands as the foundation of scholarly advancement and integrity.

The importance of feedback in academic discourse cannot be overstated. Feedback plays a pivotal role in ensuring the accuracy and relevance of

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research, safeguarding the scientific community against erroneous conclusions and unsubstantiated claims. Feedback acts as a catalyst for intellectual growth, pushing authors to refine their arguments, methodologies, and supposed contributions. It is a tool for continuous improvement, fostering critical thinking and nurturing a culture of excellence.

At the heart of academic publishing lies the peer review process, a synergistic relationship involving authors, reviewers, and editors. Authors present their research, subjecting it to the scrutiny of reviewers. These reviewers provide critiques, insights, and suggestions to enhance the work's quality and contribution based on their expertise, experience, and exposure (i.e., the 3Es) (Kraus et al., 2022). Editors facilitate this process, ensuring fairness and objectivity. More often than not, they also offer their expertise and thoughts to further enrich the feedback loop.

Despite its crucial role, the process of giving and receiving feedback often suffers from misalignment in expectations and understanding between authors and reviewers. This disconnect can lead to frustration, misinterpretation, and missed opportunities for enhancement. Authors may perceive feedback as overly critical or misaligned with their research goals, while reviewers might find it challenging to convey their insights effectively and constructively.

This article addresses this challenge by offering guidelines for both giving and responding to feedback. These guidelines aim to harmonize authors and reviewers on a unified understanding of the goals and expectations of feedback. The endgame is to enhance the peer review process, ensuring it upholds academic standards and contributes to the professional growth of both authors and reviewers. This initiative seeks to foster a more collaborative, transparent, and impactful scholarly communication in line with Rao et al. (2024).

Guidelines for reviewers: the REVIEW framework

In this section, we introduce a structured approach for reviewers, encapsulating the process in a mnemonic acronym: REVIEW. This framework is designed to guide reviewers in delivering comprehensive, constructive, and effective feedback within the peer review process (Appendix). The REVIEW acronym stands for:

- *R*ead thoroughly and reflectively;
- *E*valuate theoretically and methodologically;
- *V*erify claims and sources;
- *I*dentify strengths and shortcomings;
- *E*ngage with the content critically; and
- *W*rite clearly and constructively.

Read thoroughly and reflectively

This initial step is fundamental to the review process, setting the tone for the entire review process. It requires reviewers to engage deeply with the manuscript, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of its core content. The thorough reading phase is not merely about skimming through the text; it involves a detailed examination of the manuscript's core arguments, methodologies, and reported findings. This in-depth reading is essential for grasping the nuances of the research and forming a well-rounded view of its execution and outcomes.

Following the thorough reading, the process moves into a reflective phase. Here, reviewers are called to consider the manuscript's broader contribution to its respective field. This reflective assessment is multifaceted, encompassing an evaluation of the manuscript's originality, relevance, and potential impact. Reviewers should consider how the research advances understanding in its field, its potential to spur further inquiries, and its applicability to academic debates and real-world problems.

In terms of *originality*, reviewers can assess whether the research offers new insights or methods, challenging existing paradigms or filling significant gaps in existing knowledge.

In terms of *relevance*, reviewers can consider the significance of the research in the current academic discourse and practical contexts, evaluating how it addresses pertinent issues or questions within the field.

In terms of *potential impact*, reviewers can examine the potential implications of the research for a myriad of stakeholders, including academics, communities, policymakers, and practitioners (see Lim & Bowman, 2023).

When reviewers read thoroughly and reflect critically, they can provide feedback that is not only insightful and constructive but also appreciative of the research's potential to contribute meaningfully to its field. This approach ensures that the review process is not just a gatekeeping exercise but a valuable part of scholarly discourse and progress.

Evaluate theoretically and methodologically

This dual-layered assessment begins with a critical evaluation of the theoretical framework employed in the research. Reviewers must analyze how the theory is applied, its coherence, and, crucially, its relevance to the research objectives or questions. The theoretical underpinnings of a research are essential as they inform its direction, potential contributions, and wider implications. This evaluation requires reviewers to consider whether the theoretical framework provides a solid foundation for the research and whether it effectively informs and supports the research questions and objectives.

Following the assessment of the theoretical framework, the focus shifts to the methodology. The methodological evaluation addresses the integrity of the research design, including its data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This involves a critical appraisal of whether the chosen methodology is apt for the research goals and whether it has been implemented effectively. The methodological scrutiny plays a key role in determining the credibility and rigor of the research findings. Reviewers must assess how well the methodology aligns with the research objectives or questions. This alignment is critical for ensuring the reliability and validity of quantitative research, as well as the trustworthiness of qualitative and review studies.

Emphasizing a sequential approach – starting with theory and then moving to methodology – this guideline ensures that reviewers first establish the theoretical foundation of the study before assessing its empirical execution. This approach is in line with the scholarly principle of grounding research in robust theoretical reasoning, subsequently supported by methodologically sound practices (Homer & Lim, 2024). This structured evaluation not only enhances the quality of peer reviews but also ensures that feedback is deeply rooted in an understanding of both the theoretical and methodological dimensions of scholarly work.

Such a comprehensive evaluation by reviewers aids in reinforcing the scholarly merits of the research. It ensures that the research is theoretically grounded and methodologically sound, thereby contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field (Lim, 2022b). This step is crucial in providing authors with insightful feedback that can significantly enhance the quality and impact of their research.

Verify sources and claims

This step demands a meticulous examination of the sources cited in the manuscript. Reviewers are tasked with ensuring that these sources are not only accurate but also relevant to the research at hand. Proper attribution of sources is essential to uphold the standards of academic honesty and provide readers with a clear roadmap of the research's intellectual lineage. The accuracy of citations reflects the thoroughness of the research and its adherence to academic conventions.

In addition to verifying sources, reviewers are responsible for critically examining the validity of the manuscript's claims. This involves a rigorous evaluation of whether the claims made in the manuscript are grounded in logical reasoning and supported by evidence. Logical reasoning ties the research findings to the broader theoretical and methodological framework, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are coherent and justifiable. The emphasis on evidence-based assertions is also crucial, as it ensures that the research findings are not only theoretically sound but also empirically substantiated.

In the verification process, reviewers are expected to:

- *Assess whether the cited sources are relevant to the research.* This involves a thorough examination of the sources' seminal status and timeliness. Seminal status refers to the importance of older, foundational sources that have significantly influenced the field. Timeliness pertains to the incorporation of recent sources, typically published within the last three to five years, which reflect the current state of research. Additionally, the alignment of these sources with the manuscript's arguments is crucial, ensuring that the citations support and enhance the research narrative.
- *Examine the accuracy of cited works.* This involves a vigilant check for misquotations or misinterpretations of sources, as these inaccuracies can lead to a distorted understanding of the existing body of knowledge. This step ensures the integrity of the manuscript's scholarly underpinnings and its adherence to academic standards.
- *Ensure that the manuscript's claims are substantiated by suitable evidence.* This evidence may come in various forms, such as conceptual or theoretical insights, empirical data, or evidence of methodological rigor. For instance, in claims of causality, an experimental design might be necessary, while correlational claims may rely on non-experimental designs. For claims addressing existential or experiential aspects, a qualitative design may be appropriate. The key is that the evidence aligns appropriately with the type of claim being made.
- *Scrutinize the manuscript's logic consistency and flow.* Reviewers should be on the lookout for leaps in reasoning or conclusions that are not adequately supported by the preceding arguments or evidence. This scrutiny ensures that the manuscript's conclusions are coherent, well-reasoned, and justifiably derived from its premises and data.

Reviewers contribute significantly to the manuscript's overall credibility and quality when they rigorously verify claims and sources. This step is not just about fact-checking; it is about ensuring that the manuscript is anchored in a robust scientific foundation, with claims that are both logically sound and verifiable. This process reinforces the manuscript's contribution to the field, enhancing its value to both the academic community and wider society.

Identify strengths and shortcomings

This step necessitates a balanced approach, where reviewers acknowledge and appreciate the manuscript's strong points while also identifying its limitations. The importance of this step lies in providing authors with a clear understanding of their work's impact and areas for further development.

When identifying strengths, reviewers should focus on aspects such as the manuscript's contribution to the field, the novelty of its insights or methods, and the rigor of its execution. Constructively highlighting these strengths not only motivates authors but also helps them understand what aspects of their work are particularly valuable.

Conversely, identifying shortcomings or areas for improvement is equally crucial. This task involves pointing out sections of the research that may need refinement, such as gaps in the argument, methodological flaws, or areas where the research could be expanded for greater clarity or depth. It is important that reviewers provide concrete suggestions for enhancement. These suggestions should be actionable, guiding authors on how they might address the identified issues. This could include recommendations for additional literature to consult, alternative methodologies to consider, or new perspectives to incorporate.

In executing this step, reviewers should strive to:

- *Highlight the positive elements of the manuscript that contribute to the advancement of knowledge or methodology within the field.* This involves appreciating innovative approaches or robust methodologies as well as significant theoretical contributions. By detailing these aspects, reviewers not only affirm the value of the research but also guide authors in understanding the strengths of their work.
- *Identify specific sections of the manuscript that would benefit from further development or refinement.* This may include suggesting additional analyses to strengthen the research's conclusions, recommending engagement with a broader range of literature to contextualize the findings, or advising on incorporating alternative theoretical perspectives to enhance the study's depth. This aspect of the review is crucial in guiding authors toward areas where their research can be improved for greater scholarly impact.
- *Offer clear, specific, and practical suggestions on how to address the identified weaknesses.* This feedback should be constructive and aimed at improving the overall quality and impact of the research. By providing actionable feedback, reviewers help authors in transforming potential shortcomings into opportunities for strengthening their work, thereby contributing to the manuscript's enhancement and the field's advancement.

Reviewers who effectively identify both strengths and shortcomings provide authors with a comprehensive perspective of their work. This not only aids authors in enhancing their manuscripts but also contributes to the broader goal of advancing scholarly discourse. It ensures that the review process is a constructive exercise, facilitating the growth and development of scientific research.

Engage with the content critically

This step emphasizes the necessity for reviewers to approach the manuscript with a critical yet fair mind-set. Critical engagement involves an in-depth analysis of the content, questioning assumptions, evaluating arguments, and considering the robustness of the evidence presented. However, this criticality must be tempered with fairness, ensuring that the review is not colored by personal biases or subjective preferences.

Reviewers are expected to:

- *Maintain objectivity*. This is vital for ensuring impartiality in the review process. By evaluating the manuscript based on its academic merit rather than personal biases or opinions, reviewers keep the focus on the content's quality and relevance to the field.
- *Provide constructive criticism*. It is crucial to identify areas that need improvement, but this should be done in a constructive manner. Criticism should be valid and formulated in a way that helps the author understand and improve their work.
- *Offer specific, detailed feedback*. General comments are less helpful to authors than precise, detailed feedback. Reviewers should provide clear examples from the manuscript when pointing out issues and suggest specific ways these issues can be addressed.
- *Foster a positive dialogue*. The review process should aim to engage in a scholarly dialogue that promotes the development of the research. This can be achieved by balancing critiques with recognition of the manuscript's strengths, and by phrasing feedback in a manner that encourages revision and improvement, rather than causing discouragement.

Reviewers play an integral role in the development and refinement of scholarly research by engaging critically and constructively with the manuscript. This critical engagement not only enhances the quality of the manuscript but also contributes to the growth of the authors as scholars. It ensures that the peer review process is a collaborative effort, aimed at strengthening the body of knowledge.

Write clearly and constructively

This step focuses on the articulation of feedback, underscoring the need for clarity, conciseness, and constructiveness in the reviewer's comments. The way feedback is presented can significantly influence how it is received and acted upon by authors.

Reviewers are encouraged to:

- *Avoid overly critical or discouraging remarks*. While honesty is important, it is crucial to avoid comments that are overly critical or discouraging. The tone should be respectful and professional, aiming to build up rather than tear down.
- *Focus on constructive guidance*. The primary aim of feedback should be to guide authors toward improving their work. This involves not just pointing out flaws or areas of weakness, but also suggesting possible ways to address these issues. Feedback should be framed in a manner that is encouraging and supportive, fostering a positive approach to revision.
- *Prioritize clarity and conciseness*. Feedback should be straightforward and to the point, avoiding ambiguity and overly complex language. Clear and concise feedback is more likely to be understood and appreciated by authors, facilitating effective revisions.
- *Structure feedback effectively*. Organizing feedback in a structured manner helps in conveying the points more coherently. This could involve categorizing comments into major and minor issues, or aligning them with the structure of the manuscript for ease of reference.

Reviewers can effectively guide authors in enhancing their manuscripts by writing feedback that is clear, constructive, and structured. This approach not only improves the quality of the submitted work but also contributes to a more positive and productive academic dialogue. Well-articulated feedback serves as a valuable tool for authors, aiding in their professional development and in the advancement of their research.

Guidelines for authors: the REACT framework

In this section, we introduce a structured approach for authors, encapsulating the process in a mnemonic acronym: REACT. This framework helps authors to address feedback comprehensively and constructively, thereby enhancing their manuscripts and contributing meaningfully to their field of study (Appendix B). The REACT acronym stands for:

- *R*eview feedback;
- *E*valuate feedback;
- *A*ddress feedback;
- *C*ommunicate revision; and
- *T*hank reviewer.

Review feedback

This is a critical initial step for authors in responding to peer review comments. This stage involves a thorough and thoughtful examination of the feedback provided by reviewers. It is not merely about a cursory glance over the reviewers' comments; instead, it demands a deep engagement and comprehensive understanding of the feedback in its entirety.

In this phase, authors should meticulously read through all the comments and suggestions provided by the reviewers. It is important to approach this process with an open mind, setting aside any initial defensive reactions to criticism (Lim, 2022a). The goal here is to fully grasp the reviewers' perspectives, insights, and concerns about the manuscript.

Key aspects of this step include:

- *Identifying key themes*. Authors should look for recurring themes or major concerns raised by different reviewers. These recurring points often indicate critical areas that need attention in the manuscript.
- *Distinguishing between major and minor points*. It is crucial to differentiate between substantial issues that might require significant revisions (e.g., theoretical or methodological concerns) and minor points (e.g., formatting or stylistic suggestions). This distinction helps in prioritizing the revisions.

Authors who take the time to carefully review and thoroughly understand the feedback given by reviewers can prepare themselves to address the comments and suggestions effectively, ensuring a constructive response that enhances the quality and scholarly value of their manuscript.

Evaluate feedback

This step requires authors to critically assess the relevance of the feedback provided by the reviewers. It is a step where authors move beyond understanding what the reviewers have said to considering how their critiques, insights, and suggestions can be integrated into the manuscript.

In this evaluative process, authors should:

- *Evaluate the accuracy and relevance of the reviewers' comments to the manuscript*. This involves questioning whether the feedback is factually correct, logically sound, and pertinent to the aims and scope of the research.
- *Assess the impact of implementing changes*. Consider the potential impact of each piece of feedback on the manuscript. Authors need to think about how making specific changes will enhance their work, whether it is

through improved clarity, increased rigor, or greater contribution to the field.

Key considerations during this phase include:

- *Alignment with research goals.* Authors should reflect on how the suggested changes align with the objectives and overall narrative of their research. This is crucial for maintaining the integrity and focus of the manuscript.
- *Feasibility and appropriateness.* Evaluate the feasibility of implementing the feedback. Some suggestions might require extensive additional work or resources that may not be practical. Other comments, while insightful, might not be appropriate for the manuscript's focus or scope.

The evaluation step is essential as it allows authors to make informed decisions about which pieces of feedback to incorporate into their revisions. This careful consideration ensures that changes made to the manuscript genuinely enhance its quality and align with the author's scholarly intentions. Critically evaluating the feedback enables authors to position themselves to address it in a way that is thoughtful, strategic, and beneficial to their work.

Address feedback

This step involves formulating and implementing a plan to incorporate the feedback into the manuscript. It is about taking the insights gained from the evaluation step and translating them into concrete revisions that enhance the manuscript.

In addressing the feedback, authors should:

- *Make sure to address every piece of feedback provided by the reviewers* (*and editors, if any*). Even if certain suggestions are not incorporated, it is important to acknowledge them and provide a reasoned explanation for their exclusion.
- *Develop a revision strategy.* This might involve prioritizing certain changes, especially if they are foundational to other parts of the manuscript, or if they address the most critical concerns raised by the reviewers.

Key actions in this phase include:

- *Making the necessary amendments to the manuscript based on the feedback.* This could involve adding new data or literature, clarifying arguments, and/or rewriting sections.

- *Maintaining the coherence and flow of the manuscript as changes are made*. Revisions should integrate seamlessly into the existing storyline and structure of the manuscript.

The considerations during this step involve:

- *Effectiveness of the changes*. Each change should effectively address the corresponding piece of feedback. It is not just about making revisions but ensuring that these revisions improve the overall quality and scholarly contribution of the manuscript.
- *Maintaining the manuscript's integrity*. While addressing the feedback, authors should remain true to their original research goals and scope. Revisions should enhance the manuscript without compromising its core essence and purpose.

This step is a pivotal part of the manuscript revision process. It demonstrates the author's ability to engage constructively with feedback, showing a commitment to scholarly excellence and the advancement of knowledge in their field. When authors thoughtfully address each piece of feedback, they can substantially improve their manuscript, increasing its chances of successful publication.

Communicate revision

Once authors have addressed the feedback, the next crucial step is to communicate the revision. This step focuses on effectively communicating the changes made to the manuscript in response to the peer review feedback. It involves a clear and detailed articulation of the revisions to both the reviewers and editors, ensuring that the modifications are easily identifiable and understood.

In communicating revisions, authors should:

- *Clearly reference the changes by using page and line numbers*. This practice helps reviewers and editors to quickly locate and understand the revisions made.
- *Provide excerpts of the original (before) and revised (after) texts in the response letter*. This approach gives a direct comparison of the changes and can illustrate how feedback has been implemented more effectively.

Key actions in this phase include:

- *Drafting a response letter that systematically addresses each point of feedback*. For each point, mention the page and line number where the change has been made and include a brief excerpt of the revision.
- *Justifying changes and rebuttals*. When communicating changes, provide justifications for them, especially when they are substantial. If certain suggestions from reviewers are not implemented, offer a well-reasoned rebuttal, supported by appropriate references.

The considerations during this step are:

- *Clarity and transparency*. Communication should be clear and transparent, leaving no ambiguity about what changes have been made and why. This clarity helps reviewers and editors to easily follow the revisions and understand the author's decision-making process.
- *Acknowledging limitations*. In cases where certain feedback points to limitations in the research that cannot be addressed by revisions (e.g., due to data unavailability or methodological constraints), these should be acknowledged openly in the response letter and, if appropriate, in the manuscript itself as a limitation.

Communicating revision is critical as it bridges the gap between the revised manuscript and the reviewers' understanding of how their feedback has been incorporated. Authors who communicate revisions effectively not only show their responsiveness to feedback but also their commitment to the clarity and integrity of the scholarly discourse. This step is essential for establishing a transparent and constructive dialogue with the review panel, thereby facilitating the manuscript's path toward publication.

Thank reviewer

This step underscores the importance of expressing gratitude and maintaining a courteous and professional tone in all communications with reviewers. Acknowledging the effort and time that reviewers invest in critiquing and providing feedback on manuscripts is not only a matter of professional courtesy but also fosters a positive and collaborative peer review environment.
In thanking reviewers, authors should:

- *Express gratitude*. Regardless of the nature of the feedback, it is important to thank reviewers for their time and input. This shows appreciation for their contribution to the improvement of the manuscript.
- *Maintain a friendly tone*. A friendly and respectful tone can significantly impact the tone of the academic dialogue. Simple gestures, such as

wishing "Happy New Year" at the start of the year or "Happy Holidays" toward the end, can contribute to a positive interaction.

Key considerations in this phase include:

- *Professionalism and politeness.* Always maintain a professional and polite tone in communications. This reflects well on the author and helps in building a respectful relationship with the reviewers and editors.
- *Acknowledgment of the review process.* Recognize the importance of the peer review process in improving the quality of the work and contributing to the field.

Thanking reviewers, while seemingly simple, plays a crucial role in the overall peer review process. Demonstrating appreciation for reviewers' efforts not only is a sign of professional respect but also contributes to a constructive and collegial academic culture. It helps in establishing positive rapport and can even make the process of addressing future feedback more amicable and productive. This final step, therefore, is as much about fostering good relationships as it is about the technical aspects of responding to feedback.

Hot off the press

The opening issue of *Activities, Adaptation, and Aging: Dignified and Purposeful Living for Older Adults* for 2024 consists of eight insightful studies.

Ardelean and Redolat's (2024) study presents a systematic review examining how technology can support the management of behavioral and psychological challenges associated with dementia, particularly Alzheimer's disease. Following the PRISMA guidelines, the review screened 1085 papers, ultimately including 18 studies that met the inclusion criteria. These studies report on various technological devices designed for managing dementia-related challenges. The technologies identified include computer software, GPS, mobile apps, robots, wearables, and other assistive technologies. The review suggests that these non-pharmacological personalized approaches can be effective in managing and controlling various behavioral and psychological manifestations in individuals living with Alzheimer's. Notably, the most successful applications of technology were found in addressing agitation, anxiety, apathy, depression, motor activity, and sleep disorders. The review is significant as it highlights the potential of technology in enhancing the care and quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's. By focusing on non-pharmacological individualized approaches, the review underscores the importance of innovative approaches in managing complex conditions associated with aging. The findings are particularly relevant for healthcare providers, caregivers, and policy-makers in the field of aging and dementia care. They suggest that

incorporating technological solutions could be a valuable strategy in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by neurodegenerative diseases. The review also points to the need for further research and development in this area, to fully realize the potential of technology in supporting individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementia conditions.

Chen's (2024) study delves into the impact of Facebook use among older Taiwanese adults, particularly focusing on how this use affects their feelings of alienation and security. The study employs the micro media-system dependency model and the dual-factor model of Facebook use to understand these dynamics. With data from 184 valid respondents who used Facebook, analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS), the study finds that older adults' dependence on Facebook does not significantly influence their feelings of alienation or security. However, perceived social value and interpersonal closeness derived from Facebook use have a significant impact on these feelings. The study contributes to the academic understanding of social media use among older adults by clarifying how their interaction with platforms like Facebook affects their psychological well-being. From a practical standpoint, the study highlights the importance of Facebook in providing social value and fostering interpersonal closeness for older adults, who are often later adopters of social media. These findings are particularly relevant in the context of an aging population increasingly engaging with digital social networks. The study suggests that rather than the frequency or dependence on Facebook, the quality of social interactions and the perceived value of these interactions play a crucial role in influencing the psychological outcomes for older Taiwanese adults using social media. This insight is crucial for designing social media platforms and interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of older adults.

Elliot et al. (2024) study focuses on the development and validation of a revised version of the Artifacts of Culture Change (ACC) tool, known as ACC 2.0, designed to support teams in creating person-directed living for those living in nursing homes. The original ACC tool, funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in 2006, lacked formal validation. The study aimed to address this gap by qualitatively validating the revised tool. The methodology involved semi-structured interviews with national experts and users of the original ACC tool to gather suggestions for revisions. This was followed by a pilot-testing process with six organizations across the long-term care continuum. The pilot testing aimed to validate respondents' understanding of the tool's terminology and concepts and to assess the process of completing the tool. The study found variations in the interpretation of certain items in the ACC 2.0, leading to clarifications and revisions. Additionally, the process resulted in the creation of a new version of the tool specifically for assisted living settings: the Artifacts of Culture Change for Assisted Living. This study is significant, particularly in enhancing the quality of life and care

for people living in nursing homes and assisted living. By refining and validating the ACC tool, the study contributes to the promotion of person-directed living, nurturing ways in which long-term care (LTC) homes can foster the discovery of individual preferences, intentionally create opportunities for making choices, and enhance decision-making at both individual and community levels. This work is essential for practitioners and policy-makers in long-term care, providing them with a validated tool to assess and improve their practices, thereby fostering a more person-directed living experience, which encompasses care and extends beyond it. The tool serves various purposes: as an educational resource, an inspiration, a benchmarking standard, and a self-assessment mechanism, promoting an improved quality of life for people who live in LTC homes and showing to caregivers that these practices are implementable.

Karlin and Weil's (2024) study examines the need and potential application of telemedicine among older adults in rural areas, particularly in the Eastern Plains of Colorado and rural Western Nebraska. The study, which involved 176 participants aged 65 and above, aimed to evaluate their exposure to, use of, and potential interest in telehealth/medicine. The study included demographic data collection followed by nominal data (yes/no answers) regarding telehealth exposure and use, along with two open-ended qualitative questions for deeper insights. The results reveal that while there is support among older rural adults for the potential use of telemedicine, actual adoption and usage are low. Key themes identified include a limited but growing use of teleconferencing and health portals, and an expectation that telemedicine would become a more integral part of future healthcare systems. The study highlights the need for targeted training in technology skills for older adults in rural areas to overcome barriers to telemedicine adoption. This training is essential for those with limited technological capacity. The findings also point to a lack of awareness of telemedicine services, which hinders service use and impacts overall well-being. The study is crucial in understanding the gap between the potential benefits of telemedicine and its actual usage among older adults in rural areas. It emphasizes the importance of not only providing technological infrastructure but also ensuring that the target demographic is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to utilize these services effectively. The findings have significant implications for agencies supporting rural older adults, suggesting that integrating technology training into service offerings could greatly enhance healthcare access and quality for older adults living in rural communities.

Munawar et al. (2024) study investigates the relationships between cognitive functioning, level of dependency, and quality of life (QoL) among older adults in Pakistan, considering the moderating effects of gender and housing type. The cross-sectional study involved 274 participants, with assessments using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) for cognitive functioning, the

Incapacity Status Scale (ISS) for dependency levels, and the Urdu version of the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF) instrument for measuring QoL. The findings reveal significant relationships between these constructs. Cognitive functioning was found to significantly predict social QoL for males but did not significantly affect the overall QoL or its domains (physical, psychological, social relationships, and environmental health), regardless of whether participants lived in their own homes or care homes. However, the level of dependency was a significant predictor of overall QoL and its four domains for both male and female respondents. For those living in their own homes, dependency levels significantly predicted their overall QoL, as well as their physical and environmental QoL. In contrast, for those in care homes, cognitive functioning predicted only the social QoL for males and did not significantly impact the overall QoL or its domains for older individuals, whether in care homes or own homes. The study underscores the importance of considering cognitive functioning, dependency levels, gender, and housing type as key determinants of QoL in older adults. These findings have significant implications for policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and public health specialists in creating targeted community-based initiatives. The study advocates for strategies that enhance functional mobility and physical activity among older adults, tailored to their specific living conditions and cognitive and dependency statuses. This approach could contribute significantly to improving the overall QoL for older adults.

Orsega-Smith et al. (2024) study investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on senior centers in Delaware, focusing on the challenges and adaptations required during this period. The study involved interviewing 15 administrators of these centers, revealing their reliance on federal or state guidelines to inform their policies and the significant reduction in their class and activity offerings due to physical distancing requirements. Key challenges identified include a lack of clear guidance on how to safely reopen, financial difficulties, and shortages of volunteers and staff. The study underscores the need for the development of comprehensive policies and frameworks to assist senior centers in responding effectively to future crises. The study is significant as it highlights the critical role senior centers play in providing recreational and social opportunities for older adults and the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings emphasize the vulnerabilities of these centers in crisis situations, particularly in aspects like operational guidance, financial stability, and human resources. The study's implications are significant for policymakers and stakeholders in senior care, as it points to the necessity of creating robust support systems and contingency plans to ensure the resilience and continuity of essential services provided by senior centers in times of crisis. These insights are particularly important in the context of an aging population and the increasing role for such community resources.

Paglione et al. (2024) study investigates the role of community dance in supporting the aging process of older adults, framed within the concepts of successful aging, physical literacy, and embodiment. The study involved older adults aged 71–87 years who had participated in community dance classes. Through semi-structured interviews and reflexive thematic analysis, six key themes emerged: experiencing laughter, lightness, and a sense of youthfulness; rejuvenation of the body; gaining confidence; being emotionally moved by the music; finding a sense of belonging; and contributing to neighborhood spirit. The study concludes that community dance offers multifaceted benefits, contributing significantly to healthy and active aging. These benefits are not just physical, but also emotional and social, aligning with broader concepts of successful aging. The findings emphasize the value of dance as a medium for older adults to engage with their communities, enhance their physical and mental well-being, and foster a sense of belonging and contribution to their local environment. The study is important as it sheds light on alternative approaches to supporting the well-being of older adults. The focus on community dance underscores the potential of creative and recreational activities in enhancing quality of life and promoting active aging. For practitioners and policymakers in gerontology and community health, these insights highlight the need to include diverse, culturally enriching, and physically engaging options available for older adults to choose and participate. The study aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of holistic approaches to aging, encompassing physical, mental, and social well-being.

Zemancová et al. (2024) study zooms into the motivations behind regular physical activity in older adults living independently in the Czech Republic. Utilizing a thematic analysis of 34 interviews, the study identifies five primary motivators: exercise as an expression of the will to live, particularly as a means to combat aging; socialization and closeness to others through physical activity; the integration of exercise into personal identity; the goal of preserving or improving health; and the inherent enjoyment of physical activity. A notable finding is the frequency of exercise and the type of motivation driving it. Those who exercise more frequently tend to be driven by intrinsic motivations, while those who exercise less frequently place greater emphasis on the social and health benefits of physical activity. The study is significant in understanding the motivational factors that encourage physical activity among older adults. It suggests that differing motivations can influence the regularity of exercise, a key insight for developing strategies aimed at promoting regular physical activity in this demographic. This understanding is crucial, as regular exercise in older age is not only a matter of personal well-being but also a preventive measure against various chronic diseases. Hence, the findings can guide more effective and tailored options to promote healthier lifestyles among older adults.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this editorial and latest issue of *Activities, Adaptation, and Aging: Dignified and Purposeful Living* not only showcases a range of insightful studies but also reflects the underlying ethos of our journal: the promotion of constructive and productive interactions between authors and reviewers. The guidelines presented herein, encapsulated in the REVIEW and REACT frameworks, serve as a testament to our commitment to enhancing the quality, rigor, and impact of scholarly work through effective feedback mechanisms.

The REVIEW framework, designed for reviewers, emphasizes the importance of a thorough, analytical, and balanced approach to evaluating manuscripts. It guides reviewers in providing feedback that is not just critical but constructive, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and intellectual growth. Similarly, the REACT framework for authors delineates a structured method to respond to feedback. It encourages authors to engage deeply with reviewers' comments, thoughtfully incorporate suggestions, and maintain clear and open communication. These guidelines are crucial in ensuring that feedback serves its intended purpose of elevating the quality of research and scholarship.

The success of these frameworks is exemplified in the eight diverse and enriching articles featured in this opening issue for 2024. Each article is a product of the collaborative effort between authors and reviewers, underscoring the significance of productive interactions in academic publishing. These articles, ranging from technological interventions in dementia care to the role of community dance in supporting the aging process, not only contribute valuable insights to their respective fields but also embody the principles of rigorous peer review and responsive manuscript development.

As we move forward, it is clear that the success of our journal hinges on these dynamic and collaborative interactions between authors and reviewers. The guidelines presented herein aim to further this collaborative spirit, fostering an environment where scholarly discourse thrives on mutual respect, constructive criticism, and a shared commitment to excellence. We commit to adhering to these principles, and seek to continue to make this international journal *Activities, Adaptation, and Aging* a leading platform for disseminating research that significantly contributes to *dignified and purposeful living for older adults*.

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Appendix A. The REVIEW framework

Step		Key actions	Key considerations
R	Read thoroughly and reflectively	• Engage deeply with the manuscript. • Examine core arguments, methodologies, and findings.	• Is the manuscript original, relevant, and potentially impactful? • How does the research advances understanding in its field?
E	Evaluate theoretically and methodologically	• Critically analyze the theoretical framework. • Evaluate the integrity of research design, analysis, and interpretation.	• Is the theory relevant to the research questions? • Is the methodology aligned to the research objectives or questions?
V	Verify claims and sources	• Examine the accuracy and relevance of sources. • Scrutinize validity of claims.	• Have seminal and timely sources been used? • Are assertions evidence-based and logical?
I	Identify strengths and shortcomings	• Highlight positive elements and innovative approaches. • Point out areas needing refinement or development.	• What are the strengths deserving compliments? • What are the shortcomings and how can they be addressed?
E	Engage with the content critically	• Maintain objectivity and provide constructive criticism. • Offer specific, detailed feedback.	• Is the review constructive and developmental? • Is the feedback actionable?
W	Write clearly and constructively	• Prioritize clarity and conciseness in feedback. • Structure feedback.	• Has the feedback been framed in an encouraging and supportive manner? • Has the feedback been signposted and structured for maximum clarity?

Appendix B. The REACT framework

Step		Key actions	Key considerations
R	Review feedback	• Meticulously read all reviewer comments. • Identify key themes and differentiate between major and minor points.	• Have I approached the feedback with an open mind? • Have I identified the most critical areas that need attention?
E	Evaluate feedback	• Assess accuracy and relevance of comments. • Consider the impact of implementing changes.	• Do these changes align with my research goals? • Are these suggestions feasible and appropriate for my manuscript?
A	Address feedback	• Respond to each piece of feedback. • Develop a revision strategy and implement changes.	• How effective are these changes in addressing the feedback? • Am I maintaining the integrity and coherence of my manuscript?
C	Communicate revision	• *Reference changes using page and line numbers.* • *Provide excerpts of original (before) and revised (after) text*, and *justify changes*.	• Have I communicated the changes clearly and transparently? • Have I acknowledged any limitations that I cannot address?
T	Thank reviewer	• Express gratitude to reviewers. • Maintain a friendly and respectful tone.	• Have I expressed my appreciation professionally and politely? • Have I acknowledged the value of the peer review process in my communication?