

## PERSPECTIVE

# Transformative co-creation: Analysis of research innovation collaboration between vocational education journal editors and researchers

Le Bi<sup>1,\*</sup>, Dan Wang<sup>2</sup>
<sup>1</sup>Information Center for Social Sciences, Renmin University of China, Beijing 100872, China

<sup>2</sup>School of Public Policy and Administration, Chongqing University, Chongqing 400044, China

## INTRODUCTION

At the National Vocational Education Research Conference held in Jinan province in November 2024, Vice Minister of Education Wu Yan addressed several fundamental and current challenges, emphasizing, "Without high-level educational research, high-quality educational development becomes improbable or impossible; we need a genuine revolution in vocational education research methodologies". In the context of global industrial transformation and rapidly evolving knowledge economies, the function of vocational education has expanded significantly—from the traditional transmission of technical skills to the development of versatile, highly skilled professionals who possess innovative capabilities, interdisciplinary perspectives, and international competitiveness. Within this framework, vocational education requires profound transformation and accelerated advancement in its theoretical foundations, research methodologies, and conceptual frameworks. Consequently, the "genuine revolution in vocational education research" represents an academic response to industrial restructuring, technological advancement, and global talent competition, as well as a strategic imperative for systematic innovation in traditional vocational education research paradigms (Wu, 2024).

High-quality development of vocational education requires research guidance (Lei, 2024). In this information age characterized by interdisciplinary

integration and accelerated knowledge evolution in vocational education, academic journals serve as primary vehicles for disseminating high-quality research and play critical roles in facilitating academic exchange, advancing disciplinary development, and amplifying research impact. As core vessels of academic achievement, academic publications not only present research findings and contribute to discourse construction but also fulfill multiple functions in knowledge dissemination and influence expansion. They hold substantial significance for "advancing the development of China's autonomous knowledge systems in vocational education disciplines and elevating research standards in the field" (Zhou *et al.*, 2024). A survey of current vocational education research reveals numerous high-quality publications that have successfully bridged theory and practice, thoroughly examining rich topics, such as curriculum reform, pedagogical innovation, industry-collaborative education models, and the cultivation of craftsmanship ethos. Nevertheless, challenges persist, including fragmented research approaches, outdated rhetorical styles, and insufficient societal application of research findings. Additionally, how to generate broader impacts when drawing valuable research conclusions that can be generalized across both academic and industrial spheres remains an incompletely resolved question. Deep collaboration between journal editors and researchers is increasingly recognized as crucial for driving qualitative transformation in vocational education research.


Vocational education research has clearly evolved

### \*Corresponding Author:

Le Bi, Information Center for Social Sciences, Renmin University of China, No. 59 Zhongguancun Street, Haidian District, Beijing 100872, China. Email: 2021101902@ruc.edu.cn.

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beyond the confined exploration of a single discipline to become a nexus where multiple forces converge—including economic, social, policy, technological, and publishing factors, as well as the influences of academic journals and editorial practices. How to achieve profound paradigmatic innovation within this complex ecosystem while preserving practical utility poses the central challenge that "transformative co-creation" seeks to address. The envisioned solution lies in resonant collaboration between journal editors and researchers across traditional boundaries. Through this approach, professional insights and effective communication organically integrate, continuously evolving to sustain high-quality development in vocational education research.

## TRANSFORMATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH SYSTEMS AND ACADEMIC PUBLICATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE ERA OF SPECIALIZED DIVISION OF LABOR

The specialized division of labor framework refers to the macroscopic system wherein industry chains, educational processes, and various resource elements are engaged in refined specialization and sophisticated coordination across sectors, regions, and disciplines in the context of deeply integrated globalization and knowledge economies. The rapid evolution of contemporary globalization and knowledge economies has catalyzed a "specialized division of labor framework" that transcends traditional boundaries, expanding the scope of vocational education research beyond conventional skill development and foundational theory into multidimensional intersections of industrial policy, technological innovation, knowledge economics, and sociocultural domains (Xu, 2023). Consequently, the intrinsic logic of academic publication has become increasingly multilayered, necessitating sophisticated collaborative transformative co-creation between journal editors and researchers.

### ***The specialized division of labor framework necessitates enhancing journal editors' function as "academic text architects" to drive transformation in vocational education research systems***

Within the specialized division of labor framework, vocational education research systems require comprehensive reconfiguration (Sun, 2010). In this environment, diverse entities establish multidimensional, multilayered production and innovation networks through complementary expertise, resource integration, and role interaction, creating expansive opportunities for interdisciplinary convergence and collaborative inquiry

in vocational education. For instance, researchers must synthesize perspectives from economics, psychology, editorial studies, and other disciplines. Applying economic analysis to industrial demands, psychological frameworks to learning motivation, and editorial principles to communication effectiveness enhances both researchers' and editors' abilities for cross-vocational education discipline thinking and knowledge integration.

In the context of information fragmentation and accelerated knowledge evolution, conventional research methodologies struggle to accommodate the demands of high-complexity and dynamic knowledge environments. Achieving a comprehensive analysis of complex issues typically requires progressing through multiple rigorous phases, including theoretical framework development, empirical investigation, case analysis, and international comparative studies, generating heterogeneous datasets (Ma, 2011). Consequently, joint research—editorial teams are increasingly transitioning to the implementation of labor and multirole interaction models. Researchers concentrate on research logic and methodological rigor, while journal editors fulfill crucial functions in discourse organization, logical refinement, and dissemination strategy, effectively serving as "academic text architects" (Wang *et al.*, 2023). While researchers previously managed topic selection, data analysis, and manuscript composition predominantly independently, journal editors in contemporary knowledge economy-driven research ecosystems now contribute their specialized expertise in academic language, article structure, and logical articulation. This expanded editorial role enables sophisticated optimization of academic texts from the perspectives of audience engagement and dissemination strategy, including restructuring textual organization, highlighting key research contributions, and ensuring adherence to rigorous academic standards. Through enhanced collaboration between researchers and editorial professionals, vocational education research can simultaneously achieve theoretical sophistication and practical relevance. Thus, research not only transcends singular perspectives through interdisciplinary integration but also more effectively translates findings into drivers of innovation and foundations for talent development by leveraging editors' expertise in communication and strategic coordination.

### ***Generation of journal articles as research output vehicles: a process of multilayered interaction***

As vehicles of research outcomes, academic publications represent more than mere compilations of symbols; they embody multidimensional implications encompassing professional expertise, knowledge contributions, symbolic representation, and societal impact. First,

academic manuscripts require rigorous scholarly logic and verifiable methodologies as their foundation, particularly in vocational education where diverse approaches, including social surveys, case analyses, comparative studies, and policy formulations, are commonly employed. Only by establishing coherent, verifiable lines of argumentation, supported by comprehensive data and thorough interpretation, can publications gain academic recognition and advance research paradigms. Second, academic writing constitutes a recreative process of systematically organizing and symbolically expressing extensive materials. Researchers who cannot effectively "distill complexity" through strategic linguistic organization and visualization techniques struggle to facilitate readers' comprehension of central narratives. At this juncture, journal editors can transform complex theories and data into more accessible and thought-provoking content through their expertise in language, rhetoric, and typographical presentation, thereby increasing both the academic quality and dissemination potential of manuscripts (Jin, 2021). Finally, the intellectual life of publications continues to evolve after their release through citations, policy adoption, industrial applications, and media coverage, generating "latent value" that has profound beneficial impacts on talent development and sector transformation. Only when editors and researchers continuously monitor dissemination outcomes and thoroughly analyze external feedback can these spillover effects genuinely be converted into substantive improvements within the research ecosystem.

### ***Systematic transformation of research outcomes: imperative for transformative co-creation between journal editors and scholars***

The transformation of research outcomes generally progresses through a systematic process encompassing three key phases: research initiation, symbolic articulation, and dissemination feedback. During the initial research conceptualization and preliminary linguistic exploration phase, subtle early-stage coupling emerges, characterized predominantly by academic leadership supplemented by editorial guidance. The professional research phase constitutes the foundation of any academic investigation. During this formative stage, researchers occupy the central position in the research ecosystem. Drawing on their disciplinary expertise, academic acumen, and methodological proficiency, researchers undertake investigations, experimental studies, and data analyses, as well as develop theoretical frameworks addressing specific challenges in vocational education. The critical focus is on the formulation and development of intellectual content and logical structures. At this juncture, journal editors typically assume supportive rather than interventionist roles,

refraining from substantial involvement in the conceptual architecture of the research itself while offering preliminary linguistic guidance as manuscript drafts materialize. Editorial constructive feedback regarding linguistic precision and structural coherence enables researchers to identify areas of improvement where their research exposition can be clarified, reorganized for logical continuity, or further developed for stronger argumentation. This iterative process facilitates timely refinements in conceptual approaches, augmentation of supporting evidence, and enhancement of expressive clarity throughout the research progression. This subtle early-stage collaboration enables researchers to develop more precise conceptualizations of outcome presentation strategies at the inception of their inquiry, minimizing the necessity for substantial modifications during later developmental phases.

The outcome integration and symbolic representation phase—characterized by editors' progressively deeper involvement and researchers' responsive engagement—shifts the emphasis to knowledge systematization and symbolic articulation. During this collaborative stage, the editorial function assumes increasing prominence. At this juncture, researchers have typically established their core argumentative structure and generated preliminary findings; however, these intellectual products often remain in an unrefined state, awaiting systematic organization, structural coherence, and expressive optimization. During this phase, beyond linguistic refinement, editors' contributions encompass substantive recommendations regarding a manuscript's architectural integrity, sectional organization, thematic emphasis, and communicative accessibility. Editorial intervention facilitates a more effective presentation of academic research, enabling complex datasets and theoretical frameworks to emerge through streamlined organizational structures and coherent narratives accessible to the intended readership. This advanced level of collaborative engagement propels the researcher–editor partnership to a pivotal phase characterized by extensive intellectual coordination. In this symbiotic relationship, researchers furnish the conceptual foundation and empirical evidence, which editors subsequently refine and transform into sophisticated academic artifacts. Throughout this iterative process, researchers continuously respond to and incorporate editorial recommendations, fostering a constructive cyclical feedback mechanism that improves the quality of the final intellectual product. This collaborative process also implicitly elevates researchers' rhetorical awareness and editors' disciplinary acuity through sustained professional exchange.

The dissemination feedback and knowledge iteration phase centers on dynamic assessment mechanisms and ecosystem enhancement strategies co-developed through

editor-researcher partnerships. Following successful publication or initial dissemination, research outputs transition into phases of academic impact assessment and knowledge governance. At this juncture, the collaborative relationship between editors and researchers undergoes a significant recalibration of roles and expansion of functional parameters. Once published, scholarly articles become visible in both academic and public spheres, where they are subject to scrutiny, evaluation, and feedback from peers, policymakers, industry practitioners, and general readers. In this context, journal editors and researchers must collaboratively address readers' inquiries, reviewers' critiques, practitioners' recommendations, and application demands emerging from industrial and policy sectors. Journal editors can monitor citation metrics, media coverage, and journal evaluation indices to present the impacts of publications in structured, data-driven formats, providing researchers with evidence for refining their research directions. In turn, researchers gain inspiration and opportunities for reflection from this feedback, integrating external perspectives into their research processes. At this stage, the editor-researcher collaboration transcends mere textual refinement, extending to the development of academic ecosystems and the construction of knowledge management frameworks. Through ongoing dialogue and collaborative improvement, journal editors and researchers can jointly synthesize their experiences, critically reflect on limitations identified in the entire process, and adequately prepare for subsequent research cycles.

## **CRITICAL JUNCTURES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CO-CREATION BETWEEN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION JOURNAL EDITORS AND RESEARCHERS ACROSS THREE RESEARCH PHASES**

Based on the preceding analysis of manuscript development logic and the transformative co-creation between journal editors and researchers, it can be concluded that reforming vocational education research requires capitalizing on specific critical junctures across three phases: preliminary engagement, research dissemination, and academic iteration. Each phase entails setting distinct priorities and objectives in editor-researcher collaboration.

### ***Preliminary engagement phase: establishing solid foundations at the inception of professional research***

*Fundamental value of logical rigor and methodological design*

The professional research phase constitutes the foundational starting point for all academic publications. During this phase, researchers develop theoretical and

hypothetical frameworks based on insights into research problems and systematic literature reviews; they then select appropriate methods (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed). Logical coherence and methodological rigor are the most essential elements at this stage. However, researchers frequently prioritize academic depth while overlooking issues of linguistic accessibility and conceptual clarity. Timely "reflective feedback" from journal editors enables researchers to enhance the comprehensiveness of their literature reviews, improve the testability of their study's hypotheses, and refine the precision of key terminology before finalizing the research design, thereby reducing the need for subsequent extensive revisions.

### ***Insights and research paradigm innovation through early editorial engagement***

Although somewhat constrained, journal editors' involvement during the professional research phase offers valuable external perspectives, particularly in providing guidance on research design, anticipating structural issues, and clarifying key conceptual frameworks. As vocational education research frequently traverses multiple disciplines, editors with a keen understanding of interdisciplinary terminology and international contexts can more effectively assist researchers in identifying potential theoretical innovations or avenues for international comparative analysis. For example, editors whose backgrounds lie at the intersection of education and communication sciences can employ their knowledge of linguistic styles and audience preferences to help researchers develop internationally oriented perspectives and interdisciplinary publishing approaches from the early stages of research. Such collaboration catalyzes innovative thinking in research paradigms and cross-domain breakthroughs.

### ***Fostering research communication awareness and adaptability from the outset***

Journal editors need not significantly intervene in the research direction or academic content before the completion of professional research; rather, they provide researchers with valuable reflective insights through subtle linguistic recommendations, structural presentation strategies, and guidance on potential reader awareness (Zhao, 1996). Incorporating expression awareness training throughout the development of logical foundations and research paradigms—such as multilingual equivalents for key terminology and techniques for seamless transitions between sections—enables researchers to simultaneously address the "depth of academic logic" and "textual accessibility" from the beginning, thereby improving overall writing efficiency. More significantly, the constructive interaction established between journal editors and researchers at the inception of research continues to develop at all



subsequent phases, providing a solid foundation for comprehensive quality enhancement of vocational education research outcomes.

### **Research dissemination phase: optimizing expression and publication through knowledge synthesis**

*Transforming "raw materials" into "academic contributions"*

Once researchers have completed data collection, theoretical framework development, and preliminary analysis, manuscript preparation enters the critical phase of knowledge synthesis and formalized expression. At this juncture, the "raw research materials" require thorough refinement in linguistic articulation and structural organization so that the findings can be effectively communicated to academic communities, industry stakeholders, and the general public. At this stage, professional editorial involvement can assist authors in addressing issues such as verbosity, disjointed logical transitions, and ambiguous linguistic expression. By combining broad oversight with detailed refinement, editors play crucial roles in enhancing data visualization, clarifying central lines of argumentation, and ensuring consistency in linguistic style.

### **Building bridges for international discourse and interdisciplinary communication**

In the context of increasingly internationalized and multidisciplinary vocational education research, a significant challenge lies in crafting manuscripts with universal accessibility and effective cross-domain communicative validity. Journal editors function as crucial mediators in this process. Through judicious terminological choices and rhetorical strategies, they transform complex academic discourse into more understandable language that resonates with both academic and practitioner communities (Wang, 1998). Editors possess distinctive advantages in linguistic recoding, academic discourse alignment, and cross-cultural rhetorical adaptation. First, for linguistic adaptation, when preparing manuscripts for international journals or conferences, editors can assist researchers in aligning citation formats, abstract structures, and specific terminology with international standards based on established academic conventions. Second, regarding interdisciplinary rhetorical mediation, when manuscripts target audiences from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, editors can clarify or substitute highly specialized terminology and concepts, enhancing comprehension for readers outside the primary field and consequently broadening the manuscripts' reach. These cross-contextual and cross-cultural adjustments maintain academic rigor while significantly increasing the manuscripts' dissemination potential.

### **Promoting collaborative engagement between journal editors and researchers: from textual refinement to methodological reconsideration**

During the formalization stage, journal editors not only refine text and structure but also engage with researchers to gain deeper insights into methodological details, ensuring the correction of inaccuracies in statistical reporting or in case analysis interpretation in the manuscripts. When editors (and reviewers) identify inadequate methodological explanations or logically inconsistent data presentations during editorial and peer reviews, researchers must reassess their research processes and implement appropriate amendments or revisions. This collaborative engagement not only facilitates the timely identification and correction of research oversights but also encourages researchers to refine their research designs, enabling them to present more comprehensive and methodologically rigorous academic contributions.

### **Academic iteration phase: extending the value of journal articles through dissemination services**

Following publication, research influence gradually permeates academic and social practice domains through multiple channels. To measure the value and impact of research outcomes, editors must overcome the limitations of traditional journal impact factors or simplistic citation metrics by employing multidimensional evaluation indicators: depth of academic citation (frequency of citations in high-quality journals or monographs), policy adoption value (implications for educational policies, industry standards, and talent development programs), industrial application (tracking interviews and case studies from industry associations or corporate training departments), social dissemination impact (media coverage, secondary distribution through digital platforms, attention from non-profit organizations or public audiences), and international engagement effectiveness (applications and responses to international conferences or transnational collaborative research). This approach enables more objective assessments of manuscripts' academic and societal influence while guiding subsequent improvements. Journal editors perform a crucial "information structuring" function in data integration and impact analysis, utilizing various databases, media monitoring tools, and policy document tracking methods to periodically collect and visually present evaluations and applications of published work, thereby providing researchers with timely and comprehensive feedback (Huo, 2021). Researchers can consequently identify their studies' limitations and determine directions for deeper investigation, incorporating external perspectives and practical case studies in subsequent research projects or implementation plans, thereby establishing an

"accelerated cycle" of knowledge development. From a broader perspective, journal editors construct a "knowledge landscape" of vocational education research through continuous monitoring and synthesis, providing insights into disciplinary trends, research gaps, and potential international collaborations. Overall, this phase ultimately fosters editors' and researchers' co-creation of a productive knowledge ecosystem, where publications continuously contribute new momentum to theoretical advancement and practical innovation through cumulative iterations.

## **EXPLORING PATHWAYS FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION JOURNAL EDITORS AND RESEARCHERS TO ADVANCE THE TRANSFORMATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH ACROSS THREE STAGES**

To effectively implement transformative co-creation between journal editors and researchers in vocational education research, comprehensive analysis and synthesis of specific components and implementation strategies across three critical stages are essential. This approach ultimately drives continuous improvements in the quality and impact of vocational education journal articles, supporting the profound development of research in this domain.

### ***Transformative co-creation in the preliminary engagement phase: strengthening research foundations through early editorial involvement and interdisciplinary collaboration***

#### ***Enhancing dynamic interaction and early intervention mechanisms to reduce subsequent revision costs***

To minimize the time and effort required for substantial revisions later in the process, preliminary textual assessment and linguistic optimization guidance should be applied to research frameworks, logical structures, and key concepts during the formative stages of research planning. Early editorial involvement and detailed interactions with researchers can be facilitated through periodic online seminars, writing workshops, and/or similar collaborative platforms. These training sessions can be scheduled in preparation for each journal issue. For instance, after establishing their initial research questions and theoretical frameworks, vocational education researchers can submit their draft materials to journal editors for preliminary review. Editors can provide preemptive guidance and corrective suggestions regarding linguistic and structural elements, helping researchers refine their research designs promptly and

avoid major revisions at subsequent stages, thus creating a more streamlined and efficient review process.

### ***Cultivating interdisciplinary collaboration and diverse stakeholder participation to establish cross-domain research support networks***

Platforms should recruit experts and researchers from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds to collectively provide multifaceted consultation and evaluation of complex issues in vocational education. On these platforms, journal editors function beyond text and layout management to serve as "academic intermediaries", connecting researchers with expert resources across various domains. This approach significantly upgrades the quality of initial research endeavors while fostering researchers' capacity to examine topics from multiple perspectives and integrate interdisciplinary considerations into their research practices.

Language refinement and logical assessment in parallel to establish solid academic foundations and effective communication frameworks. Journal editors assume a "dual review" function on these platforms, not merely refining language but also facilitating researchers' deeper reflection on research approaches by identifying logical gaps, conceptual ambiguities, and argumentative discontinuities. This process simultaneously enhances content quality and expression clarity, cultivating emerging researchers' comprehensive capabilities that combine disciplinary expertise with effective communication skills. From an operational perspective, these platforms should emphasize formats that include "iterative interaction", "real-time feedback", and "preliminary assessment discussions". In conventional research paradigms, researchers typically engage with journal editors only after completing their research, rendering such late-stage remediation costly in terms of both time and effort and unfavorable for precise refinement. Conversely, platforms with preemptive characteristics enable journal editors' and relevant experts' preliminary examination of emerging research while projects are still in their formative stages of design, data collection, or initial analysis. Through thematic seminars, online discussion forums, manuscript pre-review mechanisms, and feedback workshops, these platforms provide researchers with timely and diverse perspectives. This approach not only helps researchers avoid later complications and unnecessary effort but also enables editors to gain early insights into research priorities and structural potential, establishing a foundation for subsequent textual refinement and expressive enhancement.

In this process, "language optimization" extends beyond merely transforming cumbersome academic prose into plain, easily understandable text. More significantly, journal editors can prompt researchers' profound

reflection by identifying logical discontinuities between sections, inadequate connections between arguments, or imprecise conceptual definitions, encouraging researchers to reconsider the fundamental logic of their research. In other words, editorial recommendations essentially constitute a secondary academic assessment mediated through language, helping researchers more clearly recognize inherent contradictions and expressive limitations in their work. This strategy of "concurrent optimization of textual elements and logical structures" enables vocational education research to establish more robust academic foundations and clearer communicative directions during its formative stages. Furthermore, the development of such interactive platforms hones the academic writing competencies and communicative skills of junior researchers. Through sustained engagement with editorial feedback and cross-disciplinary responses on these platforms, early-career researchers progressively benefit from their dual identity as researchers and communicators. They develop the capacity to simultaneously consider analytical depth and rhetorical strategies during research planning, fostering the emergence of exceptional talent in vocational education research—individuals capable of both profound theoretical investigation and articulate expression.

### ***Transformative co-creation in the research dissemination phase: refining research expression through efficient editorial review and collaborative communication***

When vocational education research transitions to the knowledge synthesis and formalization stage, research outcomes have substantially materialized but require further distillation, enhancement, and refinement to meet broader dissemination requirements. During this phase, the relationship between journal editors and researchers undergoes a subtle transformation. Editors advance from external observers to efficient review coordinators and facilitators of textual adaptation. While researchers no longer maintain a predominant position, they continue to fulfill essential functions in ensuring disciplinary integrity (Lu, 1998). To take advantage of the opportunities presented at this stage, it is necessary to establish systematic and sustainable editorial review and dissemination mechanisms that provide substantive support for high-quality presentation and diversified communication of vocational education research outcomes.

#### ***Developing standardized editorial review protocols, spanning from linguistic refinement to multimodal enhancement***

The community of journal editors and researchers establishes editorial review processes that address terminology standardization, citation formatting, logical text structuring, visual representation of data visual-

ization, and integration of multimedia elements. Employing project-based collaborative approaches increases procedural coherence and feedback efficiency, transforming complex research materials into clear, accessible knowledge products (Liu, 1999). At the operational level, standardized editorial review protocols can be implemented in research institutions or academic networks. Editorial teams should operate by following project-based or modular workflows. Specialized language editors review manuscripts for linguistic precision, stylistic elegance, and appropriate tone. Simultaneously, editors with relevant disciplinary expertise refine the logical structure of manuscripts to ensure coherent organization, clear lines of reasoning, and proper alignment between evidence and claims. Additionally, data visualization and multimedia specialists can transform complex statistical information into accessible graphics, convert abstract theoretical models into intuitive visual representations, and, when appropriate, incorporate audio, video, or interactive elements—facilitating the evolution of manuscripts from purely textual documents to multimodal knowledge products. Implementing this integrated process requires refined project management methodologies and communication channels to ensure seamless coordination, informational transparency, and prompt feedback across all stages.

#### ***Enhancing multidimensional dissemination strategies tailored to diverse audiences and international contexts***

Editorial teams adapt linguistic styles, narrative pacing, and argumentative depth to the particular requirements of academic journals, interdisciplinary forums, and international platforms, facilitating effective knowledge transfer across diverse cultural and intellectual ecosystems. Regarding knowledge dissemination strategies, editorial teams can customize communication approaches to the specific characteristics of different target audiences (Zhao, 1996). For highly specialized academic journals, the depth and complexity of scholarly discourse can be maintained while imposing more stringent requirements for linguistic precision and citation standards. On interdisciplinary or cross-domain communication platforms, a balance between academic rigor and accessibility must be achieved, emphasizing the innovative aspects and transferable insights gained from the research findings. When preparing manuscripts for international exchanges and submission to overseas journals, editorial teams must navigate international academic conventions and linguistic-cultural nuances while developing expressions that resonate in global academic contexts. This multidimensional approach to knowledge transfer boosts the flexibility and adaptability of research outcomes, expediting their effective dissemination across diverse academic and professional



environments.

*Strengthening the interplay between academic oversight and technical revision to ensure concurrent precision of content and optimization of expression*

Through ongoing dialogue, a balance is achieved between communication effectiveness and academic rigor, ensuring that research outputs maintain academic depth while increasing accessibility. Throughout this process, the role of academic oversight remains crucial. When editors suggest textual streamlining, terminological alternatives, or graphical modifications, researchers should promptly evaluate the potential impacts and provide feedback and corrections based on their comprehensive understanding of the research foundations, ensuring that editorial interventions preserve the work's academic integrity and innovative contributions. The feedback exchange between editors and researchers should establish accessible, responsive communication channels. Researchers can raise concerns about potential misrepresentations through annotations, tracked changes, or comparative draft reviews, while editors can adapt their approaches to researchers' academic input. This bidirectional interaction ensures that manuscripts benefit from editorial expertise in communication techniques and expressive refinement while maintaining their intellectual integrity and academic essence through the researchers' vigilant oversight. By implementing these efficient review and dissemination mechanisms, vocational education research outcomes convert static manuscripts into multiple formats across diverse contexts, extending their reach to instructional practices, policy development, industry applications, and international collaborations (Hu *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, publications evolve from singular vehicles of academic presentation to adaptable knowledge modules, enabling broader audiences to comprehend the value of vocational education research and fostering its societal integration, international recognition, and cross-sector dialogue at more extensive levels.

***Transformative co-creation in the academic iteration phase: building knowledge ecosystems through dynamic evaluation by journal editors and researchers***

When research transitions from the relatively confined domain of academic publishing to broader social spheres, it encounters various challenges related to academic assessment and knowledge management. In the academic impact and knowledge management phase, research outcomes face not only evaluation from academic communities but also interest from policy sectors, expectations from industry stakeholders, implementation attempts by educational practitioners,

and broader attention from media and public audiences. How can journal editors and researchers achieve effective collaboration at this stage to maximize and continuously develop the impact of published research? The key lies in establishing dynamic systems for evaluating academic impact and developing knowledge ecosystems.

*Developing multidimensional evaluation metrics that extend beyond citation counts to comprehensive value assessment*

Integrating five key dimensions—academic citation, policy uptake, industry response, societal dissemination, and international engagement—can establish a comprehensive evaluation framework that transcends traditional singular journal impact factor metrics, thereby illuminating the practical applications and influencing trajectories of research outcomes (He, 2024). The development of this framework begins with database integration and information tracking. The value of vocational education research exceeds citation counts or impact factors by encompassing tangible contributions to educational reform, industry-standard advancement, and innovations in talent development models (Yu *et al.*, 2009). This broad scope necessitates journal editors' and researchers' collaborative design of multidimensional evaluation metrics, including the following indicators: academic citations (frequency and quality of citations in academic journals, monographs, conference proceedings, dissertations, and literature reviews), policy impact (frequency of research incorporation in policy documents and recommendation reports), industry and institutional feedback (practical application feedback and case adoption from vocational institutions, training organizations, industry associations, and enterprises), social dissemination (media coverage, online discourse, social media engagement, and public readership metrics), and international engagement (recognition and levels of participation in international conferences, journal publications, and collaborative projects). In the development and data collection processes for these indicators, journal editors can play vital coordinating and integrative roles. Journal editors facilitate the steps comprising this phase by establishing partnerships with administrators of academic databases, policy repositories, industry information resources, and media monitoring platforms. Through data mining and analytical tools, editors systematically organize, categorize, and structurally present dispersed feedback information.

This systematic organization of data not only provides researchers with accessible visualizations of their studies' impacts but also offers valuable insights to the academic community: Which research directions garner the most attention in practical applications? Which theoretical perspectives have been successfully translated into



educational policies? Which analytical methodologies demonstrate broader applicability in international discourse?

### *Enhancing data integration and editorial coordination to construct visual representations of knowledge ecosystems*

Journal editors utilize databases to process and structure information from policy documents, industry practices, international academic exchanges, and media discourse. By creating visual representations of research impacts, they provide researchers with precise guidance for identifying knowledge gaps, recognizing areas of strength, and exploring potential applications. At this stage, researchers should regard evaluation and feedback as vital intellectual inputs for subsequent research endeavors. Influence data and information analysis results presented by journal editors can guide researchers in making strategic research direction adjustments (Tang, 2021). For instance, if analysis reveals that some findings have led to significant applications in industry practice but limited policy implementation, researchers could transform their conclusions into more actionable policy recommendations or develop stronger collaborations with policymaking bodies and think tanks. Similarly, if research demonstrates increasing citation rates in international publications but limited domestic applications, researchers should consider how to advance context-specific adaptations that align with local conditions and address practical talent development needs. Through this process of data interpretation and responsive adjustment, researchers could continuously refine their conceptual frameworks and sharpen their research focus, thereby strengthening the practical orientation of vocational education research while optimizing the international impact of regional-specific investigations.

## CONCLUSION

Maintaining dynamic cycles and iterative research processes transforms reflective feedback into paradigmatic advancement. Researchers continuously refine their research trajectories, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches based on quantitative data and feedback facilitated by editorial teams. Journal editors engage in ongoing professional development (Zhang, 2022), developing their capacity to bridge disciplinary research with editorial expertise. Within this dynamic cycle, research is converted from a discrete output into a continuously evolving component of the knowledge ecosystem, propelling vocational education research toward transformative innovation at higher levels. The establishment of these dynamic evaluation systems and knowledge ecosystem mechanisms generates a positive cycle of "research-dissemination-

evaluation-renewed research". Vocational education research transcends singular conclusion generation to become a continuously accumulating, optimizing, and iterating knowledge ecology. Editors function as knowledge ecosystem facilitators at this juncture, developing instrumental platforms for impact tracking and knowledge management that provide precise guidance for researchers in subsequent investigations (Yang & Hao, 2010). Researchers, supported by editorial intelligence, master their research directions and approaches through reflection and innovation, creating spiraling developmental trajectories for their academic endeavors. Ultimately, these upgraded systems of dynamic evaluation and knowledge ecosystem development not only promote the sophisticated management of individual manuscripts but fundamentally elevate the overall quality and impact of vocational education research. Within this framework, knowledge transforms from a static resource into dynamic "intellectual capital" that overflows, accumulates, and expands. The collaborative relationship between editors and researchers continuously enhances this capital through practice. Impact assessment, value extension, and knowledge management for each publication strengthen the academic vitality of individual studies as well as infuse the broader vocational education research community with sustained innovative momentum, fostering the long-term, comprehensive advancement of the scientific revolution.

## DECLARATIONS

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Not applicable.

### **Informed consent**

Not applicable.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

### **Data availability statement**

No additional data.

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