

**Editor's Comment:**

Please, find the Editorial decision for the manuscript 2019/JEAI/51033 as well as the commented revised manuscript herewith attached with this e-mail.

The work was forced at a certain level. The lack of correlations between drought-stress seedlings traits and grain yield could have lead to the conclusion that heat and water stress at the seedling stage do not allow selecting for drought tolerant maize planting materials.

Even by trying to ignore the above-realistic conclusion, only three of the stressed seedling traits poorly correlated with traits of plants stressed at flowering.

The work lacked scientific rigour and should be revised accordingly.

**EDITORIAL DECISION FOR MANUSCRIPT Ms\_JEAI\_51033**

The manuscript Ms\_JEAI\_51033 titled "Genetic variances, heritability and traits association of early maturing maize hybrids under drought imposed at seedling and flowering stages" rightly aimed at looking for a possibility to select drought tolerant maize planting materials at the seedling stage by subjecting 66 simple hybrids to artificial drought and evaluation the subsequent grain yields.

Low correlation between grain yield and all the irradiated seedlings traits contrasted with the expectations. However, authors desperately pursued with the search for inter-relationships among traits which resulted in a maximum correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.30$ ) between "Number of dead leaves" at seedling stage and "Stay green" at flowering stage which is physiologically difficult to explain.

It is strongly believed that estimates of direct and indirect effects of yield attributing characters on grain yield based on path analysis confirmed the fact that any data imputed in a computer program are automatically processed to produce related outputs. In the case of the current study inputs related to the drought-stressed seedling traits could be considered erroneous because it was already shown that they did not correlated with grain yield.

Reviewers did not relate the results to the interpretation and the conclusions made probably because the manuscript was well presented and written in a good English language.

The first conclusion was that the traits of seedlings growing under induced drought do not relate with subsequent grain yield and therefore should not be used as criteria in the selection of maize planting materials tolerant to drought.

This main remark and more other comments in the revised manuscript call for a revision of the manuscript accordingly. Therefore, the Journal of Experimental Agriculture International cannot yet be advised to publish the manuscript that should be resubmitted for another round of editorial decision.

**Editor's Details:**

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