

Psychology of Men and Masculinities: Guidelines for Reviewing Manuscripts¹

1. As a reviewer, you serve the dual roles of evaluator and educator. In your **evaluative** role, you will provide a recommendation to the action editor on whether the manuscript should be accepted, rejected, or revised/resubmitted. In deciding on your recommendation, consider the following four factors:
 - a. **Fit:** Is the manuscript a good fit with PMM? Is it consistent with PMM's mission? Please refer to <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/men/?tab=1> for a description of PMM's mission. Does the manuscript address gender, masculinities, sex (e.g., biological attributes), and/or gender/sex differences? If not, it might not be a good fit with PMM.
 - b. **Fatal flaws:** For empirical manuscripts, a fatal flaw is one that severely undermines the key findings and cannot be remedied through a revision or re-analysis of the data. All studies have limitations but the question to consider is whether any of the flaws are so serious that they diminish the readers' confidence in the key findings or conclusions of the study. Examples include the use of unsuitable measures in a quantitative study, a serious confounding factor in an experimental design, or the use of inappropriate interview questions in a qualitative study. This criterion does not apply to review and conceptual (non-empirical) manuscripts.
 - c. **Major weaknesses:** Even if a manuscript has no fatal flaws, it might suffer from multiple problems that, collectively, undermine the overall quality of the manuscript. An example of a major weakness is a manuscript that would likely require numerous rounds of revisions because the quality of writing is very poor. As editor, I try to offer revisions only when I'm reasonably certain (about 75% confident; one can't be 100% certain) that the manuscript will be ready or close to ready for publication within 2 rounds of revision. However, one should not recommend rejecting a manuscript solely based on non-compliance with APA style. We should also be aware that some of our authors are non-native English writers and, in some instances, the quality of writing can be remedied with the assistance of a writing professional. Another example of a manuscript with major weaknesses is one that requires major re-analyses that might substantially change the original findings presented. However, major weaknesses should be weighed against the potential scientific contribution of a manuscript. If you sense that a manuscript with major weaknesses has the potential to be a very important scientific contribution if these weaknesses are corrected, you could consider recommending a revision with detailed suggestions on how to improve the manuscript.
 - d. **Substantive scientific contribution:** This is arguably the most important factor you should consider in determining if the manuscript can proceed on a trajectory

¹ These guidelines were inspired, in part, by the Journal of Counseling Psychology's guidelines for reviewing manuscripts: see <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/cou-reviewer-guidelines.pdf>

toward publication. Even if there are no fatal flaws or major weaknesses in the manuscript, your recommendation should be to reject the manuscript if you do not believe it is a substantive scientific contribution to the literature. Using this criterion, many studies with decent research designs will not be acceptable for publication in PMM simply because they don't add substantively to the field. The mere claim that a manuscript addresses a gap in the literature does not qualify as a substantive scientific contribution. If the findings of a study (for empirical manuscripts) are obvious or trivial, they might not constitute a substantive scientific contribution. Consider the following in determining whether a manuscript is a substantive scientific contribution (none are necessary conditions but, ideally, the answer to at least one of these questions should be 'yes'):

- i. Does the manuscript address important questions that will advance the field?
- ii. Does the manuscript offer fresh, novel, or creative ideas and findings?
- iii. Does the manuscript challenge conventional wisdom?
- iv. Does the manuscript make an important theoretical contribution?
- v. Does the manuscript propose new interpretations of previous research?
- vi. Does the manuscript reconcile conflicting finding from previous research?
- vii. Is this manuscript likely to be frequently cited in the future?
- viii. Is the manuscript likely to change the way researchers and/or practitioners approach a particular issue?
- ix. Does the manuscript address a topic relevant to contemporary events and is in the public interest?
- x. Does the manuscript contain important (not trivial) practical, societal, and/or policy implications?
- xi. Did the study use innovative or relatively new methods?
- xii. Does the manuscript synthesize interdisciplinary ideas from different fields?
- xiii. Does the manuscript have broad appeal and relevance to fields beyond the psychology of men and masculinities?

2. We aim to increase the number of **review and conceptual articles** published in PMM because these can play a crucial role in advancing the psychology of men and masculinities. Conceptual articles are those that make important theoretical contributions by proposing new theories, models, constructs, and ideas, while review articles synthesize and evaluate a body of literature. Reviewers should not hold conceptual and review manuscripts to a higher standard than empirical manuscripts simply because the former do not present new empirical findings. Both empirical and non-empirical review/conceptual manuscripts are equally valued. In determining whether a review or conceptual manuscript is a substantive scientific contribution to the literature, reviewers should evaluate whether it goes beyond merely summarizing a body of literature to offering fresh perspectives, critiquing existing theories/research, and proposing new

directions for research. Please also refer to the following guidelines for review manuscripts: <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/men/literature-review-guidelines>

3. Although PMM is not primarily a journal for practitioners, we hope that our scholarship and research will be relevant to and inform the practice of psychology and other allied disciplines (e.g., public health, social work, and education). Hence, whenever possible, we encourage our authors to articulate the **practical implications** of their scholarship and research, particularly in the discussion section of an empirical manuscript. Practice is broadly defined as the work of psychologists and professionals from other allied disciplines outside the areas of research and scholarship, including education, training and supervision, advocacy, psychotherapy and other interventions, assessment, healthcare, consultation, development of policies, etc. It is not necessary for authors to address all areas of practice but please provide recommendations for how they can articulate the practical implications of their scholarship if they have not done so.
4. In its early years, PMM featured a high proportion of articles that focus on psychological well-being and mental health because many of the authors who published in the journal were counseling psychologists and clinical psychologists. Over the past 2 decades, the journal has evolved considerably in scope, and PMM now attracts submissions from diverse fields within and outside psychology. Although it will often be useful for authors to articulate the practical implications of their findings, reviewers should avoid insisting that authors discuss the clinical or counseling implications of their findings because not all our authors are counseling/clinical psychologists. Although PMM is a psychology journal, we also welcome manuscripts from the full spectrum of the social sciences (e.g., public health, sociology, social work, and media science). A manuscript should not be rejected merely because the authors use methods or theories that we are unfamiliar with.
5. In your comments to the authors, it would be helpful to explain the rationale for your recommendation (e.g., the lack of a substantive scientific contribution). However, **do not provide an explicit recommendation on the status of a manuscript (e.g., reject or major revisions) in your feedback to the authors**. Your publication recommendation should only be communicated to the action editor.
6. On PMM's website, we've provided [guidelines on equity, diversity, and inclusion](#) that authors should address in their manuscript. If the authors have not complied with these guidelines, please remind them to review these guidelines and amend their manuscript accordingly.
7. Beyond evaluating the manuscript's suitability for publication, you also perform an **educational role** as a reviewer. As an educator, your goal is to provide constructive feedback that will help the authors improve the quality of their manuscripts. As a reviewer, you play a profound role in shaping the career trajectory of our authors, some of whom are students and early career professionals. We should provide feedback that

will challenge or inspire them to be better scholars without destroying their self-efficacy. Put differently, we can hold our authors to high standards without being punitive.

Consider the following suggestions:

- a. Even if you are recommending rejection of a manuscript, you should provide at least 1 tangible suggestion for what the authors can do their future work to address the limitations in their manuscript (e.g., “In your future research, you might want to consider...”). It is natural for authors to feel disappointed if their manuscripts are rejected, but, ideally, we want them to believe that they did receive useful feedback that will improve the quality of their research and scholarship.
- b. Even though your identity as a reviewer is anonymous, write your review as if you were providing oral feedback in a face-to-face meeting with the authors. If we imagine ourselves in this scenario, we are more likely to be constructive, tactful, and respectful in our comments.
- c. Try to provide some strength-based feedback or encouragement in your review. Highlight positive aspects of the manuscript.
- d. Don’t just point out what’s wrong with the manuscript; provide tangible and specific suggestions for how it can be improved. In the following example, statement (b) is better than statement (a):
 - (a) *The introduction section is confusing.*
 - (b) *In the introduction section, the clarity of ideas can be improved in the following ways...*
- e. Whenever possible, use “I” statements. In the following example, statement (b) is more appropriate than statement (a):
 - (a) The results section is confusing!
 - (b) I did not understand the description of the results because...
- f. Avoid expressing your negative feelings about the manuscript or the authors. In the following example, statement (b) is more helpful than statement (a):
 - (a) *I was annoyed by the numerous typological and grammatical errors.*
 - (b) *There are several typological and grammatical errors that should be corrected...*
- g. Avoid criticisms that cast aspersions on the authors’ character or competence. Focus more on suggestions to address the weaknesses of the manuscript, e.g., “The manuscript can be improved by...”
- h. Before submitting your review, re-read it by focusing on the tone of your writing. Put yourself in the shoes of the authors. Does your review sound sarcastic, impatient, or harsh? After reading your review, are the authors likely to feel deflated and demoralized by the tone of your review or will your review challenge them to become better scholars?

8. Structure of your review: There are multiple ways to organize your review, and we don't want to be overly prescriptive. However, please consider the following guidelines:
 - a. Number the paragraphs in your review, e.g., 1, 2, 3. Doing so will make it easier for the action editor and authors to refer to specific aspects of your review.
 - b. Your review will be particularly helpful to the action editor and the authors if you provide a **clear distinction between major and minor comments**. For instance, you could add the headings, "Major Comments" and "Minor Comments," or make it clear at the beginning of your review that paragraphs 1, 2, 3 reflect your major comments. Your major comments could address the rationale for your publication recommendation (without explicitly revealing your publication recommendation) and/or address the most important issues to address in the next round of revision.
9. It can be easy to be caught up in the minutiae of highlighting typographical errors, non-compliance with APA style, and stylistic issues. To be clear, such feedback can be helpful to the authors and will improve the quality of the manuscript. But the best reviews are those that address **the big picture by incisively identifying the most crucial issues in the manuscript**. Examples of big-picture issues include theories, research questions, research design, analyses, interpretation of findings, and contribution to the literature.

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