

EDITORIAL

Psychology, Public Policy, and Law Adopts Further Open Science Practices and Refreshes Its Commitment to Generalizable Empirical Research

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Psychology, Public Policy, and Law's (PPPL) mission is to derive lessons and implications for practice from empirical research. To ensure that the applications to policy and law are well-founded and are likely to have enduring relevance, it is especially important that the relevant research be of the highest possible quality, yielding findings that are clear, robust, and replicable. For that reason, many otherwise meritorious articles that would be publishable in other top-tier journals are rejected by PPPL because aspects of the sampling and methodology too grievously limit the generalizability of the findings and conclusions. In common with other journals, furthermore, PPPL has been put on notice about questionable, unscrupulous, and nontransparent research practices that have led to the retraction of some research reports (none in this journal) and have fostered skepticism about the veracity and reliability of psychological science.

Authors submitting articles to PPPL have long been familiar with repeated exhortations to make their data and research materials publicly available, ideally by depositing them in APA's repository with the Open Science Framework (OSF.io) from where they could readily be retrieved, indefinitely, by other researchers. Authors are similarly familiar with requests by reviewers and members of the Editorial team to fully describe their samples and methods in the degree of detail prescribed by the Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS) for both Quantitative (Appelbaum et al., 2018) and Qualitative (Levitt et al., 2018) research which have since been incorporated into the latest edition of the APA Publication Manual (APA, 2020). Detailed and accurate sample descriptions are especially important for this journal because sampling decisions and measurement approaches often raise concerns about the limits on generalization. Because of PPPL's mission and commitment to generalizable empirical research, the journal also continues to encourage direct replications with real-world relevance for policy and law.

PPPL is now raising the bar further for researchers and scholars who want to publish reports of their studies in the journal. In an attempt to mandate the transparency and practices that we formerly encouraged, the journal has officially signed on to the Transparency

and Openness Promotion Guidelines (see Nosek et al., 2015; Transparency and Openness Promotion [TOP] Announcement for PPPL, 2021). Providing guidance and standardization across eight fundamental aspects of research planning and reporting, these TOP Guidelines offer journals and authors three levels of compliance: disclosure, requirement, and verification. PPPL has signed onto the TOP Guidelines at Level 2, which means that articles submitted to PPPL must meet the transparency and openness guidelines for all eight aspects of research planning and reporting, and that authors must share materials when legally and ethically permitted (or disclose the legal and/or ethical reasons why not if they do not). More information is available in the TOP Guidelines for PPPL (2021) and on the updated 'instructions to authors' web page.

Under the new arrangements, authors will now be required not only to describe their methods in accordance with JARS but also to deposit their data and research materials either with OSF (the preferred option) or in another repository that assures an enduring link to the documentation in question. When researchers are unable to deposit complete data and materials (e.g., because the data are sensitive and their publication might result in breaches of anonymity, privacy, or confidentiality agreements), they will be required to explain this in the article. Even when providing the complete data set may be problematic, many researchers may find it is possible to deposit a reduced version of their data set which includes all data analyzed for the reported study while excluding information that might compromise the anonymity of the participants. Maximum safe transparency is the goal.

Given the important contribution of field data to PPPL's mission, we recognize that many researchers need to carefully balance the requirements of open science with the necessity to maintain privacy protections and to conform to confidentiality agreements with collaborative partners who have provided data and stimuli (e.g., law enforcement agencies that allow researchers access to case files). PPPL editors will work with authors to satisfy these dual objectives.

In addition to the data, authors will also be expected to make publicly available copies of research materials (including stimuli) and the computer code used to generate the findings reported in the paper. If it is not possible or legal to make materials publicly available (e.g., because they are copyright standardized tests) then this will have to be explained in the paper. Should the study and/or analysis plan be preregistered (which we strongly encourage), the relevant materials should also be cited and made accessible to

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readers. We recognize that open science practices can be challenging and that the challenges may be somewhat unique in different areas of the field (see, e.g., Duncan et al. 2014; Gehlbach & Robinson, 2021; Tackett et al. 2019). Nevertheless, we encourage all scholars to embrace greater openness, tailoring approaches as need be for the various challenges that arise given the particular populations or methods.

Just as authors of studies involving field data have to balance the competing demands of transparency and respect for participants' privacy, researchers reporting analog experimental research must demonstrate that their findings have clear and valid implications for the real world of policy and practice or must otherwise justify clearly why the work should be published in *PPPL*. Like many journals, we are loath to assume that middle class North American University students behave and think like those from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, perhaps especially those of different ages who may be justice-involved. One popular solution to this dilemma has been to recruit more diverse samples using online platforms, although recent research has highlighted some of the problems associated with this recruitment strategy (see, e.g., Chmielewski & Kucker, 2020; Pyo & Maxfield, 2021). Our collective experiences with interactive online communication during the pandemic suggests there may be creative ways to promote participant engagement, for example by putting experimenters in the same virtual room. Here at *PPPL* we do not preclude any types of recruitment or methodology, although we do expect authors to carefully detail the steps they adopted to maximize the quality of their data and to explain any limitations associated with their decisions. We look forward to seeing creative and clever innovations in the use of online technology to quell concerns about internal validity issues, increase necessary and productive communication between experimenter and participant, and add to the diversity of the samples recruited for study.

PPPL is also initiating use of the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) system (Allen & McGonagle-O'Connell, 2021; Allen et al., 2014) to permit authors to explain the roles that each of the authors played in planning, seeking funding, conducting (including data collection or testing, data reduction and management), analyzing data, writing the report, and revising the article—with corresponding authors required to confirm that all authors explicitly agree with the description of authorial roles and responsibilities reported to the journal. Those descriptions will subsequently be published as Author Contributions Statements in the author note of published articles.

Prospective authors can find detailed guidance about the new requirements and procedures on the journal's submission page (<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/law?tab=4>).

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