

EDITORIAL

Richard E. Lucas

Editor, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology: Personality Processes and Individual Differences*

I am honored to be selected for and excited to begin the role of editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP): Personality Processes and Individual Differences (PPID)*. I first want to thank Lynne Cooper and her team for their work over the past years at the journal. A quick glance at any recent table of contents shows that they have done an excellent job attracting a diverse set of high-quality papers that has furthered JPSP's reputation as a top outlet for personality research. I look forward to building on their success over the next 6 years. Our team has three primary goals: To continue to improve transparency and openness of the research we publish; to further diversify the journal (including diversity in authors of the papers we publish, the editors and reviewers who evaluate that work, the samples of participants who take part in these studies, and the methods used); and to attract and publish solid scientific studies that make important new contributions to our understanding of PPID.

Transparency and Openness

It goes without saying that journal policies and practices have received increased scrutiny over the past half-decade, as serious concerns about the robustness, replicability, and transparency of the research that is published in scientific journals have emerged. The American Psychological Association, like many publishers, has encouraged its editors to consider what policies they can implement to address these issues. As I begin my term, I am happy to announce that *JPSP: PPID*, along with the other sections of this journal, has adopted Level II for most Transparency and Openness Promotion guidelines (Nosek et al., 2015) and Level III for replications. Most importantly, this means that as a default, authors will be required to post their data, materials, and code to a trusted repository before accepted papers are published. The transparency that these policies promote allows for a clearer understanding of the scientific process that led to the results that are reported, which in turn allows for a more thorough evaluation of the claims made and conclusions drawn. Moreover, transparent reporting promotes high-fidelity replications and extensions of existing work, which can lead to greater efficiency in the scientific process. Of course, there are occasions when data, code, or materials cannot be posted publicly (perhaps because of confidentiality concerns or the use of proprietary data or measures), and in such cases, this exception will need to be disclosed and evaluated during the submission process. As we move forward, we encourage authors who are planning new research to consider these requirements early on to make sure that their informed consent forms and applications to ethics boards reflect future requirements for posting data.

I am also excited to announce that *JPSP: PPID* will now consider registered reports for any submission type (see <https://www.cos.io/initiatives/registered-reports> for useful information about the registered-report format). In the past, we had used registered reports for replication studies, but with the overhaul of our open-science practices, we were able to expand this submission option. It goes without saying that the use of registered reports does not guarantee quality research, but it provides an important aspect of transparency that helps reviewers and readers evaluate claims more effectively. In addition, registered reports allow reviewers to provide input at critical early stages in the research process rather than after the research has been completed. Arguably, this is a better use of reviewer resources than simply asking reviewers to evaluate completed projects, as there is more room for improvement of the fundamental features of the research design.

There is no single policy or procedure that will guarantee that the research we publish is robust and replicable; I do not expect that the adoption of these policies will solve all the challenges that the field faces. However, I strongly believe that the transparency that these policies promote represent an essential feature of the scientific process, and I am happy to have the opportunity to implement them at *JPSP: PPID*.

Diversity and Inclusion

Personality psychologists focus on the ways that people differ from one another. Appreciating these differences is essential for the quality of research and theory that the field produces. Yet, it is clear that currently, neither the authors nor the participants in our journals reflect the diversity of the populations we seek to understand. This affects the conclusions that one can draw from this work, while also having broader impacts on equity and inclusion in science and beyond. Thus, identifying steps to improve this situation will be an important goal for our team.

The most immediate step will be to expand our efforts to recruit editors, editorial board members, and reviewers from diverse backgrounds. In addition, our team has been paying close attention to concerns raised about biases in the evaluation of work that includes samples from underrepresented groups or from authors from underrepresented backgrounds. For instance, studies with samples from underrepresented groups have sometimes been criticized for a lack of generalizability, whereas samples of college students get a pass on this issue (Atherton, 2021). I pledge to watch for these problematic comments in reviews and decision letters to reduce the negative impact that such biases have. Anyone who has concerns about their experiences during the review process can contact me at any time.

I also explicitly affirm the value of including samples that go beyond the typical college student and online convenience samples that have been the primary focus of research in many psychological journals. As I describe below, there are many different ways that a paper's contribution can warrant publication in *JPSP: PPID* and testing ideas in understudied samples is one of them.

Finally, I also believe that methodological diversity is important, both as a way of broadening the base of evidence that our journal publishes, but also as a way of broadening the perspectives on personality psychology that are represented. Thus, although *JPSP: PPID* mostly publishes strong quantitative papers, we are also open to research that contributes to our understanding of PPID using a broad range of approaches including mixed methods, qualitative techniques, or research that links personality psychology with theories and methodological approaches from other disciplines.

Research Priorities

Traditionally, *JPSP: PPID* has been seen as an outlet that publishes the most important new empirical research in personality psychology. It is necessary to acknowledge, however, that the criteria that the field uses to evaluate importance are subjective and change over time. On the one hand, research that is deemed important may be that which is the most novel, that which uses the most cutting-edge methodologies, or that which has the broadest impact on society. Yet, there is no guarantee that the research that meets these criteria will also be the most robust, replicable, or definitive. Indeed, the growing body of metascientific research conducted over the past half-decade has shown that many esteemed research findings—including several widely supported theories—do not hold up when subjected to modern methodological scrutiny. Thus, a different definition of importance may focus on the definitiveness of the work: Is this finding solid enough and do the methodological strengths improve upon past work enough that the research would be considered a definitive demonstration that can guide policy decisions or that deserves to be included in the textbooks that serve as the foundation for future research in the field?

My vision for *JPSP: PPID* is to maintain and build the reputation that the journal currently has for publishing the most important work in personality psychology, while acknowledging and embracing the diverse ways that importance can be defined. Truly novel discoveries that use innovative methodologies are exciting and can promote energetic investigations into new research areas. Therefore, work that has these characteristics should be encouraged at *JPSP*. These novel discoveries, however, may come with a higher-than-average risk that the findings will not hold up when the new methodologies are scrutinized or follow-up studies are conducted. This may be especially true when complicated methodological approaches are used, as resource limitations often mean that methodological strengths come with some form of trade-offs. Therefore, it will be essential to acknowledge that it is often difficult to be innovative and groundbreaking while simultaneously being definitive (Srivastava, 2011). This means that any claims must be calibrated to the strength of evidence that exists.

In contrast to research that is important because it is groundbreaking, research that may be less novel but that uses research methods that are especially strong can demonstrate importance by providing a more definitive answer than existing studies to critical questions in the field. Psychologists have made strides in recent years identifying methods that are more likely to lead to replicable results; and new, intensive research programs have been initiated that use these approaches to tackle critical questions in the field. This is the research that should provide the foundation for the field as a whole, and this research would also be welcome at *JPSP: PPID*.

When evaluating submissions, our team will focus broadly on whether the paper tells us something new about personality and individual differences and, most importantly, on whether authors' claims about that new knowledge match the empirical evidence that is provided. New tests of central theories in personality psychology are welcome, but as Cooper (2016) noted in her editorial for this journal at the start of her term, strong descriptive research on interesting phenomena related to personality and individual differences can also advance our field. Thus, descriptive research on important questions will continue to be welcomed and encouraged at *JPSP: PPID*. Moreover, I believe that valuable contributions can be made when existing research questions are tested using stronger methods than have been employed in the past or when these questions are tested in previously understudied populations. Thus, novel hypotheses are not required for papers to make novel contributions. And of course, we will continue our replication-report policy, as we believe that the publication of direct and close replications of existing findings are critical for the field. In short, there are many ways that papers can make contributions to the literature on personality and individual differences, and our editorial team has a broad perspective on what types of papers we think fit within the pages of this journal.

Of course, by clarifying these priorities for what types of papers we hope to see at *JPSP: PPID*, this means that there will necessarily be certain types of papers that are less likely to make it into the pages of this journal. For the sake of transparency and as a guide for authors, I would also like to highlight some characteristics of papers that will make them less likely to pass threshold. First, papers that rely solely on cross-sectional designs and self-report questionnaire techniques (especially among convenience samples) have become less and less likely to be accepted at *JPSP*. Although such studies provide an essential first step in the understanding of a construct or phenomenon, they have some important limitations. Most notably, correlations among self-report questionnaire measures are typically inflated by shared method variance, and subtle variations in content overlap across scales can affect patterns of intercorrelations in uninteresting ways. I agree that studies that use these methods have value (and I still conduct studies that use these approaches myself), but many submissions now go beyond these approaches in some way (e.g., by using longitudinal designs, non-self-report methods, or experimental techniques). Because competition for space is so high, submissions that rely solely on cross-sectional correlations among self-report questionnaire measures will not be prioritized.

This is not to say that studies that use these methods will never be published at *JPSP*, only that we have higher expectations regarding the contribution that such studies make. For instance, I can envision papers that specifically focus on the processes by which participants respond to self-report questionnaires, and such studies might necessarily rely only on self-report questionnaire techniques. Alternatively, as noted above, studies that use these methods to investigate critical issues for personality psychology in understudied populations may be judged to be important enough to pass threshold, despite the limitations inherent in these methods. And of course, we fully expect that many (if not most) studies will use self-report methods in combination with other methods or with research designs that address the concerns raised above. In short, authors who submit papers that rely solely on cross-sectional correlations among self-report questionnaires should be aware that the threshold for publication of such papers is relatively high, and many papers that rely on these techniques will be rejected without review.

Similarly, experimental studies that rely solely on hypothetical scenarios and imagined events as the primary form of manipulation will not be prioritized for publication. Like simple questionnaire studies, these methods play a valuable role in early stages of research, and as such, they can contribute to a broader package of studies. However, these methods also have important limitations in terms of the level of self-insight that participants have when responding to hypotheticals, the demand characteristics that such methods present, and the external validity that they have. Thus, papers that use more impactful and realistic experimental manipulations will be prioritized over those that rely on hypothetical scenarios, and the latter may be rejected without review.

At *JPSP*, we are also concerned about the impact of underpowered studies. Much has been written about the impact of underpowered studies on the cumulative body of scientific knowledge. Importantly, low-powered studies do not just prevent researchers from detecting effects, they can also result in overestimates of effect sizes—or even unreplicable effects—in studies that do find significant effects (Button et al., 2013). At *JPSP*, we take these concerns seriously and are focusing very explicitly on sample size and power. Authors are encouraged to think carefully about sample-size decisions and to provide adequate justification based on prior empirical evidence and reasonable expectations when possible.

One concern is that increased sample-size requirements can make it even more difficult to recruit adequately large samples of participants from underrepresented populations or to use expensive or time-intensive methodologies. This means that an emphasis on power and precision could come into conflict with efforts to increase diversity of samples and methods. We acknowledge this tradeoff and will take these different strengths into consideration when weighing the contributions of individual studies.

It is also useful to note that some open-science practices can help address these concerns. For instance, underpowered studies are especially problematic when journals rely (even unintentionally) on a significance filter for publication (Button et al., 2013). If only significant findings make it into the published literature, then published effects from underpowered studies are especially likely to be wrong. At *JPSP*, we are certainly open to the publication of null results and nonsignificant effects, but biases in the review process mean that eliminating the significance filter can be difficult; reviewers and editors may simply be swayed more by significant than nonsignificant findings. Registered reports necessarily remove this significance filter because publication decisions are made before results are obtained. Although the process of evaluating a registered report typically involves a consideration of whether the study is adequately powered, feasibility issues could also be taken into consideration when evaluating sample-size decisions. The use of the registered-report procedure in cases where feasibility precludes large samples could at least reduce some of the negative impacts of underpowered designs. In turn, this can allow valuable but inconclusive results to make it into the literature. Although dramatically underpowered studies are likely to be rejected regardless of the nature of the research project, registered reports that plan for levels of power that are a bit less than ideal may be justifiable given the population or the difficulty of the methods used. Thus, in cases where large samples are difficult to obtain, I especially encourage researchers to consider using registered reports to limit the effect that underpowered studies have on the scientific record (and of course, I encourage their use more broadly, even when adequate power is easy to achieve).

Finally, although measurement is central to personality psychology, *JPSP: PPID* is not an assessment journal. Thus, although we will consider papers that address broad measurement issues relevant to personality psychology, we are less likely to publish papers that focus on the psychometric properties of specific scales. For instance, we will rarely publish new translations of existing measures, and even new measures of specific constructs will have a relatively high threshold for publication. Those that we do publish will usually address broader theoretical issues in addition to providing information about the psychometric properties of an individual measure.

As a final note, it is important to acknowledge that evaluating submissions necessarily requires that reviewers and editors use their subjective judgment. I have done my best to identify and list the features that will factor most heavily in our team's decisions, but inevitably, disagreements will arise about the evaluation, application, and weighting of these criteria in specific cases. This unavoidably subjective aspect of the review process also means that some very good papers will be judged not to be acceptable, and some less than perfect papers will ultimately be published. Knowing this, our team will approach these judgments and decisions with humility and respect for authors. We also know that although our judgments determine what makes it into these pages, these judgments do not provide the final word on the importance or correctness of individual papers. Discussion and evaluation of the papers published in *JPSP: PPID* should not end at publication, and we welcome and encourage a robust and rigorous postpublication evaluation of the papers we publish. The American Psychological Association has partnered with PsyArxiv as the preferred preprint server for APA journals, and I encourage authors to post preprints of their submissions to promote this additional dialogue.

In closing, I am grateful to the team of editors who have agreed to serve with me. We look forward to working with you in the coming years!

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