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NEW PUBLICATION INITIATIVES FOR *SOCIAL COGNITION*

Jeffrey W. Sherman, Editor

This editorial introduces two initiatives that will broaden the types of papers that can appear in *Social Cognition*, providing a home for research that offers valuable scientific contributions but is currently difficult to publish. The first and most broadly impactful initiative is that evaluations regarding potential publication of papers will be outcome-independent. The pattern and statistical significance of results will not play a determinative role in editorial decisions. Instead, the criteria used to determine publication will be the theoretical importance and the evidentiary value of the research. Evidentiary value will be judged by the construct validity and the statistical power of the work. This initiative aims to address the so-called “file-drawer problem,” whereby negative or inconclusive results are unlikely to be submitted or, if submitted, accepted for publication. Though many positive research practice reforms have improved psychological science, the file-drawer problem—arguably the field’s most consequential problem—largely remains unaddressed. This initiative allows *Social Cognition* to serve as an outlet for well-designed and well-powered research that might otherwise go unreported due to null effects. Instructions to reviewers will emphasize these priorities and the journal’s editors will support them.

There are several important points about this first initiative that require elaboration. First and most importantly, the degree to which research is theoretically interesting and valuable will be the primary basis of determinations regarding publication. If research addresses an uninteresting or unimportant question, then we are unlikely to publish results even if they offer substantial evidentiary value. There may be cases in which purely exploratory work warrants publication in the journal, but we will typically want to see follow-up research that confirms exploratory findings. Second, inferential statistics still must be reported and may be considered in editorial review, depending on the goals and claims of the research. However, authors also are encouraged to report multiverse analyses to reveal the robustness of the results across different analysis assumptions (Steege, Tuerlinckx, Gelman, & Vanpaemel, 2016) and article-wise meta-analytic estimates to aggregate the findings of multiple studies. The use of Bayesian statistics with justified and well-explained priors also can be used to assess evidence for reasonable null and alternative hypotheses. We hope that a reduced emphasis on statistical significance will encourage these varieties of data analyses and reporting. Third,

the construct validity of the research will be of utmost importance. To the extent that the manipulations and measures are shown to effectively reflect their intended constructs (via pilot tests, manipulation checks, appropriate consideration of potential confounds, etc.), the research will be evaluated favorably. Demonstrated strong measurement will be critical. Multiple studies using different operationalizations of constructs are particularly encouraged to increase the generality of the results and to inform conclusions about their robustness. Fourth, ample power is central in determining the weight of the evidence as supporting or failing to support hypotheses. In sum, research must be theoretically important and hypotheses must be carefully and robustly interrogated.

The second initiative is to promote the submission of conceptual replications of previously published results. Conceptual replications test the same theoretical ideas using different sets of operations to establish the generality of the effects. Though the publication of close or direct replications is now widely promoted, much less encouragement has been given to conceptual replications. Conceptual replications are vital. Whereas direct replications provide information about the reliability of a given set of operations, they are limited in their ability to support or fail to support broader theoretical formulations about relationships among psychological constructs (Crandall & Sherman, 2016). It is critical to know whether a particular finding is bound to specific operations or if it generalizes across multiple instantiations of the same constructs. *Social Cognition* will publish strong direct replications, particularly replications of effects first reported in the journal. However, given the availability of other outlets for such work, we particularly encourage the submission of conceptual replications of important social-cognitive findings.

There are several important points to elaborate regarding this initiative, as well. All the points made above regarding the publication of novel research ideas also hold here. Again, first and foremost, the ideas to be tested must be theoretically interesting and important. As well, the work must demonstrate strong measurement/construct validity and must be sufficiently powered. More expansive and determined attempts to test an idea across multiple sets of operations will be viewed more favorably. Moreover, to the extent that the research attempts to shed light on discrepancies across studies (which may benefit from the inclusion of direct replications), the work will be evaluated more favorably. The identification of reliable moderators of effects would be highly valued. Single shot and/or weakly-powered studies are unlikely to be accepted for publication. We particularly encourage conceptual replications that convincingly avoid problems of previously published studies and substantially generalize knowledge about the phenomenon.

With these initiatives, *Social Cognition* offers unique contributions to ongoing field-wide efforts to improve the quality of our science. We hope that researchers will embrace these opportunities.