

JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND PSYCHOLOGY SPECIAL TRIAL INITIATIVE ANNOUNCEMENT

Provisional Acceptance Based on a Peer-Reviewed Proposal: An Alternative Publication Model in the Search for Scientific Truth

Initiative Leaders:

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The publication model used by *Journal of Business and Psychology* follows a similar process to those in almost all areas of science. Specifically, an author submits a complete paper (i.e., Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion), a set of reviewers evaluate the work, and an editor makes a publication decision. This classic model, however, has been challenged as facilitating unethical practices related to the publication process (e.g., promoting HARKing, encouraging journal self-citation, only publishing statistically significant results, etc.).

In response, we wish to explore an alternative method for ‘doing science’ in parallel with our current publication practices. For a trial period of a year, authors can pursue one of two submission paths to JBP. The first path is the current traditional model used in the organizational sciences – authors submit a completed and fully-formed paper for peer review. The second path is a proposal path. The later approach will involve a two-step process. Operating much like the process of completing a dissertation, the first step is for authors to submit a ‘proposal’ that provides:

- A complete and compelling literature review
- A strong conceptual and/or theoretical foundation leading to specific, testable study hypotheses in the case of deductive research. Inductive research is welcome.
- A detailed description of the methodology that will be used to collect data and test the proposed hypotheses/research questions. This section must convince the review team that the methodology is very sound (e.g., psychometrically strong measures, adequate manipulations, no confounding factors, adequate statistical power, etc.) and that there is confidence the methodology can be implemented. This section must also convince the review team that data can be collected within a reasonable timeframe.
- An explicit and detailed analysis plan including a specific explanation of how missing data will be treated, how each hypothesis will be tested, and what criteria will be used to evaluate whether data are supportive

of hypotheses as relevant. There should also be a discussion of the potential for exploratory and/or supplementary analyses and how such analyses may be conducted.

This document (approximately 15-25 pages) will be sent to a set of reviewers from the current *Journal of Business and Psychology* Editorial Board who will provide feedback and reactions to the editor. The review process will focus on the importance of research question/hypotheses, the ability of the proposed methodology to yield relevant data to test the proposed hypotheses, and the overall methodological rigor of the design and analyses. If the review team has significant questions about the importance of the research question and/or that the proposed methodology is insufficient, the proposal will be 'rejected.' To manage workload, the decision letter will be on the shorter side. Alternatively, if the team believes the proposed study will suitably inform the research question and incrementally advance the literature regardless of the specific findings, the project will be given a 'provisional acceptance.' The acceptance is conditional provided that the 'registered' methodology is actually followed in a reasonable time frame. For those proposals receiving a 'provisional acceptance,' following data collection and analysis, a full version of the paper will then be submitted for review. Although the bar is high, this review process means that authors will know that the paper will be accepted whether they observe significant or null results.

It is also possible that a proposal may receive a 'revise and resubmit' decision if the review team believes the study has merit, but would benefit from additional attention directed toward either the conceptual foundation and/or the proposed methodology. Thus, editorial decisions will be quite similar to decisions made in the traditional format.

Given the nature of this special feature, papers will be submitted through the journal's online system and authors will indicate that the work is to be evaluated for this special initiative. Papers may be submitted on an ongoing basis, rather than targeting a specific deadline (common to traditional journal special issues).

Why Are We Doing This?

- Although we are targeting this initiative as grand and important experiment for a year, we are very much open to extending it if it appears successful and authors are attracted to it.
- We very much want to publish impactful research, but we also want to more broadly advance our science and address critiques of our science. We hope this initiative can be a valuable case study for our discipline

and other journal editors to consider alternative methods for ‘doing science.’

Process

- Submit proposals through the JBP web portal:
<http://www.editorialmanager.com/jobu/>
- Indicate upon submission that this is for the special initiative.

Please contact any of the initiative leaders with questions:

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PRIOR TO SUBMISSION

Must I submit evidence of IRB approval for the study?

Yes. Studies must have IRB approval where appropriate.

How much detail is required in the Method section for the proposal?

Reviewers must be able to discern precisely how data are to be collected and analyzed. Insufficient detail or ambiguity may lead to rejection of the proposal.

What assurances are there that my idea won't be 'stolen' after my proposal is accepted?

Our reviewers hold themselves to the highest ethical standards. The confidentiality of proposal ideas will be maintained throughout the process.

Can I use the provisional acceptance on my vita?

A paper given a provisional acceptance decision is not equivalent to a paper that is *in press*. Rather, it is more akin to a paper that is 'under review.'

How do I make a compelling case for my paper?

Much like any paper, proposals should clearly and sufficiently address the 'so what' question. That is, the Introduction should make a case that the proposed work answers an important question.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

Assuming a 'provisional acceptance,' how long do I have to collect and analyze my data and submit a final copy?

The specific timeframe will vary as a function of the specific methodology. Extensions can be requested and will be granted as appropriate.

How long with the review process take?

We envision the proposal review process to be of similar length to a standard manuscript review. That is, authors should learn of a decision within 2-3 months of submission. Of course, the length of time necessary for data

collection, analysis, and preparation of the final manuscript will be determined by the specific study.

Does my study have to follow a hypothetico-deductive structure?

No. Both inductive and deductive research studies are welcomed.

Who will review my proposal?

Reviewers will be selected from the journal's editorial board following the same procedure as traditional papers. Reviewers of the proposal will also serve as reviewers of the completed work.

If my paper is rejected as a proposal, can I submit the work later as a completed study?

No.

POST PROPOSAL REVIEW

How much can I alter the Intro if my paper is conditionally accepted?

As with traditional papers, some editorial revisions to the front end of the paper are to be expected. Substantial changes to the front end, however, may be grounds for a paper being rejected.

What does a 'provisional acceptance' actually mean?

If a proposal is provisionally accepted, that means that we will publish the final version of the manuscript provided that the proposed methodology is explicitly followed, the analyses are thoroughly and competently conducted, and the Discussion accurately reflects and characterizes the results.