

Dear Colleagues

As Editors of the following journals, we are excited to announce a new initiative designed to enhance the quality of our science – the introduction of the hybrid registered reports submission path (a results-blind review process) in concert with the traditional manuscript submission path.

European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology

Group and Organization Management

International Journal of Selection and Assessment

Journal of Business and Psychology

Journal of Managerial Psychology

Journal of Personnel Psychology

Journal of Vocational Behavior

Leadership Quarterly

Organizational Research Methods

Work, Aging and Retirement

We all strive to produce useful, robust, and impactful research. Recently, however, how we (and really all sciences) conduct our research has drawn critique. Unfortunately, these critiques appear quite well-founded as studies have demonstrated severe replication challenges (Open Science Collaboration, 2015), suppression of non-significant results in published research (publication bias, Banks, Kepes, & McDaniel, 2015; Schmidt & Hunter, 2015), post-hoc fabrication of hypotheses (HARKing, Bosco, Aguinis, Field, Pierce, & Dalton, in press; Kerr, 1998), and other forms of questionable research practices (Banks et al., in press; John, Loewenstein, & Prelec, 2012; O'Boyle, Banks, & Gonzalez-Mule, in press), most notably P-Hacking which is a “tireless” drive to seek out significant results in one’s database so as to compose the desired “story” often driven by the conscious or unconscious belief that only a package of “clean” significant results will ultimately yield publication (Gerber & Malhotra, 2008a; Gerber & Malhotra, 2008b; Masicampo & Lalande, 2012). As editors, we believe we have a duty to seek out ways to address these issues by examining the publication “system” and how it can be altered so that it does not indirectly reinforce counterproductive research practices. To that end, we will be launching a special trail initiative — a hybrid registered reports submission option. This new protocol is NOT replacing the existing protocols, but rather expands the options available to authors and simply serves as an alternative “pathway to publication.

In this alternative path, for example, authors submit the introduction, methods, measurement information, and analysis plan of a completed study (no results or discussion in the first round). This abbreviated paper then undergoes peer review and is evaluated on the merits, rigor, and quality of the project rather than what was actually found. Following review, the article will then be either rejected, receive an R&R, or accepted in principle for publication. Following an in-principle acceptance (IPA), the authors will then produce a more traditionally formatted manuscript that includes Results and Discussion sections (Stage 2). It is important to note that the Stage 2 manuscript can still include ancillary ad hoc analyses as appropriate as an honest accounting is the ideal, they are just noted as such. Assuming that the stage 2 submission is consistent with what was committed to in stage one, and a sensible interpretation and discussion of the findings, the manuscript will be published regardless of the results. The approach is hybrid in that it combines features of traditional submissions (data have already been collected) and of registered reports of research proposals (reviewers are unaware of study outcomes). We hope that this new format combines “the best of both worlds” and encourages researchers who may be hesitant trying submission formats more radically different from traditional protocols.

Our goal is to encourage authors to propose conceptually sound, interesting, and methodologically rigorous research. We welcome the results from sound research no matter if they support proposed hypotheses, yield ‘null’ results, or replicate (or fail to replicate) previous work. Simply speaking, well conceived, designed, and conducted research should form the corpus of knowledge. We believe this special initiative provides an opportunity to do just that.

Overall, the hybrid approach emphasizes seeking truth, whatever that truth may be. We also all recognize that this path won’t solve all of our problems as a science. In fact, no single solution can address all concerns. We see this initiative as a meaningful and quite intuitive approach with no significant downsides. It might just be very helpful to our collective efforts to advance science meaningfully. As editors, we are willing to experiment with solutions.

Some Key Notes

Although all the aforementioned journals are participating in this trial initiative, we are doing it independently. As a result, processes and procedures may vary – perhaps quite considerably - among us. However, the overall aim will be to improve the integrity and quality of research. Authors are encouraged to consult each journal’s website for more details. The editors, however, will be conferring regularly on the initiative, its success and opportunities for improvement.

Participating journals will communicate the specifics of their approach sometime in 2016, this will also be the time they will accept manuscripts in this alternative format.

The hybrid registered reports approach is appropriate for inductive, deductive, mixed methods, and papers involving multiple studies. In the case of the latter type, the author is encouraged to contact the editor to decide on the best approach for submission. There are multiple options as the hybrid registered reports approach is highly flexible. Overall, an initial conversation with the editor can clarify an approach that makes sense for the project in question – ultimately it is not useful to assume a one size fits all approach given the eclectic nature of research.

Journal editors, not yet contacted, but interested in participating in the trial, please send an email to any one of the participating editors. We are happy to share all information and materials completely.

Sincerely,

John Antonakis, *Leadership Quarterly* (incoming editor)

Kevin Daniels, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*

Nadya A. Fouad, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*

William Gardner, *Group and Organization Management*

James LeBreton, *Organizational Research Methods*

Bernd Marcus, *Journal of Personnel Psychology*

Steven G. Rogelberg, *Journal of Business and Psychology*

Lois E. Tetrick, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*

Chockalingam Viswesvaran, *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*

Mo Wang, *Work, Aging and Retirement*

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