

Building an Inclusive, Cumulative, and Rigorous Science at *PSPB*: 2025 Editorial Statement

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The new editorial team (Editor Yuen Huo, Co-Editors Emre Selçuk, Michael Kraus, and Greg Webster along with 25 Associate Editors and more than 70 Consulting Editors) is grateful to be entrusted with the stewardship of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin (PSPB)*, the flagship journal of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP). We want to acknowledge the dedication and outstanding work of outgoing Editor Michael Robinson and his team as well as the guidance of SPSP leadership for elevating *PSPB* into a sought-after and well-regarded outlet for disseminating influential research on a wide range of problems of interest to personality and social psychologists, scholars in adjacent fields, and the public.

We are taking the helm of *PSPB* at a pivotal time in psychological science. In the last decade, the field has recognized two notable limitations to our research approach. The first is that our theoretical and empirical database has focused on a narrow slice of human experiences—that of people from western, industrialized, educated, rich, democratic nations (WEIRD populations, Henrich et al., 2010). The second is that questionable research practices have contributed to the replication crisis in which findings thought to be established were in fact difficult to reproduce (John et al., 2012; Shrout & Rodgers, 2018). The field has since engaged in a course of corrective actions that are transformative. Thus, as we begin our editorial term, personality and social psychology is poised to enter an exciting phase of generativity as we pursue new ideas while also developing a firmer understanding of the limitations (and generalizability) of previously documented findings.

Recognition of the field's limitations has led to thoughtful discussions in professional organizations including SPSP. Two SPSP working groups, Anti Colorism/Eurocentrism in Methods and Practices (ACEMAP) Task Force (Ledgerwood

et al., 2024) and Top II Task Force (Ledgerwood, 2021), have produced a series of recommendations to guide *PSPB*'s submission requirements, evaluation standards, and the formation of our editorial team. Together, these recommendations contribute to the building of an inclusive, cumulative, and rigorous science. We believe firmly that these elements of scientific practice will lead to impactful discoveries of the type we seek to publish in *PSPB*. Below, we elaborate on why we embrace this approach and highlight the steps we have taken to implement relevant recommendations at *PSPB*.

Inclusive Science: Importance of People and Context in the Discovery Process

There is wide variance among people and the social contexts in which they live and interact with each other. Yet, our field has historically generated theories and empirical evidence that focused on a subset of people—those from Western nations such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and those in Western Europe. And within these nations, research has prioritized the experiences of subgroups that are in the majority or experience other forms of advantage. Psychology in other parts of the world and among disadvantaged groups within WEIRD contexts has been, at times, wholly ignored or assumed to hold the same principles. We recognize that this observation is a serious critique of personality and social

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psychology. At the same time, we view these limitations as an invitation to reinvigorate our science by embracing the full diversity of human psychology in ways that can lead to groundbreaking and creative advances.

Our field is still young with many significant discoveries yet to be made. These discoveries can come in different forms whether identifying boundary conditions to relationships among psychological constructs, validating the robustness of psychological processes, or developing altogether new theories. The unexplored range of human diversity and experiences can serve as inspiration for research that generates meaningful, new knowledge. At *PSPB*, we encourage the submission of research that leverages previously unaccounted person and contextual variance to push the boundaries of existing knowledge. Findings that are robust will stand. The conditions under which more fragile findings hold will be better understood.

One way to accelerate this effort is by broadening the tent of who participates in the production, evaluation, and dissemination of scientific knowledge (Roberts et al., 2020). Researchers from backgrounds and regions of the world that have been underrepresented in personality and social psychology can bring fresh perspectives to longstanding problems and introduce all together new ideas for the field to explore. Our editorial team members handling manuscripts submitted after January 1, 2025, together represent five continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America) and 12 countries. We differ along dimensions that include race, ethnicity, social class background, religion, immigration status, political position, and type of institutional affiliations along with content and methodological expertise. Our hope is that the pool of authors who submit manuscripts for consideration at *PSPB* will be equally or more diverse.

To be sure, diversity of editors, reviewers, and authors alone will not ensure that personality and social psychology values contributions that stand outside the historical center of our discipline. However, this diversity combined with recognizing the importance of work that addresses what psychology has left out is, in our view, a combination that can drive the field forward. The more that we support researchers and value contributions that push the historical boundaries of our field, the closer we will get to the scientific goal of explaining the psychology of humans—not just those from certain regions of the world or those from select subgroups within a region.

Cumulative Science: Importance of Constraints on Generality in Interpreting Findings

While this is a time of opportunity for new discoveries, we also acknowledge that science is incremental and cumulative. No single study or set of studies can generate definitive

answers given the uncertainty in the scientific process. In designing studies, researchers choose how to test their claims, including who to sample, how to operationalize psychological constructs in manipulations and measurements, and what local context in which to carry out the study. We make these decisions about study design with the goal of conducting careful and persuasive tests of a preferred conceptual account for the problem under investigation.

Researchers must then consider what we can take away from the findings. To what extent can the findings be generalized to a population larger than the sample, a context broader than that of the study, and relationships among constructs that materials and procedures in the study attempted to capture? We strongly encourage authors to thoughtfully consider these questions as they prepare their manuscript for submission. Following recommendations from Simons and colleagues (2017), *PSPB* will now ask authors to indicate prior to submission that they have considered the extent to which their conclusions are justified by the data. Manuscripts can meet the constraints on generality requirement by (a) addressing the certainty to which the authors believe their study findings can generalize to the intended population and context specified in the theory, and (b) identifying and discussing meaningful theoretical and empirical boundary conditions for the observed relationships. We believe that attention to potential constraints on generality will advance science whether through providing cumulative evidence of a finding's robustness or through considering its boundary conditions.

Rigorous Science: Importance of Conceptualization, Design, and Open Science Practices in Producing Impactful Findings

Finally, new and carefully interpreted research must also stand up to scientific scrutiny. To this end, *PSPB* seeks to publish research that is grounded in well-reasoned accounts of the phenomenon under investigation accompanied by clear empirical evidence. Contributions can take different forms. Some papers will test competing theories. Others will attempt to explain mixed findings in the empirical literature. Still others will draw from existing theories and empirical findings to understand a new problem. These efforts will typically, but not always, report findings from multiple empirical studies. Methods used in published papers vary widely and include among others experiments, surveys, experience sampling, archival data, qualitative interviews, and meta-analysis. Regardless of the research goals and methods used, the empirical data produced should be clearly interpretable and triangulate around a preferred explanation with efforts to rule out reasonable alternative explanations.

To promote rigor in research, *PSPB* is committed to open science practices that encourage transparency and accountability in research (Nosek et al., 2015) and will

continue to adhere to Level II Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) standards (<https://www.cos.io/initiatives/top-guidelines>) adopted during Editor Michael Robinson's term. Prior to submission, data, analytical code, and research materials must be posted to a trusted repository (e.g., Open Science Framework—<https://osf.io/>) and be available to reviewers. Upon publication, this information must be made available to readers. Exceptions to these requirements may be granted if sufficiently justified (e.g., certain sensitive or proprietary data). Preregistration of studies (including hypotheses, study design, data analysis plans) is not required but strongly recommended. Authors must indicate in the manuscript whether each study was preregistered and to make documentation of preregistration available to the reviewers.

Following open science recommendations, our editorial team will continue to consider replication studies, a submission format that was instituted during the prior editorial term. In addition, we will now also consider registered reports as a new submission format. In contrast to the standard submission, these alternative submission formats will have a different handling process. Importantly, prior to submission, the author(s) should communicate with the Editor about their plans. The initial communication should include a summary of the research plan and the potential scientific contribution of the work. *PSPB* will send out for review proposals of research that are thoughtfully conceptualized, well-designed, and likely to have high interest value to *PSPB* readers. Our expectation is that *PSPB* will publish only a small number of replication studies and registered reports. Below, we highlight the handling process for replication studies and registered reports.

Replication Studies

For manuscripts that seek to directly or closely replicate the procedures of previously published studies, the author(s) must offer clear and compelling rationale for conducting the replication study. The proposed replication study will be evaluated in two stages by reviewers. Stage 1 consists of the evaluation of the proposal which should include the introduction, methods, and analysis plans. Stage 2 consists of the evaluation of the complete manuscript after data are collected.

Registered Reports

Registered reports will follow a similar two-stage process of evaluation as replication studies. In contrast to replication studies, however, a registered report would receive “in principle acceptance” after a positive evaluation of the proposal at Stage 1. The proposal should describe well-powered, carefully designed studies that, if carried out, would generate valuable insights whether the findings are consistent with or deviate from expectations. The final product would be evaluated at Stage 2 for adherence to the original proposal.

Conclusion

We begin our term with the recognition that as strong a foundation as our field has built, there is much more to discover. The problems that scientists are addressing have become increasingly complex—requiring insights and diverse methods that potentially span disciplines. Our theoretical approaches and empirical efforts have only begun to tap into the full range of human experiences at a time when new research methods and practices have become available. This confluence of events presents the field with an unprecedented opportunity for growth as researchers innovate and produce the type of research that can meaningfully advance understanding of both long-standing and new problems. We look forward to working with authors to refine and publish contributions that will take personality and social psychology forward.

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