

## Editorial

Melody Wiseheart  
Department of Psychology, York University

I am honored to be the sixth editor of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* (JEPA). The previous editor, Dan Morrow, focused heavily on ensuring that articles published in the journal made strong theoretical advancements (Morrow, 2018). My aim is for the journal to continue publishing studies that make strong theoretical advances while also having applied implications. Previous articles have tended to focus on human factors, cognitive, educational, organizational, health, and social psychology. We continue to welcome articles in these areas, as well as other applied areas such as developmental and sport psychology.

When submitting work to the journal, keep in mind that the readership includes nonacademics, including teachers, journalists, and lay readers interested in the topics being published. Articles may be published discussing the limitations of eyewitness testimony, distracted driving effects, or the impact of tornado warning systems. Ideally, writing will be accessible to nonacademics. Jargon needs to be clearly defined, and relevance outside of theoretical advancement needs to be clearly worded in public significance statements. Undergraduate students should be able to read your article and accurately summarize the main points.

### Scope of Research

One major change I made is to expand the scope of acceptable research under a broader definition of the word “experimental.” In line with the other *Journal of Experimental Psychology* journals, JEPA will now accept correlational studies. This includes quasi-experimental designs as well as articles examining associations between variables. Just like experimental studies with random assignment, correlational studies can help to advance theory (Rucker et al., 2011; Viswesvaran & Ones, 1995).

When submitting to the journal, authors should be clear in their cover letter and the introduction to their studies how their research advances theory. Exploratory research has its place in helping to advance science but is out of scope for the journal.

### Context and Individual Differences

As a faculty member at a highly diverse university, I have seen the value of integrating a wide range of perspectives into psychology. Only by explicitly studying diversity issues can we begin to see our blind spots. For example, people in North America might assume that menopause symptoms are universal, experienced similarly by

women across the globe. In reality, the experience of symptoms differs across the world and in different ethnic and cultural groups (Monteleone et al., 2018). Research demonstrates that menopause is a social and cultural construct, with women in different societies experiencing menopause as a positive or negative change, based in part on how aging is treated by a society. If research continues to fail to report ethnicity and other demographic information, it will be challenging or impossible to pick up on these sorts of patterns. We can be left with vexing failures to replicate.

I recently read an unpublished article submitted to a *Journal of Experimental Psychology* journal arguing against the collection of demographic data, including age and gender information. The authors claimed in part that collection of demographic information is too time-consuming. They also claimed that studying demographics distracts from the more important focus on theory. The authors’ perspective seems irresponsible to me, given the myriad ways in which age and gender have been demonstrated to impact basic psychological processes.

We do not need to explicitly include different cultural groups as an experimental condition in every study. However, the only way to contextualize a study in the future, once more is known about the effects of race, culture, and ethnicity, is to be able to reexamine prior research populations. We cannot assume that these and other forms of background information are irrelevant. Going back to the menopause example, a meta-analysis demonstrates that ethnicity moderates the relationship between menopause and subjective sleep disturbance (Xu & Lang, 2014). Knowledge of the ethnic background of participants is critically important to developing theories about why this finding occurs, and without complete reporting of demographic information, this meta-analysis would not have been possible.

An aspect of research I see lacking in psychology, generally, is ensuring that we conduct studies that are relevant to a wide range of target populations. It is easy and inexpensive to run studies on university undergraduates and assume that the findings will generalize to the population more broadly. Indeed, running studies on easily accessible populations as a pilot for a larger, more expensive project makes sense. My goal is to attract articles that go beyond this initial piloting to ensure that research has demonstrated benefits to a range of relevant applied populations.

A small but important change I implemented is a requirement to including years of data collection. Society changes over time, and exposure to smartphones, as one example, is likely to change many aspects of how people perceive and process the world. The COVID-19 pandemic, similarly, has been demonstrated to affect many aspects of life, including mental health and socialization. Only by knowing the data collection years can we properly contextualize work.

The journal now requires sample justifications, explaining why a particular sample was chosen. Many researchers will say “for convenience” or “because undergraduate subject pools do not cost us money.” In conjunction, a requirement for statements on how a

sample constrains generalizability will help the end users of this research, including journalists and other nonacademic audiences, better contextualize findings and reduce overgeneralization to nonsampled populations.

## Open Science

My experience is that experimental psychology has quickly embraced a move toward open science, following high-profile articles demonstrating failures to replicate previous studies. JEPA now requires authors to provide data and analysis code in a repository, barring legal or ethical reasons why this is not possible. These and other new requirements will help other researchers verify the integrity of studies prior to publication and will aid in future meta-analyses and reanalyses of data with alternate assumptions. Preregistration can be useful for some studies, and if a study is preregistered, it is important for reviewers and researchers to be aware of this.

I decided to add registered reports as an article category. These are articles where reviewers provide feedback prior to running a study, and articles are conditionally accepted without knowing the outcome of the study. Having reviewed registered report submissions at other journals, I have seen the value of gathering perspectives from other faculty as part of the study design process. Flaws in design and issues with theory testing can be identified before investing time and money in data collection. This article type might be especially important for large-scale, high-risk, high-reward studies that I hope are submitted to the journal.

## Preeexternal Review Revisions

Authors submitting articles to the journal will notice my regular use of preeexternal review revisions. These are intended to ensure that reviewer burden can be reduced by not needing an extra round of review to address common concerns. Finding reviewers has become extremely challenging, often involving a dozen or more declines to review, and anything that can be done to reduce the reviewer burden will help.

In my 12 years as associate editor, we used preeexternal review revisions for over 50% of nondesk reject submissions, due in large part to concerns about statistical analyses. An *a priori* power analysis with a fully justified effect size should be included for studies using frequentist methods (or a sensitivity analysis if this is not possible). We welcome and encourage the use of alternate analysis methods, such as Bayesian analyses, and ideally, the same analysis method will be used throughout the results rather than mixing and matching Bayesian and frequentist approaches. For theoretically important analyses, null claims must be supported by an analysis that can distinguish null from indeterminate results, typically Bayesian

analyses or equivalence tests. For nontheoretically important analyses, being clear that the analyses are indeterminate is sufficient.

## Moving Forward

I encourage authors to accept review requests. I realize that reviewing is time-consuming and often is not rewarded as part of the tenure and promotion process. There are an increasing number of declines compared to acceptances, and finding reviewers for some articles is nearly impossible (e.g., I am currently acting on an article with 30 declines and zero accepts to review, in a well-studied research area). The only way we can keep the publishing timeline reasonable is if each of us reviews three articles for every one of ours that is reviewed, just as submitting an article is asking three people to review each of our articles. We welcome coreviews by trainees and faculty mentors. I welcome input on policies and changes that will help you say yes to reviewing articles.

One of the most rewarding parts of being an editor is seeing well-conducted, meaningful research reach its end users. Articles that are easy to read—with limited use of jargon, clear explanations of core concepts, and well-designed figures—are more likely to be read and cited. Together, we can provide the field with high-impact articles that are accessible to journalists, to undergraduates, and, in an ideal scenario, directly accessible to end users.

## References

Monteleone, P., Mascagni, G., Giannini, A., Genazzani, A. R., & Simoncini, T. (2018). Symptoms of menopause—Global prevalence, physiology and implications. *Nature Reviews Endocrinology*, 14(4), 199–215. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrendo.2017.180>

Morrow, D. G. (2018). Publishing papers that matter [Editorial]. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 24(1), 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000141>

Rucker, D. D., Preacher, K. J., Tormala, Z. L., & Petty, R. E. (2011). Mediation analysis in social psychology: Current practices and new recommendations. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5(5), 359–371. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2011.00355.x>

Viswesvaran, C., & Ones, D. S. (1995). Theory testing: Combining psychometric meta-analysis and structural equations modeling. *Personnel Psychology*, 48(4), 865–885. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1995.tb01784.x>

Xu, Q., & Lang, C. P. (2014). Examining the relationship between subjective sleep disturbance and menopause: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Menopause*, 21(12), 1301–1318. <https://doi.org/10.1097/GME.0000000000000240>

Received October 18, 2023

Accepted October 18, 2023 ■