

## Editorial

This is an exciting time to be a personality psychologist. In recent years, the conceptual and methodological toolkit of personality psychology has been enriched, and its role as a hub science (Morf, 2002), located at the heart of psychological knowledge (Allik, 2013; Yang & Chiu, 2009), has been reinvigorated. Personality psychology incorporates insights and methodologies from and exerts its influence on a multitude of other psychological disciplines including general, developmental, social, clinical and biological psychology but also other sciences such as economics, genetics, behavioural medicine, epidemiology, political science and sociology. Personality science aims to provide an integrative understanding of human nature, individual differences between persons, and the psychological structures and dynamics that characterise the individual as a whole.

I am deeply grateful to be able to contribute to this science as Editor of one of the most prestigious journals of our field, the *European Journal of Personality*. Under the strong leadership of Wendy Johnson and her team of Associate Editors including Jaap Denissen, Markus Jokela, Lars Penke and Anu Realo, EJP has further increased its reputation in the field. With an impact factor of 3.989, it is now ranked fifth of the 62 journals listed in the ISI Citation Reports under Psychology – Social, up from eight in a field of 59 and an impact factor of 2.438 4 years ago. The number of submissions has remained high, and its selectivity has increased further (with a rejection rate of 88%). The overall average time to first decision is below 20 days. This includes a large percentage of papers that are desk-rejected (around 55%), but even the papers that are sent out for review have an average time to decision of just above 40 days. I want to take the opportunity to thank Wendy Johnson for the great work she has invested in EJP and for her advice and encouragement. I also want to thank all members of the executive committee of the European Association of Personality Psychology (EAPP) for their support and all of the dedicated reviewers who have provided their expertise and have helped to strengthen the papers published in EJP.

I am taking over a journal in very good shape and will do my best to keep it this way. Luckily, I was able to secure five stellar scholars from our field as Associate Editors: Joshua Jackson, Christian Kandler, René Mottus, Maarten van Zalk and Cornelia Wrzus. We have also updated the editorial board, and in doing so, we have ensured that it represents a greater proportion of the large number of excellent young female personality researchers from around the world. The editorial board now includes 50 members with a wide range of expertise. I am very happy that EJP can rely on the expertise of such strong and motivated Associate Editors and board members.

My overarching goals as Editor in Chief of EJP are threefold. First, I want to continue to publish the rich diversity of

cutting-edge personality research. Second, I want to build on the fruitful discussions surrounding the replicability of psychological research and further strengthen the robustness and transparency of papers published in EJP. Third, I aim to increase EJP's visibility as a natural home for the best work in personality science. Below, I will discuss these goals and describe the kinds of papers that we would like to publish, how we aim to foster open-science practices, and why you should consider submitting your best work to EJP.

### WHAT EJP PUBLISHES: THE BREADTH AND RICHNESS OF PERSONALITY SCIENCE

EJP publishes papers that advance personality science in its broadest sense. We consider all research fields relevant to the understanding of personality, including but not restricted to the nature of personality (personality structure; biological, motivational, cognitive, perceptual, and affective personality processes), expressions of personality in social context (person–situation interaction; within-person variability; behaviour in everyday life; personality and interpersonal perceptions; dyadic, intragroup and intergroup processes), personality development (e.g. cultural, societal, interpersonal, genetic determinants; personality stabilisation and change across the lifespan) and the consequences of personality (e.g. social, educational, occupational, well-being and health-related outcomes).

Within these fields, EJP considers contributions on any kinds of individual differences across levels of personality, including motives and goals, temperament, character, self-concept, identity, life narratives, reputations, intelligence and other abilities such as creativity or emotional competencies, interpersonal styles, values, attitudes, stereotypes and prejudice, as well as vocational and leisure interests. For us, personality is not just broad trait dimensions such as the Big Five.

We are interested in publishing empirical contributions as well as comprehensive meta-analyses and systematic reviews that address important questions in the field. In addition, EJP aims to foster conceptual and methodological innovation and publishes creative papers that move the field forward with respect to theory or methods. Regarding empirical contributions, EJP embraces both confirmatory research that tests clearly spelled-out hypotheses and exploratory research that is based on rich and representative descriptive data. We also welcome and encourage well-designed preregistered replications of previously published findings that are highly relevant to the field. We do not encourage submissions of papers that are primarily aimed at the psychometric validation of new scales or psychopathological approaches with little relevance to the understanding of personality in general.

In addition to these regular submissions, EJP publishes two kinds of special issues. Each year, an Associate Editor or a team of Associate Editors edits a special issue on a hot topic of their choice. The call for papers goes out in October/November each year, and we invite all interested researchers to submit a proposal to these impactful special issues. The second kind of special issue involves the European Personality Review issues. In these issues, we publish up to three target articles, each accompanied by invited peer comments and rejoinders by the authors. Target articles are conceptual pieces that initiate new lines of research and theory, provide a coherent framework for existing theory and lines of research, or focus on critical or controversial issues that have important consequences for personality research. They tend to be particularly widely received and well cited. If interested in submitting a target article, I invite you to send me an extended Abstract of 1000 words.

Of course, EJP welcomes submissions from all over the world (since October 2012, we have received submissions from 58 countries) and from researchers at all career stages. We explicitly encourage young researchers to submit their best work to EJP, and each year, we grant a Wiley Award to the best publication that is based on a PhD or Master/Diploma thesis (see Schubach, Zimmermann, Noack, & Neyer, 2016, for the latest award-winning paper).

#### **DESIRED FEATURES OF EJP ARTICLES: CREATIVITY, RIGOUR, POWER AND REPRESENTATIVENESS**

Naturally, there is not just a single recipe for an excellent paper that is worthy of being published in EJP. As personality researchers interested in individual differences, we are well advised to embrace the diversity found in the contents and shapes of stimulating papers. This being said, there are a number of features that typically make a paper stronger and that tend to increase a paper's likelihood of eventually being published in EJP. Unless the paper is a direct replication, we are interested in creative contributions that go beyond the repetition of previous approaches – papers that ask new questions or approach a topic from a fresh perspective, that challenge the 'established' assumptions of popular theoretical approaches, that integrate seemingly incompatible approaches to personality, and that explore important but overlooked phenomena, new or seldom used designs and methods and understudied samples.

EJP values thoughtful reasoning and, in case of empirical contributions, a careful application of methods and analyses. We welcome submissions that try to specify and rigorously formalise theoretical claims and that describe hypotheses concerning associations, structures, and processes in concrete and testable terms. We also place a strong emphasis on specificity. Personality psychology is, like other research fields, chronically plagued by jingle-jangle fallacies, that is, the tendency to assume that measures with the same label necessarily measure the same construct (jingle fallacy), and even more prevalent, the tendency to assume that two

measures with different names necessarily measure different constructs (jangle fallacy; strongly related to the 'old-wine-in-new-bottles' problem). We appreciate careful considerations and tests of the specificity of constructs, theoretically derived hypotheses, the relations between constructs, and the processes mediating these relations. We also appreciate when authors are aware of the fact that their study 'is not a revelation of ultimate truth' (Johnson, 2013). This pertains to the careful use of language such as the use of past tense when reporting results and the close alignment of what is written in the Discussion section to what was assessed and found. Furthermore, this involves the careful consideration of potential methodological flaws and pitfalls such as the role of method overlap, confounds, unconsidered third variables, multiple testing and alternative ways of analysing the data or interpreting the results. Contributions that show a strong awareness of these issues and offer accurate and careful interpretations of findings will be evaluated more positively than those that make bold statements without sufficient evidence to back them up. EJP rewards carefulness and cautiousness more than sweeping claims.

Good data build the backbone of any empirical contribution, and we at EJP will have a close look at data quality, particularly at statistical power and representativeness. Statistical power is one of the most important prerequisites for the replicability of our field's findings. Also, high power comes along with narrower confidence (or credible) intervals, that is, more accurate estimations of effect sizes. We encourage all authors to base their sampling strategy on power analyses that are performed a priori. In doing so, effect sizes should be conservatively estimated, and estimations should account for the fact that on average, published effect sizes are small to medium in size (Richard, Bond, & Stokes-Zoota, 2003), and probably overestimations of true effect sizes, and that more complex effects (e.g. interactive effects and mediations) are likely to be smaller and thus require larger sample sizes. To derive not only significant but stable estimates, even larger samples are needed (e.g. Schönbrodt & Perugini, 2013). Sufficient power should be provided for each single study; typically one well-powered study will be preferred over three less-powered studies.

Another aspect of data quality that is similarly important is the representativeness of the data; that is, how much the data represent the phenomena to which results based on analyses of the data are thought to generalise. Representativeness (Brunswik, 1955) refers not only to the sampling of participants, but it also involves the stimuli, context and situational features participants are exposed to; the mindsets that are evoked in participants; the possible range of their behaviours; the correlation of mental, behavioural, and environmental features (typically, they are not orthogonal in reality!); and how closely the applied measures capture the phenomena they are thought to measure (i.e. their validity). Only in special cases (e.g. multiple studies with validity criteria; complex genetically informative family designs; large cross-cultural investigations; the particularly careful and insightful disentangling of associations that are theoretically meaningful) will EJP publish papers that are solely based on cross-sectional correlational analyses between

typical self-report questionnaires. Although global retrospective self-reports are an important source of information when dealing with aspects of individuals' explicit self-concept, they are a less than optimal data source when it comes to, for example, people's momentary thoughts and feelings (e.g. better assessed by experience sampling), behaviours (e.g. better assessed by directly observed behaviour), implicit aspects of personality (e.g. better assessed by indirect tests of personality), abilities and skills (e.g. better assessed by some sort of objective criterion), reputations and more generally evoked social impressions (e.g. better assessed by reports by informants with different degrees of acquaintance). The methodological arsenal of personality psychology for cross-sectional, longitudinal, laboratory and field research is very rich (e.g. Wrzus & Mehl, 2015), and we encourage authors to exploit these possibilities to capture the target phenomena as representative as possible. We are well aware of the effort and resources it takes to collect and analyse intensive multimethodological data, and EJP will continue to reward studies containing such data. We are also aware of a certain tension and trade-off between statistical power and representativeness in most existing research contexts because more representative data are more difficult to gather in many cases. One option for obtaining large enough samples for high quality representative data is to team up (Back & Vazire, 2015) and collect data across samples and laboratories. Although we do not want to override the statistical truth that robust results require large samples, we will carefully weigh both the representativeness and powerfulness of the provided data when evaluating the relative merits of each paper submitted to EJP.

### **BEYOND CRISIS: AN INCLUSIVE AND PRODUCTIVE APPROACH TO OPEN PERSONALITY SCIENCE**

In recent years, psychological research has undergone a tumultuous time with accumulating evidence pointing towards an unsatisfactory replicability of our findings. As a result, there are substantial efforts to increase the transparency and robustness of psychological research (e.g. Asendorpf et al., 2013). We at EJP have a very positive and optimistic view on these recent developments: Obvious problems in our field have been made crystal clear, and perhaps even more important, there has been a lively discussion on new research and publication standards, or in many cases, reminders about well-known standards. We also have a proactive take on these issues and we hold that the ongoing efforts to comment on and discuss previous research should be increasingly complemented by new empirical research that follows updated standards. EJP has always strongly emphasised theoretical and methodological rigour, and we will certainly continue to do so. In addition, we will implement new editorial policies that will help to further foster transparent reporting in EJP.

First, and in accordance with the Transparency and Openness Promotion guidelines (see [osf.io/9f6gx/](https://osf.io/9f6gx/)), we will introduce mandatory minimal standards of reporting. In

essence, we will require from each submission to EJP explicit statements regarding how the authors dealt with relevant aspects of transparency. Authors will need to confirm that they have complied with the following five statements in order to proceed with the submission process:

- Sampling statement: We describe how the sample size was determined for each study. We also disclose any data exclusions and explain the rationale for these exclusions.
- Open material statement: We provide information regarding all procedures applied and all measures assessed in this study; either in the manuscript itself or by including the information necessary to openly access this supplementary material.
- Open data statement: The data needed to reproduce the results are open, and we included the information necessary to access the data or we explain in the Method section of the manuscript why the data is not made openly accessible.
- Reproducible script statement: We provide openly accessible data analysis scripts that allow others to reproduce all reported results and include any information necessary to access these scripts or explain why this is not possible.
- Effects statement: We report basic descriptive statistics, effect sizes, exact  $p$ -values, and 95% confidence intervals or explain why this is not possible or why alternative statistics are appropriate.

Prior to sending the papers out for review, the editors at EJP will verify the validity of these statements. Only papers following these minimal standards of reporting will be further considered for publication in EJP. In implementing these generic minimal standards that make it mandatory to be explicit about the transparency of one's work instead of prescribing more specific ways of reporting, we account for the fact that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. This is true for science in general and particularly true for a hub science such as personality psychology, which spans a number of heterogeneous phenomena, methodologies and practical restrictions.

Second, when research has a clear confirmatory orientation, we encourage authors to preregister their studies, including their hypotheses and analysis plan. If there are hypotheses that were derived a priori, or in the case of a replication (of published research or in a series of studies included in one's own paper), preregistering hypotheses is straightforward and recommended. In the case of exploratory research, we ask authors to clearly describe their research as exploratory. That is, we discourage authors to present their exploratory work as if it were confirmatory (e.g. by engaging in HARKing; Hypothesising After the Results are Known). Exploratory research has its own important function in science and should be presented as such. In exploratory research involving a larger number of measures, authors should implement suitable ways to account for the potential pitfalls of multiple testing and provide a result-independent rationale for the selection of variables.

Third, we will take the transparency of submitted work seriously and evaluate each of the mentioned aspects of transparency as further and equally important quality criteria

of each paper submitted to EJP. That is, holding constant other factors such as theoretical relevance and innovation, statistical power, and methodological quality, papers that provide well-designed documentation of all procedures and assessed variables, that provide open data and reproducible scripts, and/or are based on preregistrations when the focus is confirmatory will have a better chance of being published in EJP. The necessary supplemental materials should be posted to a public, open-access repository (e.g. the Open Science Framework) and a permanent path for accessing the materials should be provided in the manuscript. We will also guarantee that papers will receive Open Data, Open Material and Preregistration badges when applicable.

This is a challenging time for talented young researchers who (a) want to comply with the new open science standards that require substantial additional resources but at the same time (b) wish to continue to be players in a game that calls for speed and numbers. With these new guidelines, we aim to do justice to our responsibility as gatekeepers in the publication system. For a sustainable change in typical research practices, the reward structure has to be adjusted in ways that incentivize the additional effort and the time it takes to engage in the well-documented and transparent reporting of one's own research. A more open science necessarily requires a slower science with a smaller number of higher quality publications. Of course, we do not want to reward slowness per se or even lack of productivity, but we want to reward the effort and time it takes to produce open and reliable, thoughtful and creative science. In the long run, this will pay off as it speeds up the cumulative insight and impact of our field.

## WHY PUBLISH IN EJP?

EJP stands for high quality and in-depth contributions to personality science. It is a competitive, high-impact journal with high-quality papers and a reputation for excellent personality research. I invite you to contribute to and profit from this reputation. There are also three more practical reasons why EJP might be appealing as an outlet for your work. First, EJP papers have no word limit. For example, this allows authors to provide detailed thoughts on complex issues, to present helpful methodological details, to engage in fruitful discussions that go beyond the summary of findings and to publish larger projects that contain multiple studies. Of course, we ask you to write in a straightforward and succinct manner and eliminate unnecessary redundancies in your writing, but we allow you to unfold your creativity and to do what needs to be done.

Second, EJP has a tradition of providing in-depth feedback independent of the specific outcome of a decision. The Associate Editors and I will do our best to provide thoughtful, detailed, and constructive letters that provide clear guidance. This practice also helps to minimise the number of cases in which papers are rejected after multiple rounds of revisions. As editors, we work together with the authors to decide as quickly as possible whether a paper is

publishable in EJP, and if so, we try to help the authors unleash their paper's full potential.

Third, even in providing detailed feedback, we tend to be very quick. More than half of the papers submitted to EJP are desk-rejected within 1–3 days. This way, we ensure that the authors of articles that are not publishable in EJP can quickly redirect their attention to another journal or, in some cases, rework their manuscript for a resubmission to EJP. Desk-rejections also save reviewers' precious attention and work for cases in which their input is sorely needed. For papers under review, the time to first decision is typically well below 2 months. Also, after acceptance, it takes an average time of only 30 days before a paper appears online in its final proof-read version in the 'Early view' section. Finally, timely decisions will also continue to help us prevent a large backlog of papers and enable us to have a paper appear in a printed issue very soon after acceptance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Personality psychology is an up-and-coming, dynamic science at the centre of psychology. As we continue to strengthen our research practices, embrace our conceptual and methodological diversity, and more actively promote what we have to offer to other sciences, I envision our field becoming even healthier and stronger. EJP will be at the forefront of this development, and I am very much looking forward to working with you, the authors of the papers that are submitted to EJP, to publish the most interesting, robust and transparent research in personality science. We at EJP will do our best to continue to provide very timely and constructive feedback. Of course, I welcome suggestions for further improving our policies.

In short, we want to publish the work you are proud of, research that should be published not simply because it *can* be published but because you want others to actually read and profit from it. I invite you to submit your best work to EJP.

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