Editorial

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Welcome to Volume 4 of *Social Psychological and Personality Science*! As you read these words, the incoming editorial team has already been handling new manuscript submissions for over six months. Although it will be a few more issues before our manuscripts begin to fill the pages of *SPPS*, I wanted to take a moment at the beginning of this new volume to report on *SPPS*, its remarkable progress since its inception, and where we see it going during our tenure.

First, it is an honor to be the second Editor in Chief of *SPPS*. Our team inherited a fledgling journal that is off to a solid start with a very promising future. Vincent Yzerbyt and his editorial team guided *SPPS* through its first few years, and their hard work has ensured that the journal is on a very strong trajectory. During his team's tenure, the journal increased its publication frequency from quarterly to bi-monthly, and by the time you read this editorial, the journal will have received its 2000th submission and published more than 250 papers in print with more already accepted and available on-line. Overall, the acceptance rate for the journal is 17%.

Part of the success and promise of the journal is in its distinctive strengths. First, it is an outlet built from the very beginning to be interdisciplinary in nature and international in scope. *SPPS* is unique in that it is published for the Association for Research in Personality (ARP), the European Association of Social Psychology (EASP), the Society of Experimental Social Psychology (SESP), the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), and it is co-sponsored by the Asian Association of Social Psychology (AASP) and the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists (SASP). No other journal enjoys such diverse support from our leading research organizations, and these affiliations mean that more than 7000 scholars in social and personality psychology throughout the world receive complimentary subscriptions to the journal.

The short report format of *SPPS*, with papers of 5000 words or less, also helps define its mission: *SPPS* serves to get innovative, groundbreaking, impactful work into the scientific conversation quickly. *SPPS* does not skimp on scientific rigor and it does not trade impact for "sexy fluff." It provides authors with a highly visible research outlet that furnishes valuable editorial feedback in a timely and to-the-point fashion. Further, it seeks research that is accessible to scholars beyond traditional research silos and that offers insights to a broad audience in the field and beyond.

When reading through any *SPPS* issue, one is immediately struck by the range of interesting topics explored, connections between and among literatures forged, and methods and analytical techniques employed. *SPPS* truly reflects the diversity of our field, and it provides a rich showcase of research on many topics submitted by authors from around the world. Moreover, the research published often cuts across many seemingly artificial boundaries to help bridge literatures and improve our understanding of important psychological phenomena. Whereas many journals focus on a particular subdiscipline, *SPPS* encourages interdisciplinary, integrative, cross-cutting work and provides authors with a broad, receptive, international audience.

The diversity of the journal extends beyond its published research. The *SPPS* Editorial Board is composed of our field's leading scholars, who study a variety of issues in social and personality psychology, reflecting incredible diversity in training, geography, rank, gender, and race and ethnicity. This impressive collection of researchers along with many outstanding ad hoc reviewers serves our new team of editors extremely well.

As Editor in Chief, I'm incredibly fortunate to enjoy the support, expertise, and guidance of a great group of associate editors whose research I think highly of and whose editorial judgment I greatly value. This team has been hard at work for several months already, and authors can count on them to provide quality feedback on submissions, timely turn-around, and to-the-point comments and editorial decisions. Indeed, in just our first five months at the helm of *SPPS*, our team's average turnaround time from author submission to action letter has been 36 days.

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One of the functions of editorials such as these is to explicitly communicate the perspective of the new editorial team so that authors, reviewers, and editors can appropriately calibrate their efforts. Moreover, given that a number of recent events in the field has led to greater reflection on scientific publications and the research enterprise, the time seems ripe to offer some thoughts guiding our new editorial team.

Impact. The goal of *SPPS* is to get innovative, groundbreaking, impactful work into the scientific conversation. As a short report journal, no single paper can be a conclusive or exhaustive treatment of a topic, but we expect published work to provide meaningful impact. Of course, defining "impact" is challenging because no single criterion exists that transcends all areas of inquiry. "Moving the conversation forward" also differs based on the stage of research development. In areas that are fresh and novel, establishing a phenomenon and its import may be sufficient. In more developed areas, addressing an important existing question may be essential. For interdisciplinary work, marrying two different lines of research may be valuable even if the work only provides an advance for one of those areas. In the majority of cases, papers that serve to merely

replicate previously-published work do not offer sufficient impact to merit publication. Inevitably, impact is a judgment call, and that's why the excellent judgment of our editors and reviewers is critical in guiding the journal.

Replication. In our view, replication within a paper can add to impact by building confidence in the reliability of a finding and also by demonstrating its generalizability. We see replication, direct or conceptual, as providing considerable value to any paper. Further, replication is one of the best ways to combat decline effects (i.e., phenomena that "disappear" when subsequent studies fail to replicate an effect). However, replication is not an explicit requirement for publication in *SPPS*, and we anticipate publishing a mixture of single study and multiple study papers in the journal.

Mediational analyses. Recent critiques (e.g., Bullock, Green, & Ha, 2010) have questioned the extent to which mediational analyses can provide strong causal evidence, and we find much merit to such concerns. We certainly view mediational analyses and path analyses as offering suggestive evidence consistent with a hypothesized chain of events, but we will insist that authors circumscribe any claims based on correlational approaches appropriately. Further, we will not request mediational analyses in order for authors to establish a causal claim in *SPPS* papers.

Covariates. The use of covariates must be defensible and theoretically relevant to serve as evidence in *SPPS* papers, and when they are reported, we will typically ask authors to provide reports of the analyses (often in footnote form) without the covariates (Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011). To be clear, we view the use of covariates as justifiable, but authors must make a compelling case and report analyses without them. With respect to the latter, we anticipate that sometimes analyses without covariates might transform "pretty data" into "more messy data," and we view some degree of tolerance on such analyses as important for having realistic editorial expectations and encouraging authors to provide more complete accounts of their findings and work.

Desk rejections. Going forward, *SPPS* will increase the rate of papers rejected without being sent out for editorial review. When our team began its work, the desk rejection rate was around 11%, but we anticipate it will grow during our tenure probably to somewhere around 20-25%. When editors can ascertain that a paper does not have a realistic prospect of being positively received by reviewers, we believe the best course of action is to make that determination as soon as possible. During our first few months of receiving new submissions, the new editorial team has desk rejected 18% of submitted papers.

Scale validation. In our judgment, 5000 words is simply not enough space to adequately validate a new scale (e.g., structural studies; replications with multiple samples; tests of discriminant, convergent, content, and criterion validity). As a result, scale validation papers will be desk rejected and authors will be encouraged to seek more appropriate outlets.

Judicious revisions. In most cases, our standard is to request revisions only in cases where *all three* of the following criteria are met: (1) a revision will not require additional reviews (i.e., the existent issues are clear); (2) if new data are needed, they will serve to complement existing data rather than to replace existing data wholesale; and (3) there is a clear path forward to how a revision *could* prove publishable. When papers do not meet all three criteria, we will likely recommend a rejection (and when appropriate, encourage authors to consider submitting a new paper down the road). Such a judgment should not be construed as the journal not recognizing the potential of one's work, but instead, it is simply an acknowledgment of the constraints of the short report format. Further, although we will only offer revision decisions when the third criterion above is met, authors must also understand that a revision offer is not a guarantee that a revision will be published. We hope to reject few revised manuscripts, but we will reject them when they do not successfully address the concerns articulated in action letters.

Brevity. Even though *SPPS* has a short report format, we still view space as a precious resource. For example, if a paper can make an effective contribution with 3000 words, adding 2000 words of unnecessary verbiage does not make the paper stronger or increase its impact. Relatedly, *all* papers will be returned without review if they exceed 5000 words (yes, we check *every* paper upon submission). To expedite the processing of manuscripts, authors should ensure that their submissions are properly formatted, follow APA style, are complete (please double check tables and figures to make sure they were uploaded properly), and do not exceed the prescribed limits for submission.

Concluding remarks

We view taking on the responsibility of leading *SPPS* as an exciting opportunity to serve the field. Short report papers offer many positive qualities (e.g., to-the-point contributions, being accessible to a range of audiences) and they serve as an important medium in the panoply of resources that advance the field. We agree that the short report format has strengths and limitations (e.g., Ledgerwood & Sherman, 2012), and we hope that *SPPS* continues to be a positive force for advancing research within our field and in disseminating it to the public at large.

One of the real privileges of serving as the Editor in Chief of *SPPS* is being reminded each day that our field is a wonderful collection of thoughtful, creative, and passionate scholars who all work in an interdependent fashion. That is, participants, undergraduate assistants, doctoral and post-doctoral apprentices, coauthors, reviewers, and editors all work together in an interconnected canopy of activity. It is truly remarkable, inspiring, and humbling how this interdependence is interwoven into all of our scientific and professional activities. We rely on each other, are informed by each other, and serve each other – and we do our best work when we respect and nurture this interdependence.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank my excellent editorial team: Shira Gabriel, Rob Holland, Kurt Hugenberg, Dan Molden, Simone Schnall, Yuichi Shoda, Pamela Smith, Gerben Van Kleef, and Simine Vazire. Also, I greatly appreciate the support and guidance offered by the Consortium of Social and

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Allen R. McConnell
Editor in Chief, *SPPS*

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