New Submission Guidelines

As a discipline, communication is well served by a number of journals that have and continue to foster scientific progress in methodological, measurement, and statistical issues. However, we believe that the health of a scientific discipline can be gauged by the extent to which researchers in the field have ongoing, productive debates about these issues, and where discipline wide progress can be readily observed. It is our sincere hope that *CMM* can contribute to this kind of progress. With this in mind, during our tenure as editors, we plan to institute some important changes to *CMM* with the aim of fostering scientific debate and progress. Although the "Aims and Scopes" of *Communication Methods and Measures* remains largely unchanged as we take charge with this issue (the Aims and Scopes statement can be seen at the journal's web page), we have begun to implement our own editing philosophy. The standards that we use for judging submissions will differ somewhat from those used by prior editors, and it is important that potential authors be aware of these standards.

First, we seek to devote as many pages as possible to contributions to the methods and measurement literature that have broad appeal and applicability. That does not mean that we are not open to publishing work that caters to a niche area of investigation, or that targets a relatively small audience. We have in the past and will still publish work some may construe as "narrow," especially if it exemplifies good analysis, argument, and writing that serves as a model for others, particularly if it deals with a vexing problem in an innovative way or otherwise makes a nontrivial contribution to the literature. However, the measurement and statistical problems that any area of research faces are typically faced by researchers in other areas. For instance, although a paper on new methods for the automated content analysis of campaign speeches might be of particular interest to political communication researchers, certainly researchers who study health communication, advertising, journalism, or who do content analysis of small group conversation would be interested in new developments in automated content analysis. We challenge and implore authors to frame their work as generally as possible (both in the title of the submission and the body of the text), and not to leave it to the reader to make connections to the broader field on his or her own. Of course, examples used to make a point or illustrate a method are typically highly specific to a particular research area. So we see no problem with illustrating the uses of this new content analysis method by applying it to political speeches, but the paper should not be framed around the examples and illustrations. Such work is best sent to journals that publish work targeting researchers in a specific area of inquiry rather than to CMM. Authors who do submit to us and who appear to have not thought broadly enough about the applicability of their work are more likely to receive a desk rejection. If we believe there is some hope for eventual publication if appropriately reframed, we will offer such advice and encourage resubmission.

Second, we do not intend to publish work which employs outdated analytical approaches or other forms of scientific or statistical practice that experts have discredited. For example, we cannot condone the artificial categorization of continua (such as median or mean splits) in order to fit one's analysis into a certain box. This practice can rarely be justified, throws out information, lowers statistical power, and can produce spurious findings (see e.g., Irwin & McClelland, 2002; MacCallum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2002). Authors and data analysts should not be conducting principal components analysis with orthogonal rotation (e.g., varimax) when the common factor model with nonorthogonal rotation is more appropriate (as it typically is; Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999; Morrison, 2009). We recommend the use of modern approaches to assessing dimensionality in exploratory factor analysis, such as parallel analysis (Fabrigar et al., 2009, Morrison, 2009; O'Connor, 2000; Reise, Waller, & Comrey, 2000). Researchers should use confirmatory analytical approaches when a factor structure is proposed a priori rather than relying on purely exploratory analytical approaches. We encourage the statistical comparison of alternative models rather than merely documenting that a single analytical model fits one's data well. The piecemeal approach to statistical mediation analysis made famous by Baron and Kenny (1986) is no longer recommended by methodologists (see e.g., Hayes, 2009). And measures of the reliability of data resulting from subjective coding decisions should be chance-corrected. Percent agreement is not a defensible index of reliability, and Cronbach's alpha is not a measure of inter-coder agreement, as has been discussed in this journal and elsewhere (Haves & Krippendorff, 2007; Krippendorff, 2004).

Third, there has been a proliferation of published measurement scales that have not been sufficiently validated and whose psychometric properties are of questionable generality. The literature is filled with scale development pieces based on the same simple paradigm: Draft a set of questions, give them to a sample (often a small sample of college students), perform exploratory factor analyses, discard items that load poorly, evaluate reliability, call it a scale, and submit for publication. We consider this a first-step in the scale construction process, and do not see it as worthy of publication by itself. We expect authors who submit scale development pieces to replicate their initial findings in independent samples. Furthermore, unless it can be justified otherwise, such replication samples should be diverse in age, education, ethnicity, and so forth. Of course, exceptions to this requirement would be scales that are intended to be used on targeted groups (e.g., adolescents, members of certain ethnic groups, and so forth). We also expect initial evidence of construct validity if the scale is designed to measure a latent construct (such as an attitude or a personality dimension). And remember that high Cronbach's alpha is not evidence of unidimensionality (Cortina, 1993; Streiner, 2003). If a claim of unidimensionality is being made, it must be based on more than evidence of internal consistency.

Four, some comments about writing are in order. We do not impose a page limit on submissions. A submission should be as long as it needs to be—no shorter, and no longer. Of course, we strongly encourage concise writing, minimizing the number of tables and figures, and avoiding redundancy. We will require papers that are too long given their value to the literature to be shortened. We assume that prior to submission, you have carefully edited the document and corrected improper grammar and spelling, and that you have followed the spirit if not the letter of APA style. Careless writing can produce a desk rejection with a request that it be cleaned up prior to resubmission. We also request that you to seek the feedback of your colleagues rather than risk sending a first (or even second) draft to us for peer review, where the stakes are much higher and reviewers are less inclined to forgive sloppy writing or poorly constructed arguments.

Finally, when a submission involves data collection and hypothesis testing, we discourage the formal stating of hypotheses and research questions numerically (e.g., H1, H2, RQ1) and referring to them throughout using such numerical shorthand. Most readers are intelligent enough to understand what you are hypothesizing without you having to repeat your logic using an explicit hypothesis statement set out from the rest of the text, and doing so wastes valuable journal space and interrupts the flow of the narrative. Furthermore, only the reader with excellent memory will remember later in the paper what H1, H2, and RQ1 refer to from several pages back. And rather than talking about whether a particular hypothesis was supported or not, a practice which places unnecessary emphasis on your clairvoyance or lack thereof, we would rather you spend time talking about the substantive interpretation of your results as they unfold in the narrative of your analysis.

Our intention is that these guidelines will benefit authors, reviewers, and us as editors. However, they are only guidelines. Every submission is different, and we don't intend to be overly rigid and ignore context when evaluating a manuscript. You will sometimes see manuscripts printed in this journal that appear to have deviated from one or more of these guidelines or rules (especially in the first few issues of our tenure, as the backlog is cleared of manuscripts accepted by the prior editors). Yet these guidelines will influence our thinking as we evaluate submissions, just as they should influence your writing and analysis. By following the advice we give above, our decision making will be easier, the reviewers will appreciate the care you exercised, and the likelihood of a positive response will be enhanced.

Your Rights as an Author

We've engaged in many conversations with colleagues whose frustrations with the peer review process mirror our own. We consider your decision to submit to *CMM* a leap of faith in us as editors. You worked hard to collect data, articulate your argument, and edit your prose for conciseness, grammar, and consistency with the spirit of APA style. Hopefully you have also attended to the guidelines we document above. Although we cannot promise you that the outcome of the process will be to your liking, we can promise to treat you with respect. By submitting your work to *CMM*, the respect you will receive is documented in our Author's Bill of Rights, which we detail below.

- (1) You have a right to receive a decision in a timely fashion. If your submission is judged to not merit peer review and must be 'desk rejected' without review, you will hear from us within three weeks of submission. It is our belief that the ability to make desk rejects is ultimately the most fair and efficient way to run a journal. We wish to spare reviewers and ourselves the pain of reviewing work that we are sure would not merit publication. We also believe that this is beneficial for authors, whose work would otherwise be tied up in the review process when that valuable time could be spent reworking the paper or conducting further research. For manuscripts we do send out for review, our goal is no more than 90 days elapsed from submission to decision.
- (2) You have the right to responsiveness from the editorial team. We pledge to address inquiries you make during and after review, and to keep you in the loop about the status of your work. For instance, we will let you know if we are unable to make a decision within 90 days and we will update you at that time on when a decision is likely.

- (3) You have the right to an explanation for our decisions. We will do our job as editors by giving you some guidance when a manuscript is rejected, with or without an invitation to review. We do not believe an editor's job is merely to count the votes, rule based on majority sentiment, and forward along the reviews. We will read every submission ourselves at least once (typically more than once). We consider reviewers consultants whose job is to provide an expert assessment of the work. In the end, the decision is ours to make based on our own impressions of the work, our publication mission and vision for the journal, and the advice we have received by reviewers and the editorial board. There will be occasions where we reject manuscripts that reviewed favorably, or invite revisions to or outright accept submissions the reviewers did not like. Regardless, we will give you an explanation rather than a form letter.
- (4) When your work is accepted, you have the right to know when the manuscript is going to be printed. Furthermore, you should not have to wait an inordinate period of time to see the fruits of your labor. Publication lags of 15 to 18 months or more are all too common these days. We believe this is unacceptable. Our goal is to print within 9 months of acceptance. This is a risky promise to make, and to fulfill this promise will require sticking to our high publication standards in order to avoid a long production queue.

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