Invited Editorial: Psi Chi Journal Practices That Foster Publishable Student Research Articles

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ABSTRACT. The *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research* is a journal that is peer-reviewed and published quarterly for student and faculty authors. The Journal is a channel for researchers to publish high-quality research in any field of psychology. For many, publishing scientific work can be overwhelming and we understand that. As the editorial team, we have spent significant time making resources available to authors so that the peer-review process is educational, supportive, and rigorous. Our goal is that our authors will gain the skills that are needed to publish in the field of psychology. In this article, we offer eight Journal practices that are intended to nourish quality, publishable research articles.

*Keywords:* student research, publishing guidance, open science

The *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research* is a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal that supports and facilitates undergraduate student, graduate student, and faculty authors. Submitting a manuscript to a journal can be overwhelming and convoluted, particularly for those who are new to the process. The leadership of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, recognized the need for authors to have an outlet to publish diverse, high-quality research with a Journal that would support authors through the nuanced and at times ambiguous/challenging process of publication. We, the Journal’s editorial team, believe that the peer-review process for our authors should be supportive and educational, but also rigorous so that authors can gain the skills necessary for their research to advance the science of psychology. The editorial team at the *Psi Chi Journal* has made strategic changes in order to enhance and promote the publishing experience. Students are encouraged to submit to the Journal to benefit from the following eight *Psi Chi Journal* practices, all of which are intended to nourish quality, publishable research articles.

The first practice is to be transparent and clear about the requirements and goals for the *Psi Chi Journal*. These can be found inside the first page of each issue. Our mission statement asserts: “The twofold purpose of the *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research* is to foster and reward the scholarly efforts of Psi Chi members, whether students or faculty, as well as to provide them with a valuable learning experience.” Further, care is taken to ensure that details about the *Psi Chi Journal* on the Psi Chi website, official flyer (Psi Chi, n.d.), member e-mails, and social media posts prominently and consistently identifies this same information. In any of these locations, interested readers will quickly learn that student and faculty authors are welcome to submit, only the first author is required to be a Psi Chi member, and other basic facts. Clear submission guidelines also help students know what research practices are expected of them (e.g., effect sizes must be included with any *p*-values; Psi Chi, n.d.-a).

Moreover, our second practice requires that all submissions be reviewed by an APA-style reviewer and three doctoral-level reviewers. Although this is not necessarily the norm within the publishing community, we believe that the more support and feedback that we can provide our authors, the better the
publishing experience will be. Our doctoral-level reviewers understand that this is a learning process for the authors, and subsequently include specific and constructive feedback in comprehensive reviews. The reviewers for the Journal are a diverse group of volunteers who are committed to assisting the student or faculty researcher through what can be a challenging process.

A third practice to foster publishable student and faculty research articles is to constantly pursue new strategies and opportunities that will encourage authors of scientifically sound articles to choose Psi Chi Journal as a publication outlet. In recent years, many benefits of submitting to Psi Chi Journal have been launched and featured. For example, to enhance the visibility of our authors’ research across the psychological community, Psi Chi Journal is now indexed in PsycINFO, EBSCO, Crossref, and Google Scholar databases. All published articles are free to members and nonmembers alike, and they all receive a unique hyperlink DOI number; thus, the likelihood of articles being read and cited from the Psi Chi Journal is much higher than in the past. Similar to other journals, we now invite authors to sync their accounts with ORCID, which creates a more streamlined experience by keeping scholarly activities attached to one professional ID. Also, to incentivize authors to submit quality research, Psi Chi Journal specially awards Open Science Badges for submissions that provide Open Data, Open Materials, and/or Preregistration of their research. To our knowledge, Psi Chi Journal is also the first to create and award a special Replications badge to authors who publish replication studies, which are crucial to the field of psychology (Psi Chi, n.d.-b).

Our fourth, and very important practice, is that the Psi Chi Journal seeks to be as diverse and inclusive as possible by inviting authors to submit manuscripts on any topic area in psychology. The Psi Chi Journal represents a collaboration of researchers from every field of psychological research; this collaboration allows us to provide varied and comprehensive feedback that is ideal for developing researchers. That being said, allowing authors to submit from any field in psychology requires a significant amount of resources in order to properly review and edit manuscripts from every possible area in psychology. Because of this complexity, the editor has assembled a group of associate editors with a variety of backgrounds and skills. We have also recruited a diverse group of nearly 300 active reviewers who are experts in a variety of disciplines within psychology.

Fifth, our associate editors strive to make the publishing process positive and informative for all involved. Although reviewers offer advice on missing components in a manuscript, or methodological and statistical issues, our associate editors are the important people who pull it all together so that the author(s) can fully understand all the feedback that they receive. The associate editors accomplish this by “softening” any harsh reviewer feedback, condensing any repetitive suggestions, and clarifying any contradictory instructions. Additionally, associate editors offer their own review of the paper, as well. Their reviews are generally a summary of the other reviews organized in a way that assists with understanding the overarching issues with the manuscripts.

Sixth, it is never assumed that any author has previous experience with publishing in a peer-reviewed journal. Consequently, we offer the authors a “timeline” when their new submissions pass our Quality Control stage, as well as information about what they should expect during the process ahead. The first time submitting a manuscript can be daunting. Thus, we do not want authors to feel “out of the loop” (Brannan, 2018). Detailed submission guidelines and an example cover page, manuscript, and sponsor statement are available to help student and faculty authors (Psi Chi, n.d.-a). Further, multiple Psi Chi blog and magazine articles have been released to make information about the journal more accessible to new researchers such as “The Peer-Review Process Explained in Just Over 1,000 Words” (Cannon, 2018b), “Why Choose Our Journal First” (Brannan, 2018), “Our First Replication Badge” (Rouse, 2018), and “How (and Why) to Preregister Your Research” (Cannon, 2018a).

Seventh, to support authors’ during the review process, we are similarly passionate about teaching reviewers how to communicate with our authors during the review process. When reviewers agree to conduct a review, they receive an e-mail with specific instructions of what to look for in the manuscript. Reviewer instructions are available on the submission portal too, along with hyperlinks to specific reviewer resources.

Eighth, in the past 3 years, the Journal has published educational invited editorials in every issue. For example, our latest editorial describes how to prepare theses and dissertations for publication (Ayala, 2018). Other recent editorials explain how to create and understand an empirical article (Fallon, 2018), p hacking (Rouse, 2016),...
integrating quantitative and qualitative methods (Brannan, 2015), and what the institutional review board’s job is and why they are needed (Domenech Rodríguez, Corralejo, Vouvalis, & Mirly, 2017). Further, to promote research related to greater Psi Chi educational endeavors, the Psi Chi Journal released its first special issue in spring 2018. The focus was on Open Science Badges, and Steven V. Rouse from Pepperdine University was the Special Invited Editor. He reviewed and accepted eight manuscripts for the special issue, all of which received at least one Open Science Badge. This issue was met with much enthusiasm. Thus, a second issue on “Education, Research, and Practice for a Diverse World” is anticipated for release in summer 2019.

In sum, it is our goal to support authors in the publishing process by offering a supportive and educational platform in which each step of the process is transparent and clear. Moreover, the Psi Chi Journal editor and team recognize that embracing diversity and inclusion leads to increased growth and sustainability as a whole. Acceptance of diverse individuals is necessary, and their participation is needed. To make this point clear, we recently added a sentence about diversity to our purpose statement: “the Psi Chi Journal is dedicated to increasing its scope and relevance by accepting and involving diverse people of varied racial, ethnic, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious, and social class backgrounds, among many others.” We proudly believe that the eight publishing practices described above have made the Psi Chi Journal a priceless resource to help our diverse members become the best generation of psychologists yet.

References

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The authors of this article wish to note the following details of affiliation. All current authors are members of the editorial team for the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research, and are paid for their services to manage manuscript submissions and the continued success of the Psi Chi Journal.

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Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research: Reviewers for Volume 23

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