

EDITORIAL *

In assuming direct charge of the publication of *Psychonomic Science*, the membership of the Psychonomic Society has indicated that it wishes to have a journal of very high quality devoted to the prompt publication of briefer articles. It seems to us that such a journal performs an important service, and that its publication is in no way incompatible with the maintenance of high editorial standards. We wish to detail here the main criteria to be applied in the editorial evaluation of manuscripts.

Our main objective is to publish definitive results from methodologically sound studies of important problems. Our preference is for succinctly and crisply written papers describing the findings from a single experiment or from very closely related experiments which can still fit into our average space, which is the equivalent of about 3,000 words, or about three-quarters the length of the average article in other experimental journals. In some cases, an author may wish to describe in this journal an important finding to be developed later, at greater length, in another journal.

To put the matter of editorial criteria negatively, a manuscript submitted to this journal should, first of all, not report a pilot study. Pilot studies are for the benefit of the person doing the research and should be used to help him design a more definitive investigation. Secondly, a manuscript usually should not be merely a replication or a slight variation of other research. Occasionally, where there is reason to doubt the replicability of an experiment, or where the result has very important implications for a wide area of investigation, a replication is in order; but often in the course of replicating an experiment it is possible to extend it so as to tell something new. The criterion of "something new" will ordinarily be strictly applied; we should not use valuable publication space to tell experimentalists what they already know. Thirdly, papers showing nonsignificant

differences will ordinarily be discouraged, the exception being a pattern of such differences which are persuasive and would represent an important new finding if significant. As to negative results, there are too many ways of obtaining them, and such results are publishable only when of interest in themselves, because there was some very good reason to expect positive results and the study was conducted in such a way, including a sufficiently large N, as to allow positive results to emerge.

On the other hand, we wish to invite and encourage well-designed studies involving an adequately large number of experimental cases that provide new data on important theoretical questions. In some instances the theoretical significance of the results may be open to dispute, but at a minimum we would like to publish good solid findings which advance our knowledge in experimental psychology.

Articles that require extensive revision, either because badly written or for other substantive reasons, will not be accepted for publication. In general, manuscripts must be publishable, or require only minor revision, as submitted. There is no other way to run a journal devoted to high standards consistent with a very short publication lag. We will want the reviews of our consultants to be thoughtful, crisp, and fairly decisive.

And, finally, we will have to discourage interchanges between authors and consultants carried on through the Editors as intermediaries. We will be mistaken in our judgment about the importance of a contribution from time to time, often because the author has not communicated it adequately. We feel that in this circumstance time is saved all around by resubmitting a new manuscript which eliminates the areas of misunderstanding, or by submitting the article to another journal.

Abram Amsel
George E. Briggs
Rudolph W. Schulz
Richard F. Thompson
Editors

**This editorial, which appeared in Volume 24, Number 1, is being reprinted here for the benefit of subscribers who receive only the Section on Human Experimental Psychology.*

POSTSCRIPT: Because we cannot forecast exactly the space required for articles and because of delays in revising articles and returning proof, some of the articles published in the early issues of this volume were accepted by the previous editor. -CTM