GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

MIND & BEHAVIOR

About the Journal

A peer-reviewed, open-access journal dedicated to enhancing the field of psychology by sharing forward-thinking research and scholarly perspectives. The journal provides a forum for academic exchange and innovation across diverse areas of psychology and human behavior, striving to foster the professional development of psychologists, researchers, and practitioners.

The journal is published by St. Cyril and St. Methodius University Press and is open access. The journal publishes original articles, reviews, meta-analysis data and case reports in English or in Bulgarian that undergo a double-blind peer-review process conducted by established experts in the field of psychological science, members of the editorial board.

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Mind & Behavior is published twice a year, in June and December. Papers can be submitted at any time throughout the year.

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The journal is referenced and indexed in Advanced Science Index (https://journal-index.org), Central and Eastern European Online Library (https://www.ceeol.com) , Academic Resource Index ResearchBid (https://www.research-bib.com), Electronic Journals Library (https://ezb.ur.de/ezeit/index.phtml?bibid=AAAAA&colors=5&lang=en), Cobbis Plus (https://plus.cobiss.net/cobiss/bg/bg), International Citation Index Of Journal Impact Factor & Indexing (https://www.internationalcitationindex.org), Système Universitaire de Documentation (https://www.sudoc.abes.fr/cbs/xslt/), WorldCat (https://search.worldcat.org), Directory of Open Access Resources (https://road.issn.org).

Preprint Policy

As part of the submission process, authors are required to confirm that the submission has not been previously published, nor has been submitted (or will be submitted while under consideration at *Mind & Behavior*) to publication. A preprint is a draft of a scholarly manuscript made available to the public prior to publication (after passing the whole peer-review process and final acceptance) in a peer-reviewed journal.

Because the journal is a double-blind peer-reviewed one, the authors are not allowed to reveal their identity in any way. Encouragement is given to publishing in co-authored teams. Authors who wish to publish in the journal are required to submit two separate files via the official email channel — d.bosilkov@ts.uni-vt.bg, one complete version containing all required attributes as specified in the submission guidelines, and one anonymized version without names, affiliations, or any information that could allow identification of the authors. Receipt of both files is confirmed by email from the Editorial Board.

After a manuscript has been published, we suggest linking to the final article version, using the assigned article DOI in this way: https://doi.org/DOI.

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Mind & Behavior uses specialized products for screening and checking plagiarism, provided by the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University Press — StrikePlagiarism.com.

Authors must not use words, figures, or ideas of others without attribution. All sources must be cited at the point they are used, and reuse of wording must be limited and be attributed or quoted in the text. The editorial board use specific tools (Crossref Similarity Check) to detect submissions that overlap with published and submitted manuscripts.

Manuscripts that are found to have been plagiarized from a manuscript by other authors, whether published or unpublished, will be rejected. Any published articles may need to be corrected or retracted.

Corrections and Retractions

In order to improve the readability of the texts, corrections might be made only in the following cases: minor layout changes/fixes; typos or grammatical issues that are in the main body of the manuscript and do not affect the content or meaning of a sentence; broken internal links; minor fixes in references as long as the reference stays mainly the same.

In cases of serious errors that affect the article in a material way (but do not fully invalidate its results) or significantly impair the reader's understanding or evaluation of the article, *Mind & Behavior* publishes a *correction note* linked to the published article. The published article will be left unchanged.

Retraction is a mechanism for correcting the literature and alerting readers to articles that have such seri-

ously flawed or erroneous content or data that their findings and conclusions cannot be relied upon. Unreliable content or data can result from honest error, naive mistakes, or research or publication misconduct. The purpose of retraction is to correct the literature and ensure its integrity, not to punish the authors. Of note, once an article is posted online (i.e., so-called online first, not yet assigned to an issue), it is considered published.

In accordance with the "Retraction Guidelines" by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), *Mind&Behavior* will retract a published article if:

• there is clear evidence that the findings are unreliable, either as a result of misconduct (e.g., data fabrication) or honest error (e.g., miscalculation),

• the findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper crossreferencing, permission, or justification (i.e. cases of redundant publication),

• it constitutes plagiarism,

• it reports unethical research.

An article is retracted by publishing a *retraction notice* that is linked to or replaces the retracted article. *Mind & Behavior* will make any effort to clearly identify a retracted article as such.

Guidelines for Authors

A scientific product represents a newly produced or adapted knowledge. The scientific text is meant to be a result of careful consideration and evaluation of all details of the report. Presentation of scientific information is supposed to have strict consistency and sequence, a concise and exact wording, objective assertion of facts, and convincing argumentation. Clearness of wording is a priority. The scientific report is characterized by specific requirements for the structural-compositional appearance of different genre types (article, review, case report, abstract).

The following are accepted for publishing: original articles, reviews, meta-analysis data and case reports in English, subject to a double-blind review process. After review and possible revision, the final decision for publication is made by the Editor-in-Chief.

The title of a scientific paper, irrespective of its genre determination, should attract the attention, be comprehensible, short, and exact — it represents the study object. A subtitle can be prepared for extended informativeness.

The abstract displays the specific features of the study in a concise manner: aim/subject matter, methods used, main results and findings. It is distributed also through secondary informational titles (data bases), i.e., it should include the main elements of the scientific contribution. It should not contain citations, illustrative material, or abbreviations which can be precluded.

Keywords are used for topical categorization of a paper in data bases and related search in inquiries. The objective of the author is to propose the most significant concepts of his work in a synthetic manner. Keywords to any kind of publication range between 3 and 8; they can be single words or short word groups, which are commonly accepted in the specific area of knowledge.

Original article

Original scientific articles necessarily review a unique material according to thoroughly described methods. The format of *Introduction/preface +objective – Materials and Methods – Results – Discussion – Findings/Conclusion* is of a normative character.

Preface. Its main function is to provide answer of the following questions: What are the rationales for performing the study, and what is its direct aim? Auxiliary functions: the preface gives the main information that is required to understand the article; a short review of similar studies performed by other authors; relation to similar problems; the intended purpose; an assessment of the significance of the topic.

Materials and Methods. In this section, the characteristics of studied groups are specified showing the correspondence of the study material to the set objective of the study; the method of selection — criteria for inclusion/exclusion, and technique of randomization, are analyzed; the comparability of compared groups is discussed; the used method is explained as being appropriate for the set objective, statistical methods are shown and the compliance with ethical standards is declared.

Results. This section contains all the results and nothing more than the results. The text is supplemented with illustrative material: pictures, charts, and tables. The author is expected to assess the objectivity or subjectivity of the results as well as whether they answer the preset questions. Avoidance of doubled information (the same data is presented as table or figure; within the text and with an illustration) is required.

Discussion. Data and its significance are interpreted; the issues of the used methods/techniques are reviewed; similarities and differences with other studies from literature references are compared; the contribution of

the results in clarifying a problem set is illustrated. Contradictions, unsolved questions, undesired events, unexpected results, doubts, alternative interpretations and hypotheses, statistical differences, and the study's limitations are discussed. Data is summarized. Avoidance of the following is required: unproven statements, exaggeration of the data significance, diverging/peripheral questions, attacking and non-critical retelling of other studies and authors, and emotional appeals to readers.

Conclusion: The main results are summarized and the conclusions based on the study are shown.

Scientific review

It summarizes the contents of a number of sources dedicated to a single subject during a defined period of time. Discussion of authors and text should be in compliance with the thematic and problematic relevancy to the study aim. It is intended to review the experience, current state and trends in a given problem, assess the material in an argued manner and suggest the specific, practicable conclusions and recommendations. A logically linked, consistent narration, without mechanically retelling the sources, is expected. Subtitles are thematic.

Meta-analysis data

Refers to systematically collected and statistically combined results from multiple independent studies that investigate the same psychological phenomenon. The purpose of meta-analysis is to provide a more precise estimate of effect sizes, identify patterns or inconsistencies across studies, and evaluate the overall strength of evidence. Meta-analytic data typically include effect sizes, sample characteristics, methodological variables, and study quality indicators, allowing researchers to draw more robust and generalizable conclusions than any single study alone.

The structure of a meta-analysis article should be:

Title and abstract — one that clearly indicates that the study is a *meta-analysis* and provides background, objectives, methods (search strategy, inclusion criteria), main results, and conclusions.

Introduction — presents the theoretical background and relevance of the topic; explains why a meta-analysis is needed (e.g., inconsistent findings, unresolved debates).

Method — includes information about the literature search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, the coding procedure, effect size calculation and the statistical analysis.

The results section should present the following information — study characteristics, the main meta-analytic effect, heterogeneity, moderator analyses, and publication bias.

The presented meta-analysis data should have discussion and conclusion.

Case reports

Clinical case reports consist of introduction, case description, discussion and conclusions. An extended review section is used to demonstrate the significance of the presented case. The telegraphic style with duplication of a case history is unacceptable.

Statistical methods must be described sufficiently so the informed reader with access to original data can check the provided results. The results must be presented quantitatively (if possible) by appropriate indicators for the measurement error or uncertainty (e.g., confidence intervals). The use of p-values only in the verification of a hypothesis is to be avoided, since this approach does not generate sufficient quantitative information. Quoting the correct p-values in addition to the appropriate confidence intervals is desirable.

The number of measurements (sample size) is mandatorily given and the method of calculation is justified.

Statistical programs for the performance of analysis must be described.

The used statistical terms, abbreviations, and symbols should be defined unambiguously.

List of Literature References

Only the publications virtually used and required to delineate the basis, on which the study is designed need to be listed at the end of the manuscript. Avoid presenting abundant references at the account of their up-to-dateness. Minimize self-citation.

Citation of bibliographic references within the text is designated by numbers in square brackets following the order of appearance. Bibliography is arranged following the order of appearance of the sources within the text. Each source is written in a new line, with an Arabic number. Sources are structured in the following manner:

– *Articles:* Author(s). The article title. Journal title (abbreviated under the Index Medicus), year, volume, number (issue) in round brackets, pages (from-to). *Example: Yakub YN, Freedman RB, Pabico RC. Renal transplantation in systemic lupus erythematosus. Nephron, 2019, 27(1):197-201.*

– *Papers* from an edited book: Author(s). Title. In: The edited book title. Edition number, editors. Place of publication (city), publishing house, year of publication, pages (from-to). *Example: Wilkinson AH. Evaluation of the transplant recipient. In: Handbook of Kidney Transplantation. 6th ed. G. M. Danovitch (Ed.). Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 2019, 109-122.*

– *Books.* Author(s). Title. Place of publication (city), publishing house, year of publication, pages (from-to). *Example: Sheytanov Y. Systemic Vasculitis. Sofia, Medicina i Fizkultura, 2019, 8-11.*

– Citation format for *electronic resources* available on the Internet includes also the publication URL and the date you accessed the resource online, besides author(s) and article title.

In cases of up to three authors, their surnames followed by their initials (without periods) are written. In cases of more than three authors, "et al." is written after the name of the third author. For translated books, the original book language and the translator are also given. When citing Bulgarian sources, below its Cyrillic writing the source should be transliterated, with the title translated in English, while the names of the authors and the journals or publishers should also be transliterated (e.g., *Bulg. sp. psihiatr.* or *Med fizk.*).

Ethical Norms in Publishing

Authors must warrant that they submit for publication their own studies and in case different author's data and/or text are used, these are specified by citations. Strict adherence to copyright issues is maintained — texts including more than 10% of literal replication of different publication are returned for reprocessing.

A secondary publishing of the same science paper in a periodical is permissible only in the form of a secondary publication reflecting the data from an original publication, which is explicitly quoted. The corresponding author declares that the material has not been published previously, except in the form of an abstract for a scientific event, and has not been submitted to other journals.

All researchers contributing to the concept and fulfillment of the scientific study should be listed as co-authors. The corresponding author must ensure that they have approved the final variant of the paper submitted for publication and have been informed on the critical notes and recommendations for correction following peer review.

In the end of the paper, authors can express acknowledgements to individuals or authorities providing intellectual contributions or a material or financial support. When the authors are more than three persons, the specific contribution of each co-author should be stated.

Authors assume the responsibility for the contents of their publications. Presented papers and the studies described in them should comply with the established ethical standards on performance of the clinical and/or experimental studies on human subjects (the Helsinki Declaration) and experimental animals. Patients must not be referred by names and initials and images, in which they can be identified, must not be presented.

Declaring conflicts of interest or the lack thereof, as well as absence or presence of financial association of a study and the institutions performing it, is mandatory.

Technical Layout

An article begins with the title (without abbreviations), the names of authors (without academic or other titles), their workplaces designated by numeric indices, abstract, and key words.

The corresponding author shows contact data (email address, optionally: postal address and phone number).

Approximate volume of submitted papers:

Type of publication	*Word count in the main text*	*Word count in the abstract*	*Number of references*
Original article	2,500-5,000	200-300	30
Review	3,000-6,000	100-200	50
Clinical case report	1,000-3,000	100-200	20
Meta-analysis article	6,000-10,000	150-250	50-150

MS Word files are acceptable. No specific requirements on the font size and type, spacing, margins and other formatting are defined.

Illustrative material (tables, figures, images) is positioned at the corresponding places within the text with captions and legends. Captions of figures must not be shown within the image. Images with good quality (at least

300 dpi) and appropriate file format (.jpg, tif, .png) are required. Tables must be presented in an editable format rather than as images.

Specific abbreviations used in the text are introduced in round brackets with the first appearance of the entire designation.

Measurement units should follow the SI system.

Guidelines for Double-Blind Reviewers

The double-blind system ensures that reviewers do not know the authors' identities and the authors do not know the reviewers' identities. This reduces bias related to institution, reputation, gender, or nationality and enhances the objectivity and fairness of the evaluation.

The reviewer is expected to:

1. Evaluate the scientific quality; assess whether the manuscript addresses a meaningful psychological question, is grounded in relevant theoretical frameworks; use appropriate and transparent methodology; provide valid and reliable results; offer meaningful interpretation and implications.

2. Provide constructive, respectful feedback in a way as to help authors improve their work.

3. Ensure ethical integrity by checking whether the manuscript adheres to ethical standards in psychological research, includes appropriate ethical approval, or protects participants' rights and confidentiality.

4. Respect confidentiality and not share, cite, or discuss the manuscript with others; avoid any attempts to identify the authors or to include personal information in the review that reveals one's identity.

5. Ensure the absence of conflicts of interest. Editors and reviewers should decline to be involved in a submission when they have a conflict of interest.

Publication Ethics and Malpractice

Ethical standards for publication

Ethical standards for publication exist to ensure high-quality scientific publications and public trust in scientific findings. The editors shall take reasonable steps to identify and prevent the publication of papers where research misconduct has occurred, and in no case shall they encourage such misconduct.

Research integrity

The editors expect research published by the journal to meet the following criteria:

- honesty in all aspects of research;
- scrupulous care, thoroughness and excellence in research practice;
- transparency and open communication;
- care and respect for all participants in and subjects of research.

Research involving humans or animals should be approved by relevant ethics committee(s) and should conform to international ethical and legal standards for research. Authors should respect human participants' right to privacy, do their best to anonymize personal details, especially in reporting case studies, and gain any necessary consent to publish before submitting to the journal.

Duplicate submission and redundant publication

Only original content will be considered, i.e. articles that have not been previously published, including in a language other than Bulgarian or English. Articles based on content previously reported on conferences or in a thesis will be considered. Manuscripts submitted to the journal must not be submitted elsewhere while under consideration and must be withdrawn before being submitted elsewhere.

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All listed authors must have made a significant contribution to the research in the manuscript, approved its claims, and agreed to be an author. Anyone who contributed to the research or the manuscript preparation, but is not an author, should be acknowledged with their permission.

Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest (COIs) occur when issues outside research can be reasonably perceived to affect the neutrality or objectivity of the work or its assessment. This can happen at any stage in the research, while the manuscript is being written, or during its review assessment. If unsure, it is better to declare a potential interest or discuss with the editorial office. Submissions with undeclared conflicts that are later revealed may be rejected. For more information on COIs, see the guidance from the ICMJE. Possible conflicts of interest do not always stop a work from being published, however they must be declared—thus allowing others to make informed decisions about the work and its review process.

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Conflicts include (but are not limited to) the following:

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• Affiliations — being employed by, on the advisory board of, or a member of an organization with an interest in the outcome of the work

• Intellectual property — patents or trademarks owned by someone or their organization

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