

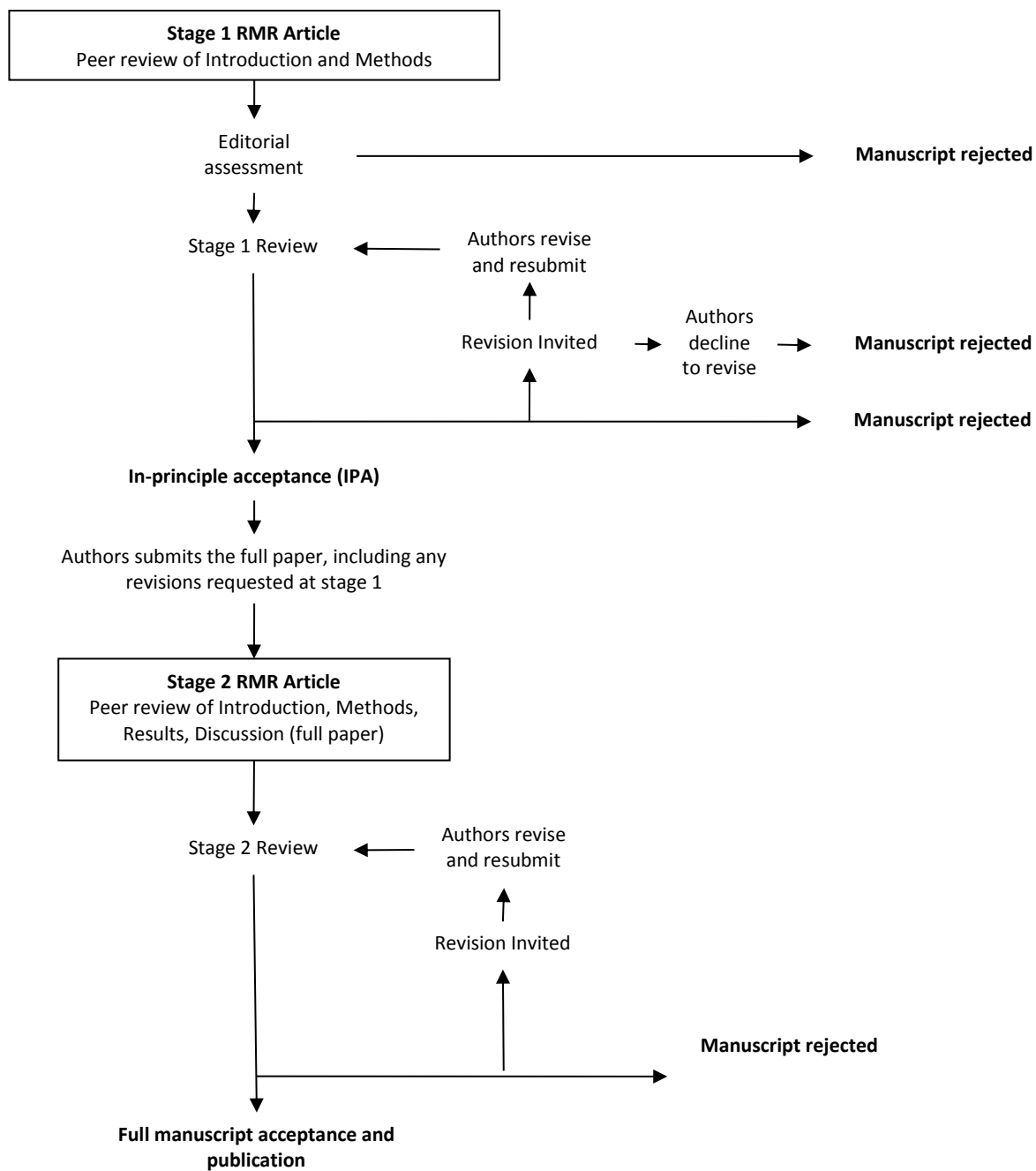
Results-Masked-Review Articles: Guidance for Authors and Reviewers

The Results-Masked-Review (RMR) model aims for work to be judged on the merits of the research question and methodology, not the findings.

RMR articles are sent for review without the results, discussion or conclusion (although data has already been collected) and reviewers are asked to evaluate the article on the hypothesis and the methodology only. This model has been adapted from *Registered Reports*, which is a form of empirical article in which the introduction, methods, and proposed analyses are pre-registered and reviewed *prior* to research being conducted. This format of article seeks to neutralize a variety of questionable research practices, including submitting research based on inadequate statistical power, selective reporting of results, P-Hacking, HARKING, and publication bias (Chambers, 2013). The Results-Masked-Review (RMR) model tweaks this format by allowing researchers to submit work that has been completed, but only the Introduction, Method, and Proposed Analyses are initially submitted for review.

Initial submissions will be reviewed by the Editor using standard screening criteria (e.g., comprehensiveness, fit and clarity). Those that pass this review will then be sent for in-depth blind peer review (Stage 1). Following review, the article will then be either rejected, receive a Revise and Resubmit decision, or accepted in principle for publication. Following in-principle acceptance (IPA), the authors will then produce a more traditionally formatted manuscript that includes Results and Discussion sections (Stage 2). Assuming that the stage 2 submission is consistent with what was committed to in stage one, and a sensible interpretation and discussion of the findings, the manuscript will be published regardless of the results. It is critical to note that this process is designed to incent the authors to have compelling research questions, excellent methodology, and then search for “truth” in their data. It is recognized that the search for “truth” can be messy, may produce non-significant results, and may lead to more questions than answers.

RMR peer review process outline:



Guidelines for authors

Stage 1: Initial manuscript submission and review

Please note that JVB follows double blind peer review. Please ensure that all article files are anonymized.

Before sending for in-depth peer review, the editorial team will assess manuscripts for adherence to basic requirements. These Stage 1 submissions should include the manuscript (details below) and a brief cover letter.

The cover letter should include:

- A statement identifying any conflicts of interests.
- A statement identifying whether data used have been used in any other research study, and if so, how.

Manuscript preparation guidelines – Stage 1

Initial Stage 1 submissions should include the following sections:

- Introduction
 - A review of the relevant literature that motivates the research question and a full description of the research aims and hypotheses if applicable. The work proposed can be inductive or deductive in nature. A strong theoretical (especially for inductive work) and/or conceptual rationale (especially for deductive work) is provided.
- Methods
 - Full description of proposed sample characteristics, including criteria for participant inclusion and exclusion, and description of procedures/practices for defining outliers or excluding data, and complete description and reliability and validity information on measures.
 - A detailed description of research procedures. These procedures must be consistently reported in the Stage 2 manuscript or the paper will be summarily rejected (unless approved in advance).
 - Proposed analysis pipeline, including a precise description of all planned analyses. Any covariates or regressors must be stated including a rationale for their inclusion. Often, proposed analyses involving covariates should be reported with and without the covariate(s) included. Where analysis decisions are contingent on the outcome of prior analyses, these contingencies should be specified. Only pre-planned analyses can be reported in the main Results section of Stage 2 submissions. However, unplanned *post hoc* analyses will be admissible in a separate section of the Results.
 - Studies involving null hypothesis significance testing must include a priori statistical power analysis. Estimated effect sizes for power analysis should be justified with reference to the existing literature. For studies involving Bayesian hypothesis testing, the predictions of the theory must be specified so that a Bayes factor can be calculated. Authors should indicate what distribution will be used to represent the predictions of the theory and how its parameters will be specified.
 - Discussion of the sample and sampling methods to assure that the research questions can be answered in a fair and appropriate manner (e.g., no floor or ceiling effects).

Although stage one submissions resemble thesis and dissertation proposals in form, papers submitted to JVB need to have the tightness and coherence of well-constructed journal manuscripts.

In considering stage 1 papers, reviewers will be asked to assess:

- The significance/importance of the research and research question(s).

- The logic, rationale, and plausibility of the proposed hypotheses and/or research questions.
- The soundness and feasibility of the methodology and analysis pipeline (including statistical power analysis where applicable).
- Measurement/psychometric information where applicable.
- Whether the authors have used measures and procedures that are of sufficient methodological rigor for ensuring that the results obtained are able to test the stated hypotheses.
- Whether the sample used provides a good test of the stated hypotheses (e.g., no major floor or ceiling effects, no systematic bias or distortion).

Following Stage 1 peer review, manuscripts will be rejected, offered the opportunity to revise, or receive in-principle acceptances (IPA) indicating that the article will be published pending accurate and complete analyses, as well as a defensible and evidence-bound interpretation of the results. Note, IPA decisions are time-bound. Time-limits will be noted if an IPA is granted (e.g., typically 3 months). Time extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that any deviation from the stated research procedures or inconsistencies between methods from Stage 1 to Stage 2, regardless of how minor it may seem to the authors, could lead to rejection of the manuscript. Note that analyses included in the Stage 1 submission must be undertaken, but additional analyses can also be included in a final manuscript.

Stage 2: Full manuscript review

IMPORTANT NOTE: Stage 2 manuscripts should be submitted as a new submission, please choose the Results-Masked-Review Article Stage 2 article type.

Authors prepare and submit their manuscript for full review. The cover letter should acknowledge any deviations or new analyses from Stage 1. This is a full and traditional manuscript, with the following additions:

- Background and Rationale
 - Please note that **the Introduction should not be altered from the approved Stage 1 submission, and the stated hypotheses should not be amended or appended.** Depending on the timeframe, new relevant literature may have appeared between Stage 1 and Stage 2. Any such literature should be covered in the Discussion.
- Results & Discussion
 - The outcome of all analyses included in stage 1 must be reported in the manuscript, except in rare instances where the approved analysis is subsequently shown to be logically flawed or unfounded. In such cases, the authors, reviewers, and editor must agree that a collective error of judgment was made and that the analysis is inappropriate. In such cases the analysis would still be mentioned in the Methods but omitted with justification from the Results.
 - It is reasonable that authors may wish to include additional analyses that were not included in the Stage 1 submission. For instance, a new analytic approach might become available between IPA and full review, or a particularly interesting and unexpected finding may emerge. Such analyses are admissible but must be reported in a separate section of the Results titled “*Exploratory analyses*” for deductive research or “*additional analyses*” for inductive work. Where the interpretation depends on inferential statistical analysis, authors should be careful not to base their conclusions entirely on the outcome of statistically significant exploratory tests.
 - Exact p values and effect sizes must be reported for all null hypothesis significance tests.
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- Any other pertinent information. It is better to provide too much information than too little information.

The resubmission will ideally be considered by the same reviewers as in Stage 1. In considering papers at Stage 2, reviewers will be asked to consider:

- Whether the Introduction and methods are the same as the approved Stage 1 submission (analysis plan is omitted).
- Whether results are reported clearly, appropriately and consistently with what was included in Stage 1.
- Whether any new exploratory or additional statistical analyses are justified, methodologically sound, and informative.
- Whether the authors' conclusions are justified given the data (e.g., absent meaningful floor and/or ceiling effects).
- Whether the discussion section effectively contextualizes the results theoretically, conceptually and practically.

Crucially, reviewers will be informed that editorial decisions will not be based on the support or lack of support of the hypotheses.

The author may be asked to revise and resubmit a stage 2 article based on reviewer/editor feedback.

Please view our full [Guide for Authors](#) before submitting.

Guidelines for reviewers

The Results-Masked-Review (RMR) model aims for work to be judged on the merits of the research question and methodology, not the findings. Editorial decisions will not be based on the support or lack of support of the hypotheses.

The peer review process for the Results-Masked Reviewed Articles happens in two stages:

Stage 1:

Stage 1 submissions include an Introduction, Method, Measurement information, and a Proposed analysis plan.

In assessing these Stage 1 manuscripts, we ask reviewers to assess:

- The significance/importance of the research and research question(s).
- The logic, rationale, and plausibility of the proposed hypotheses and/or research questions.
- The soundness and feasibility of the methodology and analysis pipeline (including statistical power analysis where applicable).
- Measurement/psychometric information where applicable (e.g., CFA, aggregation indices).
- Whether the authors have used measures and procedures that are of sufficient methodological rigor for ensuring that the results obtained are able to test the stated hypotheses.
- Whether the sample used provides a good test of the stated hypotheses (e.g., no major floor or ceiling effects, no systematic bias or distortion).

The decision options at the end of the review are nearly identical as what you find for a typical review. Reviewers can recommend rejection, revision or an in-principle acceptance (IPA).

Submissions that pass Stage 1 review are issued an in-principle acceptance (IPA), which guarantees publication of the completed work if the authors adhere exactly to the approved procedures and provide a defensible interpretation of the results. Thus, completed manuscripts are again peer reviewed at Stage 2 ideally by the same reviewers.

Stage 2:

Stage 2 submissions include the full manuscript, the same as a usual journal article. Editorial decisions will not be based on the support or lack of support of the hypotheses.

For Stage 2 manuscripts, we ask reviewers to assess:

- Whether the Introduction and methods are the same as the approved Stage 1 submission (analysis plan is omitted).
- Whether results are reported clearly, appropriately and consistently with what was included in Stage 1.
- Whether any new exploratory statistical analyses are justified, methodologically sound, and informative.
- Whether the authors' conclusions are justified given the data (e.g., absent meaningful floor and/or ceiling effects).
- Whether the discussion section effectively contextualizes the results theoretically, conceptually and practically.
- The quality and appropriateness of the discussion section. Are the conclusions reasonable given the observed results? Are all inferences drawn from the data appropriate? Do the conclusions go beyond the results? A good deal of attention should be focused here.

Please note, that if relevant, authors are free to include additional post hoc data analyses that were not described in Stage 1, however these are reported in a separate sub-section of the Results and should be appropriately caveated. In addition, authors must report the outcome of all analyses included in Stage 1.

General reviewer guidelines can be found at <http://www.elsevier.com/reviewers/reviewerguidelines>.