University of Groningen

From the Editors: Insights on how we try to show empathy, respect, and inclusion in AMJ

Umphress, Elizabeth. E. ; Rink, Floor; Muir (Zapata), Cindy P. ; Hideg, Ivona

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FROM THE EDITORS

INSIGHTS ON HOW WE TRY TO SHOW EMPATHY, RESPECT, AND INCLUSION IN AMJ

Empathy, respect, and inclusion are important to consider within all workplaces at all times. For this reason, it has long been one of the core values of the Academy of Management to "provide a dynamic and supportive community for all of our members, embracing the full diversity of our backgrounds and experiences" (Academy of Management, n.d.-a: Values section). However, the scale of recent worldwide health, social, economic, and political events cannot be denied. Although these events will not be the first nor the last crises we will face, it has become clear that current conditions disproportionately impact members of disadvantaged groups (e.g., race and ethnicity, gender, nationality, socioeconomic status, disability status, caregiver status, national membership; Jenkins et al., 2021; McNeely, Schintler, & Stabile, 2020; Millett et al., 2020), and have served to exacerbate disparities in their treatment that were already present before these crises began. With this editorial essay, we therefore would like to draw attention to the different ways in which AMJ considers empathy, respect, and inclusion, in order to assist in maintaining the open academic community we built together and aspire to develop further.

Below, we first outline how empathy and respect may contribute to inclusion, and then highlight considerations of empathy, respect, and inclusion in the various roles that one might occupy at AMJ—as a reviewer, associate editor, and author. Before we do so, however, we would like to provide three caveats. First, we acknowledge that there is no "one size fits all" approach to considering empathy, respect, and inclusion for members of our community, as scholars can experience vastly different academic challenges, depending, for example, on their nationality, career stage, and on the type of institution at which they are positioned. Second, we also do not want to imply

that we are, independently or collectively, the best examples of what it means to treat others with empathy, respect, and inclusion within our community. Rather, our intention is merely to share some observations and experiences as we continue our journeys that may inform current discussions about inclusiveness within our community (see also Avery et al., 2022; Brown & Ramlackhan, 2021; Hideg, DeCelles, & Tihanyi, 2020; Johnston, 2019; Montgomery, 2021; Ward, 2021). Third, even though large-scale changes are likely necessary, we suggest that collectively engaging in relatively small acts of empathy and respect may also allow us to enhance inclusion of ideas and scholars.

HOW EMPATHY AND RESPECT CONTRIBUTE TO INCLUSION

Feeling included within a community is about satisfying one's needs of both belongingness *and* uniqueness (Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, & Ehrhart, 2011). Striking the right balance between these two core needs is not easy (Brewer, 1991), but studies suggest that treating colleagues with empathy and respect, whether during informal daily small-talk interactions or through more formal work-related exchanges, can help to establish an inclusive work environment (Nishii, 2012). Empathy can be defined as "other-oriented feelings congruent with the perceived welfare of another individual … not only of perceiving the other as in need but also of adopting the perspective of the other" (Batson, Batson, Todd, Brummett, Shaw, & Aldeguer, 1995: 621). Showing respect is, broadly speaking, about having regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others (e.g., Rogers, Corley, & Ashforth, 2017). The two concepts are often related, such that showing empathy generally makes the other feel highly regarded (e.g., Cornelis, Van Hiel, De Cremer, & Mayer, 2013; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). But the two concepts do not always align, as empathy refers to one's capacity to *understand* why another person holds a certain point of view or works with a particular skill set, whereas respect captures one's ability to *acknowledge* the person's perspective and unique qualities. Arguably,

then, showing both empathy and respect to colleagues represents the balanced treatment needed for people to feel included within a community. Empathy can help to build trust and social connections, which satisfies people's need to belong; respect can affirm that each person has unique strengths and talents, which fulfills people's need to be distinctive (Rogers et al., 2017).

For AMJ, empathy, respect and inclusion are so important because research shows that those who feel socially supported and respected at work tend to reciprocate this feeling by treating others with more empathy (Dutton, Workman, & Hardin, 2014; Lilius, Worline, Dutton, Kanov, & Maitlis, 2011) as well as offering increased help to others (Dutton, Lilius, & Kanov, 2007; Dutton et al., 2014). People value this kind of support just as much as informational forms of support, clarifying why decisions are made or policies are implemented (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2013). Moreover, being treated with dignity has been found to increase people's willingness to recognize successes of other colleagues (e.g., Blader & Yu, 2017), and their openness to the unique expertise of others (e.g., Ely & Thomas, 2020; Nishii, 2013). Together, these positive work outcomes can create a positive and open academic community—not just in a crisis, but in our everyday work (Brown & Ramlackhan, 2021; see also Kroth & Keeler, 2009; McAllister & Bigley, 2002). Below, we discuss examples of how we might all consider empathy, respect, and inclusion in our roles as reviewers, associate editors, and authors.

CONSIDERATIONS OF EMPATHY, RESPECT, AND INCLUSION FOR REVIEWERS

The general recommendations for reviewing for AMJ state that "reviewers should be like 'lifeguards'—trying to save the current manuscript, or at least the next project in the stream of research" (Academy of Management, n.d.-b). An effective and developmental review provides constructive content-based feedback (for other reviews, see Hempel, 2014; Ragins, 2015) and does so in a way that is empathetic, respectful, and inclusive. The 2020 AMJ Best Reviewer Award winners seem to agree. In preparing for an AMJ Paper Development session, the award winners provided participants with their top three tips, and the vast majority of them noted the importance of demonstrating compassion, care, and consideration for authors. For example, one award-winning reviewer, Ned Wellman, wrote:

> Treat others the way you would like to be treated. We all know how annoying it is to have a reviewer who is overly negative and unreasonable, and how great it is to have a reviewer who is supportive and developmental. Try to be the second type of reviewer for others.

Another, Marie Mitchell, stated:

> Positivity promotes positivity: provide comments in a constructive fashion, highlighting reasonable ways for authors to strengthen their work and avoiding being negative toward the author team. Like your own research, crafting a paper is a reflection of the author team's identity and hard work. Try to protect their sense of self-esteem by providing negative feedback in a candid yet professional manner.

In this section, we highlight a few considerations for writing views with empathy, respect, and inclusion that are related to (a) preventing sample preferences; (b) overcoming language barriers; differences in (c) research norms, (d) monetary, and (e) temporal resources; and (f) being open to ideas from the review team (see also Avery et al., 2022).

Preventing Sample Preference

AMJ encourages and strives to develop submissions from authors worldwide. To be successful in this global endeavor of inclusion, we encourage reviewers to be open to research being conducted in any cultural context, and to not reflexively dismiss or devalue research conducted outside of their own cultural context. One particular problematic cultural barrier we want to highlight is a seemingly strong reliance on United States- or Western-based samples in management research, even though there is not always a strong theoretical concern underlying this preference (Avery et al., 2022). There have been instances in which papers with data from other countries have received the question of whether it would be possible to replicate the findings in the United States. We are, however, aware that asking for replications in the U.S. context can further contribute to an (implicit) notion that experiences of people from the United States are especially reflective of humankind (Cheon, Melani, & Hong, 2020). Moreover, we recognize that, even in other English-speaking countries such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, a studied phenomenon can be different than in the United States due to different laws or business policies. This suggests that generalizability of findings to what/where/who is an issue that could be applied to research conducted within any country or setting. Finally, any positive cultural sample bias can undermine inclusivity because such data would be unequally distributed

within our community such that authors located in the United States are more likely to gain access to such samples. Importantly, AMJ is dedicated to advancing our global knowledge of management science and aspires to value any robust finding that enriches our prior theoretical thinking about a management issue, regardless of the cultural sample in which it is observed.

Overcoming Language Barriers

Another way for reviewers to consider empathy, respect, and inclusion is in their openness to AMJ's large number of submitting authors who are non-native English speakers. AMJ publishes research written in English. As English has the largest base of non-native speakers, compared to all other languages (Lane, 2021), this potentially helps to enable worldwide inclusion and participation in the journal. However, there are at least two issues that can create language barriers during the submission process. First, authors who do not speak English as a first language may lack the intuitive logic behind English writing and include some grammatical mistakes in their papers when compared to papers from those who have English as their first language. Thankfully, reviewers tend to focus primarily on the theory and empirics provided in the manuscript, and this is what we would encourage. Only on rare occasions do we receive excessive comments within our reviews about grammar mistakes that can undermine authors' morale and feelings of inclusion. Small writing imperfections (assuming the paper is still clear overall) can be remedied during the review process and the final copy-editing stage.

Second, we are mindful that our reliance on the English language may also unintentionally cause native speaking authors, who can write more automatically, to implicitly signal the reliance on Western norms in their research. For example, they may refer to specific ethnic or racial groups as being of higher status or the "majority" group, while such language labels are strongly culturally determined and might thus not reflect different cultural backgrounds in other countries. Such unintentional signals—that norms or standards in a handful of countries apply in every country—might suggest that norms in other countries are unseen or less important. Instead, authors can consider framing the specific cultural context of their research in their writing and acknowledge this context—even when the data are collected in Western countries—when referring to particular norms within a setting.

Differences in Research Norms

Due to differences in norms, experience, and training, some authors might provide more transparency regarding hypothesis development, methods, and results than others. Norms regarding transparency are appropriately changing within our field, and such discussions are included within other work (e.g., DeCelles, Howard-Grenville, & Tihanyi, 2021). As these norms continue to develop, we acknowledge that there might be different standards related to transparency across and within disciplines, and that reviewers and authors might therefore have diverging expectations. Although it is essential that reviewers continue to ask for clarifications regarding the methods and results of manuscripts, we also encourage reviewers to do so in a respectful manner that assumes positive intent of the author. As stated by Indra Nooyi (2008: para. 1), the former chairperson and chief executive officer of PepsiCo:

> Whatever anybody says or does, assume positive intent. You will be amazed at how your whole approach to a person or problem becomes very different. … You are trying to understand and listen because at your basic core you are saying, "Maybe they are saying something to me that I'm not hearing."

By requesting the additional transparency information, a reviewer is helping the review team gain greater insights from the author, deeper understanding of the underlying phenomenon being studied, and knowledge about transparency in the review process. By requesting this information in a respectful manner, a reviewer is demonstrating that they are interested in developing the paper and helping to retain the dignity of the authors.

Coping with Differences in Monetary Resources

We are mindful of the broad range of academic systems authors may operate in, recognizing that the resources needed to conduct research within these systems vary both within and between countries. More resources tend to be concentrated within wealthier countries and schools—and, within those countries and schools, those resources might be more likely to be allocated to groups of senior scholars who are already highly skilled in conducting research. Regarding monetary resources, some scholars note that it is becoming increasingly more expensive to conduct research, especially when multiple studies are required. In fact, an author team recently spent over $52,000 (U.S. dollars) to collect data for multiple studies in a single publication. Because

authors have varying levels of funding available for research, those who are within countries and schools with less monetary resources may be at a disadvantage in the publication process. These disadvantages might manifest via having decreased access to samples and less ability to conduct multiple studies. Potential solutions to these resources challenges could include grants and other types of funding offered by professional associations, journals, and industries to those with resources constraints, as well as initiatives that support larger-scale collaborations among researchers in which they can join forces. In addition, although research quality is our top priority, as associate editors, together with the review team, we try to offer authors flexibility regarding how research is conducted, where possible. For example, when there are multiple ways to study a research question, the review team will be open to less expensive options. We thus encourage our broader academic community to consider that differential resources can create publication tensions and attempt to help create a more inclusive community by being cognizant of this issue and developing ways to create equitable access.

Coping with Differences in Temporal Resources

In addition to differences in monetary resources, we recognize that there are also differences in temporal resources among the members within our community. Our unique professional and personal situations make it such that some of us also tend to have a disproportionately greater amount of work on our plates than others. For this reason, for example, AMJ deliberately gives reviewers one month to provide feedback on manuscripts, because it serves both reviewers and authors. The timeline is intended to recognize that reviewers have other job and personal duties as well as review for multiple journals. We also note that it is helpful to take a bit of time to complete a review, as it allows full consideration of the ideas/methodology in the manuscript, and how to improve it. Indeed, in a previous From the Editors editorial, Harrison (2002: 1083) noted that "published papers would be better if reviewers took more time." Further, a decision can be made on a manuscript only when all the reviews are returned. So, there is no expectation at AMJ for a reviewer to return their review before the due date and we encourage no special consideration to be given to those reviewers who return their review beforehand. To grant special weight to reviewers who submit before the deadline could potentially disadvantage

those scholars who have resource constraints (e.g., caregivers, scholars with less support).

At the same time, it is pivotal for authors to have reviews returned by the month deadline. We promise timely feedback so that authors do not encounter significant delays outside their control when attempting to publish their work. Such delays are harmful for their career progression and can limit the news value of their research. We very much realize that reviewing represents an academic service that requires significant effort, so we are grateful to all who serve as reviewers for AMJ. Most reviewers indeed meet the one-month deadline, and we greatly appreciate these efforts.

Being Open to Ideas from Others on the Review Team

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that, for each paper at AMJ, there are three reviewers and an associate editor who are providing guidance on the manuscript. This means that a single reviewer can never solely determine the course of a submission process. There is always the possibility that other individuals might have alternative ideas for how to move the manuscript forward. Indeed, there might be more than one way to move forward with the manuscript. We are fortunate with an excellent review board that indeed primarily focuses on the ideas presented in the paper with regard to potential theoretical contribution and impact for society, and that is well aware that reviewing is a team effort.

We encourage reviewers for AMJ to consider that a submission likely reflects both on the capabilities of the author team as well as their specific academic situations—the scientific and cultural contexts, each with their unique resources and constraints, in which they are being trained or work in. For this and other reasons, consider writing empathic, respectful reviews that have a developmental tone. In the next section, we provide some examples of how we, as associate editors of AMJ's editorial team, are seeking to show empathy and respect to reviewers and authors.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS AND CONSIDERING EMPATHY, RESPECT, AND INCLUSION

As editors, reviewers, and authors (and, more broadly, scholars), we believe that demonstrating respect and empathy is a best practice as we strive for publishing high-quality papers. In this way, being inclusive goes hand in hand with the high bar we set for scientific excellence. The first action we take to

strive for this excellence when a paper is submitted to AMJ is to assemble a review team well equipped to judge the quality of the work. We want to highlight, however, that, in addition to guaranteeing content expertise, we strive to select members from the review board who differ in cultural backgrounds and hierarchical levels. Moreover, it is customary practice to invite at least one reviewer from outside the review board on a team. In this way, we hope to gain insights from multiple scholars and prevent that only a select group of scholars becomes familiar with our publication process. One intent of having ad hoc reviewers is to encourage broad representation in AMJ's publication process, and to help decide the type of research questions the field should try to answer.

Scholarly work suggests that individual performance depends on how well or thoroughly outcomes are explained (informational support) and how honest and respectful explanations are delivered (social/interactional support; see Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013). This work suggests that the outcome of whether or not a paper is accepted for publication at AMJ (or assigned a revise-and-resubmit/"R&R" request) and how authors respond to this outcome is influenced by how this outcome is communicated. Presumably, the better we are at communicating these decisions with empathy and respect, the more likely it will be that the author can incorporate and build on the comments from the reviewers on how to improve their ideas for submission to another journal outlet.

How to Interpret an Associate Editor's Decision on a Manuscript

With regard to receiving an editorial decision on a manuscript, many of us strive to ensure that the editorial letter and any accompanying concerns are clearly explained to the author, and that the author understands why a certain editorial decision was made. Meeting this criterion in a way that is perceived by the authors as empathetic and respectful can be challenging. Being authors ourselves, we know that decision letters can often feel like broader criticisms on our scholarship. However, it is important to keep in mind that, at AMJ, we strive to minimize the revision rounds needed to reach a final decision (conditional accept or reject). We want to emphasize that a specific decision from AMJ is only meant to denote a decision for the specific journal in question, and not other journals. As Hollenbeck and Mannor (2007) noted, it takes an average of three different journal submissions before a paper finds its academic home. For this reason, we strive to write decision letters that contain valuable and respectful feedback. In this way, authors receive help to make substantive changes that serve to improve the manuscript, even if not for publication in AMJ.

How to Interpret a Paper Revision

Receiving a revision is without a doubt a more desirable outcome, but, "because reviewers focus primarily on the problems in a manuscript … the R&R often feels more like a rebuke rather than a reward" (Seibert, 2006: 203). Because, at least to some extent, our encouragement is signaled implicitly by virtue of receiving a revision request, the high-risk language used by most associate editors may inadvertently contribute to authors' mixed feelings. In addition, we would be remiss if we did not point out that how a decision letter is framed may also be interpreted differently by authors because of factors such as their academic or demographic background, or prior success with revisions, among others. It is therefore good to explain what we mean by a "high risk" revision. According to *Merriam-Webster*, "risk" (n.d.) is defined as the "possibility of loss or injury." When we label a revision in terms of risk, we are attempting to describe the likelihood that the time invested in revising the manuscript would be "lost" if the manuscript were ultimately rejected. As all authors know, responding to an R&R is a substantial amount of work that not only entails revising their manuscript, but also drafting a response letter that is its own form of scholarship. Although the majority of revisions carry some level of risk, editors face a tension between making that uncertainty and risk clear, such that authors do not feel they were promised an eventual acceptance, and simultaneously expressing encouragement.

As editors of AMJ, it is, without a doubt, our core duty to help develop and ultimately select only those papers that fulfill the journal's mission of publishing high-quality research. Because AMJ has, much like other rigorous academic journals, a rejection rate that is substantially higher than its acceptance rate, we are charged with improving manuscripts much more than we are tasked with praising them. Yet, in our quest to advance scholarship, it is important to try to not lose sight of the real human beings whose work we are assessing. Our primary way of doing this is selecting the best reviewers to evaluate manuscripts, by being transparent about the likelihood of getting the paper published in AMJ, by thoroughly

explaining our decisions, by clarifying how to interpret our decisions, and by attempting to be empathic and respectful while communicating our views to authors in our decision letters—as well as to the larger community in publishing workshops and editorial essays. Again, we are by no means suggesting that these are the only ways in which empathy and respect can be shown to our authors, nor that they represent the most effective ways to do so. We are simply sharing some of our practices at AMJ in an attempt to be transparent, and with the hope to move the conversation about inclusion further within our profession.

Finally, we would like to mention a few ways in which authors tend to show empathy and respect to the reviewers and editors who are involved in the submission process of their paper.

ROLE OF AUTHORS IN DEMONSTRATING EMPATHY, RESPECT, AND INCLUSION

When conducting research, writing manuscripts, and responding to revisions, authors can also consider empathy and respect, helping to create a more inclusive environment within the field of management. Most important, we expect authors to respect the human rights of participants by engaging in regulatory processes like the institutional review board within the authors' country and the specific country in which the research will be conducted. Such processes help protect participants, and also ensure the integrity of the research being conducted. Moreover, when writing the manuscript, we suggest that authors refer to other scholars' work in a respectful manner. It is possible to highlight a manuscript's contribution without disparaging or degrading the previous work done by other scholars. We encourage authors to respectfully refer to previous work and remark on how the current work builds on or addresses important questions that have not yet been addressed—being clear why the current work changes, challenges, or fundamentally advances our knowledge related to the topic.

We realize that the expectations for empathy, respect, and inclusion is not symmetrical for all parties within a review process, given that there are inherent power differentials between the associate editors and reviewers, on the one hand, and the authors on the other (i.e., they are ultimately being evaluated by the review team). However, there is an expectation for authors to be empathetic, respectful, and inclusive as well, because revisions are ultimately scholarly conversations between all three parties involved. As we know, the review team spends many hours providing feedback on a voluntary basis as a service to our field. And, in our experience, reviewers by and large are genuinely interested in helping authors. Yet, it can be easy to forget that reviewers (and associate editors) are also human and can (and do) make mistakes. Sometimes, suggestions may not make sense to the authors (and may be plainly wrong). We again want to emphasize that we, as associate editors, and our reviewers, come from diverse backgrounds and can bring a variety of perspectives and insights to a paper that authors may have never considered. Leveraging these additional insights and perspectives may also contribute to a more inclusive and global science, and thus demonstrating curiosity to what might seem like an odd (or incorrect) comment serves to acknowledge the hard work of the review team and keep them interested in helping authors further improve their scholarship. Just as authors deserve to be treated with respect by those evaluating their scholarship, authors should do the same and grant reviewers the benefit of the doubt that the reviewer/associate editor made a suggestion with the intent to improve the manuscript.

CONCLUSION

The worldwide events of the past several years have had a direct impact on the academic lives of most of us and underlined the diversity present within our global scientific community. They have made clear that differences in research requirements, languages, and cultural behavioral norms impose unique challenges on some of us that can make it more difficult to submit a paper to AMJ, even those with promising research ideas. To all authors motivated to publish in our journal, we want to emphasize that you are invited to do so. Without trying, we do not get a chance to evaluate the suitability of your work and cannot provide guidance on how to streamline it. We are committed to give constructive feedback, even when we feel a paper is not suitable for publication in AMJ. In this way, we hope the submission process remains a positive learning experience.

Ultimately, we hope to prompt discussion on demonstrating empathy, respect, and inclusion toward fellow scholars because doing so has a positive impact on the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of those others and enhances a sense of inclusion within our community—even during these challenging times, and in spite of the tensions that come along with them. This message may seem needless to say, given that most, if not all, AMJ readers consider it only natural to treat others this way. Still, most

(if not all) of us have likely observed instances within the scientific community of disparities among its members. And research repeatedly shows that these instances are, unfortunately, not idiosyncratic—they are reflective of systematic biases in the academic system. Hence, we should not take respect, empathy, and inclusion for granted.

We hope that these ideas and the important discussions that have come before (e.g., Avery et al., 2022; Brown & Ramlackhan, 2021; Hideg et al., 2020; Johnston, 2019; Montgomery, 2021; Ward, 2021) and those that will come after have the potential to expand access to authors and reviewers of AMJ, and, in doing so, to address these research questions that are, to date, less examined in our literature.

Elizabeth E. Umphress
University of Washington

Floor Rink
University of Groningen

Cindy P. Muir (Zapata)
University of Notre Dame

Ivona Hideg
York University

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