

Journal of
Cognitive Neuroscience

One-year update from the Editor-in-Chief

Journal:	<i>Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience</i>
Manuscript ID	JOCN-2021-0273
Manuscript Type:	Editorial
Date Submitted by the Author:	29-Oct-2021
Complete List of Authors:	Postle, Brad; Montreal Neurological Institute, Fulvio, Jacqueline; University of Wisconsin-Madison, Psychology
Keywords:	Gender, Citation, Bias

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Manuscripts

Commentary

One-year update from the Editor-in-Chief

Volume 33 Issue 1 of *JoCN* opened with a “Statement from the Incoming Editor-in-Chief” (Postle, 2021) that introduced some of the new policies and practices being ushered in by the new regime. These involved peer review, editorial rejection, gender bias in citation practices, and preregistration. Twelve months later, how are these working out for us?

PEER REVIEW and EDITORIAL REJECTION

These modifications to our practices have worked well. Indeed, 2020 and 2021 have seen an uptick in the number of editorial rejections that we have issued, relative to “the Beforetimes,” perhaps in part because 18 months of global pandemic-related lock-down led stuck-at-home scientists to write-up and submit manuscripts that, for whatever reason, hadn’t until then been of high priority? Whatever the reasons, we are grateful to our newly assembled team of Consulting Editors for helping us work through this uptick in difficult decisions. Importantly, the fact that on many occasions a Consulting Editor has overruled an initial decision to editorially reject a manuscript means that the decision-making process for editorial rejection has become fairer.

GENDER BIAS IN CITATION PRACTICES

O.k, now for the real reason for writing this one-year update: One year into the introduction of the Gender Citation Balance tool we have preliminary data to share! Volume 33 Issue 1 of *JoCN* also included the assessment, by Fulvio et al. {, 2021 #6378}, of gender (im)balances in citation practices in *JoCN* from 2009-July 2020. Is there any evidence that the introduction of the Gender Citation Balance Index tool (“GCBI-alizer;” <https://postlab.psych.wisc.edu/gcbialyzer/>), and the inclusion of a Diversity in Citation Practices statement in which authors are encouraged to report their paper’s gender citation balances, may have started to chip away at the longstanding bias favoring man-authored papers? To assess this, we (more specifically J.M.F.) have carried out two sets of analyses: First, how do the gender citation balance indices (GCBIs) for all papers published in Vol. 33 compare to those from Vols. 21-32 (as reported in Fulvio et al., 2021)? Second, for authors publishing in Vol. 33 who chose to estimate and report their paper’s GCBIs, did the “intervention” of encouraging authors to think about their paper’s gender citation balance, and inviting reviewers to make suggestions, influence the published paper’s GCBIs (relative to the GCBIs of the initial submission)?

First, we can undertake the purely descriptive exercise of documenting what happened during the past year. 135 papers were published in Vol. 33 of *JoCN* and, as illustrated in Figure 1, the gender breakdown of authorship teams – into M(an)-first/M-last (MM), W(oman)-first/M-last (WM), MW, and WW -- was similar to what it has been for the past ten years. Figures 2 and 3 re-present the GCBIs from Vols. 21-32 (c.f., Figs. 2 & 3 from Fulvio et al., 2021) and superimpose the GCBIs for the papers published in Vol. 33. It illustrates that, for all four categories, GCBIs have moved closer to a value of 0, which indicates a reduction of gender citation imbalances. To be clear, we cannot infer causation from these outcomes, only observe the data.

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4 Reporting of gender citation balances is voluntary, and in Vol. 33, 30 author groups chose to
5 participate. Despite the small n, we can draw stronger inference about the influence of the
6 GCBI-alizer by comparing, for these papers, the GCBI of the initially submitted manuscript
7 against the GCBI of the final published paper. Because a few of these papers were initially
8 submitted before the GCBI-alizer had become available, this analysis could only be carried out
9 on 24 papers. As illustrated in Figure 4, peer review and revision had almost no effect on the
10 GCBI of MM and WM papers, but appreciably reduced (i.e., made less-negative) the GCBI for
11 MW and (to a lesser extent) WW papers.
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15 Thus, we are cautiously optimistic that the introduction of the Diversity in Citation Practices
16 statement and the associated GCBI-alizer have been effective at combating, however modestly,
17 this one systemic inequity in how we communicate our science.
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20 PREREGISTRATION

21 This is a publication practice that, despite its merits (as extolled, e.g., by Postle (2021)), hasn't
22 yet caught fire at *JoCN*: during the past there was a total of two manuscripts submitted for
23 review as Stage 1 Preregistered Research Articles, and as of the time of this writing *JoCN* has
24 one Stage 1-accepted manuscript.
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27 WHAT'S NEW? NONHUMAN PRIMATE NEUROPHYSIOLOGY

28 Not yet conceived in January 2021, we have more recently added the policy that *the factor of number of*
29 *animals included in the experiment does not carry special status relative to other aspects of the*
30 *experimental procedure that are also evaluated when a manuscript is being considered for*
31 *publication*. Pragmatically, this means that it is explicit policy that *JoCN* will consider n-of-1 case studies
32 for this type of experiment.
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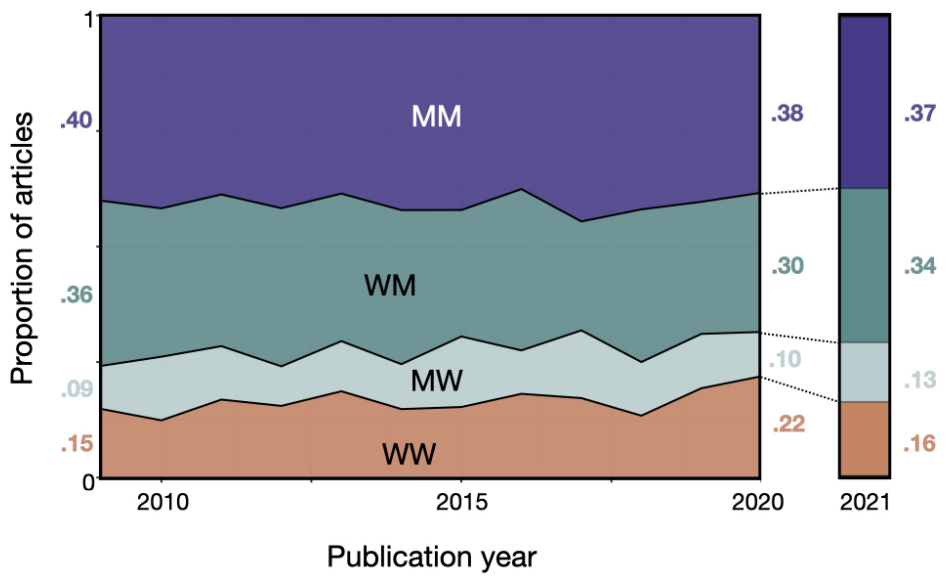
35 WRAP UP

36 As always, we welcome input from the community about how we might consider improving editorial
37 practices at *JoCN*.
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40 References

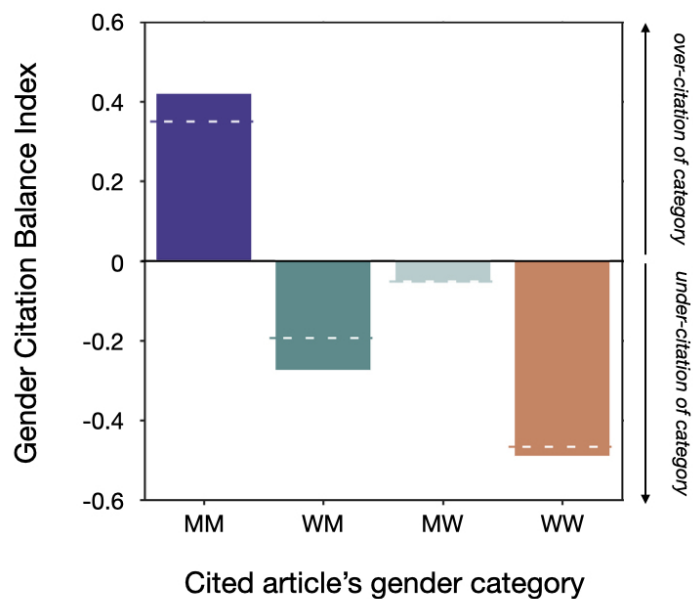
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Gender-category breakdowns of authorship teams publishing in JoCN for 2009-2020 (for which GCBI were reported in Fulvio et al. (2021), and for 2021 (corresponding to Vol. 33).

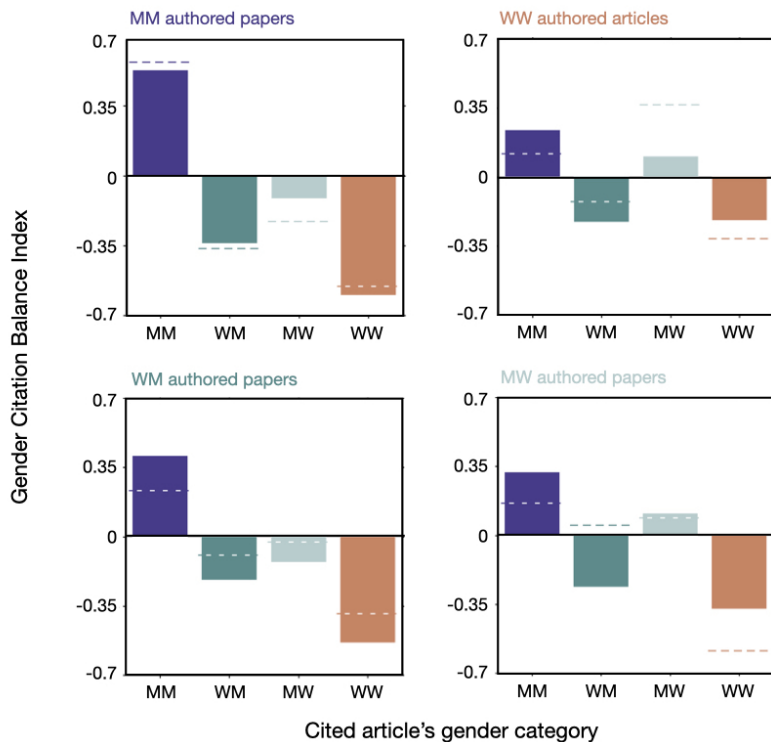
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GCBIs for all papers published in JoCN from 2009-2020 (solid bars, reproduced from Fulvio et al. (2021)) and for all papers published in Vol. 33 of JoCN (i.e., with a publication date of 2021; dashed lines). GCBIs for Vol. 33 were less imbalanced for all categories except MW, for which it was unchanged from the previous decade.

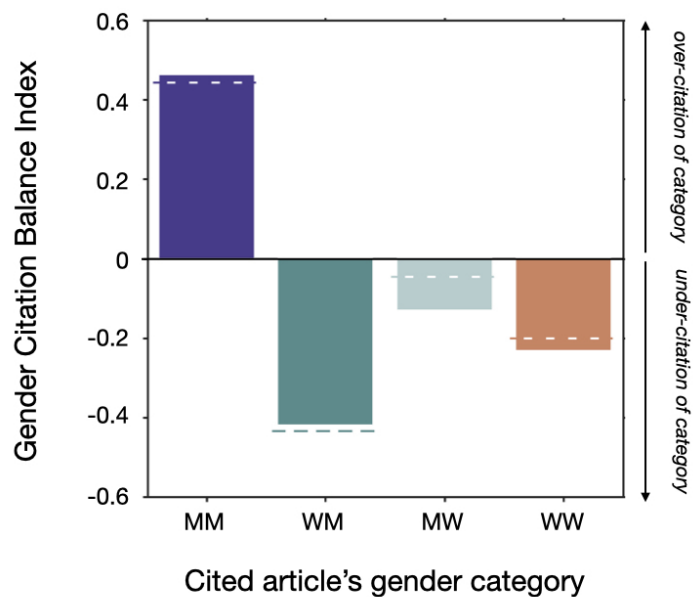
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Same data from Figure 2, but broken out by authorship teams (i.e., these are the GCBIs for papers published by MM author groups, by WW author groups, by WM author groups, and by MW author groups). Graphical conventions same as Figure 2.

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GCBIs for the 24 papers published in Vol. 33 of JoCN for which the authors chose to estimate and report these data for their initial submission (solid bars) and for the subsequently published paper (dashed lines). This shows that peer review and revision had almost no effect on the GCBIs of MM and WM papers, but that it improved the GCBIs of MW and, to a lesser extent, WW papers.

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