How Journal Editors View Replication Research

Charles S. Madden, Richard W. Easley and Mark G. Dunn

The usefulness of replication research is a widely debated topic in the social sciences. Although most scholars recognize the need for a replication tradition in their respective disciplines, studies have documented a paucity of replication research in the advertising/consumer behavior/marketing literature. The authors investigate the prevalence of replication research by soliciting journal editors' perceptions of their disciplines' attitudes toward such work. Two studies were conducted questioning editors first in the natural and social sciences and, later, editors in advertising, communications, and marketing journals. Findings included that natural science editors have generally endorsed replication as a necessary part of research, while social science editors have been less than enthusiastic about its adoption. Marketing communications and advertising editors responded consistently with that of most other social science editors.

Dr. Charles S. Madden, (Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln) is the Ben H. Williams Professor of Marketing at Baylor University.

Richard W. Easley (Ph.D., University of South Carolina) is Assistant Professor of Marketing at Baylor University.

Mark G. Dunn (Ph.D., University of Mississippi) is Associate Professor of Marketing at Baylor University.

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Replication is an essential part of good science. Discussion of the role of replication has been ongoing in the advertising/consumer behavior/marketing literature since the Arndt article appeared in 1976 (Arndt 1976; Brown and Coney 1976; Brown and Gaulden 1982; Hubbard and Armstrong 1994; Leone and Schultz 1980; Madden, Franz, and Mittelstaedt 1979; Mahoney 1987; Mittelstaedt 1981; Monroe 1992a, 1992b; Neuliep and Crandall 1990; Reid, Soley, and Wimmers 1981, Zinkhan et al. 1990; Zinkhan, Jones, and Smith 1991). The articles generally begin with the observation that few replication studies are being reported in the advertising/consumer behavior/marketing literature and conclude by citing a need for more replication research. For example, the recent Hubbard and Armstrong article (1994) begins with a discussion of the benefits of replications and extensions, enumerates the frequency of recent replication research in the marketing literature, and concludes with several suggestions to increase the submission and publication of replications and extensions in marketing.

If replication is so firmly established as necessary for good science, why is there such a disparity between the actual state of replication in our related disciplines and the ideal state that so many researchers espouse (Reid, Soley, and Wimmers 1981)? Hubbard and Armstrong (1994) find some explanation in the rather complex structure of marketing and related disciplines, but the basic question has not been answered. Other questions also remain to be addressed. Are researchers in the advertising, communications, and marketing disciplines out of the scientific mainstream, as has been suggested by numerous authors, because we have never fully honored the tradition of replication? Do strongly held values, including a rich tradition of replication, guide other sciences in a more orderly pursuit of knowledge? Have the advertising, communications, and marketing disciplines found strategies to foster a rich replication tradition? What are reasonable expectations for replication? We conducted two survey studies to find answers to such questions.

Journal editors were chosen as respondents because of their potential ability to provide insightful commentary about replication research and its role in science. They are obviously exposed to more papers in their respective disciplines than most other scholars. Editors act as a "channel member"

(and, some would argue, gatekeeper) who assembles product assortments (academic papers) from various producers (researchers) and delivers them to appraisers (reviewers) who deem them acceptable or unacceptable for public consumption (publication). They are assumed to be leaders in their respective areas of research. Further, editors' viewpoints are assumed to reflect a mainstream *disciplinary bias* in their respective areas.

Study 1

Background

In contrast to the social sciences, the natural sciences have a rather well-developed historical pattern of replication (Hubbard and Armstrong 1994; Zinkhan, Jones, and Smith 1991). We therefore believed that social and natural scientists would have different perspectives and we categorized editors by discipline as representing social or natural science. Harré and Secord (1973, p. 29) differentiated the two streams of scientific inquiry on the basis of methodology and purpose. They pointed out (p. 29, 66) that social sciences and natural sciences differ in the types of observed phenomena explained (e.g., natural sciences explain nonrandom events; social sciences explain actions mediated by meanings), the extent of control (e.g., the complete elimination of extraneous factors in the natural sciences; in the social sciences limiting control, where possible, where it interacts with human behavior), and the effectiveness of experimentation (e.g., natural scientists can usually conduct experimentation to determine relationships among variables; social scientists often cannot rely on experimentation to create experimental realism). Simon (1978, p. 66) noted not only the relative complexity of establishing causality in the social sciences, but also the indeterminate nature of findings. For example, statistical probabilities tend to be associated with main effects in the social sciences, whereas replication either succeeds or fails in the natural sciences. Simon (1978, p. 71) also points out that social science problems usually involve more than one important variable. Social scientists must try to *disentangle* multiple variables to study their separate effects. The key distinction between social sciences and natural sciences, however, is that the former pertain to human behavior and the latter do not (see Gergen 1978). In each of the disciplines that we categorized as natural sciences, human behavior is not a focus of study and does not affect either research or data.

Procedure

We chose 205 journals for the sample frame. The journals were selected randomly from the social and natural science holdings of a major university library and were divided about equally between the social and natural sciences. Current editors of the journals were sent a two-page questionnaire. The editors were asked to respond to three statements by indicating agreement or disagreement on a 4- point scale. They were then asked to provide explanatory comments for their responses. One hundred and seven editors responded to the survey, a response rate of 52%.

After coding the editors into a social/natural science dichotomy, we analyzed their responses to each of the three questions by calculating a t-test to determine whether the responses differed significantly between the two groups. Next, the open-ended responses to the questions were pooled and categorized. Finally, we selected a series of comments that were representative of the sample responses.

Results

Study 1 investigated three questions relevant to the role of replication in the development of theory in the natural and social sciences:

1. Is adequate attention being given to replication?
2. Are research findings suspect prior to being cross validated?
3. How often are replications published in the journals?

Table 1 provides the results associated with the first question. Responses to the statement, "My discipline devotes adequate attention to the replication of published research," differed significantly between the two groups of editors ($t = 3.40$, $d.f. = 102$, $p \leq .01$). Natural science editors ($\bar{X} = 2.93$) agreed to a greater extent than social science editors ($\bar{X} = 2.47$) that their disciplines devote adequate attention to the replication of previous research.

Editor comments provided additional insight about the differences between the natural and social sciences. A segment within each group of editors believed that creativity and originality should be of primary importance in conducting research. For these editors, strict replication was of minimal value. They perceived researchers who do not address new issues to be wasting valuable time and resources. As a result, these editors did not publish strict replications and they considered replications only if the next rea-

Table 1
Study 1: Editors' Comments about Attention Given to Replication

Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
• There are numerous publications that focus upon the replication of published data.	• Few or no brownie points given for it. Doesn't help get tenure or fame.
• Replication is rarely an issue for us—perhaps never—since we publish them.	• Replication isn't considered "creative."
• One cannot generalize a physiological finding without replication with other species.	• The discipline as a whole pays scant attention to the matter.
• I have a sense that replication of data is tolerated but not exactly encouraged.	• There certainly could/should be more.
• Total replication will not be published. We accept only original reports.	• Replications can be hard to get published.
• Some reviewers might suggest—"Nothing new here with a replicated study."	• Replication is an important direction which merits attention.
• Replication without some novelty is not accepted.	• Incremented studies are valued in which studies conduct at least partial replications while expanding parameters.
• A balance is required. Otherwise potential authors will opt for replication rather than original work.	• Replications are considered especially if new aspects are included in replication studies—e. g., considering new as well as old issues in an attempt to synthesize.
• Our attention is focused on avoiding replication! There are so many interesting subjects which have not been studied that it is a stupid thing to make the same work once again.	• Few journals are willing to publish literal replications. I probably would not. Constructive replications are more acceptable.
• Why do you want to replicate already published work? If there is some interest puzzle, of course, but replication for its own sake is never encouraged.	• We very seldom get a simple or "pure" replication. Usually, something new is added.

sonable question was also addressed.

Within the natural sciences, replication evidently plays a significant role in some disciplines. One editor commented, "Replication is rarely an issue for us—perhaps never—since we publish them." Within the social sciences, replication seems to play a less significant role and many editors recognized that the role of replication should be enhanced. The underlying basis for the neglect of replication appears to be current research norms that encourage researchers to seek recognition by conducting original research. One editor commented that tenure is not achieved by conducting replication research. Such behavior is not likely to change unless the disciplines, norms and values for the research process also change.

Table 2 lists the editors' responses to the question on whether research findings are "suspect" prior to being replicated. Again the responses of the natural science and social science editors were significantly different ($t = 2.61$, $d.f. = 101$, $p \leq .01$). Both groups of editors tended to disagree with the statement that "published research in our discipline is considered 'suspect' until it is replicated and the results published in the literature," but natural science editors ($\overline{X} = 1.93$) disagreed to a greater extent than social science editors ($\overline{X} = 2.30$).

The natural science editors provided a very clear explanation for their ratings. They valued the rigor of the review process and the checks it provides. They viewed effective peer review and academic integrity as important mechanisms for ensuring that published research is valid and reliable. However, they felt that if studies deviate from accepted wisdom or look too good to be true, the findings can be considered suspect. The same opinions were expressed by the social science editors, but some of them felt that studies should be considered suspect prior to being replicated. One editor commented, "We are, I think, insufficiently 'suspicious'! Most accepted studies were accepted without replication and failure to replicate does little to reduce their status." These findings suggest that social science editors are more concerned than natural science editors about the lack of replication and the role of replication in the development of their disciplines.

The editors also provided feedback about how often their journals publish replications of previously published studies. Table 3 lists the responses to this question. Although the social science editors felt that more attention should be given to replication and that unreplicated studies should be considered suspect, the results revealed that their journals publish replications more frequently ($\overline{X} = 1.98$) than the natural science journals ($\overline{X} = 1.59$) ($t = 3.18$, $d.f. = 105$, $p \leq .01$). In fact, more than half of the natural science editors indicated that their journals never publish replications. Their comments ranged from the assertion that no replication would ever be published to the statement that replications would be published if next best question or additional findings were forthcoming in the research. The social science editors also expressed a wide range of opinions about whether their journals would publish a strict replication. Their comments represented three positions: (1) do not discourage replications but do not receive many, (2) would publish as a research note or review article, and (3) would consider for publication, if the research included new variables or areas of investigation.

The editors were also asked to state any strategies that are used in their disciplines to encourage the replication of research. Their responses, combined with their replies to the three questions, provide a clear picture of the role of replication research in the social and natural sciences. The advance of knowledge through replication faces many obstacles in both the social and natural sciences. On the individual level, the perceived cost/benefit ratio does not provide the motivation necessary to conduct strict replications. The costs simply outweigh the benefits that a researcher would receive from replicating previous published work. The potential personal gain appears to be minimal. Moreover, researchers who conduct replications are often considered lacking in creativity and originality. Thus, the prospects for academic respect and success are diminished. Tenure is perceived to be negatively affected by lack of creativity, originality, and contributions to the discipline. Replication, therefore, is avoided and is accorded very low status by many researchers.

Study 2

Procedure

The study 2 sample was essentially a census of the editors of all marketing, advertising, and related journals. The editors were sent a four-page page questionnaire that included additional questions specific to marketing. They were asked to respond to statements by indicating agreement or disagreement on a 4-point scale and then to provide explanatory comments for their responses. Finally, the editors were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions about their perceptions of the role of replication in

Table 2
Study 1: Editors' Comments about Statement that Published Studies Are Suspect Until Replicated

Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
• Only considered "suspect" if results are way out of line, or look "too good be true."	• I think they should be, but in general, they are not.
• If the findings "fit" with previous work, they are not likely to be "suspect"—the context is critical.	• I wish they were considered suspect! They do eventually get checked. If A reports X, then B sees if some implication of X (call it Y) is true. If yes, B publishes. If no, B starts checking.
• There is considerable variation on this—studies that deviate from "accepted wisdom" by very much would be "suspect"; most results are accepted, however, without replication.	• Wish that it were so. Will mention it in future "Editor! Comments."
• Scientists tend to trust one another, unless there is reason to believe that someone cooks their data.	• We are I think insufficiently "suspicious"! Most accepted studies are accepted without replication and failure to replicate does little to reduce their status.
• Our experience indicates problem is minor, but one that requires due diligence and effective peer review.	• If only replications were published, nothing new would ever be published.
• Studies*will not be published if evidence is lacking of adequate replication* within experiments: given that, if a study is acceptable, it is no longer "suspect."	• Replication is ill-considered. Novelty is more prized than "mere" replication.
• The integrity of an author is not questioned, as this implies. Papers are subject to rigorous peer review before being accepted	• Almost never. If they are, there is usually some further inquiring associated with the study.
• If the methodology, data, and statistics have been checked by two independent referees, why should data be suspect?	• It depends—on the data, the methods, the problem, etc. But "good" work is not "suspect" even if not yet replicated.
• There is little time or justification in repeating earlier studies.	• Findings are accepted based on (a) soundness of method (b) consistency with prior research and theory.

Table 3
Study 1: Editors' Comments about the Frequency of Published Replications

Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
• We prefer to only publish first replications (or confirmations) and seldom publish second or later replications.	• Would not discourage — but typically would not receive many submissions of this type.
• Only in review articles or when another author requests rebuttal.	• Whenever the topic is important and the manuscript passes muster with external reviewers.
• We don't encourage or discourage this.	• Research reviews.
• Rarely submitted. Very glad to publish.	• Usually as "research notes."
• I don't recall receiving one since I became editor 20 years ago. Seems that important topics should be "cross validated."	• Especially if contradicting results were reported.
• Unless these show remarkable divergence demanding a reinterpretation.	• Very Seldom. Few are submitted. No policy against them.
• I can think of several articles that replicated the works of others. Often, these articles ask some other question and include a replication or rejection.	• Not a likely submission. We would, if it happened.
• There is much replication on published papers, but this is usually secondary to the new material in those papers. I can't remember an example of a paper being published just for the replication of previous work.	• Whenever a proper replication is submitted.
• If the results indicate different results or use a different source of material (i. e., a measure of inherent variability).	• Although usually not an exact replication; replication-and-extension studies are frequently published.
• Never in their own right. If replication occurs as part of a significant new study the confirmatory results are published.	• To a certain extent always, but never as a simple repetition of previously published studies.
• We require a copyright form signed by all authors which certifies that they are submitting original data. However, replication often occurs as part of a study specifically addressing another issue.	• As part of other variables investigated.
• We try never to do this, if this is all that the study is about. If there is some new angle, then of course we should consider such a manuscript.	• Usually something must be added to the replication to be publishable.
• Pressure on page-space is such that we never have the opportunity to publish repeat studies	• Replications of major effects are nearly always incorporated into new derived experiments but are rarely published alone.
• Exact replicate studies are not encouraged.	• Never—unless they add a "twist" or a "regional dimension."
• Since my appointment as editor, I have had few requests to do this. I think that my strict refereeing procedure helps to avoid the need for this!	• The accepted procedure is to publish only constructive replications.

Table 4
Study 2: Marketing Editors' Responses to Replication Statements

Statement	Mean[2]
Frequency of Replications	
1. Replication studies are usually not published except in controversial areas.	2.79
2. Most reviewers of the journal require new theory development.	2.64
3. Few strict replications are submitted to the journal.	3.29
4. Replication manuscripts are frequently published in the journal.	1.57
5. The editorial policy of the journal is to avoid replications.	2.29
6. Something new must be in a manuscript for it to be publishable.	3.23
Importance of Replication	
7. The marketing discipline devotes adequate attention to the replication of published research.	1.93
8. Researchers avoid the replication process due to the difficulty of publishing these types of articles	3.07
9. There should be more attention paid to replication in the marketing literature.	3.15
10. The importance of replication in the research process is given lip service only.	3.15
11. Novelty is more prized by marketing researchers than "mere" replications.	3.21
12. Most researchers look too much for the giant leap forward rather than the steady march of science.	3.00
13. A researcher who spent his or her time attempting to replicate previously published work would be thought to be lacking creativity.	3.36
14. Failure to replicate does little to reduce the status of an article.	2.93
15. Published studies in the marketing discipline are "suspect" until they are replicated and these results are published in the literature.	2.00
16. Researchers avoid replication because the rewards for doing these types of investigations are considered less than those for conducting original research.	3.23

[2]Range is from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

marketing thought. Sixteen editors (of a sample of 19) responded to the survey, a response rate of 84%.

Results

As the study 2 sample was discipline-specific, classification variables were not used in the study. Mean scores on the responses to the quantitative measures were computed from the data.

As can be seen in Table 4, the respondents agreed that replication studies are usually not published in marketing, advertising and related disciplines unless they are in controversial areas ($\bar{X}$ = 2.79). Responses to the fourth statement, "Replication manuscripts are frequently published in the journal" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.57), support this finding. However, the journals apparently are not resistant to replication submissions, as the responses to question 5 indicate no explicit editorial bias against such submissions ($\bar{X}$ = 3.23).

The series of questions on the importance of replications illustrates the perceptions of *career costs* associated with replication research. For example, most respondents agreed that a researcher who does too much replication would be thought to lack creativity ($\bar{X}$ = 3.36). They also agreed with the statements about the lack of rewards for conducting replications and the difficulty of publishing replications. The findings from this second group of questions are interesting because, although the editors were very cognizant of the perceived career costs associated with replication research, they also recognized its importance to their respective disciplines. That recognition is reflected in their responses to the open-ended questions.

The open-ended responses are grouped in Tables 5 and 6 and center on: 1) the role of replication in the development of advertising, communications, and marketing thought and 2) strategies used to encour-

age replication research. The responses are listed under two headings, what the disciplines are currently doing and what they should be doing in replication.

Most of the comments in Table 5 suggest that replication research currently plays a small role in the development of disciplinary thought, yet most respondents believed it should be playing a much larger role. As one editor noted, "It should play a prominent role. How else can marketing claim to adhere to the scientific method?"

The findings in Table 6 mirror those of Table 5. That is, few discipline-level strategies are currently in force to encourage the replication of published research. The editors suggested publishing special issues of journals that include replications, changing the reward structure within the respective disciplines, and devoting new journals entirely to replications.

Discussion

In comparison with editors in the natural sciences, editors in the social sciences are more preoccupied with their deficiencies in fostering replication on a broader scale. Editors in the natural sciences do not generally separate the research process from the replication process. The culture of the natural sciences integrates the roles of researcher and observer of research findings. The involvement of natural science researchers with the inquiry process ensures that they follow the work of all significant researchers in their specialty. Unsupported or unreproducible research is identified quickly by colleagues working in the same streams of research. The more closely the stream of questions is followed by numerous researchers, the less need there is for literal or operational replication. However, literal replication is probably not possible in the social sciences. In the natural sciences, duplicating (i.e., literally replicating) an experiment is feasible. In the social sciences, the more common practice is to approximate (i.e., operationally or constructively replicate) an effect that has been demonstrated initially by previous research. Most replications in the social sciences have been isolated studies (because of political realities and disciplinary norms) that have contributed little to the advancement of knowledge. Consequently, the word "replication" has negative connotations.

A paradox of replication in the social sciences is that a researcher who operationally replicates and finds *nonsupport* for previous work may be accused of not being true to the original method, but if the researcher finds *support* for the previous work, then the argument will be made that nothing new has been learned (Monroe 1992a, b). Editors of marketing/consumer behavior/advertising and other related journals seem to express *guilt* arising from the belief that *real* science requires a discrete ritual of replication of published works. When social science editors' responses from Study 1 are compared with marketing editors' responses from Study 2, this culture of self-doubt appears consistent.

As the disciplines (and subdisciplines) represented in Study 2 are frequently accused of *borrowing* from other, more established social sciences, such as those represented in Study 1, some insecurity about the legitimacy of the research process is understandable. Even so, the uneasiness of many social science editors in Study 1 was reflected by virtually all of the marketing/consumer/behavior/advertising editors in Study 2. How can so many natural science editors seem so assured that their sciences are not in desperate need of further replication activity? The answer is probably rooted in the divergent cultures of the two scientific traditions (natural and social). Perhaps replication should be reconceptualized in the social sciences as a necessary condition interwoven with the initial basic research process. Every research stream could contain both studies that yield new findings and extensions that substantiate or call into question previous findings. Research and replication are not discrete processes. Each replication effort should be nested in new inquiry. A reconceptualization of replication, in conjunction with endorsement from the discipline, would ensure that future advances in advertising/consumer behavior/marketing thought will benefit from the accumulated knowledge thus generated. The uneasiness marketing scholars feel about the scarcity of *distinct* replications could be channeled into discipline-level norms, fostered by researcher training and journal replication guidelines, that would cast replication as a strand that runs throughout the research process.

Much of the apparent conflict between the views of replication held in the natural and social sciences has arisen from semantics as well as from true differences in world views. Many natural scientists perceive the research process as something that continues while scientists come and go. Many social scientists see their work as a series of discrete studies. That view may warrant scrutiny and perhaps a challenge.

Our examination of the two cultures of natural and social sciences and the subculture of marketing/ad-

Table 5
Study 2: Advertising, Communications, and Marketing Editors' Responses to Open-Ended Questions

What role, if any does replication currently play in the development of advertising, communications, and marketing thought?	What role, if any, should replication play in the development of advertising, communications, and marketing thought?
The purpose of replication is to be certain that previous *non-generalizable* studies can in fact be generalized. For many areas there is no need for this. Further, since *specific* empirical results are of value to managers, but of little value to academics, there is little need for academics to replicate previous researchers' (or their own) results *unless* it is believed that previous results are suspect.	More.
Not enough. We have enough areas with long established research thoughts.	Perhaps as a method to validate significant contributions.
Replication is a dominant force in terms of developing marketing concepts. At times it seems that ideas are "squeezed to death" in pursuit of one being published.	It should play a major role in helping to validate research. The discipline in the long run would gain more respect if findings from research were more thoroughly validated via replication.
Very Little. The standard questions on the previous page in essence explain why.	Establish validity of research findings.
Not as much as needed.	Big! Can always include extensions along with a straight replication. Always.
Not much.	We need to build on previous work and to some extent replicate. The many studies in CB that cover the current hot topic have some aspects of replication but each researcher tries to add their individual contributions.
See Previous section. Replication as part of work that extends the theory is acceptable. Just plain replication might be useful but the reward system discourages the work.	Towards theory and concept development.
Support role. More significant role is played in international marketing, comparative marketing, cross-cultural consumer behavior research.	Exact replication—none. Conceptual replication is what most researchers do. There is a theory—you test it—it comes out a conceptual replication. Where we need more latitude is in publishing disconfirmations.
Conceptual replication is critical and goes on more than any other type of work. "Exact" replications are of little if any theoretical interest.	It should play a prominent role. How else can marketing claim to adhere to the scientific method?
Very little role, if any. There is no history of replication in marketing.	It should be a major effort and rewarded as such.
Little, if any.	Key to the advancement of a discipline is gaining insights into generalizability of relationships. Key to gaining insights into generalizability of relationships is replications—both strict replications and extensions.
Very little, if any. It should, however, be recognized that there are impediments to doing strict replications in marketing.	All Ph.D. students should be required to conduct a replication study (but not of this advisor's research). These should be published in a Journal of Replication in Marketing Science.
Only to the extent of training Ph.D. students to do research.	Much more. Question of reliability of major *developments*. Many theories are never replicated.
Little.	

Table 6
Study 2: Advertising, Communications, and Marketing Editors' Responses about Strategies for Encouraging Replication of Published Research

Please state below strategies, if any, that are currently being used in advertising, communications, and marketing to encourage the replication of published research.	What strategies, if any, should be employed by the advertising, communications, and marketing disciplines to encourage the replication of research?
There seems to be an established hierarchy of individuals who sit on editorial review boards who favor "their own" and tend to rotate amongst the various marketing journals.	Encouragement by editors.
I don't believe there are any strategies. There is, however, a fair amount of lip service about the importance of replication.	Very little!
Cannot say.	How about periodic special issues of journal, devoted exclusively to replication studies?
Almost none.	How about a "Replication of Marketing Research" journal?
None that I know about.	Special issues devoted to replications.
I cannot think of any.	Showing how the work links to previous studies.
None for exact replication.	To give more journal space to this kind of research. Better acceptance by peers. To educate the researchers about the virtues of this type of research.
Unknown.	None for exact replication.
None.	If high quality replication work is published, then researchers will conduct these types of studies.
Earmarking a few number of pages in each issue of a journal for publication of replication studies might be one way of insuring that an otherwise publishable replication study is not published due to journal space constraints.	Change the reward structure to address replication.
None.	Personally, I have tried to encourage doctoral students to seriously consider undertaking replication studies during their doctoral program as a way of fulfilling doctoral seminar requirements and as a training exercise prior to working on their doctoral dissertation.
	All Ph.D. students should be required to conduct a replication study (but not of this advisor's research). These should be published in a Journal of Replication in Marketing Science.
	Journals should encourage as research notes. Fewer pages but reporting scales accumulated by a central clearing house.

vertising/consumer behavior suggests, despite their differences, concurrence in their views on the role of replication. If we examine the presuppositions that underlie our philosophy of science in the social sciences, we may find that we are actually converging toward the norms of the natural sciences that integrate replication into the fabric of scientific inquiry.

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