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| D. Stephen Lindsay, PhD, Editor  Psychological Science | |  |
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| date  17/04/2020 | page  1 | our reference  Manuscript Submission | |
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Dear Professor Lindsay,

Please find attached a commentary paper that we would like to be considered for publication in *Psychological Science,* titled “Evaluative Conditioning without awareness: Replicable effects do not equate replicable inferences”. This is a commentary of a Registered Replication Report that has been given Stage 1 RRR acceptance for publication by the journal (“Incidental Attitude Formation via the Surveillance Task: A Registered Replication Report of Olson and Fazio [2001]”) (MS number PSCI-19-0402, [RR-PDR]).

To provide some context, the surveillance task (Olson & Fazio, 2001), originally published in *Psychological Science*, is an Evaluative Conditioning (EC) paradigm that has been used to support the idea that attitudes can be formed in the absence of a person’s awareness. It is one of the most highly cited EC procedures and papers (the original article has over 700 citations in Google Scholar) and has inspired conceptual, theoretical, and applied developments throughout the discipline.

Despite such developments, it turns out that this task and its effect are based on weak evidence and relatively few published studies. With this in mind, Moran et al. (2020) conducted a high-powered multi-site study to examined whether evidence for EC in this task does emerge, and if it depends on the specific way in which awareness is measured. Their replication was ‘successful’ insofar as it replicated the surveillance task effect.

However, we are concerned that readers will view the replication of this effect as evidence supporting the verbal hypothesis that attitude formation can occur in the absence of awareness, a conclusion we strongly disagree with. Such an inference requires that ‘aware’ participants are successfully excluded from consideration in the original study and the replication attempt. In our commentary we present new evidence that the awareness exclusion criterion used by Olson and Fazio (2001) – the only one to produce a significant effect in Moran et al. (2020) – is a poor measure of awareness: it is overly lax, noisy, and demonstrates heterogeneity between sites. When we carried out a new meta-analysis using a stricter compound awareness criterion which prioritizes sensitivity (*N* = 665) the replicated effect collapses to a non-significant and near-zero effect size (Hedges’ *g* = 0.00, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.10], *p* = .983, BF10 = 0.04).

Put simply, when subjected to a more severe test, Moran et al.’s (2020) data does not support the ‘unaware Evaluative Conditioning’ hypothesis. Our results serve to highlight the importance of distinguishing between a *replicable statistical effect* and a *replicable inference* regarding a verbal hypothesis. This distinction is especially important when the hypothesis has far reaching implications.

We believe that *Psychological Science* would be a perfect outlet for our commentary given that the Registered Replication Report will soon be published in the journal. We hope that the commentary could be published along with the Replication Report, as doing so would provide the journal’s readership with an opportunity to experience this debate for themselves and offer them a more nuanced perspective on this study and behavioral effect than the main manuscript does alone.

All data and code are available on the OSF ([osf.io/ugrjh](https://osf.io/ugrjh/)). A preprint is available on the PsyArXiv preprint server ([psyarxiv.com/4gzsp](https://psyarxiv.com/4gzsp)). This manuscript is not submitted to any other journal and its publication is approved by both contributing authors.

We look forward to your reply.

Best Regards,

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