

# Meeting the Need: Developing an On-line, Open Access Journal Focused on Ethnic Minority Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract** Before the Journal of Undergraduate Ethnic Minority Psychology (JUEMP) was launched, a literature search revealed no undergraduate journals that were devoted to research on ethnic minority's psychological issues or that reflected a largely non-ethnic minority voice and target-of-study. JUEMP addresses these concerns as it aims to provide the following: a free and open access publishing outlet; shorter and less formal formatting options; a social media presence; and greater receptiveness to the research and interests of ethnic minority undergraduate students. JUEMP accepts submissions on a rolling basis and will publish issues semi-annually. More information may be found on the website of the journal: <http://www.juemp psychology.com>.

**Key Terms**— undergraduate journal, JUEMP, ethnic, minority

## INTRODUCTION

The editorial staff of the Journal of Undergraduate Ethnic Minority Psychology (JUEMP) consists of psychology major(s) and an Associate Professor in a Department of Psychology at a Historically Black University (HBU) in the Southeastern United States. Perceptions of limited opportunities to showcase the quality of ethnic minority undergraduates' research prompted our goal to increase publishing opportunities. This paper is a form of introduction to JUEMP. Here we outline the need for this publishing outlet and describe the following: (1) publishing outlets that existed prior to the founding of JUEMP; (2) demographics of the US undergraduate ethnic minority student population; (3) challenges to establish an empirical, on-line, open-access, and peer-reviewed journal;

and (4) the ways in which JUEMP both satisfies the unique needs of this population and addresses these challenges.

## DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING PUBLISHING OUTLETS

A review of the existing publishing outlets that focus on the psychology of ethnic minorities (in the U.S.) revealed several empirical journals. To begin with, the American Psychological Association (APA) lists several organizations that are devoted to ethnic minorities' psychology: Society for the Psychological, Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race (Division 45 of APA); Asian American Psychological Association; Association of Black Psychologists; National Latina/o Psychological Association; and the Society of Indian Psychologists (List of Ethnic Minority Associations, 2014). A quick web search revealed that each of these organizations has a newsletter and a journal or journals that

Manuscript received December 2014, resubmitted, and accepted March 2015.

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are devoted to publishing research specifically relevant to the group (e.g., *Asian American Psychologist*, *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *Journal of Black Psychology*, etc.).

As it is daunting and infrequent for undergraduates to publish their research findings in these professional newsletters and journals, we searched for undergraduate psychology journals and, specifically, for undergraduate psychology journals devoted to ethnic minorities' unique thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. While there are several excellent undergraduate psychology journals (e.g., *Undergraduate Journal of Psychology*, *Journal of Psychological Inquiry*, *Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research*, and *Modern Psychological Studies*), we could find no undergraduate psychology journals devoted to ethnic minorities' unique thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Upon learning this, we became committed to increasing publishing opportunities for ethnic minority undergraduates and to highlighting the quality of research being conducted by and about ethnic minority students. Thus, we established the Journal of Ethnic Minority Psychology (JUEMP).

#### UNIQUENESS OF THE TARGET POPULATIONS' DEMOGRAPHICS

According to U. S. Census Bureau (2014), there are 320 million individuals living in the United States of America. The breakdown of ethnic groups is as follows: 1.2 % are American Indians, 5.3 % are Asian, 13.2 % are Black/African American, 17.1 % are Hispanic or Latino/a, and 77.7 % are White. In the Fall of 2014, approximately 21 million students were expected to enroll in U.S. colleges and universities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Regarding the percentages of ethnic minorities in the broader U.S. college population, American Indians constitute approximately 0.9%, Asians constitute 6%, Blacks/African Americans constitute 15%, Hispanics or Latinos/as constitute 14%, and Whites constitute 61% (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). According to a 1997 report of the American Psychological Associations' Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (Final Report, 1997), ethnic minorities constituted 23.9% of college entrants majoring in psychology and 16.2% of bachelor's degree recipients in psychology. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assert that there are myriads of students who would have the opportunity to conduct and publish research by or about topics specifically relevant to ethnic minorities (e.g., course projects, honors' theses, etc.). Although a significantly higher percentage of students (and faculty) are ethnic minorities, survey research asserts that fewer than 5% of the psychological literature is authored by ethnic minorities (Hall, 2010, p. 5). Thus, more opportunities and outlets for publishing research by and about undergraduate ethnic minorities are needed.

#### CHALLENGES TO ESTABLISHING AN ON-LINE JOURNAL

There are several challenges that individuals developing online journals should consider and the following are particularly important for a successful launch: (1) the financial costs of maintaining and running a journal (Boyce & Dalterio, 1996); (2) the decision of whether to make the journal open access or subscription-based (Gould, 2009); and (3) gaining the attention of the targeted audience.

##### *Financial costs, open-access vs. subscription-based format*

As the staff of JUEMP, we rely on institutional support as well as volunteers to help make JUEMP a success. "The costs involved in providing an online-only journal are noticeably different from those of printing and shipping physical journal volumes...the major online-only costs (are) copyediting, web hosting, and the maintenance of a functioning mechanism for peer-review." (Laasko et al., 2011, p. 1). Before the 1980's, empirical journals were available solely at cost and either in print or microfiche format. Together, the cost and format were limiting, as access to the information was available only for people who had paid-subscriptions and access to the print and microfiche versions. With the advent of the World Wide Web (www), access was made possible for free and for wider swaths of people via mailing lists and e-mail. When the World Wide Web was still fairly new and the digital transformation of information began, traditional publishers shifted to creating electronic systems for articles and journals (Boyce & Dalterio, 1996).

Boyce and Dalterio noted the important potential of this critical, more economical technology and pointed out several problems that arise with the shift from traditional formatting to on-line formatting for journals. Specifically, those problems are difficulties keeping up with the rapidly accumulating and changing online information and formatting as well as difficulties in generating revenue on-line. At the time that piece was published, those concerns were substantial. However, almost two decades later, the World Wide Web has grown, and the digitization of information has developed such that some of these concerns are no longer substantive hurdles to the success of electronic publishing. Currently, the majority of well-established academic journals offer their content in an on-line format. Open access journals are a unique format that permits unrestricted access to the content of the journal.

Laakso et al. (2011) explored the development of open-access journals from 1993-2009. They found that compared to the predicted growth in the volume of published journal articles, the growth in the volume of published open-access journal articles was substantially faster. The popularity of open access journals and on-line publishing is tremendous, in part, because these have several advantages for diverse populations (e.g., greater access, less expensive access, and increased visibility for

their voice and concerns).

*Gaining a presence and the attention of JUEMP's targeted audience*

Having addressed the need for more opportunities and outlets, we now address the uniqueness of this demographic's perspectives and how JUEMP seeks to meet the needs of this specific demographic. The following are among the key descriptors of current college students: frugal; free flowing and easily engaged by digital devices; more receptive to short(er) pieces of information; and more attentive to social media outlets (compared to traditional, print sources). In addition, stemming from their historically marginalized status, ethnic minority college students tend to be keenly attentive to topics that relate to them personally (e.g., activism, discrimination, intersectionality, and stereotype threat). Given that our goal was to tailor a publishing outlet to this population, we took these key descriptors into account while developing JUEMP.

First, as college students tend to be frugal, we developed JUEMP as an on-line, open-access, and publication-fee-free journal. At present, we are seeking sponsorship from professional organizations, volunteer faculty and professional reviewers as well as editors. Second, as this population is more free flowing and easily engaged by digital devices, it is ideal that the journal is on-line and, thus, accessible via any device with Internet access. Third, as this population is more receptive to short(er) pieces of information, JUEMP has a less formal tone, such that we will consider all submissions that fall within the broad area of 'psychology'. Furthermore, we provide authors with the options of submitting short report or full-length manuscripts. Fourth, as the college students are more attentive to social media outlets (compared to traditional, print sources), JUEMP's on-line status and social media presence should aid in its accessibility. Finally, as a considerable percentage of college undergraduates major in psychology (23.9%; Final Report, 1997) and their voices are largely absent from the published literature, JUEMP invites and encourages empirical research submissions that are from ethnic minorities' unique perspectives or that focus on the thoughts and behaviors of ethnic minority populations.

CONCLUSION

There is a critical need for JUEMP due to the underrepresentation of Non-whites in the psychology literature and the paucity of outlets for undergraduate researchers. To illustrate, approximately 5% of all psychology publications are written by or about Non-whites (Hall, 2010). This reality can be imposing to Non-white researchers and those who conduct research on Non-white populations. In addition, before JUEMP was launched, there were no undergraduate journals devoted to research

on ethnic minority psychological issues. Other journals (e.g., Psi Chi, MPS, Yale Review of Undergraduate Research, etc.) reflect a largely non-ethnic minority voice and target-of-study. JUEMP addresses these concerns as it aims to provide the following: a free and open access publishing outlet; shorter and less formal formatting options; a social media presence; and greater receptiveness to the research and interests of ethnic minority undergraduate students. JUEMP accepts submissions on a rolling basis and will publish issues semi-annually. More information may be found on the website of the journal: <http://www.juempsychology.com>

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