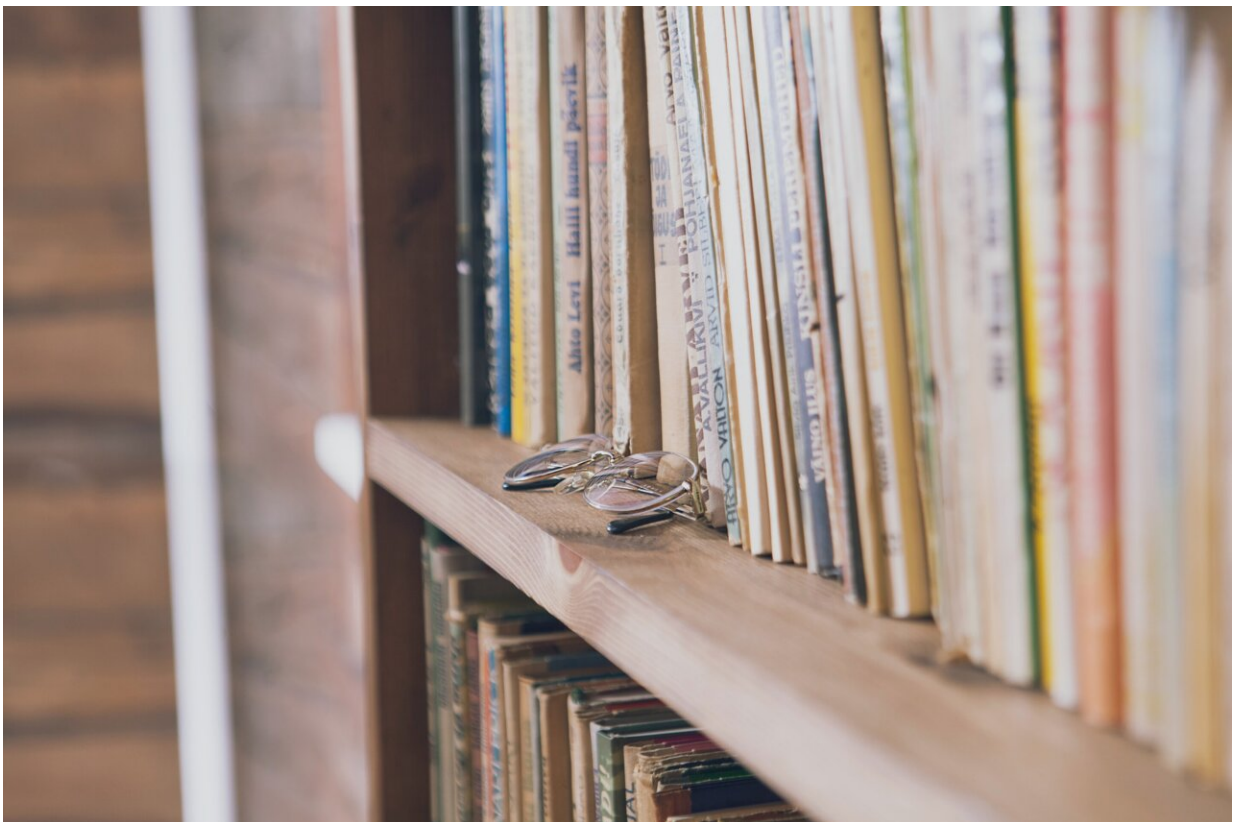


Psychologists suggest more humility is needed in the social, behavioral and life sciences

November 12 2021, by Bob Yirka



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Rink Hoekstra and Simine Vazire, psychologists with the University of Groningen and the University of California, Davis, respectively, have

published a Perspective piece in the journal *Nature Human Behavior* calling for more humility in the social, behavioral and life sciences. In their paper they outline a methodology for imbuing intellectual humility into the paper writing and publishing process.

As Hoekstra and Vazire note, there has been a crisis of sorts in the social, behavioral and [life sciences](#) over the past few years, involving multiple reports of the inability to replicate results in academic papers. The authors contend that this is due to a lack of intellectual humility and suggest that there is too much bragging and not enough acknowledgment of the limitations inherent in such work. They suggest a more humble approach is needed if the factors that led to the crisis are to be changed, and they have created guidelines aimed at changing the publishing process. They believe this will restore faith in the work being done.

The suggested changes include making titles and extracts more honest in their descriptions of the work and the achievements. Similar changes need to be made in introductions; researchers need to stop exaggerating the impact of their work and certain elements of the work itself. Methods sections need to remain true to their intended purpose—outlining the work in a way that allows others to replicate what was done. Unflattering details should not be omitted, nor should explanations of why decisions were made. They also suggest that researchers alter their focus in the results section; instead of including only the positive aspects of the research, they suggest giving readers some insight into some of the challenges faced or examples of things that did not work out as planned. And then finally, in the discussion section, they suggest researchers avoid trying to give ironclad results when they are not warranted. In many social [science](#) experiments, they note, results may suggest a finding rather than actually showing it exists.

The team concludes by noting that changing perceptions of researchers in the softer sciences will not be easy but failing to do so could prove

disastrous for everyone in the field if changes are not made.

More information: Rink Hoekstra et al, Aspiring to greater intellectual humility in science, *Nature Human Behaviour* (2021). [DOI: 10.1038/s41562-021-01203-8](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01203-8)

© 2021 Science X Network

Citation: Psychologists suggest more humility is needed in the social, behavioral and life sciences (2021, November 12) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-11-psychologists-humility-social-behavioral-life.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.