Review of: "Behavioral optimization in Scientific Publishing"

Mitch Brown[1]

1 University of Arkansas - Fayetteville

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This article provides an interesting framework that integrates an evolutionary perspective into understanding the machinations of peer review. Namely, the author argues that a cost-benefit analysis drives much of our consideration for certain research viewpoints. This presents a conflict between ancestrally derived motives of self-preservation with the objective goals of science that is ostensibly removed from such selection pressures (i.e., an evolutionary mismatch). The author cites appropriate research related to error management theory with the language of economic ratios.

The only real critique that I have for this manuscript is its scope would be widened with additional discussion on these selection pressures. There is some growing research in the topic of what peer review's ultimate function is and whether the costs of publishing a controversial finding could exceed the benefits. Cory Clark and colleagues (in press) in a recent paper in Psychological Science showed that people tend to overestimate the harm caused by published works. Additional research has also shown that people's coalitional memberships inform whether they support these viewpoints (dating back from Lord et al., 1979, to the aforementioned Clark paper). I believe the author could integrate the more social component of these biases with the existing ideas.