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FULL-LENGTH REPORT

Open science practices in behavioral addictions: An exploratory survey

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ABSTRACT

Background: The field of behavioral addictions (BA) research addresses activity domains such as excessive gaming, gambling, and other online behaviors that influence public health policies. A failure to embrace open science practices may lead to concerns about the trustworthiness and reliability of its research outputs. This study explored the current use of open science practices among BA researchers, focusing on the adoption, underlying motivations, concerns, and support needs across seven specific

open science practices. *Methods:* We distributed an exploratory survey through professional networks, conferences, and social media and received 83 eligible responses (early career researcher [ECRs]: $N = 41$). The survey covered six domains: general use, frequency, importance, engagement, concerns, and support needs related to open science practices. *Results:* Most respondents reported positive attitudes toward open science, with preregistration (75% of total N) and data sharing (65% of total N) as the most commonly used practices. Descriptively, ECRs placed greater importance on these practices than their established counterparts, suggesting a potential generational shift. ECRs primarily reported concerns about insufficient knowledge and fear of errors, while established researchers emphasized workload and a lack of incentives. Both groups highlighted the need for increased time, resources, institutional support, and training. *Discussion:* Although our findings are descriptive and limited by self-selection and sample bias, they offer initial insights into how open science is perceived and practised in the field. Sustained progress requires coordinated action from individuals, institutions, and professional societies in terms of knowledge transfer and incentives to ensure inclusive and equitable adoption of open science practices.

KEYWORDS

behavioral addiction, open science, reproducibility, gambling, gaming

In recent years, psychology has faced what is now commonly referred to as the "replication crisis"—a recognition that many foundational findings in the discipline have proven difficult or impossible to replicate or reproduce (Pennington, 2023). This has led to the emergence of several open, rigorous and transparent research practices across various fields and subfields, the adoption and promotion of which has become known as the "open science" movement. The Framework for Open and Reproducible Research Training (FORRT) organized a glossary which defines open science as "an umbrella term reflecting the idea that scientific knowledge of all kinds, where appropriate, should be openly accessible, transparent, rigorous, reproducible, replicable, accumulative, and inclusive, all of which are considered fundamental features of the scientific endeavor." (Elsherif, Flack, Kalandadze, Pennington, & Xiao, 2021; Parsons et al., 2022). Within this definition, open science comprises six key components: open data, open methodology, open source, open access, open peer review, and open educational resources.

Many areas of psychology, particularly cognitive and social psychology, have made significant strides in adopting open science practices. However, not all subfields have progressed at the same pace, and it seems that one area in which open science remains relatively underutilized is behavioral addictions (for a discussion see Eben et al., 2023). This is surprising given the field's relevance to public health and policy and the methodological challenges it often faces. Therefore, understanding how open science is currently used in this domain and what barriers might hinder its adoption is of critical importance.

The field of behavioral addictions covers behaviors such as gambling, gaming, compulsive sexual behaviors, compulsive buying, or problematic social media use (Brand et al., 2025; Zare-Bidoky et al., 2025) and, importantly, is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing from the fields of psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and public health, among others (Akcayir, Nicoll, & Baxter, 2021). This diversity may lead to more fragmented or cautious adoption of open science principles. Nonetheless, recent developments indicate a growing awareness of the issue and increasing efforts to investigate and implement open science practices within the field.

Initial efforts to promote open science within behavioral addiction research have primarily emerged in the gambling context. For instance, Wohl, Tabri, and Zelenski (2019) advocated for pre-registration, data sharing, and journal policies that support replication efforts. Another early discussion by Heirene (2021) focused on the need to conduct replication studies and raised questions on how to interpret replications that might not support the original study. Building on this, Louderback, Wohl, and LaPlante (2021) proposed Guidelines for Research Independence and Transparency (GRIT) to incorporate open science principles into industry-funded gambling research. While primarily focused on gambling studies, these guidelines are broadly applicable to other behavioral addiction fields and funding contexts. Similar calls have emerged across other areas of behavioral addiction research. Shi, Potenza, and Turner (2020), for instance, stressed the importance of open science practices in gaming disorder research to improve transparency and credibility, especially in studies supported by industry funding. They argued that such practices would foster greater trust in the field and enhance its contributions to public health. Similarly, in the field of gaming disorder, van Rooij et al. (2018) argued that stronger research designs and broader adoption of preregistration and registered reports are essential for generating reliable evidence that can inform both policy and clinical practice (for a discussion about preregistration in qualitative research in video gaming see Karhulahti, 2022).

These conceptual contributions have been accompanied by empirical investigations into how open science practices are actually used. A meta-analysis by López-Guerrero et al. (2025) on compulsivity-oriented treatments for behavioral addictions revealed inflated effect sizes and signs of publication bias, which could possibly result from the "file-drawer" effect (i.e., studies with null effects that have never been published, potentially because of these null effects), and potentially questionable research practices, such as absence of carefully designed control conditions, outcome selection or data slicing. These findings underscore the need for methodological reforms such as preregistration and adequately powered studies. Other empirical work has assessed gambling studies' preregistration plans, with a focus on how specific those plans were, and how closely researchers followed them in the eventual publications (Heirene et al., 2024). They found generally low specificity in preregistrations, with a lack of detail regarding both designs and data analyses. This, the authors argued, left substantial room for researcher degrees of freedom and thereby the

potential for bias. Among the 20 articles that were examined, 65% deviated from their preregistered protocols without declaring these changes. Nevertheless, the study observed improvements in both specificity and adherence over time, particularly between 2017 and 2020, indicating a positive trend toward better implementation of open science practices.

Despite this progress, the broader adoption of open science in the field of behavioral addictions remains largely anecdotal and under-examined. In a recent article, Eben et al. (2023) provided an overview of the barriers and possible solutions to adopting open science practices in the specific context of behavioral addiction research. The authors raised ethical concerns about data sharing and participant confidentiality, noting that the field's many points of contact with industry create unique challenges. These concerns can make researchers hesitant to engage in open science practices. Eben et al. lacked empirical data to arbitrate on researchers' current practices and concerns. Other fields have begun to fill this gap through empirical survey research. Norris et al. (2022), for example, developed a brief 12-item questionnaire to measure open science awareness and engagement among researchers across all fields in the UK and found high levels of awareness and usage of open access, preprints, and open data alongside a need for structural support. Similarly, Silverstein et al. (2024) conducted a registered report survey across psychological subdisciplines in the UK and Ireland, reporting strong engagement with practices such as declaring conflicts of interest, open access publishing, and adhering to FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) data principles. These studies offer valuable insights for understanding the wider adoption of open science practices and provide a benchmark for future evaluations of changes in open science practices.

In the gambling research context, LaPlante, Louderback, and Abarbanel (2021) distributed a short survey to conference attendees in 2019, finding that only a minority of stakeholders had experience with open science. This highlights the need for targeted education and knowledge transfer. A follow-up study by LaPlante, Louderback, Gharian, and Abarbanel (2025) compared these findings with data collected at the same conference in 2023, showing a 16% increase in engagement with open science practices. Importantly, the perceived benefits of these practices were associated with a greater likelihood of adoption.

These findings underscore both a growing momentum and persistent gaps in the adoption of open science in behavioral addiction research. As Eben et al. (2023) discussed, the field of behavioral addiction research addresses topics including gaming, gambling, and other online behaviors that significantly influence public health policies. A failure to embrace open science practices may lead to concerns about the trustworthiness and reliability of its research outputs. To encourage and monitor the shift toward open science practices, there is a need for empirical work to systematically assess the state of open science in the behavioral addictions research community. Such assessments can not only identify where uptake remains low, but also serve as a benchmark for future developments and policy efforts. Against this backdrop, the present study aimed to empirically examine the current landscape of open science practices within the field of behavioral addictions to better understand needs, barriers and facilitating factors. We developed and distributed a survey to researchers in the field via professional networks, conferences, and social media platforms, to understand current levels of use among different open science practices, reasons for adoption, perceived barriers, and the types of support researchers feel are necessary. Serving as an exploratory, empirical follow-up to Eben et al. (2023), the present study aimed to estimate the use of open science in behavioral addictions and to inform actionable strategies for its broader adoption.

METHOD

We report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions, all manipulations, and all measures in the study. All raw data, code, and materials, including the survey itself, can be found on OSF (https://osf.io/8v7ep/?view_only=f26b23c87d5f4f2491f4dbdf10e75b2f). The local ethics committee of the Universty of British Columbia approved the study. We did not have any *a priori* hypotheses. While preregistration of known factors of exploratory studies is desirable, we decided to follow the 'buffet approach' as described by Bergmann (2023) and later by Eben et al. (2023), and did not preregister this exploratory study for the simple reason of time constraints. As the primary purpose of the study was to provide a comprehensive picture regarding the state of adoption of open science practices in the field, we did not perform any inferential statistics on the data.

Participants

We had no target sample size but collected a convenience sample. After an initial influx of responses, data collection slowed down and eventually stopped, which is why we decided to close the survey at the end of August 2024. In total, we received 121 responses to our survey from behavioral addiction researchers at various career stages and from a variety of regions. Of the 121 responses, 37 were incomplete, and one failed the attention check. Since incomplete responses can be taken as a consent withdrawal in online settings, we excluded those incomplete responses for ethical reasons. Thus, for our final analyses, we included responses from 83 participants (33 women, 2 identified as non-binary/third gender, and 2 preferred not to disclose their gender). We received most responses from Europe (53, 63.86%), but with further respondents from America (14, 16.87%) and Australia (8, 9.63%), and a small minority from Asia (2, 2.40%) and Africa (1, 1.20%). The percentages do not add up to 100% since some respondents did not report their continent. We defined being an early career researcher (ECR) as being a student or within five years post-PhD.

We had to recode responses to our question about ECR status because, after inspection, we realized that some Masters and PhD students (who are by definition ECRs) misunderstood the relevant question ("Are you an early career researcher (defined as within five years of being awarded your PhD)?") and indicated that they were not ECRs. In the recoded data, 42 respondents were classed as non-ECRs and 41 were ECRs, comprising 3 Master's students, 19 PhD students, 11 postdoctoral researchers ("postdocs" hereafter), six assistant professors, and two other current positions. In the non-ECR group, there were 14 full professors, 13 associate professors, nine assistant professors, two postdocs, and four other current positions.

Measure

The survey questions were developed by the research team. First, the initial survey questions were drafted and all authors provided input. Questions were revised and modified until all authors were satisfied with their clarity and coverage of relevant topics. Demographic questions were asked first. These were followed by a short explanation and definition of each open-science-related term used in the survey, with definitions taken from the Framework for Open and Reproducible Research Training (FORRT) glossary (https://forrt.org/glossary/). We then asked several questions about the following open science practices: open data, open code, open materials, preregistration, replication studies, registered reports, preprints, and publication practices. Questions covered frequency of use for each practice, intentions to continue using currently used practices, the perceived importance of each practice, the type or manner of engagement with practices, perceived concerns about each practice, and what people need to practice open science. The full questionnaire can be found on OSF (https://osf.io/8v7ep/files/ue93a).

Procedure

We used the Qualtrics survey platform to collect data. A QR code and link to the survey were included in a social media advertisement, which we distributed via our social media channels (e.g., LinkedIn, and X) and other networks (such as personal networks and society mailing lists). The survey was advertised during the Current Advances in Gambling Research 2024 (CAGR) conference in Amsterdam and the International Conference of Behavioral Addictions (ICBA) 2024 conference in Gibraltar. The survey was open to anyone who had the link or scanned the QR code. Data collection started on June 18th, 2024, and closed on August 31st, 2024.

Statistical analysis

We did not have an *a priori* data analysis plan or perform inferential statistical tests. Instead, we summarised responses to questions using tables and figures, highlighting variation between those at different career levels (ECRs vs. non-ECRs). We focused on this distinction as [1] there was approximately even representation between the two groups, [2] it was suggested that the open science movement has been largely led by ECRs and this allowed us to explore whether this was the case for the behavioural addictions field as well (Armeni et al., 2021; Gownaris et al., 2022), and [3] we were interested in identifying groups that may be slower to adopt the practices within the field and therefore represent a target for efforts aiming to encourage the adoption of open-science practices. For data visualization, we used RStudio and the packages *Hmisc* (version 5.1-3; Harrell, 2024), *Rmisc* (version 1.1.5; Hope, 2022), *tidyverse* (version 2.0.0; Wickham et al., 2019), *sysfonts* (version 0.8.9; Qiu, 2024a), and *showtext* (version 0.9-1; Qiu, 2024b).

Ethics

The study procedures were carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The study was approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia under the approval number H24-01596. All subjects were informed about the study and all provided informed consent.

RESULTS

For all analyses, we used the raw data as collected in the survey. We only excluded incomplete responses. We did not do a formal thematic analysis of the open-ended responses, but we refer to some representative individual responses in the Discussion section. Interested researchers are invited to inspect, reuse, and reanalyze the raw data themselves (access to the data: https://osf.io/8v7ep/files/5hyd4).

General use

Preregistration was the most frequently used open science practice among both ECRs (71%) and non-ECRs (81%, see Table 1). Among respondents who had previously used a practice, they mostly reported that they would use it again.

Table 1. Rates of current engagement with open science practices overall and by career status, ranked by overall frequency of engagement

Practice	Overall $N = 83^1$	ECR $N = 41^1$	Non-ECR $N = 42^1$
Preregistration	63 (76%)	29 (71%)	34 (81%)
Open Data	54 (65%)	27 (66%)	27 (64%)
Open Materials	51 (61%)	28 (68%)	23 (55%)
Preprints	46 (55%)	20 (49%)	26 (62%)
Open Code	40 (48%)	19 (46%)	21 (50%)
Replication Studies	25 (30%)	14 (34%)	11 (26%)
Registered Reports	9 (11%)	3 (7.3%)	6 (14%)
Tests of Reproducibility	2 (2.4%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.8%)
Systematic Protocols	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)
Open Peer Review	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)
Open Lab[2]	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)

[1] *n* (%);
[2] This was an open response and we assume Open Lab Notebooks were meant.

Practices that were not as frequently used (e.g., registered reports = 11% and replication studies = 30%) were those that most reported they would like to use in the future. In terms of reasons given for practising open science, the facilitation of replication, openness and transparency, and to make research available were the most common (see Fig. 1).

Frequency

As well as asking whether participants had any experience with the different options, we also asked the frequency with which they used each option, as an indicator of habitual research practices. Open data was used always or most of the time by 34% of all ECRs, and 21% of non-ECRs use open data always or most of the time. Open materials were used always or most of the time by 49% of all ECRs, and 23% of non-ECRs indicated to always or most of the time use open materials. In both ECRs (31%) and non-ECRs (21%), the minority indicated always or most of the time using open code. Of all ECRs, 29% used preregistration always or most of the time, and 30% of all non-ECRs used preregistration always or most of the time. Both registered reports and replication studies were much less frequently used than all other practices (in both career groups, 2% of all respondents used registered reports most of the time, and 5% of the ECRs used replication studies most of the time). One fifth of non-ECRs (21%) and ECRs (20%) indicated that they had used preprints most of the time or always. For more details, see online supplementary material (https://osf.io/56m4r). In general, descriptive differences were observed between career levels, but the main differences were found between the different practices.

Importance of each open science practice

In total, three-quarters of both groups indicated open data to be very important to extremely important. Notably, more than half of ECRs indicated open data to be extremely important. Only 24% of the non-ECRs indicated open data to be extremely important. When it comes to open materials, 86% of ECRs indicated this practice to be very to extremely important. Among non-ECRs, 69% found open materials to be very to extremely important. Of all ECRs, 59% indicated preregistrations to be very to extremely important, and 65% of the non-ECRs agreed with this practice. Only 24% of the non-ECRs indicated that registered reports are very to extremely important, and 41% of the ECRs thought that registered reports were very to extremely important. Of all non-ECRs, 61% indicated replication studies to be very to extremely important and 71% of all ECRs. In summary, most practices were perceived by all respondents to be important, with the exception of registered reports. Descriptively, ECRs valued all practices to be slightly more important than non-ECRs. For more details, see the online supplementary materials (https://osf.io/56m4r).

Types of engagement with open science practices

We asked people about how they engage with OS practices to gain a more granular understanding of engagement beyond just yes/no statements. We gave people the possibility to endorse different options that we came up with and report their own ways in the open responses. Most of the researchers who reported sharing data, shared processed/cleaned data (ECR 77%, non-ECR 63%). Of those sharing open materials, ECRs (85%) and non-ECRs (90%) shared stimuli and questionnaire items. Of those who used open code, ECRs (63%) and non-ECRs (65%) indicated that they had used reproducible code. In addition, 52% of ECRs and 40% of non-ECRs indicated that they had used open-source software, and 42% of the ECRs indicated that they annotated their code, whereas 60% of the non-ECRs who use open code indicated this. Most ECRs (89%) and non-ECRs (79%)

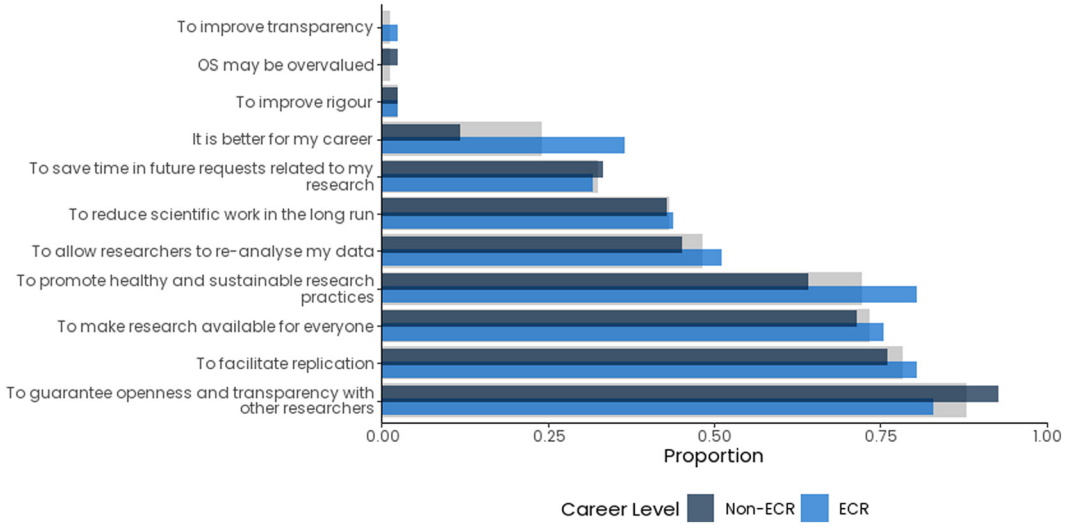

Fig. 1. Proportion of responses indicating reasons and attitudes to use open science. The grey bars indicate the proportion among the entire sample ($N = 83$), the dark blue bar indicates the proportion among more established researchers (Non-ECR, $N = 42$) and the light blue bar indicates the proportion among early career researchers (ECR, $N = 41$). The three responses with the lowest rates were open text responses to the "Other" option, and all others are from our fixed list of options we presented to participants

reported that they preregistered their studies on OSF. Generally, engagement with registered reports was low. When engaging with replication studies, non-ECRs (90%; ECR 50%) conducted replications of their own studies. When ECRs (57%; non-ECR 80%) engage with replications, they reported mostly conducting conceptual replications. Generally, the engagement with preprints was low, 50% of the ECRs and 61% of the more established researchers indicated that they update their preprint with every version. However, non-ECRs were more likely to report updating their preprint versions (61% vs. 50% for ECRs, see Fig. 2). For more details regarding the different ways participants reported engaging with individual practices, see online supplementary material (https://osf.io/56m4r).

Concerns

For open data, the biggest concerns in both groups were privacy and data protection issues (41% ECR, 50% non-ECR), as well as the fact that they might have done something wrong (53% ECR, 38% non-ECR). These were closely followed by the concern that someone could conduct analyses on the data that the original authors still wanted to conduct (36% ECR, 40% non-ECR). For open materials, among non-ECRs, 38% were worried that it was too much work to share materials. Among ECRs, 24% thought it was more work. A total of 31% of the non-ECRs and 29% of the ECRs were worried that other people's materials were copyrighted. For open code, the biggest concerns of ECRs were the fear of doing something wrong (48%) and that their code might be of poor quality (31%). The biggest concern of non-ECRs was that it is more work (30%, see Fig. 3).

The biggest concern regarding preregistration for both groups was that it would lead to more work (31% ECR, 40% non-ECR). Additionally, 23% of the non-ECRs and 19% of the ECRs fear that someone will steal their idea. The third biggest concern of both groups was that they did not know how to do it best (21% in both groups). The biggest concerns around registered reports in both groups were that it was more work (29% ECR, 42% non-ECR) and that not all journals offer this article format (31% ECR, 38% non-ECR). When it comes to replication studies, ECRs as well as non-ECRs were mainly concerned that replication studies were less publishable (53% ECR, 54% non-ECR) and that replication studies were considered less prestigious (53% ECR, 45% non-ECR).

For preprint behaviours, the three biggest concerns in ECRs and non-ECRs were that some journals might not publish the study if it already existed as a preprint (31% ECR, 38% non-ECR), that the paper was cited either for a result that was not in the final publication (26% ECR, 38% non-ECR), and that it might be cited even though it never made it to a peer-reviewed journal (29% ECR, 30% non-ECR).

Needs

Regardless of the open science practice, the four most mentioned structures needed to encourage open science were more time, more resources/knowledge, better incentives or mandates from funders, and better culture in the field around open science with respect to each practice (see online supplementary material https://osf.io/56m4r for more information; see Fig. 4).

DISCUSSION

The primary objective was to identify currently adopted open science practices in the study of behavioral addictions, motivations for their adoption, researchers' concerns, and the types of support researchers consider necessary. To this end, we developed an exploratory survey which was distributed to researchers in the field through professional

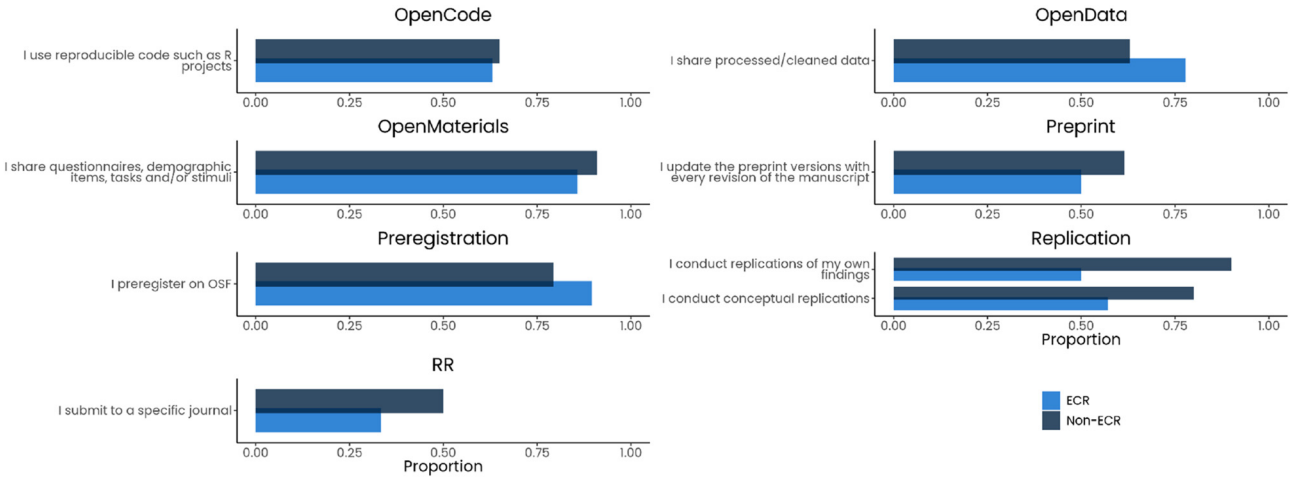

Fig. 2. Proportion of responses indicating how researchers engage with open science. The dark blue bar indicates the proportion among more established researchers (Non-ECR) and the light blue bar indicates the proportion among early career researchers (ECR) who already used the individual practice. Note the registered report (RR) engagement type of "I submit to a specific journal" refers to submitting a registered report to a known journal that accepts this type of article (other response options included: using PCI registered report and registered report templates)

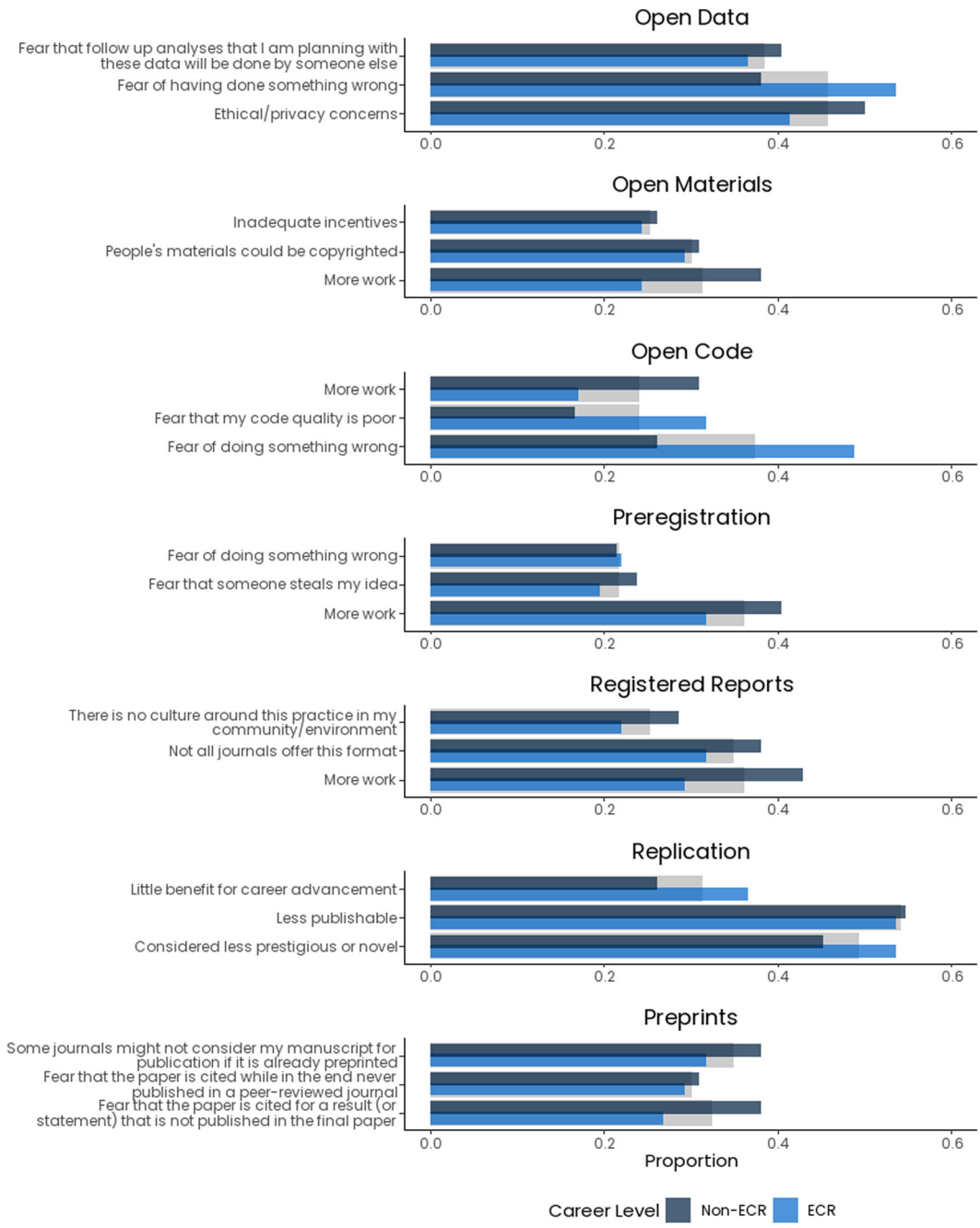

Fig. 3. Top three concerns mentioned per individual practice. The grey bars indicate the proportion among the entire sample ($N = 83$), the dark blue bar indicates the proportion among more established researchers (Non-ECR, $N = 42$) and the light blue bar indicates the proportion among early career researchers (ECR, $N = 41$)

networks, academic conferences, and social media platforms. We sought to gain a clearer understanding of the open science landscape in the field, with the ultimate goal of enhancing methodological rigor in the investigation, classification, and diagnosis of behavioral addictions. We had six subsets of questions about the general use, the frequency, the importance of open science practices, the engagement with open science practices, the concerns, and the needs related to open science practices.

Most respondents expressed a positive attitude toward open science practices. The most commonly used practices were preregistration (76%) and data sharing (65%). As a comparison, Silverstein et al. (2024) found Open Access (which we did not include in our survey; ~70%), FAIR data (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable Data; ~70%) and Open Materials (~60%) to be the most used practices. Similarly, Norris et al. (2022) found Open Access, preprints (56.5%) and Open Data (52.5%) to be the most used practices. Even within the gambling field, a behavioral addiction field, LaPlante et al. (2025) found that Open Data (46.1%) and Open Materials (49.2%) were used the most and preregistration for example was only used by 43% in 2023.

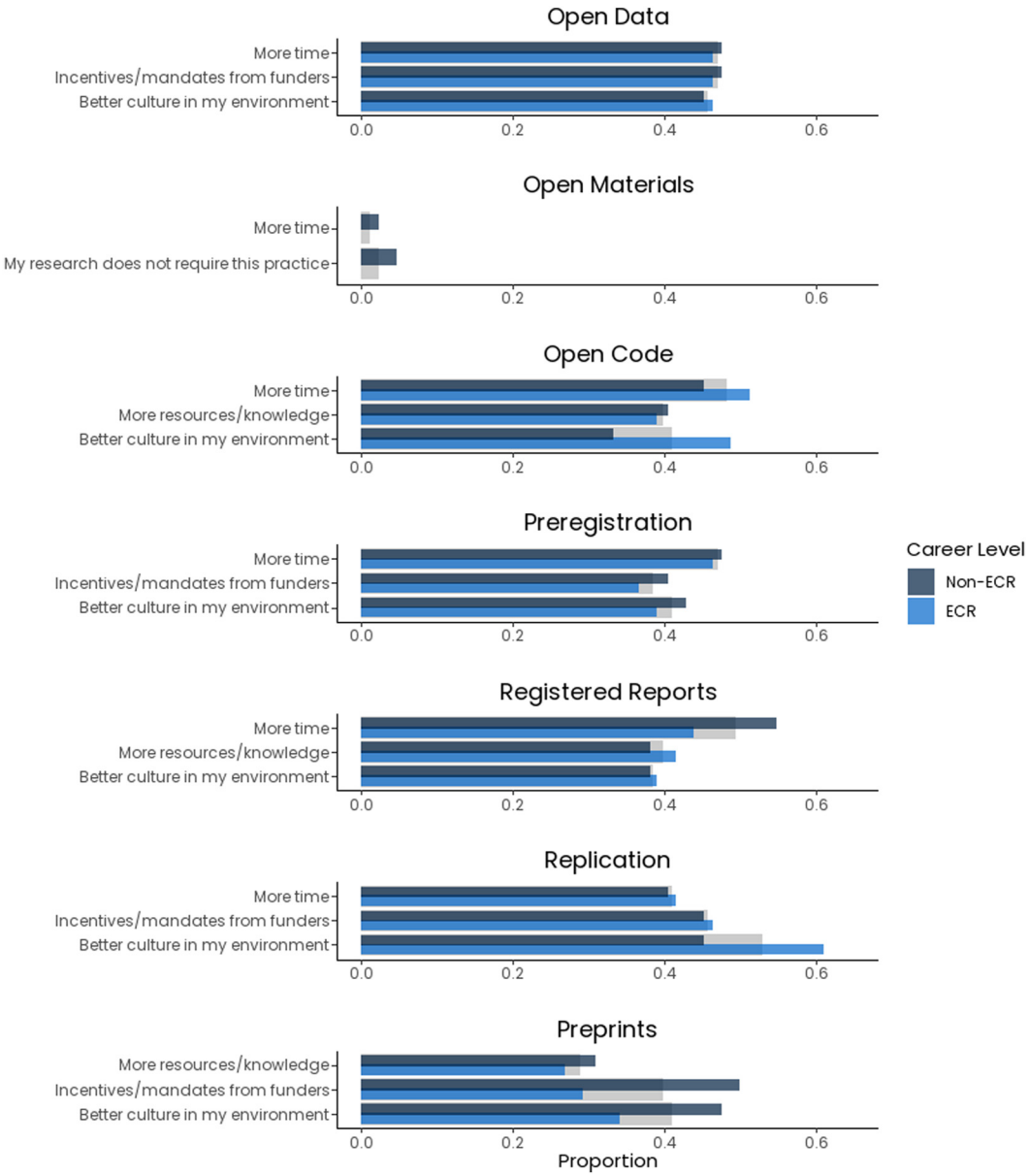

Fig. 4. Top three responses in relation to what researchers need to engage with the individual practice. The grey bars indicate the proportion among the entire sample ($N = 83$), the dark blue bar indicates the proportion among more established researchers (Non-ECR, $N = 42$) and the light blue bar indicates the proportion among early career researchers (ECR, $N = 41$)

Compared to those prevalence surveys, the use of preregistration seems to be very high, which could be a result of self-selection bias (see limitations section).

Our descriptive findings suggest that ECRs place greater importance on open science practices compared to their more established counterparts, indicating a potential cultural shift already underway. Established researchers' primary concerns appeared to center on the increased workload and insufficient incentives, whereas ECRs were mainly concerned about making mistakes or lacking the necessary knowledge to implement these practices effectively. It is important to note that some established researchers may have responded to indicate 'lab-wide' practices including their ECRs, while ECRs likely responded from their own perspectives. Our findings underscore how additional time, resources, incentives, and cultural support are needed by most respondents to facilitate the adoption of open science practices within their workflows. We also would like to note that the main reasons this sample indicated for engaging in open science practices seemed to be about "intrinsic motivation" (e.g., it potentially makes the research more robust and better), but most of the concerns/needs seem to be about the lack of "extrinsic motivation" (takes more time, lack of incentive etc.). Solely relying on the intrinsic motivations of individual researchers may mean that only the most motivated will choose to use open science practices. Without an incentive structure aligned with these practices, it will be difficult to bring about a change in the field.

Recommendations

To address the identified needs, action is required at multiple levels—by institutions, societies, journals and individuals. A first step involves transferring existing knowledge and experiences from subfields such as gambling studies to other areas within behavioral addictions. This can be achieved through the collective development of procedures and guidelines for implementing various open science practices. These efforts can be informed and enriched by initiatives from other disciplines, including the well-developed resources provided by FORRT.

We also urge institutions to support researchers across all career stages by offering training in data protection and research data management, for instance through data officers or open science offices. Such institutional support could help alleviate some of the ethical concerns around data sharing raised by our respondents. We encourage ECRs to explore the training opportunities available at their institutions and academic networks.

Within professional societies, conferences present key opportunities for open science training (Eben et al., 2023). Organizations such as the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Addictions (ISSBA) should contribute by organizing satellite events or workshops focused on integrating open science practices into researchers' workflows.

To facilitate the sharing of qualitative data, researchers are again encouraged to seek institutional support for example, through research data officers or dedicated research data management services (for a good example of institutional support, see https://www.ugent.be/en/research/openscience and their data steward efforts). Such support is essential for addressing ethical and practical challenges associated with managing and disseminating qualitative data in line with open science principles. Some of the open-ended responses we received expressed concerns about applying open science practices to qualitative research. As previously noted, preregistering qualitative studies presents unique challenges compared to quantitative research, but it is not unfeasible. Importantly, there is growing momentum in the field advocating for the preregistration of qualitative studies (e.g., Haven & Van Grootel, 2019; Karhulahti, 2022; van Rooij et al., 2018), as well as for the development of registered reports involving qualitative data (Karhulahti, Branney, Siutila, & Syed, 2023). Relatedly, Karhulahti (2025) recently proposed that researchers share their expectations regarding qualitative data as a way to disclose hypotheses without testing them, which may serve as a valuable approach in preregistration efforts.

While implementing those recommendations, we emphasize the need to avoid reinforcing the Matthew Effect, a phenomenon where advantage breeds further advantage, and disadvantage begets further disadvantage (Merton, 1968), in this context, in open science. Efforts must be made to ensure that open science is accessible, particularly for those from underprivileged backgrounds (see Ross-Hellauer et al., 2022, for a detailed discussion). This can be done through free and recorded open science workshops and talks to ensure participation across time zones when travel is not possible. Our survey responses indicate that most participants came from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) countries. However, as noted by Eben et al. (2023), researchers in non-WEIRD countries, who may face greater resource constraints, could stand to benefit the most from open science, even though it is often more difficult for them to implement these practices.

As reflected in our survey responses, we believe that the full implementation of open science practices in the field of behavioral addictions is likely to follow a bottom-up trajectory. Many ECRs are leading this shift by highlighting the personal and professional value they place on open science in this survey. However, to sustain and accelerate this change, established researchers must actively support these efforts. For instance, if established researchers feel they lack sufficient expertise in open science or its commonly used practices, we encourage them to collaborate with individuals with these skills. These collaborators can assist in gradually adopting open science practices and in supporting the broader research team. Established researchers should also enable their ECRs to access appropriate training opportunities, and where needed, provide funding for such efforts. We further encourage researchers to engage with their institutions to request support in research data management, for example through data officers or open science offices. If such support structures are not yet in place, we urge established researchers to advocate for their development. Institutional backing is essential for embedding open science practices more broadly and sustainably across the field.

Limitations

We acknowledge several limitations of this exploratory study. Most notably, our sample size was relatively small and likely influenced by self-selection bias. It is reasonable to assume that the majority of our respondents are researchers who already value open science and are committed to incorporating its practices into their workflows. This may also explain the predominance of participants from WEIRD countries and institutions. As previously noted, both the field of behavioral addictions and the open science movement within it must take proactive steps to engage and include researchers from non-WEIRD regions. Especially noticeable is that, although a substantial amount of research in the field of behavioral addictions is carried out in Asian countries, we lack survey responses from researchers from Asian institutions. Still, their perspectives are essential for ensuring that the transition toward more open, transparent, and rigorous science is inclusive and equitable.

Secondly, we emphasize that no inferential statistical analyses were conducted in this study. All findings are purely descriptive and exploratory in nature. As such, any comparisons between ECRs and more established researchers should be interpreted with caution. Our primary objective was to provide an initial overview of the use of open science practices within the field of behavioral addictions. Nonetheless, the dataset is rich, and we encourage other researchers to explore and reuse it for analyses of interest (https://osf.io/8v7ep/files/5hyd4). For future studies, we recommend more

targeted participant recruitment strategies to increase representation from non-WEIRD countries and ensure broader inclusion across career stages, ideally with a larger sample size. We also encourage follow-up research to employ preregistered hypotheses and appropriate inferential statistical methods to test our preliminary findings. In particular, we propose examining differences between ECRs and more established researchers in their adoption of open science practices, based on our observation that ECRs may be more inclined toward such practices. Additionally, our results suggest that ECRs and non-ECRs have distinct concerns and support needs when it comes to implementing open science practices in their research workflows.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study offers an initial insight into the use of open science practices within the field of behavioral addictions. Our findings indicate a general uptake of these practices, with early-career researchers appearing to be key drivers of this shift. However, to sustain and expand this momentum, individual researchers, institutions, and professional societies must strengthen their support systems. In particular, greater efforts are needed to equip the next generation of researchers with the resources and training necessary to foster a more open, transparent, and rigorous research culture in the field of behavioral addictions.

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