

Who Benefits from JACR?

It has been a special honor to serve as the inaugural editor in chief of the *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*. I am very pleased that Angela Lee, who has been an active supporter of the journal since its conception, will take over my role. I use this occasion to examine the impact that JACR has had in integrating the diverse culture at ACR, and to assess its influence on so many people and organizations. We can be very proud of what we have accomplished, even though there remain challenges as JACR continues to evolve.

More than eight years ago, an ACR task force asked how we could expand the publishing opportunities for its members. That task force had Don Lehmann and me as co-chairs, and Jonathan Levav, Debbie MacInnis, Page Moreau, Rick Pieters, Linda Price, and Norbert Schwarz as members. After examining a number of new journal options that reflected the needs of ACR members from different interest groups, ACR decided to launch a quarterly journal where each issue would be vetted by top scholars and would focus on a particular theme. The goal was to facilitate the introduction of constructs and methods from other disciplines that would deepen ACR's research vision, and to encourage articles from consumer behavior that could be adopted by other disciplines. The first call for papers went out in 2014, resulting in the publication two years later of "The Behavioral Science of Eating." Since then we have published 14 issues, with nine more scheduled within two years.

A SURPRISING BREADTH OF TOPICS

Table 1 provides the full list, displaying a surprising breadth of topics and a gratifying display of ACR's best talent serving as editors. The 23 issues shown there can be roughly conceptualized as coming primarily from four research categories: (1) established, (2) emerging, (3) subgroup, or (4) managerial articles. Each of these categories has its own advantages and disadvantages.

The largest group explores topics that are currently doing well in the mainstream journals. These special issues examine *established* theory that can be found in the top jour-

nals in our field. Examples of established topics include "Embodied Cognition" (fall 2017), "Goals and Motivation" (winter 2019), "Consumer Emotions" (spring 2019), and the "Prosocial Consumer" (winter 2020). The risk of pursuing articles in this category lies in the difficulty of attracting top scholars who could provide strong contributions in relatively mature research areas.

The second category of special issues introduces an *emerging* idea, one that has the potential to generate a new stream of research in the future but is less well known by many ACR members. The difficulty here is determining how to generate sufficient interest in a problem that introduces novel research techniques or unfamiliar concepts. Examples of emerging issues are "Hedonistic Consumption" (fall 2016), "Habit-Driven Consumer" (summer 2017), "Resource Valuation" (winter 2017), "Scarcity" (fall 2020), "Extraordinary Beliefs" (fall 2018), and "Longitudinal Effects" (summer 2020). Like risky ventures for a company, these special issues are critical if ACR is to generate exciting ideas or new ways of thinking. Because of the novelty of this category, JACR has the difficult task of attracting contributors and successfully modifying ideas arising from less known research traditions.

A third category of special issues focuses on ideas that are enthusiastically embraced by a relatively small *subgroup* within ACR. Such researchers may be less likely to publish in mainstream consumer and marketing journals, but they sponsor enthusiastic special sessions at ACR conferences and publish in focused journals. Examples of subgroup special issues include "Consumer Ownership and Sharing" (spring 2016), "Everyday Aesthetics" (fall 2019), "Genders" (spring 2021), and "Addiction" (summer 2021). These topics are important because they enable greater awareness and acceptance of diverse research pathways within the ACR community.

Finally, the fourth category of special issues embraces topics that apply consumer behavior thinking to *managerial* issues. Research articles with substantial managerial implications are less likely to be featured at ACR meetings, but since so many ACR members work in business schools, such

Table 1. Themes and Editors for the First 23 *JACR* Issues

Issue/Publication	Theme	Editors
1.1 / Winter 2016	The Behavioral Science of Eating	Koert van Ittersum, Brian Wansink
1.2 / Spring 2016	Consumer Ownership and Sharing	Linda L. Price, Russell W. Belk
1.3 / Summer 2016	Consumer Response to Regulation	David W. Stewart, Debra L. Scammon
1.4 / Fall 2016	The Science of Hedonistic Consumption	Angela Y. Lee, Kathleen D. Vohs
2.1 / Winter 2017	Resource Valuation	Chris Janiszewski, Luk Warlop
2.2 / Spring 2017	The Consumer in a Connected World	John Deighton, Jacob Goldenberg, Andrew Stephen
2.3 / Summer 2017	The Habit-Driven Consumer	Aimee Drolet, Wendy Wood
2.4 / Fall 2017	Embodied Cognition, Sensory Marketing, and the Conceptualization of Consumers' Judgment and Decision Processes	Aradhna Krishna, Spike W. S. Lee, Xiuping Li, Norbert Schwarz
3.1 / Winter 2018	Risky Consumption	Cait Lamberton, Ronald Paul Hill
3.2 / Spring 2018	Brand Relationships, Emotions, and the Self	C. Whan Park, Debbie MacInnis
3.3 / Summer 2018	Consumer Response to the Evolving Retailing Landscape	Barbara E. Kahn, Jeff Inman, Peter C. Verhoef
3.4 / Fall 2018	The Science of Extraordinary Beliefs	Pankaj Aggarwal, Lauren Block, Thomas Kramer, Ann L. McGill
4.1 / Winter 2019	Goals and Motivation	Uzma Khan, Ayelet Fishbach, Ravi Dhar
4.2 / Spring 2019	Consumer Emotions in the Marketplace	Michel Tuan Pham, Leonard Lee
4.3 / Summer 2019	Consumer Response to Big Innovations	Page Moreau, Stacy Wood
4.4 / Fall 2019	Everyday Consumer Aesthetics: Transformative Directions for Aesthetics in Everyday Life	Vanessa M. Patrick, Laura Peracchio, Claudia Townsend
5.1 / Winter 2020	The Prosocial Consumer	Darren Dahl, Katherine White
5.2 / Spring 2020	Trust in Doubt: Consuming in a Post-truth World	Andrew Gershoff, Robert V. Kozinets, Tiffany White
5.3 / Summer 2020	Longitudinal Effects and Consumption	Pradeep Chintagunta, Aparna Labroo
5.4 / Fall 2020	Scarcity and Consumer Decision Making	Kelly Goldsmith, Vlad Griskevicius, Rebecca Hamilton
6.1 / Winter 2021	Behavioral Pricing	Lisa Bolton, Haiping (Allan) Chen, David Hardesty, Akshay Rao
6.2 / Spring 2021	Genders, Markets, and Consumers	Catherine Coleman, Eileen Fischer, Linda Tuncay Zayer
6.3 / Summer 2021	Addiction and Maladaptive Consumption	Shailendra Pratap Jain, Martin Reimann

articles can provide access to exciting insights from *JACR* for their teaching. Examples of managerial issues include the “Connected Consumer” (spring 2017), “Brands and the Self” (spring 2018), “Evolving Retail Landscape” (summer 2018), and “Behavioral Pricing” (winter 2021).

This diversity in topics for special issues was planned from the start of *JACR*, but we had no clear idea about which categories would be more successful. Indeed, examining both Google citation rates and downloads, we find successful and unsuccessful topics in all four categories. In

fact, there is far more variance within than across categories. I am personally humbled by my inability to correctly predict the success of an upcoming issue. That uncertainty should be expected. *JACR* is an experimental laboratory, one that tests different research ideas and facilitates progressive adoption of those that work best. Further, even though the four categories seem distinct, all the issues will have several papers that easily cross into other categories.

In summary, it is helpful to think of *JACR* as a thriving community of heterogeneous researchers. *JACR* then facil-

itates ways to integrate and improve the productivity of these diverse scholars. It can help the established researchers to publish in areas that may otherwise be seen as mature. It gives voice to researchers with novel ideas or methods imported from other disciplines. Finally, it enables those with focused or idiosyncratic research goals to share their thinking with those within and beyond the ACR community. In short, *JACR*'s variety parallels the way ACR's meetings and conferences support the diversity that makes it such a vibrant collective body.

JACR is designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of ACR members. As an indication of the extent to which ACR has achieved that desired breadth, out of about 2,000 ACR members, more than 700 have edited an issue, submitted an article, or reviewed articles for *JACR* over the last four years. Further, for every two contributors from ACR to the journal, there is one nonmember contributor. Thus, we can be proud of the active support of *JACR* by those both inside and outside the ACR community.

THE *JACR* TEAM

Next, it is useful to consider the impact of ACR on those tasked with delivering the journal. What is the effect of *JACR* on its editors, authors, reviewers, and its publisher?

Editors: Approximately 60 scholars have edited or soon will edit a special issue. Editors expressed their excitement but also their concerns when they initially discussed their plans for their special issue. Later, after publication, they are debriefed to provide feedback on the processes that they used, what worked well, and what could be improved. A common challenge expressed by almost all editors was how to recruit a sufficient number of articles by the submission deadline. To encourage submissions, editors send between 30 and 50 personal emails to scholars who are likely to submit papers. Those solicitations require follow-up emails and calls that try to match the recipient's talent and expertise to the needs of the special issue. The quarterly call for papers that announces the issue encourages potential contributors to send an abstract for a possible paper. These abstracts are valuable, allowing editors to discourage inappropriate submissions and to shape those that are more likely to get through. Further, a number of editors hold recruiting sessions or small conferences to generate interest and excitement before the submission deadline. Early on, many editors expressed difficulty in processing articles in a short time period. In 2017 *JACR* increased the time from submission to publication from 12 to 15 months. With that extra time, editors with five or more conditionally accepted articles within six months

of publication can encourage joint discussion among those authors by organizing a mini-conference or posting articles on a file-sharing system. That process enables authors to receive suggestions, generate new perspectives, and transform a collection of articles into a more integrated publication.

While all the editors have found the *JACR* process challenging, they have also expressed pride in what they were able to achieve, and satisfaction with their personal relationships with those researchers brought together to explore and expand an exciting research topic.

Authors: Authors gain in ways that are unique to *JACR*, largely because of the direct impact of the issue editors. Authors who submit but are not ultimately published often experience a shorter and less agonizing process. Those who succeed have a publication whose editor-focused review process delivers greater speed and effectiveness. Additionally, by also taking part in the review process or attending editor-sponsored conferences, authors gain critical knowledge about the topic and the people involved in it. Externally, by being part of a thematic topic, authors can become associated with a growing area.

University of Chicago Press: The Press plays a critical role in the success of *JACR*. All book and journal publishers struggle to compete in a world shaken by the complex changes in electronic publication. As editor in chief, I was amazed by the extent to which all parties at the Press worked to overcome the challenges of launching a new journal. ACR agreed to fund the start-up costs of a journal, primarily by raising its membership dues and including *JACR* subscription as a benefit of membership. Thus, each ACR member receives four colorful copies of *JACR* each year. In addition, ACR provides support for special issues by providing space and publicity at its many conferences. For its part, the Chicago Press has enthusiastically risen to the challenge of a new, thematically oriented journal. This unique format requires the training of new teams of editors every three months that establish procedures to keep each team on schedule and on target. The major operational burden rests on the able shoulders of the managing editor, James Ellis. His considerable processing skills, unflagging good humor, and amazing attention to detail have earned consistent praise from all who deal with him. In addition, the Chicago Press editorial, publicity, and systems staff have been instrumental in adjusting their work patterns to the ever-changing demands of *JACR*. The Press has also worked particularly well with *JACR* to develop and improve its electronic delivery via its website, its editorial management system, and online appendixes.

REMAINING CHALLENGES

There are three areas where *JACR* has not been as successful as we had hoped. We had planned to encourage direct input and regular discussions from managers or public policy experts. Journals such as *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, and *Marketing Science* have also tried to encourage such input, with disappointing results. Still, the special-issue format of *JACR* puts it in a better position to attract input from those who would use the insights from our research.

Second, it has been difficult for *JACR* to introduce unfamiliar methods to analyze data, such as structural equation modeling, neuroscience, or aggregate consumer response to web-based strategies. It is difficult to present new methods in a way that helps consumer researchers understand the elegant mathematics and analysis that often characterizes these disciplines.

Finally, we must do a better job of publicizing *JACR*'s articles. Some editor teams, working through their universities' publicity departments and drawing on their scholarly and professional networks, have done a great job of modifying the external abstracts for some of the published articles and sending them to journals or other media outlets that have picked up the idea. In addition, the Chicago Press

opens up one article per issue to free circulation and has begun issuing one press release per issue. Though still in its infancy, *JACR* has managed to catch the attention of many major media outlets. However, it is necessary for the ACR to supplement such activities by building publicity capabilities not just for *JACR*, but for all of its activities.

In summary, it is an honor and a pleasure to have been the editor in chief of *JACR*. It has greatly broadened my knowledge and respect for so many people within ACR. It is a vibrant community that displays so many different skills and abilities. We share a gratifying level of risk taking, cooperation, and willingness to do the hard work that has enabled *JACR* to progress so far.

Going forward, Angela Lee will have the help of an outstanding Policy Board comprised of Donna Hoffman (chair), Stacy Wood, Pierre Chandon, Kathleen Vohs, Darren Dahl, and Rob Kozinets. This team has supported the venture in so many positive ways as spokespersons, editors, reviewers, and authors. They will continue to make *JACR* the most successful consumer behavior publication start-up in the last 20 years.

Joel Huber
Editor in Chief