
"Journal of Marketing Research": Looking Forward

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Journal of Marketing Research (JMR) has a storied history as one of the preeminent journals in the marketing discipline. This position has enabled *JMR* to leverage and attract the best manuscripts from authors who seek a broad audience. Suggestions for improvements in five specific areas are discussed: competitive landscape, evolution in the theory and practice of marketing, stakeholder management, managing manuscripts, and improving credibility. Such improvements can be achieved with sustained effort and input from authors, reviewers, associate editors, and coeditors.

Journal of Marketing Research: Looking Forward

Since the inception of the *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)* in 1964, the vision of founding editor Robert Ferber has endured. This vision has inspired *JMR* to publish the best research in marketing over the past 50+ years. The journal embraces all paradigms, representing a broad spectrum of substantive areas and utilizing all methodological foci. This tradition has grown under the stewardship of distinguished marketing scholars and educators who have served as past editors (see Table 1). Humbled and privileged to be among such a revered group, I intend to build on this tradition. I want to thank the outgoing Editor in Chief, Robert Meyer, for his support and guidance and for inviting me to serve as a coeditor of the journal during his leadership.

From its initial roots in practice-oriented consumer and market research (Ferber 1967; Morrison 2014; Wyner 2014), *JMR* has evolved to emphasize “theory-based work that matters for firms, consumers, and policy makers” (Huber and Erdem 2014, p. 134). Relative to other premier marketing journals, *JMR* is viewed as having a “more eclectic conceptual and methodological foundation and a stronger ‘engineering’ or ‘technology’ focus on solving real and practical problems” (Kamakura 2014, p. 131). I am in full agreement with outgoing Editor in Chief Robert Meyer that *JMR* is equivalent to the *American Economic Review* in the field of marketing. The journal attracts authors who are central to the discipline and have broad appeal (Huber, Kamakura, and Mela 2014). My goal is to fully leverage *JMR*’s central position to carry out the following goals:

- Ensure that no sudden or dramatic changes affect the journal’s esteemed reputation created by past editors;

- Attract and publish, on an ongoing basis, the best manuscripts representing behavioral, managerial, and quantitative (in alphabetical order) research; and
- Reinforce *JMR* as the journal of first choice among authors who seek a broad audience.

I can report that *JMR*, by all measures, is a healthy and vibrant journal. Like other successful enterprises, we seek and strive to further improve the publication while meeting the aforementioned goals. As outlined next, the suggested improvements in *JMR* emanate from several areas: (1) the competitive landscape, (2) evolution in the theory and practice of marketing, (3) stakeholder management, (4) managing manuscripts, and (5) improving credibility.

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

The competitive landscape of *JMR* is being shaped by several forces, including, but not limited to, (1) an increased number of journals, (2) digitization of publishing, and (3) the meshing of disciplines. As I discuss subsequently, *JMR* will continue to evolve to meet these challenges.

As marketing has matured as a discipline, we have seen a proliferation of journals and a corresponding increase in the number of articles published in the premier marketing journals (including *JMR*). This increase has resulted in the emergence of journals whose missions differ from that of *JMR*. Some journals focus on publishing shorter papers with a fast review process, while others focus on methodological and/or topical specialization. As a traditional premier marketing outlet with a broad scope, *JMR* must compete with these newer journals. To attract quality submissions that authors may consider for specialty journals, as well as other premier journals, I will strive to ensure that each article is reviewed on its merits by domain as well as methodological experts. For example, the review team for a submission on an analytical model of online advertising would include

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Table 1
PAST EDITORS: *JOURNAL OF MARKETING RESEARCH*

Editor	Tenure
Robert Ferber	1964–1969
Ralph Day	1969–1972
Frank Bass	1972–1975
Harper Boyd	1975–1978
Gilbert Churchill	1978–1982
William Perreault	1983–1985
Robert Peterson	1986–1988
Michael Houston	1988–1991
Barton Weitz	1992–1994
Vijay Mahajan	1995–1997
Russell S. Winer	1997–2000
Wagner A. Kamakura	2000–2003
Dick R. Wittink	2003–2005
Russell S. Winer	2005–2006
Joel Huber	2006–2009
Tülin Erdem	2009–2012
Robert Meyer	2012–2016

an associate editor and reviewers who are experts in online advertising and/or analytic models. In fact, the team of associate editors and editorial review board members reflect the breadth of current and future submissions that *JMR* seeks. Thus, *JMR* will seek to attract authors in niche areas by ensuring an evaluation process that is timely, caters to specialized research needs, and is useful in helping improve their research.

The digitization of publications is making it easier to launch online-only journals. Although such journals, I believe, do not pose a threat to *JMR* in the short run, they do highlight *JMR*'s need for a digital strategy. Such a development and implementation would be under the purview of the Vice President of Publications of the American Marketing Association. Working with that position, I will seek to build on two opportunities:

- First, we will encourage authors to make available supporting submission materials, such as experimental stimuli and codes of programs, as supplementary files when articles are downloaded. This feature should help future research scholars replicate and enhance their research.
- Second, *JMR* could reach a wider audience through a variety of techniques, including press releases, social-media marketing, and wider dissemination of research through direct-mail campaigns. These opportunities should help authors increase the impact of their research beyond fellow scholars.

With cooperation and support from the American Marketing Association, *JMR* has undertaken steps to reach a wider audience using social-media platforms. I encourage all contributors, readers, and scholars to help with this initiative, and I would appreciate hearing from any volunteers by e-mail.

Thanks to the integration of marketing with more basic disciplines such as economics, psychology, and statistics, we see marketing scholars publishing in the basic disciplines and leading scholars from basic disciplines publishing in marketing. *JMR* has been a benefactor of this cross- and multi-disciplinary trend, publishing articles by leading scholars from economics (Petrin and Train 2010), psychology (Petty and Cacioppo 1996), and statistics (Gilula, McCullough, and Rossi 2006), as well as by Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman (e.g., Novemsky and Kahneman 2005). This intermingling of

scholarship benefits the reputation of *JMR*, and I will do my best to ensure that this trend continues.

EVOLUTION IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MARKETING

Since my days as a doctoral student, marketing scholarship has changed in one major way: we no longer toil in a data-scarce world. In fact, there is currently an overabundance of data available to marketing scholars. While this situation creates opportunities, it also lays the burden on marketing scholars to ask questions that are important and not merely data driven. Such questions come from many dimensions and address issues that vex numerous stakeholders—consumers, consumer advocates, marketing managers, and policy makers, among others. Questions become important when answers are not obvious, underlying mechanisms are not apparent, and/or boundary conditions are obscure. Important questions inspire scholars to push methodological boundaries to glean insights from existing and new forms of data. Important questions raise issues that push the frontiers of established theories, inspire scholars to develop new theories, uncover empirical generalizations and data patterns, and provide fresh (causal) evidence for or against existing beliefs. For example, Anderson et al. (2010) exploit the notion that retailers do not have to pay sales tax unless they own a physical store in a region to study whether collecting sales taxes has a negative impact on Internet and catalog sales. Likewise, Lewis and Rao (2015) conduct large-scale field experiments to assess the returns on online advertising.

A need exists to broaden the scope of problems studied and push beyond traditional marketing concepts and methodologies to research questions whose importance rests in the phenomenon examined, the depth of the context (industry or application), and questions asked from the vantage point of critical stakeholders. For example, Zhang (2010) utilizes data from the U.S. kidney market to study observational learning. Similarly, Galak, Small, and Stephen (2011) show that in microlending, lenders favor individual borrowers over consortiums of borrowers and also favor borrowers that are socially proximate to themselves. These studies go beyond the traditional paradigms to broaden the concept of marketing to new domains, industries, contexts, issues, problems, and questions. The use of diverse contexts enables scholars to develop contextualized models that exploit the institutional features of these contexts to provide rich, deep, and substantive insights that shed new light on extant marketing theories and phenomena. In particular, institutional details can provide strong and valid instruments and thereby overcome Leamer's (1983) critique.

Along similar lines, as the practice of marketing has evolved, *JMR* has helped guide the introduction and documentation of methodologies that can enrich the scope of practitioners. For example, breadth can be seen in articles on netnography (Kozinets 2002), historical research (Golder 2000), construct measurement (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001), and econometric analysis (Luan and Sudhir 2010), among others. Similarly, depth is evident from studies that examine endogeneity of marketing decisions such as the control function approach (Petrin and Train 2010) and slope endogeneity issues (Luan and Sudhir 2010). In my view, research is still needed in areas such as proposing new methodologies for analyzing massively large data sets, establishing causality, and understanding unstructured data, among others.

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

The tension between the core *JMR* stakeholders—academics and managers—has been exemplified in the sustained debate over the importance of academic rigor versus managerial relevance in published research (Wyner 2014). To those who pose the question of which is more important, rigor or relevance, *JMR* suggests both. *JMR* strives to publish rigorous research that is of relevance to a diverse set of managerial interests, such as marketing analysts, data scientists, sales managers, communication directors, chief marketing officers, technology officers, and chief executive officers.

Adding to this group, an even larger and diverse set of stakeholders has claimed stake to the findings of core marketing journals. Policy makers associated with regulating markets and industries, financial analysts, and employee and consumer advocates are a few of the stakeholders claiming rigor and relevance from marketing scholars. These stakeholders expect scholars to seek both relevance in the ethical and social impact of decisions they or other such stakeholders make and rigor in creative approaches of framing, measuring, and managing their decisions.

An important and useful approach in providing a voice to different stakeholders is to devote special issues to topics, areas, and goals of interest to them. At present, I have not committed to any special issues; I welcome and strongly encourage special-issue proposals based on any variety of topics, themes, and areas. When instituted, a special issue will go through the regular *JMR* review process. Guest associate editors and reviewers may be recruited as needed to achieve the goals of the special issue.

MANAGING MANUSCRIPTS

In 2017, we expect close to 700 new submissions, for a total of approximately 900 overall submissions (including revisions) that the editorial office will process. Aside from the large volume, the manuscripts submitted to *JMR* are also diverse in terms of their theoretical bases (e.g., economics, psychology, sociology, statistics); substantive areas (behavioral, managerial, quantitative); domains (health care, industrial marketing, social media); and methodological approaches, in terms of both data (experimental, observational, and analytical tools) and models (e.g., statistical, econometric, structural, analytical). *JMR* seeks and thrives on this diversity. Naturally, the review process is structured to manage this diversity.

JMR will continue the coeditor structure that Robert Meyer has put in place. On that note, I am thankful to Sachin Gupta (Cornell University) and Rebecca Hamilton (Georgetown University) for agreeing to serve as coeditors. I intend to further improve the process to ensure quality, fairness, and timeliness of reviews. Details on the journal governance and the manuscript-handling process are available from the journal website (<http://bit.ly/JMR-Grewal-editor-perspective>). I encourage everyone to read them and provide feedback.

Ensuring that a “right” review team oversees the appropriate submission can facilitate the objectives of quality, fairness, and timeliness. With the diversity of papers submitted to *JMR*, it is critically important to identify the correct set of experts in order to evaluate each submission in a balanced manner to maximize the goals of quality, fairness, and timeliness. The correct set of experts serves as associate editor and reviewers

on the manuscript. This process of review team selection is informed by author recommendations. In addition, the coeditors seek the recommendations from the associate editors, who in most cases are closer to the focus of the submission than the managing coeditor. Thus, I encourage authors to heedfully recommend associate editors and reviewers according to their expertise in various aspects of their research.

Although *JMR* strives to nurture and develop exceptional ideas and manuscripts, not all submitted manuscripts are published; in fact, fewer than 10% of submissions are eventually published. As part of our editorial responsibility, we find ourselves writing rejection letters and being the bearer of disappointing news most of the time. However, we do strive to give every submission a fair chance insofar that rejection decisions are made for the right reasons, and in this way, the reviews are helpful to the authors. In this regard, I have instituted a reject–resubmit decision option available to coeditors. This option can be used for manuscripts that have important but underdeveloped ideas and do not survive the review process in their current form. Furthermore, *JMR* will be risk-seeking in the first round of reviews, during which time we will invite revisions for somewhat underdeveloped manuscripts. In contrast, if a clear path to publication is not evident in the second round, we will be conservative and make the hard decision to reject the manuscript. While it is always discouraging to have a paper rejected, an author may be better off with a second-round rejection than a rejection in later rounds. Such an approach will provide authors with an opportunity to respond to reviewers without taking them down a nonconverging path to publication.

IMPROVING CREDIBILITY

Meyer (2015, p. 577) astutely discusses the idea that well-publicized research improprieties threaten “the legitimacy of our academic research enterprise.” More than ever, the research enterprise needs transparency while a manuscript is crafted, during the process of review, and after the manuscript is published. The American Marketing Association has developed a set of reporting and disclosure policies, available at <http://bit.ly/AMA-editorial-policy>. I encourage you to read them.

Policies and procedures, however, can only go so far in maintaining and enhancing credibility. The onus rests on us—authors, reviewers, and editors—to ensure that utmost care is taken in understanding and reporting the mundane aspects of manuscripts. The ability for future scholars to replicate the key content of a research project reported in a manuscript is vital to maintaining and enhancing credibility. I urge authors to provide and share details on data collection procedures, stimuli, and codes with web appendices, as Meyer (2015) recommends. Whenever possible, I will encourage authors to share data. Web appendices will be available when readers download electronic versions of the articles from online archives such as EBSCO. I urge all of us to give paramount importance to confirming the propriety, sanctity, and credibility of the research endeavor.

CONCLUSION

JMR is, and will continue to be, the leading journal in the marketing discipline. In serving the journal, I intend to focus

on the five specific areas initially outlined: (1) the competitive landscape, (2) evolution in the theory and practice of marketing, (3) stakeholder management, (4) managing manuscripts, and (5) improving credibility. Changes and improvements in each of these areas rely on the collective efforts of authors, reviewers, associate editors, and coeditors.

JMR's history bears witness that each stakeholder group has shouldered its responsibility with a deep sense of ownership and pride over the years. This approach has enabled the journal to navigate all sorts of changes—positive and negative—and emerge stronger. My association with the journal as an author, member of the review team, and now editor in chief gives me great confidence that the journal will continue its upward trajectory.

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