

Comparing *Journal of Consumer Psychology* and *Journal of Consumer Research*

Anat Alon

*Department of Marketing
Boston University*

Maureen Morrin

*Department of Marketing
University of Pittsburgh*

Nada Nasr Bechwati

*Department of Business Administration
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

The *Journal of Consumer Psychology (JCP)* was created in 1992 partly in response to what was interpreted by some as a shift in the methodological focus of the *Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)*. *JCR* began to increase its accommodation of postmodern approaches, compared to more positivistic approaches. *JCP*'s mission was thus perceived by some to be more methodologically homogeneous, with a greater focus on traditional experimental psychology in the domain of consumer behavior. Is *JCR* really more methodologically diverse than *JCP*? In what other ways are the two journals similar or different? This article attempts to answer these questions with an in-depth analysis of the articles published in both journals from 1992 to 1998. The articles are reviewed in terms of overall output, authorship, content, research design, and data analysis. Conclusions and implications are included.

The *Journal of Consumer Psychology (JCP)*, which published its first issue in 1992, came into being at a time when the number of researchers in the field of consumer research was growing (Lutz, 1991). From the outset, *JCP*'s stated goal has been to publish research that will "contribute to our understanding of consumer psychology in all of its domains and all of its forms" by encouraging scholars "of widely divergent backgrounds and orientations" to submit "both experimental and nonexperimental studies that report original data, as well as theoretical, methodological, and review articles" (*JCP*, Vol. 1, No. 1, back cover). Interestingly, *JCP*'s statement of purpose is similar in many respects to that of the *Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)*; Frank, 1974; Monroe, 1991), which was launched over two decades ago and is considered by many researchers in the field as the premiere journal of consumer research.

Although *JCP*'s stated goal seems quite similar to that of *JCR*, *JCP*'s *raison d'être* has been perceived by some as not simply being an alternative outlet for publication of consumer research. That is, *JCP* is not generally viewed as simply a "me too" journal. Instead, the journal has been perceived by many as having a research focus somewhat different from that of *JCR*. Specifically, *JCP* has been perceived by some as having been created partly in response to what was interpreted as a shift in the methodological focus of *JCR* in the last decade or so. During that time, *JCR* began to increase its accommodation of postmodern approaches, compared to more positivistic approaches (Hunt, 1991), perhaps in response to growing calls for such an accommodation by leading members of its professional organization, the Association of Consumer Research (see, e.g., Hirschman, 1991). In comparison to *JCR*, *JCP*'s mission was thus perceived by many to be more methodologically homogeneous, with a greater focus on traditional experimentalism, as opposed to other approaches such as postmodernism. To our knowledge, this assumption has not been empirically tested. Neither have other issues of compari-

son between the two journals, such as the extent to which they publish articles on the same or different topics, or the extent to which its authors come from diverse disciplines of interest. Thus, at present, we do not know whether *JCP* acts as a supplement or a complement to *JCR*. *JCP* recently reached a significant milestone by having published a total of over 100 articles since its inception. This, combined with the start of a new millennium, suggested it was an appropriate time for pausing to assess the degree to which the *JCP*'s editorial objectives are being met and to examine its mission and positioning, especially in relation to *JCR*. How does *JCP* compare to *JCR*, the leading journal in consumer research? Is *JCP* just a "me too" journal, essentially a clone of *JCR*, or does it have a unique mission and focus? Is *JCP* really less diverse, in terms of methodology, than *JCR*? Are there ways in which *JCP* is more diverse than *JCR*? In what other ways are the two journals similar or different? This review seeks to address these questions.

This article consists of an in-depth review of the articles published in *JCP* and *JCR* from 1992 to 1998. The review is intended to provide perspective on key differences and similarities between the journals, as well as on trends that may indicate where these journals are headed—in terms of research focus and overall stature within the discipline. We focus on issues such as output, authorship, content, research design, and data analysis. To our knowledge, this article constitutes the first major attempt to review *JCP*. However, researchers have previously assessed *JCR*'s impact (e.g., Zinkhan, Roth, & Saxton, 1992)—for example, in terms of its level of diversity (Leong, 1989; Tellis, Chandy, & Ackerman, 1999). Tellis et al. (1999) conducted a citation analysis from which they concluded that "*JCR*, which strives to be diverse, appears not to achieve its goal" (p. 120). In their review, Tellis et al. (1999) chose to compare *JCR* with other journals that are considerably broader in nature (*Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Marketing Science*) as they cover marketing topics other than consumer behavior (e.g., distribution and logistics, quantitative models, sales force management issues, etc.). In this article, by choosing to focus the comparison on *JCP* and *JCR*, we are able to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the published research. In addition, we adopt a more multidimensional view of diversity than that applied in previous comparisons, several of which have been based on citation analyses. In this research, we investigate how diverse a journal is within its own subdiscipline—namely, within the field of consumer research (vs. marketing, more broadly). We assess diversity on a number of measures such as methodological approach and author affiliation. Each of these issues is discussed later, followed by a concluding section on implications.

OUTPUT AND AUTHORSHIP

During its initial 7-year life span, *JCP* published a total of 117 articles, written by over 198 different authors. In that time, the journal published four issues annually (with the exception of 1994, when two issues were published). The typical issue of

JCP contained four to five 22-page articles written by two co-authors. During the same period, *JCR* published nearly a third more articles ($n = 269$). However, the average number of articles contained in a typical issue of *JCR* fell rather dramatically during that time period ($M = 12.25$ from 1992 to 1994; $M = 7.625$ from 1995 to 1998). This may have been the result of the creation of *JCP* as an alternative outlet for consumer behavior research, or other factors such as changing editorial policies and directions at *JCR*. Not only were there more articles published in *JCR* in the 1992 to 1998 time span, the average article length was somewhat longer. The average number of pages in a typical *JCR* article was 14, compared to an average page length of 11 for *JCP*. (note that the different format of the two journals was taken into account by calculation of a conversion ratio whereby two *JCP* pages equaled about one *JCR* page.)¹

As one of *JCP*'s stated goals is to attract researchers from across several disciplines, author affiliation was examined.² The vast majority of authors publishing in *JCP* in its first 7 years were academic researchers (97.5%). The majority of these academics held positions in marketing or business departments (76.7%), with psychology the next most prevalent departmental affiliation (15.0%). Other areas, such as communications (1.7%) and advertising (1.7%) were represented to a significantly lesser degree. Hence, it would appear that the journal has not attracted a significant number of researchers from outside of academic disciplines, however, it has managed to attract a significant proportion of academics from outside the field of marketing. Nonmarketing disciplines were less well represented in *JCR* during the same time period. Almost all the researchers published in *JCR* held positions in marketing or business departments (91.0%). Other departments, such as psychology (2.6%), were represented to a much lesser degree than in *JCP*.

CONTENT

Each article published in the two journals during the past 7 years was classified by content area based on a typology from a recent review of the consumer psychology literature (Jacoby, Johar, & Morrin, 1998). This system classifies articles according to whether they are concerned with the follow-

¹We randomly selected five pages with different formats (i.e., a first page in an article, a page full of words with no subtitles or tables, a page with subtitles, a page with one table, a reference page), counted the words, added them up for the five pages for each journal, and then divided the sum for one journal by that of the other. The conversion rate in article length is approximately 1.97.

²Affiliations for 97.5% of the authors were obtained. In those instances where department affiliation was not identified on the title page of an article, attempts were made to establish the author's affiliation using membership directories for Association for Consumer Research and Society for Consumer Psychology, the 1995 Wiley Guide to Marketing Faculty (Hasselback, 1995), as well as university Web sites. The analysis was based on counting each authorship as "1" (e.g., if an author, who was a marketing academic, published twice in *JCP*, that counted as two academic marketing affiliations). In multiple-authored articles, each author was allocated a value of 1.

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