Editorial

Enhancing the *Journal of Psychophysiology*

Message From the Previous and the New Editors

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Having emerged as an outlet of the Federation of European Psychophysiological Societies in 1987, the *Journal of Psychophysiology* (*JoP*) subsequently developed into an international scientific platform for disseminating psychophysiological research and published by Hogrefe since 1992. The high quality of the journal has been maintained over recent years in a competitive publication environment. The major responsibility for this task has been taken by Michael Falkenstein, who has successfully and enthusiastically guided *JoP* as its Editor-in-Chief since 2002. After 20 years of outstanding service, Michael Falkenstein is now stepping back, and the position of Editor-in-Chief is being taken on by Juliana Yordanova. At this time of transition, we – the outgoing and the incoming Editor-in-Chief, feel it is appropriate both to acknowledge the well-established position of *JoP* in our scientific space and at the same time to identify some important challenges to the journal's enhancement in the future.

Journal of Psychophysiology is one of the few existing journals focusing on psychophysiological research. Over the years, *JoP* has been increasingly well established as a high-quality journal keeping to the standards required for a good journal (Eder & Frings, 2018). Specifically, *JoP* is topic-specific, maintains a rigorous review process and transparency of decision-making for publications, keeps high scientific criteria for published data, and respects authors and contributors. The good positioning and progress of the journal are reflected by adopted scientific metrics. Taking into account that *JoP* is published 4 times per year, with an average of 5–6 articles per issue, a review of the dynamics of its impact factor (which is, of course, sensitive to the overall number of publications) indicates a stable tendency toward an increase using the 5-year impact factor as a basis. As the new Editor-in-Chief, Juliana Yordanova deeply appreciates Michael Falkenstein's devotion to the journal and expresses her gratitude to all

Action Editors and Hogrefe Publishing for their engaged contributions to this remarkably stable development.

When thinking about how the journal might advance in the future, we need to recognize current and newly emerging challenges, which not only link to established quality standards for a good journal but also reflect theoretical and technological progress in the scientific environment. We aim to focus on some of the challenges that we find especially pertinent for *JoP*.

The Challenge of Topic Specificity

Topic specificity of *JoP* is clearly stated on the journal's website (<https://www.hogrefe.com/us/journal/journal-of-psychophysiology>): “The *Journal of Psychophysiology* is an international periodical that presents original research in all fields employing psychophysiological measures on human subjects”. It mentions further that contributions from psychology, physiology, clinical psychology, psychiatry, neurosciences, and pharmacology are considered, along with presentations of new psychophysiological methods. Modern scientific advances are expected to extend the psychophysiological frame by expanding consideration of both psychological and physiological systems (Cacioppo et al., 2007). Contemporary multi-disciplinarity in scientific approaches calls for extending psychophysiological investigations both in the direction of cellular and molecular research, adding the interrelationships with endocrinological (hormone), immunological, metabolic, and/or genetic mechanisms, on the micro-scale, and toward social and cultural systems as determinants of mental states and processes on the macro-scale. Current theoretical developments in complex system dynamics, neuroinformatics, and mathematical modeling have the potential to further contribute to psychophysiology in a new way.

Submission and Review Process: Areas to Be Optimized

JoP is a journal with a rigorous peer-review process, organized and controlled by the Editor-in-Chief and a board of Action Editors. A standardized two-step evaluation is realized through (1) a preliminary initial evaluation of the quality and topic of each submitted manuscript carried out by the Editor-in-Chief, and (2) a peer-review process carried out by an appointed Action Editor whose expertise best fits the topic of the manuscript. Manuscripts accepted for review receive feedback from the expert Action Editor and internationally recognized referees, which guarantees the high scientific quality of publications.

JoP is fortunate to have an internationally renowned Board of Action Editors with research backgrounds in different areas of psychophysiology. The combined expertise of our Action Editors satisfactorily covers thematic (cognitive, social, developmental, clinical, applied, environmental) and systemic (central, autonomous, and somatic neural systems, cardiovascular, endocrinological, etc.) psychophysiological research. The journal will greatly benefit from inviting new Action Editors to fully complement expertise in all aspects of psychophysiology and promote a regular balanced involvement of experts in the review process.

On a separate but related note, *JoP* also plans to confront some of the challenges related to the way manuscripts are handled. Currently, manuscripts are submitted to *JoP* via e-mail, and communication between editors, authors, referees, and the publisher also relies mainly on e-mails. This is inevitable, on occasion linked with delays, challenges in coordination, or a variety of technical issues. One important task for us in the near future is to implement an online manuscript submission and peer review system for *JoP* to facilitate smoother and more rapid communication. The Editor-in-Chief and the publisher aim to set up a portal using the Editorial Manager system, one of the most widely used systems for academic journals. Such a portal will not only support and improve the manuscript submission process. It will also help expedite the review process through automated reminders and increase transparency for authors, who should be able to see how their manuscript progresses through the peer-review process.

Another challenge that merits consideration and optimization is the increasing difficulty in finding relevant referees. The problem is widespread and by no means specific to *JoP*. We have already partially addressed this issue by asking authors to suggest up to five potential reviewers for their work who would have no conflict of interest. We hope that the implementation and use of the submissions and peer review portal will enable us, over time, to develop an ever-larger electronic database of potential reviewers along with

keywords illustrating their fields of primary and secondary expertise. In addition, new measures to help motivate reviewers will be discussed within the Editorial Board, including specific credits and benefits. We will keep you posted on developments.

Making *JoP* a Preferred Journal

In addition to meeting the standard criteria for a high-quality journal, other factors determine the competitiveness of a journal:

Visibility in Discovery Services

Currently, *JoP* is listed in Science Citation Index (SCI), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), EMBASE, Current Awareness in Biological Sciences (CABS), PsycINFO, BIOBASE, BIOSIS, IBZ, PSYINDEX, ERIH, and Scopus. Thus, *JoP* is excellently represented in the most relevant reference and discovery systems. One specific challenge for *JoP* is that it is not included in the PubMed/Medline database, despite several applications over the years, even though many contributors to the journal would like their work to be more visible there. The last application by *JoP* for inclusion was guided by Michael Falkenstein in 2016. We aim to reapply for inclusion in 2022. Having said that, a huge advantage for authors publishing in *JoP* is that the full text of all articles has for many years now been available in the American Psychological Association's PsycArticles database, giving researchers and students worldwide at literally thousands of institutions access to all the papers published in the journal – a uniquely broad “reach.”

Open Science

Since 2019 *JoP*'s content has been available via the ScienceOpen platform (Hogrefe Collection – ScienceOpen). Importantly, Hogrefe also offers an open access program with several licenses and has recently signed a transformative agreement with more than 100 German institutions (<https://www.hogrefe.com/us/resources/publishing-with-hogrefe/for-journals/openmind>). Furthermore, Hogrefe is constantly working on extending the range of offerings for authors concerning open access and open science.

Making the Profile of *JoP* Specific

Thinking about the perspectives for *JoP* in the future, we would like to consider the question of the journal's specific

profile and why contributors should choose to publish in *JoP* rather than in another journal. We intend to introduce several measures related to the structure of the journal that aim to improve its impact on both authors and readers.

First, going back to the roots of the journal, we intend to extend *JoP*'s scope to cover a broader range of psychophysiological research outputs that include a variety of stages and aspects of the research process and not only focus on the final product, that is, publication of results. Currently, the types of publications in the journal are Original Articles, Book Reviews, Congress Abstracts, Editorials, and Communications on new psychophysiological methods. The journal may, in the future, support other research outputs by extending the range of publication types, to include (a) summaries of dissertations in the field of psychophysiology to promote young researchers expose their investigations and increase visibility; (b) pre-registered reports; and (c) global and local project presentations and reports. More details on these initiatives will follow.

Secondly, we intend to establish two new sections: "Current trends and opinions in psychophysiology" and "Modern methods and techniques in psychophysiology." The former is intended to be a discussion forum with very short contributions and letters to the editor; the latter will emphasize combined methods. Methodological issues will get increasing attention with respect to novel emerging methodologies and technologies in psychophysiology, integrative approaches for multi-parametric registration and analysis, as well as the application of mathematical algorithms for complex data analyses.

Thirdly, short communications with rapid publication times will be introduced.

Fourthly, analysis of which publications in the journal are most widely read shows that systematic reviews are among the most attractive papers. We would therefore like to encourage authors to submit systematic reviews to *JoP*. From a thematic point of view, no specific preferences

are obvious, with the possible exception of stress-related topics, which may reflect current pandemic conditions.

Fifthly, we want to encourage systematic reviews and special issues on specific areas of current interest in psychophysiology. Again, we would encourage potential guest editors of such special issues to contact the Editor-in-Chief with proposals.

Conclusion

We intend to increase our efforts to promote and improve *JoP* – the only and thus indispensable outlet for the European psychophysiology community – and invite you, our readers, authors, editors, and reviewers, to join us in this endeavor. We look forward to working with you all to create a bright and long future for our *Journal of Psychophysiology*.

References

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