

FROM THE EDITORS

THE LAST THREE YEARS AT *AMJ*—CELEBRATING THE BIG PURPLE TENT

With this issue, the 19th editorial team in the *Academy of Management Journal's* rich history ends its three-year run. As we make room on the masthead for the next team, I wanted to use this occasion to celebrate the “big tent” that *AMJ* represents. Anyone who has attended an Academy of Management meeting has a sense of the scale of the field. After all, the Academy's 17,000+ members are arrayed into 25 different divisions and interest groups. Some of those attendees self-identify as management scholars. Others are psychologists, sociologists, or economists. Still others represent other fields or disciplines in business schools or the arts and sciences. The ecumenical nature of management befits a journal whose signature color symbolizes everything from wisdom and truth to patience and harmony (Conroy, 1921).

As we celebrate the past three years, the expanse of the *Journal's* tent can be described in two ways: in terms of both the submissions we have received since taking the reins and the papers we have published since joining the masthead. On the one hand, describing submissions is logical because they represent what our editorial team has been *doing* during our term. It is those submissions that constitute our service to the Academy and to the invisible college, from editors to associate editors to editorial review board members and ad hoc reviewers. On the other hand, describing published articles is also logical because they are what many Academy members connect to our team. They—along with our editorials—are what Academy members offer feedback on when e-mailing me in my role as editor. Thus, this editorial will reflect on both submissions and publications while offering several notes of thanks along the way.

THREE YEARS OF SUBMISSIONS

Our editorial team received 3,358 original submissions, not including revisions, re-revisions, conditional acceptances, and special research forum submissions. We received 993 original submissions in our first year, 1,127 in our second year, and

1,238 in our third year. Those totals continue a string of five consecutive years of growth in *AMJ* submissions. If one of those 3,358 submissions is yours, thank you for looking to *AMJ* as an outlet for your best work! Given the competing presence of other top management journals and signature outlets in scholars' home disciplines, rest assured that we do not take submissions to *AMJ* for granted. Submissions are the lifeblood of any journal.

One way of describing the vastness of the *Journal's* tent is examining the content of those submissions. When authors submit their papers, they are asked to categorize them using 180 keywords that cut across three categories: topic area, theoretical perspective, and research methods. Of those 180 keywords, half were used at least 50 times during our tenure, and only 9 were used fewer than 10 times. Those data show that *AMJ* is receiving submissions in a wide range of content areas across the spectrum of management. Indeed, our 3,358 submissions were almost completely balanced between micro and macro content areas, with 49 percent of submissions falling under the micro umbrella and 51 percent of submissions falling under the macro umbrella. That balance is vital, as it helps ensure that the *Journal* remains in the “to be read” pile for micro and macro scholars.

Of course, we could not have shepherded those submissions through the review process without the hard work of our editorial review board members. Our board included 240 scholars from 125 universities across 15 countries. All were dedicated to providing timely and constructive reviews for our authors, even when review requests came at busy or inopportune moments. If you served as one of those board members, I thank you for your service and your insights! You made all of *AMJ's* published articles better while also improving submissions that will ultimately be published in other journals. Of course, those same sentiments are extended to the thousands of ad hoc reviewers who served the *Journal* when called upon.

THREE YEARS OF ARTICLES

Our editorial team published 174 articles during our time on the masthead (not including special research forum articles). Issues contained 9 articles in our first year before moving to 10 in our second year and 12 in our third year (see the February 2011 *From the Editors* [vol. 54: 9–14] for a discussion of that expansion). Many of those articles were handled by members of Duane Ireland's editorial team, and I thank them for seeing those articles through to the end of the publication process. Mirroring the balance in submissions, 87 of our published articles fell under the micro umbrella, and 87 fell under the macro umbrella. The question of whether *AMJ* leans micro or macro has confronted editorial teams for some time (see the June 2003 *From the Editors* [vol. 46: 279–282]). Our issues mirror the takeaway from past analyses: *AMJ*'s tent has micro and macro poles of equal height.

Our three years of articles can be described at both the forest level and the tree level. To create a forest-level view, I took the opening, introductory sections of all 174 articles and created a "word cloud" from them (Feinberg, 2013). The openings of *AMJ* articles "set the hook" for readers by describing a question of interest, positioning that question around a scholarly conversation, and describing why that question is novel, interesting, and important (see the October 2011 *From the Editors* [vol. 54: 873–879]). Those openings therefore provide an effective encapsulation of what an *AMJ* article is intended to do. The resulting word cloud is shown in Figure 1. Words that appear more frequently in the 174 openings are larger in the cloud; words that appear less frequently are smaller (the vertical or horizontal positioning of the words within the cloud has no systematic meaning). To create a tree-level view, I did my own in-depth coding of the 174 articles.

The micro-macro balance at *AMJ* is immediately apparent in the word cloud, with firms, teams, individuals, and employees all well represented. That balance is also seen in words that range from institution and corporate to work and job. The cloud also summarizes some of the more often studied topics in *AMJ*'s pages, including CEOs, boards of directors, networks, culture, leadership, power, status, diversity, voice, creativity, emotions, identity, and turnover. Of course, no matter the level of analysis, authors of *AMJ* articles are typically studying organizations—and often studying performance. Sometimes those organizations are

the performing entities, and sometimes those organizations are the contexts within which performance is studied.

The *Journal*'s focus on making a value-added contribution to science is also apparent in the word cloud. Figure 1 suggests that authors position their research relative to the status quo using words like new, important, change, identify, and key. My own coding revealed that around 50 percent of *AMJ* articles opened by discussing the state of the literature on some academic topic (e.g., alliances, corporate social responsibility, emotional labor, moral decision making). Sometimes that discussion noted the existence of some important gap to be filled; sometimes it noted the existence of some controversial dissensus to clarify; and sometimes it noted the existence of some problematic consensus in need of shifting (see Alvesson and Sandberg [2011] and Hollenbeck [2008] for a discussion of such frames). Regardless, the openings were joining some topic-based conversation before changing and contributing to it in some new and important fashion (Huff, 1999).

Of course, *AMJ*'s emphasis on theoretical contribution is also evident in the word cloud. Theory itself is one of the most prominent words in Figure 1, but the cloud also includes a number of words that orbit theory—including idea, understanding, logic, relationship, process, mechanism, and model. My coding revealed that authors pursued a theoretical contribution through a number of routes. Around 15 percent of *AMJ* articles opened by joining some theory-based conversation while focusing on changing or contributing to it. For example, Polidoro and Toh (2011) questioned the resource-based view's proposition that deterring imitation is in a firm's best interest in their study of rivalry. My coding also revealed that around 50 percent of articles used some existing theory (e.g., agency theory, attribution theory, institutional theory, resource-based view, self-determination theory, social identity theory) to inspire their research question or choice of variables or to ground and inform their hypotheses or propositions.

The remaining 50 percent of articles focused on their own theorizing either by using disciplined imagination (Weick, 1989) or inductive methods, or by combining references, data, and diagrams with the verbal explication needed to describe why connections should be observed (Sutton & Staw, 1995). For example, Detert and Edmondson (2011) built theory about why employees stay silent about important issues using a combination of their own

FIGURE 1
The Big Purple Tent



insights, connections drawn among previous studies, and their own qualitative data. On this front, I should note that *AMJ*'s commitment to inductive, qualitative research—which extends back through several editorial regimes—has reached a new high watermark. My coding showed that around 17 percent of the articles published over the past three years are inductive, qualitative articles. My team began its term by calling for even more inductive submissions using even more diverse qualitative methods (see the April 2011 *From the Editors* [vol. 54: 233–237]). These data, together with the trajectory of qualitative submissions, show that *AMJ* has cemented its status as an outlet of choice for inductive scholars.

Moving beyond the word cloud, I would like to note two other points that surfaced in my coding. One of the privileges of my editorial role has been representing *AMJ* at conferences and at brownbags and colloquia on campuses. One misconception that I encountered more than once—especially among scholars who publish frequently in discipline-based outlets—is that *AMJ* does not value phenomenon-driven work. Such comments often confused me, given that many of our articles are very phenomenon-driven. Indeed, my coding revealed that around 25 percent of *AMJ* articles open simply by highlighting some interesting or important phenomenon. For example, Bechky and Okhuysen's (2011) investigation of organizational bricolage begins by describing the phenomenon of surprise before exploring how firms can cope with it. *AMJ* clearly does value phenomenon-driven work. Our mission merely asks authors to position their phenomenon in some existing theoretical lens or to explore it using their own theorizing.

Finally, my coding reinforced the diversity of *AMJ*'s tent in terms of research design and sampling. For example, 12 percent of the articles published in the past three years included a laboratory experiment. That figure represents a more than twofold increase over the 5 percent level in 2008 (see the August 2008 *From the Editors* [vol. 51: 616–620]). The increase in laboratory experiments is consistent with *AMJ*'s mission, given that theory emphasizes “the nature of causal relationships” (Sutton & Staw, 1995: 378). That increase should also continue to make *AMJ* appealing to micro scholars who gear their work toward discipline-based journals. In terms of field studies, around 25 percent of the articles published in the past three years utilized a non-US field sample. Those samples were taken from 21 different countries on

five different continents, illustrating the worldwide reach of the scholarship published in *AMJ*.

THREE YEARS' WORTH OF THANKS

So many people deserve a note of thanks for making this editorial term possible, rewarding, and (I hope) successful. First and foremost, I thank Tima Bansal, Joyce Bono, Kevin Corley, Marta Geletkanycz, Gerry George, Adam Grant, Kyle Mayer, Gerry McNamara, Tim Pollock, Jason Shaw, Ray Sparrowe, Ben Tepper, and Anthea Zhang. I thank them for saying yes, as it is all too easy to decline the call to serve. I also thank them for caring as deeply about the *Journal* as I do—a level of caring that was evident in their decision letters, their input at editorial retreats, and their involvement in Academy workshops and consortia. Of course, I also thank them for their editorials, which will be a service to current and future authors for years to come. Finally, I thank them for being such a super league of associate editors and friends.

I thank Duane Ireland for inviting me to be one of his associate editors six years ago, and for being such a shining example of editorial patience and class. I am also grateful to Mike Malgrande, *AMJ*'s tireless managing editor. Mike did not have the luxury of limiting his attention to *AMJ*'s original submissions. Instead, he had to process all 4,401 submissions during the past three years, a number that includes revisions, re-revisions, conditional acceptances, and special research forum submissions. With all that, I never received an e-mail that was anything but positive and enthusiastic. Mike, it's been an honor. A note of thanks is also owed to Susan Zaid, the Academy's assistant director of publishing, and Adam Etkin, the director of publishing, for all their behind-the-scenes efforts to help our team. I am also grateful to our copy editor, Persephone Doliner, for continuing to guard the voice and sensibility of the *Journal*. Finally, I thank my editorial assistant, Liesl Wesson, for being a joy to work with, no matter the task.

My last note of thanks will extend to the next three years. I thank Gerry George for stepping up to lead the 20th team in the *Journal*'s history. Simply put, Gerry is a scholar's scholar. He is uniquely aware of how scientific research can be leveraged to tackle real problems on a local and a global level. He is upbeat, optimistic, and indefatigable, and his innovative and entrepreneurial expertise (and spirit) will serve *AMJ* well. Of course, having the *Journal* headquartered outside the US for the first

time is itself exciting and historic. I will leave it to Gerry to introduce his distinguished group of associate editors and to describe his vision for the next three years. I believe I speak for all involved when I say we look forward to submitting to his team, reviewing for his team, and reading the work published under his team's stewardship!

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