

## Editorial

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Mortimer H. Appley served as the founding editor of *Motivation and Emotion*. He published volume 1 in 1977, just when so many of today's prominent theories were first being born (e.g., self-efficacy theory, self-determination theory, attribution theory, reactance theory, goal-setting, appraisal theories of emotion). Twelve years later, Alice M. Isen became the journal's second and longest-serving editor. She, together with editor Appley, defined the journal's purpose: Offer the diverse community of motivation and emotion researchers a central outlet to publish their best empirical work. In 2005, Springer became the new owners of the journal. It was then that Richard M. Ryan, the journal's third editor, launched *Motivation and Emotion* into the digital age and gave the journal its new look (larger pages, more articles per issue) and enhanced electronic access. My tenure began in 2011. In taking the reins, my plan is to continue my predecessors' work to find new ways to advance the empirical study of human motivation and emotion.

Motivation and emotion has always been a diverse field of study. The primary reason for this, I believe, is because "motivation and emotion researcher" is typically only a self-ascribed identity. What brings us together to read and publish in the pages of *Motivation and Emotion* is our subject matter. Given our diversity, I thought it might be a helpful to identify the core features of published articles.

The pages of *Motivation and Emotion* have always published articles that make a theoretical advance by linking empirical findings to underlying processes. Published articles are almost always explanatory rather than merely descriptive, as they provide the data necessary to

understand the origins of motivation and emotion, to explicate why, how, and under what conditions motivational and emotional states change, and to document that motivation and emotional processes are important to human functioning. Essentially, articles that are excellent candidates for the pages of *Motivation and Emotion* are those that use and develop theory to explain the field's core concepts—human needs, cognitive and neural states capable of energizing and directing action, emotion, affect, and mood.

In part, motivation and emotion are subjective, private experiences that are difficult to observe directly. This observation often leads researchers to collect exclusively self-report data. But self-report measures have serious pitfalls within the study of motivation and emotion, as verbal reports are often left unconfirmed by behavioral, implicit, neural, and psychophysiological measures. For this reason, published articles often include objective measures, such as behavioral observations, psychophysiological responses (e.g., cardiovascular output), reaction times, facial muscular activity, brain activity, performance indicators, and measures of achievement. A submitted paper that relies only on survey data may or may not be able to stand on its own, but more often than not such a paper needs accompanying support from objective measures. This is not to say that self-report and qualitative data sets are not welcomed at *Motivation and Emotion*, because they are. Instead, it is simply worth noting that objective measures are given greater credence than are subjective measures.

Motivational and emotional processes are also often conceptualized within a mediation-based framework. Conceptually and statistically, mediation portrays a featured motivational and emotional process as an intervening variable that arises out of antecedent conditions and

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produces consequent effects. The trouble with mediation models is that they are easy to propose but difficult to confirm. The difficulty is the issue of causality, especially when researchers employ only questionnaire-based cross-sectional research designs. Such methodological approaches, even those utilizing structural equation modeling analyses, are ill-suited to explain underlying causal processes. For this reason, experimental research designs have a special place in any field populated by mediational frameworks, as do field-based longitudinal research designs. For instance, it is sometimes necessary to manipulate the antecedent condition in a first study (while assessing the hypothesized mediator and outcome), while then directly manipulating the hypothesized mediator in a second study. Longitudinal designs can accomplish much of this same conceptual clarity by virtue of multi-wave assessments. These designs allow researchers to speak to the issues of causality and alternative interpretations and are therefore better positioned to offer serious theoretical advancements. Again, this is not to say that cross-sectional research designs are not welcomed at *Motivation and Emotion*. Instead, it is simply worth noting that experimental and longitudinal research designs are given greater credence than are one-shot cross-sectional designs.

I mention these three editorial preferences because they often surface as important tipping points in the editorial decision. In recent years, the sheer number of articles submitted to *Motivation and Emotion* has spiked higher. This competition for space in the journal has effectively raised the bar that marks the publication threshold, though Springer has recognized the strong contemporary interest in motivation and emotion and given the journal more pages. Nevertheless, it is probably harder to publish in *Motivation and Emotion* than it was a few years ago. I should add, however, that the editorial team does not just evaluate manuscripts, because we further work constructively with author teams throughout the revision process. On a personal note, the first manuscript I ever submitted was to *Motivation and Emotion*, and it was handled by Editor Appley. Though our exchange took place three

decades ago, I still vividly remember his constructive and deeply helpful tone. It is my hope that all authors who submit their work to *Motivation and Emotion* have a similar experience.

*Motivation and Emotion* aims to be a home for work that brings together researchers from a wide range of fields. In each issue, you will read cutting-edge research from personality, social, clinical, cognitive, biological, evolutionary, neuroscientific, organizational, educational, developmental, health, and sports and exercise author teams. Given these many voices, not every article will be all things to all readers, but each article will test hypotheses that advance and validate ground-breaking theoretical ideas.

Before concluding, I offer a few recommendations regarding new submissions. Submissions should speak to an important problem in motivation and emotion study, and they should offer theory-based directional hypotheses. A range of methodological approaches are welcomed, but methodological rigor generally speaking is the key criterion. The focus should be on human motivation and emotion, so any submission that utilizes non-human participants should contribute to understanding human motivation and emotion. Submissions should be 40 pages or less, though this is only a generic guideline. In 2011 the journal published 41 articles with an acceptance rate of 20 %. We have no current plans for a special issue, but we are open to the possibility. The key criterion we apply is whether or not the special issue can deliver cutting-edge research that can move our understanding of motivation and emotion significantly forward.

Overall, we at *Motivation and Emotion* are blessed with a terrific editorial board led by three outstanding associate editors—Mark Muraven of the University of Albany (USA), Michael Richter of the University of Geneva (Switzerland), and Martyn Standage of the University of Bath (United Kingdom). We are an international lot who serve this journal to fulfill outgoing Editor Ryan's charge to advance "this rapidly changing, dynamic field of research that is so vitally central to human experience, health, and socio-cultural wellness."