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Impact Factor Stories

Anxiety, Stress, & Coping

JOACHIM STOEBER and ALEKSANDRA LUSZCZYNSKA, Editors-in-chief,

Anxiety, Stress & Coping



Anxiety, Stress, & Coping provides a forum for scientific, theoretically important, and clinically significant research reports and conceptual contributions. It deals with experimental and field studies on anxiety dimensions and stress and coping processes, but also with related topics such as the antecedents and consequences of stress and emotion. Welcome are papers contributing to the understanding of the relationship between psychological and physiological processes, specific for stress and anxiety

The journal's Impact Factor has increased impressively over the past three Impact Factor years. It moved from 0.588 in the 2007 JCR® to 1.127 the subsequent year, with a further jump to 1.545 in the recently released 2009 JCR®. Below, we ask the editors for their thoughts on these increases.

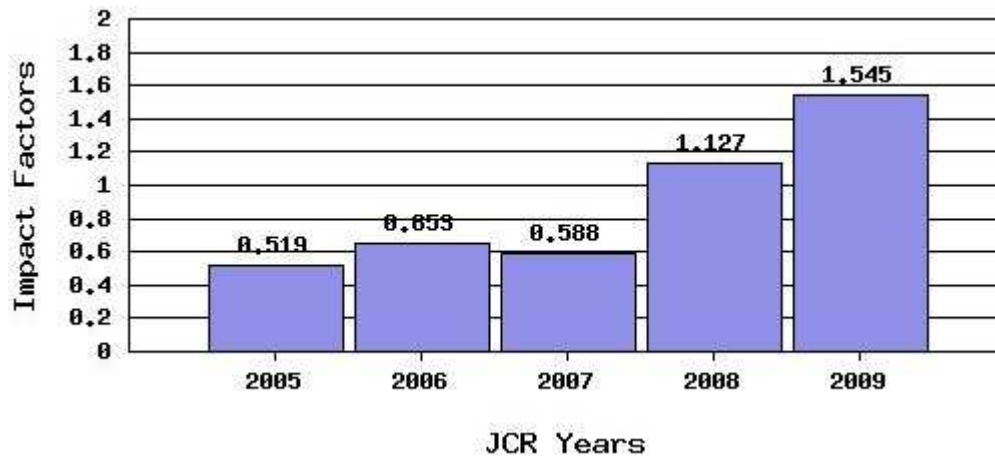


Figure 1 The journal's Impact Factor over the past five years. Source: 2010 Thomson Reuters' 2009 *Journal Citation Reports*®

1. Why do you think the journal has seen such an improvement in its impact factor? Has it resulted from any changes in editorial policy?

There were no rapid changes in editorial policy of *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping* (ASC), except that last year we decided to remove the explicit reference to assessment from the journal's aims and scope and to discontinue publishing articles on psychometric analyses of instruments and measures in languages other than English because such articles are of limited utility to ASC's international readership. However, we still publish articles on psychometric analyses of English-language instruments and measures that make a significant novel contribution to the assessment of stress, anxiety, coping, and directly related characteristics, processes, and outcomes (e.g., Cann et al., 2010).

Instead we think that the significant improvement in ASC's impact factor is mostly due to the many technical and strategic changes we implemented over the last four years (for details, see Kaniasty & Stoeber, 2007; Luszczynska & Stoeber, 2009; Stoeber & Luszczynska, 2008, 2010). In 2007 we moved from a postal submission system to ScholarOne Manuscript's Internet-based online submission and peer-review system to increase speed and ease of manuscript submission for everybody involved in the submission, review, and decision processes (viz. authors, reviewers, and editors). Moreover, we decided to invite once a year highly distinguished scholars in the areas of anxiety, stress, and coping to write a review article for ASC on the state of the art. These papers are published in the first issue of a year's volume (cf. Cookson & Cross, 2007). Furthermore, we made a successful application to MEDLINE®, a service of the US National Library of Medicine, so that from 2007 all ASC articles are now included in the PubMed online repository making the journal's articles more visible and more accessible to researchers in the medical and other life sciences. Finally, at the end of 2007, ASC started to make use of *iFirst*, Taylor & Francis's system to publish articles online immediately after the final proofs are corrected, so that readers could have access to all ASC articles long before they appear in print (see <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/ifirst~db=all>).

In the following year, we moved our publication schedule forward, publishing the first issue of each year in January instead of March, to make full use of the two-year citation window on which the impact-factor calculations are based (Cross & Bulpitt, 2008). Moreover, we moved to a "double-blind" review system, that is, a system where not only reviewers are masked, but authors are too (meaning that reviewers do not see who wrote the submitted manuscript). A "single-blind" review system (only the reviewers are masked, but the authors are known to the

reviewers) may give an unfair advantage to well-known authors and a disadvantage to early career authors and other authors who are not widely known. Consequently, all reviews are now double-blind. In the last two years, we made no further technical or strategic changes except that we expanded our editorial board so that our editorial board now contains highly-esteemed international experts in all areas that ASC covers. Further, caring for high ethical standards we have joined the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Finally, over the last four years, we have speeded up all aspects of the review and the decision process. First, reviewers are invited to return the reviews within five weeks—and most reviewers do provide their review in five weeks or less (many thanks to all of them!) so that most authors submitting to ASC receive an editorial decision within five weeks after submission, which makes submitting to ASC more attractive. Moreover, we have reduced the time we give authors for revising and resubmitting manuscripts from four to three months for major revisions (and between two weeks and two months for minor revisions) to provide for a faster dissemination of new and important research findings to ASC readers.

We think that all these changes—many of which we could not have implemented without the great help and support from the editorial and production team at Taylor & Francis—helped make ASC articles more timely, visible, and widely accessible and thus contributed to the increase in ASC's impact factor.

2. What developments in your research area have contributed to the recent Impact Factor growth?

We do not think that any particular development in the research areas covered in ASC have contributed to the increased impact of success of ASC. Anxiety, stress, and coping have long been central issues in psychological research having high relevance for psychiatric research. However, over the last years, ASC has published more articles related to coping with health problems and with trauma (including studies that focus on physiological mechanisms). Moreover, in the last two years, we published more articles related to anxiety disorders, which may have contributed to the journal's success. Further, we receive manuscripts from several applied disciplines of psychology, such as organizational psychology. In the same time we process and publish papers which discuss nuances of emotion and cognition.

3. Have you seen any change in the geographical profile of authors in recent years?

We do not keep statistics of the geographical profile, but we have the perception that there are now more manuscript submissions from East Asia, particularly Singapore and China. In general, the published manuscripts come from Europe, North America, Australia, and Asia.

4. Is your journal supported by a learned society or research institution?

Yes, ASC is the official journal of the Stress and Anxiety Research Society (STAR; for details of the history of the ASC, see Kaniasty & Stoeber, 2007).

5. Are you currently rolling out initiatives that may improve the Impact Factor in the future?

Yes, last month we implemented Taylor & Francis's Accepted Manuscript Online feature, meaning that manuscripts accepted for publication in ASC are posted as HTML files on the *iFirst* section of the journal's website directly after they have been accepted for publication (see again <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/ifirst~db=all>), so that readers have rapid access to every new article accepted for publication in ASC. Because the articles are posted without typesetting and proofing (they will be typeset and proofed at a later point, and eventually the final article is posted), this will speed up the publication of ASC articles by yet another 3-4 weeks. Because the speed of early-publishing initiatives is key for improving impact (Cross & Bulpitt, 2008), we are confident that this new initiative will help further improve ASC's Impact Factor.

6. What role you feel your journal plays in your research community?

We feel, supported by the journal's increasing Impact Factor, that ASC plays an increasingly important role in all areas of psychological and medical research (e.g., psychiatry) that are interested in learning about theoretical developments and empirical findings that make a significant novel contribution to the understanding of stress, anxiety, and coping and associated characteristics, processes, resources, and outcomes.

7. What are the exciting areas of research to watch in your research area?

We expect to see more studies, and exciting findings, particularly from biopsychology and neuroscience research.

8. What do you hope the journal will achieve over the next five years?

We hope that the recent increases in the journal's Impact Factor will lead to a further increase in high-quality manuscript submission with novel findings that make a significant contribution to the literature. Over the last three years, the journal has each year seen a 15% increase in manuscript submissions, which allowed us to increase the journal's volume from four issues per year to now five issues per year. We hope that this positive trend continues and, in five years time, ASC will be one of the leading journals in our research area.

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Biographical Notes

Joachim Stoeber is a Reader in Psychology at the University of Kent, UK. His main area of interest is personality and individual differences where his current research focuses on positive and negative aspects of perfectionism and how they relate to motivation and emotion, psychosocial well-being, and performance at school, at work, and in sports.

Aleksandra Luszczynska is a Professor of Psychology in Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities (Poland) and an Associate Research Professor at Trauma, Health, and Hazards Center, University of Colorado (USA). Her research deals with health behavior change and

resources facilitating adaptation after stressful events (including traumatic stress, life-threatening disease, and job stress).

Photo J Stoeber:



Photo A Luszczynska:

