



Twenty-five years of the *Journal of Economic Psychology* (1981–2005): A report on the development of an interdisciplinary field of research

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Received 11 March 2006; accepted 10 July 2006

Available online 30 August 2006

Abstract

Economic Psychology has gained considerable momentum through the introduction of the *Journal of Economic Psychology* (*JoEP*) in 1981. Twenty-five years later, economic psychology has a clear profile as an interdisciplinary field of research. A content analysis of articles published in the *JoEP* together with a bibliometric analysis of references and citing journals identified the topics, the sources and the impact of *JoEP*. Results indicate the high degree of interdisciplinarity reached in the field, taking its ideas from social psychology, economics and consumer research, and its recognition in business and psychology. Implications for journal policy are discussed.

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JEL classification: A30; B0; Z0

PsycINFO classification: 2140

Keywords: History of economic psychology; Journal review

Although the discipline of Economic Psychology goes back as far as 1900, it has gained considerable momentum in the last decades. This has resulted in the establishment of the

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International Association for Research in Economic Psychology (IAREP), in annual colloquia and workshops as well as in close collaboration with the Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics (SABE). A major step towards the institutionalisation and recognition of the discipline in the scientific community has been the introduction of the *Journal of Economic Psychology (JoEP)* in 1981. The aim of the Journal is to bridge the gap between economics, business and marketing, and applied psychology and to provide a forum for researchers whose work crosses the borders of these disciplines. After 25 years, a look at the development of the field, mirrored in the publications of the *JoEP*, may show the core topics and the degree of mutual cooperation. Bibliometric analyses of journals provide insight in developmental trends and the status quo of a discipline and can inform journal policy (Alon, Morrin, & Bechwati, 2002; Bettencourt & Houston, 2001; Quiñones-Vidal, López-García, Peñaranda-Ortega, & Tortosa-Gil, 2004).

The present article starts with an overview of the structure of the *JoEP* and its authorship. Second, a topical analysis of the papers published in the journal from its inception in 1981–2005 is presented. Third, a bibliometric analysis follows, locating the main sources of economic psychology. We analyze what publications and journals are most frequently cited in *JoEP*. Finally, we identify those journals in which the *JoEP* was most frequently cited, and make some suggestions for journal policy.

1. Overview

For the analysis, all issues of the *JoEP* from its first appearance until the end of 2005 were considered. In this 25-year period, 26 volumes appeared, due to the fact that in 1983 two volumes were published. From 1981 to 1995, four issues were published each year; from 1996 on, six issues per year were published.

In the first 25 years, more than 800 research papers have been published. Entries in the Social Science Citation Index database were double-checked with the table of contents on Elsevier's journal homepage. The total number of entries for the *JoEP* in the Social Science Citation Index from the beginning of 1981 to the end of 2005 was 1032. After excluding book reviews, errata, etc., 854 substantial entries remained.

The following analyses are based on five-year periods (Table 1). The number of articles published in each period increased steadily, from 127 articles published in the period 1981–1985 to 220 articles published in 2001–2005. While the average page count per article remained rather stable, the number of references per article increased over time. In the period 1981–1985 the average number of references per article was 23.22 and rose to 38.35 in the period 2001–2005. In comparison, the average number of references in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* was about 60 in the period 1996–2000 (Quiñones-Vidal et al., 2004, Fig. 5, p. 447).

Table 1
Descriptives for publications in the JoEP from 1981 to 2005

	1981–1985	1986–1990	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	Total
Articles published	127	135	182	190	220	854
Page count, 5% trimmed mean	16.47	18.43	18.26	18.73	17.51	17.92
Reference count, 5% trimmed mean	23.22	30.97	29.64	29.68	38.35	30.99
Author count, 5% trimmed mean	1.59	1.70	1.71	1.77	2.02	1.77
Percentage of single-author articles	52.0%	43.7%	41.2%	39.5%	34.1%	41.0%

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