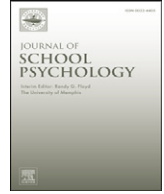




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Commissioned Article

Journal article citation classics in school psychology: Analysis of the most cited articles in five school psychology journals[☆]

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the top 100 most highly cited articles of all time as well as the 25 most highly cited articles of the last decade from within 5 school psychology journals: *Journal of School Psychology*, *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology International*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, and *School Psychology Review*. The Institute for Scientific Information Web of Science database was utilized to identify citation counts for each article appearing in these journals. Coding schemes were used to identify article type and content area. The top 10 most highly cited articles of all time as well as the top 10 most highly cited articles of the past decade are detailed, and general patterns found across these articles are discussed. Implications for reviewing manuscripts that are likely to become highly cited articles and for authoring a highly cited article are offered.

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1. Introduction

There have been several attempts over the past 40 years to identify literary trends, the scholarly productivity of authors and preparation programs, and the impact of school psychology literature on other publications within and beyond that of school psychology (see Fagan & Wise, 2007, pp. 61–63). An analysis of the most impactful journal articles within the school psychology literature would be beneficial for a number of reasons (see Aylward, Roberts, Colombo, & Steele, 2007; Dubin, Hafner, & Arndt, 1993; Flores,

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Rooney, Heppner, Browne, & Wu, 1999; Wicherts, 2009). First, it would identify the seminal works and emphasize their importance to the field. Second, it would serve to illustrate the development of the literature over time, which helps to determine which issues have been central to the development of school psychology, and identify those individuals who have made especially important contributions to the field. Third, it would allow for the mapping of important intellectual trends within the field and serve to satiate the curiosity of those invested in the literature as to what topics have been most impactful in the past and what topics are likely to be most impactful in the future. Fourth, it would serve as a contribution to journal editorial teams because it would identify article attributes that could be selected for or nurtured through peer-review. Finally, it would empower authors to replicate select article attributes in the hopes of producing highly cited articles.

1.1. Determining article impact via citation counts

Article examination or classification studies have been completed previously across a variety of fields to determine publication patterns and to provide a roadmap of those published articles that have been highly successful. Within school psychology, chronologies of the literature have been presented (Fagan, 1986), along with bibliographies (Fagan, Delugach, Mellon, & Schlitt, 1986), analyses of articles across specific decades (O'Callaghan, 1974), and analyses of dissertations within the field (French & Raykovitz, 1984; Lekwa & Ysseldyke, 2010; Ysseldyke & Pickholtz, 1975). More recently, the results of at least six studies focusing on the general patterns of journal articles published in school psychology journals have been offered during the past 20 years (Bliss, Skinner, Hautau, & Carroll, 2008; Jennings, Ehrhardt, & Poling, 2008; Kawano, Kehle, Clark, & Jenson, 1993; Reynolds & Clark, 1984; Robinson, Skinner, & Brown, 1998; Strein, Cramer, & Lawser, 2003, see Floyd et al., 2012–this issue, for a review).

Despite completing reviews of the journal article literature, little has been done to judge the impact of that literature. In recent decades, there has been broad acceptance of the use of citations as a means of judging the relative impact of (a) an author or a particular publication on a field's subsequent literature and (b) the quality of journals, per se (e.g., via the journal impact factor; Garfield, 1955, 2006). To date, however, there has not been a comprehensive analysis of the citation impact of school psychology's literature (see also Floyd et al., 2012–this issue). The present investigation provides a method, citation count analysis, to judge journal article impact as well as useful data for future efforts in judging the impact of journal articles via citations. Numerous models exist in which citations of articles have been analyzed across articles in specific journals (e.g., Aylward et al., 2007; Cokley, Caldwell, Miller, & Muhammad, 2001; Elkins & Roberts, 1988; Elliott & Byrd, 1986; Flores et al., 1999; Wicherts, 2009) and more broadly, within other literatures (Dubin et al., 1993; Garfield, 1992; Landers, 2009; Paladugu, Schein, Gardezi, & Wise, 2002), but they have yet to be applied to the school psychology literature to judge journal article impact.

1.2. Purpose of the study

Consistent with Frisby's (1998) call for study of the impact of seminal journal articles in school psychology, the purpose of this study was to identify the most highly cited articles from the five school psychology journals producing impact factor values (see Floyd et al., 2012–this issue): *Journal of School Psychology*, *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology International*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, and *School Psychology Review*, across their history. Highly cited articles were identified based on citation counts from the Institute for Scientific Information Web of Science database. Thus, we targeted journal article "citation classics" from these select journals that were highly cited in the journal in which they were published as well as across other journals, but we did not examine the publications (e.g., articles, chapters, or books) that were highly cited across these same journal articles across these five journals.

Because more recently published journal articles are at a stark disadvantage when citation counts are used as a metric for impact, and in order to highlight those articles that are emerging classics within the field, a separate analysis of those articles that have been most cited in the last decade (i.e., since 1999) was also conducted. After the most highly cited articles were identified, they were coded based on content as well as article type (i.e., quantitative research, qualitative research, or narrative). The articles were then examined for descriptive purposes and for trends present in the sample.

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