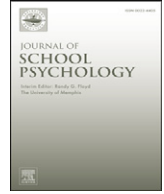




Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

## Journal of School Psychology

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### Commissioned Article

# An overview and analysis of journal operations, journal publication patterns, and journal impact in school psychology and related fields ☆, ☆ ☆

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article history:

Received 3 November 2011

Accepted 17 November 2011

##### Keywords:

Peer-review

Journal editors

Impact factor

School psychology journals

#### ABSTRACT

This article describes the results of three studies designed to understand better the journal operations, publishing practices, and impact of school psychology journals in recent years. The first study presents the results of a survey focusing on journal operations and peer-review practices that was completed by 61 journal editors of school psychology and aligned journals. The second study presents the results of review and classification of all articles appearing in one volume year for nine school psychology journals (i.e., *The California School Psychologist*, *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, *Journal of Applied School*

☆ We appreciate Bruce Bracken, Patti Harrison, Tom Oakland, LeAdelle Phelps, Robert Pianta, Susan Sheridan, and Chris Skinner for their comments and recommendations after reviewing the initial draft of the editors' survey. Thanks to Danielle Steele and Kimberly Hooss for their contributions to the survey preparation and for their review and coding of articles. We thank Craig Albers and his students for aid in obtaining impact factor values, Ryan Farmer for examining the accuracy of the impact factor data, Sarah Irby for her editing expertise, and Rebecca Martinez, David McIntosh, and Caven Mcloughlin for their reviews of this manuscript. Finally, we are appreciative of all editors who responded to our requests for participation in Study 1's survey.

☆☆ The former Editor of the Journal of School Psychology (JSP), Dr. Edward Daly III, commissioned this article to be developed as part of a special issue of JSP. All manuscripts were subjected to masked peer review. Reviews were coordinated by Dr. Tanya Eckert and Dr. John Hintze without using the JSP manuscript submission portal, the Elsevier Editorial System, to ensure that the manuscript authors were blind to reviewers' identities.

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ACTION EDITOR: John Hintze.

<sup>1</sup> **Randy Floyd** has served on the editorial boards of three of the journals described in this article: *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology Review*, and *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*. He has been an associate editor and interim editor of *Journal of School Psychology*, and he is the current editor of *Journal of School Psychology*.

<sup>2</sup> **Thomas Fagan** has served or currently serves on the editorial boards of five of the journals described in this article: *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, *Journal of School Psychology*, *School Psychology International*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, and *School Psychology Review*, and he has been an associate editor for *School Psychology Review*.

<sup>3</sup> **Sterett Mercer** currently serves on the editorial boards of two of the journals described in this article: *Journal of School Psychology* and *Psychology in the Schools*.

*Psychology, Journal of School Psychology, Psychology in the Schools, School Psychology Forum, School Psychology International, School Psychology Quarterly, and School Psychology Review*). The third study employed multilevel modeling to investigate differences in the longitudinal trends of impact factor data for five school psychology journals listed in the Web of Science (i.e., *Journal of School Psychology, Psychology in the Schools, School Psychology International, School Psychology Quarterly, and School Psychology Review*). The article addresses implications for authors, editors, and journal editorial teams as well as the status and impact of school psychology journals.

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## 1. Introduction

The development of professional literature in the field of school psychology has followed the characteristics of the field's history in general. That is, in comparison to other professional psychology fields (e.g., clinical psychology), the literature of school psychology developed in the latter half of the twentieth century, followed the rapid growth in employment demand and practitioner preparation, and witnessed rapid expansion. The early history of this literary development has been chronicled by Fagan (1986). Although there were a few books specifically about school psychology prior to the 1960s, its journal literature was broadly scattered across psychological and educational publications until the field matured to the point where a specific literature could be supported. The first journal devoted to school psychology was the *Journal of School Psychology* (JSP) in 1963, which was followed by *Psychology in the Schools* (PITS) in 1964. Table 1 provides a chronology of the journal literature specific to school psychology as well as a list of the journals' publishers and editors. A more expansive chronology of the literature in school psychology appears in Fagan and Wise (2007), and a review of contributors to journal editorial service appears in Runge and French (1999).

This article describes the results of three studies designed to better understand this journal literature. First, we wanted to understand better the widening breadth of peer-reviewed journals in school psychology and related fields that have surfaced during the past decade (cf. Robinson, Skinner, & Brown, 1998; Bliss, Skinner, Hautau, & Carroll, 2008; Strein, Cramer, & Lawser, 2003, which targeted three, four, and five school psychology journals, respectively). We know of no other publication that has outlined these journals' basic characteristics (e.g., number of issues published per year and distribution), operations (e.g., number of manuscripts reviewed and rejection rates), and evidence of impact on other publications, and we envisioned that an overview of these journals would benefit the field as a whole. Second, we wanted to increase the knowledge of manuscript authors about school psychology and related journals so that they would be better able to (a) select journals to which to submit their manuscripts and (b) anticipate the immediate and long-term outcomes of the publication process. Finally, we wanted to increase understanding of those engaged in the peer-review process for journals (e.g., editors and reviewers) by comparing and contrasting practices and outcome indexes across journals. In striving to meet these goals, we focused primarily on school psychology journals targeting a general audience and focusing on a range of topics. We also considered the practices and outcomes of journals highlighting more specific content areas (e.g., assessment and consultation) as well as journals representing related fields (e.g., developmental psychology and educational psychology).

Our first study reports the results of a survey of journal editors of the nine school psychology journals listed in Table 1 as well as editors of related journals. The survey targeted journal operations and peer-review practices during roughly the 2007 volume year of these journals as well as the perspectives of editors about quality submissions and their expectations for reviewers. In order to enrich the picture of the outcomes of the peer-review process and to make concrete the results from the first study, our second study yields results from the coding and analysis of each article appearing during the 2007 volume year for the journals listed in Table 1. In particular, this study focused on analysis of general publishing information (e.g., the number of issues, articles, and pages published) as well as analysis of the general and specific types of articles published during this volume year. Finally, in order to elucidate the citation patterns of

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