

Content Analysis of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*: Buboltz, Miller, and Williams (1999) 11 Years Later

Walter Buboltz Jr., Eric Deemer, and Rebecca Hoffmann
Louisiana Tech University

A content analysis of research published in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology (JCP)* was conducted for Volumes 46 (1999) through 56 (2009). The analysis involved the placement of 514 articles in 15 substantive content categories. In addition, we identified the most frequently published authors, most frequent institutional affiliations, and several reported demographic characteristics. The principal areas of research activity in the *JCP* were multiculturalism and/or diversity, research on development and evaluation of tests and measures, personality and adjustment, outcome research, and interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment, with these categories accounting for 57% of the articles published. Over 40% of the samples reported were college students, with a large number of samples including both genders and indicating the ethnic breakdown. This content analysis revealed that the *JCP* has remained consistent with its stated mission while incorporating changes in the field in its publications.

Keywords: content analysis, research productivity, institutional productivity

Supplemental material: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0020028.supp>

The *Journal of Counseling Psychology (JCP)* has a long and rich tradition of publishing research that has influenced the direction and growth of many domains considered to define our field—therapeutic intervention and assessment, career development, clinical supervision, multicultural competence, and methodological issues. Periodic content analyses of scholarly journals are believed to be important because they provide an index of the extent to which published scholarship reflects the purpose, interests, and values of a given psychological discipline. The *JCP* serves as a barometer of these aims and conditions because it is perhaps the preeminent scholarly journal in counseling psychology.

Extending this line of inquiry seems appropriate for a number of more specific reasons. Previous content analytic investigations by Munley (1974) and by Buboltz and his colleagues (Buboltz, Miller, & Williams, 1999) have revealed changes in the types of research published in the *JCP*. The proportion of articles published on counseling process and outcome remained relatively stable at 25% from 1974 to 1998, whereas there was a substantial decrease in the percentage of published vocational behavior articles from the Munley study (18%) to the Buboltz et al. (1999, 9%) study. Similarly, the percentage of articles dealing with the psychometric properties of tests and measures decreased from 17% in 1974 to 9% in 1998. The latter trend is particularly interesting, given that career development has been one of the core domains by which counseling psychology has traditionally defined itself (Gelso & Fretz, 2001; Watkins, 1994). Although neither of these declines was significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 719) = 2.77, p = .10$, in both cases,

they may herald an emerging shift of scholarly emphasis in our field. Examining the recent contents of the *JCP* issues would shed further light on whether these continue to be trends in counseling psychology research.

In addition, the increasing globalization of counseling psychology has been an encouraging development in terms of attending to issues of cultural diversity, one that is consistent with the American Psychological Association's (APA, 2002) broader policy of increasing multicultural competence and sensitivity in the science and practice of psychology. Indeed, multicultural research was not considered a category in the Munley (1974) study; but 25 years later, this area comprised 7% of the published articles in the *JCP* (Buboltz et al., 1999). It is unclear, however, whether multiculturalism articles will continue to be published in the *JCP* at the same rate. Leong and Ponterotto (2003) noted that authors prefer to publish in the *JCP* for its prestige and called on institutions and others within the professional psychology community to place greater value on, and publish in, international journals in an effort to promote international collaboration.

A further and related point is that the recent proliferation of publication outlets has given authors greater choice in deciding where to submit their articles. For example, research training articles, once believed to fall under the purview of the *JCP* because of their relevance to career development and professional identity issues in counseling psychology (e.g., Bishop & Bieschke, 1998; Kahn, 2001), are now largely published in the new APA journal *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*. Articles published in *Training and Education in Professional Psychology* also pertain to other issues, such as clinical supervision, multicultural issues, and counselor characteristics. Perhaps fewer articles related to the aforementioned issues are being submitted to the *JCP*, which if true, would create more publication space for articles in other content domains.

Walter Buboltz Jr., Eric Deemer, and Rebecca Hoffmann, Department of Psychology, Louisiana Tech University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Walter Buboltz Jr., Department of Psychology, Louisiana Tech University, PO Box 10048, Ruston, LA 71272. E-mail: buboltz@latech.edu

Finally, the impact of technology, the sophistication of which has grown dramatically in the last decade, cannot be overstated. Worldwide accessibility to the Internet has no doubt afforded more researchers than ever before the opportunity to read and shape the contents of the *JCP*. More specifically, the advent of electronic submission portals has made it rather simple for authors to submit their work for relatively little cost (i.e., paper and shipping) and effort. Such an easy process is likely to lend itself to an increased number of submissions, which affords the *JCP* editors the ability to be more selective in choosing which articles to accept. This may or may not have a direct bearing on the contents of the *JCP*, but it does seem to suggest that only those authors whose studies are well designed and reported will be rewarded with publication.

We believe that the types and patterns of research published in the *JCP* represent microcosms of counseling psychology as a whole. Yet, only two substantive content reviews of the *JCP* in the past 36 years seem insufficient to gauge the status and direction of our field. The purpose of this study was therefore to provide an update to the work of Buboltz et al. (1999) by empirically analyzing the content domains of research represented in the *JCP* from 1999 to 2009. We also examined the *JCP*'s contents over this time period with regard to methodological, institutional, and individual differences.

Method

Participants

A senior-level doctoral student in counseling psychology and the first author served as the primary judges. The doctoral student was trained by the first author. The doctoral student first reviewed all articles published and placed the article into one content category or divided an article between two content categories. The first author then reviewed the placement of articles, with initial agreement between the two raters being over 90%. For articles that the two primary judges disagreed on, the second author was consulted, and through discussion among all three authors, the article was placed into a content category. Finally, Cohen's kappa was calculated to examine the interrater reliability after the removal of articles that were divided into two categories. The resulting kappa of .84 was obtained and represented substantial to outstanding agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Content Categories

Content categories were determined through both deductive and inductive procedures. The authors reviewed the categories developed by Buboltz et al. (1999) and then reviewed the contents of the journal for the past 11 years. After doing these reviews, the authors concluded that the categories developed by Buboltz et al. (1999) were appropriate, with one additional category being added to better capture the content of the journal. The category added was interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment. The exact same category operational definitions (descriptions) developed by Buboltz et al. (1999) were used for this analysis. The only difference was the addition and development of the interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment category. The authors felt that keeping content categories the same as those used in previous content analysis would allow for a more accurate examination of

stability or changes over the years between the current content analysis and the previous analysis. Articles were coded in the following content categories through the use of a codebook in Microsoft Excel (for a more detailed description of the content categories, see Buboltz et al., 1999):

1. Outcome research: Examined direct effects of counseling or other types of interventions.
2. Process research: Presented data on the counseling process in the absence of outcome measures.
3. Process and outcome: Presented outcome measures of the effects of counseling process variables.
4. Counselor training and supervision: Related to the training and education of counselors.
5. Research on attitudes and beliefs about counselors: Examined public perceptions of counselors and the field of counseling.
6. Multiculturalism and/or diversity: Primarily investigated issues relevant to multicultural groups or diverse groups, broadly defined.
7. Personality and adjustment research: Dealt with the relations between personality and performance of development. The personality instrument that was developed was placed in research on the development and evaluation of tests and measures.
8. Academic achievement: Focused on student academic achievement across all educational levels.
9. Research on vocational behavior: Focused on the career development of individuals or groups. Career counseling process articles and career instrument development articles were placed in other more appropriate categories.
10. Research on the development and evaluation of tests and measures: Focused on the development and validation of psychological instruments.
11. Research methods and statistics: Emphasized new applications of research methodologies or statistical procedures.
12. Research reviews: Reviewed the prominent research germane to a specific area of counseling psychology.
13. Theoretical articles: Primarily intended to present a specific theory based on research in the field.
14. Interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment: Primarily pertained to interpersonal relationships and attachment. For example, if a study reported on perceived social support or focused primarily on attachment issues such as attachment avoidance or the role of attachment, it was coded into this category.

15. Miscellaneous: Did not fit in any other category.

Procedure

The period covered by the current analysis ranges from 1999 to 2009, inclusive. A total of 484 articles were reviewed and classified in the content categories. Special issues were not included in the content categories because those issues inflated a content category. Excluded from the analysis were test reviews, book reviews, letters to the editor, introductions to special sections, corrections, and reactions.

The classification process consisted of assigning a credit of 1 point to each article. For articles that clearly fit two categories, the credit was divided between the two categories (0.5 for each category). No further divisions were made. For articles bridging various categories, the two prominent classifications were chosen, based on the agreement of the two authors who categorized the articles. After each article was placed in one or more of the content categories, several methodological and other characteristics were recorded: (a) samples used, (b) gender composition of sample, (c) ethnicity reported, (d) number of studies per published article, (e) number of references, and (f) quantitative or qualitative research.

The rankings of authorship and institutional affiliation of author(s) were computed through the use of a weighted, proportional counting system that was devised by Howard, Cole, and Maxwell (1987). This method was used to attempt to account for potential differences in contributing effort by different authors. In this system, credit for authorship and institutional affiliation is set at a credit value of 1 for each area (authorship and institutional affiliation) per article. A single authored article netted that author a single unit of credit (1). For an article with two authors, the first author earned .6 credit and the second author earned .4 credit. In an article with three authors, the first author netted a credit of .47, the second netted .32, and the third netted .21. For four authors, .42, .28, .18, and .12 points of credit were earned, in that order, and for five authors .38, .26, .17, .11, and .08 points of credit were earned, in that order. If an article had more than five authors, the proportional credit was determined for each author based on a continuation of the above system. This method of assigning credit was used for institutional affiliation as well. In cases in which an individual author had more than one institutional affiliation listed, the affiliation noted first was used for credit determination.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the frequency of the articles that were classified into the 15 content categories for Volumes 46 (1999) through 56 (2009), not including two special issues: Volume 52, Issue 1, "Knowledge in Context: Qualitative Methods in Counseling Psychology Research" and Volume 56, Issue 2, "Advances in Research With Sexual Minority Persons." A table that includes data from both special issues is presented in an online supplement to this article. The total column shows the total number of articles examined for a particular year. The total row shows the total number of articles and percentage for a particular content category. This information is provided to examine the primary areas of publication of the *JCP* and to allow for examination of the content across years.

Overall, the multiculturalism and/or diversity category accounts for the largest number of published articles across the 11-year span. Research on the development and evaluation of tests and measures accounted for the second largest number of articles. Personality and adjustment research represented the third largest number of categorized articles, followed by outcome research, research on vocational behavior, research on interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment, and miscellaneous research, in that order. When the top five content categories are taken together, they total 280 articles or just over 57% of articles published in the journal. If the top seven content categories are considered, they represent 358.5 articles and account for just over 74% of the articles published. The remaining eight content categories composed the remaining 26% of the articles published.

When looking across the years, we note no obvious trends in any particular content categories. There are some slight variations from year to year, but there is no content category that appears to have any major change during the time span examined in this analysis. It should be noted that in the Buboltz et al. (1999) study, the interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment category did not exist, and the addition of this category may explain some of the changes noted; however, the authors of the previous article have indicated that the majority of articles that would have fallen into the current interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment category were coded into the miscellaneous category.

When we compared the results of the current content analysis with that of Buboltz et al. (1999), some interesting results emerged. First, multiculturalism and/or diversity moved from being ranked fifth in the previous analysis to being ranked first in the current analysis, whereas process and outcome research moved from being first in the previous analysis to being 10th in the current analysis. The latter finding represents a dramatic shift in journal content. One interpretation of this finding is that perhaps fewer scholars are conducting therapy research that is of high enough quality to merit publication in the *JCP*. Alternatively, it is possible that therapy researchers have increasingly chosen to publish in other appropriate journals. As we noted in the introduction, other journals relevant to counseling psychologists may be drawing some of the articles that may have traditionally been published in the *JCP*, and this is certainly possible with respect to publication outlets for therapy researchers. It is also important to note that the *JCP* sometimes publishes special issues that emphasize particular topics (e.g., research methodology), which naturally results in fewer opportunities for therapy (or other) researchers to publish their work in the journal. Although beyond the scope of the present study, a comparative analysis of the *JCP* publication trends relative to those of other traditional or emerging journals warrants further investigation. It should be noted that despite these obvious changes, there was a great deal of stability in overall ranks with outcome research, research on vocational behavior, research on development and evaluation of tests and measures, and personality and adjustment research being ranked near the top in both analyses.

In reviewing the current findings and in light of previous findings of content analyses, it appears that the *JCP* consistently provides the readership with research and articles in line with the mission of the journal. As noted by Buboltz et al. (1999) and reinforced by the current findings, the *JCP* publishes articles in the primary areas that are associated with the identity of counseling

Table 1
Research Published in the Journal of Counseling Psychology by Content Category: 1999–2009

Year	Content category															Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
1999																
<i>n</i>	2.5	5	1	0	3.5	4	2.5	1.5	2.5	9.5	0	3	1	2	7	
%	6	11	2	0	8	9	6	3	6	21	0	7	2	4	16	
2000																
<i>n</i>	4.5	1	3	2	1.5	5	7.5	1	3.5	4	0	2	2.5	2.5	4	
%	10	2	7	5	3	11	17	2	8	9	0	5	6	6	9	
2001																
<i>n</i>	8	0	1	2.5	1.5	7	5.5	1	5	5.5	0	2	0	3.5	2.5	
%	18	0	2	6	3	16	7	2	11	12	0	4	0	8	6	
2002																
<i>n</i>	5.5	2	2.5	1.5	1.5	6	3	1	7.5	4.5	0.5	0	3.5	2.5	4.5	
%	12	4	5	3	3	13	7	2	16	10	1	0	8	5	10	
2003																
<i>n</i>	0.5	4	2.5	2	0.5	5.5	4	0	4	6	2	0	3.5	4	2.5	
%	1	10	6	5	1	13	10	0	10	15	5	0	9	10	6	
2004																
<i>n</i>	4	1	3	0	0.5	6.5	4.5	0	3	7	3.5	2	2	1.5	2.5	
%	10	2	7	0	1	16	11	0	7	17	9	5	5	4	6	
2005																
<i>n</i>	1.5	3	1	1.5	1	12	2.5	1	2.5	7	2	0	4	7.5	3.5	
%	3	6	2	3	2	24	5	2	5	14	4	0	8	15	7	
2006																
<i>n</i>	4	1.5	1	0.5	0.5	9	6.5	0	4	11	1	0.5	1.5	6	2	
%	8	3	2	1	1	18	13	0	8	22	2	1	3	12	4	
2007																
<i>n</i>	2	1	2	1.5	2.5	8.5	3	0	3.5	1	1	6	3	4	5	
%	5	2	5	3	6	19	7	0	8	2	2	14	7	9	11	
2008																
<i>n</i>	10	4	1	1.5	0.5	7.5	5	0	2	8	0	1	0	2.5	3	
%	22	9	2	3	1	16	11	0	4	17	0	2	0	5	7	
2009																
<i>n</i>	3	2.5	1	0	1	3.5	6	0	5	4	0	0.5	0.5	5	1	
%	9	8	3	0	3	11	18	0	15	12	0	1	2	2	3	
Total																
<i>N</i>	45.5	25	19	13	14.5	74.5	50	5.5	42.5	67.5	10	17	21.5	41	37.5	
%	9	5	4	3	3	15	10	1	9	14	2	4	4	9	8	
Buboltz (1999)																
<i>N</i>	118.5	225.0	504.5	122.5	74.5	136.5	140.5	43.0	185.0	173.5	72.0	40.5	86.0		74.0	
%	6	13	25	6	4	7	7	2	9	9	4	2	4		4	
Munley (1974)																
<i>N</i>	157	93	13	42	37		66	58	185	176	25	66	276		44	
%	15	9	1	4	4		6	6	18	17	2				4	

Note. All percentages were rounded off. 1 = outcome research; 2 = process research; 3 = process and outcome; 4 = counselor training and supervision; 5 = research on attitudes and beliefs about counselors, counseling services, and mental health services; 6 = multiculturalism and/or diversity; 7 = personality and adjustment research; 8 = academic achievement; 9 = research on vocational behavior; 10 = research on development and evaluation of tests and measures; 11 = research methods and statistics; 12 = research reviews; 13 = theoretical articles; 14 = interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment; 15 = miscellaneous. Munley (1974) did not record percentages for nonempirical articles; therefore, some categories do not have percentages.
^a Excludes Volume 52, Issue 2. ^b Excludes Volume 56, Issue 1.

psychology. Despite the consistency in publications and despite holding to the core areas of counseling psychology as a field, the *JCP* has been able to change as the field has changed. For instance, with increasing globalization of counseling psychology and increasing attention to issues of cultural diversity, publications in the *JCP* focusing on multiculturalism and/or diversity have also increased. Initially, multiculturalism and/or diversity was not even a category (Munley, 1974); then, it moved from being ranked in the middle of the pack (Buboltz et al., 1999) to currently being the number one ranked category. Clearly, the *JCP* and the editors are in tune with changes that have occurred or that are occurring

within the field of counseling psychology, publishing articles that bring knowledge in these areas to the field. On the basis of the content analyses conducted, we can only assume that the *JCP* will continue to be relatively consistent in its overall publication patterns while continuing to have the flexibility to address emerging areas that may become core areas of counseling psychology in the future. It will be interesting to see over the next couple of decades what areas will be further developed and what areas will emerge and will be reflected in the publications of the *JCP*.

Overall, we feel that any major changes in the publication patterns of the *JCP* would be reflected in the major content

categories examined in this content analysis. It is possible that this relative stability over time reflects the consistent views of the *JCP* editors and the stable identity of counseling psychology. If the field of counseling psychology was having a dramatic shift in identity or focus or if the recent, increased use of technology was having a major impact, it seems likely that the publications and patterns of publication in the *JCP* would reflect these changes.

Authors

Table 2 lists and ranks the top 20 contributors to the *JCP* over the past 11 years. Only the top 20 contributors were listed because we felt that this provided a fairly good representation of frequently contributing authors while decreasing the risk of inclusion of authors who made few contributions to the journal. Since 1999, the author receiving the most credit, based on the weighted coding system, was Meifen Wei. The second leading contributor was Madonna G. Constantine. The third leading contributor was Tracy L. Tylka, followed by Richard M. Lee and David L. Vogel, in that order. Overall, the small percentages that were found in this review indicate that a large number of authors are contributing to the journal, and no author accounts for a large percentage of published articles.

It is of interest to note that only six of the top 20 ranked authors in the current study were ranked in the top 20 in the previous content analysis by Buboltz et al. (1999), and none of the current top five ranked authors are in the top 20 in the previous analysis. This should be taken with a high degree of caution because there are many possible reasons for this change. For example, some of the leading authors from previous content analysis have retired (3 have retired), and one is deceased. Also, some individuals may have changed areas of research that fit better with other journals or

may have, due to their experience, taken on administrative roles that prohibit publication. It could also be due to the emergence of more outlets, which has allowed other professionals the opportunity to publish in the *JCP* as previous authors have sought other outlets for their research, or it could be due to a changing of the guard per se in counseling psychology.

Contributing Institutions

Table 3 lists the top 20 institutional contributors to the *JCP* over the past 11 years. As with authors, only the top 20 contributors were included, to disallow listing those contributors who only made a few contributions. The institution receiving the highest rank for the entire period was University of Maryland, College Park. The second ranked was University of Missouri—Columbia. The third ranked was Iowa State University, followed by University of Florida and State University of New York, Albany, in that order. The top 20 institutional contributors account for over 50% of the articles published in the *JCP*, and this may indicate that these are leading centers of research in counseling psychology. Additionally of interest is the fact that three (University of Maryland, College Park; University of Missouri—Columbia; and State University of New York, Albany) of the top five leading contributors in the current analysis were also in the top five ranked contributors in the previous analysis, and nine of the current ranked institutions were ranked in the top 20 in the previous analysis by Buboltz et al. (1999).

Examination of changes in institutional contributions should be taken cautiously because the movement of authors to new employment settings can impact institutional affiliation. Despite the potential movement of faculty and potential retirements, several institutions have remained fairly consistent in research productivity over the years, as measured by contributions to the *JCP*. It is possible that these institutions foster research environments, hire faculty who are committed to the scientific process, and espouse the identity of counseling psychology.

Counseling psychology has had a long history of researchers examining institutional research productivity through the examination of a variety of journals over the years (Buboltz et al., 2005; Diegelman, Uffelman, Wagner, & Diegelman, 2005; Delgado & Howard, 1994; Howard, 1983). The two most recent by Buboltz et al. (2005) and Diegelman et al. (2005) provided institutional productivity rankings based on publications in a conglomerate of journals (including the *JCP*) that they believe represent counseling psychology. A comparison of the results of the current institutional rankings with those of Buboltz et al. (2005) and Diegelman et al. (2005) shows that University of Maryland, College Park, and University of Missouri—Columbia, are ranked in the top two for all three studies. In addition, six of the top 10 in the current analysis are also in the top 10 in the other institutional productivity rankings. Clearly, the results from these productivity analyses indicate that some institutions are extremely active contributors to a variety of journals that are believed to represent counseling psychology or that are attractive to counseling psychologists.

Samples Used

Table 4 presents the percentages of various samples that were used in the articles that were reviewed. College student samples

Table 2
Author Contributions to the Journal of Counseling Psychology:
1999–2009

Author	Weighted contribution	Rank	Buboltz (1999)	
			Weighted contribution	Rank
Meifen Wei	7.53	1		
Madonna G. Constantine	6.35	2		
Tracy L. Tylka	6.20	3		
Richard M. Lee	5.86	4		
David L. Vogel	5.40	5		
Terence J. G. Tracey	5.32	6	10.41	8
Brent S. Mallinckrodt	5.18	7	13.16	4
Bonnie Moradi	5.05	8		
Bryan S. K. Kim	4.59	9		
Clara E. Hill	4.47	10	15.17	2
Edward C. Chang	4.27	11		
Kenneth G. Rice	4.23	12		
Frederick G. Lopez	4.16	13		
Robert W. Lent	4.10	14		
Dennis M. Kivlighan, Jr.	4.00	15	11.63	6
Jonathan J. Mohr	3.85	16		
Charles J. Gelso	3.37	17	11.72	5
Kevin O. Cokley	3.11	18		
Christine Robitschek	3.06	19		
Myrna L. Friedlander	3.01	20	10.30	9

Table 3
Ranking of Top Contributing Institutions: 1999–2009

Institution	Total	Rank	%	Buboltz (1999)		
				Total	Rank	%
University of Maryland, College Park	36.27	1	7.06	142.25	1	7.21
University of Missouri—Columbia	30.48	2	5.93	58.02	3	2.94
Iowa State University	27.34	3	5.32	29.42	12	1.49
University of Florida	18.82	4	3.66			
University at Albany, State University of New York	15.25	5	2.90	57.21	4	2.90
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	14.89	6	2.90	32.25	10	1.63
University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign	14.76	7	2.87			
Columbia University	14.35	8	2.79			
University of Akron	11.20	9	2.18	23.8	18	1.21
Boston College	10.04	10	1.95			
Arizona State University	9.56	11	1.86			
Ohio State University	9.20	12	1.79	71.85	2	7.21
University of Wisconsin—Madison	7.44	13	1.45			
University of Memphis	7.32	14	1.42			
University of British Columbia	7.27	15	1.42			
Texas Tech University	6.80	16	1.32			
Illinois State University	6.60	17	1.29			
University of Notre Dame	6.40	18	1.25	28.07	13	1.42
Pennsylvania State University	6.36	19	1.24	24.70	16	1.26
Michigan State University	6.32	20	1.23			

Note. All percentages were rounded off.

are again the most frequently used in the sample, but there was a greater than 10% decrease in the use of college samples from the previous analysis (Buboltz et al., 1999). Adults (nonclinical), adults (clinical), counselors, and graduate students were the next most used samples. Combined, these five types of participant samples account for over 77% of the research samples used. Compared to the previous content analysis (Buboltz et al., 1999),

as already noted, there was a decrease in reliance on college student samples, and this was mostly made up by an increase in the use of adults (nonclinical) and some slight increases in other areas, such as family and/or couples and adult (medical). It is hoped that this possible trend in noncollege student samples will continue to increase, facilitating the movement of counseling psychology into other realms of human growth and development, thus fulfill counseling psychology's emphasis on the total lifespan with diverse populations.

Table 4
Research Samples Reported in the Journal of Counseling Psychology: 1999–2009

Sample characteristic	%	Buboltz (1999) %	Munley (1974) %
Preschool children	0	0.05	0
Elementary school children	0.6	0.5	3
Middle school children	1.3		
High school children	4.8	4.6	11
College students	43.3	55.7	44
Counseling center clients	3.4	5.6	16
Graduate students	6	6.2	3
Adults (nonclinical)	14.2	7.5	12
Adults (clinical)	6.9	5.3	5.5
Adults (medical)	1.8	0.3	2
Adults (voc/rehab)	0.4	0.4	2
Adults (deaf)	0.4		
Adolescents	0.8	1.3	
Juvenile delinquents and inmates	0.4	0.4	0.5
Families and couples	2.4	1.0	1
Counselors	6.7	6.1	
Professors	0.7		
Others	0.8	4.9	
Not applicable	5.3		

Note. Totals do not add to 100% due to rounding. Voc/rehab = vocation and/or rehabilitation.

Demographic Characteristics and Other Article Information

In articles that reported the gender characteristics of their sample, the majority have included both male and female participants (from 65.9% in 2004 to 85.4% in 2003). However, at times, a fairly large number of studies (i.e., 28.6% in 2006) have used only female participants. It is interesting that despite the increased awareness of cultural diversity and despite the provision of basic information about samples, the reporting of ethnicity of samples varied greatly from year to year. The overall average for reporting ethnicity of samples was 89.2%, with a low of 76.6% (2005) and a high of 98% (2009). These results tend to indicate that although counseling psychology reflects an awareness of multicultural issues, many authors still fail to report the ethnic breakdown of their samples. It should however be noted that the percentage reporting has improved greatly over the years. Buboltz et al. (1999) found that in the 1970's, 10% or fewer of the articles reported the ethnic breakdown of their samples. It appears that the trend of increased reporting noted by Buboltz et al. (1999) has leveled off. One may look at these results as an indication that counseling psychology has increased its awareness of multicultural issues over the years, has incorporated diversity into its identity, and has met a goal of

being a life span development field dedicated to the growth and development of diverse groups of individuals across a variety of settings. The reasons for not achieving 100% reporting of ethnicity are not evident but may be related to data collection procedures, lack of awareness of the importance of ethnicity reporting by foreign authors, and many other potential reasons.

The number of studies reported in a single article tends to be one for the majority of articles published (445, 87%), but there have been some (69, 13%) that reported the findings from two or more studies, with two articles reporting the findings from six studies. No clear trend is evident in the number of studies reported in a single article, and whether this will become more of the norm in the future is yet to be determined. Twenty-three percent of the articles reviewed were qualitative (i.e., grounded theory analysis, narrative analysis, ethnographic typology, taxonomy, analytic induction, logical analysis or matrix analysis) in nature, and 77% were quantitative (i.e., structural equation modeling, multinomial logit regression, path analyses, hierarchical cluster analysis, multivariate analysis of variance, multivariate analysis of covariance, canonical analysis, and hierarchical linear modeling) in nature for the period reviewed. Again, no trend was discernible in the number of qualitative or quantitative articles, with type of research varying slightly from year to year. It is interesting that the number of references per article has increased from a mean of 46 in 1999 to a mean of 56 in 2009. This would tend to make sense; as more research is produced, individuals need to review and cite the previous research on which their current research is based. However, as the number of references increases, this consumes page space, limiting the number of articles that can be published in any given issue of the journal. If this trend continues, it may be time to look at alternative methods of reporting references, such as electronic databases that would allow more page space for reporting research findings that may be valuable to the field but that are not published due to space limitations.

Limitations, Brief Summary, and Implications

This analysis must be discussed in the context of its limitations. First, it must be kept in mind that the content categories were based on a previous content analysis and were modified by the current authors. Other researchers may have developed different content categories or modified the categories in other ways. Other researchers may also classify articles differently, thus obtaining a different distribution among the content categories. Second, in the rating system of Howard et al. (1987), it is assumed that the first author contributed the most to the publication; thus, it does not accurately assess equally contributing authors or instances in which senior authors gave junior authors publication experience. Third, as noted by Buboltz et al. (1999), author ranks do not give any indication of the impact of the authors' work on the field. This system of determining author contribution only gives information about the frequency of publication, which does provide some information about which authors' works are the most important to the field. Finally, this content analysis is a descriptive analysis of the past and does not necessarily say anything about the future. The analysis is meant to give some insight into the types of research published in the past by the *JCP* and to provide a look into the scope of the journal.

In summary, we believe that the results of this study provide an informative, cross-sectional look at the values and professional beliefs inherent in counseling psychology as reflected by contrib-

uting authors and editors of the journal. It should be noted that articles published in any given year represent the effects of the unique interactions among the type, the quality, and the quantity of articles submitted to the journal and the preferences of the editorial board members and editors. In the past 11 years, it appears that multiculturalism and/or diversity, development and evaluation of tests and measures, personality and adjustment, outcome research, and interpersonal and/or social support and/or attachment were the leading content categories. The publishing patterns of the journal appear to correspond with the journal's mission, as well as with the defining characteristics of counseling psychology as espoused by the members of Division 17 of the American Psychological Association.

Awareness of the direction and emphasis of publications in the journal regarding professional concerns and current issues can be of benefit to the readers of the journal. In addition, the information generated by the analysis could also be used as a means of providing direction to potential authors. Indeed, understanding the likelihood that one's article may be accepted for publication based on the *JCP*'s content emphases might inform the prospective author's decision-making process in terms of determining which alternative outlets might be more appropriately pursued. We invite our colleagues to conduct further research focusing on the publication trends of the *JCP* in the years to come. For example, the results of analyses focusing on the content of submissions not accepted by the *JCP* may provide further direction to authors and an additional index of the state of counseling psychology as measured by its flagship journal.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2002). *Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/multiculturalguidelines.pdf>
- Bishop, R. M., & Bieschke, K. J. (1998). Applying social cognitive theory to interest in research among counseling psychology doctoral students: A path analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 45*, 182-187.
- Buboltz, W. C., Jenkins, S., Thomas, A., Lindley, L., Schwartz, J., & Loveland, J. (2005). Research productivity in counseling psychology: An update. *The Counseling Psychologist, 33*, 709-728.
- Buboltz, W. C., Miller, M., & Williams, D. J. (1999). Content analysis of research in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (1973-1988). *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46*, 496-503.
- Delgado, E., & Howard, G. (1994). Changes in research productivity in counseling psychology: Revisiting Howard (1983) a decade later. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 41*, 69-73.
- Diegelman, N., Uffelman, R., Wagner, K., & Diegelman, S. (2005). Current institutional trends in research productivity in counseling psychology journals. *The Counseling Psychologist, 33*, 327-339.
- Gelso, C. J., & Fretz, B. R. (2001). *Counseling psychology* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Howard, G. (1983). Research productivity in counseling psychology: An update and generalization study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 30*, 600-602.
- Howard, G., Cole, D., & Maxwell, S. (1987). Research productivity in psychology based on publication in the journals of the American Psychological Association. *American Psychologist, 42*, 975-986.
- Kahn, J. H. (2001). Predicting the scholarly activity of counseling psychology students: A refinement and extension. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*, 344-354.

- Landis, J. R., & Koch, G. G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics*, *33*, 159–174.
- Leong, F. T., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2003). A proposal for internationalizing counseling psychology in the United States: Rationale, recommendations, and challenges. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *31*, 381–395.
- Munley, P. H. (1974). A content analysis of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *21*, 305–310.
- Watkins, C. E. (1994). On hope, promise, and possibility in counseling psychology or some simple, but meaningful observations about our specialty. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *22*, 315–334.

Received January 12, 2010

Revision received April 27, 2010

Accepted April 27, 2010 ■