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Geographically representative scholarship and internationalization in school and educational psychology: A bibliometric analysis of eight journals from 2002–2016

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ABSTRACT

Although the discipline of school and educational psychology is arguably international (e.g., relevant research and practice is evident in more than 80 countries), there has been limited research examining the international scholarship published in school and educational psychology journals. Such an assessment is important because it provides one important metric for better understanding the field's level of internationalization. The purpose of this study was to evaluate every article ($N = 4456$) published from 2002 to 2016 across eight school and educational psychology journals that publish international scholarship. Each article's authorship and participant data were coded and reported in terms of respective country and geographical region. Research questions examined, for example, how the published scholarship aligns with international employment data for school psychologists and whether particular journals published a geographically wider breadth of articles. Overall findings indicated that although the field of school psychology is present in more than 80 countries, the overall scholarship in the reviewed journals predominantly features participants living in, and authors working in, North America or Western Europe. However, one journal (*School Psychology International*) published relatively more articles with participants from outside of these geographic regions. Also, journals affiliated with a national professional organization largely differed in their percentage of “within-nation” publications (e.g., articles with participants living in the same nation that sponsors the respective journal). Explanations of the data are discussed and several recommendations are made that, if followed, could improve the internationalization and geographical representation of scholarship in school and educational psychology.

The concept of internationalization has been defined and described somewhat differently within the existing literature (e.g., Arfken, 2012; Gerstein, Heppner, Ægisdóttir, Leung, & Norsworthy, 2009; Ng & Noonan, 2012; van de Vijver, 2013). For example, van de Vijver (2013) suggests that internationalization is:

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The approach in which existing or new psychological theories, methods, procedures, or data across cultures are synthesized so as to create a more culture-informed, inclusive, and globally applicable science and profession. This approach is essential to advance [the discipline] beyond its Euro-American context of development and to achieve a more global applicability of its theories and professional procedures.

(p. 761).

Among the various descriptions and definitions, nearly all suggested that a focus of internationalization is on (a) cross-national and culturally responsible research collaboration, (b) synthesizing data and knowledge generated from scholarship and practice with the aim of fostering a more culturally informed and internationally relevant discipline, and/or (c) an awareness and prevention of simply exporting professional work (e.g., scholarship about theories, procedures, methods) from North American and Western European countries to other countries without regard to cultural appropriateness or sufficient evaluation (e.g., Arfken, 2012; Begeny, *in press*; Leung et al., 2009; Pieterse, Fang, & Evans, 2011; van de Vijver, 2013). Given these common themes within the literature on internationalization, it is logical that internationally representative scholarship is a critical component of internationalization.

Over the past 15 years of education and psychology research, only a small number of studies (Arnett, 2008; O’Gorman, Shum, Halford, & Ogilvie, 2012; Pieterse et al., 2011) have taken a focused look at international publication characteristics and internationally representative scholarship across multiple journals and multiple years. In Arnett’s (2008) analysis, he reviewed author affiliations of six of the American Psychological Association’s (APA’s) leading journals (i.e., at least one journal devoted to the field of clinical, educational, developmental, health, family, and social psychology). From 2003 to 2007, Arnett reported that 73% of first authors were affiliated with universities in the United States of America (USA), 14% were from other English-speaking countries (a category Arnett used in his analysis, which included Australia, Canada [CAN], New Zealand, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland [GBR]), and 11% of the authors were from Europe. Thus, only 2% of first authors were from outside of these geographic locations: 1% of first authors were from Asia, 1% from Israel, and virtually none of the authors were from Africa, the Middle East, or Latin America. Arnett also examined authors who were not first authors, the location of the study sample for empirical articles, and the author and sample representation during the years 1988, 1993, and 1998. In all of these analyses the results were virtually the same as those reported of first authors from 2003 to 2007. Overall, Arnett concluded that there ought to be substantial concern for the fact that so much of the scholarship in these APA journals neglect the vast majority of the world’s population.

More recently, O’Gorman et al. (2012) examined the publications and citations of psychology articles represented in Web of Science. They reviewed articles from 1996 to 2010 for 73 different countries and examined each country’s publication output with indices of national development. Overall findings revealed that the authors identified in the articles were most affiliated with institutions (primarily universities) in the USA and Western Europe, and publication output (i.e., number of publications) was significantly correlated with impact (i.e., frequency of scholarship from a given nation being cited) during the time period reviewed. Findings also revealed that although authors from the USA contributed the most scholarship, their percentage of contribution slightly decreased over the 15-year period examined in the study.

Although the studies conducted by Arnett (2008) and O’Gorman et al. (2012) were unique in that they captured important information across multiple psychology journals about international publication trends, they did not explicitly examine international publication patterns for specific disciplines within psychology. Pieterse et al. (2011) published the only known study to examine international publication patterns across multiple journals within a specific psychology sub-discipline. In that study, they reviewed two counseling psychology journals published in the USA and found that across those two journals, only 6% of participants and 7% of first authors were living in or affiliated with a country outside of the USA. Although Pieterse and colleagues provide another good example of research aimed at better understanding internationalization through a journal’s published scholarship, their study had some important limitations. For example, they only examined two journals, and the authors described both journals as “US-based” counseling psychology journals because they are official APA journals.

To summarize the aforementioned content, published scholarship that adequately represents the international community is imperative in understanding and furthering a science that truly represents the international community, and it is also a relevant metric of a discipline’s level of internationalization (Arfken, 2012; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Pieterse et al., 2011). This is true across many fields, including education, psychology, and their sub-disciplines (Arnett, 2008; O’Gorman et al., 2012; van de Vijver, 2013). Some initial studies have looked at geographically representative scholarship across multiple journals and their findings have been similar. With our specific interest in the discipline of school and educational psychology, the main goal of this study was to better understand this discipline’s publication characteristics across multiple journals and consider these data in the context of internationalization.

1. Internationalization within school and educational psychology

Most would contend that school psychology is an international discipline based on factors such as the following: there is evidence of school psychology practice in over 80 countries and graduate-level training programs in at least 56 countries (Jimerson, Skokut, Cardenas, Malone, & Stewart, 2008), since the 1970s there has been an international organization of school psychologists (the International School Psychology Association [ISPA]), and there is evidence that school psychology is growing around the world and has continued potential for substantial growth (Cook, Jimerson, & Begeny, 2010; Jimerson, Oakland, & Farrell, 2007).¹ Furthermore,

¹ Similar to Jimerson, Stewart, Skokut, Cardenas, and Malone (2009) and several other publications, we use the term *school psychology* or *school*

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