
A Meta-Study of *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*: An Analysis of Publication Characteristics in Articles From 2000 to 2019

Une métaétude de la *Revue canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie* : une analyse des caractéristiques des publications dans les articles de 2000 à 2019

Karishma K. Katrak

Vanderbilt University

Emily S. Olson

Vanderbilt University

Bradley T. Erford

Vanderbilt University

Catherine Y. Chang

Georgia State University

Jordana Saks

University of British Columbia

Lexa Villette

University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT

Publication patterns in articles appearing in *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy (CJCP)* from 2000 to 2019 were reviewed. Trends in author characteristics (e.g., sex, work setting) and article content (e.g., topic, methodology, participants, design, statistics) were analyzed in 5-year periods (i.e., 2000–2004, 2005–2009, 2010–2014, 2015–2019). Women, authors affiliated with universities, and authors residing in Canada were the major contributors during this period. Overall, there was an increase in research-focused articles, specifically qualitative designs, now accounting for most research articles published in *CJCP*. Data analysis sophistication decreased significantly, while reports of study effect sizes, reliability/dependability, and validity/trustworthiness increased significantly. This meta-study helps readers better understand the history, trajectory, and scope of author and article characteristics to address quality practices and socio-cultural issues within the profession. It also substantiates the conclusion that *CJCP* is publishing articles consistent with its mission and stated purpose.

RÉSUMÉ

Des schémas de publication dans les articles apparaissant dans la *Revue canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie (RCCP)* allant de 2000 à 2019 ont été examinés. Les tendances dans les caractéristiques des auteur-trice-s (par ex. : genre, environnement de travail) et dans le contenu des articles (par ex. : sujet, méthodologie, participant-e-s, conception, statistiques) ont été analysées sur des périodes de 5 ans (c.-à.-dire : 2000 à 2004, 2005 à 2009, 2010 à 2014, 2015 à 2019). Les femmes, les auteur-trice-s affilié-e-s à des universités et des auteur-trice-s résidant au Canada ont été les principaux contributeur-trice-s durant cette période. En général, il y a eu une augmentation des articles reliés à la recherche, surtout ceux ayant des conceptions qualitatives, comptant désormais pour la plupart des articles qui sont publiés dans la *RCCP*. La sophistication des analyses de données a largement diminué, alors que les rapports sur la taille des effets des études, la fiabilité, la validité/crédibilité ont fortement augmenté. Cette métaétude aide les lecteur-trice-s à mieux comprendre l'histoire, la trajectoire, et l'étendue des auteur-trice-s et les caractéristiques des articles pour répondre aux enjeux socioculturels et aux enjeux entourant une pratique de qualité au sein de la profession. Elle souligne également la conclusion que la *RCCP* publie des articles cohérents avec sa mission et son objectif déclaré.

Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy (CJCP) is the official peer-reviewed publication of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/>) and has been published continually since 1967. *CJCP* (2022) aims to advance and improve counselling practice, disseminate scholarly information about current theories, research, and practice, and allows for critical analysis, review, and discussion of scholarly work. *CJCP* includes articles published by Canadian and international contributors that cater to counsellor educators, counsellors, and psychotherapists across community agencies, schools, and universities. The current editor is Michael Sorsdahl.

CJCP (n.d.) is a quarterly journal that publishes a range of articles, including research reports, descriptions of new counselling techniques and interventions, current scientific advancements, commentaries on professional issues within the counselling field, and depictions of individuals, groups, and specific populations and their needs. Other types of articles consist of meta-analyses, meta-syntheses, systematic reviews, and literature reviews that include details of the authors' processes in identifying the relevant literature (i.e., literature reviews must have a method section). *CJCP* also publishes special issues that focus on specific areas of counselling or populations (see Table 1). Some examples include counselor supervision, social justice, evolving practices in career development, and graduate student research.

This article is focused on reviewing articles published in the *CJCP* from 2000 to 2019. Analyses of counselling journals such as *CJCP* are needed to highlight trends in and themes of research and practice within the counselling profession, in

Table 1
Special Issues/Sections Published in CJCP From 2000 to 2019

Year	Volume(Issue)	Topic
2000	34(1)	Counselling First Nations People in Canada
2000	34(3)	Innovations in Career and Employment Counselling
2001	35(1)	Multicultural Counselling in the Millennium
2004	38(3)	Innovations in Counsellor Education and Supervision
2005	39(3–4)	Career Counselling for Women
2008–2009	42(4) & 43(1)	Graduate Student Research
2009	43(4)	Commemorative Issue
2010	44(3)	Supervision
2012	46(4)	Men
2013	47(1)	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Counselling Psychology
2013	47(2)	Evolving Practices in Career Development
2014	48(3)	Social Justice
2016	50(3)	History of Counselling
2016	50(3)	Divorce

order for journals to make course adjustments in author and article characteristics to reflect best practices in counselling publication. The field of counselling has seen vast growth and evolution over the past two decades (Erford, 2023; Kaplan & Gladding, 2011; Kaplan et al., 2014), and journals can reflect key advancements. Thus, it becomes important for journal content and characteristics to be examined, analyzed, and evaluated periodically in order to represent developments within the field accurately (Erford et al., 2010). Objective, unbiased, and socially responsible methods must be used in such critical examinations to ensure credible results. Erford and colleagues (2010) highlighted three primary methods of analyzing journal publication content: content analyses of special issues published in the journal, qualitative syntheses, and quantitative meta-studies.

Content analysis of special issues helps readers understand a journal's efforts toward examining issues of importance to the field in a timely manner and how the journal has helped fulfill a greater need within society. A brief content analysis of special issues is provided in the results section. The second method for evaluating journal content is a qualitative synthesis (Erford et al., 2010) or a qualitative review of journal article content over a certain period. Such analyses are carried out by a content expert, a scholar who assesses, conceptualizes, and synthesizes information about the journal, including trends across journal topics, researcher

characteristics, methodologies used, and data analysis procedures, among other article characteristics.

The third method, and the method primarily employed in the current article, is the quantitative meta-study (Erford et al., 2010), which involves using quantitative means to review and analyze patterns in article characteristics over a given period. Characteristics such as author demographics and work settings, leading contributors and institutions, article types, topical issues explored, and statistical methods used are analyzed under this method. Most sophisticated meta-studies use descriptive and univariate data analysis procedures to identify trends in article characteristics (Anderson et al., 2021). This method also has the advantage of using objective information and hypothesis testing to determine effect sizes in order to gain a better understanding of changing trends across multiple variables (Williams et al., 2021).

To date, none of these three methodologies has been used to summarize characteristics of articles published in *CJCP*. No qualitative syntheses of *CJCP* article content have been completed, nor have other forms of quantitative synthesis been published regarding *CJCP* practices. Many counselling journals have recently been subjected to quantitative meta-studies, including *Journal of Counseling and Development* (Anderson et al., 2021), *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development* (Saks et al., 2020), and *The Professional Counselor* (Williams et al., 2021). Few recent qualitative reviews have been conducted of other counselling journals (Saks et al., 2020).

It was within this context that the current meta-study of *CJCP* articles published between 2000 and 2019 was conducted. We used the same methodology as other recent meta-studies (Saks et al., 2020; Anderson et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2021) to allow comparisons across variables and journals. We encourage other counselling scholars to conduct a qualitative synthesis of *CJCP* articles. We sought to answer three primary research questions: (a) What were the characteristics of the authors who published in *CJCP*? (b) What were the characteristics of articles published in *CJCP* with a special emphasis on research articles? and (c) What trends in these author and article characteristics were demonstrated over this 20-year period?

Method

Articles published in *CJCP* from 2000 to 2019 were reviewed, selected, coded, and analyzed for specific author and article characteristics. Lengthy, scholarly works (e.g., research, practice, theoretical, or literature review manuscripts) were included in the study, whereas brief, less scholarly works such as book reviews, introductions to special issues, interviews, reflections, and practice notes were excluded. The methods of analysis described below mirror the methods used by Saks and colleagues (2020).

Extracted author characteristics included author name, author sex, number of authors, lead author employment setting (collapsed to university and non-university), university name, and domicile (Canadian or international). Article characteristics explored in this study include the topic (e.g., multicultural, treatment, interventions, ethics/legal) and the focus (i.e., research or not research). Additional characteristics were explored for research articles specifically. These included whether articles were intervention or non-intervention based, the research paradigm (qualitative or quantitative), the research design (e.g., qualitative, true/quasi-experimental, test development, descriptive, comparative, correlational, meta-analysis, survey), sampling/assignment procedures (i.e., random or non-random), numerical sample size, participant sample size category (i.e., small [1–29], medium [30–99], large [100–499], very large [500 or more]), types of participants (i.e., adults, counsellors/mental health practitioners, children/adolescents, undergraduate students, graduate students, non-humans), sophistication of data analysis applications (basic [i.e., descriptive, correlation, theme coding], intermediate [i.e., *t*/ANOVA, regression analysis], or advanced [i.e., MANOVA, factor analysis, cluster analysis]), primary statistical analyses used (i.e., descriptive, correlation, independent *t*-test/ANOVA, MANOVA, regression analysis, cluster or factor analysis, nonparametric) as applied within both quantitative and qualitative approaches, inclusion of sample effect size, and reliability/dependability and validity/trustworthy metrics/descriptions, as applied within both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The typology of statistics was developed after the fact through the retention of the most frequently reported statistics, the aggregation of similar categories, and the elimination of very low frequency occurrences. Randomization was included as a description of different sampling methodologies and was not meant as an indicator of rigour.

The first two authors, working independently, coded the information from each article into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet in the order of article release date. Articles in French were coded by the fifth and sixth authors, who are French-language speakers. The authors then brought their data together to assess for discrepancies, which were resolved through consensus, and aggregated them into 5-year time windows (2000–2004, 2005–2009, 2010–2014, and 2015–2019). These 5-year time windows were used to allow decades to be divided while allowing a substantial number of articles to be analyzed within each window to power all statistical analyses sufficiently. The analysis included descriptive statistics to analyze trends over time of parameters, given that the data were from a census of available articles over the 2000–2019 time period. Interpretative guidelines for reporting effect sizes (η^2) were .01 = small effect, .09 = medium effect, and 0.25 = large effect (Cohen, 1988), with larger effect sizes indicating more important changes observed over time.

Results

A brief content analysis of special issues shows that *CJCP* saw the publication of 17 special issues between 2000 and 2019. A quick glance at the special issue topics displayed in Table 1 indicates four primary areas, as discerned through thematic analysis: counselling subdisciplines, participant subpopulations, societal issues, and legacy initiatives. Innovative, growing subdiscipline foci included multicultural counselling, career development, career and employment counselling, and counsellor education and supervision. Several special issues were focused on counselling specific subpopulations of interest, like men or Indigenous people. Other special issues focused on important counselling issues in society such as divorce, social justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Finally, legacy initiatives included a commemorative issue as well as important areas such as graduate student research, counselling history, and conference outcomes.

CJCP published 548 articles from 2000 to 2019, of which 128 were excluded from this analysis (e.g., editorials, book reviews, reviewer commendations, indexes, introductions, or conclusions to special issues). This left 420 articles coded for author and article variables aggregated into 5-year time windows (2000–2004, 2005–2009, 2010–2014, and 2015–2019) and analyzed for trends over time. The results of these analyses follow, grouped according to author characteristics and article characteristics.

Author Characteristics

Female authors maintained a very consistent majority among all *CJCP* authors during the 20-year span of this study. Female lead authors composed a consistent majority at 63.3% compared to male lead authors at 36.7%, $\eta^2 = .010$. Likewise, female authors made up a consistent majority (64.0%) of all authors publishing in *CJCP* between 2000 and 2019, $\eta^2 = .003$. At the same time, the average number of authors per article was steady throughout this period, in that *CJCP* authors collaborated at a consistent level over time, $\eta^2 = .013$. *CJCP* articles had an average of 2.14 authors between 2000 and 2004 and 2.26 between 2005–2014, followed by a slight increase to 2.65 authors per article between 2015 and 2019.

Employment affiliation of *CJCP* lead authors shifted significantly toward university settings from 2000–2004 (80.9%) to 2010–2014 (93.4%), then remained consistent in 2015–2019, $\eta^2 = .026$. Thus, between 2010 and 2019, only about 7% of all authors were not affiliated primarily with a university. Given that *CJCP* is a Canadian journal that is affiliated with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (*CJCP*, n.d.), we discerned what proportion of the lead authors work at institutions (e.g., universities, hospitals, counselling centres, etc.) in Canada and determined that a consistent 89.3% were from Canada.

The authors who contributed most frequently to the *CJCP* from 2000 to 2019, in total number of authored articles, were Nancy Arthur with 12 articles;

Table 2
Article Topic Categories in CJCP Articles From 2000 to 2019

Content topic	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2015–2019	Total
Theory/treatment	106 (66.3%)	83 (75.4%)	122 (64.2%)	122 (64.2%)	410 (68.9%)
Multicultural issues	44 (27.5%)	25 (22.7%)	52 (27.4%)	30 (22.2%)	151 (25.4%)
Ethics/legal	10 (6.2%)	2 (1.8%)	16 (8.4%)	6 (4.4%)	34 (5.7%)
Totals	160	110	190	158	595

Note. Many articles were coded to reflect multiple content issues. Thus, totals exceed the number of accepted articles.

Jose F. Domene with 9 articles; Martin Drapeau, Nicola Gazzola, and Blythe G. Shepherd with 7 articles each; and Robinder P. Bedi, Timothy G. Black, Marla J. Buchanan, Sandra Collins, and Gina Wong-Wylie with 6 articles each. From 2000 to 2019, the universities that supported the highest number of articles written by *CJCP* lead authors were all from Canada: the University of Calgary (with 49 articles), the University of Alberta (with 33 articles), Athabasca University (with 31 articles), the University of British Columbia (with 28 articles), the University of Victoria (with 26 articles), McGill University (with 19 articles), Université Laval (with 16 articles), the University of Ottawa (with 14 articles), the University of Lethbridge (with 11 articles), and Université de Sherbrooke (with 8 articles).

Article Characteristics

As shown in Table 2, *CJCP* topical content changed between 2000 and 2019, $\eta^2 = .014$. A close inspection of Table 2 indicates that only three categories were coded, and slight fluctuations appeared in the proportions of multicultural issues and theory/treatment topics. The simplest explanation stems from the occurrence of two entire special issues related to multicultural issues during the 2000–2004 window and the 2010–2014 window. The overall proportions of all research articles published in *CJCP* increased from 42.2% in 2000–2004 to 68.9% in 2010–2014 before reducing a bit to 61.5% in 2015–2019, $\eta^2 = .042$. The focus for the rest of this results section is on the various characteristics of the 243 research articles published in *CJCP* between 2000 and 2019.

Qualitative approaches to research designs recurred most frequently in *CJCP*. The proportion of qualitative research studies appearing in *CJCP* increased from 44.9% from 2000–2004 to 70.8% in 2010–2014 before declining slightly to 61.8% in 2015–2019, $\eta^2 = .035$, so now they consistently comprise the majority of research studies published in this journal. Similarly, the specific types of research designs that appeared in *CJCP* research articles changed over the 20-year

Table 3
Proportion of Research Designs Used in CJCP Research Studies

Design	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2015–2019	Total
Qualitative	20 (42.6%)	26 (53.1%)	58 (68.2%)	38 (59.4%)	142 (58.0%)
Survey	16 (34.0%)	18 (36.7%)	23 (27.1%)	22 (34.4%)	79 (32.2%)
True/quasi-experiment	4 (8.5%)	1 (2.0%)	3 (3.5%)	2 (3.1%)	10 (4.1%)
Comparative	4 (8.5%)	2 (4.1%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.6%)	8 (3.3%)
Test development	3 (6.4%)	2 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.6%)	6 (2.4%)
Totals	47	49	85	64	245

span of the current study, $\eta^2 = .068$ (see Table 3), and this change yielded one of the largest effect sizes in this meta-study. Variations over time were noted in the proportional increases of qualitative designs, accompanied by decreases in surveys and in comparative designs (i.e., non-experimental tests of difference). A slight proportional decline was noted when true/quasi-experimental design studies decreased from 8.5% of all research designs in the 2000–2004 window to about 3% of studies in the 2005–2019 window (i.e., a range of 2.0% to 3.5% across the three time windows). Concurrently, the proportion of intervention designs maintained a stable occurrence, $\eta^2 = .017$, averaging 9.9% of all research studies over the 20-year time interval. Thus, even though the proportions moved from 17.8% in 2000–2004 to 7.5% in 2010–2019, this shift was not significant. Predictably, as the proportion of qualitative studies increased, the proportion of intervention studies decreased slightly.

All four *CJCP* research article sample variables were stable throughout the 20-year span of time between 2000 and 2019. Sample sizes were stable over all four time windows, $\eta^2 = .024$, with small sample sizes (fewer than 30 participants) occurring in 52.3% of articles, medium sample sizes (30–99 participants) in 18.9% of articles, large sample sizes (100–499 participants) occurring in 20.6% of articles, and very large sample sizes (500 or more participants) occurring in 8.2% of articles. The median sample sizes were also stable, with an overall median sample size of 23 participants, although the time window medians mirrored the increase of qualitative design dominance noted above, with 67 participants (2000–2004), 24 participants (2005–2009), 21 participants (2010–2014), and 15 participants (2015–2019). At the same time, proportions of types of participants maintained a stable balance in *CJCP* research studies over time, $\eta^2 = .017$ (see Table 4). As participants, adults from 2000–2019 were a stable 47%, counselors/providers were 18%, and children/adolescents were 13%. Finally, the proportion of use of randomization in selection or assignment procedures was stable over

Table 4
Types of Participants Used in CJCP Research Articles

Participant type	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2015–2019	Total
Adults	21 (35.0%)	33 (55.0%)	54 (47.8%)	40 (48.8%)	148 (47.0%)
Counsellors/ providers	12 (20.0%)	11 (18.3%)	25 (22.1%)	10 (12.2%)	58 (18.4%)
Children/ adolescents	15 (25.0%)	6 (10.0%)	13 (11.5%)	7 (8.5%)	41 (13.0%)
Undergraduates	6 (10.0%)	6 (10.0%)	10 (8.8%)	11 (13.4%)	33 (10.5%)
Graduate students	5 (8.3%)	3 (5.0%)	9 (8.0%)	7 (8.5%)	24 (7.6%)
Non-humans	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.7%)	2 (1.8%)	7 (8.5%)	11 (3.5%)
Totals	60	60	113	82	315

the 20-year period, $\eta^2 = .022$, given that only 1% of *CJCP* research studies used some form of randomization procedure.

Both data analysis procedure variables assessed in *CJCP* research articles from 2000 to 2019 demonstrated significant changes across this time span. First, data analysis procedures were categorized into basic, intermediate, and advanced designations as a way to analyze changes in data analysis sophistication over time. This data analysis sophistication variable demonstrated that *CJCP* research articles changed throughout the 2 decades of the present study, $\eta^2 = .064$. Basic data analysis procedures (e.g., descriptive, correlation) used in *CJCP* research studies increased from 56.5% in 2000–2004 to 79.7% in 2015–2019; intermediate data analysis procedures (e.g., *t*/ANOVA, regression analysis) decreased from 19.6% in 2000–2004 to 8.3% in 2005–2009; and advanced data analysis procedures (e.g., MANOVA, factor analysis) decreased from 23.9% in 2000–2004 to just 4.7% in 2015–2019. Likewise, an analysis of the specific data analysis procedures showed that shifts over time also occurred (see Table 5), $\eta^2 = .033$. The use of thematic coding increased from 31.6% in 2000–2004 to 45.4% in 2010–2014, while the utilization of MANOVA and factor analysis both decreased between 2000 and 2019.

Finally, three reporting standards for rigour were coded to determine if authors and the editorial board insisted on the provision of evidence of study effect sizes, sample reliability/dependability, and sample validity/trustworthiness results. All three showed significant changes over the 20-year span of this study, which yielded some of the largest effect sizes of this meta-study. The reporting of study effect sizes rose from 0.0% of all *CJCP* research studies in 2000–2004 to 11.1% in 2015–2019, $\eta^2 = .032$. The reporting of score reliability/dependability within studies increased from 22.4% in 2005–2009 to 57.1% in 2015–2019, $\eta^2 = .067$,

Table 5
Proportion of Various Data Analysis Procedures Used in CJCP Research Studies

Procedure	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2015–2019	Total
Thematic coding	30 (31.6%)	39 (42.9%)	64 (45.4%)	42 (42.4%)	175 (41.1%)
Descriptive	25 (26.3%)	23 (25.3%)	42 (29.8%)	31 (31.3%)	121 (28.4%)
ANOVA/t	15 (15.8%)	9 (9.9%)	14 (9.9%)	11 (11.1%)	49 (11.5%)
Correlation/ regression	9 (9.5%)	12 (13.2%)	16 (11.3%)	12 (12.1%)	49 (11.5%)
MANOVA	9 (9.5%)	6 (6.6%)	3 (2.1%)	3 (3.0%)	21 (4.9%)
Factor/cluster analysis	7 (7.4%)	2 (2.2%)	2 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (2.6%)
Totals	95	91	141	99	426

as did the reporting of score validity/trustworthiness within studies from 18.4% in 2005–2009 to 55.8% in 2010–2014, $\eta^2 = .075$, the largest effect size of this meta-study.

Discussion

CJCP provides important scholarly information on professional issues for counsellors in Canada and in a wide range of international settings. This meta-study of *CJCP* publication patterns provides evidence of changes and trends that occurred between 2000 and 2019 related to *CJCP* author and article characteristics.

Author Characteristics: Who Publishes in *CJCP*?

Women make up 80% of the counselling profession and 74% of university counsellors (LeViness et al., 2019; United States Census Bureau, 2026); therefore, it is not surprising that most authors who published in *CJCP* were women, although given that about 64% of *CJCP* authors were female, women may still be under-represented in overall authorship compared to an approximately 80% representation in the counselling field. This reflects the trend in counsellor education and the rise of the prominence of female scholars (Saks et al., 2020). The majority of the lead authors and of all authors of *CJCP* articles were women within each of the 5-year time windows and in the overall 20-year time period of the study. Majority female authorship is consistent across many counselling journals as determined in recent meta-studies, including *Adultspan* (Rippeto et al., 2021), *Counseling and Values* (Alder et al., 2021), *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation* (Johnson et al., 2022), *Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling* (MacInerney et al., 2020), and *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and*

Development (Saks et al., 2020). *Journal of Humanistic Counseling* was the only counselling journal assessed via meta-study that did not have a majority female authorship (Sylvester et al., 2021).

Consistent with other journals, the lead authors of *CJCP* articles continue to be predominantly university affiliated. The lower participation rates from non-university-affiliated authors is troublesome given that the focus of *CJCP* is to improve counselling practice. It is important that *CJCP* and all counselling journals include the voices of practitioners who can provide valuable insights regarding real-world application of scholarship and assist with the collection of field-based data. Williams and colleagues (2021) outlined some barriers that practitioners encounter in their attempts to engage in scholarship: lack of compensation for scholarship, not a part of their performance evaluations, and time constraints. Despite these challenges, it is essential that scholarship opportunities include the expertise and voices of practitioners.

CJCP is at the low end of collaborative efforts among other counselling journals at 2.44 authors per article between 2010 and 2019 (median = 2.83; Erford et al., 2023). Establishing research teams is one way to promote collaboration. Another avenue for increased scholarship with practitioners could be in increasing collaborations between practitioners and university-affiliated scholars. Over the 20-year period assessed in this meta-study, *CJCP* experienced a slight increase in the number of authors per publications. Most authors who published in *CJCP* (89.3%) worked in Canada. Scholars and editors of *CJCP* could increase their efforts to engage in collaborative scholarship, which would increase the number of practitioners and thus add to the diversity of voices reflected in the *CJCP* authorship.

Article Characteristics: What Is Published in *CJCP*?

The three main content topic areas coded were theory/treatment, multicultural issues, and ethics/legal issues. Although there were some fluctuations between each 5-year period, most of the articles were theory/treatment in content, followed by multicultural issues and ethics/legal issues (see Table 2). Theory/treatment is a broad category and, in the future, researchers may want to break down this topic area into more specialized content areas. Given the importance of multicultural issues and ethics/legal issues in counselling practice, editors may want to encourage more articles related to these categories.

Research articles are essential in informing best practices. The percentage of research articles increased over the 20-year period covered in this study and now constitute most of the articles published in *CJCP*, indicating a shift from practice-related articles to data-based research articles. This trend in more research articles compared to non-research articles was reported in nearly all other recent meta-studies of counselling journals, including *Adultspan* (Rippetto et al., 2021), *Counselor Education and Supervision* (Johnsen et al., 2021), *Counseling Outcome*

Research and Evaluation (Johnson et al., 2022), and *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development* (Saks et al., 2020).

This 20-year period (2000–2019) of *CJCP* articles began with more quantitative research articles but quickly and steadily shifted to a majority of qualitative research articles. This increase in proportion of research studies published was reflected in nearly every other counselling journal during the same period (Erford et al., 2023), apparently a concerted effort to firm up the scientific foundations of the counselling profession. While many counselling journals experienced significant increases in quantitative research studies, *CJCP* observed an increase in qualitative research studies. With the increase in qualitative design studies, there was a decrease in survey and comparative design studies and a slight decline in true/quasi-experiential design studies. While intervention studies remained relatively stable, it is concerning that true/quasi-experimental design studies and intervention studies constitute less than 10% of all research articles. The editors of *CJCP* may want to encourage more true/quasi-experimental design and intervention studies because these research designs help inform the efficacy of counselling treatment. *CJCP* is in the median range compared to other journals in the number of research articles published, but it publishes a higher proportion of qualitative research articles compared to other counselling journals. It will be interesting to see how this trend in research design evolves in the future and whether important systematic reviews emerge from this wealth of qualitative counselling research.

Systematic reviews of qualitative research can be as valuable as quantitative reviews, and even more so in some areas. Pearson (2010) correctly pointed out that outcome research is “not exclusively about effectiveness; it is about basing practice on the best available evidence” (p. 489). Outcome research should have at least four main foci—feasibility, appropriateness, meaningfulness, and effectiveness—and qualitative systematic reviews are often absent from or invisible in these discussions. Counselling researchers are encouraged to produce systematic meta-ethnographies or other qualitative reviews by consulting important guiding sources (e.g., EPPI Centre, 2023; Higgins & Thomas, 2022; Joanna Briggs Institute, n.d.).

The variable categories pertaining to sampling/assignment procedures (i.e., random or non-random), sample sizes, sample size categories (i.e., small, medium, large), and types of participants (i.e., adults, counsellors/mental health practitioners, children/adolescents, undergraduate students, graduate students, non-humans) remained stable across the 20-year period. While sample variables remained stable, data analysis procedures varied, with basic data analysis procedures increasing and, conversely, advanced data analysis procedures decreasing. This drop in advanced data analysis procedures is consistent with some other counselling journals such as *Journal of Counseling and Development* (Anderson et al., 2021). It is possible that the advancement of training in qualitative methods among counselling scholars led to reductions in training in more advanced

statistical methods. Nevertheless, the increase in basic data analysis procedures is concerning. Descriptive statistics only describe or summarize the characteristics under investigation and cannot be used to generalize to other people. This is a problem inherent in both the qualitative and quantitative research traditions. The results suggest that authors should submit research articles that use more intermediate and advanced data analysis procedures so that the counselling profession can enhance evidence-based practice.

Consistent with other journals (Anderson et al., 2021) and with editorial board members' calls for authors to be consistent in reporting effect sizes, sample reliability/dependability statistics, and sample validity/trustworthiness statistics, *CJCP* increased these reporting metrics of rigour steadily over the 20-year period. This increase is promising, but there is more room for improvement. Effect size was reported in only about 11% of the research articles and reliability/dependability and validity/generalizability results were reported in fewer than 60% of the research articles. For readers to understand clearly the efficacy and meaning of the research studies, all research articles should include effect sizes and sample reliability/dependability and validity/trustworthiness information, as appropriate.

Limitations

This meta-study followed the steps as outlined by Erford and colleagues (2010) using systematic methods for data collection and analysis. Despite these efforts, it is possible that classification or coding errors were made, especially given that the English-language articles were coded by one team and the French-language articles were coded by another team. Another limitation is that we coded only for readily available demographics of the authors (i.e., sex, lead authorship, residency). For example, author sex was based on author name and coded in a binary fashion, and even with additional Internet searches, it is possible that errors occurred. Future researchers may gather additional self-identified demographic information about the authors so that we have a better understanding of the diversity within authorship (e.g., author race/ethnicity, race/ethnicity of participants, characteristics of participants/clients). In addition, some variables (e.g., topical content) were more challenging to code due to their subjective nature and relied on greater expertise and training.

Some readers and researchers may be interested in annual or micro-trends of movements within journals. We used the 5-year windows to analyze the 420 total articles (an average of 21 articles per year or 105 over 5 years) and 243 research articles (an average of 12 articles per year or 61 over 5 years). We acknowledge that coding for only several topics can result in overly broad categories that can reduce important within-category variations as well as ignore more precise and meaningful categorization systems. For example, reducing all diversity-type articles to multicultural will not allow the reader to assess if certain multicultural

topics or racial/ethnic groups are over-represented or under-represented in *CJCP* or if certain essential multicultural content is even being covered in *CJCP*.

Another limitation pertains to the categorization of all forms of qualitative research to the basic sophistication category under the label “thematic/theme coding.” We recognize that there is substantial variability in how qualitative research is conducted and that the same nuance given to quantitative methods was not afforded to qualitative methods. This classification of all qualitative methods as thematic and basic fails to recognize the increasing recognition given to qualitative research as a substantive form of evidence. Future meta-study coding should offer greater nuance in terms of how qualitative methods are categorized. In addition, there are several traditions or types of qualitative research that could be coded in future meta-studies, in contrast to studies that treat qualitative designs and thematic coding or content analysis as a homogenous category.

Sample size descriptors may differ across qualitative and quantitative research. For example, a participant sample size of 25 (a small sample size in this study) would be considered quite small for most quantitative research but considered medium or large for most qualitative designs. There, the terms *small*, *medium*, *large*, and *very large* may be misnomers when they are applied concurrently to both qualitative and quantitative designs and may constitute a potential bias against qualitative research. To address this issue in the future, researchers conducting meta-studies could present different values for qualitative versus quantitative studies or change the labels to number categories (e.g., 1–10, 11–20).

Finally, descriptive and comparative studies cannot yield causal inferences, and readers of this meta-study should not attempt to do so. These results should be interpreted as trends that have developed over time and that might shape current and future *CJCP* publication practices. Reviews like this meta-study are essential to describe trends within *CJCP* and other counselling journals and substantiates the conclusion that *CJCP* is publishing articles consistent with its mission and stated purpose and disseminating scholarship related to current theories, research, and practice.

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About the Authors

Karishma K. Katrak, M.Ed., is a graduate of the Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University.

Emily S. Olson, M.Ed., is a graduate of the Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University.

Bradley T. Erford, Ph.D., is a professor in the human development counseling program in the Department of Human and Organizational Development in the Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5891-5770>

Catherine Y. Chang is a professor and director of international programs in the College of Education and Human Development at Georgia State University.

Jordana Saks, M.Ed., is a graduate of the counselling psychology program in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education in the School of Education at the University of British Columbia.

Lexa Villette, M.Ed., is a graduate of the counselling psychology program in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education in the School of Education at the University of British Columbia.

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Bradley T. Erford, PMB 90, Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37203-5721. Email: bradley.t.erford@vanderbilt.edu