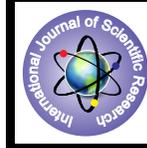


Publication Trends In Journal of School Social Work (2004-2013) : A Bibliometric Review



Social Science

KEYWORDS: bibliometric review, scientific communication, scholarly publishing

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ABSTRACT

AIM: To evaluate the trends of articles published in Journal of School Social Work, India. MATERIALS AND METHODS: Totally 210 articles were selected randomly from 2004-2013 and all the articles from the particular issue were included for the review. RESULTS: Majority of the articles were contributed by female authors (57%), single authors (72%), academicians (51%), Government Institutions (47%), 53.8% articles were from TamilNadu, followed by Karnataka (23.8%). 59% contributors were from Social Work discipline. Research articles constituted 17.2%. CONCLUSION: There is a trend towards academicians contributing more number of non-empirical articles. There is strong need for swift towards considering empirical studies for publication for growth of school social work in India.

Introduction

Bibliometry is a set of quantitative methods to analyze academic literature. Citation analysis and content analysis are commonly used bibliometric tools. Bibliometric analysis is the process of extracting measurable data through the statistical analysis of texts, and information about how the texts are being used. Through bibliometric analysis research output of the universities can be assessed. The term bibliometrics was first used by Alan Pritchard in 1969, in his paper titled Statistical Bibliography or Bibliometrics. He defined bibliometrics as "the application of mathematics and statistical methods to books and other media of communication (Alan 1969). It is used to determine how many times a researcher's work has been cited in key literature, to measure the patterns of authorship, publication trends, to find if an author is attracting citations from outside their main field of study, to decide where to publish research to obtain maximum visibility, to know the impact factor of the article and the journal. Hence present study attempted to investigate the patterns of authorships and publication trends in journal of school social work.

Literature Review

Harlekar (1965) analyzed 838 articles in Indian journal of social work from 1940-1964 and Pathak (1974) surveyed the articles in The Social Work Forum from 1963-1971. Both the study found that majority articles were on personnel management. Pathak reported that 40% articles were written by social work educators and 22% were practitioners.

Howe (1974) examined articles in three major social work journals in 1957 and from 1967-1972 to determine the changes occurred in important content areas. There was decline in the numbers of social treatment articles and increase in policy, administration, service-delivery, and client-behavior articles. Number of family intervention-oriented articles decreased while group intervention-oriented articles increased slightly. Else (1978) reported that there is proliferation of new journals in social work and raised questions about the state of journal publication in social work.

Vijaylakshmi (1992) investigated the trends of articles published in Indian Journal of Social Work from 1971-1990. Analysis of 194 articles revealed that most articles were contributed by male, social work educators, about 50% of the articles were empirical and focused upon family and child welfare, community development, personnel management and core social work. There was slight increase in non-empirical studies over the years and less than 15% of the articles were devoted to women's issues.

Ann (1994) conducted review from 1982-1991 in selected social work journals to determine the coverage of women's issues. Findings indicate that less than 10% of the articles focused on women's issues. Women authored over 75% of the articles and books on women's content, but only about 15% of the women authors write on women's issues. Gibelman & Gelman (2000) in their analysis of publication trends in social work in the US and UK found that common trends in multiple authorship were emerging across international boundaries. Number of outcome studies in core social work journals show a strong positive upward trend from 2000-2004 and then a downward trend from 2004-2011 (Craig 2013).

Jenson (2005) discussed key concerns in structural factors and quality of publication in social work journals such as limited impact of social work journals, absence of electronic submission, lack of accountability and transparency in publication decision-making, poor quality and slow space of manuscript review and delayed publication.

Mathias (2010) investigated treatment fidelity in social work research by reviewing all articles published in five prominent social work journals over a 5-year period. Out of Sixty-three outcome studies reviewed, 71% lacked information on control measures for the interventions. Gary Holden (2010) did bibliometric analysis of 322 articles in the journal of research on Social Work Practice. Results revealed that most of the articles were 15 pages long, had two authors, 28 references and 1,139 articles were cited in other journals.

Need for the study: To date, only three attempts were made on bibliometric review to analyze the publication trends in social work journals in India. After 1990, there was no systematic study on changing trends in publication of articles in social work journals. Journal of School Social Work was launched in 2004 at Madras School of Social Work, Chennai with an objective of promoting school social work practice in India. Till date, no attempt was made to examine the publication trends in the journal of school social work (JSSW). Therefore present study was carried out.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The study was observational in nature. Content analysis research design was used. 210 articles were selected randomly out of 840 articles published from 2004-2013 in JSSW. All the articles from particular issue were included for the review. Exclusion criteria: Editorial articles were excluded from the review. Review was conducted at Manipal University, Udipi district, Karnataka. Statistical Analysis: Descriptive sta-

tistics such as frequency distribution, and chi-square test were used to analyze the data. Statistics consultation was sought from statistics department for sample size calculation, it was advised that sample frame is measurable in this study (which is 840 articles) hence complete enumeration of all articles would be appropriate for the study. Owing to time constraint the author limited sample size to 210. Data was collected from March 2014 to Nov 2014.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of authors. Nearly half of the articles were contributed by female authors (47%), one-third of them were written by male authors (33%) and 20% of the articles were jointly written by male and female authors. Female authors outnumbered male authors in this study. Co-authors of the articles were also taken into consideration for analysis of gender distribution of authors.

More than half of them (51%) were academicians, followed by researcher scholars (25%) (M.Phil and Ph.D), 26% were practitioners from varied discipline; 20% were assistant professors, 8% were lecturers, 8% were associate professors, 3% were professors, 2% were additional professors and readers. More than one-third (32%) of the authors qualification was Ph.D, followed by post-graduates in varied disciplines (20%). More authors (47%) were from government sector, followed by private sector (43%). More than half of the articles were generated from TamilNadu (53%), followed by Karnataka (24%).

Table 1 may be shifted to Result section and may be placed above the Interpretation of Table 1

Demographic Profile	Categories	N=210	%
Gender	Female	99	47.1
	Male	70	33.3
	Both	41	20.0
Classification of Authors	Academicians	107	51.0
	Research scholars	53	25.2
	Administrators	18	08.5
	Practitioners	26	12.4
	Students	04	02.0
	No information	02	01.0
	Primary author qualification	Doctorate	68
Ph.D Scholars		23	11.0
Pre-Doctorate		20	09.5
Post-Graduates		41	19.5
Graduates		03	01.4
School Students		03	04.1
No Information		55	26.2
Primary Author's Institutional Affiliation	Govt sector	99	47.1
	Private sector	87	43.0
	Freelancer	17	08.1
	No information	07	02.7

State	Tamil Nadu	113	53.8
	Karnataka	50	23.8
	Gujarat	15	7.1
	Andhra	09	4.3
	Delhi	07	3.3
	Maharashtra	03	1.4
	Other states	05	2.4
	No information	05	2.4
	Abroad	03	1.5

Table 2 shows that majority (60%) of the articles were single authored, more than one-third (35%) of the articles had dual authorship and 5% had multiple authorship. More than half of the articles were generated from Social Work discipline (59%), followed by education (13%), psychology (9%) and nursing professionals (6%). Nearly one-third (28%) of the articles were non-empirical, research articles constitute 17%, review articles (21%), case studies 10.5%.

Table 2 can be shifted to Result section and may be placed above the Interpretation of Table 2

Article details	Categories	N=210	%
Authorship	Single	126	60.0
	Dual	73	34.8
	Multiple	11	05.2
Discipline	Social Work	124	59
	Education	27	13
	Psychology	18	09
	Nursing	13	06
	Others	18	09
	Info not available	10	04
	Article type	Concept	58
Action research		42	20.0
Case study		22	10.5
Research		36	17.2
Review		45	21.4
Theory		02	1.0
Others		05	2.4

Table 3 reveals that female authors contributed significantly more number of action research, research articles and review articles ($\chi^2=10.56$, $p=0.032$). More number of research articles were penned by multiple authors and single authors have inked more number of review articles, case studies ($\chi^2=18.49$, $p=0.001$).

Table 3: Association between authors' profile and article contribution

Variables	Category	Classification of Articles					Chi square / Fisher exact test	p value
		Concept	Review	Action Research	Case Study	Research		
Gender (N=168)	Male	31	10	9	12	7	10.56	.032**
	Female	28	20	23	9	19		
Authorship (N=210)	Single	41	26	23	21	15	18.49	0.001*
	Multiple	23	17	22	1	21		
Institute affiliation (N=201)	Government	33	24	17	16	17	9.06	0.06
	Private	27	17	27	5	18		
Discipline (N=201)	Social work	40	24	25	17	18	4.37	0.36
	Others	20	18	20	5	14		
Authors (N=209)	Academicians	34	22	27	6	18	6.65	0.15
	Others	29	21	18	16	18		
Qualification (N=155)	Ph.D	24	15	16	4	9	5.69	0.22
	Others	25	22	13	14	13		

**p<0.05 level, *p<0.001 level

Discussion

The bibliometric analysis showed that there was increasing trend towards publication of non-empirical articles in JSSW. This finding is in concordance with Vijaylakshmi et al (1992) where they reported that during 1970-1990 in Indian journal of social work (IJSW) showed similar trend. Reasons for more non-empirical articles in the journal could be attributed to the journal policy that it would give primary importance to articles related to focus/theme of the month then articles related to children. If the journal standard is strengthened in terms of its outlook then JSSW would have more possibilities of receiving empirical articles for publication. Any researchers would like to publish their research in reputed journals which has citation index and impact factor of > 1.

The review showed that social work educators contributed significantly more articles during the last decade 2004-2013. Similar findings were reported by Vijaylakshmi et al (1992) in their review. As the journal is concerned with school social work, most of the articles were contributed by the personnel from medical and psychiatric social work specialization. JSSW publishes articles related to children and parents which are integral part of other specializations such as family and child welfare, welfare of weaker sections and community development.

Few findings of the study were contrast to earlier studies. Present study showed that female authors outnumbered male authors though this was not significant. In earlier studies male authors were significantly more (Vijaylakshmi et al 1992). Gibelman&Gelman (2000) reported that there was changing trend towards multiple authorship in the articles published from UK and US. This may be because of research articles might require team work whereas non-empirical articles can be written in overnight by single authors if they working in respective field and their writing skills are apt. It is evident from the review that JSSW received more articles were from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where IJSW has more articles from Maharashtra and Delhi (vijaylakshmi et al 1992).

Critical appraisal

Strengths: There has been slow but steady growth of research and evidence based articles in the journal at the rate of one per issue. It has shown consistency in bringing out the issue every month without delay from 2004 to 2014. It provides editorial assistance to the articles contributed in terms of language support without modifying the content. Improvisation of the articles by

the editor strengthens its quality and the journal. Each article is peer reviewed by three experts in the respective field. There was no processing charge for publication of articles. Though, the editor insists subscription charges for sustained growth of the journal as there was no external support for funds other than its subscribers. Articles are selected purely based on merit in terms of relevance to focus of the month and originality. Journal has particular focus on every month that has significantly contributed to Indian literature on school social work, child welfare and child mental health.

Some observations: There was no word limitation or page limitation for the article published. Corresponding author details and contact details were not mentioned in most of the articles. There was no correspondence between editor and authors with regard to revision of the articles due to paucity of time in monthly publication. Referencing pattern was not uniform throughout the decade.

Limitations of the study

Though the investigators randomly selected 210 articles, it is not true representation the study universe (N=840). The sample size (n=210) is about 25% of the total sample. Complete enumeration of all the articles would have revealed accurate results. Articles were not classified such as prevention related, intervention related articles. Coding of the articles was done by the first author with regard to demographic profile of the authors and other article related information. Inter-rater reliability was not done to assess the reliability of the articles coded. Because most of the articles were non-empirical, the authors could not examine the methodological issues in the articles.

Suggestions

Complete enumeration of the articles published would give bird's eye view of the publication trends in JSSW. Content analysis can be carried out particularly focusing on empirical articles published in JSSW. Presently, JSSW was not indexed in any of the citation. An attempt was made to index the journal in Open J-Gate and Index Copernicus;JSSW did not fulfill the criteria of having separate webpage and abstract of articles. As a result the journal could not be indexed. Therefore it may not fetch much reward for the academicians publishing in a journal which is no indexed.

Conclusion

There is a trend towards academicians contributing more number of non-empirical articles. There is strong need for swift towards considering empirical studies for publication for growth of school social work in India.

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