



An assessment of the relative impact of criminal justice and criminology journals

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ABSTRACT

The current study was undertaken to provide an impact assessment of criminal justice and criminology journals as an alternative measure to the prestige survey ratings reported by Sorensen, Snell, and Rodriguez (2006). Citations to sixty-seven target journals were tallied from ten top criminal justice and criminology journals. Various impact measures were fairly consistent with one another and the prestige survey ratings, particularly for a “top tier” of journals. With a couple of notable exceptions, a long-standing core of these elite journals has held their relative positions from early impact studies relying on data from the 1970s and 1980s; nevertheless, significant deviations were noted based on the measurement utilized for all but the top journals. Findings from the current study suggested that the quality of journals is multifaceted and warns against employing a scale based on one dimension of journal quality.

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Introduction

Evaluating the relative standing of academic journals serves many important functions. The perceived stature of publication outlets can have significant effects on a faculty member's career, influencing a range of personnel decisions (i.e., hiring, annual review, merit, tenure, promotion). The prominence of journals in which faculty members publish also impacts the departments in which they work. Studies have ranked or identified top criminal justice and criminology (CJC) departments based on both the “quality” of faculty journal publications and the number of publications in “top” journals (Kleck, Wang, & Tark, 2007; Steiner & Schwartz, 2006). Being able to gauge the quality of a journal assists authors in targeting outlets at levels appropriate for their work. This knowledge also assists others outside the discipline in fulfilling their duties, such as librarians ordering titles or granting agencies deciding among the most qualified investigators (Walters, 2006).

Although numerous potential criteria exist (e.g., circulation, readership, rejection rates), the two ways that the quality of journals has generally been gauged in academic disciplines is through prestige surveys or impact studies (Alvarez & Pulgarin, 1996). The first is considered a subjective assessment wherein knowledgeable persons in the field are asked to rate journals according to some predetermined scale. Prestige surveys have been the method most commonly utilized in CJC (DeZee, 1980; Fabianic, 1980; Greene, Bynum, & Webb, 1985; McElrath, 1990; Parker & Goldfeder, 1979; Regoli, Poole, & Miracle, 1982; Shichor, O'Brien, & Decker, 1981; Sorensen et al., 2006; Williams, McShane, & Wagoner, 1995). The second is considered a more objective method wherein citations from “source” journals, texts, or indexes are searched to count how many times articles from

“targeted” journals were cited in determining which of the target journals were having the greatest “impact” on the field. Impact studies have been less commonly employed in CJC, with only two articles published thus far (Poole & Regoli, 1981; Stack, 1987).

Impact studies

After critiquing a prestige survey completed by Shichor et al. (1981), Poole and Regoli (1981) offered a measure of periodical eminence they described as more “objective,” a citation count. They chose *Criminology* (CRIM) as the source journal due to its breadth of coverage of the discipline, searching for citations to any of forty-three target journals rated by Shichor et al. During a five-year period (1975–79), Poole and Regoli found that only twenty-four of the forty-three journals were cited in CRIM, and that few of the journals accounted for the bulk of the citations. The *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (JCLC) alone, due to its prominent, seventy-year history, accounted for nearly 32 percent of the citations. Together with CRIM, the second most oft-cited journal, the top two journals garnered nearly half of the total number of citations among the targeted journals during the five-year period. Nearly three-quarters of the citations were accounted for when the next three journals were added: *Crime and Delinquency* (CD); *Law and Society Review* (LSR); and *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* (JRCD). Overall the authors noted that the rank order correlation between the twenty-four cited journals and Shichor et al.'s prestige scores was quite high at .75, but that a number of significant discrepancies existed between the rankings.

The second impact study was completed by Steven Stack (1987), relying on the *Social Science Citation Index* (SSCI) as a source for citations. He searched for citations to twenty-six target journals in the SSCI for a two-year period in the mid-1980s, creating three separate measures: a raw impact citation index, which included the total count

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of citations attributed to a target journal regardless of the publication date; the age-adjusted impact, which included only articles published in a target journal during the previous two-year period; and the impact factor (I.F.), which was calculated by dividing the number of citations to a target journal by the number of articles published in that journal during the previous two-year period—the average number of citations per journal article published. Among the three measures, he found the highest degree of correlation between the raw citation count and the age-adjusted impact (.80), and the age-adjusted impact and the I.F. (.72), and a lower degree of correlation between the I.F. and raw citation count (.54). Stack noted the importance of making adjustments to citation measures based on the I.F. For example, the *JRCD* ranked 11.5 on the age-adjusted measure because it published fewer articles; but because of its high number of citations per article, the journal rose to a fifth place ranking on the I.F. measure. Favoring the I.F., Stack considered the top four journals to be *LSR*, *American Criminal Law Review (ACLR)*, *CRIM*, and *Criminal Law Review (CLR)*. While Stack's methodology had the advantage of utilizing a much broader source pool, at the same time it entered a bias into the measurement of journal "impact." Journals from smaller disciplines such as CJC were cited much less often in the *SSCI* than journals that were part of larger disciplines, as witnessed in Stack's top four rankings, all but one of which were law reviews.

While no other published academic study has ranked CJC journals using citations, an ongoing program conducted by Thomson Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) publishes *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* for various disciplines using information gleaned from the *SSCI*. Their methodology involves selecting a core set of journals that represent a discipline, and then treating them as both the source and target journals for impact evaluation. Their method has the obvious advantage that disciplinary journals are pitted only against each other without having to compete with other outside disciplines. This is especially advantageous when attempting to evaluate outlets in a fledgling discipline such as CJC, wherein journals aligned with traditional disciplines (psychology, sociology, law, political science) would fare much better than CJC journals if the overall *SSCI* were utilized simply due to the relatively larger number of source journals citing in the traditional disciplines (i.e., Stack, 1987). Their method also has an advantage over using a source journal to evaluate other target journals (i.e., Poole & Regoli, 1981) by eliminating the edge that a source/target journal would have in its ability to accumulate self-citations (to articles published in the same journal) versus a target-only journal which would be at a disadvantage in that regard.

Having noted the advantages, however, a number of criticisms have been leveled against the *JCR*. In one recent study, numerous criticisms were leveled against ISI's use of the I.F.: wide variance from year to year; limited selection of source materials; and a poor standard of comparison across fields (Walters, 2006). Concerning the latter, fields which are more established, have longer publication lags, and are more applied will have fewer citations than those which are in a ground-breaking phase, have a short publication lag, and a basic scientific focus. Walters noted other problems with the calculation of the I.F., pointing out that journals which indulged in the following could rack up more citations: publishing large numbers of letters, book reviews, editorials, and other materials which are counted in the numerator but not in the denominator; self-citing at a high rate; and publishing review articles which are cited at a rate about double that of regular articles.

Due to problems detailed above and the fact that the *JCR* did not include a separate category for fifteen journals in the "crime-psychology subfield," Walters performed an impact study that utilized an alternative measure to the I.F. Walter's measures took into account several shortcomings of the I.F. by adjusting for self-citations, by excluding non-articles, reviews, and notes, by reducing the weights assigned to review articles, and by lengthening the follow-up period. As predicted, Walters found that his newly constructed measure was

more consistent with raters' estimates of the utility of journals. Two of the fifteen journals showed consistently high impact scores during 2000–2004 and across ratings of informal utility: (1) *Law and Human Behavior (LHB)* and (2) *Criminal Justice and Behavior (CJB)*. Among many lessons learned, the I.F. was not found to be a completely flawed measure, being fairly consistent with the other measures. The Immediacy Index (II), a measure relied on by ISI that counts citations to articles published during the same year as the source journal, was shown to be completely flawed for the field of crime-psychology; due to publication lag in the field, nearly all of the II cites were self-cites.

While a prestige survey of CJC journals was recently published (Sorensen et al., 2006), an impact study of CJC journals has not been produced in more than two decades. Although impact studies of CJC journal prestige have shown a degree of high correlation with reputational rankings, significant deviations in rankings between the two types of measures have also been observed (Poole & Regoli, 1981; Sorensen, Patterson, & Widmayer, 1992). This is due to the fact that citation analyses are intended to measure a specific domain, the usefulness of journal articles published to other researchers and subsequent impact on the field, as opposed to the reputational prestige of a journal, which could be influenced by numerous additional factors such as its age, sponsorship, theoretical or research orientation, and past reputation (Christenson & Sigelman, 1985; Weisheit & Regoli, 1984). The current study was undertaken to provide an impact assessment of journals as an alternative measure to the peer ratings reported by Sorensen et al. (2006). While the *JCR* exist, as seen above for a variety of reasons, they are simply insufficient for the task. Most obviously, the *JCR* contain only a fraction of the sixty-nine journals rated by respondents in Sorensen et al.'s prestige survey. Further, the *JCR* includes journals that were purposefully excluded from Sorensen et al.'s survey, specifically foreign journals¹ and niche journals only tangentially related to CJC. In counting citations from source journals in the current study, several measures were considered for the purposes of comparing target journals. Next, the study compared current findings with those from previous citation analyses. Finally, some issues and insights related to the utilization of citation measures were considered.

Methods

Sample

Citation analyses have been premised on the idea that the source of citations should be the most prestigious and general texts, journals, or indexes available. In this study, the top tier of journals was sought to use as the source of journal citations to be searched for the year 2007.² The natural starting place was Sorensen et al.'s (2006) mean ranking provided by respondents to their prestige survey. From that list, the top twelve journals were initially selected, but three were rejected because most of the articles carried in their issues were outside the scope of "criminal justice" or "criminology." *LSR* carried articles mainly related to legal studies, while *LHB* published primarily forensic psychology articles. The *JCLC*, while one of the oldest and most venerable CJC journals, published articles substantively related to criminal law.³ Of the remaining nine journals, seven have been used time and again in citation analyses, and are considered standards in this sort of work: *CRIM*, *Justice Quarterly (JQ)*, *JRCD*, *Crime and Delinquency (CD)*, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology (JQC)*, *CJB*, and *Journal of Criminal Justice (JCJ)*. Two newcomers to the list included journals that were founded fairly recently: *Criminology and Public Policy (CPP)* and *Theoretical Criminology (TC)*. Another new journal was added to round out the top ten after it kept surfacing in the citation counts: the *Journal of Experimental Criminology (JEC)*. Aside from *Advances in Criminological Theory (ACT)*, *JEC* had an I.F. higher than any of the other journals on the list except for the top nine. Although *ACT* is probably more appropriately considered an edited

Table 1
Citation measures for criminal justice and criminology journals, 2007

Journal title	Total citations	Adjusted count ¹	Impact factor ²
<i>Advances in Criminological Theory</i>	52	17	.46
<i>Aggression and Violent Behavior</i>	30	14	.05
<i>Aggressive Behavior</i>	14	5	.01
<i>American Criminal Law Review</i>	8	1	.00
<i>American Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	31	7	.08
<i>American Journal of Criminal Law</i>	2	1	.06
<i>Behavioral Sciences and the Law</i>	63	23	.04
<i>Contemporary Justice Review</i>	14	8	.00
<i>Corrections Compendium</i>	4	3	.01
<i>Crime and Delinquency</i>	257	66	.62
<i>Crime and Justice</i>	212	32	.29
<i>Crime, Law, and Social Change</i>	11	4	.00
<i>Crime, Media, Culture</i>	1	1	.03
<i>Criminal Justice and Behavior</i>	343	23	.57
<i>Criminal Justice Ethics</i>	4	0	.00
<i>Criminal Justice Policy Review</i>	23	12	.12
<i>Criminal Justice Review</i>	17	5	.16
<i>Criminal Justice Studies</i>	10	8	.06
<i>Criminal Law Bulletin</i>	3	0	.00
<i>Criminology</i>	980	155	1.21
<i>Criminology and Public Policy</i>	167	66	1.07
<i>Critical Criminology</i>	1	1	.03
<i>Deviant Behavior</i>	37	11	.06
<i>Federal Probation</i>	84	14	.09
<i>Homicide Studies</i>	24	10	.18
<i>Howard Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	10	3	.06
<i>International Criminal Justice Review</i>	4	2	.00
<i>International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice</i>	9	2	.00
<i>International Journal of Comparative Criminology</i>	2	1	.00
<i>International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology</i>	61	26	.08
<i>International Journal of Police Science and Management</i>	4	2	.02
<i>Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice</i>	29	13	.13
<i>Journal of Crime and Justice</i>	33	5	.13
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	220	29	.23
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice Education</i>	6	2	.05
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture</i>	4	4	.00
<i>Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology</i>	113	9	.09
<i>Journal of Drug Issues</i>	67	11	.03
<i>Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice</i>	3	3	.03
<i>Journal of Experimental Criminology</i>	19	11	.37
<i>Journal of Gang Research</i>	1	0	.00
<i>Journal of Interpersonal Violence</i>	132	41	.09
<i>Journal of Offender Rehabilitation</i>	42	12	.03
<i>Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology</i>	8	3	.04
<i>Journal of Quantitative Criminology</i>	238	51	.57
<i>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</i>	388	66	.68
<i>Justice Policy Journal</i>	2	0	.00
<i>Justice Quarterly</i>	357	77	.69
<i>Justice Research and Policy</i>	17	9	.00
<i>Justice System Journal</i>	15	0	.00
<i>Juvenile and Family Court Journal</i>	12	0	.00
<i>Law and Human Behavior</i>	119	27	.09
<i>Law and Social Inquiry</i>	3	0	.00
<i>Law and Society Review</i>	172	18	.08
<i>Police Practice and Research</i>	5	3	.04
<i>Police Quarterly</i>	41	26	.33
<i>Policing: International Journal of Police Strategy and Management</i>	32	9	.05
<i>Policing and Society</i>	9	0	.00
<i>Prison Journal</i>	127	25	.12
<i>Punishment and Society</i>	30	17	.21
<i>Social Justice</i>	13	2	.04
<i>Theoretical Criminology</i>	45	5	.14
<i>Violence Against Women</i>	31	13	.05
<i>Violence and Victims</i>	58	9	.00
<i>Western Criminology Review</i>	6	3	.04
<i>Women and Criminal Justice</i>	21	3	.11
<i>Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice</i>	17	17	.03

series as opposed to a journal, it was retained on the list of target journals due to its high volume of citations. For the same reason, *Crime and Justice (CJ)* was added to the original list of target journals along with *JEC*. *ACT* and *CJ*, however, were not chosen as source journals mainly because they are thematic and typically published only once annually, which would have limited citations to a narrow range during the year included in this study.⁴

Measures

Three citation measures were calculated: total citations, adjusted count, and the I.F. Total citations refer to the raw cumulative count of citations from all ten journals that were attributed to any target journal. This included citations during the current year, self-citations, citations in editorials, notes, etc. back to the earliest year cited. The adjusted count included only citations from 2003 forward through the current issue (in 2007), but with each target journal's self-citations eliminated. This measure removed the advantage that a journal would have had from including self-citations to previous articles in the same or prior issues, editorial introductions, etc. By restricting the age, it also erased the advantage that older journals would have purely because they had been around longer and published many more articles that were still in circulation and available for citation; however, it did not erase the advantage of a journal that published many more articles during a recent time frame. For instance, *Criminal Justice Review* published nineteen articles during 2005–2006, while the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* published 211 during the same period. In order to control for the bias that comes from differences in the number of articles published, the I.F. was calculated, whereby the number of citations during 2007 to articles published during the previous two years was divided by the number of articles published by each target journal during those years. The I.F. reflects a count of citations per article published during 2005–2006 in the target journals including articles, research notes, and essays.⁵ Journal rankings were also created from these measures, and one final summary ranking that was an ordinal amalgam of all the citation measures.

Results

Table 1 presents the relative impact measures for the CJC journals. The first column includes the total raw citation count; the second, citation counts to articles published since 2003 minus self-citations; and the third, citations to articles published during 2005–06 divided by the number of articles published in target journals during those years. Four journals were removed from the original list of sixty-nine journals included in the original prestige survey because they received no citations during 2007 in the source journals.⁶ Two journals, *CJ* and *JEC*, were added to the citation list for a total of sixty-seven journals listed in **Table 1**.

In terms of the raw number of citations, the findings from the current study concurred with the findings of previous studies in that citations tended to be unequally distributed. The findings were not as extreme as *Poole and Regoli's (1981)*, however, wherein only 56 percent of the journals were cited; herein 94 percent of the journals were cited, suggesting a broader base for citation practices in recent years. Nonetheless, *CRIM* alone accounted for nearly 20 percent of the

Notes to Table 1:

¹ This column was adjusted by age to include only citations to articles with publication dates of 2003 or later. Self-citations (those published by the citing journal) were also removed from the count.

² The impact factor reflects a count of citations per article published during 2005–2006 in the target journals including articles, research notes, and essays. It does not include book reviews or editorial introductions. Reaction papers and authors' responses were counted as half articles.

total number of citations (980 of 4,917) to the target journals listed in Table 1. This was not an artifact of the age of the journal, for the much older *JCLC* received only 2.3 percent of the total citations. *CRIM* also topped the adjusted count measure, having twice the number of other than self-citations since 2003 (adjusted count) compared to the next closest-ranking journal, *JQ*, 155 versus 77. While *CRIM* similarly topped the I.F. measure at 1.21, it had a closer competitor with its sister journal, *CPP*, at 1.07.⁷

Together, the next highest seven journals in terms of raw citation totals (*JRCD*, *JQ*, *CJB*, *CD*, *JQC*, *JCJ*, *CJ*) accounted for more than 40 percent of the total number of citations. Together, including *CRIM*, the top eight journals accounted for 61 percent (2,995 of 4,917) of the total number of raw citations attributed to the targeted journals. The choice of “top tier” or “elite” journals in the discipline identified in previous studies (Cohn & Farrington, 1994a; Sorensen & Pilgrim, 2002) and in the prestige survey by Sorensen et al. (2006) was supported to a large degree by the citation measures. Eight of the ten journals chosen as source journals were among the top ten in terms of the raw number of citations (*CPP* in addition to those listed previously). *TC*, although a prestigious journal, due to its subject matter, much of which focused on the development of criminological theory, seemed more likely to be cited in textbooks than in journal articles.⁸ The *JEC* was too new to have accrued a large number of citations. On the only fair comparison measure given its age, the I.F., *JEC* ranked ninth.

The rankings of the journals on all of the impact measures are presented in Table 2. A fourth summary column was included as an overall means of positioning the journals in the current study. The table also presents a comparison to the earlier prestige rankings by Sorensen et al. (2006); for this reason, the two journals not included in those ratings (*CJ*, *JEC*) were excluded from Table 2.

The first issue of note in Table 2 is that the impact measures appeared to be quite consistent. The overall correlations among the counts were: tot - adj = .931; tot - I.F. = .820; adj - I.F. = .882. The adjusted count was the centrist measure, while the others could be seen as representing quadrants on levels of recency and concentration continua. The total citation count was a measure of older and cumulative influence on the discipline, while the I.F. was a sign of more recent and targeted impact. Most journals fared similarly across the measures, indicating a degree of stability in influence over time and in “per article” influence. Some journals, however, fared significantly better on some measures than others. One example was provided by *ACT* and *LSR*, ranked thirteenth and fourteenth on the summary impact measure, whose patterns of influence across measures were exact opposites. *ACT* showed a pattern of increasing influence with a ranking of nineteenth on the number of total citations, sixteenth on the adjusted measure, and increasing to eighth on the I.F.; *LSR* showed a pattern of decreasing impact with a ranking of eighth on the number of total citations, fifteenth on the adjusted measure, and decreasing to twenty-fourth on the I.F.

The top journals tended to be quite consistent across the measures. As noted earlier, *CRIM* took the top spot by a landslide in terms of its impact by any measure. Beyond *CRIM*, the remaining journals did not necessarily seem to have their impact “slots” locked in place. The specific choice of impact measures could have determined the second, third, or fourth place rankings. The journals were close or even tied on some of these measures. Only two of the top eight journals seemed to have a significant disparity on one of its three measures. Having only been in existence a short time, *CPP*, for instance, had not yet been able to accrue a huge number of total citations, ranking ninth, but considering its age adjusted and I.F. impact measures, the journal was having an impact surpassed only by one or two other journals. The other top journal with a large disparity on one of its three measures was *CJB*, which had a much lower ranking on the adjusted measure. After reviewing the data the reason was clear; it was because *CJB* had many self-citations. Due to the journal's focus on forensic

Table 2

A comparison of journal rankings by citation measures and prestige rating

Journal title	Tot.	Adj.	I.F.	Summary rank current study	Prestige rank Sorensen et al. (2006)
<i>Criminology</i>	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Justice Quarterly</i>	3	2	3	2	2
<i>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</i>	2	3	4	3	3
<i>Crime and Delinquency</i>	5	3	5	4	6
<i>Criminology and Public Policy</i>	9	3	2	5	6
<i>Journal of Quantitative Criminology</i>	6	6	6	6	8
<i>Criminal Justice and Behavior</i>	4	13	6	7	10
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	7	8	10	8	12
<i>Journal of Interpersonal Violence</i>	10	7	20	9	14
<i>Prison Journal</i>	11	12	17	10	20
<i>Law and Human Behavior</i>	12	9	20	11	11
<i>Police Quarterly</i>	22	10	9	11	16
<i>Advances in Criminological Theory</i>	19	16	8	13	13
<i>Law and Society Review</i>	8	15	24	14	4
<i>International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology</i>	17	10	24	15	43
<i>Federal Probation</i>	14	19	20	16	63
<i>Punishment and Society</i>	28	16	11	17	22
<i>Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology</i>	13	28	20	18	5
<i>Behavioral Sciences and the Law</i>	16	13	35	19	18
<i>Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice</i>	30	21	15	20	44
<i>Theoretical Criminology</i>	20	35	14	21	9
<i>Homicide Studies</i>	31	27	12	22	28
<i>Criminal Justice Policy Review</i>	32	23	17	23	29
<i>Deviant Behavior</i>	23	25	27	24	15
<i>Journal of Crime and Justice</i>	24	35	16	25	36
<i>Aggression and Violent Behavior</i>	28	19	31	26	49
<i>Violence Against Women</i>	26	21	31	26	30
<i>Journal of Drug Issues</i>	15	25	40	28	33
<i>Criminal Justice Review</i>	34	35	13	29	33
<i>American Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	26	34	24	30	37
<i>Journal of Offender Rehabilitation</i>	21	23	40	30	46
<i>Policing: International Journal of Police Strategy and Management</i>	25	28	31	30	39
<i>Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice</i>	34	16	40	33	45
<i>Women and Criminal Justice</i>	33	41	19	34	35
<i>Violence and Victims</i>	18	28	49	35	22
<i>Criminal Justice Studies</i>	43	32	27	36	60
<i>Howard Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	43	41	27	37	54
<i>Justice Research and Policy</i>	34	28	49	37	41
<i>Contemporary Justice Review</i>	38	32	49	39	50
<i>Aggressive Behavior</i>	38	35	47	40	61
<i>Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology</i>	47	41	35	41	58
<i>Social Justice</i>	40	48	35	41	31
<i>Western Criminology Review</i>	49	41	35	43	52
<i>Police Practice and Research</i>	51	41	35	44	53
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice Education</i>	49	48	31	45	17
<i>Crime, Law, and Social Change</i>	42	39	49	46	26
<i>Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice</i>	57	41	40	47	63
<i>American Journal of Criminal Law</i>	60	53	27	48	25
<i>Corrections Compendium</i>	52	41	47	48	65
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture</i>	52	39	49	48	57
<i>International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice</i>	45	48	49	51	40
<i>Justice System Journal</i>	37	58	49	52	56
<i>International Journal of Police Science and Management</i>	52	48	46	53	47
<i>Juvenile and Family Court Journal</i>	41	58	49	54	62
<i>American Criminal Law Review</i>	47	53	49	55	19
<i>International Criminal Justice Review</i>	52	48	49	55	38
<i>Policing and Society</i>	45	58	49	57	42
<i>Crime, Media, Culture</i>	63	53	40	58	55
<i>Critical Criminology</i>	63	53	40	58	24
<i>Criminal Justice Ethics</i>	52	58	49	60	32
<i>International Journal of Comparative Criminology</i>	60	53	49	61	26
<i>Criminal Law Bulletin</i>	57	58	49	62	50
<i>Law and Social Inquiry</i>	57	58	49	62	21
<i>Justice Policy Journal</i>	60	58	49	64	48
<i>Journal of Gang Research</i>	63	58	49	65	59

correctional psychology, it tended to publish articles within a narrower subject range, and its authors tended more often to cite within that area. Eliminating self-citations hurt journals of this variety, especially niche journals like *Journal of Criminal Justice Education (JCJE)*, for whom impact measures in general are less appropriate measures. Nevertheless, the fourth column in Table 2 presents the summary rank, an amalgam of citation impact measures. It showed the top eight journals to be: (1) *CRIM*, (2) *JQ*, (3) *JRCD*, (4) *CD*, (5) *CPP*, (6) *JQC*, (7) *CJB*, and (8) *JCJ*.⁹

The final column in Table 2 presents the prestige rank of journals from Sorensen et al. (2006).¹⁰ As noted in previous studies (Poole & Regoli, 1981; Sorensen et al., 1992), the peer ratings from Sorensen et al. (2006) were fairly consistent with impact measures from the current study, all of which were correlated at .7.¹¹ The similarity in correlation between prestige ratings and various impact measures suggests that peer reviewers may have considered multiple dimensions in assigning weights to journals (i.e., historical performance (total citations); recent sheer impact (adjusted counts); and the quality or per capita influence of articles (I.F.)). Among the top journals, there was a close correspondence between the summary rank and the prestige rank of journals. The top three journals were identical on both measures: (1) *CRIM*, (2) *JQ*, and (3) *JRCD*. The prestige ranking showed *LSR* and *JCLC* in fourth and fifth places respectively, while they ranked much lower on the impact measures in the current study. While both are top journals in their respective fields, it appears that the subject matter of their articles had simply not been as focused on CJC topics in recent years, and as such were having less of an impact on the CJC field. Yet, they remain highly respected outlets by scholars in the field, as do many journals that serve more established disciplines. When they were excluded from consideration as legal rather than CJC journals, which was the rationale for not including them as source journals in this study, the prestige and summary ranks continued to closely match for the next three journals, with *CD*, *CPP*, and *JQC* taking the fourth through sixth place rankings. At seventh and eighth place, *CJB* and *JCJ* both climbed slightly in the current study when utilizing impact measures over peer ratings from the prior prestige survey.

There were a few inconsistencies, steep rises or declines, to point out in the remainder of Table 2. The steep declines from the prestige survey to the impact study included specialized journals such as *JCJE*, *Critical Criminology*, and *Criminal Justice Ethics*; and journals serving broader disciplines such as *American Journal of Criminal Law*, *ACLR*, and *Law and Social Inquiry*. Journals that experienced steep increases in rankings included general CJC journals such as *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, and *Criminal Justice Studies*; and those specialized journals such as *Prison Journal*, *Federal Probation*, and *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*.

Table 3 shows how the ranking of journals in the current study compared to those from previous citation studies. Viewing Table 3, it is possible to get a rough gauge of how the impact of specific CJC journals changed during the past three decades. What is immediately noticeable was the relative stability in rankings among the top five long-standing CJC journals over time. These stalwarts, *CRIM*, *JRCD*, *CD*, *CJB*, and *JCJ*, ranked consistently strong from Poole and Regoli's (1981) initial impact study utilizing *CRIM* citations from the late 1970s to the current rankings. The slightly lower ranking in Stack (1987) was likely a measurement artifact arising from his utilization of the *SSCI* as a source index, pitting CJC journals against those from larger disciplines (i.e., law journals), which as a result naturally garnered more citations and jumped ahead in his rankings. The remaining five journals (*CPP*, *JEC*, *JQC*, *JQ*, and *TC*) did not exist at the time of Poole and Regoli's initial study, and therefore had no benchmark available for comparative purposes.

Table 3 also shows that some of the journals did not have the same degree of impact on the field recently that they did previously. This possibility was indirectly raised in the comparisons among the various types of impact measures, and between prestige ratings and impact measures, but the data in Table 3 allowed for a more direct assessment.

Table 3

A comparison of journal rankings in the current study to previous studies using similar measures

Journal title	Summary ranking current study	Stack (1987)	Poole and Regoli (1981)
<i>Criminology</i>	1	3	2
<i>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</i>	3	5	5
<i>Crime and Delinquency</i>	4	9	3
<i>Criminal Justice and Behavior</i>	7	15	11
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	8	16	9
<i>Prison Journal</i>	10	-	21
<i>Law and Society Review</i>	14	1	4
<i>International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology</i>	15	23	-
<i>Federal Probation</i>	16	21	6
<i>Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology</i>	18	10	1
<i>Deviant Behavior</i>	24	18	-
<i>Journal of Drug Issues</i>	28	12	18
<i>Social Justice</i>	41	-	8
<i>American Journal of Criminal Law</i>	48	26	-
<i>Justice System Journal</i>	52	13	-
<i>Juvenile and Family Court Journal</i>	54	25	-
<i>American Criminal Law Review</i>	55	2	-
<i>Criminal Law Bulletin</i>	62	-	18

As was noted earlier, it appeared *JCLC* and *LSR*, particularly, along with some other law journals, slipped in the rankings over the years. Rather than publishing lower quality articles, it appears that these journals simply published fewer articles recently related to CJC topics, resulting in a lower aggregate number of citations. The most likely reason for this trend has been the proliferation of CJC journals in recent years which offer authors a large variety of outlets tailored to fit particular subject matter interests.

A final figure is provided that clearly demonstrates this progression in citation practices away from broader disciplinary outlets to CJC journals.¹² The chart shows that fourteen other disciplinary journals coded accounted for over four-fifths of the citations to works published in the 1950s or earlier. This disparity decreased to about one-half for articles cited during the 1970s, one-third for articles published during the 1980s, and less than one-quarter of articles published in the 1990s. For articles cited in the 2000s, only 13 percent were published in those original fourteen target journals. From the chart, it is obvious that CJC is becoming less dependent on the major disciplines for its knowledge base.

While the pattern in Fig. 1 describes one insight inadvertently gained during the course of the current study, Table 4 provides a description of

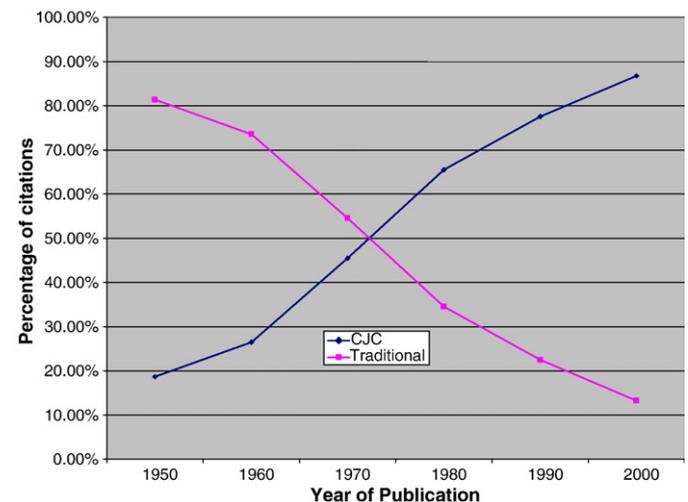


Fig. 1. Percentage of citations to CJC versus selected traditional disciplinary journals.

Table 4
Description of citing practices among the ten source journals

Journal title	Total cites	Median age cites	Percent of I.F. self-cites
<i>Crime and Delinquency</i>	390	1997.5	12.5%
<i>Criminal Justice and Behavior</i>	1,167	2000.0	77.8%
<i>Criminology</i>	513	1998.0	30.9%
<i>Criminology and Public Policy</i>	495	2002.0	32.1%
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	879	1999.0	52.2%
<i>Journal of Experimental Criminology</i>	186	1997.5	41.2%
<i>Journal of Quantitative Criminology</i>	303	1996.0	35.0%
<i>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</i>	351	1999.0	26.1%
<i>Justice Quarterly</i>	517	1998.0	20.7%
<i>Theoretical Criminology</i>	116	2001.5	100.0%

citing practices among the source journals from which additional insights and lessons were gleaned. The first column shows the total number of citations to any of the sixty-seven CJC journals. The source journals varied widely in citing practices; those with more citations had a heavier influence on the study's outcome. The average was just under five hundred citations per source journal; at that rate each journal would be expected to contribute about 10 percent of the citations to the study. At the lowest end, however, *TC* contributed only 2.4 percent of the total citations. At the highest end, *CJB*, a journal which began publishing twelve issues annually in 2007, contributed ten times as many, nearly 24 percent of the total citations in the study. The median age of citations varied from 1996 to 2002, meaning that changing the cutoff for any age-adjusted citation measure would have influenced outcomes based on the source journals selected. Finally, the extent to which self-citation practices were counted had an uneven influence on journal impact. For a journal like *CJB* that had a large total number of citations and high percentage of self-citations during the previous two years, including self-citations provided a boost to its I.F.

Discussion

The debate over whether criminal justice/criminology is a discipline is passé. Criminal justice is a discipline that produces knowledge and maintains its own outlets for information related to the advancement of the discipline. There also appears to be a rather stable hierarchy of outlets, although the boundaries are somewhat permeable and positions dependent to a degree on measurement choices. Overall, stalwarts in the field operate according to well-known standards with solid institutional backing, boards of editors of national renown, and long-standing reputations for publishing high quality work in the field. This "top tier" of elite journals tends to perform well in prestige surveys and impact studies with only slight deviations resulting from the selection of particular measures. Beyond these are group of well-known second-tier general, regional, and specialized journals with editors and board members that perform a solid job of peer review and procurement of quality articles. Ratings for these journals fluctuate a bit more depending on the selection of measures, but have been generally consistent.

At the same time, the proliferation of CJC journals has made it difficult to keep up with newcomers to the discipline. While they have not yet gained recognition to make a peer rating possible, they have also not been around long enough to calculate their impact. Any gradations for these journals must rely on other indicia such as the reputation of the editor, board members, quality of early publications, institutional affiliation, and professional association sponsorship until enough time has passed for them to be rated by peer review or impact measures.

Two other types of journals for which rankings are complicated, and for which citation analyses do not work well, are niche journals

and non-CJC journals. Niche journals publish within a circumscribed area of research. The narrowness of the subject matter and the portion of articles related to that subject matter published by a particular journal will determine how well the journal does in citation analyses, rather than the quality of articles. For instance, *JCJE* is a specialized journal that publishes articles on CJC pedagogy, and is one of the only journals that does so. Only occasionally do other criminal justice journals publish articles in that area. Consequently, nearly all of the citations to such articles and about such article are self-citations to *JCJE*. Excluding them as source journals or proscribing self-citations would make it impossible for such journals to accrue citations on an even footing with other less specialized journals. Alternately, their inclusion would serve to inflate niche journals' level of impact on the field.¹³

Similarly, citation analyses do not work well for non-CJC journals. Many of the journals in the current study that had the most dramatic shifts across impact measures, between citation and peer ratings, and over time, were those from broader disciplines. A journal such as *LSR* is a top-notch journal in its field. The problem is in attempting to determine its impact on CJC. While it theoretically could be possible to calculate an I.F. for CJC topical articles within a journal publishing in a broader area, in practice it would be quite difficult. First, it would require searching through each issue of the journals and making a determination of which articles should be considered in the denominator. This would be no easy task considering how fuzzy the lines are that delineate the discipline. Second, many times the broader theoretical, legal, or methodological articles from the more established disciplinary journals, which are totally unrelated to CJC, are cited in CJC journals. Some method would have to be devised to take these citations into consideration in the counts.

More general criticisms of citation analyses abound related to factors involved in the production of citation sources (i.e., journals), the citing practices of authors, and the procurement of citations by researchers performing citation studies (Cohn & Farrington, 1998; Sorensen et al., 2006). The main argument against citation analyses is that citations may not be a valid indicator of the quality of work produced by an author, or in this case, published by a journal. Specifically, publications may be cited for reasons that are unfavorable (i.e., to refute them) rather than favorable. The validity of citation analyses, however, has been supported by empirical studies which have found a strong relationship between citation counts and individual achievements in various fields (Cohn & Farrington, 1998, p. 189; Cole, 1983, p. 116). Available evidence has also shown that "the vast majority of citations are positive or neutral" (Cohn & Farrington, 1994b, p. 220; also see, Garfield, 1979). Findings from those studies suggested that limitations inherent in citation analyses should not preclude their use in rating journals, nor do they explain the predominance of peer reviews in rating journals.

As seen in the current study, one particular measure, such as a prestige rating or an impact measure alone, may be inadequate to capture the relative positions for all but the top CJC journals. Findings from the current study suggested that the quality of journals is multifaceted and warns against employing a scale based on one dimension of journal quality (i.e., Kleck et al., 2007; Shutt & Barnes, 2008). Further, it is important in any individual citation study to show that the source journals/indexes/texts are chosen based on the intent of the research. Weaknesses and limitations connected with the findings relative to those choices should be clearly pointed out. The choice of citation sources, weightings, measurements types, and time periods studied could each affect the relative impact of CJC journals, which could in turn influence the outcome of a study. Studies which rate such things as individual or departmental productivity should be viewed with great caution, as the attendant results from a particular study could depend to a large extent on methodological choices related to the measurement of journal prestige or journal impact.

Notes

1. The most cited foreign journal was the *British Journal of Criminology* with 107 cites. While a world-class journal, it would still have been in an unfair competition among included target journals utilizing U.S. source journals where it would have ranked fourteen out of sixty-nine. Other foreign journals attained few citations. For instance, the *Canadian Journal of Criminology* received thirty-eight citations, while the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* received eighteen.

2. Utilizing a strategy like JCR, and including all journals as both source and target journals, would have raised numerous problems in the current study while failing to eliminate the problem with self-citations. First, many of the journals self-cite at very different rates so the problem of self-citations would not have been eliminated by including all target journals as source journals. Second, self-citation rates may be justified among top tier journals but less so among lower tier journals. Third, the problem with self-citations can be eliminated by simply disallowing them. Fourth, if citations from all journals were included, the issue of whether citations should be weighted would arise. After all, a citation in a journal with one of the lowest prestige scores should not count the same as a citation in a journal with one of the highest prestige scores. The easiest, sensible, and timely means of dealing with the problem was simply to choose from among the top tier to rely on as source journals as citation researchers have been doing to study the influence of individual scholarship, and then limiting the influence of self-citations.

3. Other citation analysts have dropped JCLC previously for a pragmatic reason, due to its legal referencing style (Cohn & Farrington, 1994a). Further, its issues are inevitably delayed later than the other journals because, being a law review it runs according to, and changes staff based on, the academic school year schedule.

4. Had the observation period been longer, it might have made sense to include *ACT* and *CJ* as source journals in the current study.

5. The I.F. did not include book reviews or editorial introductions. Reaction papers and authors responses were counted as half articles.

6. *Criminal Justice* was included in the Sorensen et al. (2006) study as the American Bar Association section journal; however, *Criminal Justice* was also the title of a publication by the British Society of Criminology until 2005 when the title was changed to *Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Undoubtedly, this was a cause for confusion among many who rated the journal, making the rating for the journal unreliable. Also, the goal of the prestige study was to include only journals regularly published in by U.S. criminologists. Confusion over the title, and the fact that all of the citations in the source journals appeared to have been to the British publication, made it necessary to drop *Criminal Justice* from the current study.

7. If the reaction essays had been counted as full articles, *CPP* would still have fared well, but would have been nearer its rivals than to *CRIM*, with an I.F. of .73.

8. Due to the small number of citations both by *TC* as a source and to *TC* as a target suggests that its inclusion in future impact studies should be given further consideration.

9. If included, the rankings for *CJ* would have been: tot = 8; adj = 8; I.F. = 11; summary rank = 8. The rankings for *JEC* would have been: tot = 35; adj = 26; I.F. = 9; summary rank = 21.

10. This column was constructed from the mean rating of journals in Table 1, p. 311.

11. Actual scores rather than ranks were used in the calculations of Pearson's *r*.

12. For this exercise, an attempt was made to code information from additional CJC journals and the most often cited journals from the traditional disciplines of sociology, psychology, political science, science, and medicine. The coding was performed "by hand," and as such no attempt was made to code all journals, which would have taken an inordinate amount of time. The fourteen non-CJC journals included: *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Psychologist*, *American Sociological Review*, the *ANNALS*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *JAMA*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Journal Personality and Social Psychology*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Psychological Review*, *Science*, *Sexual Abuse*, *Social Forces*, and *Social Problems*.

13. One of the reviewers suggested that self-citations in niche journals present a broader threat to the discipline than merely that related to evaluating journal impact. The reviewer's contention was that niche journals reduce the quality of scholarship because authors in particular specialty areas covered by these journals no longer have

to earn "one of the few coveted slots in the mainstream generalist journal (e.g., *Criminology*)—where the best of the best, regardless of subject matter, compete."

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