What’s Important and What’s Not: What our Journals Tell Us About our Profession, Theory, Research, and Practice

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Prior annual reviews
- Content analyses of journal articles
- Theory, research, practice
- Methodology
- Results and discussion
- Implications and limitations
- Conclusion
Prior Annual Reviews

• Savickas, M. L. (1989)
• Spokane, A. R., & Hawks, B. K. (1990)
• Cook, E. (1991)
• Jepsen, D. A. (1992)
• Salomone, P. R. (1993)
• Subich, L. (1994)
• Walsh, W., & Srsic, C. (1995)
Prior Annual Reviews

- Niles, S. G. (1997)
Prior Annual Reviews

- Patton, W., & McIlveen, P. (2009)
- Hartung, P. J. (2010)
- Creager, M. (2011)
Prior Annual Reviews

Content Analyses of Journal Articles

• Four basic forms:
  – Analyzes the content of multiple journals in a given year
  – Analyzes the content of a single journal over an extended period of time
  – Compares the content of two journals over an extended period of time
  – Analyzes journal content related to a specific topic for one journal or multiple journals
Content Analyses from Career Journals

- Career development journal reviews
  - Five content analyses of CDQ, JVB, and JCA
- Life-span career development/perspectives, career development interventions, career assessment/assessment of vocational behavior, person-environment fit/Holland’s theory, and decision making
Content Analyses from *CDQ Annual Reviews*

- Three trends
  - Career theory, career assessment, and gender
  - Life-career development, self-efficacy, work-life/family balance, career transitions, and disability
  - Professional issues/development, international students, mentoring, sexual orientation, job satisfaction, career maturity/adaptability, well-being, social justice, emotional intelligence, calling, social class, and immigration status
Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice

- 1. Existing Theory
- 2. Prior Research
- 3. Observations from Prior Practice

Evidence for Theory Revision

Theory

Practice

Evidence for Future Research

Research

Literature on Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice

• Influence of theory on research
• Influence of theory on practice
• Influence of research on practice
Influence of Theory on Research

• Career theory provides a foundation for the study of vocational behavior and career development, and for examining evidence-based practice

• Karr and Lawson (2005) found that a theory or model was used to guide research in only 43% of the data-based studies they reviewed
Influence of Theory on Practice

- Practitioners can link theory-based concepts with client needs to better select career interventions
- The potential contribution of theory to practice may be somewhat limited
Influence of Research on Practice

- Research is also a fundamental tool in creating new career resources and services

- Murray (2009) noted that a chasm exists between researchers and practitioners
Methodology

- Selection of journal articles included in the analysis
  - Total of 357 articles from 24 different journals

- Development of a schema for career constructs
  - Total of 458 concepts were included in all four levels of the final schema
  - Used to answer research question #1
Methodology

• Journals included in the analyses:
  – The Career Development Quarterly
  – Career Planning and Adult Development Journal
  – Journal of Vocational Behavior
  – Journal of Career Assessment
  – Journal of Career Development
  – Journal of Employment Counseling
  – International Journal for Educational & Vocational Guidance
Methodology

- Journals included in the analyses:
  - Adultspan Journal
  - American Psychologist
  - British Journal of Guidance and Counselling
  - Journal of Applied Psychology
  - Journal of Counseling & Development
  - Journal of Counseling Psychology
  - Journal of Organizational Behavior
  - Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development
  - Australian Journal of Career Development
  - Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin
Methodology

• Journals included in the analyses:
  • The Counseling Psychologist
  • The Professional Counselor
  • Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling
  • The Canadian Journal of Career Development
  • Canadian Journal of Counseling & Psychotherapy
  • International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling
  • South African Journal of Industrial Psychology
Methodology

• Created operational definitions for key terms
  – Used to answer research questions #2-4

• Coding process
  – Mean number of content terms coded per article was 4.57 (SD = 2.38)

• SPSS
  – Articles in *rows*, and content topics and theory/research/practice variables in *columns*
Research Question #1

- What content topics were included in career development articles published in refereed journals in 2013?
  - What content topics appear most frequently in the journal literature?
  - What content topics appear to be underrepresented in the journal literature?
Results – Research Question #1

- Five general themes:
  - Personal characteristics and state of being (578 times)
  - Delivery of career interventions (230 times)
  - External factors influencing the individual (126 times)
  - Theory (114 times)
  - Occupational, educational, or employment options (37 times)
Results – Research Question #1

- Content topics underrepresented in the literature:
  - Accountability
  - Aptitude
  - Career library
  - Creativity
  - Glass ceiling
  - Information classification systems
  - Learning styles
  - Life-long learning
  - Mock interviews
  - Sexual harassment
  - Work-to-school transition
Discussion – Research Question #1

• Examples of content topics that have remained constant over time:
  – RIASEC and life span/life space career theories
  – The design and use of career assessments
  – Individual characteristics
  – The nature and process of decision making
  – The centrality of employment as an outcome
Discussion – Research Question #1

- Personal characteristics and state of being = 53.27%
- Delivery of career interventions = 21.20%
- External factors influencing the individual = 11.61%
- Theory = 10.51%
- Occupational, educational, or employment options = 3.41%
Research Question #2

- To what extent are theory, research, and practice integrated in career development articles published in refereed journals in 2013?
Results – Research Question #2

- What is the overall proportion of the literature that includes theory, research, and practice?
  - Theory = 176 (30.72%)
  - Research = 266 (46.42%)
  - Practice = 131 (22.86%)
Results – Research Question #2

• To what extent are one or more theories included in research articles?
  – 145 articles which included both theory and research
  – Represented 54.51% of the total 266 articles coded as research
Results – Research Question #2

- To what extent are one or more theories included in practice articles?
  - 51 articles which included both theory and practice
  - Represented 38.93% of the total 131 articles coded as practice
Results – Research Question #2

- To what extent is research included in practice articles?
  - 51 articles which included both research and practice
  - Represented 38.93% of the total 131 articles coded as practice
Discussion – Research Question #2

• Integration happens 44.12% of the time
  – Enhances quality and utility of the literature
  – Requires a systematic approach
  – A rough estimate of a desirable level of integration would be an average of 75%
Research Question #3

• What variation exists in the characteristics of career development articles published in refereed journals in 2013?
Results – Research Question #3

• What are the most common *theories* included in the literature?
  – Social Cognitive-Career Theory (n = 35)
  – Career Construction-Life Design Theory (n = 19)
  – RIASEC Theory (n = 17)
  – Big Five Factor Theory (n = 11)
  – Job Demands-Resources Model (n = 8)
  – Life Span/Life Space Theory (n = 8)
Results – Research Question #3

• When *theories* are included in the literature, are these theories presented as a single theory or multiple theories?

  – Average number of theories per article was 1.27 (SD = 0.53)
Results – Research Question #3

• To what extent do research articles focus on the study of vocational behavior versus evidence-based practice?

  – 93% \( (n = 247) \) involved the study of vocational behavior

  – 7% \( (n = 19) \) involved the examination of evidence-based practice
Results – Research Question #3

- To what extent do research articles use quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods?
  - 82% \((n = 217)\) were quantitative
  - 14% \((n = 37)\) were qualitative
  - 4% \((n = 12)\) were mixed methods
Results – Research Question #3

- What is the relative proportion of articles pertaining to career resources and career services?
  - Career resources = 24% (n = 88)
  - Career services = 19% (n = 67)
  - Both career resources and career services = 11% (n = 38)
  - Neither career resources or career services = 46% (n = 164)
Discussion – Research Question #3

- The use of multiple theoretical perspectives

- Lack of evidence-based practice in our field

- Topic of accountability
Discussion – Research Question #3

- Assessment of career intervention learning outcomes

- Vast majority of resources included in articles were career assessments
Research Question #4

• What variation exists in the content included in theory, research, and practice articles?
Results – Research Question #4

• To what extent are *theory*, *research*, and *practice* included in articles categorized as career resources and career services?
Results – Research Question #4

– Career resources
  • Theory = 30% (n = 42)
  • Research = 46% (n = 65)
  • Practice = 24% (n = 34)

– Career services
  • Theory = 21% (n = 21)
  • Research = 37% (n = 37)
  • Practice = 42% (n = 43)
Results – Research Question #4

- What are the most common theories used in research articles versus practice articles?
Results – Research Question #4

- Research articles
  - Social Cognitive Career Theory (22)
  - RIASEC Theory (16)
  - Career Construction-Life Design Theory (15)
  - Big Five Personality Factor Theory (10)
  - Job Demands-Resources Model (8)
  - Self-Determination Theory (7)
  - Life Span Life Space Theory (4)
  - Relational Theory of Working (4)
Results – Research Question #4

– Practice articles

• Social Cognitive Career Theory (13)
• Career Construction-Life Design Theory (7)
• RIASEC Theory (6)
• Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (6)
• Cognitive Information Processing Theory (3)
• Life Span Life Space Theory (3)
• Social Learning and Happenstance Theory (3)
• Latent Deprivation Theory (2)
Results – Research Question #4

• What are the most common *theories* used in *research* articles categorized as vocational behavior versus evidence-based practice?
Results – Research Question #4

- Vocational Behavior
  - Social Cognitive Career Theory (22)
  - RIASEC theory (16)
  - Career Construction-Life Design Theory (15)
  - Big Five Personality Factor Theory (10)
  - Job Demands-Resources Model (8)
  - Relational Theory of Working (4)
  - Conservation of Resources Theory (4)
  - Life Span Life Space Theory (4)
  - Self-Determination Theory (7)
Results – Research Question #4

- Evidence-Based Practice
  - Social Cognitive Career Theory (2)
  - Attribution Theory (1)
  - Career Decision-Making Self-efficacy Model (1)
  - Conservation of Resources Theory (1)
  - Expectancy Value Theory (1)
  - Human Capital Theory (1)
  - Latent Deprivation Theory (1)
  - RIASEC Theory (1)
  - Social Learning Theory (1)
Results – Research Question #4

• What are the most common content topics in *theory*, *research*, *practice*, and all articles combined?
Results – Research Question #4

• Career self-efficacy
  – All articles (n = 35)
  – Research articles (n = 31)

• Social-Cognitive Career Theory
  – Theory articles (n = 35)

• STEM occupations
  – Practice articles (n = 18)
Discussion – Research Question #4

• Career theories used in research and practice were similar

• Popularity of specific theories and the need to explore them in practice

• Missed opportunities for integration
Implications for Practice

• Future topic content
• Better integration of theory, research, and practice
• Education and training
• Journal editorial policy
• Content analyses of journal articles
• Topics important at this time in history
• Adopt a 60 - 30 - 10 goal
• Distinguish between best practices and evidence-based practice
• Compare the cost-effectiveness of various career interventions
Integration of Theory, Research, and Practice

- Increased collaboration among theorists, researchers, and practitioners
  - External grant funding
  - Lobby policy makers
  - Encourage students to use the research literature
  - More use of case studies
  - More practitioner engagement in research
Education and Training

• “Increase the emphasis in counseling methods courses on using research findings as a means of answering real-life problems” (Anderson & Heppner, 1986, p. 152)
Journal Editorial Policy

• Rebalancing of content related to theory, research, practice, and policy is needed

• Special issues or dedicated sections of journals could be used

• A need for policy analysis
Content Analyses of Journal Articles

- Conduct large-scale reviews every five to ten years
- Include more diverse types of refereed literature, as well as non-refereed publications
Limitations

• Special issues of journals
• Key words in journals
• Terminology
Conclusion

• The largest proportion of the literature was devoted to research

• Opportunities for integration were not often being realized

• Unprecedented opportunity to achieve goals
Audience Questions

For more information:

www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter