

Identifying the Classics: An Examination of Articles Published in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* from 1976–2006

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Objectives The purpose of the present investigation was to identify the top 100 most highly cited “classic” articles in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, from 1976 to 2006. **Methods** The Cited Reference search option of the Web of Science[®] was used, which allows for identification of variations in citations.

Results One-hundred and four classic articles ranging in citations from 46 to 192 ($M = 71.66$, $SD = 31.15$) were identified. These articles were found to be mostly applied research that focused predominantly on children across several age groups with chronic illness. Citation trends among the classics revealed an inverted-u shape relationship between year since publication and citations per year, which peaked around seven years after publication. **Conclusions** The current findings highlight some of the influential works in the field, which have contributed to important advances not only the field of pediatric psychology but other fields as well.

Key words citation analysis; classics; *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*.

Development in the field of pediatric psychology has been remarkable, with rapid and complex growth (Roberts, 1993), and moreover, the field has achieved a clear identity and recognition both within the broad discipline of psychology, as well as across various health care environments (Kazak, 2000). Today, scientific research in the field is integrated with applied clinical activities and can be found in book chapters, professional texts, and in a number of specialty and sub-specialty journals; however, as suggested by Roberts, Mitchell, and McNeal (2003), the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology (JPP)*, which in 2005 marked its 30th anniversary, constitutes the most concentrated scientific representation in pediatric psychology, and its contents reflect the breadth and depth of research in the field. With publication formally beginning in 1976, the journal was an essential element in solidifying the foundation of the Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP), and provided a publication outlet that “clearly established the field as a truly scientific and professional enterprise” (Roberts, Maddux, Wurtele, & Wright, 1982, p. 198). Further, in his *vale dictum* as editor of the journal, Roberts (1992) referenced *JPP* as the flagship publication for SPP and the field in general, and

stated that the journal is “a reflection of progress in the field” (p. 802).

To date, there have been several analyses conducted examining the contents of the field’s primary journal, *JPP*, in order to provide a historical perspective of the nature of research in the field (Routh, 1980; Routh & Mesibov, 1979). Moreover, in a further examination, Elkins and Roberts (1988) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the articles published in *JPP* during the first 10 years (1976–1985) as an official journal, and found that over time, the number of literature reviews and professional practice articles decreased, while the number of applied and basic research articles correspondingly increased. Furthermore, the ages targeted in the research spanned two or more age groups and were primarily focused on medically ill or children with developmental delays. In a similar study, Roberts (1992) examined articles published during his editorship of the journal from 1988 to 1992. For example, he found that very few of the articles were literature reviews or focused on professional practice, with many of the articles involving applied research and others more basic research. Moreover, results consistent with the Elkins and Roberts’ (1988) findings with respect

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to population age and type were also found. Similar article analyses were completed by La Greca (1997) and Kazak (2002) at the conclusion of their editorships and illustrated many of the same trends.

Rationale of the Current Study

Journal articles are often considered the *sine qua non* of scientific information exchange and *JPP* is most clearly and uniquely identified within the field of pediatric psychology. As a primary archive of the field, *JPP* is isomorphic with the history of research in pediatric psychology. In looking at the developmental course of the journal, Kazak (2000) reviewed the history of *JPP* from 1969 to 1999 and reported that *JPP* has had consistent linear growth in the number of submissions, number of papers published, numbers of issues/pages published annually, and the quantity of individual and institutional subscriptions. With evidence of the journal's maturity and achievements, an examination of the defining the "classics" of the journal (and correspondingly, somewhat, for the field itself) was warranted.

Defining the classics in a particular field can be accomplished in several ways, such as examining the most frequently cited articles, surveying professionals in the field, or examining web server logs (e.g., requests for reports, webpage "hits"). However, the former method may be the most reliable and objective means in defining the classics because it is less influenced by subjective biases (Flores, Rooney, Heppner, Browne, & Wei, 1999). Moreover, this analysis is a direct measure of the recognition and impact any particular publication has had in a particular field (Baltussen & Kindler, 2004; Terajima & Aneman, 2003; White & White, 1977).

Using citation analyses of journals in a particular field to define classics in that area has been performed numerous times in various fields (Baltussen & Kindler, 2004; Dubin, Hafner, & Arndt, 1993; Paladugu, Schein, Gardezi, & Wise, 2002; Wentz, 2003), including psychology (Heesacker, Heppner, & Rogers, 1982; LeUnes, 1974, 1978). To date, however, there have been no studies conducted looking specifically at the field of pediatric psychology. Thus, the current exploratory investigation examined the most highly cited articles in *JPP*, the representative publication in the field. Empirically defining the classics in *JPP* is important because the process can serve several functions such as (a) identifying central issues from the classics within the field, (b) identifying individuals who have made significant contributions to the journal and development of the

field (Heesacker et al., 1982), and (c) identifying trends in citations among the "classics."

Recent investigations attempting to analyze the classics have typically examined the "top 100" best-cited articles in a journal or discipline (Dubin et al., 1993; Garfield, 1987; Paladugu et al., 2002; Picknett & Davis, 1999). Thus, the top 100 most highly cited articles in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* from 1976 to 2006 were identified, and the contents (i.e., populations studied, age groups, etc.) of these classics were examined for descriptive purposes. In addition, trends in citations among these most highly cited articles were also examined.

Methods

Identification of Most Highly Cited Articles

To identify classic articles, the Institute for Scientific Information's (ISI) Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI; 1980–2006) was used. The SSCI is a multidisciplinary database providing information on the citation article and information on how many times an article has been cited. The Cited Reference Search option of the Web of Science[®] was used, which enables the researcher to find articles that have cited a previously published work, and allows for identification of variations in citations. A variation in citation is defined as any typographical error that might differ between the original article and reference citation of that article (i.e., author, page number, title, issue, or volume number variations: e.g., Aylward, BS; Aylward, B). This method was utilized to ensure maximum and accurate capture of the total number of citations. Articles were examined in one year segments and compared to a table of contents of the respective year from *JPP*. Tables of contents of each issue of *JPP* beginning with Issue 1, Volume 1 in 1976 to Issue 9, Volume 31, in 2006 were examined to ensure reliability of the search option.

Examining the Content

Similar to the content analyses of articles published in *JPP* by Elkins and Roberts (1988) and Roberts (1992), the current investigation made a comprehensive examination of the classics in *JPP*. Each article was read and categorized following preliminary guidelines for each of the six variables: (a) population age group (inclusive ages of subjects), (b) population type (characteristics of research population), (c) article type (focus of paper), (d) research purpose, (e) gender of senior author, and (f) senior author affiliation (types of department and institutions). A description of the guidelines for

categorizing each variable can be found in the Supplementary material.

Citation Trends

Citations for each article were examined to identify the publication year in which they cite the “classic.” The “shelf-life” of each classic article was then divided into 1 year segments, and the total number of citations the article received in each segment was calculated and entered into the database. Starting with the year of publication, the number of citations of the classic was calculated for each subsequent year. For example, a classic published in 1999 might have two citations in the first year (1999–2000), eight in the second year (2000–2001), and so forth, continuing up to 2006. Next, regression modeling techniques were utilized to examine overall trends in citations of the classics as well as individual trends among groups of articles. Additionally, a listing of the journals in which the citing articles appeared was created and descriptive statistics were computed.

Results

Identification of Most Highly Cited Articles

The Cited Reference Search option of the Web of Science[®] was used to identify total citation numbers of articles that appeared in *JPP* from 1976 to 2006, using the October 27, 2006 update. A total of 634 variation citations were identified in the database from the years 1975–2006, and an article from each variation citation group was retrieved electronically or via interlibrary loan. The reference section of the citing article retrieved was then analyzed and compared to listings of tables of contents from *JPP* issues and appropriate credit was given for citation numbers. Total citation numbers including variations were calculated for all cited *JPP* articles, and a paired samples *t*-test indicated that, on average, the number of citations for a given article was significantly higher when the variations were included ($M = 71.66$, $SD = 31.15$) than when just raw citations were used ($M = 69.50$, $SD = 30.37$), $t(103) = 6.678$, $p < .001$. Articles were entered into a spreadsheet database and sorted by the total number of times cited, and the top 100 most frequently cited articles in *JPP* articles were then identified. This yielded a total of 104 “classic” articles (due to tied rankings at the bottom end of the distribution). These ranged in citations from 46 to 192 ($M = 71.66$, $SD = 31.15$). A calculation of the number of citations per month since publication was computed for each article by subtracting the published month and year from October 2006, and then dividing the total number

of citations by that number. A detailed listing of the articles in rank order by total number of citations can be found in Table I. The citations per month and rank-order based on this calculation for each article is also presented in the table.

Descriptive Statistics of the Classics

From 1976 to 2006, there was a total of 1,312 cited articles in *JPP* identified in the Web of Science[®] database, which had a total of 22,523 citations. Overall, the 104 mostly highly cited articles (7.9% of all cited articles) had a total of 7,453 citations, accounting for 33.1% of all citations in the journal identified in the Web of Science[®] database. Out of the 7,453 citations among the classics, 7,450 of the citing articles were identified and used in subsequent analyses. Next, the author listings of both the classics and citing articles of the classics were reviewed and descriptive statistics were completed. The classic articles in *JPP* had, on average, 3.74 authors per article ($SD = 1.93$). In order to examine the influence of senior author self-citation rates on an article’s total number of citations, the author listings of the citing articles for each “classic” article were examined and self-citations by the senior author were identified. Overall, the mean senior author self-citation rate was 5.26 self-citations per article ($SD = 5.29$, range 0–26), accounting for, on average, only 8.1% of an articles’ total citations ($SD = 0.084$).

Preliminary Analyses

To examine the relationship between year of publication and total number of citations, including variations, a Pearson correlation was conducted. Among all articles, a significant, albeit weak, negative correlation was found between year of publication and total citations [$r(1,312) = -.197$, $p < .01$]. Among the classics, with all years between 1977 and 2002, with the exception of 2001, the results indicated that there was no significant relationship between year of publication and total number of citations ($p = .811$).

Content Analysis

The following analyses of article content were conducted based on the methodology of Elkins and Roberts (1988) and Roberts (1992).

Gender of Senior Author

Among the classics in *JPP*, the distribution of male to female authors was equal (52 articles for males and females). In his *vale dictum*, Roberts (1992) indicated that there was an overall increasing representation of female authors with increasing time in *JPP*. To examine whether

Table I. Listing of "Classic" Articles in *JPP* by Total Citations, with Citations/Month and Rank Order in Parenthesis also Listed

| Rank | Article | Total citations | Citations/month (rank) |
|-------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Lavigne and Faier-Routman (1992) | 192 | 1.10 (2nd) |
| 2. | Friedrich, Urquiza, and Beilke (1986) | 188 | 0.76 (4th) |
| 3. | Fullard, McDevitt, and Carey (1984) | 177 | 0.66 (t-9th) |
| 4. | Wallander, Varni, Babani, Banis, and Wilcox (1988) | 158 | 0.71 (t-6th) |
| 5. | Wallander, Varni, Babani, Banis, and Wilcox (1989) | 152 | 0.73 (5th) |
| 6. | Spirito, Stark, and Williams (1988) | 141 | 0.66 (t-9th) |
| 7. | Perrin, Stein, and Drotar (1991) | 140 | 0.77 (3rd) |
| 8. | Kupst and Schulman (1988) | 127 | 0.57 (t-17th) |
| 9. | Holmbeck (2002) | 125 | 2.16 (1st) |
| 10. | Walker and Greene (1989) | 118 | 0.56 (20th) |
| 11. | Gil, Williams, Thompson, and Kinney (1991) | 114 | 0.63 (t-12th) |
| 12. | Anderson, Auslander, Jung, Miller, and Santiago (1990) | 112 | 0.57 (t-17th) |
| t-13. | Hauser et al. (1990) | 103 | 0.53 (t-21st) |
| | Ambuel, Hamlett, Marx, and Blumer (1992) | 103 | 0.58 (t-15th) |
| 15. | Bennett (1994) | 95 | 0.63 (t-12th) |
| 16. | Brown, O'Keefe, Sanders, and Baker (1986) | 92 | 0.38 (t-34th) |
| 17. | Rando (1983) | 88 | 0.31 (t-57th) |
| t-18. | La Greca et al. (1995) | 87 | 0.64 (11th) |
| | Loyd and Abidin (1985) | 87 | 0.34 (t-46th) |
| | Wallander, Varni, Babani, DeHaan, Wilcox, and Banis (1989) | 87 | 0.42 (29th) |
| 21. | Spieth and Harris (1996) | 86 | 0.68 (8th) |
| 22. | Walker and Greene (1991) | 85 | 0.45 (27th) |
| 23. | Blouin, Bornstein, and Trites (1978) | 83 | 0.25 (t-77th) |
| t-24. | Lobovits and Handal (1985) | 81 | 0.31 (t-57th) |
| | Kazak and Meadows (1989) | 81 | 0.39 (t-32nd) |
| 26. | Elliot, Jay, and Woody (1987) | 79 | 0.35 (t-41st) |
| 27. | Wallander, Varni, Babani, Banis, DeHaan, and Wilcox (1989) | 78 | 0.37 (t-38th) |
| t-28. | Barakat et al. (1997) | 76 | 0.71 (t-6th) |
| | Ewing-Cobbs, Miner, Fletcher, and Levin (1989) | 76 | 0.37 (t-38th) |
| 30. | Hurtig, Koepke, and Park (1989) | 75 | 0.35 (t-41st) |
| 31. | Drotar (1981) | 74 | 0.25 (t-77th) |
| 32. | Dahl, Pelham, and Wierson (1991) | 72 | 0.39 (t-32nd) |
| 33. | La Greca (1990) | 69 | 0.35 (t-41st) |
| 34. | Goldberg, Morris, Simmons, Fowler, and Levison (1990) | 68 | 0.35 (t-41st) |
| t-35. | Breen and Barkley (1988) | 67 | 0.30 (t-62nd) |
| | Jacobson et al. (1990) | 67 | 0.34 (t-46th) |
| | Rourke and Strang (1978) | 67 | 0.20 (t-90th) |
| | Walker and Zeman (1992) | 67 | 0.38 (t-34th) |
| 39. | Speechley and Noh (1992) | 66 | 0.37 (t-38th) |
| 40. | Milich and Loney (1979) | 65 | 0.20 (t-90th) |
| t-41. | Baltaxe (1977) | 64 | 0.18 (t-95th) |
| | Timko, Stovel, and Moos (1992) | 64 | 0.38 (t-34th) |
| t-43. | Epstein, Wing, Steranchak, Dickson, and Michelson (1980) | 63 | 0.20 (t-90th) |
| | Levin and Eisenberg (1979) | 63 | 0.20 (t-90th) |
| | Morgan and Jackson (1986) | 63 | 0.26 (t-71st) |
| | Thompson, Gill, Burbach, Keith, and Kinney (1993) | 63 | 0.40 (31st) |
| 47. | Kupst et al. (1995) | 62 | 0.47 (26th) |
| t-48. | Asarnow, Satz, Light, Lewis, and Neumann (1991) | 61 | 0.34 (t-46th) |
| | Braet, Mervielde, and Vandereyken (1997) | 61 | 0.52 (t-23rd) |
| | Shaw and Routh (1982) | 61 | 0.21 (t-87th) |
| t-51. | Gil et al. (1993) | 60 | 0.38 (t-34th) |
| | Hamlett, Pellegrini, and Katz (1992) | 60 | 0.34 (t-46th) |

(continued)

Table I. Continued

| Rank | Article | Total citations | Citations/month (rank) |
|-------|---|-----------------|------------------------|
| | Rovet, Ehrlich, and Sorbara (1992) | 60 | 0.34 (t-46th) |
| | Snyder et al. (1997) | 60 | 0.53 (t-21st) |
| t-55. | Cantwell and Satterfield (1978) | 59 | 0.18 (t-95th) |
| | DeMaso et al. (1991) | 59 | 0.32 (t-53rd) |
| | Hurtig and White (1986) | 59 | 0.24 (t-82nd) |
| | Kashani, König, Shepperd, Wilfley, and Morris (1988) | 59 | 0.27 (t-69th) |
| | Langley, McGee, Silva, and Williams (1983) | 59 | 0.21 (t-87th) |
| | Spinetta, Swarner, and Sheposh (1981) | 59 | 0.20 (t-90th) |
| | Whalen et al. (1978) | 59 | 0.18 (t-95th) |
| t-62. | Drotar (1997b) | 58 | 0.50 (25th) |
| | Kovacs et al. (1990) | 58 | 0.30 (t-62nd) |
| | Worchel et al. (1988) | 58 | 0.26 (t-71st) |
| t-65. | Feagans, Sanyal, Henderson, Collier, and Appelbaum (1987) | 57 | 0.25 (t-77th) |
| | McKinney and Peterson (1987) | 57 | 0.24 (t-82nd) |
| | Strauss, Smith, Frame, and Forehand (1985) | 57 | 0.22 (t-85th) |
| | Taylor, Albo, Phebus, Sachs, and Bierl (1987) | 57 | 0.25 (t-77th) |
| 69. | Walsh and Bibace (1991) | 56 | 0.30 (t-62nd) |
| t-70. | MacLean, Perrin, Gortmaker, and Pierre (1992) | 55 | 0.31 (t-57th) |
| | Manne, Du Hamel, Gallelli, Sorgen, and Redd (1998) | 55 | 0.58 (t-15th) |
| | Thompson, Gustafson, Hamlett, and Spock (1992a) | 55 | 0.33 (t-51st) |
| | Van Dongen-Melman et al. (1995) | 55 | 0.41 (30th) |
| | Wills, Holmbeck, Dilllon, and McLone (1990) | 55 | 0.28 (t-67th) |
| t-75. | Powers, Blount, Bachanas, Cotter, and Swan (1993) | 54 | 0.35 (t-41st) |
| | Quittner, DiGirolamo, Michel, and Eigen (1992) | 54 | 0.32 (t-53rd) |
| | Thompson, Gustafson, Hamlett, and Spock (1992b) | 54 | 0.32 (t-53rd) |
| | Trites, Dugas, Lynch, and Ferguson (1979) | 54 | 0.16 (t-102nd) |
| t-79. | Kupst et al. (1982) | 53 | 0.18 (t-95th) |
| | Osborne, Hatcher, and Richtsmeier (1989) | 53 | 0.25 (t-77th) |
| | Walker, Ortiz-Valdes, and Newbrough (1989) | 53 | 0.26 (t-71st) |
| 82. | Powers (1999) | 52 | 0.57 (t-17th) |
| t-83. | Satin, La Greca, Zigo, and Skyler (1989) | 51 | 0.24 (t-82nd) |
| | Thompson, Varni, and Hanson (1987) | 51 | 0.22 (t-85th) |
| t-85. | Cohen, Blount, and Panopoulos (1997) | 50 | 0.44 (28th) |
| | Siegel et al. (1982) | 50 | 0.17 (101st) |
| t-87. | Thompson et al. (1994) | 49 | 0.32 (t-53rd) |
| | Wysocki (1993) | 49 | 0.31 (t-57th) |
| | Wysocki et al. (2000) | 49 | 0.60 (14th) |
| 90. | Noll, LeRoy, Bukowski, Rogosch, and Kulkarni (1991) | 48 | 0.26 (t-71st) |
| t-91. | Cousens, Ungerer, Crawford, and Stevens (1991) | 47 | 0.26 (t-71st) |
| | Finney, Riley, and Cataldo (1991) | 47 | 0.26 (t-71st) |
| | Firestone and Witt (1982) | 47 | 0.16 (t-102nd) |
| | Landry et al. (1984) | 47 | 0.18 (t-95th) |
| | Levy-Shiff, Einat, Mogilner, Lerman, and Krikler (1994) | 47 | 0.31 (t-57th) |
| | Miller, Gordon, Danielle, and Diller (1992) | 47 | 0.28 (t-67th) |
| t-97. | Black, Schuler, and Nair (1993) | 46 | 0.29 (66th) |
| | Drotar and Sturm (1988) | 46 | 0.21 (t-87th) |
| | Jelalian and Saelens (1999) | 46 | 0.52 (t-23rd) |
| | Money and Russo (1979) | 46 | 0.14 (104th) |
| | Mulhern, Fairclough, Smith, and Douglas (1992) | 46 | 0.27 (t-69th) |
| | Shaffer, Friedrich, Shurtleff, and Wolf (1985) | 46 | 0.18 (t-95th) |
| | Varni, Katz, Colegrove, and Dolgin (1993) | 46 | 0.30 (t-62nd) |
| | Walker, Garber, Van Slyke, and Greene (1995) | 46 | 0.33 (t-51st) |

Note: t = tied rank.

similar trends existed in the classics, descriptive statistics were completed, examining the total number of classic articles per year from 1977 to 2002 for males and female senior authors. Across all classic articles, an independent samples *t*-test revealed that there was no significant relationship between senior author gender and year of publication among the classics, $t(102) = -.880, p = .381$.

Senior Author Affiliation

At the time of publication, the authors of the classics in *JPP* were affiliated with medical settings for 63.5% of the articles and with settings in colleges and universities for 36.5%, which are similar to the results of Elkins and Roberts (1988) (59% medical; 34% college), as well as Roberts (1992; 56.1% medical, 42% college).

Population Type

This variable presents the population characteristics of the research and practice in classic articles. Chronic medical problems were the highest single type of population (46.2%), followed by studies including more than one type of population or nonspecific to a population (i.e., "other;" 16.3%), behavioral/emotionally disturbed (10.6%), physical disability and developmental/learning disabled (both 7.7%), and general and acute medical conditions (both 5.8%). Combining acute and chronic medical conditions with the physical disability category revealed that 59.7% of the classic articles were on medical topics or conditions. Among the chronic medical condition category, articles on cancer, diabetes, and sickle cell disease were found at the highest number, which is similar to the results of Roberts (1992).

Population Age

Based on the guidelines adapted from Roberts (1992), this variable categorized the age characteristics reported in the articles. Similar to previous findings the *combinations of ages* category (44.2% of the classic articles) was the most prominent category represented (Elkins & Roberts, 1988; Roberts, 1992). This category was followed by *middle childhood* (17.3% of articles), *parents* (15.4% of articles), *adolescence* (5.8% of articles), *infancy* (3.8% of articles), *preschool* (2.9% of articles), *other* (1.9% of articles), and *not applicable* (8.7% of articles).

Article Type

In examining the primary emphasis of each classic article published, 63.5% ($n = 66$) were Applied Research, 26.0% ($n = 27$) were Basic Research, 8.7% ($n = 9$) were literature reviews, and 1.9% ($n = 2$) were on aspects of Professional Practice. Using the criteria developed by Elkins and

Roberts (1988) and Roberts (1992), basic research was defined as articles that report results obtained from a group or single-case, experimental or quasi-experimental design and whose results "are not expected to be immediately valuable for any specific use" (Vasta, 1979, p. 34). On the other hand, applied research was defined as articles that report results obtained from a group or single-case, experimental or quasi-experimental design, and results of applied research "provide information that is immediately useful" (Vasta, 1979, p. 33). Previous studies revealed similar results with regards to percentage of articles of applied and basic research, which highlights the applied nature of pediatric psychology (Elkins & Roberts, 1988; Roberts, 1992)

Research Purpose

This category examined the main orientation or purpose of those articles that were categorized as Research (i.e., Basic or Applied; $n = 93$) (adapted from Roberts, 1992): (a) *Assessment* articles (12.9% of articles, $n = 12$) had the purpose of developing clinical diagnoses via testing, interviewing, surveys, or instrument development and validation, (b) *Intervention* articles described the efforts to improve the status or functioning of the child, parent, or family (8.6%, $n = 8$), (c) *Explicative* research articles described the relationship between two or more phenomena or variables (e.g., connections and associations between physical and psychological phenomena; 78.5%, $n = 73$). None of the classic Research articles were categorized as (d) *Prevention* articles describing an intervention or program designed to avoid the development of a psychological or physical problem prior to the problem emerging.

To examine reliability between raters, a random sample of 25% of the articles were independently coded by a research assistant, and κ -coefficients were calculated with the assumption that no single category would be more prominent than the others. The results yielded fair ($\kappa = .297$) to excellent ($\kappa = .834$) agreement across raters on the six content variables. Overall, agreement between raters on all the variables was found to be moderate (mean $\kappa = .586$).

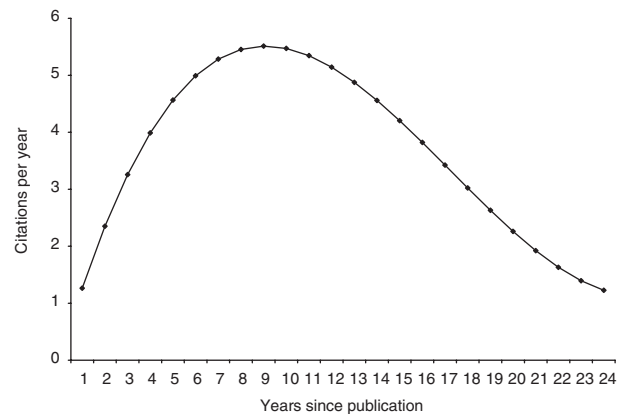
Citation Trends

The citing journals of the 7,450 citations that could be identified were entered into a database and descriptive statistics on these journals were then calculated. *JPP* was found to be the highest citing journal ($n = 1,031$, 13.8%) of the "classics." A listing of the top 10 citing journals can be found in Table II. Next, to examine

Table II. Top 10 Citing Journals of the Classics in *JPP*

| Rank | Journal | Frequency | Total citations (%) |
|------|--|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. | Journal of Pediatric Psychology | 1,031 | 13.8 |
| 2. | Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics | 248 | 3.3 |
| 3. | Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry | 206 | 2.8 |
| 4. | Children's Health Care | 199 | 2.7 |
| 5. | Pediatrics | 186 | 2.5 |
| 6. | Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings | 134 | 1.8 |
| 7. | Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines | 127 | 1.7 |
| 8. | Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology | 113 | 1.5 |
| 9. | Journal of Clinical Child Psychology | 85 | 1.1 |
| 10. | Child: Care, Health and Development | 81 | 1.1 |

trends in citations, the starting year (publication year) for each article was defined as zero, and every year after that was increased by one. The number of citations occurring in each year was then recorded for each article. To examine overall trends in citations, a regression model based on all the articles was generated, with linear, and orthogonalized quadratic and cubic components of the number of years in publication (YRS) as the predictor variables and number of citations per year as the dependent variable. The results indicated that the linear, and both the orthogonalized quadratic and cubic components of number of YRS all significantly predicted number of citations (all p -values $<.001$), yielding the following significant prediction model: Citations = $4.369 + (-.039) (YRS) + (-.024)(YRS^2 \text{ residual}) + (0.002) (YRS^3 \text{ residual})$. In an effort to determine whether these trends were the product of a few articles or an artifact of longevity, we examined the predictive value of the linear, quadratic, and cubic components by considering the number of years since publication (i.e., 15- and 20-years since publication). This analysis yielded similar results (all components p -values $<.001$). Given these findings, all three components were included in subsequent analyses. Figure 1 provides a graphical illustration of the citation trends based on the overall data. As can be seen in this figure, overall it appears that there is an inverted u-shaped relationship between years since publication and number of citations per year, with the number of citations per year for a given article peaking around 8 years after publication.

**Figure 1.** Citation trends of the classics based on overall data over time.

Discussion

The purpose of the present investigation was to empirically derive a listing of the top 100 most highly cited articles in *JPP* from 1976 to 2006. This yielded a total of 104 articles as the classics in *JPP*, which accounted for nearly one-third of all citations of *JPP* identified in the Web of Science® database. Overall, the classics in *JPP* were found to focus predominantly on chronic medical problems, namely cancer, diabetes, and sickle cell disease, and children included in these articles spanned several age categories defined for the present study. In more recent years, *JPP* has honed its focus on chronic health conditions, and other topics in its history have been less represented, despite attempts to broaden the pediatric psychology paradigm of care (Delamater, 2007; Freier & Aylward, 2007). In the current investigation, however, it is possible that esoteric/idiosyncratic publication topics were not found among the classics because these topics may have a smaller number of researchers in the specific area, which in turn affects the citation rates of these articles. For this reason, it becomes more likely that some topics that have been part of the pediatric psychology domain (e.g., prevention and health promotion), as reflected in the field's mission statement, are not represented at all in the classics.

Moreover, some topics reflected in the classics had a presence early in the field and relatively disappeared (e.g., ADHD, autism), and were presumably absorbed by other specialty journals. For example, although autistic disorder (AD) is not a major presence in the journal due to the Plenum Publishing contract in 1979, the current investigation identified one study that focused on autism (Baltaxe, 1977). However, today, few people likely associate autism as a major part of the field of pediatric psychology, even though it was viewed as a fundamental

topic in the early years. Ultimately, this classic article became a classic by being highly cited by journals other than *JPP* (zero citations by *JPP*).

Second, the majority of the classic articles were found to be categorized as applied research followed by basic research. Given previous findings on article distribution type (Elkins & Roberts, 1988; Roberts, 1992), as well as the applied nature of pediatric psychology, it is not surprising that the results of the current study are consistent. Of those articles categorized as applied or basic research, a majority of these articles were explicative research, and often examined the relationship between physical and psychological phenomena. Based on the rate of explicative research identified by Roberts (1992), one would expect more explicative studies to be classics due to the fact that there are more explicative studies in the journal in general.

Although explicative research has enhanced our knowledge and understanding of factors related to medical and psychological conditions (Roberts, McNeal, Randall, & Roberts, 1996), as Roberts (1992) stated, one would hope that explicative research eventually translates into methods and approaches for clinical interventions. However, overall there have been fewer studies on clinical interventions within the field (La Greca, 1997; La Greca & Varni, 1993; Roberts, 1992), as well as a lack of substantive discussion of clinical applications within explicative articles (Roberts et al., 1996). Moreover, in the Delphic survey conducted by Brown and Roberts (2000), panelists identified increased investigations providing support for treatment interventions as a significant issue within the field of pediatric psychology. Although intervention projects are rather more difficult to conduct and the reports resulting from these studies are often easy to criticize on methodology grounds, there has been a recent emphasis on intervention research in *JPP* and such studies are encouraged (Drotar, 1997a). However, in the present investigation, there were very few intervention studies among the classics, and although pediatric psychology is a clinical application field, this is not reflected in the classics. Moreover, as noted by other analyses (Roberts, 1992), there are fewer intervention studies in general as compared to explicative studies. With the increased emphasis on intervention studies, it may be that these articles will appear as future citation classics.

Finally, the senior authors of these articles identified as classics were equally distributed among males and females, and these were predominantly affiliated with medical settings at the time of their respective articles' publication. Additionally, overall, there was a large

number of contributors to the classics, thus indicating a depth to the "bench" of authors, and furthermore that not just one single research team was highly influential among *JPP* pages. There were, however, a few repeat citation classic authors (e.g., Drotar, La Greca, Kupst, Walker, and Wallander) who typically conduct programmatic research that continues to be in a long-standing zeitgeist of pediatric psychology (cancer, diabetes, and chronic conditions).

Recently, in examining research citing articles appearing in *JPP* between 2000 and 2004, Steele, Graves, Roberts, and Steele (2007) found that articles in the journal are being cited both within and outside the field of pediatric psychology, thus providing evidence of interdisciplinary dissemination of pediatric psychology research, a stated goal of the journal. Parallel to these findings, in the current investigation, evidence of interdisciplinary dissemination was also found among the classics. The classic articles in *JPP* have been recognized in developmental and behavioral pediatrics, child and adolescent psychiatry, general clinical psychology, child development, and specialty medicine (e.g., diabetes, cancer).

Although the present study offers an empirical approach to identifying the classics in *JPP*, some limitations should be noted. First, citation analyses, while potentially useful in identifying articles with a large number of citations in a given journal, are not perfect indicators of any article's complete influence on a given field. For example, citation analyses do not provide information regarding how or why a specific work was cited (Everett & Pecotich, 1993; Hoffman & Holbrook, 1993). Furthermore, the clinical impact of a given article cannot be measured in this manner. Although the pediatric practitioner could be using the information from a study in practice, this would not necessarily result in a citation of the article. Additionally, citation analyses can be limited by their "snapshot" approach in examining the citation impact of a given article, and given a more suitable lag time since publication, it is likely that more recent articles would appear as classics.

Despite these limitations, citation analyses provide a direct, objective, and reliable means of defining the classics in a field (Baltussen & Kindler, 2004; Terajima & Aneman, 2003). Although only a piece of the puzzle, the current findings highlight some of the influential works in the field of pediatric psychology, as reflected in the field's flagship publication. In addition, the current study highlights potential areas of future research. For example, future studies could examine several issues, such as how the availability of federal grant funding, advances in

medical procedures, or increased use of more sophisticated statistical techniques affect the topics published within *JPP* pages, and, in turn, how these aspects influence citation rates. Additionally, future studies might consider how programmatic styles of research investigators, factors of seniority, and contributions through mentoring of junior colleagues might influence potential classics. The process by which pediatric psychology scientists “do their thing” is worth understanding to the same degree that our field needs to understand how its practitioners implement the science. Nonetheless, the articles identified in the current study have contributed to important advances not only in the field of pediatric psychology but in other fields as well. As mentioned by La Greca (1997), the advances in the field of pediatric psychology, as well as within *JPP*, are due to the quality works of both scientists and practitioners. With continued scholarly submissions to *JPP*, new classics in the field will emerge and continue to impact the expanding field itself as well as other fields.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary Data are available at *JPEPSY* Online.

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