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ABSTRACT

A study examined the relative prestige of university speech communication departments based on the published output of their graduates. All issues of nine major speech communication journals were examined for the period 1971 to 1981. Approximately 200 institutions were represented in the 3,771 entries in the data base; 90 percent of the authors held doctoral degrees. Analysis of the data involving authors with degrees in speech communication indicated that the University of Iowa's graduates had been the most active publishers, followed by Pennsylvania State University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Illinois, and Michigan State University. When considered with data supplied by other researchers, these results indicate that regardless of the measure used to establish prestige, institutions housing doctoral programs produce more productive graduates. Although the presence of one or two prolific publishers and the failure to obtain some information on where the degree was obtained reduce the authority of these findings somewhat, this study does suggest that prestige, as measured by the number of articles published by an institution's graduates, does seem to index institutions. (Includes tables of data and institution rankings.) (JL)

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AN ANALYSIS OF DEGREE-GRANTING
INSTITUTIONS AND NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN
COMMUNICATION JOURNALS

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AN ANALYSIS OF DEGREE-GRANTING
INSTITUTIONS AND NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN
COMMUNICATION JOURNALS

Determining the relative institutional prestige in any discipline is both a difficult and potentially controversial subject. When trying to establish the relative prestige of an institution or program based in that institution, several indices of prestige may be applied to a data base. One method is to count the number of publications produced by a given department over a period of years. In speech communication Barker, Hall, Roach, and Underberg in 1979, 1980, and 1981 have published such data. Similar studies in mass communication (King and Baran, 1981) and in general communication (Cherwitz and Daly, 1981) are available. In the Barker et al. and King and Baran studies the relative importance or prestige of an institution was measured by providing points per institution based on the number of authors per article published. Cherwitz and Daly, on the other hand, examined the process by which faculty get their articles published: the editorial board.

These attempts to judge the relative prestige of communication departments or institutions have produced remarkably similar results. Such findings might be viewed as a way of obtaining some measure of validity and reliability given the significant correlations between the Barker et al. and the Cherwitz and Daly studies. However, this research examining the impact of faculty production is potentially biased by the changes in departmental faculties over any given period of time. Perhaps a better index of the prestige of an institution or program might be the number of publications produced by its graduates. While institutional affiliations change over the years, the degree conferred does not. Further, the relative prestige of any program is based in large part on those people graduated from that program or institution and what they do after graduation. It would follow, then, that a measure of prestige similar to

article production by department affiliated with would be article production by degree-granted institution affiliation,

The purpose of this study is to examine the relative prestige of speech communication departments based on the output of their graduates. Such an analysis should provide the reader with a sense of which graduate or undergraduate programs are producing people who publish in speech communication journals and allow comparison with departmental and editorial research reported earlier by Barker et al. and Cherwitz and Daly.

Method

Previous surveys of publications in any given discipline have employed an eight to ten year survey for determining the quality of publications (e.g., Barker et al., 1979, 1980, 1981; Cherwitz and Daly, 1981; King and Baran, 1981). This survey of publications used a similar method. All issues of nine major speech communication journals were examined for the period, 1971 to 1981 (some issues in 1981 were unavailable because of printing delays). The list of journals appears in Table 1.¹

This survey differs from those of Barker et al. in one important way. Rather than judge the relative quality of the article based on "quality points," whereby multiple authorship is divided equally by author (assuming that a single authorship is worth twice as much as a dual authorship, etc.), each author was coded as receiving full "publication credit" whether the article was of single or multiple authorship. The rationale for such a departure from earlier prototypes (e.g., Cox and Catt, 1977; West, 1978; Ratusnik, Klor, and Militani, 1977) was that equal work is represented in a publication by one or more authors and the institutional prestige rather than individual prestige was best measured if credit was assumed equally among the authors of any given publication; an

article co-authored is still an article for the individual and is weighed as if the article were not co-authored.

When coding the data for analysis each entry was coded by journal, volume, and number. Further, each article was attributed to the institution where the author received his or her highest degree at the time of publication, i.e., a publication by a master's or a doctoral student was credited to his or her undergraduate or master's affiliation. Because only a limited number of journals in the speech communication field routinely publish the institution where the author's highest degree was conferred, the SCA Directory was consulted for authors with degrees granted prior to 1976, when the last listing by degree was published. For authors not listed in the SCA Directory, a cross-tabulation of entries was used to locate and match some institutions to authors, for others not listed, colleagues were queried and in some cases lists of faculty were examined using their institutional bulletins.

As these criteria suggest, the focus of this survey was to determine the number of publications over a given period of time by the highest degree conferred and where that degree was conferred. Additionally, in order to ascertain who was publishing in our journals, a further analysis broke down the data base by departmental affiliation. These data were obtained from each journal or from the SCA Directory for the appropriate year in cases where no affiliation was reported (as in some cases in Communication Education [formerly Speech Teacher] and Communication Quarterly [formerly Today's Speech]).

To assign publication credit for any given article a simple criterion was applied. Any published article was included unless it fell into one of the following areas: a book review, a bibliography, or a special report published each issue by the journal (e.g., "News and Notes"). Included in this analysis were special reports, when identified as such, addresses when published as an article (as is the tradition of at least one journal), and the "Instructional Practices"

(short articles published in Communication Education). No specific measure of page length was used as a criterion; however, the vast majority of entries (to include "Instructional Practices") also met the criteria of page length established by Barker et al.

Results

A total of approximately 200 institutions and organizations were represented in one or more articles published in the period under analysis, a significantly smaller number than reported by Barker et al. that represents the difference between the criteria used in the previous studies and the current one.

Table 2 presents an analysis of the highest degree at time of publication for the 3,771 entries made in the data base. As might be expected, a vast majority of articles are published with the Ph.D. as the highest degree earned at time of publication (90 percent). Ten percent of the authors held Master's degrees at the time of publication and less than one percent (0.98 percent) published with a Bachelor's degree.

To ascertain whether the journals under study represent the speech communication discipline, an analysis of departmental affiliation was performed. Table 3 affirms that the journals selected did represent the speech communication discipline; 92 percent of the authors in the survey resided in speech communication departments (operationally defined as departments solely responsible for speech communication or departments with other areas, such as theatre or pathology/audiology or media, included). It should be noted, however, that in several instances articles were co-authored with authors outside the discipline. This analysis artificially broke down this distinction and examined each as a unique contributor to the article. Of the 7.83 percent of non-speech communication authors, the largest single departments represented were Psychology and English. In the category, "Other," departments with fewer than five entries

were represented. Only one percent of the authors was found to be out of academia.

Analysis of the data involving authors with degrees in speech communication resulted in a population of 3,464 entries.² The analysis yielded 129 different institutions represented in the journals surveyed. Table 4 presents the top 30 institutions based on the number of times their graduates published in the nine journals surveyed.³ The results indicate that the University of Iowa's graduates have been the most active publishers, followed by Pennsylvania State University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Illinois, and Michigan State University. Of the top 30 ranked institutions, 29 have or have had doctoral programs in speech communication. Only West Virginia University (tied for 19th) does not offer a doctorate in speech communication (although an Ed.D. degree is possible in a hybrid program).

To compare the relative prestige of the institutions, the relative rankings of Barker et al. (1981) and Cherwitz and Daly (1981) were compared with those of the current study. Table 5 presents the three studies' top 30 institutions (25 in the case of the Barker et al. study). There appears to be a high degree of correspondence in the listing of institutions, although some difference in the ranks occur both in terms of make-up and rank. In all, however, there are more similarities between the current rankings and those found by Cherwitz and Daly.

Discussion

This study has attempted to provide more information with which to assign relative prestige to institutions in the speech communication discipline. When taken with the data supplied by other researchers, it should be apparent that, regardless of the measure used to establish prestige, institutions housing doctoral programs produce more productive graduates. While quality undoubtedly is a subjective measure and one most likely correlated with editorial "gatekeepers,"

certain institutions seem to be ranked highly across this study and others.

Care should be taken in interpreting the number of entries used as the basis for this study. The appearance of one or two prolific researchers almost certainly skewed the results of this research. Consider, for example, the impact of one of the top five ranked institutions on graduate students enrolled there. If there is any behavior modification in graduate programs, perhaps some of it works in terms of publication.

There have been certain limitations in conducting this research. First, it was often impossible to obtain the institution from which the authors received their highest degree. In many cases even the highest degree earned (or most recent as in some cases) was not obtainable. Future research would be enhanced if editors would list both highest degree earned and the institution from which that degree was earned. Given the 10 percent of authors missing in this analysis, the precision and accuracy of the rankings would be enhanced with more information available from the journals. The listing of such data also allows the reader to have some idea as to the theoretical/ideological training the author has had.

One of the findings of this research is that very few (ten percent or less) of the articles in our discipline are published by non-Ph.D.'s. Given the number of masters' candidates moving on to doctoral programs over a ten year and more period, one would have expected more publication. Perhaps the doctoral institutions do not emphasize writing as much as content material or course work. It would be of interest to see which journals are publishing more non-Ph.D. authors and with what frequency.

A finding of less importance was that speech communication journals are the home for speech communication authors, but the percentages are not what was expected at the beginning of the study. Less than eight percent of all authors were from disciplines other than speech communication or not in the academic area.

This finding certainly does not suggest much cross-over between disciplines in our journals -- or cross-disciplinary influence.

Taken altogether this study suggests that prestige, as measured by the number of articles published by an institution's graduates, does seem to index institutions. This index seems related to both the number of entries across journals and the gatekeeping function that certain institutions seem to have. What this study also seems to suggest is that it might be of interest to see who is publishing (in terms of where the degree was granted) in what journals, which journals are publishing more non-discipline authors, and which journals are publishing more non-Ph.D. authors. Further, as Edwards and Barker (1979) have argued, perceptions of highly regarded graduate programs differ when surveyed from a random sample to a sample of articles' first authors. Such perceptions might differ also if an analysis were undertaken to see which of those "highly regarded doctoral programs" were producing graduates publishing in the academic areas each institution was noted for.

One final caveat. This study has sought to identify prestige via the quantity of publications an institution's graduates produce. No index as to quality has been attempted. Although there may be a perception as the quality of program and that perception may or may not have been reinforced by the findings reported here, such interpretations should be approached with caution. Given the similarity of rankings between this and other research, some basis for quality may be afforded; however, such decisions are individual and are based on more than merely frequency data. Further research using this and other research as its base might probe the question of quality in the future.

Endnotes

1. The Journal of Communication was not included in this survey for two reasons. First, JoC represents a large number of non-speech communication authors, much more so than other journals in the field. Second, the journal yielded in the first attempt at coding too many people for whom we could not find a corresponding degree-granting institution. Obvioulsy, inclusion of the Journal of Communication might have changed some rankings.
2. Of these entries, 404 (about 325 individual authors) were coded as missing. Neither the SCA Directory for any year, the various institutional bulletins, or consultation with other faculty yielded the institutional affiliation where the highest degree was earned for those classified as missing.
3. Copies of the entire ranking of 129 institutions are available from the authors.

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TABLE 1
COMMUNICATION JOURNALS REVIEWED

Journal
<u>Central States Speech Journal</u>
<u>Communication Education</u> (formerly <u>Speech Teacher</u>)
<u>Communication Monographs</u> (formerly <u>Speech Monographs</u>)
<u>Communication Quarterly</u> (formerly <u>Today's Speech</u>)
<u>Human Communication Research</u>
<u>Journal of Applied Communications Research</u>
<u>Quarterly Journal of Speech</u>
<u>Southern Speech Communication Journal</u>
<u>Western Journal of Speech Communication</u>

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF ARTICLES BY HIGHEST
DEGREE HELD AT TIME OF PUBLICATION

Degree at Time of Publication	Number Published	Per cent of Total
Ph.D.	3,354	88.94
M.A.	380	10.08
B.A.	37	0.98

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES
BY ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OF AUTHORS IN
COMMUNICATION JOURNALS

Academic Department	Number Published	Per cent of Total
Communication	3,470	92.02
Psychology	60	1.58
English	51	1.35
Speech Pathology/Audiology	24	0.64
Education	23	0.61
Sociology	18	0.48
Business	17	0.45
Administration	16	0.42
Political Science	12	0.32
Humanities/Behavioral Science	8	0.21
History	6	0.16
Other	27	0.72
Out of Academia	39	1.03

TABLE 4

TOP 30 RANKED UNIVERSITIES
BY NUMBER OF TIMES DEGREE-RECIPIENTS
PUBLISHED IN COMMUNICATION JOURNALS, 1971-1981

University*	Number of Times Published**	Per cent of Total Published†
<u>TOP TEN:</u>		
1. University of Iowa	221	5.86
2. Pennsylvania State University	180	4.77
3. University of Wisconsin- Madison	179	4.75
4. University of Illinois	169	4.48
5. Michigan State University	156	4.14
6. Northwestern University	152	4.03
7. Purdue University	135	3.61
Indiana University	135	3.61
9. Ohio State University	123	3.26
10. University of Minnesota	112	2.97
<u>SECOND TEN:</u>		
11. University of Michigan	96	2.55
12. University of Kansas	89	2.36
13. Ohio University	79	2.10
14. University of Southern California	75	1.99
15. Florida State University	74	1.96
16. Wayne State University	56	1.49
Bowling Green University	56	1.49
18. Kent State University	55	1.49
19. University of Florida	53	1.41
West Virginia University	53	1.41
<u>THIRD TEN:</u>		
21. Louisiana State University	48	1.27
22. Southern Illinois University	39	0.98
23. Temple University	35	0.98
24. University of Texas-Austin	33	0.88
25. University of Pittsburgh	32	0.85
University of Oklahoma	32	0.85
27. Cornell University	31	0.82
University of Colorado- Boulder	31	0.82
29. University of Utah	27	0.72
30. University of Nebraska	25	0.66
University of Oregon	25	0.66

*Represents articles published by graduates with their highest degree earned at time of publication.

**Total number of entries for analyses was 3771, of which 301 (7.98%) were published by people with non-communication degrees.
†404 (10.38%) of the entries were classified as missing or not able to be located.

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF RANKINGS OF COMMUNICATION
INSTITUTIONS BASED ON DEGREE AFFILIATION, DEPARTMENTAL
AFFILIATION, AND GATEKEEPING

Current University and Ranking	Barker et al. Ranking*	Cherwitz & Daly Ranking**
1. University of Iowa	14	1
2. Pennsylvania State University	9	4
3. University of Wisconsin- Madison	7	2
4. University of Illinois	1	5
5. Michigan State University	18	7
6. Northwestern University	19	3
7. Purdue University	5	12
8. Indiana University	4	11
9. Ohio State University	6	8
10. University of Minnesota	17	6
11. University of Michigan	13	24
12. University of Kansas	25	13
13. Ohio University	NR†	15
14. University of Southern California	15	14
15. Florida State University	11	18
16. Wayne State University	NR	22
Bowling Green University	NR	21
18. Kent State University	NR	28
19. University of Florida	16	19
West Virginia University	8	29
21. Louisiana State University	NR	10
22. Southern Illinois University	NR	NR
23. Temple University	12	NR
24. University of Texas-Austin	2	NR
25. University of Pittsburgh	21	20
University of Oklahoma	NR	25
27. Cornell University	NR	9
University of Colorado- Boulder	NR	30
29. University of Utah	22	28
30. University of Nebraska	NR	NR
University of Oregon	NR	23

*Ranked the top 25 doctoral institutions by departmental affiliations.

**Ranked the top 35 institutions by membership on editorial boards.

†Not ranked in this particular study.