

Editorial

International Psychology: A balance between Output and Impact

For the first time, this Editorial is devoted to comment on a paper presented in this issue. This is because it merits and suggests a reflection on knowledge visibility management from the perspective of output in Psychology all over the world.

The paper is entitled “World Scientific Production in Psychology”, by García, Guerrero & de Moya. It describes and analyses, in scientometric terms, Psychology in a global scope. In the analysis performed by the authors, distinctions are made between production, specialisation, and citation by countries, institutions and journals. The scope of this work is, therefore, a landmark in the analysis of the discipline in terms of its features, trends, and will surely lead to new discussions about the course of Psychology worldwide.

The article first describes how almost 70% of the total output is concentrated in five countries: United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and Australia. The United States accounts for 43% of the world's production in Psychology, which attests to the undeniable role of North American Psychology. It is also the leader in general scientific output in the world. Interestingly, countries with distinguished places in general scientific production such as China (1), India (2) and Russia (14), do not seem to have relevant production in Psychology. The case of Russia is peculiar in that its contributions to Psychology in its origins were groundbreaking: we need only mention the influence of the work of Pavlov, Luria, Leontiev, Vygotsky or Korsakov – yet it publishes relatively little nowadays. In contrast, it is worth noting that

Brazil, Poland, and Colombia have shown growth in the past six years.

One of the most significant facts is the relationship between production and citation impact. The United States again accounts for about 50% of the total citations in the world, followed by the United Kingdom (11%). It seems clear that these two countries are hegemonic in citation worldwide, but it also shows the influence of the English language, and the influence of these two countries' Psychology on global Psychology is self-evident. It would be interesting to assess the role that other countries could play with regards to the use of this production.

When crossing different variables, certain groups tend to form. The first group consists of the countries with higher production, higher specialisation, higher citation, and higher normalised impact. They are 14 countries, which produce 82% of the articles published worldwide, and get 88% of the total citations. This would be the “mainstream” International Psychology group, and its members include the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, amongst others.

Group 3 consists of countries with high specialisation, distinguished Psychological production when compared to the country's general production, and low impact. Countries such as Spain and Colombia are here – the latter showing an important growth in output, but with very low impact. Spain's production, in contrast, is of higher impact. Groups 3 and 4 have been marked by quality editorial processes, which has enabled their journals

to be covered by international indexes, and which has given their Psychologies international visibility. Accreditation systems, incentive systems, and increases in science and technology budgets have also played an important role in the creation of these groups.

Group 4, the most heterogeneous, comprises the lower output, lower specialisation, and low normalised citation countries. Brazil, France, and Japan, despite their significant production, have low global recognition expressed in normalised citation. Countries with low specialisation, but significant growth, such as Portugal, Mexico, Chile, and Argentina, are members of this group. Its 16 constituent countries account for 10.37% of the total global output, and received only 5.83% of the citations. The role of Latin America is especially interesting, because despite the growth in output, it still needs to carry out actions to build recognition, both regionally and globally.

The paper also presents a set of analyses on institutional production worldwide. I will only mention that Universities dominate the first 70 institutions with highest output rates, which means that our discipline is being built at the Universities, and as expected, most of them are located in the United States (over 50). A detailed analysis of group 4, the Universities that have shown significant growth but low recognition and impact in the timeframe of the

analysis would be interesting at this point. Only one French institution appears in this list, which begs the question for an analysis of European vs. Iberoamerican institutions.

Last, the paper analyses the role of journals. Several questions for editors, researchers and academics stem from this analysis. The growing visibility of Latin America in worldwide Psychology has to do with the production published in regional journals, and their low visibility is explained by the fact that they have been included in international indexes only recently. It will not be easy to compete with journals with long tradition and consolidated communities; it will involve strategic planning of our actions in the long term, which should strive for an intensive internationalisation of our journals and emphasis on improving their quality. Probably, the comparison with similar communities will be important in this.

In summary, this work is a significant contribution to the knowledge of the current state of our discipline. We trust that it will be a reference for global Psychology when analysing and understanding the role of Psychology as a science and as a profession, both globally and locally.

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