SELF- AND CROSS-CITATIONS IN THE JOURNAL OF
APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS AND THE JOURNAL OF THE
EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIOR:
1983–1992

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We examined self- and cross-citation practices in *JABA* and *JEAB* from 1983 through 1992. Mean levels of self-citation for *JABA* and for *JEAB* were 22.6% and 36.1%, respectively. Overall, 2.4% of *JABA* citations were *JEAB* articles, and 0.6% of *JEAB* citations were *JABA* articles, which suggests limited integration of basic and applied research.

DESCRIPTORS: applied behavior analysis, basic research, citations

Roughly a decade ago, several authors suggested that applied behavior analysis had moved progressively away from its basic research roots. As evidence, Poling, Picker, Grossett, Hall-Johnson, and Holbrook (1981) reported that, from 1968 through 1979, articles published in *JEAB* were cited increasingly infrequently in *JABA*. Previously, Krantz (1971) used *JEAB* self-citation data to support his contention that operant and nonoperant psychology were isolated and noninteractive domains. His data indicated that self-citations in *JEAB* increased dramatically through the first 12 years of publication (1958–1969). In a recent updating of Krantz's work, Coleman and Mehlman (1992) found higher self-citation rates in *JEAB* than in related journals, although the percentage of self-citations since 1969 had decreased by a larger amount in *JEAB* than in those journals. Cross-citation data revealed that *JEAB* was cited with diminishing frequency by some related journals over the 20-year period. By examining self- and cross-citation practices in *JABA* and *JEAB* from 1983 through 1992, the present study extends and updates prior research on the integration, or lack thereof, between the basic and applied research domains of behavior analysis.

METHOD

Each reference list that appeared in *JABA* or *JEAB* from 1983 through 1992 was scored by

one of the authors of the present study, regardless of the kind of article in which the list appeared. For each list, the following information was recorded: (a) the first author of the article, (b) the total number of citations (including reference notes), (c) the number of citations of *JABA* articles, and (d) the number of citations of *JEAB* articles. For reference lists that appeared in *JABA*, the author(s) and year of publication of every cited *JEAB* article was also recorded. Comparable information was recorded for *JABA* articles cited in *JEAB*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the percentage of total citations that were self- and cross-citations for *JABA* and *JEAB*. The value for self-citations ranged from 17.8% to 29.1% across years in *JABA* and 30.1% to 47.1% in *JEAB*. Mean values for the 10 years were 22.6% and 36.1% for *JABA* and *JEAB*, respectively. For both journals, there were no obvious trends in the percentage of self-citations across time. Across years, 0.3% to 4.8% of *JABA* citations were *JEAB* articles, with a mean of 2.4%. For *JABA* citations in *JEAB*, the mean was 0.6% and the range across years was 0.1% to 1.7%. No trends were obvious in these data.

For the 10 years evaluated, 176 different *JEAB* articles were cited in *JABA*, and 83 different *JABA* articles were cited in *JEAB*. The three *JEAB* articles most often cited in *JABA* were Herrnstein (1970), Michael (1982), and Herrnstein (1961), with 12, 9, and 8 citations, respectively. The two

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Figure 1. Percentage of total citations that were self-citations (above) and cross-citations (below) in *JABA* and *JEAB* from 1983 through 1992.

JABA articles most often cited in *JEAB* were Risley and Hart (1968) and Stokes and Baer (1977), both cited six times. Third place in citation frequency was shared by seven *JABA* articles, each cited three times.

When the present data for *JEAB* citations in *JABA* are compared to findings from 1968 through 1979 (Poling et al., 1981), it is apparent that the downward trend evident in those years did not continue. In fact, the percentage of total references in *JABA* articles that came from *JEAB* was higher for each of the past 10 years (1983 through 1992) than for the late 1970s. Perhaps the oft-repeated suggestion that applied behavior analysts should attend more carefully to basic research findings has exercised some behavioral control. Or it may be that basic researchers are attending increasingly to topics that are potentially of applied significance, a tack some authors have suggested to be gainful. If they are, they are not commonly citing *JABA* articles for verification: From 1983 through 1992, relatively few *JEAB* references came from *JABA*. Of course, the applied significance of basic research findings cannot be ascertained on the basis of cross-citation data alone. Like self-citation data, overall cross-citation data can offer at best a suggestion of how particular scientific domains interact (see Garfield, 1979).

Examining the particular articles that are commonly cross-referenced may provide a more complete picture. For example, two of the three *JEAB* articles most often cited in *JABA* during the past 10 years deal with the matching law (Herrnstein, 1961, 1970). Several authors have suggested that the analysis of concurrent behaviors, as quantified

by the matching law, can be profitably extended to socially significant human behaviors. It appears that applied behavior analysts have begun to take the suggestion seriously.

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