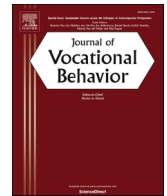




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Journal of Vocational Behavior's 50th anniversary: Looking back and going forward

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I appreciated the invitation from Professor Nadya Fouad, Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of Vocational Behavior (JVB)*, to describe my experience, goals, and challenges in editing *JVB* as well as consider the growth of vocational psychology and muse about the future of the *Journal*. My experience with *JVB* began as a charter subscriber in 1971, then as an editorial board member from 1988 to 1998, and eventually as editor from 1999 to 2016. During my term, I served as editor for 102 issues and action editor for 4667 submissions, with Associate Editors Linda Mezydlo Subich and Joyce E. A. Russell acting on another 630 submissions, and guest editors of special issues acting on another 205 submissions. Together, we made a commitment to expeditious processing of manuscripts. Each year, the average time from submission to first decision was four to five weeks and from submission to acceptance was eight to eleven weeks. During my term, submissions grew steadily from 201 to 622 per year; the impact factor increased from 1.36 to 2.76; and digital downloads swelled from 31,006 in 2001 to 840,385 in 2015.

My two overriding goals for *JVB*, then and now, are to maintain its (a) *role* as an institutional manifestation and intellectual home of vocational psychology and (b) *function* of evaluating and reporting research about vocational behavior and career development. To accomplish these goals, my main activities involved providing constructive feedback to submitters, recruiting subject matter experts to serve on the editorial board, identifying *ad hoc* reviewers for particular topics, offering educational feedback to first-time authors, suggesting more fitting journals for misdirected submission, acting on recommendations by the editorial board, representing *JVB* at conventions, and commissioning special issues and monographs on timely topics.

The challenges I encountered included learning about qualitative research report standards and innovative statistical methods, assisting authors for whom English was a second language, encouraging international submissions, restricting the number of special issues because of the limit of 1200 pages per year that were more than filled by author submissions, evaluating submissions that included data obtained from on-line panels of participants who were paid to respond, dealing with disputes about author credit and plagiarism claims, and preventing *ad hominem* comments in reviews and published articles. As demanding as they were, these challenges paled in comparison to making the transition from paper to on-line submissions and later moving to article-based publishing. Learning to manage the on-line submission and peer review system took both time and effort, although eventually it saved time. The subsequent move to a digital-first paradigm significantly increased the speed of article publication. In the prior print-driven paradigm I was able to compose print issues by selecting the articles and arranging the table of contents in a systematic manner. Publishing articles digitally before they appeared in print issues meant that once an article was accepted, and after proofing, it was published electronically in the current, open issue. Rather than the editor composing issues, chronological flow determined issue content. Instead of six issues per year of about 190 pages each, issue length became determined solely by the number of accepted articles since the prior issue. Authors liked the fact that their articles were being published as quickly as possible. The digital-first publishing platform also served the needs of the increasing number of scholars, as shown by download figures, who browse, search, read, and print articles on-line. The transition from print to electronic publishing also changed how promotion and tenure committees evaluated *JVB*, and in turn the contributions of individual authors. Originally, they judged *JVB* by the number of subscribers, then by impact factor, later by article

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citations, and eventually by article downloads.

Reflecting on the growth of vocational psychology, I came to concentrate on the need to compile and further develop the relevant concepts and findings produced by *JVB* authors. With new studies from around the world constantly being published, I seldom thought about how to organize the information with a systematic approach that positions essential features into an integrative framework. I remembered that for many years *JVB* published an annual review of literature. That practice ended because it was difficult for any one reviewer or a group of reviewers to digest the more than 700 relevant articles published each year across numerous journals. The annual review was replaced for a few years by invited reviews on specific topics, yet that too was abandoned because of the difficulty in recruiting authors to perform a challenging and time-consuming task. Recently, Editor Fouad effectively addressed the need to organize the plethora of literature on particular topics into a coherent whole by publishing special issues and annual review issues (Fouad, 2019, 2020) that provide a critical, in-depth examination of specific constructs. In musing about the future development of *JVB*, another step forward occasioned by article-based publishing may be to link journal content and place it into context by assembling the articles published chronologically into topical reading lists and even virtual special issues.

In the end, my reflection on the growth of vocational psychology as a discipline led me to identify the need for an updated codification of vocational psychology's domain. Harry Levi Hollingworth (1916) first formalized the discipline in the book entitled *Vocational Psychology: Its Problems and Methods*. He conceptualized vocational psychology as a branch of applied psychology dedicated to improving vocational guidance and personnel selection through research on individual differences and the matching model. Fifty-three years later, John Orr Crites codified vocational psychology as a research enterprise focused on the vocational behavior of individuals. In a momentous book entitled *Vocational Psychology: The Study of Vocational Behavior and Development*, Crites (1969) presented a systematic codification of vocational psychology that elaborated, organized, and standardized its domain. Crites (1969) refocused vocational psychology's perspective on individuals' vocational choice and work adjustment by asserting that vocational behavior was the unit of analysis, defining vocational behavior as "all the responses an individual makes in choosing and adjusting to an occupation" (p. 16). In founding a journal for vocational psychology in 1971, Samuel H. Osipow reiterated the concentration on individual behavior by naming the new entity the *Journal Vocational Behavior*, rather than the *Journal of Vocational Psychology*. Together, Crites and Osipow planted the flag for the re-conceptualized discipline, each firmly declaring the standpoint and boundaries of vocational psychology in general and *JVB* in particular.

Since the renaissance of vocational psychology prompted by the Crites' codification and the Osipow's launching of *JVB*, vocational psychology has developed and expanded as researchers produced new knowledge, constructs, measures, and even paradigms. Now 50 years forward, this substantial evolution of the discipline, in my view, calls for an updated conceptual framework with which to make sense of it all. The discipline could benefit from a project to critically analyze and synthesize the existing literatures into a broadly integrative story of vocational psychology and its realms of meaning. The goal would be a contemporary determination of the discipline's distinctive subject matter, value orientations, epistemologies, fundamental concepts, organizing structure, methods of inquiry, and relation to other psychological disciplines and counseling professions. In addition to updating the discipline's ordering of knowledge, this project could outline the content of an academic course for students. Given the need for and the size of the task, the project would require the leadership and contributions of the *JVB* editorial team, reviewers, and authors. I believe a project to recodify vocational psychology would be a consequential way to both explicitly recognize how *JVB* authors have transformed vocational psychology during the *Journal's* first 50 years and systematically structure its future evolution. *JVB*, *semper crescere*.

Declaration of competing interest

The author is unaware of any conflict of interest that he may have.

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