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Keywords

gerontological counseling, older adults, research trends, content analysis, counseling journals

RESEARCH

Gerontological Counseling Trends in *Adulthood Journal*: 1999–2019

Matthew C. Fullen, Christian D. Chan, Justin Jordan,
Robert A. Dobmeier, and Sean Gorby

Using quantitative content analysis, we categorized 76 out of 154 articles (49.35%) published in Adulthood Journal from 1999 to 2019 as focused on gerontological counseling. This study explored publication trends for these articles and compared results with a larger study (Fullen et al., 2019) on publication trends for gerontological counseling across all counseling-related journals.

Keywords: gerontological counseling, older adults, research trends, content analysis, counseling journals

The counseling profession has established a need for research and best practices for counseling older adults because of its emphasis on development across the life span (Kampfe, 2015; Myers & Harper, 2004), student and professional interest in gerontology (Foster et al., 2009, 2014; Fowler & Hoquee, 2016; Wagner et al., 2019), and legislative advocacy opportunities (Bergman, 2013). With Medicare reimbursement for counselors as a primary focus of legislative advocacy efforts (Field, 2017; Fullen, 2016), there is a need to legitimize gerontological counseling (GC) as a credible area of competency for counseling professionals, both as an avenue for improving client care across the life span and as proof that the counseling profession possesses relevant educational and training competencies to substantiate inclusion of counselors as Medicare-eligible providers (Bergman, 2013).

Over the past 2 decades, several issues have emerged regarding the counseling profession's role in meeting the counseling needs of older adults, including an increased focus on GC in relation to credentialing, accreditation, and counselor

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training programs. In 1992, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) approved a GC specialty track intended to prepare professional counselors for careers in working with older adults (Bobby, 2013; Maples & Abney, 2006; Myers, 1995). Curricula in this track were shaped to focus on skill sets, workforce trends, and a knowledge base directed at the growth of gerontology (Myers, 1995). Despite being sustained for several years, the specialty track was eliminated when the 2001 CACREP Standards were published because of a lack of programs using the track (Bobby, 2013). Additionally, the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), the primary professional affiliate for counselor credentialing, developed the National Certified Gerontological Counselor credential to establish professional standards for distinguishing the ability and advocacy of professional counselors to work with older adults, but it eventually discontinued the credential because of lack of utilization (Myers, 1995; Remley & Herlihy, 2020).

Although GC has resurfaced as an important priority in practice and advocacy (Foster et al., 2014; Fullen, 2018), the lack of standards may contribute to gaps between practice and research, with insufficient backing to promote research on gerontology and older adults in counselor education programs, departments, and the overarching profession. Despite this disparity, *Adultspan Journal (ADSP)* has long been a forerunner in showcasing conceptual and empirical research on older adults and their counseling needs. In this article, we present findings from a content analysis examining the impact of *ADSP* as a leading source in promoting growth in older adult and GC research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

GC research has shown promising patterns for proliferation among the counseling profession. Several scholars have described student interest in and conceptualization of older adults (e.g., Bettis et al., 2020; Foster et al., 2014; Fowler & Hoquee, 2016; McBride & Hays, 2012), suggesting there is interest in promoting counseling with older adults within counselor training programs. Despite the increasing interest in gerontology within counselor training programs, research concurrent with these interests has not kept pace. One issue pertains to a significant disparity between interest in counselor preparation programs and the slow movement of empirical research on older adults in counseling. Fullen et al. (2019) found that dating back to 1992 when GC competencies were developed (Myers, 1992), only 1.68% of all articles published in counseling journals were focused on GC and related issues. With the omission of empirical research, counselor preparation programs lack teaching tools to align best practices with scholarly evidence and empirical data. This disparity signifies a potential lack of opportunities for the role of counselor educators not only to advocate for students who have interest in GC, but also to teach students about opportunities for client, community,

professional, and legislative advocacy (Chan et al., 2019). Relatedly, Fullen et al. (2019) reported that between 1992 and 2017, only a handful of counseling researchers had published a critical mass (i.e., more than two) of journal articles about gerontology, GC, or older adults in counseling journals. This finding suggests a lack of counseling scholars with a research agenda focused on aging. Despite an urgent call to counseling scholars to respond to caregiver needs (Bordonada et al., 2018; Kepic et al., 2019), Medicare reimbursement (Chan et al., 2019), and other key GC issues, empirical research has been slow to develop.

Amid the dearth of GC research across the counseling field generally, Fullen et al. (2019) found that specific journals were more likely to publish GC research. Namely, *ADSP* has served as a scholarly hub for promoting the development, research, and practice of gerontology for the past several decades. *ADSP* is the source of more than one third of the profession's total publications on GC (36.17%). Exploring *ADSP*'s publishing trends more closely is necessary because of the journal's outsized impact on GC publishing rates across the entire counseling profession. Comparable efforts have been made in other counseling journals (e.g., see Erford et al., 2011) to provide summary feedback to the counseling profession on which types of scholarship have or have not been supported. These efforts may be especially important for *ADSP* given its relationship to the Association for Adult Development and Aging (AADA), which is a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the primary division that emphasizes life span development and aging considerations.

In light of the results presented in Fullen et al. (2019), several key questions remain about the publishing patterns found within *ADSP*: (a) Are there patterns related to the GC topics published in *ADSP*? (b) How does the ratio of empirical and theory-based GC research found in *ADSP* compare to what has been found within the broader counseling profession? and (c) Have there been any trends related to the rate of GC publishing within *ADSP*?

METHOD

To answer the aforementioned research questions, we used data from a quantitative content analysis of articles with a specific focus on GC in *ADSP*, in other journals affiliated with ACA and its divisions, and in the flagship journals affiliated with NBCC and Chi Sigma Iota (Fullen et al., 2019). The Fullen et al. (2019) study analyzed publishing patterns, topics explored, and the roles of theory and empirical research in GC research. In the current study, our goal was to compare trends in GC publications in *ADSP* with trends in other counseling journals. Publications for other counseling journals spanned from 1992 (the year in which the CACREP GC specialization was approved; Myers, 1995) to 2017. Therefore, comparisons between *ADSP* and other counseling journals were made using data from

this time frame. Regarding publication trends within *ADSP*, we screened 16 additional articles from 2018 and 2019 to identify whether they met inclusion criteria for the study. Eight of the 16 articles were included after we reached consensus. Therefore, the *ADSP* articles covered the period from 1999 to 2019, excluding 2002–2004 when there was no record of *ADSP* publications. The current sample consisted of 76 *ADSP* articles categorized as GC, and for comparison purposes, 120 non-*ADSP* counseling journal articles categorized as GC.

We used content analysis in the current study to explore topics investigated and publishing patterns in *ADSP* and to compare use of theory and empirical research in GC research in *ADSP* to that in other counseling journals. As described by Krippendorff (2013), content analysis “is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p. 24) and is used to analyze large amounts of data. Stemler (2001) described content analysis as a “systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding” (p. 1). This methodology has been used in counseling to “identify themes, trends, submission patterns, and topic areas” (Evans, 2013, p. 468). In the current study, the use of content analysis facilitated a critical exploration of how GC has been covered in *ADSP* compared with how GC has been covered in 23 non-*ADSP* counseling journals over a 26-year period.

Procedure

We built on the GC articles database and used the coding procedures applied in Fullen et al. (2019), in which key search terms (i.e., *older adult, later life, older adulthood, age, aging, ageism, gerontology, gerontological counseling, elder, grandparent, retirement, caregiver, and caregiving*) were used to identify publications focused on older adulthood in 24 counseling journals. All articles generated in the searches were then visually inspected to confirm that the article focused on GC or related issues.

Data Analysis

Fullen et al. (2019) utilized human preset coding methodology to analyze the data using a priori coding measures, including a codebook and a coding form “based on theory, past research, and often, pilot work that includes immersion in the message pool under investigation” (Neuendorf & Skalski, 2009, p. 207). The codebook consisted of several codes that informed the content analysis as follows: (a) Does the article meet the consensus standard for having a focus on aging/older adulthood/GC? (b) What is the topical focus of the article? (c) Which type of empirical research, if any, is used in the article? (d) To what extent is the article grounded in a theoretical framework? and (e) Does the article incorporate a counseling theory, an adult development theory, or both? To ensure that the topical focus categories were exhaustive and mutually exclusive,

we used a three-stage process. In the first stage, two of the authors generated an exhaustive list of categories for each code. Then two other authors completed the second stage, during which they examined each code, added any categories missed in the first stage, and ensured that the categories were mutually exclusive. In the final stage, all authors confirmed the final codes and categories. Once confirmed, all the authors developed operational definitions for each category that were used to guide the coding process.

Once the coding scheme was established, four of the authors coded the data. In accordance with Neuendorf's (2011) recommendations, the four authors held a training session to discuss the codebook and the code form and practiced together in order to calibrate their coding (Neuendorf, 2011). Once the pilot process was complete and changes were made to the codebook, the remaining articles were each randomly assigned to one of four groups. Three coders were randomly assigned to each group, resulting in three coders per article. After the pilot and full data sets were coded, any codes resulting in a tie underwent full team review whereby four coders discussed the article and unanimously agreed on the most accurate code. The same coding procedures were then applied to 16 new *ADSP* articles from 2018 and 2019, eight of which addressed GC and were eligible for the current study.

RESULTS

Of 154 *ADSP* articles published from 1999 to 2019, 76 (49.35%) were coded as having a focus on GC, including issues associated with aging and older adulthood. Regarding the GC topics covered in *ADSP*, we found a relatively broad dispersion (see Table 1). Nine categories had between five and seven articles associated with that topical code, with general wellness, spiritual wellness, intervention, family, and death and dying/grief being the most commonly used codes ($n = 7$). In comparison with our previous analysis of the entire profession's corpus related to GC (Fullen et al., 2019), there were some notable differences. For example, several codes were more likely to show up in the *ADSP* sample than in the non-*ADSP* sample, including social wellness (3.88 times), spiritual wellness (3.68 times), emotional wellness (3.25 times), theories (3.25 times), and general wellness (2.19 times). On the other hand, some codes were more commonly used in the non-*ADSP* sample than in the *ADSP* sample, including vocational wellness (2.11 times), family (1.99 times), cultural diversity (1.71 times), and professional issues (1.49 times).

When assessing the proportion of empirical and theory-driven articles, we found that 42 of 76 (55.26%) articles were coded as nonempirical, whereas 20 (26.32%) were quantitative, 12 (15.79%) were qualitative, and two (2.63%) were mixed methods. In comparison with the broader profession, of the 120 non-*ADSP* articles published from 1992 to 2017, 73 (60.80%) were nonempirical, 27 (22.50%) were quantitative, 17 (14.20%) were qualitative,

TABLE 1

**Topical Themes of Gerontological Counseling Articles
in *Adultspan Journal* Versus Other Professional Counseling Journals**

Theme	<i>Adultspan Journal</i> (N = 76)		Other Counseling Journals (N = 120)	
	n	%	n	%
General wellness	7	9.2	5	4.2
Financial resources	0	0.0	1	0.8
Social wellness	5	6.6	2	1.7
Emotional wellness	2	2.6	1	0.8
Living environment/ environmental wellness	2	2.6	3	2.5
Intellectual wellness	2	2.6	2	1.7
Physical wellness	5	6.6	5	4.2
Spiritual wellness	7	9.2	3	2.5
Vocational wellness	6	7.9	20	16.7
Social justice/advocacy	2	2.6	3	2.5
Intervention	7	9.2	15	12.5
Family	7	9.2	22	18.3
Clinical mental health disorders	6	7.9	7	5.8
Death and dying and/or grief	7	9.2	9	7.5
Counselor education	3	3.9	6	5.0
Professional issues	3	3.9	7	5.8
Theories	2	2.6	1	0.8
Cultural diversity	3	3.9	8	6.7

Note. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

and three (2.50%) were mixed methods. In terms of the integration of a theoretical foundation for *ADSP* articles focused on GC, 18 (23.68%) articles used an adult development theory, six (7.89%) used a counseling theory, and five (6.58%) used both. The remaining 47 of the 76 (61.84%) *ADSP* articles were coded as having no theoretical foundation or having a theoretical basis that was not clearly connected to adult development or counseling theory. In comparison with the broader profession, of the 120 non-*ADSP* articles published from 1992 to 2017, 79 (65.80%) had no theoretical foundation (or other non-adult development/counseling), 19 (15.80%) used an adult development theory, 16 (13.30%) used a counseling theory, and six (5.00%) used both adult development and counseling theory. (Some percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.)

Finally, our analysis of publishing trends over time revealed a decrease in the number of *ADSP* articles focusing on GC. For example, older adulthood was the focus of 35 of 50 (70%) *ADSP* articles during the journal's first six volumes (1999–2007; no volumes were published in 2002–2004). In the next six volumes (2008–2013), only 18 of 52 (34.62%) articles focused on GC. Between 2014 and 2019, 23 of 52 (44.23%) articles focused on GC. This means that nearly half (46.1%) of all GC articles in the journal's history were published during its first six volumes, with the remaining 41

articles (approximately 3.4 per year) published in the 12 volumes between 2008 and 2019. Another way to frame the data is to look at the nine specific volumes in which more than half of *ADSP* articles were focused on GC (see Table 2). These publication years include 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2016, and 2019. Notably, these were the first 6 years in which *ADSP* volumes were printed, followed by only three of the most recent 12 volumes. Table 3 shows the GC articles published in *ADSP* from 1999 to 2019. (Because of space limitations, a complete list of these articles is available from the first author.)

Investigation of authorship trends suggests that one factor that might have contributed to a decrease in GC publications was the reduced output of GC articles by Jane E. Myers after 2007. Myers was an author on 11 of the 188 (5.85%) GC articles described in Fullen et al. (2019), which ranks her as one of the most productive GC authors in the counseling profession’s history. In particular, she was an author on four of the 76 (5.26%) *ADSP* articles included in our analysis; notably, three of these articles occurred during the 1999–2007 span, in which GC publishing was most prominent within *ADSP*; the fourth was published posthumously after Myers’s death in 2014 (Gill et al., 2015; see Table 3). Given the low total number of GC articles, Myers’s contribution to *ADSP* from 1999 to 2007 is worth highlighting.

TABLE 2
***Adultspan Journal* Publishing Patterns From 1999 to 2019**

Publication Year	Article Type		Ratio of GC Articles to Total
	GC (N = 76)	Total Articles Published (N = 154)	
1999	5	7	71.43
2000	6	8	75.00
2001	5	8	62.50
2002–2004 ^a	—	—	—
2005	6	9	66.67
2006	6	9	66.67
2007	7	9	77.78
2008	3	8	37.50
2009	4	8	50.00
2010	2	9	22.22
2011	2	9	22.22
2012	5	9	55.56
2013	2	9	22.22
2014	2	9	22.22
2015	3	10	30.00
2016	6	9	66.67
2017	4	8	50.00
2018	3	8	37.50
2019	5	8	62.50

Note. GC = gerontological counseling.
^aNo record of publication during this time period.

TABLE 3
Adultspan Journal Gerontological Counseling Publications
From 1999 to 2019

Article (by Year in Publication Order) ^a	Main Topic	Research Type	Theory Type
Kampfe (1999)	LE/EW	Quantitative	NA
Kampfe & Smith (1999)	PW	Nonempirical	NA
LeBauve & Robinson (1999)	VW	Nonempirical	ADT
Myers & Schwiebert (1999)	Family	Nonempirical	NA
Westburg (1999)	GW	Mixed methods	NA
Goodman & Pappas (2000)	VW	Quantitative	CT
Kirk & Alessi (2000)	SW	Quantitative	ADT
Langan & Marotta (2000)	PW	Quantitative	NA
Myers, Dice, & Dew (2000)	CMHD	Nonempirical	NA
Pennequin & Fontain (2000)	IW	Quantitative	ADT
Wright, Carcaddon, & Lambert (2000)	IW	Quantitative	ADT
Barbour (2001)	DDG	Nonempirical	NA
Bartlett (2001)	SW	Qualitative	NA
Borman & Henderson (2001)	VW	Nonempirical	NA
Garrow & Walker (2001)	DDG	Nonempirical	CT
Huffstetler (2001)	CMHD	Nonempirical	NA
Degges-White (2005)	SPW	Nonempirical	ADT
Penick & Fallshore (2005)	SPW	Quantitative	ADT
Seto & Dahlen (2005)	Family	Nonempirical	ADT
Snyder (2005)	SPW	Nonempirical	ADT
Thompson & Priest (2005)	PI	Nonempirical	NA
Williams, Ballard, & Hunter (2005)	CMHD	Nonempirical	NA
Burlew & Serface (2006)	CD	Nonempirical	NA
Daire & Mitcham-Smith (2006)	Family	Nonempirical	NA
Hunter & Gillen (2006)	EW	Nonempirical	NA
Huffstetler (2006)	PW	Nonempirical	NA
Onedera & Stickle (2006)	CMHD	Nonempirical	NA
Warner (2006)	Intervention	Nonempirical	ADT and CT
Dixon (2007)	SPW	Quantitative	NA
Douthit (2007)	CMHD	Nonempirical	CT
Myers & Degges-White (2007)	GW	Quantitative	CT
Orel, Landry-Myer, & Spence (2007)	VW	Nonempirical	NA
Pope, Weirzalis, Barret, & Rankins (2007)	CD	Nonempirical	NA
Reiner (2007)	DDG	Nonempirical	NA
Whiting & Bradley (2007)	DDG	Nonempirical	ADT
Davis & Degges-White (2008)	Intervention	Qualitative	ADT
Granello & Fleming (2008)	CMHD	Nonempirical	NA
Rayburn (2008)	DDG	Nonempirical	NA
Borzumato-Gainey, Kennedy, McCabe, & Degges-White (2009)	GW	Quantitative	NA
Daire, Torres, & Edwards (2009)	Family	Nonempirical	NA
Hunter (2009)	EMW	Mixed methods	NA
Jungers & Slagel (2009)	Intervention	Nonempirical	NA
Forman & McBride (2010)	PI	Nonempirical	NA
Portman, Bartlett, & Carlson (2010)	SW	Qualitative	ADT and CT
Carlson & Harper (2011)	LE/EW	Qualitative	NA
Sherman, Michel, Rybak, Randall, & Davidson (2011)	SPW	Quantitative	NA
Duba, Hughey, Lana, & Burke (2012)	Family	Quantitative	NA
Foster & Levitov (2012)	GW	Quantitative	CT
Kurt & Piazza (2012)	DDG	Nonempirical	NA
McBride & Hays (2012)	Coun Ed	Quantitative	CT
Stark, Kirk, & Burhn (2012)	SW	Qualitative	NA

(continued)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

**Adultspan Journal Gerontological Counseling Publications
From 1999 to 2019**

Article (by Year in Publication Order) ^a	Main Topic	Research Type	Theory Type
Lee, Heo, Lu, & Portman (2013)	CD	Qualitative	NA
Lindinger-Sternart & Laux (2013)	SW	Qualitative	ADT and CT
Foster, Evans, & Chew (2014)	Coun Ed	Quantitative	NA
Killam & Webber (2014)	VW	Nonempirical	NA
Dispenza, Dew, Tatum, & Wolf (2015)	PW	Nonempirical	NA
Gill, Minton, & Myers (2015)	SPW	Quantitative	ADT and CT
MacLeod & Douthit (2015)	GW	Nonempirical	NA
Burgin & Gibbons (2016)	Intervention	Nonempirical	NA
Ermann, Lawson, & Burge (2016)	Intervention	Qualitative	ADT
Fowler & Hoquee (2016)	Coun Ed	Qualitative	NA
Fullen (2016a)	GW	Nonempirical	ADT
Fullen (2016b)	SJ/Advocacy	Nonempirical	NA
Linscott, Randolph, & Mayle (2016)	SPW	Qualitative	ADT
Dobmeier, Kornl, Johnson, Fleck, Cenci, Giglia, Broomfield, & Morde (2017)	SJ/Advocacy	Qualitative	NA
Lorelle & Michel (2017)	Intervention	Nonempirical	NA
Pearson (2017)	PW	Nonempirical	NA
Swank, Smith-Adcock, & Puig (2017)	GW	Qualitative	NA
Bordonada, Feather, Ohrt, & Waddington (2018)	Family	Nonempirical	NA
George & Dixon (2018)	Theories	Quantitative	ADT
Hensen & Koltz (2018)	Intervention	Nonempirical	ADT and CT
Gladding (2019)	Theories	Nonempirical	ADT
Kepic (2019)	DDG	Quantitative	ADT
Kepic, Randolph, & Hermann-Turner (2019)	Family	Nonempirical	NA
Shultz, Olson, & Vogelsang (2019)	VW	Quantitative	NA
Wagner, Mullen, & Sims (2019)	PI	Quantitative	NA

Note. LE/EW = living environment/environmental wellness; NA = no theoretical foundation or other/not any; PW = physical wellness; VW = vocational wellness; ADT = adult development theory; GW = general wellness; CT = counseling theory; SW = social wellness; CMHD = clinical and mental health disorders; IW = intellectual wellness; DDG = death, dying, and grief; SPW = spiritual wellness; PI = professional issues; CD = cultural diversity; EMW = emotional wellness; Coun Ed = counselor education; SJ = social justice.

^aBecause of space limitations, article titles were not included. A complete list of these articles is available from the first author.

DISCUSSION

In this content analysis, we explored *ADSP's* unique role within the counseling profession, including the rate of GC publishing in *ADSP*, patterns related to GC topics published in *ADSP*, and the ratio of empirical and theory-based GC research found within *ADSP* compared with other counseling journals.

Main Findings

The relative proportion of articles focused on wellness—including social, spiritual, emotional, and general dimensions—coincides with the counseling profession's emphasis on both wellness and human development across the life span (Kaplan et al., 2014). This finding is notable in light of concerns that have

been raised about the validity of instrumentation for measuring older adults' wellness, as well as critiques on the dearth of wellness research that specifically focuses on the needs of older adults elsewhere in the counseling literature (Shannonhouse et al., 2019). In contrast, articles with a specific focus on family, vocational wellness, and professional issues occurred more frequently in non-*ADSP* articles. It is likely that this reflects the alternative journal outlets (e.g., *The Career Development Quarterly*, *The Family Journal*) available to counseling scholars who intend to publish research on career or family issues.

Regarding the ratio of empirical to nonempirical GC literature, *ADSP* appears to be consistent with the broader counseling profession. It is worth noting that *ADSP* has contributed more empirical GC articles ($N = 30$) than the *total* number of articles contributed by any other single counseling profession journal (Fullen et al., 2019). This signifies the role of *ADSP* in both supporting GC research in general and ensuring that the counseling profession has access to empirical research related to aging. The ratio of quantitative to qualitative research was relatively consistent between *ADSP* and non-*ADSP* journals. In general, there is a need for more empirical research related to GC, whether relating to issues such as the effectiveness of counseling older adults, the total impact of Medicare ineligibility, or optimal forms of counseling treatment.

Almost two thirds of the articles on GC, in both *ADSP* and other counseling journals, did not use an adult development theory or a counseling theory. There appears to be room for improvement in grounding GC literature in theory, whether that is adult development theory, counseling theory, or both. A total of five GC articles in *ADSP* included both an adult development theory and a counseling theory (Gill et al., 2015; Hensen & Koltz, 2018; Lindinger-Sternart & Laux, 2013; Portman et al., 2010; Warner, 2006). Integration of both types of theory may reflect exemplary practice in GC research, and those articles might be explored further for replication in future GC research.

Finally, the decreasing rate of publication of GC articles in *ADSP* may have coincided with the aforementioned difficulties in maintaining GC accreditation, standards, and specialty programs. We conjecture that early spikes in the proportion of GC articles in *ADSP* may have occurred during the initial surge in attention to GC, which included the onset of CACREP accreditation of GC programs and creation of the gerontology competencies. However, maintaining this momentum appears to have been complicated by extenuating circumstances, such as the lack of scholars focusing on GC in their research agendas (Fullen et al., 2019) and ongoing barriers related to Medicare ineligibility (Bergman, 2013). The failure of GC to gain traction among counseling leaders, educators, and practitioners—as evidenced by the discontinuing of program accreditation by CACREP and weakening interest in the competencies—may have contributed to fewer GC publications in *ADSP* during the most recent decade.

Authorship trends may be responsible for this decrease as well. Jane E. Myers's prominence in establishing GC as an area of interest in the counseling profession

dates back to the 1980s and 1990s, when her work was almost singularly focused on counseling older adults (Cashwell & Sweeney, 2016). Although Myers's authorship accounted for roughly 6% of all *ADSP* publications, she was a founding member of the journal's home division, AADA, and her influence in legitimizing GC cannot be overstated. Therefore, the combination of Myers's shift from GC to other areas of research (e.g., wellness; see NC Docks, n.d.), coupled with a dearth of counseling scholars focused on GC as a research agenda (Fullen et al., 2019), might very well have influenced the relative decrease in GC publishing in *ADSP*, particularly from 2008 to 2015.

Notably, although the proportion of *ADSP* articles focused on GC has decreased, the journal's role within the broader counseling profession has remained intact. According to Fullen et al. (2019), there were 4.86 GC publications per year prior to the launch of *ADSP* (1992–1998), 10.00 GC articles per year during *ADSP*'s initial years of publication (1999–2001), 4.33 articles per year during the gap in published volumes (2002–2004), and 8.54 GC articles per year in the time since (2005–2017). It is apparent by all metrics that *ADSP* plays an integral role in sustaining the counseling profession's corpus of GC literature.

Implications

ADSP clearly has a vital role in promulgating research about GC for the counseling profession. With *ADSP* as the flagship journal for AADA, the mission as well as vision of AADA is to prominently augment a voice on overall life span development and, more importantly, older adult issues. With its close relationship to AADA, *ADSP* has shown ample opportunities to extend a platform for cultivating research agendas on older adults and GC. The findings of Fullen et al. (2019) and of the current analysis situate *ADSP* as the benchmark for research focused on older adults in counseling. Considering recent trends of a decrease in the proportion of *ADSP* articles focused on older adulthood, it is important to highlight the journal's historical role in contributing to the profession's scholarly literature on GC. Our data do not provide conclusive evidence to answer the question of why this reduction has occurred. In light of scholarship focused on student and professional interest in gerontology (Foster et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2019) and accreditation standards (Fullen, 2018), further efforts to understand what influences the rate of GC publishing in specific journals, such as *ADSP*, are certainly warranted.

For practicing counselors, the limited pool of GC literature suggests that counselors-in-training will enter the field with less exposure to the unique needs of older adults. Practicing counselors working with older adult clients or caregivers may lack the necessary resources to turn to for guidance and professional growth (Fullen, 2018). Relatedly, there is a worrisome incongruence between ongoing efforts to incorporate counselors as Medicare-eligible providers and a historical dearth of GC research published in counseling journals. As the

most productive counseling journal in GC research, *ADSP* must continue to prioritize publishing on these topics. The results of this study can be regarded as a motivator to sustain and increase *ADSP*'s output of GC articles, given the downward trend in recent years. Because *ADSP* is the most visible journal for older adult issues in counseling while other journals minimally publish on these topics, *ADSP*'s ownership of that role includes continuing to dedicate significant space to GC articles. As ACA and NBCC continue their pursuit of Medicare reimbursement, *ADSP* has an opportunity for expanded readership with more counselors and educators seeking quality information about how to work with older adults, given their clear relationship to Medicare legislation.

Furthermore, *ADSP* can continue to challenge scholars to emphasize the integration of adult development theory and counseling theories in conceptual and empirical articles. In doing so, *ADSP* has the opportunity to raise the standard of what is expected of GC articles across professional counseling journals. *ADSP* also benefits the profession by continuing to focus on empirical articles that offer evidence for what works with this population. Special issues focused on relevant GC topics, such as Medicare populations and advocacy, best practices in GC, or the diverse clinical needs of older adults, may bolster the visibility of *ADSP* as the home for this literature. Additionally, there may be benefits of prominently featuring authors who steadily contribute research focused on GC topics, because this expertise may entice other professionals to collaborate and explore how their focus areas relate to GC. The current study celebrates *ADSP*'s consistent, essential contribution as the leading journal for aging research in counseling.

Limitations

Although the present analysis indicates several key points about the state of GC research in *ADSP*, there are limitations to this study. Topics were coded based on subjective criteria, and in certain cases, there were articles in which several topics were present. Our a priori decision to select only one topic per article represents a limitation to our results. Furthermore, we found that differentiating between adult development theory and the “other” theory category was difficult, especially when career-related theories were used. Although we carefully determined the search terms used to elicit the articles in the study, they may not be a complete representation of topics related to GC. Additionally, it is not possible to determine the precise reasons why the rate of GC publishing has decreased. The factors we have outlined reflect reasoned speculation, but additional causes may be responsible as well.

CONCLUSION

Given the metrics for articles published in a single journal, notably from the current analysis, *ADSP* can serve as a significant leader in the overall level of scholarship and research focused on GC. Primarily, researchers can be emboldened

to substantiate their research and scholarly productivity within *ADSP* and locate a number of resources for the various issues affecting older adults. Additionally, researchers can note the promise of cultivating a much larger impact on the overall profession with their research agendas and scholarship by (a) drawing from resources in *ADSP*, (b) considering articles in *ADSP* for citation, and (c) substantiating *ADSP* with more empirical research.

In sum, despite a limited amount of GC research across counseling journals, *ADSP* should be commended for its role in providing a home for authors and research focused on the older adult population. Without *ADSP*'s contributions, the counseling profession would be less prepared to serve older adult clients and their loved ones, as evidenced by lower GC publishing rates in the years *ADSP* did not publish and the substantial proportion of total GC publications by the journal. *ADSP* and its contributors are encouraged to expand the journal's identity as the impetus for the counseling profession in prioritizing best practices with older adults.

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