Criminal Justice and Criminology at the Core: Using a Sustainable Method for Constructing a Core Journal List

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Abstract

The desire to identify which journals are core to a discipline is important to librarians and departmental faculty alike. Whether for purposes of accreditation, decisions related to retention, tenure, and promotion, or the assessment of a library's collection, core lists are highly valued resources. Applying a previously tested, mixed-methods approach, the authors created a five-tiered list of criminal justice and criminology journals from which 151 titles were identified as being core to the discipline. In an effort to assess the reliability of their results, the authors also compared the results of their study to a list created by criminal justice scholars.

Keywords: Core journals; scholarly communication; collection development; academic libraries; academic librarians

Introduction

The effort to understand which journals are the "best" or most influential is familiar to many, if not all, disciplines. The inexhaustible need for authoritative lists has been fueled by any number of sources, including departments seeking accreditation, committees evaluating the credentials of candidates for employment or as part of the retention, tenure and promotion process, and, of course, librarians evaluating a collection. Over time, various methods for building such lists have been developed including the opinion(s) of experts, citation analysis, and inclusion in abstracting and indexing services. . Concurrently, there has also been a steady drumbeat of criticism regarding core lists, primarily focusing on how they are constructed and used (e.g., Laband[1] Nkomo[2] Sangster[3], Tadajewski[4]).

Mindful of the criticisms leveled against core lists and journal ranking, the co-authors decided to employ a previously tested, mixed-methods approach to construct a stratified tier journal list for the criminal justice and criminology disciplines. The approach used for this study blends two popular methods for core list construction (i.e., citation analysis and titles indexed by commercial databases) while also including the expertise of the Library of Congress. Each individual method results in a list which, when compared, results in stratified tiers of titles which appear on one, two, or more of the prior lists. By comparing overlap between lists, a robust and clear understanding of what constitutes the core emerges: those titles on a majority of the lists. The effect of this mixed-method approach is to leverage the strengths of the individual methods while also mitigating their respective weaknesses. Further, the method employed for this study can be used by an individual librarian, thereby allowing for updated core lists to be created with greater frequency. There is an extensive corpus on the topic of core journals and journal rankings in the disciplines of criminal justice and criminology. However, many of the lists include a relatively small number of titles. So, the co-authors (one of whom serves as criminal justice librarian and the other who formerly served in that role) undertook this study to create a list that balances selectivity with a higher degree of inclusivity.

Literature Review

The use of lists to assess and manage library collections has a long history in libraries in the United States, going back more than a century.[5] Not surprisingly, several methodologies have been used to pursue core journal lists. Of particular note have been the use of expert rankings (a.k.a. perceptual rankings), the inclusion of journals in abstracting and indexing services (A & I), and reliance on citation analyses of works published in journals. A brief discussion of these methods and their respective strengths and weaknesses is important to understand the reasons for using a mixed-method approach for this study.

As observed by Nisonger, reliance upon the judgment of those presumed to be experts in their field is one of the oldest methods for identifying core journals.[6] Examples of this approach are plentiful and can be found in disparate areas of scholarship, from business[7], finance[8], nonprofit and civil society studies[9], and social work.[10] Within the discipline of criminal justice, early examples of the importance of perceptual rankings to the discipline can be found in the work of David Fabianic, both in 1980[11] and again in 1981[12], that included a survey of the membership of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences as part of an effort to determine the leading journals in the field. Subsequent studies by other scholars which also incorporated survey methodology have appeared

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irregularly since (e.g., Green, et al.[13], Sorensen, et al.[14], Williams III, et al.[15]). However, besides being labor-intensive, critics have found that these perceptual ratings sometimes measure something other than the perceived reputation of journals[16] or are built upon "a set of untenable assumptions."[17] Further, as with any subjective measure, the potential bias of survey respondents is a cause for concern (e.g., Serenko and Bontis[18], Walters[19]).

Another approach to identifying the core journals within a discipline that has enjoyed regular use (e.g., Bobrinski[20], Paynter, et al.[21], Peritz[22], Serebnick and Harter[23]), though of limited popularity within the field of criminology or criminal justice[24], has been relying upon the judgment of abstracting & indexing (A&I) services. Some proponents have argued that a journal's inclusion in a popular index underscores the importance of the publication while also increasing the title's visibility and likely use.[25] For librarians the collective wisdom of A&I services implies credibility.[26] Despite these considerations, criticism of this method includes the observation that, consistent with the so-called "80/20 rule," the majority of usage comes from a relatively small subset of titles (i.e., only a fraction of the "core" journals are used),[27] and that there is often a lack of transparency in the selection criteria for inclusion in an A&I service.[28] Related to that, it is sometimes unclear whether a journal title is indexed because it is core to a discipline or core to a discipline because it is indexed.[29] Reinforcing this argument is a recent study that found that 1,601 Library & Information periodicals were indexed across four electronic A&I services (i.e., databases),[30] which begs the question which of these are core to that discipline? Ultimately, while hundreds of journals might be useful, some are more important than others.

The final method for consideration here, and perhaps the most popular, is citation analysis. In 1927 an evaluation of citations contained in a single volume year of a journal was undertaken.[31] Since then, tens of thousands of citation analyses have been undertaken (a recent Google Scholar search for the term "citation analysis" yielded more than 94,000 results) across nearly every scholarly discipline imaginable. The reasons for the popularity of this approach include "the assumption that [a] citation is . . . an indication of quality"[32] and "that citation counts are strongly correlated with . . . scholarly prestige."[33] In the disciplines of criminal justice and criminology, this method has been used frequently to assess the productivity of scholars and programs (e.g., Ahlin[34] Cohn and Farrington[35], Sorensen[36]). But for scholars, either individually or as part of a group of researchers, the work necessary to undertake such an analysis can be daunting. For example, the Excellence in Research for Australia project employed 700 experts to create a journal ranking.[37] Meanwhile, the Gross and Gross analysis identified more than 3,600 references from 247 journals[38], and by the late 20th century and into the 21st century, it has not been unusual for researchers to consider upwards of 20,000 articles for a single study (e.g., Black[39] Fell, et al.[40] Ramakrishnan, et al.[41], Wakiji[42]). This fact may explain the popularity of commercially produced citation analysis tools.

Clarivate's *Journal Citation Reports* (*JCR*) and Elsevier's *CiteScore* are commercially produced and similar in that both measure "a ratio between citations and recent citable items published during a particular period of time,"[43] and the ease of use and convenience of each make them attractive options for journal evaluation. Amongst the differences between the two is that *JCR* calculates both a two-year and a five-year Impact Factor (IF) for selected journals; while *CiteScore* calculates its ratio in a four-year window, arguing that doing so makes "the calculation more robust and stable."[44] Another distinction between the two that is worth noting here is that *JCR* defines

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"citable items" as "articles and reviews,"[45] while in 2020 *CiteScore* updated its definition of citable items to include only "peer-reviewed publication types (articles, reviews, conference papers, book chapters and data papers)."[46] Also, the level of selectivity between the *JCR* and *CiteScore* is considerably different, with the total number of journals assigned an IF standing at 12,030[47] while the number of titles assigned a *CiteScore* is more than 41,000.[48] Indeed, more than 13,000 titles have been assigned CiteScores in 2019 that do not have a *JCR* Impact Factor.[49] Finally, while accessing *JCR* data requires a subscription, the CiteScore data is currently available (and downloadable in spreadsheet format) for free.

Because *JCR* has been available for more than forty years than *CiteScore* much of the available literature focusing on these two commercially produced citation analyses examines the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Clarivate's *JCR* citation analysis tool.[50] Because *JCR* has been such an important tool for journal evaluation for so long, by the late 20th century it had come to be seen as something of an authority for that purpose.[51] Meanwhile, others have highlighted the fact that the "unbiased" nature of the data gives *JCR* an appearance of objectivity[52] and a "demonstrably . . . empirical basis" for collection development decisions,[53] thereby enabling librarians to construct core journal lists on their own. While no similar arguments in the literature have been explicitly made about *CiteScore*, its use of data is very similar to *JCR*. Despite all of the perceived advantages that commercially produced citation analyses offer, criticism of the reports and IF, has been unrelenting. For example, Nisonger argues that the methods employed to calculate the IF are advantageous to older, established journals.[54] More recently, Su, et al. have argued that the use of statistical metrics in assessing journal quality "should be considered with due caution."[55] An extension of that argument can be found in Malsch and Tessier, in which they contend that the methods used to categorize and rank journals by *JCR* (and by inference *CiteScore*) suppress impact scores of publications in particular disciplines.[56] Issues related to the inflation of a journal's impact score, either unintentional or otherwise, have been widely discussed, including citation stacking (e.g., Chakraborty, Pradhan and Nandi[57], Lariviere and Sugiomoto[58], Hayatdavoudi and Haghighat[59], Heneberg[60]) and self-citation (Budimir, et al.[61], DeJong and St. George[62], Lăzăroiu[63]). Though Walters argues that concerns over self-citation may be overblown[64], at least one suggestion of a modified *CiteScore* has been made,[65] and Clarivate has taken steps to punish journals found to have intentionally manipulated their IF.[66]

Methodology

This study's ultimate goal was to identify journals core to Criminal Justice by adopting a mixed-methods approach that incorporates the strengths of several methods traditionally employed for building a list of core titles while also ameliorating their weaknesses. Further, we sought to use a technique that would yield reliable results, which could be completed with relative ease, and in a reasonable amount of time. Further, we sought an approach that considered a diverse population of titles. To that end, we adopted the approach used successfully in identifying core journals in Social Work[67] and Educational Psychology.[68] That approach used five sources -- two abstracting & indexing sources, two citation analysis sources, and the authoritative source for subject access used by libraries worldwide -- to construct individual lists of Criminal Justice journal titles from each of those sources. As it relates to the number of sources used, it is worth noting that the

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methodology on which this study is based is not prescriptive, i.e. the number of sources to be used is entirely at the discretion of the person constructing the list.

The journal titles on each of the lists were then assessed for particular characteristics, with titles lacking any of those characteristics eliminated from consideration as a potential core title. Finally, the lists were compared and contrasted, thereby creating tiers of agreement, with the result being a stratified list of titles. In our approach, those titles included on all five lists represent the journals most essential to the discipline, and titles included on four of the lists or three of the lists constitute the balance of the core of Criminal Justice journals. Meanwhile, titles on only two of the five lists are considered optional, i.e., they may be of value depending upon the research focus of an individual scholar or department but are not part of the core. Finally, titles appearing on only one list fall outside of the core.

Since our focus was Criminal Justice journals, the first sources consulted were two relevant abstracting & indexing (A&I) services in the discipline, EBSCO's *Criminal Justice Abstracts* (*CJA*) and ProQuest's *Criminal Justice Database* (*CJD*). According to EBSCO, *CJA* "is the leading bibliographic database for criminal justice and criminology research" and offers "cover-to-cover indexing of more than 600 journals."[69] Meanwhile, *Criminal Justice Database* (*CJD*) is described by ProQuest as "a comprehensive database supporting research on crime, its causes and impacts, legal and social implications, as well as litigation and crime trends."[70] Each database's title coverage lists was obtained, and every title on each of the coverage lists was assessed for specific characteristics. Those characteristics were as follows:

- That journals be actively publishing (i.e., the title has not ceased publication),
- That articles be peer-reviewed,
- That the journal has an ISSN number,
- That the journal publishes at least two issues annually.

Titles from either A&I service that lacked any of these characteristics were excluded from further consideration. Also, because our research focuses on core journal titles, items included in either A&I service that were not journals (e.g., monographic series) were excluded. Ulrichsweb, Global Serials Directory, a subscription service from ExLibris, was used to clarify where questions arose. This process led to the construction of two separate lists, one for each A&I service, of journal titles to be considered for inclusion amongst core titles. The *CJA* list included 436 titles, and the *CJD* list had 395.
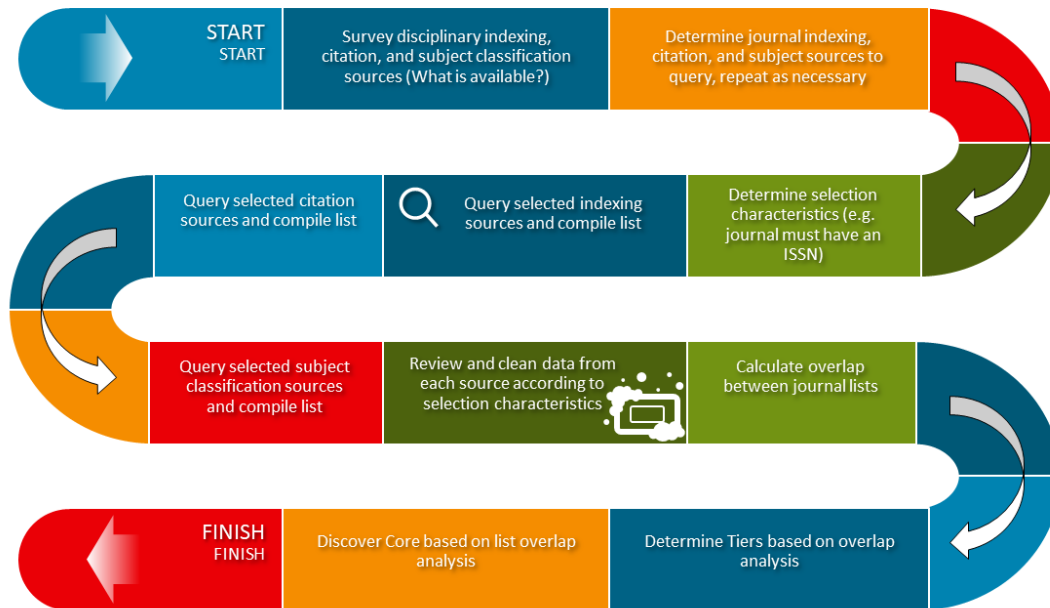
The next step in this process was extracting titles from two citation analysis tools. *JCR*'s annual Impact Factors (IF) for journals are calculated by dividing the total number of citations a journal receives in a given calendar year by the total number of "substantive articles"[71] published by that journal during the previous two or five calendar years. The result is a two-year and five-year IF for a selected group of journals.[72] Creating a *JCR* title list was as simple as downloading the *JCR* specific to its "Criminology & Penology" category. The 69 titles included in that category were then reviewed for the same characteristics as the titles from the A&I sources (i.e., actively publishing, peer review, assignment of an ISSN, and frequency of publication). Two of the included titles were found to publish annually (*Annual Review of Criminology*, and *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*), and each was excluded from further consideration, even though *Annual Review of Criminology* has the highest IF of any of the 69 titles in the "Criminology & Penology" category, and *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* is 19th.

The other citation analysis tool, *CiteScore*, is calculated by counting "peer-reviewed publication types (articles, reviews, conference papers, book chapters and data papers) in both the citation numerator and publication denominator" during the "the four years up to and including the calculation year."[73] The most current *CiteScore* data was downloaded in a multi-tab spreadsheet format that included more than 40,000 lines of data. To make the process of reviewing the available data easier several spreadsheet filters were activated. For example, only publications with a status of "active" were displayed. Also, titles with a 2019 *CiteScore* of 0.0 were excluded from consideration for the core. Next, "source type" data was limited to "journals," thereby eliminating "book series" and "trade journals." Unlike *JCR*, there is no specific criminal justice category in *CiteScore*. Instead, Scopus has developed its own classification scheme, the All Science Journal Classification Code,[74] and has assigned each serial publication at least one subject term, with journals often assigned more than one ASJC designation. The closest correlate to criminal justice in this schema is "Law" (ASJC 3308). Therefore, in filtering the ASJC information, all journal titles assigned the code number 3308 were included. The result was a list of 615 titles to be considered for possible inclusion in a core list. A review of those titles was then undertaken to ensure each possessed the necessary characteristics (i.e., peer review, ISSN number, frequency of publication). As a result of that review, the determination was made that several titles were published annually and, according to *Ulrich's*, at least one title has ceased publication (*Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine*, ISSN 2008-0387). The net number of journal titles on the *CiteScore* list following that review was 599.

The fifth and final resource from which titles were drawn was the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (*LCSH*). It has been argued that controlled vocabulary lists allow information seekers to retrieve information more efficiently and are critical for efficiently retrieving and using knowledge.[75] Further, while some have argued that keyword searching has supplanted subject headings as the de facto method for organizing knowledge, a 2015 study discovered that more than 25% of keyword search results would be lost if not for the presence of *LCSH*.[76] The *Library of Congress Subject Headings* has been described as one of "the most well-known subject heading lists for the whole field of knowledge"[77] and is now in its 42nd edition.[78] Finally, the precise scope of individual subject headings allows for a level of selectivity that, while helpful, can eliminate journals that are complementary to the discipline.

After a review of the pertinent *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, the decision was made to search for all journals assigned the *LCSH* "Criminal justice, Administration of –" or "Criminology" using the advanced search option of the Library of Congress (LOC) public-facing catalog. Also built into the search was a Boolean "not" statement so as to exclude items whose record included the phrase "annual," "irregular," "biennial," or "ceased." The search parameters were limited under "type of material" to "periodical or newspaper." The total number of items yielded by this search was 489. Those titles were then reviewed to ensure the presence of an ISSN number, that each item was a journal, that the journal is peer-reviewed, and that it publishes at least two issues annually. The result of the review was that 95 titles remained, and it was those 95 that were considered for inclusion amongst the core journals for Criminal Justice.

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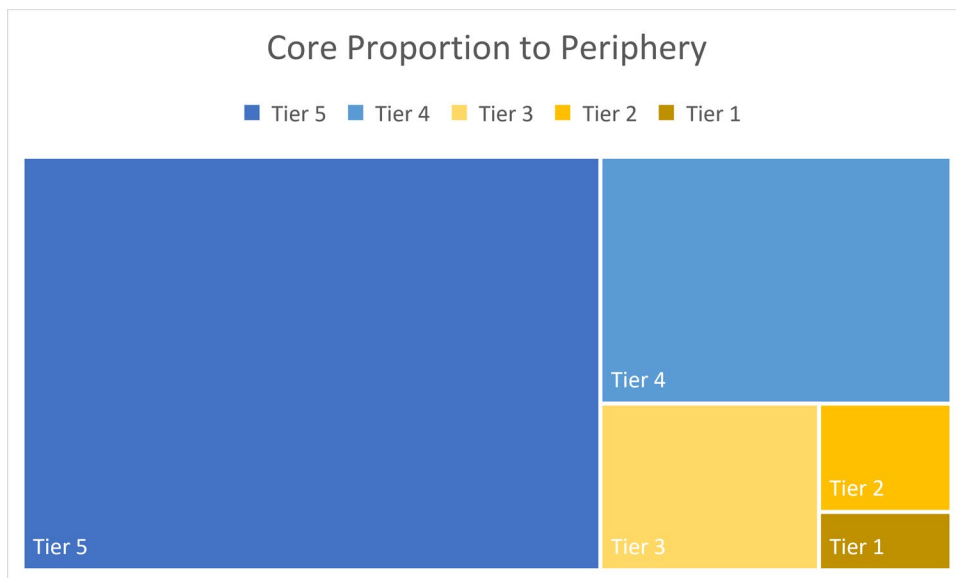
Figure 1: Methodology Workflow

While this methodology aims to create a tiered list of journals, it is not intended to create journal rankings. Therefore, the next step in the process was to compare and contrast the titles included on each of the five individual lists (i.e., *CJA*, *CJD*, *JCR*, *CiteScore*, and *LCSH*). The overlap between the lists explains why the universe of titles to be considered for the core is 990 (the complete list of those titles can be found online at 10.6084/m9.figshare.14498526), though the total sum of titles on the five lists is 1,592 (i.e., 436 titles on the *CJA* list, 395 on *CJD*, 599 on *CiteScore*, 67 on *JCR*, and 95 on *LCSH*).

Results

The core list of journals was comprised of the top three tiers out of the five tiers created by comparing the five title lists. The sources consulted to construct these stratified tiers of journal titles were: Two abstracting & indexing services (*Criminal Justice Abstracts* and *Criminal Justice Database*), two citations analysis sources (*CiteScore* and *Journal Citation Reports*), and the preeminent English-language knowledge organization schema, the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (*LCSH*). Lists of titles were created from each source and then compared to one another for overlap, thereby creating a stratified tier list from which a core could be discerned. The relative sizes of each tier and the size of the core compared with the periphery are visible in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Core Proportion to Periphery

As a result of this methodology, of the 990 titles considered for inclusion, only 151 are considered core to the discipline (a complete alphabetically arranged list of the core titles is available at 10.6084/m9.figshare.14402513). Of that number, essential titles are those that appeared on each of the five source lists, and it is these 20 titles that comprise Tier 1 (see Table 1). Of note, at this level, 29.85% of the *JCR* titles included by this method are at this essential tier. Further, ten of the *JCR* titles in Tier 1 are amongst those titles with top-20 Impact Factors. Meanwhile, only 3.34% of the 599 *CiteScore* titles this methodology includes for constructing a core list are tier one titles. Still, the median *CiteScore* is 3.7, the highest median *CiteScore* of all five tiers.

Table 1: Criminal Justice and Criminology at the Core

Title	ISSN	eISSN	Criminal Justice Abstracts	CiteScore	JCR	LCSH	Criminal Justice Database
American Journal of Criminal Justice : AJCJ	1066-2316	1936-1351	Core	2.3	1.181	X	X
British Journal of Criminology, The	0007-0955	1464-3529	Core	5.3	2.632	X	X
Crime and Delinquency	0011-1287	1552-387X	Core	3.8	2.188	X	X
Crime Law and Social Change	0925-4994	1573-0751	Core	1.9	0.921	X	X
Criminology	0011-1384	1745-9125	Core	5.6	3.879	X	X
Criminology & Criminal Justice	1748-8958	1748-8966	Core	3.6	1.809	X	X
Criminology & Public Policy	1538-6473	1745-9133	Core	6.0	2.040	X	X
Critical Criminology	1205-8629	1572-9877	Core	2.5	1.149	X	X
European Journal of Criminology	1477-3708	1741-2609	Core	4.2	1.671	X	X

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European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research	0928-1371	1572-9869	Core	2.6	1.397	X	X
Feminist Criminology	1557-0851	1557-086X	Core	2.4	1.535	X	X
International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice	1756-0616	1876-763X	Core	1.5	0.773	X	X
Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice	1043-9862	1552-5406	Core	2.8	1.111	X	X
Journal of Crime & Justice	0735-648X	2158-9119	Core	2.1	1.159	X	X
Journal of Criminal Justice	0047-2352	1873-6203	Core	4.8	2.935	X	X
Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology, The	0091-4169	2160-0325	Core	2.2	1.333	X	X
Journal of Experimental Criminology	1573-3750	1572-8315	Core	5.1	2.308	X	X
Journal of Quantitative Criminology	0748-4518	1573-7799	Core	6.8	3.423	X	X
Justice Quarterly	0741-8825	1745-9109	Core	6.0	2.802	X	X
Theoretical Criminology	1362-4806	1461-7439	Core	4.0	2.818	X	X

The 37 titles on four of the five lists comprise Tier 2 (see Table 2). Though not as essential as tier one, the titles at this tier are very much a part of the core journal titles for criminal justice and criminology. At this level, *CiteScore*, *Criminal Justice Abstracts*, and *Criminal Justice Database* each includes 35 titles, though each one excludes different titles. For example, EBSCO's *CJA* does not include *Asian Journal of Criminology* or the *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology*. Meanwhile, ProQuest's *CJD* excludes the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* and *Monatsschrift für Kriminologie und Strafrechtsreform*. As for Scopus' *CiteScore*, while a 2019 *CiteScore* is available for the *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* (2.4) rather than including that title as part of the "Law" category (ASJC 3308), *CiteScore* has categorized it within three other categories: "Arts and Humanities (miscellaneous)" (ASJC 1201), "Medicine, Pathology and Forensic" (ASJC 2734), and "Psychology, Applied Psychology" (ASJC 3202). Also excluded from the "Law" category is the *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency* (2019 *CiteScore* 5.4), which is categorized within just one category -- "Psychology, Social Psychology" (ASJC 3207). At this tier *JCR* includes 26 titles (70.3%), with only three of those amongst the top 20 Impact Factors and a median IF of 1.2. Finally, *LCSH* includes just 17 titles, and the precise nature of *LCSH* has a qualitative impact. For example, searching for titles with the *LCSH* "Criminal justice, Administration of --" or "Criminology," meant that the journal *Crime, Media, Culture* fell outside of the titles included on this list (i.e., its *LCSH* is "Crime in mass media--Periodicals" et al.). While the exclusion of that title may be reasonable, others seem less so. For instance, the *LCSH* assigned to *Punishment & Society: International Journal of Penology* are "Punishment--Periodicals," "Corrections--Periodicals," and "Crime--Sociological aspects--Periodicals." The narrowly focused nature of *LCSH* leaves this title, which has the highest Impact Factor in this tier (2.648) and a *CiteScore* (3.8) that is almost twice the median, outside of tier one.

Table 2: Criminal Justice and Criminology at the Core

Title	ISSN	eISSN	Criminal Justice Abstracts	CiteScore	JCR	LCSH	Criminal Justice Database
Asian Journal of Criminology	1871-0131	1871-014X		1.5	1.06	X	X
Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology	0004-8658	1837-9273	Core	2.3	1.32	X	
Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice		1911-0219	Core	1.2	0.58		X
Contemporary Justice Review	1028-2580	1477-2248	Core	1.2		X	X
Crime Media Culture	1741-6590		Core	3.5	1.75		X
Criminal Justice and Behavior	0093-8548	1552-3594	Core	3.6	1.52		X
Criminal Justice Ethics	0731-129X	1937-5948	Core	0.5		X	X
Criminal Justice Policy Review	0887-4034	1552-3586	Core	2.8		X	X
Criminal Justice Review	0734-0168	1556-3839	Core	1.6		X	X
Deviant Behavior	0163-9625	1521-0456	Core	2.6	1.35		X
European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice	0928-9569	1571-8174	Core	1.4		X	X
Homicide Studies	1088-7679	1552-6720	Core	2.4	1.64		X
International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice	0192-4036	2157-6475	Core	1.6		X	X
International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences	0973-5089		Core	0.3		X	X
International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology	0306-624X	1552-6933	Core		1.03	X	X
Journal of Criminal Justice Education	1051-1253	1745-9117	Core	1.2		X	X
Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology	2199-4641	2199-465X		2.2	1.11	X	X
Journal of Offender Rehabilitation	1050-9674	1540-8558	Core	1.3		X	X
Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency, The	0022-4278	1552-731X	Core		2.52	X	X
Monatsschrift für Kriminologie und Strafrechtsreform	0026-9301		Core	0.4	0.23	X	
New Criminal Law Review	1933-4192	1933-4206	Core	1.3		X	X
Police Quarterly	1098-6111		Core	4.7	1.5		X
Policing & Society	1043-9463	1477-2728	Core	3.4	1.66		X
Policing: A Journal of Policy & Practice	1752-4512	1752-4520	Core	2.9	1.79		X
Policing: An International Journal Of Police Strategies & Management	1363-951X		Core	1.76	1.19		X
Prison Journal, The	0032-8855	1552-7522	Core	1.5	0.86		X
Probation Journal	0264-5505	1741-3079	Core	2.2		X	X
Psychology Crime & Law	1068-316X	1477-2744	Core	3.1	1.19		X
Punishment & Society: International Journal of Penology	1462-4745	1741-3095	Core	3.8	2.65		X
Security Journal	0955-1662	1743-4645	Core	2.3	0.84		X
Social & Legal Studies	0964-6639	1461-7390	Core	2	1.22		X
Trends in Organized Crime	1084-4791	1936-4830	Core	2.1	1.25		X
Victims & Offenders	1556-4886	1556-4991	Core	2.5	1.12		X
Violence and Victims	0886-6708	1945-7073	Core	1.6	0.6		X
Women & Criminal Justice	0897-4454	1541-0323	Core	1.6	0.88		X
Youth Justice: An International Journal	1473-2254	1747-6283	Core	1.4	1.23		X

| Youth Violence And Juvenile Justice | 1541-2040 | 1556-9330 | Core | 4.4 | 2.18 | | X |

Tier three is comprised of those journal titles included in three of the five source lists, and this group of 94 titles completes the list of core titles (see Table 3). At this level *CJA* includes 91 titles, just over 20% of all titles indexed and abstracted by *CJA* and the third-highest percentage for *CJA* at any tier. *CJD* also includes 91 titles, the second-highest number at any tier for *CJD, and* 23.45% of all titles indexed and abstracted by *CJD*. At this level, *JCR* includes 14 titles, more than 20% of all *JCR* titles, and the second-lowest number of all the tiers. Meanwhile, *CiteScore* includes 74 titles, the second-highest number for this list. Of the 20 titles at this tier that *CiteScore* does not include, 12 have a 2019 *CiteScore*, (median score 3.7) but have not been assigned to the "Law" category. These titles include *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (*CiteScore* of 4.1, categorized in "Psychology, Clinical Psychology" and "Psychology, Applied Psychology"), *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling* (2.2, "Psychology, Social Psychology" and "Psychology, Applied Psychology"), *Journal of School Violence* (3.3, "Social Science, Education" and "Engineering, Safety, Risk, Reliability and Quality"), and *Legal and Criminological Psychology* (4.5, "Medicine, Pathology and Forensic Medicine" and "Psychology, Applied Psychology"). Also of interest is that there are only two titles that *CiteScore* and *JCR* share in common: *Psychiatry Psychology and Law* and *Revija Za Kriminalistiko in Kriminologijo*. Finally, *LCSH* includes only 12 titles. At this tier, the impact of the limited scope of individual *LCSH* comes into full relief. For example, though *Police Practice and Research* has been assigned multiple subject headings ("Police--Periodicals," Police administration--Periodicals," "Law enforcement--Periodicals," "Crime prevention--Periodicals"), the decision to search for journals using broader *LCSH* left this title, and a multitude of others, off the *LCSH* list and moved them from Tier 2 to Tier 3.

Table 3: Criminal Justice and Criminology at the Core

Title	ISSN	eISSN	Criminal Justice Abstracts	CiteScore	JCR	LCSH	Criminal Justice Database
African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies : AJCJS		1554-3897	Core			X	X
Aggression and Violent Behavior	1359-1789	1873-6335	Core		2.893		X
American Journal of Law & Medicine	0098-8588	2375-835X	Core	1.5			X
American University Law Review	0003-1453		Core	1.17			X
Behavioral Sciences & the Law	0735-3936		Core	1.8			X
British Journal of Community Justice	1475-0279		Core	0.8			X
California Law Review	0008-1221		Core	2.7			X
Cambridge Law Journal, The	0008-1973	1469-2139	Core	0.9			X
Canadian Journal of Law & Society/Revue Canadienne Droit et Societe (Cambridge University Press)	0829-3201	1911-0227	Core	0.6			X
Canadian Journal of Women & the Law	0832-8781	1911-0235	Core	1.1			X
Child Abuse Review	0952-9136	1099-0852	Core	3.3			X
CJM : Criminal Justice Matters	0962-7251	1934-6220	Core			X	X

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Journal	ISSN	ISSN					
Columbia Journal of Law & Social Problems	0010-1923		Core	0.3			X
Columbia Law Review	0010-1958	1945-2268	Core	2.1			X
Computers & Security	0167-4048	1872-6208	Core	7.5			X
Conflict Resolution Quarterly	1536-5581	1541-1508	Core	1.8			X
Contemporary Drug Problems	0091-4509	2163-1808	Core	3			X
Cornell Law Review	0010-8847		Core	2.3			X
Crime Prevention & Community Safety	1460-3780	1743-4629	Core	1.2			X
Crime Science	2193-7680		Core	3.6			X
Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health	0957-9664	1471-2857	Core		1.221		X
Criminal Justice Studies	1478-601X	1478-6028	Core	1.4			X
Criminal Law & Philosophy	1871-9791	1871-9805	Core	1.3			X
Criminal Law Forum	1046-8374	1572-9850	Core	0.7			X
Derecho Penal y Criminología	0121-0483	2346-2108	Core			X	X
Digital Investigation	1742-2876	1873-202X	Core	3.9			X
Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict	1746-7594		Core	1		X	
European Journal of International Law	0938-5428	1464-3596	Core	2.2			X
Forensische Psychiatrie, Psychologie, Kriminologie	1862-7072	1862-7080		0.6		X	X
Global Crime	1744-0572	1744-0580	Core	2.4			X
Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy	0193-4872		Core	0.8			X
Health & Justice		2194-7899	Core	2.4			X
Howard Journal of Crime and Justice, The	2059-1098	2059-1101		1.5		X	X
Human Rights Law Review	1461-7781	1744-1021	Core	1.6			X
International & Comparative Law Quarterly, The	0020-5893	1471-6895	Core	2			X
International Criminal Justice Review	1057-5677	1556-3855	Core	1.5			X
International Criminal Law Review	1567-536X	1571-8123	Core	1			X
International Journal for Crime, Justice & Social Democracy	2202-7998	2202-8005	Core	2			X
International Journal of Conflict & Violence		1864-1385	Core	2.1			X
International Journal of Cyber Criminology		0974-2891	Core	2.3			X
International Journal of Forensic Mental Health	1499-9013	1932-9903	Core		1.121		X
International Journal of Law, Policy & the Family	1360-9939	1464-3707	Core	1.5			X
Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling	1055-3835	2161-1874	Core	1.1			X
Journal of Adult Protection, The	1466-8203	2042-8669	Core	1.6			X
Journal of Aggression Maltreatment & Trauma	1092-6771	1545-083X	Core		1.03		X
Journal of Aggression, Conflict & Peace Research	1759-6599	2042-8715	Core	1.2			X
Journal of Applied Security Research	1936-1610	1936-1629	Core	1.2			X

Journal	ISSN	ISSN					
Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice	2056-3841	2056-385X		1		X	X
Journal of Empirical Legal Studies	1740-1453	1740-1461	Core	1.7			X
Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice	1537-7938	1537-7946	Core	1.1			X
Journal of Family Violence	0885-7482	1573-2851	Core	2.2			X
Journal of Forensic & Legal Medicine	1752-928X		Core	2.4			X
Journal of Forensic Practice	2050-8794	2050-8808	Core	0.7			X
Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology, The	1478-9949	1478-9957	Core		1.061		X
Journal of International Criminal Justice	1478-1387	1478-1395	Core	1.4			X
Journal of Interpersonal Violence	0886-2605	1552-6518	Core		3.573		X
Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling	1544-4759	1544-4767	Core		0.783		X
Journal of Law & Economics	0022-2186	1537-5285	Core	2			X
Journal of Law & Society	0263-323X	1467-6478	Core	1.5			X
Journal of Law, Economics & Organization	8756-6222	1465-7341	Core	2.1			X
Journal of Legal Studies	0047-2530	1537-5366	Core	2			X
Journal of Money Laundering Control	1368-5201	1758-7808	Core	1.1			X
Journal of Police & Criminal Psychology	0882-0783	1936-6469	Core	2.1			X
Journal of School Violence	1538-8220	1538-8239	Core		1.561		X
Journal of Sexual Aggression, The	1355-2600	1742-6545	Core		0.917		X
Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law, The	0964-9069		Core	0.9			X
Journal of Theoretical & Philosophical Criminology		2166-8094	Core			X	X
Justice Evaluation Journal	2475-1979	2475-1987	Core			X	X
Justice System Journal	0098-261X	2327-7556	Core	0.9			X
Juvenile & Family Court Journal	0161-7109	1755-6988	Core	0.8			X
Law & Contemporary Problems	0023-9186	1945-2322	Core	3.3			X
Law & Critique	0957-8536	1572-8617	Core	1.4			X
Law & History Review	0738-2480	1939-9022	Core	0.8			X
Law & Human Behavior	0147-7307	1573-661X	Core	4.9			X
Law & Policy	0265-8240	1467-9930	Core	2.3			X
Law & Social Inquiry	0897-6546	1545-696X	Core	1.7			X
Law & Society Review	0023-9216	1540-5893	Core	2.6			X
Law, Probability & Risk	1470-8396	1470-840X	Core	2.2			X
Legal And Criminological Psychology	1355-3259	2044-8333	Core		1.667		X
Modern Law Review, The	0026-7961	1468-2230	Core	1.8			X
Notre Dame Law Review, The	0745-3515		Core	1.6			X
Oxford Journal of Legal Studies	0143-6503	1464-3820	Core	1.8			X
Pakistan Journal of Criminology	2074-2738	2222-6648	Core			X	X
Police Practice & Research	1561-4263	1477-271X	Core	2			X
Psychiatry Psychology And Law	1321-8719		Core	1.4	0.664		

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Revija Za Kriminalistiko in Kriminologijo	0034-690X		Core	0.6	0.565			
Safer Communities	1757-8043	2042-8774	Core	0.9				X
Sexual Abuse: A Journal Of Research And Treatment	1079-0632	1573-286X	Core		2.13			X
Social Justice : A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order	1043-1578	2327-641X	Core				X	X
Social Justice Research	0885-7466	1573-6725	Core	2.1				X
State Crime Journal	2046-6056	2046-6064	Core	0.3				X
Tijdschrift voor Criminologie	0165-182X	2468-9467	Core				X	X
Trauma Violence & Abuse	1524-8380		Core		6.325			X
Violence Against Women	1077-8012	1552-8448	Core	3				X

The 223 titles included on just two of the source lists comprises the fourth tier, and this comparative lack of agreement makes these titles optional rather than part of the core. At this level it is the two abstracting and indexing sources that contribute overwhelmingly. Roughly 45% of all the titles indexed by *CJA* are found here, while the corresponding number for *CJD* is nearly 48%. Moreover, of all the titles at this level, *CJA* and *CJD* have 164 in common. Also of interest is the inclusion of specific titles on the *CiteScore* list. For example, the *Journal of Criminal Psychology* is assigned to the "Law" category, as well as "Psychology, Social Psychology" and "Psychology, Applied Psychology" (the complete list of titles at this tier is available online at 10.6084/m9.figshare.14510838).

Finally, tier five is comprised of those titles that appear on only one list. Interestingly, almost 70% of the titles here appear only on the *CiteScore* list (*JCR* has no titles at this tier), slightly more than 15% are on the *CJA* list, just over 10% on the *CJD* list, and 4.38% are from the *LCSH* list. While there may be journals of outstanding quality at this level, the absence of any agreement between the five lists means that the 616 titles found here are entirely outside the core.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to employ a previously tested, scalable, mixed-methods approach to constructing a core list of criminal justice and criminology journals. Though each of the methods employed in this study is not without shortcomings, we believe that comparing and contrasting the lists of titles derived from each of the five sources ameliorated those. One method that was not employed for this study was that of perceptual rankings, arguably the most labor-intensive of all the methods used for constructing core journal lists. To investigate our list's usefulness, we decided to compare the results of this study with the recent study by DeJong and St. George that use survey data to construct its core list and then compared those results with "objective measures."[79] For their study, DeJong and St. George surveyed the membership of the American Society of Criminology and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (n=4,287) and received responses from 543 members.[80] A key characteristic of the work of DeJong and St. George is that they provided survey respondents with a list of journal titles to rank and assess, a list constructed from journal titles listed in Google Scholar and [*JCR*] for a total of 46 titles[81] (by way of comparison, this current study has 151 titles considered core to the discipline). To their credit, the authors are forthcoming concerning the challenges they faced in asking respondents to complete the survey process and caution readers that the rankings may not be entirely reliable.[82]

But because DeJong and St. George have compiled one of the longer lists of core titles available in the criminal justice and criminology literature we believe it is still a good benchmark by which to assess our own results.

At first blush, the two core lists appear to match up well. Of the 46 titles identified by DeJong and St. George, 38 (possibly 39) are considered core to the discipline (82.6%) using this five-list method. In our list, 14 are Tier 1, i.e., the most essential (36.8%), twelve of the 38 titles are considered Tier 2 (31.6%), and at least 12 (possibly 13, see below) are considered Tier 3 titles (31.6%). Three titles are Tier 4 (8%), making them optional, and a single title is considered Tier 5, meaning that it is outside of those titles considered core to the discipline. Finally, there are unresolved questions about three others that do not appear on any of the five source lists used to compile the list for this research. A note about the titles not included in the core list seems warranted:

- *Crime and Justice: A Review of the Research*: According to *Ulrich's,* this item is published once annually, and as part of the methodology we employed, to be considered for inclusion in the core, items must publish at least two issues annually.

- *Social Problems*: This is a top ten journal on the DeJong and St. George list but only a Tier 4 journal (i.e., it is considered optional) using the five-list method employed for this study. Despite being indexed by both *Criminal Justice Abstracts* (*CJA*) and *Criminal Justice Database* (*CJD*), the journal has not been assigned an Impact Factor (IF) nor a CiteScore, and its *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (*LCSH*) is "Social problems—Periodicals." DeJong and St. George mention the question of whether journals that are not strictly focused on Criminal Justice or Criminology should be included in a core list for the discipline.[83] This title may be one that, while relevant to the discipline, is not *of* the discipline.

- *Social Forces*: Ranked tenth by DeJong and St. George,[84] this is a Tier 5 journal in the current study. Though *CJD* indexes this title, it is not indexed in *CJA*, is not assigned a CiteScore or an IF, and its *LCSH* are "Social problems—Periodicals" and "Social service—Periodicals." As with *Social Problems*, an argument can be made that this title is not central to the discipline.

- *Legal and Criminal Psychology*: No journal with this exact title was included on our core list. Because the DeJong and St. George study did not include ISSN numbers, searches using *Ulrich's*, the Library of Congress public catalog advanced search screen, Google Scholar (including journal metrics), and a web search were undertaken. We were unable to identify a journal with that exact title. However, the *JCR* for both 2017 and 2018 include the journal *Legal and Criminological Psychology* (eISSN 2044-8333), and that journal is included in our core list at Tier 3. Whether it is the title included by DeJong and St. George is not known for certain, but if so, it would raise the number of titles identified by them that are also included in this core list from 38 to 39.

- *Policing*: Once again, no journal with that exact title could be located. The *JCR* for 2017 and 2018 do include *Policing & Society* (eISSN 1477-2827), which is a Tier 2 journal

using the current methodology

- *Journal of Forensic Psychology and Offender Profiling*: Using an identical approach to the search for *Legal and Criminal Psychology*, we could not locate a journal with this exact title. Further, no journal with that title appears in either the *JCR* for 2017 or 2018.

While it is natural to compare the results of this study to those of disciplinary experts, it is also worth comparing their work to ours. To that end, here are a few of the more than 100 titles included on our list that are not part of the DeJong and St. George list:

- **Tier 1**
  - *American Journal of Criminal Justice: AJCJ* (IF: 1.181, CiteScore: 2.3)
  - *Critical Criminology* (IF: 1.149, CiteScore: 2.5)
  - *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* (IF: 1.397, CiteScore: 2.6)
- **Tier 2**
  - *Crime Media Culture* (IF: 1.750, CiteScore: 3.5)
  - *Punishment & Society: International Journal of Penology* (IF: 2.648, CiteScore: 3.8).
  - *Youth Justice: An International Journal* IF: 1.231, CiteScore: 1.4)
- **Tier 3**
  - *Journal of Aggression Maltreatment & Trauma* (IF: 1.030, indexed in *CJA* and *CJD*).
  - *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology* (IF: 1.061, indexed in *CJA* and *CJD*).
  - *Journal of Sexual Aggression* (IF: 0.917, indexed in *CJA* and *CJD*)

Core journal lists constructed by disciplinary experts have always been, and will always be, of considerable value. However, the value of the method employed for this study is that it considers the disciplinary literature more inclusively while still acknowledging qualitative distinctions that are often a part of perceptual rankings.

Limitations

As noted above, while this study, with its tiered lists, uses a more rigorous and novel method than previous studies looking at the criminal justice and criminology fields, there remain some caveats and limits. Usage, particularly by practitioners and scholars in the field but also by students is incredibly important. This study did not collect or take any usage data into account and, therefore, should not be used in isolation for any speculative collection development purposes. The process of attempting to quantify "quality" requires several assumptions and has been subject to a variety of criticisms summarized in the literature review. Of particular note for readers is the absence of a CiteScore category for criminology or criminal justice. This study used the "Law" category. Law, legal studies, and criminology are not synonymous, and their intersections are a source of debate over the scope of what criminal justice is as a field. Also, a 2016 study demonstrated that over time the amount of legal scholarship in criminology journals had decreased considerably.[85] While the obverse is not necessarily true, we could not find literature speaking to the question one way or the other and thus note the possibility that a different quality indicator with an explicit "Criminal Justice" category might prove a superior source. One categorization option that does include Criminology is the Field of Research (FoRs) section of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification used by the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) framework.

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Alternative journal metrics as a substitute for CiteScore in future research are mentioned below. As noted above in the Methodology and Results sections, the total universe of titles included on any one of the source lists was 1,592, but only 990 were overlapping, suggesting that subject classification as a general enterprise remains publisher-specific, inconsistent, and subjective.

Conclusion

The sheer numbers of core journal lists across many disciplines, including criminal justice and criminology, that have been created speak to a seemingly inexhaustible desire to identify those journals that consistently publish the most meaningful scholarship. Many of the methods used to create lists, particularly perceptual rankings, and citation analyses, are labor-intensive, making them difficult to update regularly. This study employed a methodology previously tested in Social Work and Educational Psychology, which relied upon the collective judgment of two leading abstracting & indexing services in criminal justice, two commercial citation analysis tools, and a respected and selective controlled vocabulary schema. That method produced a list of 151 journal titles that are considered core to criminal justice and criminology. These results are consistent with a list created by experts in the discipline while being more inclusive of other relevant journals. Importantly, in addition to producing reliable results, the work of creating the core list is manageable in both size and scope.

The method we have employed has produced encouraging results across multiple disciplines and is an approach that others can use with some confidence. An area of future research that may advance the method is incorporating other journal metric tools (e.g., Eigenfactor, SCImago Journal & Country Rank, Google Scholar Metrics, ERA FoRs) in direct comparison to, or as replacements for, *JCR* or *CiteScore*. Librarians responsible for collection development in criminal justice or criminology are encouraged to make all reasonable efforts to bring access to the 151 core journal titles for these areas to their students and faculty.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in figshare at https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14498526.

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