



Scholarly Works of School Psychology Faculty: How much of our field's current publications focus on racism and anti-racism?

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Abstract

The school psychology community is committed to anti-racism work as part of our role as school psychologists (García-Vázquez et al., 2020; Thomas, 2014). School psychology trainees and current practitioners can look to school psychology faculty and their publications as a key training and best practice resource and as a marker of activity and expertise. Publications that identify and describe racism are productive because they address racism without softening language in fear of sensitivity, and publications related to anti-racism are important because they demonstrate an active practice of challenging racism and the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate it (Kendi, 2019; Nelson, 2015). No studies to date have examined scholarly works related to racism and anti-racism among the field's professors. Thus, this study seeks to identify existing scholarly publications that focus on racism and anti-racism from among all school psychology publications.

The study identified 906 professors from 213 American Psychological Association accredited and National Association of School Psychologists approved school psychology programs, conducted a publication search for a sample of 510 professors from 130 programs, and categorized a sample of 300 publications. Results yielded 1.67 percent of publications relating to racism and .67 percent relating to anti-racism. Considering the impact of the field's scholarly publications on current and future school psychologists, an increase in articles focusing on racism and anti-racism is needed to cultivate skills among school psychologists and to demonstrate our field's growth in these efforts.

Introduction & Objectives

Professors of School Psychology and their areas of research interest and expertise help educate school psychology students, guide and enhance the work of practicing school psychologists, and improve understanding and implementation of best practices for the field. Examining the content of school psychology professor's publications can be demonstrative of areas of expertise, action, and focus that we expect would influence the field's work and outcomes, yet no studies to date examine racism and anti-racism publications within the field of school psychology.

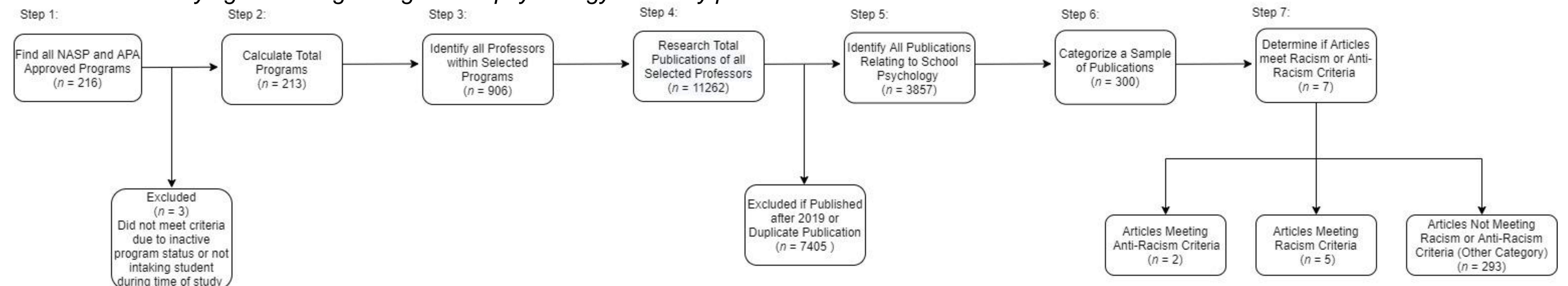
This study considers scholarly works inclusive of racism and anti-racism content as one resource that can help practitioners of school psychology best act as anti-racist agents of change and as one strategy for documenting where our field stands currently in focusing on and advancing anti-racism efforts.

Method

Figure 1 describes the procedure to identify and categorize scholarly publications within school psychology. In this study, racism is defined as the marginalization and/or oppression of people of color or specific ethnic groups based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people, and anti-racism is defined as an active process of identifying, challenging, and eliminating racism.

Figure 1

Method for identifying and categorizing school psychology scholarly publications.



Results

Figure 2 displays that of the 300 publications categorized, 1.67% included content about racism, .67% included content about anti-racism, and 97.67% included content about other topics in school psychology. Figure 3 displays the percent of articles identified in each category by year, with the first representation of articles focusing on racism or anti-racism from 2010 to 2019.

Figure 2
Percent of articles by category.

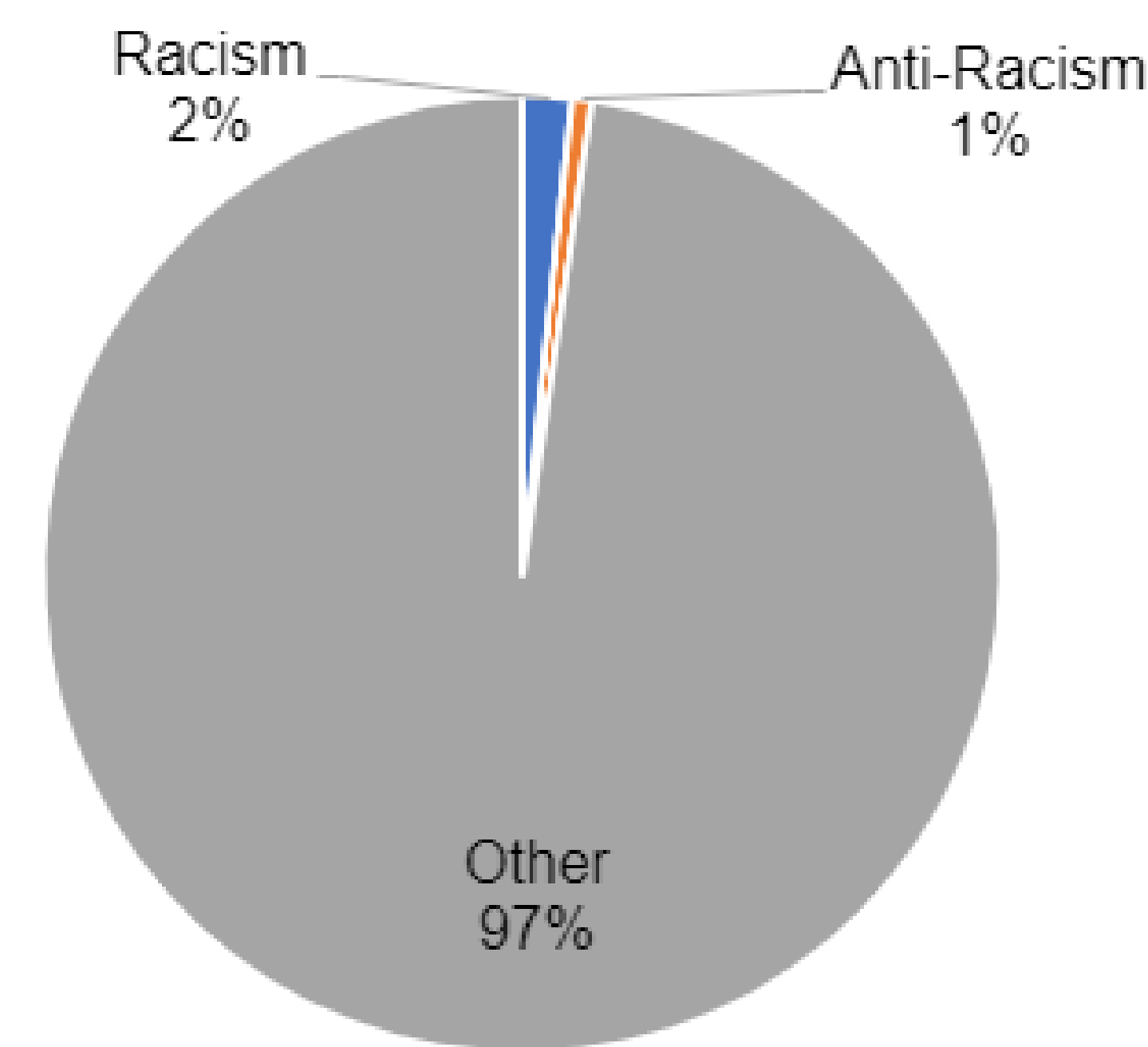
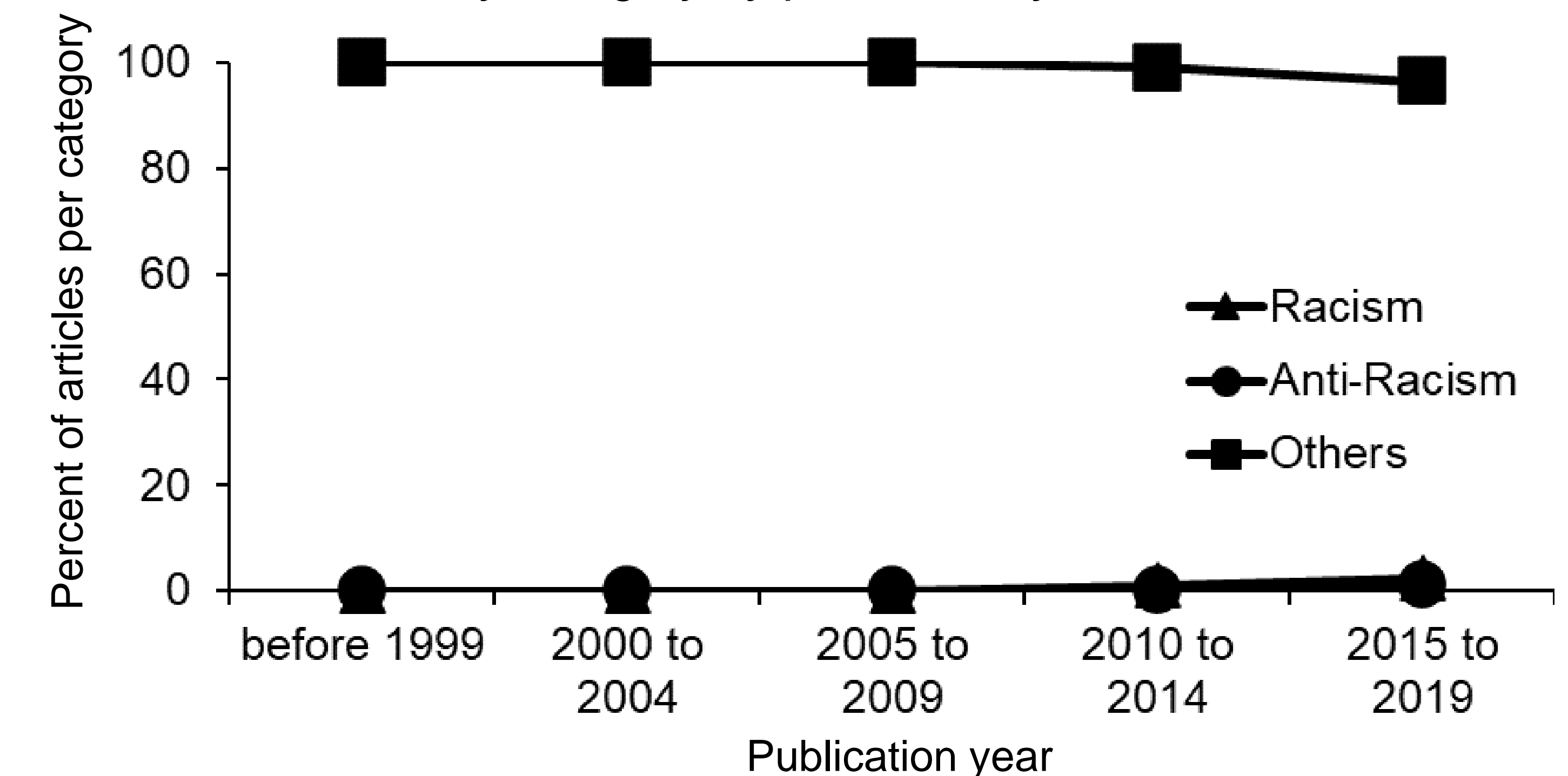


Figure 3

Percent of articles by category by publication year.



Conclusion

Study findings identify that topics related to racism and anti-racism are underrepresented in the community's scholarly works, contributing to barriers to determining and implementing anti-racist best practices across our field. Findings also demonstrate little change in the percentage of studies related to racism and anti-racism as compared to all other topics in school psychology over time. These trends are at odds with the field's recognition of systemic race-related inequity for Black and Brown students in our school systems (Merrell et al., 2012; Valant 2020) and identify not only a shortage of publications to disseminate best practice information on these topics but also potentially a shortage of authors within the field that hold expertise, or an underrepresentation of the work of authors that hold this expertise in our peer-reviewed journals. Along with demonstrating that more scholarly works related to these topics are needed in the field, these findings may also demonstrate the need for a robust effort to prioritize attention and growth of expertise on these topics across more members of our field and space for these topics in more of our peer-reviewed publications.

Future research efforts can complete the search and categorization of publications begun here and continue to collect and monitor data over time. As our field works to create change, we hypothesize that both the publications related to racism and anti-racism and the number of school psychology professionals authoring publications related to these topics should increase. A more detailed analysis of studies identified about racism and anti-racism is also of interest. This study explored only peer-reviewed journals, within specific databases, by author first and last name as listed on program websites, and through 2019. Future research should consider analyzing publications from January 2020 and beyond, and under names that varied from our search descriptions, as well as other resources such as dissertations, theses, presentations, and school psychology program curriculum.