

A Longitudinal Study of *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*: The Past, Present, and Future

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Purpose and Objectives. The goal of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of the *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* (CTRJ)'s publication trends and the journal's thematic evolution from its inception in 1982 to the end of 2023. Specifically, the objectives of the study are: (1) to identify key research categories in CTRJ and explore the publication patterns and trends to provide guidance to researchers in our discipline; (2) to compare our findings with the current CTRJ, International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Meta-Goals, and the Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing (TAPAC) standards for alignment; and (3) to evaluate the need to redefine the identity of our discipline in higher education.

Literature Review. Academic journals always have a profound impact on disciplines by examining the history and progression of the discipline, defining/redefining the core of the discipline, and shaping the future of the discipline (Goldsmith, 1983). When the Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing (ACPTC) was established in 1979 and CTRJ was established in 1982, they together marked the beginning of Textile, Apparel, and Merchandising (TAM) as a discipline. In 1991, ACPTC became ITAA to reflect the globalization of the industry and the growing international membership. As the official publication of ITAA, CTRJ has served as the leading scholarly outlet for strengthening the research base and inspiring future research (Ha-Brookshire & Hawley, 2014). However, during CTRJ's 42 years of publishing, only 2 studies examined CTRJ, including Oliver and Mahoney (1991) and Ha-Brookshire and Hawley (2014). Moreover, limited CTRJ publications were focusing on the future.

TAPAC serves as the official accrediting organization for programs in textiles and apparel in higher education to establish standards to support member programs in achieving excellence. Both ITAA Meta-Goals and TAPAC have jointly created an umbrella to bring our programs together for excellence, uniformity, and protection. As the official publication of ITAA, CTRJ serves as a credible and consistent barometer to gauge concerns and interests within our discipline and to identify the structure, interest, maturity, and future of our diverse fields (Lakner, Paff, & Din, 1997). However, despite such a high level of academic prominence, prior attempts to assess CTRJ publications in relation to ITAA Meta-goals and TAPAC standards are surprisingly absent. Thus, a periodic reflection of the history and academic legacy of CTRJ is vital to legitimize CTRJ's future advancements and the TAM discipline at large.

Research Method. To create a data set, all the articles' titles, year of publication, volume numbers, issue numbers, and links were included. From 1982 – 2023, there were a total of 990 articles published by CTRJ. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods is used in this study. A qualitative method, specifically, the Constant Comparative Method (CCM) (Boeije, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), was adopted to identify the categories in CTRJ. After

CCM was used to develop the categories and code the data, bibliometric analysis, a quantitative research method, was conducted to analyze the data further. The key indicator chosen for this study is the publication counts and percentages. Data was analyzed by year, by decade, and by category. The two researchers in this study reviewed and coded every article to improve its reliability. During the coding process, each article is open to the possibility of more than one category to reflect the more and more multidisciplinary nature of the studies in our discipline. A total of 1273 codes and 21 categories were identified after the coding process of 990 CTRJ articles published during the last 42 years.

Results and Discussion. **First**, after a careful coding process of all the articles and the discussion between the researchers and by combining, regrouping, and refining certain categories, the researchers identified 13 categories, which are listed in Table 1 from the biggest category to the smallest category in order based on the article counts and percentages. **Second**, the development trends in each category were explored. Six evolving patterns were identified (Table 2), which combined together show the history of CTRJ. **Third**, when the 13 categories identified in this study were compared with the current CTRJ tracks, 4 new categories, including Discipline Study (C11), International Trade/Business/Industry (C8), Industrial Professional Development (C13), and Discipline Methodology (C12), were recommended to be added to CTRJ's current 9 tracks. **Fourth**, the findings of this study were compared with the ITAA Meta-Goals and TAPAC standards for similarities and differences. The 13 categories of this study together show an improved alignment with both than the current CTRJ's 9 categories do. **Fifth**, 9 of the 13 categories were used as the key foundation for our discipline and an updated identity of our discipline was explored. In Figure 1, the size of each circle represents the percentage of publications in each category in the last 42 years. It is obvious that TAM is interdisciplinary with multiple sub-disciplines ranging from social science to natural science and creative art, and with subject matter derived from a variety of root disciplines.

Table 1

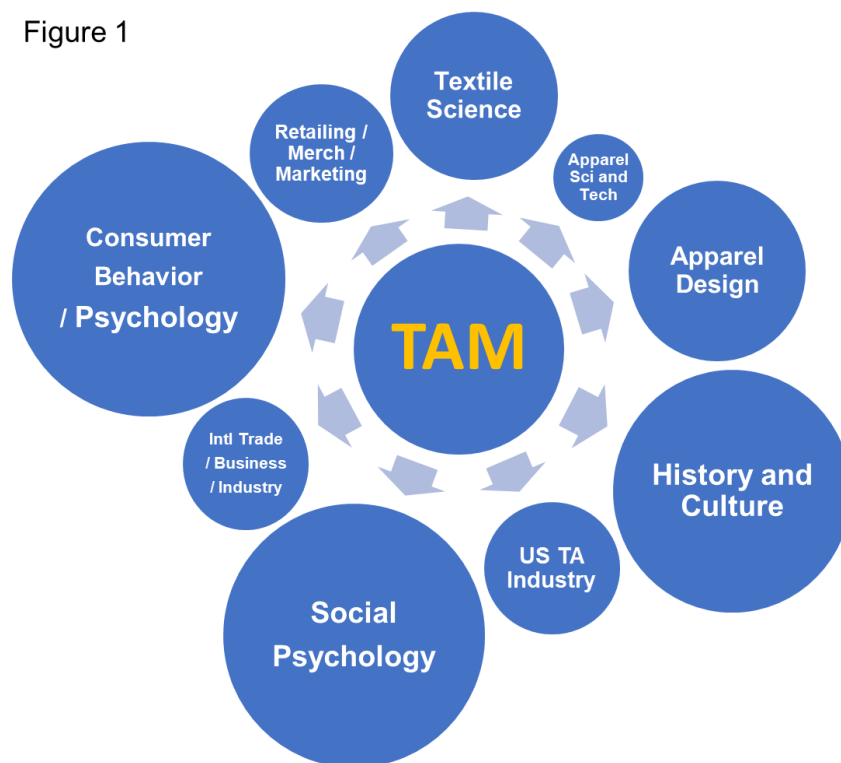
	Category (Category Number)	Freq	%
Group 1 - Biggest 5 categories	Consumer Behavior/Psychology (C6)	235	23.7
	Social Psychology (C5)	204	20.6
	History and Culture (C4)	177	17.9
	Apparel Design (C3)	106	10.7
	Textile Science (C1)	92	9.3
Group 2 – Middle 5 categories	Pedagogy/Curriculum/Assessment (C10)	85	8.6
	Discipline Study (C11)	85	8.6
	US Textiles and Clothing Industry (C9)	65	6.6
	Retailing/Merchandising/Marketing (C7)	53	5.4
Group 3 – Smallest 3 categories	International Trade/Business/Industry (C8)	44	4.4
	Apparel Science and Technology (C2)	24	2.4
	Industrial Professional Development (C13)	8	0.8
	Discipline Methodology (C12)	8	0.8

Table 2

	Evolving Patterns	Categories
1	Increasing pattern	International Trade/Business/Industry (C8), Discipline Methodology (C12)
2	Decreasing pattern	Social Psychology (C5), Retailing/Merchandising/Marketing (C7), US Textile and Clothing Industry (C9)
3	Stable pattern	History and Culture (C4), Consumer Behavior/Psychology (C6)
4	Up and down pattern - Pattern shapes like W	Pedagogy/Curriculum/Assessment (C10), Discipline Study (C11)
5	Pattern shapes like V	Textile Science (C1), Apparel Science and Technology (C2), Industrial Professional Development (C13)
6	Pattern shapes like ^	Apparel Design (C3)

Conclusions. Being the first to examine all 42 years of CTRJ publications, this study identifies 13 key research categories, explores the publication patterns of CTRJ, compares the findings with the current CTRJ journal description, ITAA Meta-Goals, and TAPAC standards to check the alignment and evaluate the need to redefine the identity of our discipline in higher education. The study brings multiple contributions on different levels – for individual researchers and scholars in our discipline, for the programs and departments in our discipline, and for our discipline identity and consistency across CTRJ, ITAA, and TAPAC.

Figure 1



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