A Review of Australian Publications in Educational Leadership Journals

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ABSTRACT: *Educational leadership research activity has a long history in Australia dating back to the pioneering work of Bill Walker. One measure of such activity is publications and in the contemporary policy environment of higher education in which assessment and ranking is tied to research outputs and income, the imperative to publish is arguably at its greatest. In this paper, using the data from an audit of 18 different educational leadership journals, I argue that the Australian contribution to the field of educational leadership is in need of critical reflection. Although Australians play a prominent role in some international arenas, the bulk of the work comes from a relatively small group of academics published in a small set of journals. If the Australian educational leadership voice is to reach the lofty heights of the leading field, it requires a period of self-reflection and a commitment to undertaking work that is of both theoretical and methodological importance. This paper is meant as a starting point for such a conversation to begin.*

Introduction

The field of educational leadership, or its previous labels, educational management and educational administration, has a long history in Australia dating back to the pioneering work of Bill Walker at the Centre for Administrative Studies at the University of New England in the 1960s. Leithwood and Day (2007) describe the current period of international scholarship in educational leadership as a 'golden age' (p. 1). While this may be true internationally, others (Bates & Eacott, 2008; Mulford, 2007) have raised concerns about the current standing of the 'Australian voice' within this golden age as not only is there a shortage of Australian research, but fellow researchers and practitioners take little notice of what is produced anyway. Mulford (2007) argues that the quality of Australian research needs drastic improvement, both methodologically and theoretically, if the desire is to have any influence on policy and practice. Bates and Eacott (2008, p. 154) raise the question 'Whatever happened to those Australian writers in the field that contributed an Australian voice to the field internationally?'

To provide an overview of the whole field is a task which is 'as impossible to achieve as it is fascinating to engage in' (Baron, 1979, p. 2). This paper, building on from notion that 'one measure of the vibrancy of research is publication activity' (DETYA, 2000, p. 9), examines the publication outputs of Australian based academics in educational leadership journals. The choice of Australian based academics is deliberate. While recognising that many who work in Australian

tertiary institutions and those who undertake post graduate work come from many diverse backgrounds, this paper focuses on work that is produced when linked to an Australian institution. In some cases, people who may travel on passports from a range of countries will be included because their work was undertaken while they were affiliated with an Australian institution.

The paper begins by identifying scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed educational leadership journals. Such a list provides valuable insight into the contributions to the field and serves as the foundation for the paper. It then analyses the publication outputs over time to see how the contribution of Australian academics in the field has evolved. An analysis of the contributions allows for the identification of needs for the future. The over-riding goal of this paper is to foreground the contributions of fellow academics, so that the Australian educational leadership voice can progress with an appreciation of the past.

A few caveats before proceeding. As noted by Ladwig (1996), there are a number of problems faced when delimiting the literature to be included in any study. However, it should be noted that this 'audit' of the publications of Australian based scholars publishing in the field of educational leadership is not exhaustive. I make no claim to have analysed, much less summarised, all of the literature that is produced by Australian based scholars. Whether this would even be possible is open to debate. The research I have chosen to consider is meant to be illustrative of the kind of research outputs relevant to the main arguments of this paper. Conducting research and publishing the results is strenuous, intense work (Tschannen-Moran, Firestone, Hoy & Johnson, 2000) and it should be acknowledged that refereed journals are but one outlet for the publication of academic work.

A Description of the Study

Research on the scholarship of educational leadership in Australia has been studied previously by Mulford (2007) who sampled works from four Australian based journals (*Australian Journal of Education*, *Australian Educational Researcher*, *Journal of Educational Administration* and *Leading & Managing*). Ribbins, Bates and Gunter (2003) also contributed to the discussion in their comparison of the Australian and UK research contexts. Broader analysis of the impact of Australian research was conducted by Phelan, Anderson and Bourke (2000). However, Mulford drew on a small sample of journals, a fact he himself noted, with only two being field specific. The purpose of Ribbins et al. was to compare and contrast the research environment in two different national settings and Phelan et al. was focused on the discipline of education, as opposed to the field of educational leadership. There has not been a specific study on the contribution of Australian based academics to the field with the scope of this paper.

This study describes the Australian contribution to the field of educational leadership as measured through the publication of refereed journal articles. The year 1977 was chosen as the starting point for the data collection as it allowed for an analysis of 30 years (the data collection was extended through to 2007).

To compile data for analysis, the table of contents and abstracts of each issue of 18 different educational leadership and management journals were searched. Unlike other fields such as strategic management, where regular studies by MacMillan (1987, 1989, 1991) have identified 16 journals as offering appropriate, significant or outstanding quality as a forum for the publication of

research, there is no such list in educational leadership. Mayo, Zirkel and Finger (2006) produced a list entitled 'Which journals are educational leadership professors choosing?' however, the list contained both refereed and professional journals, and only those from the USA. To overcome this situation, two sources of journal ranking were used to populate a list of journals to sample and differentiate those within the sample. Firstly, early analysis of the 'Journal Banding study' conducted by the Centre for the Study of Research Training and Impact (SORTI) at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) was used. In this study over 900 education journals were identified. The journals were broken into 26 different fields. The most appropriate field for this study was 'Administration, leadership, educational management and policy'. It consisted of 49 journals (see Table 1 for the top twenty journals). For each journal a QScore (quality score) was calculated from three sources of information; survey responses (esteem measures, N=628, 83% Australian, 82% employed by universities), the journal's ISI score (if it had one) and whether the journal has an international editorial board (for more information on the study see http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/sorti/). While this project has been criticised for its parochial sampling strategy (drawn from an Australian based research association), as the current study was focused on the 'Australian educational leadership voice', the identification of leading journals by Australian academics was an appropriate means of establishing the parameters of the search strategy. The sub-field of 'Administration, leadership, educational management and policy' had 123 responses (representing 7.4% of the total sample).

The fourth column of Table 1 displays the current Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) tier for each of the identified journals. The ERA is the new Federal government means of evaluating the quality of research outputs (under the former Howard government, a similar scheme was known as the Research Quality Framework). Further discussion and debate regarding the value of the scheme has taken considerable space in recent issues of the Australian Association for Research in Education Newsletter (available at www.aare.edu.au). In essence, university funding, in addition to teaching places, will be based on research income and output, e.g. income from competitive grants and the outputs such as publications, creative works and patents. While tiers are allocated, they are not static. Therefore, using ERA tiers to establish any historical trends in publications is flawed.

The highest scoring journal in the field was the *Journal of Education Policy* with a QScore of 18.56. The five highest scoring journals in the discipline (education) were the *American Educational Research Journal* (29.33), *British Educational Research Journal* (29.30), *Review of Educational Research* (29.21), *Teachers College Record* (28.54) and *Harvard Educational Review* (26.04). While being number one in the field, the *Journal of Education Policy* was ranked 56th overall in the discipline. This is consistent with the work of others (see Gorard, 2005; Griffiths, 1959, 1965, 1985; Immegart, 1975) who have suggested that educational leadership has a relatively weak quality profile within the already weak quality profile of educational research. However, it is to be noted that the *Journal of Education Policy* was ranked second (behind *Oxford Review of Education*) in a ranking study conducted in the United Kingdom by Wellington and Torgerson (2005).

TABLE 1: ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY JOURNALS

Journal	QScore	Location	ERA Tier[1]
Journal of Education Policy	18.56	UK	A*
International Journal of Educational Management	15.84	UK	B
Educational Administration Quarterly	15.74	USA	A*
Educational Management, Administration and Leadership	15.31	UK	A
Journal of Educational Administration	15.31	Australia	A
School Effectiveness and School Improvement	14.10	The Netherlands	A
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management	14.08	Australia	A
Educational Policy	13.95	USA	A
International Journal of Leadership in Education	13.31	USA	A
School Leadership and Management	12.37	UK	B
The Australian Educational Leader	12.30	Australia	B
Journal of Educational Change	12.01	The Netherlands	B
Education Policy Analysis Archives	11.61	USA	B
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis	11.61	USA	B
Educational Leadership	10.53	USA	B
International Studies in Educational Administration	10.14	Cyprus	B
Policy Futures in Education	10.14	UK	B
Leading and Managing	9.70	Australia	B
International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning	9.52	Canada	B
Journal of Educational Administration and History	9.52	UK	B

NOTE: A further 30 journals[2] were identified in the study with scores ranging from 9.36 to 0.00

The *International Journal of Educational Management* (*IJEM*) was not included in the field in the SORTI/AARE study. Rather it was included in the field of 'Economics, accounting, business and management'. The decision to include it in this study was based on *IJEM* featuring prominently in two previous studies, Eacott (2008) on the publication of work on strategy in education over 25 years in 14 prominent educational leadership journals and Bates and Eacott (2008) on teaching educational leadership and administration in Australia. However it should be noted that *IJEM* was the only journal in the SORTI/AARE list which was positioned higher than the current ERA tier would suggest. On QScore, *IJEM* was the second highest ranking journal for the field, yet based on the ERA tiers it should have been listed much lower. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to offer conclusive evidence as to why this is so, it is suggested that as a result of this journal (*IJEM*) having a higher (relative to other internationally based journals in the field) percentage of Australian contributions, it has been perceived by those ranking the journals (primarily Australian based academics) in the SORTI/AARE study (drawn from an Australian research association) as being of higher quality.

Seven of the 20 journals on the list are published in the USA. Five and four are published in the UK and Australia respectively, two in the Netherlands and one in both Cyprus and Canada

(notably the only entirely online journal in the list). Reflecting a somewhat American / British centric nature, no journals from the sub-continent or Asia (such as the *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration* – India) appeared in the SORTI/AARE list. The low representation of works from India in ISI listed journals is discussed, albeit briefly, by Phelan et al. (2000), and Bates (2003) also discusses the impact of country of publication and representation in the international literature.

Using the journals identified in Table 1, the table of contents and abstracts were searched for any original article (book reviews, editorial comments and research notes were excluded) where one of the authors was affiliated with an Australian educational institution. The choice of 'Australian educational institution' was deliberate and consistent with previous work such as Thomas (2006) who noted that writing in the field was not only the domain of academics (those employed by universities), but also of the multitude of practitioners who face the reality of educational leadership on a daily basis. Despite appearing in the SORTI/AARE study, articles from *The Australian Educational Leader* and *Educational Leadership* were omitted because they had not been subject to peer review processes as defined by Australian funding criteria.

Results

Having established the parameters for the search, a total of 8521 articles were surveyed, with 970 (11.38%) linked to an Australian based author. Several patterns emerge from this data. Figure 1 shows the percentage of works surveyed that were linked to an Australian based author over time. The contributions of Australian based authors was relatively consistent from 1977-1979 (ranging from 14.71 to 15.38) before reaching its peak in 1980 (20.35%). Between 1980 and 2007 there was a series of ebbs and flows. Most notably, since 2002 (7.60%, the lowest in the sample period), the contribution of Australian based authors has been steadily rising.

Three journals standout as the dominant outlets for publications by Australian based authors when considered as a percentage of total publications (see Table 2): *Leading & Managing* (*n*=66, 58.93%), *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* (*n*=249, 50.40%) and the *Journal of Educational Administration* (*n*=209, 28.59%). Not surprisingly, all three of these journals are based at Australian universities. *Leading & Managing* is currently housed at the University of Southern Queensland, but was previously associated with the University of Melbourne. The *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* is located at Monash University. The *Journal of Educational Administration* is currently situated at the University of Wollongong after previously being located at the University of New England. This is consistent with the findings of Bates (2003) who noted that 'educational researchers publish most of their research in 'local' journals' (p. 59). If we remove these three journals from the data, Australian authors are associated with 446 out of a possible 7184 articles, representing a 6.21 percent share of the sample.

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF ARTICLES LINKED TO AUSTRALIAN BASED AUTHORS
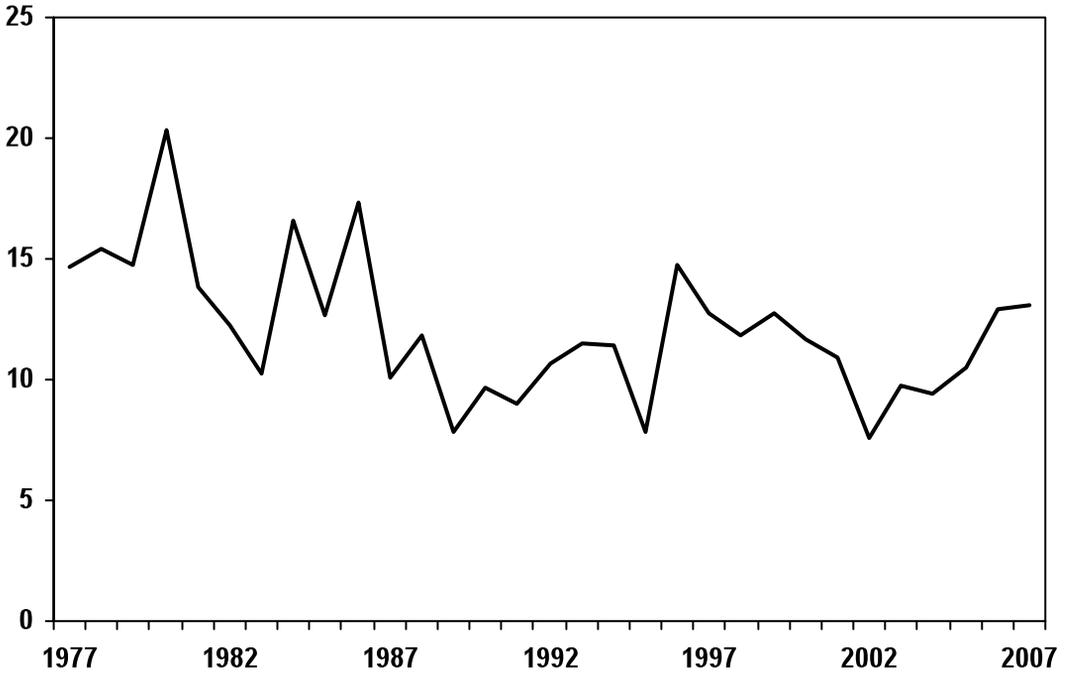
Who is publishing?

Whereas the previous section gave an overview of where Australian based authors are publishing in the field, this section seeks to examine and discuss 'Who is publishing in the field?' and 'How has this changed over time?'. Initially the publications were analysed in decades (noting that the data set began in 1977). Descriptive statistics were computed (see Table 3). The purpose of this action was twofold. In the first instance, the analysis sought to determine how many articles were produced and secondly, how many authors were responsible for those articles. It should be noted that unlike previous work (e.g. Phelan et al., 2000), this section gives credit to all authors on a paper. In Table 3, authors are merely linked to articles. However, for Table 4, a publication is divided by the number of authors. For example, a paper with two authors would have each author being assigned 0.50 publication points. This is consistent with university funding programs.

TABLE 2: AUSTRALIAN BASED OUTPUTS BY PUBLICATION OUTLETS

Journal	Total articles	With Australian Authors	Percent with Australian authors	Rank
Journal of Education Policy	760	87	11.45	6
Educational Administration Quarterly	708	22	3.11	15
Educational Management, Administration and Leadership	749	38	5.07	14
Journal of Educational Administration	731	209	28.59	3
School Effectiveness and School Improvement	350	26	7.43	11
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management	494	249	50.40	2
Educational Policy	601	4	0.67	18
International Journal of Leadership in Education	222	21	9.46	9
International Journal of Educational Management	627	72	11.48	5
School Leadership and Management	817	44	5.39	13
Journal of Educational Change	126	14	11.11	7
Education Policy Analysis Archives	509	8	1.57	17
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis	826	16	1.94	16
International Studies in Educational Administration	163	16	9.82	8
Policy Futures in Education	176	14	7.95	10
Leading & Managing	112	66	58.93	1
International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning	178	12	6.74	12
Journal of Educational Administration and History	372	52	13.98	4
TOTAL	8521	970	11.38	

TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE DATA OF AUTHORSHIP OVER TIME

Time period	Total articles	Total authors	Articles per author	Range	Single article authors	Multiple article authors	Most published author
1977-79	37	42	0.88	1-2	38	4	Many
1980-89	232	203	1.14	1-6	162	41	P.A. Duignan W.G. Walker
1990-99	325	310	1.05	1-12	225	85	C. Dimmock
2000-07	376	386	0.97	1-21	345	41	B. Mulford
1977-07	970	793	1.24	1-25	576	217	B. Mulford

As can be seen from Table 3, the average number of articles per author has remained relatively constant over the past 30 years, and remains below two. The upper range of articles produced by authors has risen from 2 in the 1977-1979 period through to 25 in the 2000-2007

period. It should be noted that often a publication track record will extend beyond the limits of a decade and that a number of authors had multiple articles across decades (e.g. 1979, then 1980), explaining the higher numbers in the overall row for articles per author and multiple articles authors. Worth noting from Table 3 is that Duignan and Mulford, two of the most published authors, have retired from their formal positions (although have continued in very active roles as Emeritus Professors). Table 4 shows the most published authors, the time period in which they have published and the number of articles per year. Bill Mulford is the most published author in the sample, with a career spanning the entire surveyed period. Worth noting is that relatively recent additions to publishing the field such as Wildy, Ehrich, McCormick, and Cranston have high articles to year ratios, suggesting that more recent additions to the Australian educational leadership voice are more active in publishing in the field's journals.

TABLE 4:   MOST PUBLISHED AUTHORS 1977-2007

Author	Publication period	Total Articles	Publication Points	Points Per Year
Mulford, B.	1977-2007	25	13.28	0.83
Gronn, P.	1982-2005	15	12.33	0.65
Macpherson, R.J.S.	1984-1996	14	11.40	1.17
Marginson, S.	1991-2007	10	10.00	0.63
Smyth, .J.	1977-2006	11	9.75	0.38
Dimmock, C.	1987-2002	15	9.50	1.00
Blackmore, J.	1992-2006	12	9.33	0.86
Wildy, H.	1992-2006	15	8.07	1.07
Duignan, P.A.	1980-2005	11	7.83	0.44
Caldwell, B.J.	1992-2004	8	7.50	0.67
Watkins, P.	1986-1994	7	7.00	0.88
Ehrich, L.C.	1994-2006	12	6.41	1.00
McCormick, J.	1996-2007	14	6.25	1.27
Cranston, N.	1999-2007	10	6.16	1.25
Whitehead, C.	1984-2007	6	6.00	0.26
Townsend, T.	1994-2001	6	6.00	0.86
Walker, W.G.	1980-1989	6	6.00	0.67
Evers, C.W.	1985-2000	6	5.50	0.40
Angus, L.	1986-2006	6	5.50	0.30
Thomas, A.R.	1979-2007	8	5.50	0.29
Johnson, N.	1990-1993	7	5.33	2.33

Institutional affiliations

To further deepen the analysis of the Australian educational leadership voice, the same procedure was performed at the institutional level. Table 5 uses the affiliation of the first author to show the distribution (expressed as a percentage) of publications across Australian universities.

Non-university affiliated authors, usually research higher degree students who are still working in schools or non-university settings, were the most common first author on papers. While still contributing the largest percentage, non-university authors are contributing far less of the Australian voice than in the 1980s, however this may be the result of universities ensuring that research students publish under the university affiliation in the current accountability/performance environment.

The greatest example of decreasing contribution is the University of New England (UNE), once one of the homes of the Australian educational leadership voice. Despite maintaining the School of Professional Development and Leadership, the Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy, and a host of bachelor, graduate certificate, masters and research higher degrees in administration and educational leadership, the research outputs (as measured by refereed publications in the field's leading journals) of UNE have decreased considerably over the past 30 years. Additionally, the *Journal of Educational Administration* (the leading Australian journal in the field) has moved from UNE to the Australian Centre for Educational Leadership at the University of Wollongong.

Deakin, Melbourne and UQ have remained relatively steady over the 30 years sampled in this study. This is not overly surprising given that Deakin (Bates, Blackmore, Watkins), Melbourne (Caldwell, Gurr, Lakomski, Marginson) and UQ (Lingard, Cranston) have maintained nationally influential figures in the field to head up their programs. Additionally, they each offer a range of post graduate programs in educational leadership and Melbourne has a research centre (Centre for Organizational Learning and Leadership) focused on the field.

QUT, Monash and Griffith are cited as three increasingly prominent players in the field. QUT has had steady performers in Taylor, Henry and more recently Ehrich, as the basis of their improvement. Monash has featured leading figures such as Beatty, Evers, Groon, Marginson, Seddon and Townsend. Griffith has benefited from the work of Dempster and a larger number of single publications by authors. The evidence presented in the form of leading/improving institutions supports the notion that a successful institution within the field requires at least one, if not a number of, prominent figures in the field to head up an active publication program.

TABLE 5: **DISTRIBUTION OF ARTICLES BY INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION, DISPLAYED IN PERCENTAGES**

Institution	1977-79 *n*=36	1980s *n*=229	1990s *n*=313	2000s *n*=358	OVERALL *N*=936
ACU		0.87	1.31	3.06	1.28
Adelaide	2.78		0.87	1.31	0.64
ANU	2.78	1.75	0.87	0.87	0.96
Ballarat		1.31	0.87	2.62	1.18
Canberra		0.44	1.75	1.75	0.96
CDU				0.44	0.11
CQU		0.44	0.87	0.87	0.53
CSU			0.44	1.75	0.53
Curtin		1.75	6.55	0.87	2.24
Deakin		4.80	6.55	6.99	4.49
ECU		0.87	5.24	3.06	2.24
Flinders	8.33	0.44	4.37	3.49	2.35
Griffith		0.87	1.31	7.86	2.46
JCU		0.87	0.44	0.87	0.53
La Trobe		1.75	0.87	3.93	1.60
Macquarie		0.44	0.44		0.21
Melbourne		7.42	11.35	10.48	7.16
Monash	5.56	10.04	11.35	14.41	8.97
Murdoch		2.18	1.31	2.62	1.50
Newcastle	2.78	0.87	3.49	2.62	1.82
Non-university	27.78	21.40	10.04	17.47	13.14
NTU	2.78	0.44	1.75	0.44	0.75
Queensland	11.11	4.80	4.80	7.86	4.70
QUT	2.78	0.87	7.42	10.04	4.59
RMIT		2.62	0.87	3.49	1.71
SCU			0.44	0.87	0.32
Swinburne		0.87	1.31	0.87	0.75
Sydney	2.78	1.31	4.80	3.93	2.56
Tasmania		2.62	3.93	6.55	3.21
UCQ			0.44		0.11
UNDA			0.87		0.21
UNE	16.67	15.28	12.23	3.49	8.23
UniSA		0.44	2.18	3.49	1.50
UNSW		3.06	5.24	3.93	2.99
UOW		1.31	0.87	3.06	1.28
USQ				2.18	0.53
UTS		1.75	0.87	2.18	1.18
UWA	13.89	4.37	12.23	6.55	6.20
UWS		0.87	2.18	4.37	1.82
VU		0.44	2.62	1.75	1.18
WoSA			0.44	2.18	0.64

Discussion

While it has been argued that as a relatively small country (when compared with the population and economies of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, just to name a few) Australia is fighting above its weight class in the international literature (Bates, 2003), I argue that the low level of contribution to the field's literature is a result of the limited attention given to educational leadership research in Australia. When discussing the quantity and quality of Australian based educational leadership research, Mulford (2007, p. 19) wrote:

> These disappointing results may have to do with the lack of priority in this country for the funding of educational research and, in particular, research in the area of educational leadership. In the last five years (2002-2006) only 2.3 percent of Australian Research Council (ARC) funding for Discovery grants, and 4.1 percent for Linkage grants went to the field of education. Less than 5 percent of all grants awarded in the field of education went to educational leadership and related areas. The average annual amount invested by the ARC in educational leadership research in Australia over the last five years was in the order of a miserly $52,000. Yet comparing the ARC grant list with subsequent publications, there is a clear link between grants and multiple publications in the area.

Lingard (2001) adds, current sources of research funding are significantly more restricted and policy driven than in the past. In addition, there is support for the notion that claims that Australian expenditure on education and educational research has steadily declined in comparison with other OECD economies (Considine et al., 2001). The decline of what was already a low level of support for educational research (McGraw et al., 1992) is a 'discouraging indicator of future research possibilities' (Ribbins et al., 2003, p. 438).

In personal correspondence following the publication of Bates and Eacott (2008), Ross Thomas, the editor of the *Journal of Educational Administration* and a leading figure in the field nationally noted:

> . . . my compliments on your article. It certainly is timely -- overdue, in fact -- and will, I hope, serve as a wake-up call for Australian institutions contributing to our field . . . . My deep belief is that we have depended on overseas material for far too long and, in conjunction with such, there has been frequently an unthinking acceptance that overseas material (especially from the USA) is readily applicable to the Australian context.

Building on from Mulford (2007) and others, if the Australian educational leadership is to reach the lofty heights of international excellence, it requires a commitment from both academics to produce research of the highest quality and impact, and the institutions that employ them to support the development of programs (of both teaching and research) that will advance the field nationally and put academics in the most advantageous position to lead the field internationally.

Before concluding, it is important to briefly touch on the notion that educational leadership is a field. In a recent introduction to a special issue of the *Australian Journal of Education*, *51*(3), Brian Caldwell (2007, p. 225) stated:

> There should be no doubt that both leadership and management are disciplines in their own right, a fact attested to by another Harvard scholar of renown who has had far-reaching influence in education, namely, Howard Gardner, who declared in *Five Minds for the Future* that 'beyond doubt both management and leadership are disciplines' (2006, p. 5).

He later adds:

> Leadership is required to establish a new policy, design a new curriculum or create a new culture. In this sense, leadership is ubiquitous in education and a consequence can be that the study of leadership is often dispersed or dissipated. Given that it is a discipline, however, it warrants a special place in the literature and in institutions of higher learning. It is a phenomenon that can be researched and for which theories can be built and applied in particular fields of policy and practice (p. 226).

For those of us who teach and research educational leadership, rarely would we doubt the impact of leadership on educational institutions. If we did, we would have to confront the uncomfortable questions about the basic value of our work, as well as the moral dilemma of taking our students' time and money under the prentice of becoming 'better educational leaders'. I do not argue against the importance of leadership in education institutions, but I do not see educational leadership as a discipline in its own right. It is well established that the divide between academic disciplines has become increasingly difficult to distinguish and that within any individual discipline it has become the norm for research to be conducted across multiple fields (Bourke & Butler, 1998). If you look at the ranking of the publication outlets, following the three Australian based journals, the next most frequent publication source is the multi-disciplinary *Journal of Educational Administration and History*. While I applaud the efforts of Caldwell, contemporary orthodoxy in educational leadership literature calls for a re-focus on the educational elements of the role (as opposed to the managerial). Any attempt to try and segregate the work of 'educational leadership' from the broader work of 'education' is both practically and theoretically flawed.

Thinking of educational leadership as a field and not as a discipline, may explain why there are so many authors who make single or few contributions. Even some of the leading publishers in the field have produced relatively few publications for the time period. As one of many fields within the discipline of education, on the basis of research focus, many academics come in and out of the field over the course of their careers. Despite educational leadership courses or programs being offered at some 22 of the 36 Australian universities (Bates & Eacott, 2008), student numbers are relatively low when compared with other aspects of education (such as initial teacher training) and as previously discussed, research funding is limited, resulting in very few academics being able to maintain their workloads solely within the field. Many academics who would consider themselves focused on 'educational leadership' are forced to supplement their workload with work in other areas such as primary education, further reducing their ability to publish.

Conclusion

The status of an academic field and the institutions which contribute to it derives from sources such as media accounts, government information, academic studies, political discourse, and self-promotion (Phelan et al., 2000). The publication data provided in this paper supplements these other, often anecdotal evaluations, with rigorous quantitative information. The count of publications presented are not estimates, rather they are actual measures of publication outputs by Australian based authors in major international journals within the field of educational leadership. Publication within these journals is an important research activity for academics in the current performance orientated higher education environment.

However, it is important to consider that publication is only one feature of the Australian educational leadership voice. Although, the field of educational leadership has traditionally adopted a defensive stance in relation to its stature in both the academy and wider community (McCarthy et al., 1988; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997). Pounder, Crow and Bergerson (2004) found that the 'publish or perish' phenomenon of academia was positively correlated with an intention to remain a professor, suggesting that 'perhaps those who chose to become educational leadership professors do not experience the publish or perish pressure as disadvantageous to staying in the academy' (p. 523). Not surprisingly, the leading publishers in the field, as indicated by the data presented in this paper, hold senior (professor or associate professor) positions within their universities.

The analysis presented in this paper has provided a descriptive and analytical assessment of the Australian educational leadership voice through the measure of published articles in the field's leading journals. In synthesising the findings, it is essential to return to the major research questions of the study. Despite surveying a 30 year period and a large number of authors from a diverse group of educational leadership journals, the bulk of works in the field come from a relatively small set of academics and their work is published in a small set of journals. Although it is acknowledged that refereed journals are but one outlet for the publication of academic work. Further analysis drawing from books, book chapters and a wider scope of journals may or may not reveal different findings. As with any academic endeavour, the Australian educational leadership voice has experienced a series of ebbs and flows over the past 30 years. However, the contribution of Australian based authors to the field's leading journals has been consistently low. While it is only natural that there are fewer articles in the very top journals because there are fewer top journals than lower tiers and they are more difficult to get in to, getting published in the top journals of the field reflects the authority and disciplinary grounding that is required to lead a field internationally. Although a number of Australians continue to have significant influence in a variety of international posts (e.g. Barry McGaw and Brian Caldwell just to name two), for the Australian educational leadership voice to truly rise again on the international scene it requires a period of reflection (which is the underlying intention of this paper) and renewed focus on undertaking research that matters to both the theoretical and practical development of the field. The information presented in this paper is intended to open discussion on how best to support and develop the Australian educational leadership voice. This paper is by no means intended to provide the final word. Rather, the goal is to set the stage for an open and wide-ranging discussion on how to position the Australian contribution at the leading edge of the field internationally.

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Notes

1. A thorough description of the criteria used for ERA journal ranking tiers can be found at http://www.arc.gov.au/era/tiers_ranking.htm. Basically, A* journals represent the top 5% in a field, A the next 15%; B the next 30% and C the final 50%.

2. The other 30 journals, their QScore and ERA tier were: Education Leadership Review (9.36, B); Leadership and Policy in Schools (7.90, B); New Zealand Journal of Educational Leadership (7.90, n/a); Economics of Education Review (7.15, A); Educational Research and Reviews (6.79, C); Journal of Research for Educational Leaders (5.77, C); Management in Education (5.77, C); Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy (5.30, C); Education Economics (5.30, B); International Journal of Educational Advancement (5.30, C); Education Next: A journal of opinion and research (3.78, C); International Journal of Educational Reform (3.78, C); Journal of School Leadership (3.78, C); Journal of Women in Educational Leadership (3.78, C); NASSP Bulletin (3.78, n/a); Educational Planning (3.01, C); Improving Schools (3.01, C); Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies (3.01, C); The Urban Review: Issues and ideas in public education (3.01, C); AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice (2.29, C); Educational Horizons (2.29, C); Journal of Access Policy and Practice (2.29, C); Journal of Education Finance (2.29, C); Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education (2.29, C); Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership (2.29, C); National Association of Student Affairs Professionals Journal (2.29, C); The New Educator (2.29, C); Academic Leadership (0.00, C); Canadian Journal of Education (0.00, C); Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration (0.00, C).

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