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# Authorship Analysis of *The Southeastern Librarian*, 2007-2011

David Sesser

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## Introduction

*The Southeastern Librarian* has served as a voice among librarians in the region for more than 50 years. A publication that focuses on both research articles and news and information from around the region, *The Southeastern Librarian* continues to fill a niche that state and national publications cannot. The characteristics of the authors published in the journal have also changed over the years. A study of who is published in the journal is essential to understanding how it is currently impacting the field, especially in the southeastern United States. Authorship studies are an important bibliometric tool that examine publishing patterns among selected titles and can prove to be useful to collection development professionals. They can also be used by prospective authors to determine if a certain publication would be a good fit for their work.

## Problem Statement

This study examines the authorship patterns in refereed research articles published in *The Southeastern Librarian*. *The Southeastern Librarian* was selected for this study as it is the preeminent regional library publication for the southeastern United States and is a refereed publication, unlike the journals of several of the state library organizations that make up the Southeastern Library Association.

## Research Questions

The research questions that this study answers include:

- R1. Which authors were published in *The Southeastern Librarian* during the specified time period?
- R2. What is the gender of the authors in this study?
- R3. Were the authors employed and what was their position/title?
- R4. Which states are represented by the authors in this study?
- R5. What is the degree of collaboration - that is the ratio of single authored articles to co-authored articles?

## Limitations

The study examined articles published between 2007 and 2011 and only included items published in the first and third issues from each volume. The journal is published quarterly but the second and fourth issues are newsletters rather than research publications and are not included in this study.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this article, bibliometrics is defined as the use of statistical methods in the analysis of a body of literature to reveal the historical development of subject fields and patterns of authorship, publication, and use (Young 1983). The term authorship study refers to an examination of an author's characteristics (Park 2).

## Assumptions

The articles included in this study were accessed on the Web site of the Southeastern Library Association and it is assumed that the author data associated with each article is accurate and complete.

## Literature Review

Bibliometric studies that examine authorship characteristics are quite common, but a search of the scholarly LIS literature did not find another authorship study of *The Southeastern Librarian*. One article that does explore authorship but examines another journal is Finch's 2009 article that examines *The American Archivist*. She observed an increase in the number of peer-reviewed articles published during the time period investigated, with an increase of more than 50 percent a year. Also, a wide range of institutions were reflected among the authors published in the journal, with some universities more heavily represented as single authors published multiple articles (Finch 56).

Other articles that examine authorship patterns include Bahr and Zemon's examination of collaborative publications between academic librarians. The authors studied both *College & Research Libraries* and the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*. They observed that the number of co-authored publications increased as time passed and authors from smaller institutions could work with another author to more easily publish (Bahr 417). Collaboration

plays an important role in small college librarian publishing habits.

While not specifically limited to librarians who are employed in the southeastern United States, the majority of articles published by *The Southeastern Librarian* are written by authors who do reside in those states. A similar study examined the publication patterns of librarians employed at campuses of Penn State University. By limiting the geographic scope of the sample while focusing on scholarly, refereed publications, an accurate representation of the academic output in a certain area can be determined. The author, Hart, determined that the overall output by these librarians was high and only increased overtime (460-61). He also observed that authors employed at research institutions were more likely to publish than their counterparts at smaller colleges and did so in order to meet tenure and promotion goals. Other geographic publications pattern studies include Joswick and Willard, supporting the idea that collaborative authorship is only increasing and librarians at research institutions are more likely to publish than their colleagues at smaller institutions or public libraries.

The methodology of these studies is similar to the methodology of this study. Like these studies, the articles published in *The Southeastern Librarian* were analyzed in a spreadsheet in order to determine data about each author and was organized into charts to easily display the results.

### Methodology

This authorship study was based on data gathered directly from *The Southeastern Librarian*, which is available on the Web site of the Southeastern Library Association in a PDF format. Each issue from 2007 to 2011 that contains research articles was included in the study.

The data recorded for each article includes publication year, article title, authors, author location and position, and location by state. The data collected were compiled in a spreadsheet. The data were used to create charts to display the results for each research question. The data were broken into sub-topics for each research question, and graphs were created to help answer the research questions.

### Results

R1. Which authors were published in *The Southeastern Librarian* during the specified time period?

The data gathered in this study and displayed in **table 1** indicate that a total of sixty-three people were listed as authors or co-authors of peer-reviewed articles in *The Southeastern Librarian* from 2007 to 2011. Six authors were published more than once during this period. A total of thirty-eight articles were published in the journal during this period.

**Table 1. Authors published more than once, 2007-2011.**

Last Name	First Name	Frequency
Martin	Alyssa	2
Knight	Carley	2
Braquet	Donna	2
Doolittle	Elizabeth	2
Krishnamurthy	Mangala	2
Jin	Miao	2

R2. What is the gender of the authors in this study?

According to **table 2**, the publication of female authors heavily outnumbered male authors in this study. Each of the authors who were published more than once was also female. A total of eighteen of the authors included in this study were male for a total of twenty-eight percent. Forty-five of the authors were female for a total of seventy-one percent of the authors published during this period.

**Table 2. Author gender.**

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	45	71%
Male	18	28%

R3. Were the authors employed and what was their position/title?

The authors included in this study were employed as librarians or library school faculty at a wide range of institutions and held a number of different job titles. One author was an intern at a non-profit, and two authors were university faculty members in fields outside library science. Three authors were graduate students, and other authors held a variety of titles including coordinator of media services, bibliographic specialist, and photograph curator. The types of institutions at which the authors were employed were not as varied as their titles. The vast majority of authors were employed at institutions of higher learning, including libraries at colleges, universities, and law schools. Only two were not associated as either a student, faculty, or staff member at an institution of higher learning. No public or school librarians were published in *The Southeastern Librarian* during this period. Some institutions were more heavily represented than others, as seen in **table 3**.

**Table 3. Five most represented institutions.**

Institution	Number of Authors
University of Alabama	7
Jacksonville State University	6
East Carolina University	5
Troy University-Montgomery	5
University of Southern Mississippi	5

R4. Which states are represented by the authors in this study?

The Southeastern Library Association is a regional group, and almost all of the authors who were included in this data set are employed at institutions that fall under the scope of

the association. One author included in this study moved to California before his/her article was published but resided in Tennessee at the time of submission. As noted in **table 4**, the other authors all resided in the southeastern United States.

**Table 4. States represented in the study.**

State	Number of authors from state
Alabama	22
Florida	2
Georgia	3
Kentucky	8
Louisiana	1
Mississippi	12
North Carolina	12
South Carolina	4
Tennessee	4
California	1

Several states that are part of the Southeastern Library Association were not represented in the data set. The states of Arkansas, West Virginia, and Virginia were not represented by a single author in this study.

R5. *What is the degree of collaboration, that is ratio of single authored articles to co-authored articles?*

From 2001 to 2011, a total of thirty-eight peer reviewed articles were published in *The Southeastern Librarian*. Twenty-one of the articles were co-authored while the remaining seventeen were written by single authors. **Table 5** shows the number of single and co-authored articles in this study, as well as the percentage of each.

**Table 5. Co-authored articles and single authored articles**

Type of Authorship	Number	Percentage
Co-authored	21	55%
Single authored	17	45%

**Table 6. Co-authored articles by year.**

Year	Co-authored articles/ Percentage of annual total		Single author articles/ Percentage of annual total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2007	7	64%	4	36%
2008	4	57%	3	43%
2009	3	38%	5	62%
2010	4	67%	2	33%
2011	3	50%	3	50%

While the total number of articles published in *The Southeastern Librarian* varied from year to year during the time frame of the study, the annual total of articles published decreased. As seen in **table 7**, the number of articles decreased from a high of eleven in 2007 to a low of six in 2011. This represents a forty five percent decrease in the number of articles published on an annual basis.

**Table 7. Annual number of articles.**

Year	Articles
2007	11
2008	7
2009	8
2010	6
2011	6

## Discussion

*The Southeastern Librarian* published a total of thirty-seven refereed research articles from 2007 to 2011. The majority of these articles were written by women, and several women were published more than once. The majority of authors were associated with institutions of higher learning, either as a library professional, instructor, or as a student. Only three percent of the authors in the study were not directly associated with a college or university. Several institutions were also heavily represented in the *Southeastern Librarian*, and some states had multiple authors, while other states that participate in the Southeastern Library Association were not represented at all. Also, the majority of the articles examined in the data set were written by co-authors.

These findings correspond with the results of Finch's study of *The American Archivist*. A similar ratio of male-to-female authors, a majority of authors associated with institutions of higher education, and a high ratio of co-authored articles were all discovered in that study. These findings are unlike those discovered in Hart's study - which found an increase in publications within a specific geographic area over the time period of the study. The data set shows that the number of articles published by *The Southeastern Librarian* decreased during the time frame of the study - indicating a decrease in submissions. A steady increase in the number of articles written by co-authors does not appear in this study, unlike the studies of Joswick and Willard. Rather, the number of co-authored and single-authored articles is quite fluid during the time frame of the study.

Further research could be conducted on this topic. Additional study could examine topics directly relating to the types of authors publishing in the journal. These topics could include the degrees that authors hold, the size and type of institutions of the authors, the faculty status of the authors, and if the author is seeking tenure. An examination of a larger time period might yield a clearer pattern of the rate of co-authored articles. Additionally, a study of other regional library publications could show how *The Southeastern Librarian* compares to its peer journals.

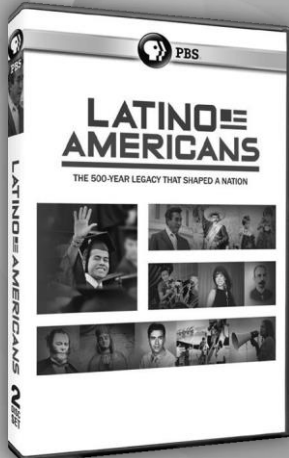
One area for improvement for *The Southeastern Librarian* would be to increase submissions from states that do not appear in this study. An effective partnership with each state organization could be used to especially encourage submissions from Arkansas, Virginia, and West Virginia, while also increasing the overall number of submissions from all of the states that belong to the Southeastern Library Association.

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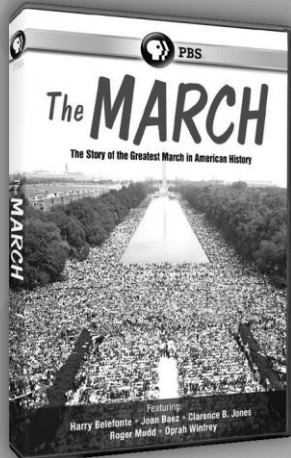
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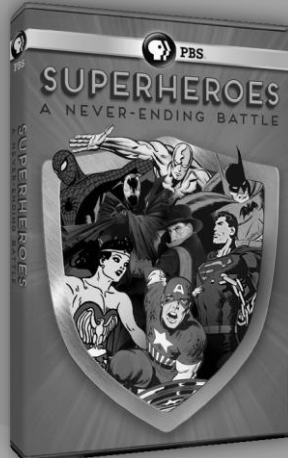
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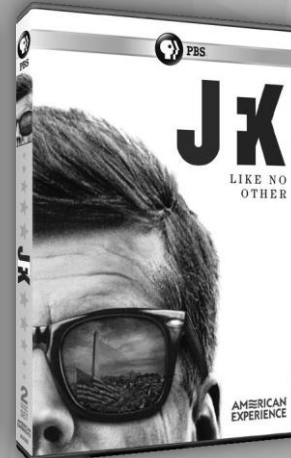
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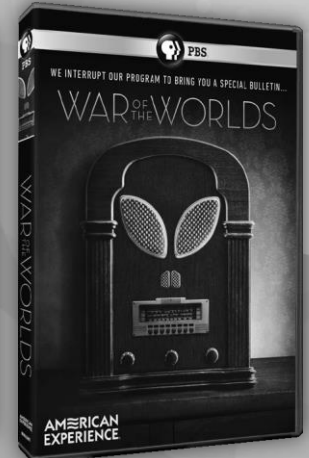
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