

**Publications in psychology:  
French issues**

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**Abstract**

This paper discusses the situation of psychology publications in France, in particular, the visibility of French research through journals and bibliographic databases; the role of publications for the evaluation of researchers and laboratories, and the contribution of French psychologists to a national publications archiving platform.

Key words: psychology; scientific communication; journals; databases; evaluation; France

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## Introduction

The world of research produces new knowledge and communicates the results. Publications such as articles in journals, monographs, conference proceedings and reports play an essential role in communicating research results. They are also of major importance when evaluating the work done by researchers and laboratories and when decisions need to be made regarding the funding of research projects. Work that is published in media with high visibility in the field of scientific research is in fact one of the most important criteria for this type of evaluation. Constant competition to get work published, preferably in international journals, is a day-to-day reality for research laboratories. In certain areas of psychology such as cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience the competition is just as intense as in the fields of biology or medicine.

French psychologists realized very early on how important it is to publish information on their research work. In 1876, the founder of French scientific psychology Théodule Ribot (1839-1916) created the “*Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*” to publish work stemming from the new current emerging in psychology at the time. In 1894, Alfred Binet (1857-1911) founded *L'Année Psychologique*, the first journal to be entirely devoted to psychology. In 1904 the *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* was set up by Pierre Janet (1859-1947) and Georges Dumas (1866-1946).

Today French works and/or periodicals are brought out by many French publishers. For example, “*Le Travail Humain*” is published by the University Presses of France and “*L'Année psychologique*” by Armand Colin. Some overseas publishing houses also publish French work, for example the French Psychological Society's two journals, “*Psychologie Française*” and “*Pratiques Psychologiques*” are now part of the Elsevier group.

A non-exhaustive search on the INIST-CNRS “Pascal” database in June 2008 came up with the result that over 1200 articles were published by French authors in psychology and its related fields (psychopathology, psychoanalysis, cognitive neuroscience and neuropsychology) over the 2005-2007 period. Although this may seem a considerable amount, is French research in the field of psychology really visible enough?

For certain French psychologists, American domination in the field may tend to handicap the dissemination of French research work (Beauvois, 2006 ; Piolat & Beauvois, 2008 ; Thiberghien & Beauvois, 2008 ). For example, some aspects of French research in social psychology are specific to a French context and this can lead to difficulty in getting articles on the subject published in American journals.

The fact that English is accepted as the “universal” language for communication between researchers is in fact less problematic than both the criteria employed by the editorial boards of American journals to decide whether to publish or not and the requests for articles to be modified before publication (Piolat & Beauvois, 2008).

An article about the history of the cognitive revolution by George Miller of the Department of Psychology of Princeton University in the U.S. published in “*Trends in Cognitive Sciences*” is quite symptomatic of this rather reductive vision (Miller, 2003). Any European aspect to the debate is totally ignored and therefore the author concludes that psychology contributed in no way to this revolution because it had yet to emancipate itself from the dominance of behaviorism at that time. This analysis may be convincing in an American context but does not necessarily apply to Europe where behaviorism had a much less widespread influence. Houdé & Mazoyer (2003) and Vaclair & Perret (2003) both

wrote replies to Miller which highlighted the European contribution to developments in cognitive sciences (the formalization of thought, the emergence of neurosciences and neuropsychology) and restated the important contributions made by authors such as Piaget and Vigotsky.

As Vauclair & Piolat (2004) have pointed out, it is not an easy task to provide an accurate overview of the situation regarding publication and the production of scientific work in the field of psychology. It is particularly difficult to define the borders of this discipline because it has close links with other scientific areas such as psychiatry, neurosciences, medicine, education, human and social sciences, computing, psychoanalysis etc. The number of paper and electronic journals is constantly on the increase. It would be crucially important to have access to journals whose quality is recognized by the national and international scientific communities.

The information below is given in response to the following two questions:

- What is the level of French research visibility?
- To what extent would a European publishing platform (or open archives) improve dissemination of French research work?

### **How does French research in psychology compare in terms of academic references?**

The source of these statistics is the ISI (Web of knowledge –Essential Science Indicators) in which French language visibility has a fairly low representation so the ranking of French research may be underestimated. Also, given that here psychology is mixed with other disciplines like psychiatry and neurosciences, it is difficult to provide an exact ranking for France in this field.

**Table 1: Ranking of psychology/psychiatry according to the number of citations obtained**

<b>Ranking (N= 83)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>Citations per paper</b>
1	United States	1,253,719	10.90
2	England	245,099	10.67
3	Canada	161,298	10.20
4	Germany	110,934	7.16
5	Netherlands	86,123	9.78
6	Australia	81,604	8.19
7	France	39,842	7.63
8	Italy	39,474	9.30
9	Israel	31,539	8.13
10	Sweden	27,996	8.76

**Table 2: Rankings in the Neurosciences & Behavior category according to the number of citations obtained**

Place (N= 81)	Country	Citations	Citations per paper
1	America	2,647,975	22.35
2	England	514,522	22.18
3	Germany	487,255	18.06
4	Canada	328,130	18.39
5	Japan	322,227	12.97
6	France	280,629	17.01
7	Italy	231,953	13.63
8	Netherlands	138,413	15.99
9	Sweden	131,835	18.36
10	Switzerland	127,777	20.15

### **Which areas are covered by French psychology journals?**

Our non-exhaustive inventory of French journals shows that the majority of these publications are devoted to clinical psychology and psychoanalysis. After that come periodicals dealing with social psychology, applied psychology and child psychology. There are few publications in the areas of general psychology, cognitive and experimental psychology and neuropsychology. The areas with the most coverage are also those with a specific link to a French context. For example, psychoanalysis tends to have a greater influence on French clinical psychology than elsewhere in the world (training in clinical psychology in France is essentially oriented towards psychoanalysis). In the case of social psychology, certain themes such as social representations are particularly specific to French research. It is therefore easier for work in these fields to be published by French national journals than by American publications.

### Presence of French Psychology journals in international databases

**Table 3: The number of French psychology journals indexed in four international databases (including psychoanalysis and psychiatry)**

INIST-CNRS (Pascal)	60
PsycINFO	38
ISI	10
Pubmed/Medline	8

See Annexes for the titles of the journals

The American databases index a lot less French titles than INIST-CNRS. As the impact factor is calculated with reference to the ISI databases the level of visibility for French research in psychology is underestimated. As the Table below shows, the impact factor of two French journals are low. Two new journals, *Psychologie Française* and *Pratiques Psychologiques*, are currently being integrated into the ISI databases which mean that their impact factors will not be available until 2011.

**Table 4: Evolution of two French psychology journals' impact factors**

Titles	IF 2004	IF 2005	IF 2006	IF 2007
L'année psychologique	0.478	0.304	0.191	0.380
Le travail humain	0.067	0.121	0.161	0.448

The presence of a journal on an international database is not necessarily proof of its quality but it does nonetheless favor its international visibility. Vauclair & Piolat (2004) noted however that the managing editors and publishers of French language journals from Belgium, Switzerland and Quebec are more likely to attempt to get their periodicals into a database like PsycINFO than into their French counterparts.

### Which psychology journals do French researchers prefer to be published in?

At the start of the 2000's, a survey was carried out in which 112 French researchers (University Professors and Senior Lecturers) were asked to classify 325 psychology journals into four criteria-based categories (Jeannin & Santiago-Delefosse, 2004):

- Level 1 journals: journals which are central to their discipline and in which researchers are highly recommended to publish their work;
- Level 2 journals: specialist psychology journals or journals which are central to another discipline but which accept contributions on psychology. Researchers are recommended to publish work in these journals
- No : the journal is not in level 1 or level 2;
- Don't know.

The results show that the journals classed as Level 1 were mainly English language periodicals. This demonstrates that there is a strong inclination to publish in “international” journals and one should take into account the fact that publishing in English facilitates access to research.

There are more French language titles in the journals classed in Level 2 however and the appraisals by the researchers are more varied. French researchers know these periodicals but opinions vary on the benefits of being published by these journals.

**Table 5: The top eleven psychology journals classified in Level One in descending order (Jeannin & Santiago-Delefosse, 2004):**

L'année psychologique
Cogniton
Psychological Review
Journal of experimental psychology : learning, memory and, cognition
Cognitive psychology
Journal of experimental psychology : human perception and performance
Journal of experimental psychology : general
British journal of psychology
Child development
Annual review of psychology
Psychologie française

*L'Année Psychologique* which is in top place in this table is also a journal with a low impact factor. This tends to prove that the impact factor is not necessarily a prime criterion for defining a journal's prestige.

**Table 6: The top eleven psychology journals classified in Level Two in descending order (Jeannin & Santiago-Delefosse, 2004):**

Applied psychology – An international review/Psychologie appliquée – Revue internationale
Bulletin de psychologie
Psychologie française
Orientation scolaire et professionnelle
Annales médico-psychologiques
Langages
Applied cognitive psychology
Connexions
Annales de psychiatrie
Cahiers de psychologie cognitive – Current psychology of cognition
Enfance

### Which journals do French researchers really publish their work in?

We have put together a sample list of records from the Pascal database on the basis of author affiliations (French University psychology departments and laboratories such as the Inserm and the CNRS along with French practicing psychologists) which are classified with the database's psychology/psychopathology codes. The articles were published between 2005 and 2007. We retrieved a total of 1239 records. This figure does not correspond to the total of all publications – a search by affiliation is particularly difficult to do (incomplete affiliation, laboratories changing names, different spellings of the name of a laboratory etc.).

**Table 7: The top eleven journals in which French researchers publish work in descending order**

Psychologie française
Bulletin de psychologie
L'encéphale
Neuropsychiatrie de l'enfance et de l'adolescence
Pratiques psychologiques
Annales médico-psychologiques
Les cahiers internationaux de psychologie sociale
Année psychologique
Revue européenne de psychologie appliquée/European Journal of Applied Psychology
Behavioural brain research
Enfance

It should be noted that there is a discrepancy between the classification of these journals by French academics and the journals which actually publish French research work in psychology. While academics would like to publish in international journals, research work mainly gets published in French journals

However, it is likely that practices vary according to the institution to which the researchers belong and the scientific orientation of works. We obtained a sub-sample of records corresponding to the publications of researchers from the CNRS (348 references):

**Table 8: The top eleven journals in which CNRS researchers publish work on psychology work in descending order**

Behavioural brain research
L'encéphale
Cognition
Psychologie française
Année psychologique
Neuropsychologia
European journal of social psychology
Brain and cognition
Brain research
Neurobiology of learning and memory
Vision research

French researchers in psychology (and its related fields) from the CNRS prefer to publish in English language journals. Journals in the fields of cognitive psychology, cognitive neurosciences and neuropsychology are particularly well represented which can be explained in part by the specific CNRS orientation of research work in this field. It should also be noted that there are few French or French language specialist journals which publish this kind of work.

Note that our data may be biased due to the literature coverage of the Pascal database and the selection of the references.

### **Which language do French researchers in psychology publish their work in?**

We also analyzed the language which articles were published in using the same corpus as above.

**Table 9: Language of publication for French researchers in psychology**

French	65.779 %
English	34.302 %
Spanish	0.081 %

**Table 10: Language of publication for CNRS researchers**

English	70.69 %
French	29.310



Again it can be noted that practices vary according to the institution to which the researchers belong, and probably to the scientific area, with the majority of CNRS researchers tending to publish work in English.

### **In which countries are French research works in psychology published?**

Are researchers ready to publish on a European platform? To encourage thought on this point, we looked at the part played by the country of publication for work by French researchers in psychology.

**Table 11: Country of publication in descending order:**

France	63.51 %
United States	10.25 %
United Kingdom	9.28 %
Netherlands	5.97 %
Ireland	3.55 %
Belgium	3.14 %
Germany	2.5 %
Switzerland	1.21 %
Canada	0.56 %

**Table 12: Country of publication for work by CNRS researchers, in descending order :**

France	30.74 %
United States	23.56 %
United Kingdom	19.82 %
Netherlands	12.93 %
Ireland	9.19 %
Germany	3.44 %
Switzerland	0.28 %

Generally, researchers and practicing psychologists give preference to French journals and tend not to publish much in journals from countries that are partially French-speaking (Belgium, Switzerland, Canada). Nevertheless they also publish more in other European countries' journals than in American journals.

## **The presence of French psychologists on the editorial boards of international journals**

The presence of French psychologists on the editorial boards of international journals tends to also indicate the level of visibility of French research work. There are in fact few French researchers (2 %) on the editorial boards of sixty international journals classed in Level 1 by Jeannin's survey.

The presence of foreign researchers on editorial boards can also denote a greater degree of openness to other countries in these journals. An analysis of the editorial boards of twenty-eight French psychology journals showed that they are mainly made up of French researchers with few foreign researchers present. However, it should be noted that there are more European researchers than their North American counterparts.

## **Publication and the evaluation of laboratories and researchers**

Here are three examples:

### *At the CNRS:*

The National Committee of the CNRS is the main evaluation body for laboratories and researchers. It is made up of 40 different departments corresponding to either one scientific field or a group of fields. Psychology is mainly present in department 27 "Behaviour, the Brain, Cognition".

Priority is given to publication in international journals which are indexed on the main international databases even if publication in French journals is not looked down upon. There is no definitive list of journals classified according to their importance. Various bibliometric indexes are used such as the impact factor and the "H" factor.

### *In the University system:*

According to our information, one of the criteria used by Department 16 "Psychology, Social Psychology and Clinical Psychology" of the French National University Council ("*Comité National Universitaire*") for the recruitment of Professors and Senior Lecturers in Psychology is whether or not a researcher has been published in one of the Council's approved journals. An approved journal needs to be indexed on the main international databases such as INIST-CNRS, ISI, PsycINFO, Medline).

Currently periodicals are not listed according to their importance for the recruitment and evaluation of academics but this kind of list is currently being compiled.

### *At the AERES :*

AERES (*L'Agence d'Evaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur – Research and Higher Education Evaluation Agency*) uses its own criteria to evaluate whether a researcher is "publishing". To qualify for this status, a researcher needs to produce a certain minimum number of so-called Level A works during a four-year contract. This figure varies according to the scientific discipline concerned. Thus for Human and Social Sciences, a researcher is required to obtain four Level A publications whereas as a teacher-researcher is required to obtain two.

Level A scientific research work is defined as follows:

- Publication in an international journal with its own peer review committee (or a journal in certain fields which is considered to be of very high level by the scientific community);
- A book chapter or research work which is recognized internationally or has national importance in the field of Human and Social Sciences;
- For the fields of Science and Technology Information and Communication or Human and Social Sciences, a long article published at an international conference with a selection committee whose discernment is respected by the scientific community;
- In Human and Social Sciences, the creation of accessible databases, reference corpuses or critical editions;
- An international patent.

French psychologists do tend to agree on certain criteria but nonetheless there is no standardized set of common practices used to evaluate researchers' publications. Jeannin and Santiago-Delefosse's survey (2004) even tends to suggest that French academics judge publications according to their own publishing practices.

### **Open access archives of works in psychology: the example of HAL**

The development of open institutional archives is an increasingly common practice in France. A recent survey of COUPERIN's member institutions by Bruley, Huet, Kalfon & Thirion (2008) found that the majority of such projects are based on theses (48 %) followed by mixed archives (39 %), publications (10 %) and other documents (3 %). The authors who carried out the survey also noted that posting material into these archives has not become a habitual working practice. However the archives have a high rate of people consulting them.

HAL (Hyper Articles en Ligne – "On-Line Hyper Articles") is a common interdisciplinary open access platform which houses articles by researchers from French universities, "grandes écoles" (prestigious university level schools) and research establishments. HAL was developed by the Centre for Direct Scientific Communication (CCSD - Centre pour la Communication Scientifique Directe) a unit affiliated to the CNRS with the stated aim of promoting French national research. In June 2008, around 108,000 full text documents had been placed on the platform.

On the HAL platform, psychology is present in two disciplinary categories, cognitive sciences and human and social sciences

**Table 13 : Presence of psychology on HAL (Cognitive sciences)**

<b>Psychology</b>	<b>207</b>
Computing	204
Neurosciences	138
Linguistics	305

**Table 14 : Presence of psychology on HAL (Human and Social Sciences)**

Archaeology and prehistory	498
Architecture and Planning	411
Art and Art History	159
Biological Anthropology	30
Business Administration and Management	371
Classical Studies	20
Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies	104
Demographics	32
Economics and Finance	2317
Education	3203
Environmental Studies	162
Gender Studies	51
Geography	834
History	1254
History, philosophy and Sociology of science	487
Information and Communication Sciences	1208
Law	176
Linguistics	1585
Literature	200
Methods and Statistics	94
Music, Musicology and Dramatic Arts	85
Philosophy	625
Political Science	720
<b>Psychology</b>	<b>135</b>
Religion	92
Social and Ethnological Anthropology	729
Sociology	1123

French psychologists are less inclined to publish their works in the Human and Social Sciences category but are more willing to do so in the Cognitive Sciences category.

If a European archive platform was to be developed, a federated system should be set up between the different national systems to ensure documents are automatically pooled in the main repository because researchers probably would not send their documents to all the different systems. The European interdisciplinary DRIVER 1 project has been set up to look into how to make this kind of federated system work.

## CONCLUSION

In France there is no consensus of agreement on the criteria that should be used to evaluate the quality of journals. It tends to likely depend on the administrative affiliation of researchers and the scientific orientation of works.

Further, as researchers do not all publish their work in the same ways; they may also tend to have differing viewpoints on the relevance of a European platform.

It is therefore necessary to consider how to federate research support for this platform. One idea could be to take decisions which would increase the platform's international visibility.

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**ANNEXE 1: Titles of the French psychology periodicals indexed on Pascal (INIST-CNRS), including psychoanalysis and psychiatry**

Activités (revue électronique)	Ortho magazine
Adolescence (Paris)	Performances
Alcoologie et addictologie	Perspectives psychiatriques
A.N.A.E. Approches neuropsychologiques	Pratiques en santé mentale
des apprentissages chez l'enfant	Pratiques psychologiques
Annales médico-psychologiques	PRISME
Année psychologique	Psychiatrie de l'enfant
Bulletin de psychologie	Psychiatrie, sciences humaines et neurosciences
Cahiers de psychologie cognitive	Psychologie et éducation
Cahiers internationaux de psychologie sociale	Psychologie et neuropsychiatrie du vieillissement
Champ psychosomatique	Psychologie clinique
Cliniques méditerranéennes	Psychologie clinique et projective
Confrontations psychiatriques	Psychologie de l'interaction
Connexions	Psychologie du travail et des interactions
Courrier des addictions	Psychologie française
Devenir	Psycho-oncologie
Enfance	Psychothérapies
Evolution psychiatrique	Revue de psychothérapie psychanalytique de groupe
Evolutions psychomotrices	Revue de psychiatrie et de psychologie médicale
Filigrane	Revue française de psychanalyse
Imaginaire et inconscient	Revue française de psychosomatique
Information psychiatrique	Revue francophone de clinique comportementale et cognitive
Intellectica	Revue francophone du stress et du trauma
Journal de thérapie comportementale et cognitive	Revue internationale de psychologie sociale
L'autre	Revue internationale de psychosociologie
L'encéphale	Revue neurologique
La lettre du psychiatre	Thérapie familiale
Le divan familial	Topique: revue freudienne
Le travail humain	Travailler
Les cahiers du réseau	
Neuropsychy News	
Neuropsychiatrie de l'enfance et de l'adolescence	

**ANNEXE 2: Titles of the French psychology periodicals indexed on PsycINFO, including psychoanalysis and psychiatry**

Activités (revue électronique)	Le travail humain
Alcoologie et Addictologie	Neuropsychiatrie de l'enfance et de l'adolescence
A.N.A.E. Approches neuropsychologiques des apprentissages chez l'enfant	Pratiques psychologiques
Annales médico-psychologiques	Psychiatrie de l'enfant
Année psychologique	Psychologie & neuropsychiatrie du vieillissement
Bulletin de psychologie	Psychologie clinique et projective
Cahiers de psychologie cognitive	Psychologie française
Cahiers internationaux de psychologie sociale	Psychothérapies
Cliniques méditerranéennes	Recherches en psychanalyse
Confrontations psychiatriques	Revue de neuropsychologie
Devenir	Revue française de psychanalyse
Déviance et société	Revue française de psychosomatique
Enfance	Revue francophone de clinique comportementale et cognitive
European review of applied psychology/Revue européenne de psychologie appliquée	Revue francophone de la déficience intellectuelle
Intellectica	Revue française du stress et du trauma
Journal de thérapie comportementale et cognitive	Revue internationale de psychologie sociale
L'encéphale	Revue neurologique
L'évolution psychiatrique	Thérapie familiale
Le divan familial	Topique : revue freudienne

**ANNEXE 3: Titles of the French psychology periodicals indexed on the ISI databases (Social Science Citation Index), including psychoanalysis and psychiatry**

Année psychologique	Revue européenne de psychologie appliquée
Cahiers de psychologie cognitive	Psychologie du travail et des organisations
Déviance et société	Revue internationale de psychologie sociale
Evolution psychiatrique	Le travail humain
Psychologie française	
Pratiques psychologiques	

**ANNEXE 4: Titles of the French psychology periodicals indexed in Pubmed/Medline, including psychoanalysis and psychiatry**

Annales médico-psychologiques	Psychiatrie de l'enfant
Année psychologique	Psychologie et neuropsychiatrie du vieillissement
Evolution psychiatrique	Revue française de psychanalyse
Neuropsychiatrie de l'enfance et de l'adolescence	Soins. Psychiatri