

Co-authorship and collaboration in Academia



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Agenda

- Motivation
- Background
- Method
- Results
- Conclusion
- Further work



Motivation

- The aim of this study is to investigate how researchers perceive and utilize co-authorship in academia.
- Authorship
 - Reputation
 - Promotion/Hiring
 - Funding
 - Job Bonus



Background

- Physics: Authorship = acknowledgement for the work (Birnholtz, 2006)
- Biomedicine: Authorship = contributorship, the contribution decide the author order (Rennie et al, 1997)
- Psychology: Authorship = ambiguous definitions, focus on the researchers' contributions (Bebeau et al., 2011)
- Engineering: Authorship = significant contribution, authors are not responsible for the all aspects of the research because of specialization (Borenstein, 2011)

Vancouver Authorship criteria



All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content.

Authorship credit should be based only on substantial contributions to

- 1) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data; AND to
- 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND on
- 3) final approval of the version to be published.

Conditions 1, 2, and 3 must all be met. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data does not justify authorship. General supervision of the research group is not sufficient for authorship. Any part of an article critical to its main conclusions must be the responsibility of at least one author.



Background

- Research Programme Governance, Funding and Performance of Universities at University of Southern Denmark. Case Study: New Public Management at Work



Method

- Case study – Interviewed 43 researchers
- The interviews were structured in four parts with questions about:
 1. Publishing process
 - a) Their own publication
 - b) General questions about collaboration, authorship and publishing
 2. Publication practice and culture
 3. Publication pressure
 4. The national Danish publication indicator (NDPI)

Data



University		Participants	PhD	Post doc	Associate Professor	Professor
Aalborg University	AAU	7	.	2	3	2
Aarhus University	AU	12	.	2	8	2
University of Copenhagen	KU	8	1	1	4	2
University of Southern Denmark	SDU	8	.	3	4	1
Technical University of Denmark	DTU	4	.	1	2	1
Copenhagen Business School	CBS	4	.	.	3	1
Total		43	1	9	24	9



Data

University	Research Area	Participants
AU	Health & Life Sciences	4
AU	Humanities	4
AU	Social Sciences	4
CBS	Social Sciences	4
DTU	Science and Technology	4
KU	Health & Life Sciences	4
KU	Humanities	4
SDU	Social Sciences	4
SDU	Science and Technology	4
AAU	Humanities	3
AAU	Science and Technology	4
Total		43



Humanities (11)

- The lone author
- Belong to research groups – collaborate and acknowledge
- Younger researchers – positive about publication collaboration opportunities
- Increasing tendency to co-author publications
- What justifies authorship – be part of all aspects of the research and writing process



Social Sciences (12)

- The majority co-authored their publications (2-3 authors)
- Supervisor – phd student co-authorship tendency
- Describe an increasing tendency to co-author
- Psychology had the greatest tendency to multi-authorship (more than 3)
- Economics used an alphabetical order to decide the order of authors

SS - What justifies a co-authorship



- You have to be part of the whole process
- Supervisors are co-authors
- The Vancouver rules



Sciences (12)

- Applied sciences
- Team work/ Research groups
- Professional discussions in the writing process



S - What justifies a co-authorship

- Authorship = Contributorship
- The contribution have to be essential for the research? = Authorship
- Younger researchers were less positive about funding justifying authorship

Health and Life Sciences (8)



- Vancouver rules are sometimes followed
- Co-authorship increases responsibility and work effort (the carrot effect)
- You cannot be responsible for the whole study, but only your own part of the study
- Contributorships
- There are definitely Matthew effects
- Collaboration is necessary because of specialization.
- Important contributions: 1st, 2nd and last author

HL - What justifies a co-authorship



- Contributorship
- Small contribution – middle author
- The last author funds the research



Conclusion

- The case study confirms findings from earlier studies
- Academic authorship equals contributorship in most science and health and life science
- Highlights the need to rethink responsibility, research assessment and reward system in certain fields
- Authorship in the humanities are similar to the “traditional” author
- Supervisor/PhD student co-authorships



Further work

- Finish the coding of interviews
- Substantiate the study with more data
- Co-authorship and collaboration in social sciences



Thank you for listening

Piled Higher and Deeper by *Jorge Cham*

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THE AUTHOR LIST: GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The first author
Senior grad student on the project. Made the figures.

The third author
First year student who actually did the experiments, performed the analysis and wrote the whole paper. Thinks being third author is "fair".

The second-to-last author
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