A Bibliometric Study of Texas Law Reviews

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A bibliometric approach was used to measure the relative impact of seven Texas law reviews on the federal and Texas state judiciary. The following questions were also posed: (1) Was there an increase or decrease in judicial citations to the reviews from 1970 to 1989? (2) Were the reviews cited more or less frequently by the Texas courts than by the federal courts? (3) Were the citation counts affected by the quantity of material published from 1970 to 1989? (4) Was there any relationship between the age of the reviews and the judicial citation frequency?

A review of the literature indicated that no post-1959 longitudinal bibliometric studies of law reviews used publication year samples of more than three years and included the seven Texas law reviews examined in this study. The findings yielded by the analysis of the citation data included the following: (1) St. Mary’s Law Journal was shown to have had the greatest impact on the Texas courts, while Texas Law Review was cited most frequently by the federal courts; (2) the frequency of judicial citations to Texas law reviews declined overall from 1970 to 1989, with the sharpest decrease observed over the last five years; (3) Texas law reviews, with the exception of the Texas Law Review, were collectively cited three times more frequently by the Texas courts than by the federal courts; (4) when considering an impact factor of citations per 1,000 pages of text, I found only a negligible effect on the ranking positions of the Texas law reviews; and (5) when considering the publications’ ages, I found that the top-ranking journal, St. Mary’s Law Review, was among the most recently established, and the low-ranking journal, South Texas Law Review, was fifteen years older than St. Mary’s Law Review.

I concluded that (1) a twenty-year publication sample yielded citation patterns in connection with Texas law reviews which were obscured in studies using samples of one or two years, as indicated in findings 1

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through 3 above; (2) publication volume had little effect on judicial citation frequency of the sample of Texas law reviews; and (3) publication age was not a reliable indicator of judicial citation frequency with respect to the sample of Texas law reviews.