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# Exploring the Role of Books as a Knowledge Translation Mechanism: Citation Analysis and Author Survey

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to empirically investigate whether books serve as effective knowledge distribution agents and whether the body of knowledge published in peer-reviewed sources is used in the development of book content. The results of citation analysis in 40 authored and 9 edited books, followed by the survey of 35 book authors, demonstrate that peer-reviewed sources, such as refereed journals, book chapters and conference proceedings, are used to develop the content of knowledge management and intellectual capital (KM/IC) books. Edited books contain twice as many references from refereed journals as authored books. The major source of references in KM/IC books are other books. Personal research is the major non-citable source of book content. The study concludes that the indirect knowledge distribution channel plays a key role in the process of dissemination of scholarly findings to practitioners.

## Keywords

Knowledge management, intellectual capital, academic research, relevance, book, citation analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management and intellectual capital (KM/IC) is a burgeoning scholarly management discipline which has existed for just over a decade. Despite that, it has already gained recognition within the business community and can boast various attributes of an academic discipline. For example, it has its own set of journals (Bontis and Serenko, 2009, Serenko and Bontis, 2009), university courses (Bontis et al., 2006, Ruth et al., 2003), theories (Serenko et al., 2007, Grant, 2002), and scientometric studies that attempt to understand the past, present and future growth of the field (Ma and Yu, 2010, Rodríguez-Ruiz and Fernández-Menéndez, 2009, Serenko and Bontis, 2004).

To facilitate the future of KM/IC as a well-recognized discipline, it is critical not only to promote scholarly research but also to ensure the success of KM initiatives in organizational settings (Jennex and Olfman, 2005, Jennex and Olfman, 2006). However, academics and practitioners define KM success from different perspectives; whereas the former concentrate on theoretical and generalized measures, the latter focus on specific measurable impacts, such as productivity and effectiveness (Jennex et al., 2009). They also have different goals and career objectives in mind. Academics want to achieve recognition within their own research community, and practitioners wish to use the knowledge generated by scholars to solve current organizational problems. As a result, the impact of scholarly KM/IC research on the state of practice has been questioned (Andriessen, 2004, Ferguson, 2005). Initially, both the theoretical and academic sides of the discipline were represented by practitioners; gradually, however, industry professionals withdrew from scholarly research. For example, in 1994 non-academics generated 30% of all peer-reviewed KM/IC articles, but in 2009 their output dropped to only 10% (Serenko et al., 2010).

KM/IC scholars create knowledge mostly appearing in the form of refereed journal articles and conference proceedings, which may be delivered to industry professionals through two channels (Booker et al., 2008). The *direct knowledge dissemination approach* assumes that practitioners educate themselves by reading scholarly publications. However, evidence suggests the opposite; practitioners are mostly unaware of scholarly works, rarely read them, and find scholarly papers

outdated, difficult to comprehend and of little value (e.g., see Pearson et al., 2005). According to the *indirect knowledge transfer method*, scholarly knowledge is delivered to practitioners by means of knowledge translation mechanisms, which summarize, contextualize and transform knowledge existing in peer-reviewed sources, and present it to busy professionals in a very compact, easy to comprehend form. Examples of these mechanisms include classes, workshops, industry magazines, online sources, and books. In the previous investigation, Serenko et al. (2011) explored the role of KM/IC books as the indirect knowledge dissemination media, and concluded that books serve as knowledge distribution agents and that the body of knowledge published in peer-reviewed sources is used in the development of book content. The books, in turn, are read by practitioners and students, who later join the professional world. Their study, however, relied on self-reported data (i.e., author interviews). The present investigation takes a step further and attempts to test this claim through a different method, such as citation analysis from 40 authored and 9 edited books, followed by a survey of 35 book authors.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

When ancient writing appeared in Egypt around 5,000 years ago, messages were written on clay, wood, stone and metal. Later, papyrus scrolls were invented and introduced in Europe. The first manifestation of the book in its page-bound format was the codex, which replaced the scroll as the primary form of recorded information by the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (Roberts and Skeat, 1983). The relationship between academia and books dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century when scholarly institutions and monasteries started playing a critical role in the life of the book. During that time, they possessed the largest libraries, provided access to their collections, actively engaged in bookmaking, and fostered innovations, such as the pecia system (Saenger, 1975). After the invention of the printing press in 1440, books became mass produced and more accessible outside of the scholarly world (McLuhan, 1962). The motivation behind the creation of the book was to collate experiences, document observations, preserve knowledge for future generations, and communicate findings to academics, students and practitioners (Daly and Brater, 2000). Initially, the rate of dissemination of the book was very slow (Suarez, 2003-2004) and was precipitated by the manual reproduction of the Bible. With the improvement of printing technologies, books became more common, content quality improved, and they were considered a source of authority (Saenger, 1975). According to a study conducted by the Google Books project in 2010, there have been a total of over 129 million books published (Jackson, 2010).

Books have impacted the development of our society in various ways. Most importantly, books have shaped the way people perceive the human condition through the transmission of thought and behavior (Darton, 1982). Notwithstanding, the effectiveness of scholarly books in the transmission of knowledge, theories, and ideas outside of academia is unclear. White (1983) investigated the use of scholarly books in law and found that these books are read only by academics with law degrees and intellectuals interested in the subject matter, not by the general public or professionals. However, the material found in these law books is transmitted to potential practitioners through the professor in the academic environment. Books written for use specifically in academia, such as the textbook, also allow for the transmission of ideas so that they might be turned into actions when read by students. Scholarly books are important since the knowledge they contain is integral for the advancement of our knowledge-based society (Dalton, 2006). Denial Coit Gilman, the first president of Johns Hopkins University expressed in 1878 that it is “one of the noblest duties of a university to advance knowledge and to diffuse it not merely among those who can attend the daily lectures but far and wide.”<sup>1</sup> This concept of advancing the dissemination of scientific progress has become a common mission statement for contemporary universities, and research has been recognized as one of the most important activities for faculty members who publish their findings in books and peer-reviewed journals (Jagodinski, 2008).

The first scholarly journal dedicated exclusively to science, the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*<sup>2</sup>, was established in 1665 and remains in existence to the present day. Scholarly journals have had an impact on scientific progress since the increased proliferation of journals has coincided with a decrease in disputes amongst academics relating to simultaneous discovery (Merton and Szompka, 1996). Additionally, the quality of academic work has increased as a result of the accessibility and timeliness of journals (Greco et al., 2006). Scholarly journals provide universities with a method of performance measurement for their faculty by tracking the number of published papers and the citation impact of faculty (Dalton, 2006). Based on data from the Ulrich periodical database, over 43,500 scholarly journals existed worldwide in 2004, and approximately 1,350,000 scholarly articles were published in 2006 (Björk et al., 2009, Tenopir, 2004).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.press.jhu.edu/about/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://rstl.royalsocietypublishing.org>

Table 1 shows differences between scholarly books and scholarly journals (Dalton, 2006, White, 1983, Greco et al., 2006), and demonstrates how they differ across several factors. For example, the dominance of books and journals depends on the discipline; whereas scholars in humanities favor books, science academics prefer peer-reviewed journals. In recent years, book and textbook prices have dramatically increased, which has caused university libraries to reallocate funds from books to journals. Currently, scholarly books are read less often than before because students and researchers prefer short versions of recent material accessed online, for example, through digital libraries.

Factor	Scholarly Books	Scholarly Journals
Target audience	Academics and students	Academics, students, practitioners
Discipline	Humanities Social Sciences	Sciences Social Sciences
Impact	Direct impact on scientific development Indirect impact on society	Direct impact on scientific development Limited direct impact on society
Time bound	Can be considered outdated	Can be published faster than a book therefore can offer more recent information
Accessibility	Length can be a deterrent Difficulty obtaining hard copies	Easily available due to online resources
Knowledge base	Possesses context for argument	Requires prerequisite knowledge found in alternative sources

Table 1. Scholarly Books vs. Scholarly Journals

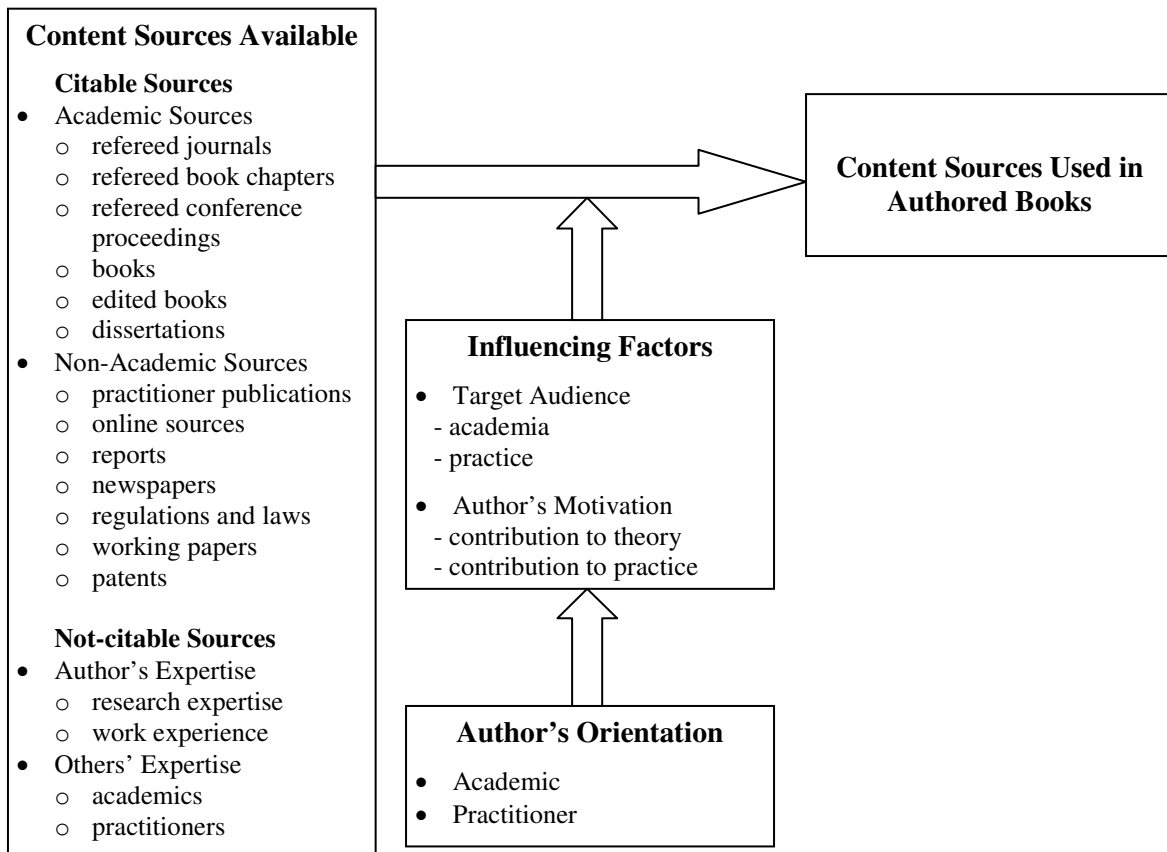


Figure 1. Books as Knowledge Translation Agents

This study's model, adapted from Serenko et al. (2011), explicates the process by which the book content is formed (see Figure 1). Authors have a variety of academic and non-academic sources available at their disposal. They can also capitalize on their personal knowledge and experience, and knowledge obtained from others. Authors' decisions of what type of references to use in order to develop their book content depends on two factors: 1) the book's target audience and 2) the author's motivation. Authors who target scholars and wish to contribute to theory tend to rely on peer-reviewed publications, whereas those who want to address the needs of practitioners use non-academic sources. An author's personal orientation (i.e., academic vs. practitioner) also influences this process because academic and practitioner authors target their respective audiences and are inspired by theoretical vs. practical needs.

Overall, books represent a mechanism by which the academic body of knowledge existing in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and conference proceedings may be transformed and delivered to students and practitioners in a very accessible form. This is reflected in the degree to which various types of peer-reviewed sources are referenced in a book, which may be observed by counting categories of book references. Therefore, based on the framework and assumption above, this project's methodology was developed as described in the following section.

## METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive search for KM/IC books was conducted. As a result, 40 authored books and 9 edited books were identified. The data collection process consisted of two stages. The first phase included an analysis of authored book and edited book citations. For this, all citations in each book were classified based on their type (e.g., peer-reviewed article, book, book chapter, practitioner magazine, website, etc.) In order to eliminate the effect of book size (i.e., number of pages), the citation type count was converted to percentage. At the second stage, an online survey of book authors was conducted. The editors of edited books were excluded from the survey since they did not generate the book content themselves, but only provided guidance to the authors. Survey questions pertained to four areas:

- 1) the author's academic vs. practitioner orientation (academic vs. practitioner self-identification, number of peer-reviewed articles published, number of practitioner articles published, and years of full-time university/college teaching experience);
- 2) the author's motivation to write the book (theoretical vs. practical);
- 3) the book's target audience (academic vs. practitioner); and,
- 4) the extent to which non-citable book content sources were used, which cannot be identified by means of citation analysis, such as personal research, personal work experience, discussions with academics and discussions with practitioners.

When the same author wrote multiple books, motivation and target audience questions were repeated for each book individually. Sixty-seven unique authors were identified and contacted by email, followed by two reminders. The questionnaire is available online at <http://foba.lakeheadu.ca/serenko/amcis2011questionnaire.pdf>.

## RESULTS

Table 2 provides an overview of the sample of 40 authored books and 9 edited books studied. A total of 35 completed questionnaires were received, yielding a response rate of 52%. If only one author of a multi-authored book completed the questionnaire, his/her data was used for this book. If multiple authors of the same book completed the survey, their responses were averaged. Overall, author survey data on 32 books were obtained and used for analysis. For the 8 books that had no author survey data, descriptive analysis of citations was done, but these books were excluded from further correlation analysis.

	1 author	2 authors	3 authors	4 authors
Number of authored books	27	10	2	1
Number of edited books	3	4	1	1

**Table 2. Sample Statistics by Number of Authors**

There were 10 female and 25 male authors. On average, they published 2.7 peer-reviewed and 8.6 practitioner articles per year, and had 8 years of full-time university/college teaching experience. 70% of them had a Ph.D., primarily in the fields of management, social science, engineering, computer science, psychology, and economics. Table 3 outlines general citation data and demonstrates that edited books contain more citations than authored books on average. Table 4 and Table 5 show

the categories of content sources for authored books and edited books, respectively. Books represented almost a half of all citations in authored books, followed by practitioner magazines, peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and general online resources. Other types of citations were very rare. Overall, peer-reviewed sources, such as refereed journals, refereed conference proceedings, and book chapters (which are usually peer-reviewed) constituted 20.4% of all citations in authored books. In edited books, a somewhat similar pattern was observed, but peer-reviewed journals were used more frequently, with all peer-reviewed sources constituting 37.9% of all citations.

	<b>Total #</b>	<b>Avg. per Book</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Std. dev.</b>
Authored Books, n = 40	7,715	193	22	857	187
Edited Books, n = 9	3,814	424	62	815	197

**Table 3. General Citation Data**

N	<b>Type of Content Sources Used</b>	<b>Avg.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Std. dev.</b>
1	Books	45.2%	15.5%	100%	20.3%
2	Practitioner/Trade/Industry (i.e., non-academic) Journals/Magazines	18.9%	0.0%	40.0%	8.7%
3	Peer-Reviewed Journals	13.4%	0.0%	36.1%	10.4%
4	Book Chapters (e.g., chapters in edited books or encyclopedias)	4.9%	0.0%	19.2%	4.6%
5	General Online Sources (i.e., websites, excluding online newspapers)	4.7%	0.0%	35.2%	7.9%
6	Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings	2.1%	0.0%	7.1%	1.9%
7	Reports (including technical reports)	2.0%	0.0%	11.3%	3.1%
8	Newspapers (off-line)	1.7%	0.0%	13.3%	2.9%
9	Edited Books	1.0%	0.0%	6.5%	1.7%
10	Legal Rule, Law or Regulation	0.9%	0.0%	33.3%	5.3%
11	Working Paper	0.7%	0.0%	4.6%	1.2%
12	Other (unpublished manuscript, interview, case study, dissertation, personal communication, patent, etc).	4.5%	0.0%	43.3%	8.0%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>			

**Table 4. Content Sources Used – Authored Books**

Table 6 presents correlations among different categories of citations. Three observations have been made. First, book citations act as a substitute for all other categories of citations; the more authors cite books, the less they cite other types of sources. Second, peer-reviewed journal citations correlate positively with practitioner magazine citations, and negatively with general Internet sources. Third, citations to conference proceedings correlate positively with general Internet citations; this may happen because both types of sources are located through search engines.

N	Type of Content Sources Used	Avg.	Min	Max	Std. dev.
1	Books	29.9%	21.5%	53.2%	10.4%
2	Peer-Reviewed Journals	25.6%	15.9%	34.1%	5.2%
3	Practitioner/Trade/Industry (i.e., non-academic) Journals/Magazines	20.2%	12.9%	26.8%	4.7%
4	Book Chapters (e.g., chapters in edited books or encyclopedias)	8.6%	1.6%	16.0%	4.2%
5	General Online Sources (i.e., websites, excluding online newspapers)	4.2%	0.0%	15.7%	5.5%
6	Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings	3.7%	0.0%	8.5%	3.3%
7	Reports (including technical reports)	2.4%	0.0%	14.4%	4.6%
8	Edited Books	1.7%	0.2%	4.4%	1.4%
9	Working Paper	1.3%	0.0%	2.9%	1.1%
10	Other (off-line newspaper, unpublished manuscript, interview, case study, dissertation, personal communication, etc).	2.4%	0.8%	4.8%	1.1%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>			

Table 5. Content Sources Used – Edited Books

N	Type of Content Sources Used	Authored Books					Edited Books				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	Books	1					1				
2	Peer-Reviewed Journals	-.48*	1				.20	1			
3	Practitioner/trade/industry (i.e., non-academic) journal/magazine	-.73*	.40*	1			-.37	.57*	1		
4	Book Chapters (e.g., chapters in edited books or encyclopedias)	-.32*	.26	.10	1		-.62*	-.30	.12	1	
5	General Online Sources (i.e., websites, excluding online newspapers)	-.28*	-.38*	-.01	-.14	1	-.60*	-.72*	-.29	.66*	1
6	Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings	-.46*	.15	.26	.22	.34*	-.75*	-.74*	-.25	.58*	.89*

Table 6. Correlations between Content Sources Used – Authored and Edited Books (\* -  $p < 0.1$ )

Several findings emerged as reported in Table 7, Table 8, and Table 9. First, there is a strong relationship between the author's degree of academic vs. practitioner orientation and the overall number of citations; more academically-focused authors use more citations than practitioner-centered. Second, results show that academically-focused authors wish to contribute to theory, target other scholars, and get ideas from other academics. Those who are more practitioner-oriented are motivated to contribute to practice, target other practitioners, use fewer citations, and get ideas from other practitioners and personal work experience. Third, the validity of the self-reported academic vs. practitioner scale was further confirmed.

Authors who publish more scholarly articles identify themselves as academically-focused, are less inspired to contribute to practice and do not target practitioners. The more practitioner articles book authors publish, the fewer citations they use in their books. Authors who have more university/college full-time teaching experience are more academically-oriented, cite more sources, target other scholars, and write more academic and fewer practitioner articles. Fourth, academically-focused authors cited more peer-reviewed journals and book chapters, and fewer unreliable online sources than practically-focused authors. Even though some of the correlations in these tables were not statistically significant, most were in the theoretically proposed direction; the lack of statistical significance was a result of a small sample size of authored books (32).

	ORIENT	# of citations	TMOT	PMOT	ACAUD	PAUD	APUB	PPUB
Self-reported degree of academic vs. practitioner orientation (ORIENT)	1							
Total # of citations in the book	.51*	1						
The degree of the author's motivation to contribute to theory (TMOT)	.09	.18	1					
The degree of the author's motivation to contribute to practice (PMOT)	-.46*	-.33*	-.13	1				
The degree to which the author targeted an academic audience (ACAUD)	.23	.30*	.82*	-.26	1			
The degree to which the author targeted a practitioner audience (PAUD)	-.44*	-.33*	-.21	.66*	-.31*	1		
Number of academic articles written (APUB)	.65*	.26	.22	-.49*	.24	-.42*	1	
Number of practitioner articles written (PPUB)	-.32*	-.38*	-.07	.20	.29	.25	-.14	1
Number of years of full-time university/college teaching (TEACH)	.52*	.36*	.13	-.20	.33*	.00	.29	-.32*

**Table 7. Correlations between Author's Orientation, Author's Motivation, Book's Target Audience and Number of Citations (\* - p < 0.1)**

Extent to which the following information sources were used:	ORIENT	# of citations	TMOT	PMOT	ACAUD	PAUD	APUB	PPUB
Personal Research (PERE)	-.14	-.49*	-.12	.23	-.29	.39*	-.08	.24
Personal Work Experience (PEWR)	-.26	-.47*	-.20	.35*	-.29	.19	-.12	.31*
Discussions with Academics (DISCA)	.22	.38*	.36*	.09	.36*	-.22	-.10	-.46*
Discussions with Practitioners (DISCP)	-.61*	-.48*	-.05	.59*	-.25	.44*	-.72*	.28

**Table 8. Correlations between Self-Reported Information Sources and Author's Orientation, Author's Motivation, Book's Target Audience, and Number of Citations (\* - p < 0.1)**



	ORIENT	TMOT	PMOT	ACAUD	PAUD
Books Citations	.22	-.09	.14	.02	-.03
Peer-Reviewed Journals Citations	.57*	.08	-.33*	.23	-.26
Practitioner/trade/industry (i.e., non-academic) journal/magazine Citations	.12	.05	-.04	-.13	.14
Book Chapters (e.g., chapters in edited books or encyclopedias) Citations	.35*	.09	-.42*	.17	-.18
General Online Sources (i.e., websites, excluding online newspapers) Citations	-.31*	-.29	.23	-.26	.09
Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings Citations	.10	-.14	-.24	-.05	-.15

**Table 9. Correlations between Content Sources Used and Influencing Factors (\* -  $p < 0.1$ )**

According to Table 10, personal research and discussions with academics act as a substitute for peer-reviewed journals. Those authors who use more personal work experience and ideas obtained from discussions with academics use more refereed journal citations. Personal work experience also substitutes for information from book chapters. Note that statistically significant differences among these four self-reported content sources were observed,  $F(3, 123) = 7.242$ ,  $p < .01$ .

	Personal Research Avg.=6.2	Personal Work Experience Avg.=5.57	Discussions with Academics Avg.=4.60	Discussions with Practitioners Avg.=5.93
Books Citations	.09	.22	-.06	.20
Peer-Reviewed Journals Citations	-.36*	.27	.21	-.41*
Practitioner/trade/industry (i.e., non-academic) journal/magazine Citations	-.15	-.08	-.09	-.08
Book Chapters (e.g., chapters in edited books or encyclopedias) Citations	.06	-.33*	.14	-.24
General Online Sources (i.e., websites, excluding online newspapers) Citations	.01	.04	-.03	.08
Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings Citations	-.13	-.08	.08	-.15

**Table 10. Correlations between Citation-Based Content Sources and Self-Reported Content Sources (\* -  $p < 0.1$ )**

## IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore whether KM/IC books serve as a knowledge translation mechanism. For this, analysis of citations in 40 authored books and 9 edited books was done, followed by a survey of the authors. Based on the findings, eight implications are proposed that warrant discussion:

*Implication #1: The body of knowledge that exists in peer-reviewed sources, such as peer-reviewed journals, book chapters and conference proceedings, is used to develop the content of KM/IC books.*

This study refutes the previous claim that managerial academic research has made little, if any, impact on the state of practice. It was observed that in the KM/IC field, authored and edited books contain 20.4% and 37.9% citations from peer-reviewed publications, respectively, with peer-reviewed journals being an important source. As stated by Serenko et al. (2011), these books are often read by practitioners and used as textbooks to educate future managers. This highlights the importance of the indirect knowledge distribution approach when scholarly knowledge is delivered to professionals by means of intermediaries, such as books.

*Implication #2: In KM/IC, edited books contain twice as many references from refereed journals as authored books.*

Compared to authored books, edited books contain more peer-reviewed journal references (25.6% vs. 13.4%). This is not surprising. First, each edited book chapter is written by one or more contributors who are usually academics or students; second, edited books are mostly targeted to the academic audience; and third, edited books are often theoretical (non-empirical) and contribute to theory. This demonstrates that the content of edited book chapters is better referenced which is usually done in scholarly publications.

*Implication #3: The major source of references in KM/IC books are other books.*

References from books constitute 45% and 30% of all references in authored and edited books, respectively. This reveals that book authors rely heavily on other books which serve as a major information source. Recently, Thomson Reuters (formerly ISI) announced the launch of the Book Citation Index, which demonstrates the importance of citations to books.

*Implication #4: Non-academic publications are heavily used in the content of KM/IC books.*

References from practitioner, trade, or industry magazines represent almost 20% of all KM/IC book citations. This finding is not surprising since KM/IC initially emerged as a professional field with several major professional publications (e.g., Fortune magazine) which inspired both academics and practitioners to engage in scholarly research. In addition, practitioner publications are a good source of real-life examples and brief cases that complement theories presented in books.

*Implication #5: In KM/IC, citations to books substitute all other categories of citations.*

The percentage of book citations is negatively correlated with all other types of citations. The more authors cite other books, the less likely they are to cite other sources, including peer-reviewed journals, professional magazines, websites, etc. This observation further highlights the importance of books as a source of ideas which are used in other books. In peer-reviewed articles, which are mostly targeted to the academic audience, authors report the detailed results of a single investigation. Practical implications of the study, which are an after-thought rather than the purpose of the project, are limited to one or two paragraphs only. In contrast, books allow authors to explore a particular issue in depth by drawing on both the scientific evidence and non-citable sources, such as personal research, work experience, and discussions with colleagues. This unique feature of books makes them very attractive to other book authors.

*Implication #6: Personal research is the major non-citable source of book content.*

Out of the four categories of non-citable book content, personal research plays a major role, scoring 6.23 out of 7 (i.e., between frequently and very frequently), followed by discussions with practitioners (5.93) and work experience (5.57). At the same time, discussions with academics were used only occasionally (4.60). It is likely that KM/IC book authors are very familiar with the academic body of knowledge and they rarely ask for input from other scholars. Instead, they use the knowledge they have accumulated from conducting research. At the same time, they utilize ideas from industry professionals that may serve as case studies and real-world examples.

*Implication #7: The validity of the proposed model was confirmed empirically.*

Academically-oriented authors have more years of full-time university/college teaching experience, publish more peer-reviewed articles, wish to contribute to theory, target their books to other scholars, use more citations in general, and get ideas from other academics. They tend to cite more peer-reviewed journals and book chapters, but fewer general online sources, such as websites. In contrast, practice-focused book authors are less likely to teach full-time in academia, publish

more professional (i.e., non-refereed) articles, want to address practical issues of interest to industry professionals, and use fewer citations in their books. They cite fewer peer-reviewed sources and more websites, and get ideas from other practitioners and personal work experience. Therefore, this study's model received strong empirical support and can be used in future research.

*Implication #8: Indirect knowledge distribution channels should be further investigated.*

The scholarly body of knowledge may reach practitioners by means of two channels: direct (when professionals are supposed to read peer-reviewed sources to educate themselves) and indirect (when knowledge existing in peer-reviewed sources is converted to the format that may be easily comprehended by current or potential industry professionals). This study demonstrated the existence of the indirect channels where books serve as knowledge transmission agents. Future investigations should further explore other indirect channels. For example, scholarly knowledge may be transmitted through consultants, workshops, professional meetings, indirect interactions, scholarly news releases, professional associations, etc.

In conclusion, this investigation represents one of the first documented attempts to study the role of books as the disseminator of knowledge from the academic to practitioner audience. Overall, it is concluded that the statements on the irrelevance of scholarly KM/IC research are not empirically grounded. In fact, the scholarly knowledge reaches current and future practitioners through indirect channels with the assistance of knowledge translation mechanisms, such as books.

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