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Project Management: Journal Assessment Research-in-Progress

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of the Management Information Systems (MIS) discipline has generated much interest in the appropriate publication outlets for scholarly research. During the early years of MIS research, constituents of the field sought a unique identity, while building upon the theories of management, management science, operations management, and computer science. Scholars and students of all disciplines have the same desire to share their knowledge with their colleagues. All new research fields have endured the long and somewhat arduous journey of finding their place in the academic arena.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the emergence of Project Management (PM) as a research topic in academic and practitioner journals is beset by the same fundamental issues of not only appropriate but also quality publication outlets. Information dissemination is critical for the development and advancement of PM research. This distribution of information has become essential as companies strive for a global presence and researchers strive to share knowledge.

The purpose of this study is to identify the best quality outlet for PM publications based upon academic journal rankings and number of citations by researchers. Previous research concerning journal assessment will guide preliminary analysis of PM articles published between 1985 and 2006. Consequently, an examination of approximately 10,000 journal articles using six predefined categories as well as the nine PM knowledge areas will be used to investigate relationships and develop a profile that will determine where constituents are currently publishing PM research as well as the best journals to publish PM research.

Keywords

Journal Assessment, Project Management, Publication Outlets.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

There are numerous research articles on how to determine the best outlet for a new research discipline. The first articles of any discipline are the launch pads for subsequent studies that builds the knowledge of quality publication outlets of a specific area of research. Since there is not a clear indication of top tier journals for PM research in the practitioner or academic community, this study will seek to build a profile that will guide members of the PM community.

Therefore, the research objectives and questions that will be addressed in this preliminary study:

1. Identify the outlets for publishing PM research
2. Identify the journal with the highest number of PM publications
3. Identify the highest ranked MIS journal outlets for PM publications

These objectives can be met by using an empirical approach to evaluate and analyze the PM publication outlets for academic and practitioner journals. "Empirical research captures the essence of research relying on observation. The empirical research process can be viewed as the overall process of scientific activities, in which researchers engage to produce useful knowledge" (Cheon and Grover, 1993). This empirical approach will include the calculation of the number of PM publications by journal, institution, author, discipline and year; the determination of journal rankings by measuring the number of times cited; and by identifying the journals and authors with the greatest number of publications. This quintessential method will aid in the development of a PM publication trend and guide the researchers to the appropriate publication outlets.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY

Over the last decade, there has been a paradigm shift in the management of projects across the organization. Many corporations are establishing Program Management Offices (PMO), with the intent of implementing PM best practices to coordinate key corporate initiatives, while developing a global presence. The Society for Information Management (SIM) reports that project management and business skills are the “top” jobs or “hottest skills” today. Project managers are in great demand as organizations continue their efforts in streamlining processes and developing new processes. The continued advancement in systems and delivery processes not only requires vision, but also excellent project management skills; thus, many organizations seek professionals with PM certifications (e.g.; Project Management Institute) or individuals who have extensive experience managing projects.

Furthermore, practitioners and academics use journals for acquiring information and disseminating new findings (Nord & Nord, 1995) of seminal research topics, such as PM. The continued evolution of PM as a field of research requires a systematic approach to determine publication outlets. “Many constituents have a definite interest in the determination of the relevance of publication outlets in a particular discipline,” (Walstrom, Hardgrave, Wilson, 1995).

The investigated methodologies and assessments that were used for MIS research provide an excellent baseline for PM research. Publications have included survey instruments (Lowery, Romans, and Curtis, 2004; Peffers & Ya, 2003; Mylonopoulous and Theoharakis, 2001; and Walstrom and Hargrove, 2001; Nord and Nord; 1995) to identify and assess publication outlets. In addition, some studies have used citations as a measure of value of publications of a new discipline (Holsapple, Johnson, Manakyan, and Tanner, 1994; Vogel and Wetherbe, 1984; Hamilton and Ives, 1982). The scrutiny that a new discipline must endure includes studies of methodological rigor and quality, such as the debate of rigor in the field of MIS research (Baroudi and Orlikowski, 1989; Culnan, 1986; Cheon, Lee, and Grover; 1991; Culnan and Swanson; 1986; Kaplan and Duchon, 1988).

The motivation behind the studies of MIS research was to foster the growth of a new discipline. The cultivation of PM as a field of research deserves the same attention and promotion as other disciplines that have evolved over time. Therefore, the progression of this specific research provides an opportunity for further investigation of quality publication outlets for constituents of PM research and the successful publication of PM articles.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY BEING USED

The methodology guiding this research includes the evaluation of articles published between 1985 and 2006 on the nine knowledge areas of project management. During the first quarter of 2006, a rigorous search was conducted to ascertain PM publications as reported in electronic business databases. This preliminary analysis evaluated two of the PM knowledge areas: Project Management and Project Cost. As represented in Figure 1, summaries of these analyses identified the number of articles published by journal, institution, author, discipline and year. These summaries were then sorted to get a ranked list, based upon highest number of articles to lowest number of articles, for each category. Figures 2-6 represent a sample of the results of ranked order based upon category.

Total # of articles by Knowledge Area:	Project Management Knowledge Areas (KA)	
	Project Management	Project Cost
Journals	2932	255
Institution	1810	310
Authors	1346	554
Discipline	3982	384
Year	2180	213

Figure 1. Project Management Journal Articles by Knowledge Area

Furthermore, a citation analysis (Holsapple, Johnson & Manakyan, 1994) and journal assessment methodology (Nord & Nord, 1995), used for MIS research, will be employed for PM research articles. The empirical evidence gained from the categorization in Figures 1-6 and the previously employed methodologies will lay the foundation for determining the top-ranked journals publishing PM research.

	Project Management Knowledge Areas (KA)	
Total # of articles by Journal	Project Management	Project Cost
Project Management	780	22
Journal of Construction Engineering and Management-ASCE	110	35
European Journal of Operational Research	104	8

Figure 2. Sample of Journal Summary

	Project Management Knowledge Areas (KA)	
Total # of articles by Institution	Project Management	Project Cost
University of Texas	23	4
Carnegie Mellon Univeristy	22	1
University of Wisconsin	18	1

Figure 3. Sample of Institution Summary

	Project Management Knowledge Areas (KA)	
Total # of articles by Author	Project Management	Project Cost
Anonymous	54	12
Love, Ped	7	1
Herroelen, W.	18	0

Figure 4. Sample of Author Summary

	Project Management Knowledge Areas (KA)	
Total # of articles by Discipline	Project Management	Project Cost
Management	428	13
Engineering – Industrial	425	52
Operations Research and Management Science	351	26

Figure 5. Sample of Discipline Summary

	Project Management Knowledge Areas (KA)	
Total # of articles by Year	Project Management	Project Cost
2005	194	12
2004	194	19
2003	190	17

Figure 6. Sample of Year Summary

CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT

The current status of the project is the evaluation of all nine knowledge areas of project management: communications, cost, integration, management, procurement, quality, risk, and scope. The associated analyses will be performed on approximately

10,000 articles and 900 independent journals. As represented in the preliminary study, relationships amongst the categories (i.e.; journal, institution, author, discipline and year) will be reported.

In addition to the journal assessment methodology described in the previous section, a citation analysis of PM researchers will be performed to determine the number of times articles have been cited by other researchers. The results of this analysis will be compared to the other methodologies employed in this study in an effort to develop a profile for ranking outlets of PM research. The expected results should provide an underpinning that will aid in determining the most appropriate publication outlets for academics and practitioners conducting PM research.

DESCRIPTION OF WHAT AUTHORS PROPOSE TO PRESENT AT CONFERENCE

The planned timeline for this study includes the completion of the research by the date of the conference. Therefore, the authors plan to present a final version of journal assessment for the PM discipline. The final version will include the purpose of the study, the methodology used for the research; and the final results. In addition, not only the analysis of current PM articles and publication outlets; but also, the relationship of the nine PM knowledge areas to the top journals publishing PM research will be reported. The desired results will include a profile that will determine where constituents are currently publishing PM articles; the best journals to publish PM research; and the highest ranked journal outlets for PM research. This journal assessment process will aid all PM constitutes in their quest to distribute information and share knowledge.

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