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A Survey of Transdisciplinary Business Research Forums

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Introduction

Many of us have heeded the call to engage in transdisciplinary research, sometimes with colleagues in other disciplines, and sometimes with colleagues from the same discipline, but exploring transdisciplinary areas. While this can be a richly rewarding experience, there can be some difficulties which arise from these endeavors. One of these difficulties can be identifying suitable outlets for disseminating the findings of transdisciplinary research. The research may not appear to “fit” the expressed purpose of any of the journals in the base disciplines of the researchers. Occasionally, when a stream of transdisciplinary research becomes more established, new journals arise as outlets for findings from this research. However, in many cases, especially in the early stages of transdisciplinary research, identifying an outlet for research findings may be difficult.

The purpose of this study is to identify journal outlets which may be more favorable to publishing the research findings resulting from transdisciplinary research. Findings from this study can be used to: (1) help researchers target outlets for their research, (2) help researchers find transdisciplinary research upon which to base their own literature review, (3) help researchers identify other people who may be doing similar types of transdisciplinary research, and (4) help educators and practitioners identify research forums which are likely to present transdisciplinary findings which represent upcoming trends in business.

Methodology

Only disciplines traditionally considered “business” disciplines (one of the three major areas at the intersection of informing science (Cohen, 1998)) were considered for this study. Future studies are intended to examine a broader range of disciplines including computing and systems, if findings from this study prove valuable.

For this study, results of separate journal rating sources were collected and combined to provide perspective on transdisciplinary research forums. Combining the results of different studies is a three step process: (1) searching for and gathering studies; (2) extracting information from the studies; and (3) cumulating the information extracted (Hunter, et al., 1982). For the purposes of this study, it was decided to look at business discipline journal rankings findings published in the last ten years. Looking at sources prior to 1988 would dilute the overall findings of this study by introducing journal rankings which may

have been accurate in the past, but no longer reflected the current quality and structure of business publication forums. Ten years was deemed to be a sufficient time to yield findings for each business discipline.

Analysis

Eleven studies or sources (representing seven business disciplines) were identified which had been published after 1987 (the past 10 years) which identified research forums for business scholars. The appendix shows these sources, the underlying discipline, the year the work was published, the number of respondents, the type of sample used, and the number of journals under consideration. Two sources were identified from each of the following business disciplines: Accounting, Finance, Information Systems, and Management. One source was identified from each of the following business disciplines: Marketing, Operations Management, and Strategic Management. From these eleven sources, 305 total journal forums were identified, of which 25 journal were evaluated by more than one business discipline.

A normalized score was calculated for each of the 25 journals for each of the seven business disciplines under investigation. In cases where a discipline was represented by two studies, scores were calculated for each study and averaged to represent the discipline. Individual study scores were calculated using the formula: $((X + 1) - Y) / X * 100$,

where X is the total number of journals included in the source and Y is the relative ranking within the study of the journal under consideration. The higher the score, the better the ranking with 100 being the highest possible ranking. For instance, a journal ranked 4th in a source containing 54 journals would be scored as follows: $(55 - 4) / 54 * 100 = 94.4$. The sole exception was Heck's *Finance Literature Index* which only listed the journals and did not rank them. Journals listed in this source were assigned a score of 50 (one-half) which was then used to help calculate the final ratings.

Findings

High Exposure

From Table 1, two journals, Harvard Business Review and Management Science, were rated by all seven business disciplines with almost identical scores of 70. One journal, Decision Science, was rated by five disciplines with an average score of 56.4. Three journals,

Administrative Science Quarterly, Sloan Management Review, and Business Horizons, were rated by four disciplines. However, there was difference of 59 between Administrative Science Quarterly and Business Horizons. From these findings, five journals appear to be well-known and fairly well-thought of among the business disciplines: Administrative Science Quarterly, Harvard Business Review, Decision Sciences, Management Science, and Sloan Management Review.

High Quality

From Table 1, six journals appeared which scored over 70. Four of the journals were rated only by the Accounting and Finance disciplines: Journal of Finance, Journal of Accounting Research, Journal of Financial & Quantitative Analysis, and Journal of Accounting & Economics. One journal, Academy of Management Journal, was rated by three disciplines. One journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, was rated by four disciplines. From these findings, five other journals were found to be high quality journals across several disciplines: Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Accounting & Economics, Journal of Accounting Research, Journal of Finance, and Journal of Financial & Quantitative Analysis.

Comparison

Comparing this study with the Fry, et al. (1985) study reveals some interesting findings. *Harvard Business Review* was identified as a top journal in both studies. *Management Science* was a top journal in this study and a

PRESTIGIOUS journal in the earlier study. *Decision Sciences*, while viewed as a top journal in this study was not rated in the earlier study. *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Business* and *Sloan Management Review* all rated well in both studies. So while considerable difference might be expected because of the differences in types of respondents used in each study, at the top of the forum structure, there was remarkable agreement. The differences in time between the earlier 1985 study and this 1998 study could be a factor in the differences, but the current study included findings collected as far back as 1987. Therefore, the perceptions over time might not be as great as first thought.

Conclusion

This study identified three journals which were highly rated across five or more business disciplines making them excellent candidates as publication outlets for transdisciplinary research findings. They were: *Harvard Business Review*, *Management Science* and *Decision Sciences*. Two additional journals were highly rated across four business disciplines: *Administrative Science Quarterly* and *Sloan Management Review*. *Business Horizons* had high exposure across four business disciplines, but received an overall low rating. Other journals of note, being rated by three business disciplines and receiving ratings over 70 were: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Business*, and *Academy of Management Review*.

TABLE 1. JOURNALS LISTED BY NUMBER OF DISCIPLINES RATING THE JOURNAL AND OVERALL SCORE

JOURNAL	OVERALL SCORE	# of Disciplines Rating the Journal
Harvard Business Review	70	7
Management Science	69.7	7
Decision Sciences	56.4	5
Administrative Science Quarterly	82.8	4
Sloan Management Review	63.4	4
Business Horizons	24.3	4
Academy of Management Journal	81.3	3
Journal of Business	73.7	3
Academy of Management Review	70.7	3
Journal of Business Research	63.7	3
California Management Review	52	3
Interfaces (INFORMS)	27.8	3
Journal of Finance	85.5	2
Journal of Accounting Research	83.5	2

Journal of Financial & Quantitative Analysis	81.5	2
Journal of Accounting & Economics	79.8	2
Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes	76.3	2
The Accounting Review	74.8	2
Operations Research	68.8	2
Journal of Business Finance & Accounting	65.5	2
Financial Analysts Journal	64.5	2
Financial Management	50.5	2
Journal of Information Systems (Accounting)	37	2
Journal of Systems Management	32.3	2
Datamation	12.5	2

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