Knowledge Development and Scientific Status in Consumer-Behavior Research: A Social Exchange Perspective

GEORGE M. ZINKHAN
MARTIN S. ROTH
MARY JANE SAXTON

As the Journal of Consumer Research (JCR) approaches its twentieth year of publication, there is increasing debate about the scientific status of the consumer-behavior discipline. The resolution of this debate has implications for the scope of inquiry (Holbrook 1987; Kernan 1987), appropriate methodology (Calder and Tybout 1987; Siegel 1988), and funding possibilities (Bloom and Milne 1991) in consumer research.

Specifically, the stature of the field has important ramifications for JCR researchers. Although consumer-behavior literature can be found in a variety of consumer, marketing, psychology, and economic journals (Mittelstaedt 1990), JCR serves as the flagship journal (Leong 1989) and, as such, is the chief repository of consumer-behavior theory and method. In addition to this archival function, JCR has a stated mission to function as an interdisciplinary journal (Monroe 1990), that is, drawing knowledge from and sending knowledge to the various disciplines represented by the members of its policy board. However, as Lutz (1989) points out, JCR’s relative youth (“just now entering adolescence”) argues for clarification of JCR’s positioning among the broad array of social science journals to assess both its scientific status and its accomplishment of the interdisciplinary mission.

There are, of course, many ways to assess scientific status. This article adopts the social exchange perspective on knowledge development suggested by Anderson (1983). This perspective maintains that science is inherently a social enterprise in which “theories must be argued for within a socially sustained matrix of commitments, beliefs, and practices” (Anderson 1983, p. 25). From this perspective, status (and “progress”) may be ascertained by understanding the communication network of a field (Eagly 1975). In the most generic sense, JCR’s communication network refers to its knowledge exchanges with other disciplines; in a narrower sense, its network is composed of other disciplines represented on its policy board.

Here, we are interested in examining communication flows in both networks. The extent of JCR’s acceptance by these related social sciences can be determined by the degree of reciprocity in dissemination of knowledge between JCR and other journals in its network. The degree of reciprocity can be assessed in terms of a sending/receiving ratio, or the ratio of the number of messages sent (frequency with which a journal is cited by other journals) to the number of messages received (frequency with which the journal cites other journals).

*George M. Zinkhan is an associate professor of marketing at the College of Business Administration, University of Houston, Houston, TX 77204. Martin S. Roth is an assistant professor of marketing at the Carroll School of Management, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167. Mary Jane Saxton is an assistant professor of management at the College of Business Administration, University of Houston, Houston, TX 77204. The authors thank Ed Blair, Victoria Crippenden, Pat Kaufmann, Mike Lyon, Jean Romero, Gerald Zaltman, and the three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. The authors would also like to thank the American Marketing Association Task Force on Knowledge Development for stimulating our thinking on this topic.
Hence, JCR's scientific status will be assessed through a comparison of those disciplines (and journals) that utilize knowledge published in JCR with those from which JCR authors receive knowledge.

Our method is citation analysis. Previous analyses have focused on the origins of knowledge by examining literature citations (Leong 1989) or they have focused on the journals that have cited JCR (Cote, Leong, and Cote 1991). We go beyond these previous investigations by studying both of these patterns simultaneously and by analyzing patterns of cocitations. We also construct a visual map (using multidimensional scaling) to illustrate the knowledge flows that take place between JCR and other journals.

Our main focus is to assess scientific status and to document specific knowledge flows between JCR and other, related journals. Thus, our study differs from previous investigations (e.g., Leong 1989; Cote et al. 1991) by (a) concentrating on the issue of scientific status and, to this end, developing a conceptual framework that emphasizes how scientific knowledge develops within a social exchange network, (b) focusing on cocitation patterns to tap into the social exchange network that surrounds JCR, (c) examining cocitation patterns over time to assess the extent to which JCR has developed as an interdisciplinary journal, and (d) identifying specific streams of research that have made an impact on sister disciplines.

THE ROLE OF CITATIONS IN KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

Citations represent the pool of archival knowledge from which authors retrieve established ideas and, in turn, generate new research ideas. This knowledge may be disseminated within an area and across disciplinary boundaries. Such an exchange of knowledge represents the passage of ideas within and among scientific disciplines. This exchange process has the potential to enhance or expand a field's knowledge development. Archival knowledge may be cited in a manuscript for reasons such as giving credit to related work, substantiating claims, and generally authenticating the manuscript's contribution to knowledge.¹

¹There are also authors who believe that there are many inaccuracies in citing, including memory failures, lack of secular awareness, carelessness, plagiarism of other people's citations without having actually used them, the widespread custom of not citing "obvious" sources, and others. In addition, many authors, journal reviewers, and editors believe that citations may be included in a manuscript to enhance chances of publication (e.g., to appeal to the ideological views of the journal's editor and review board, to satisfy reviewers' requests, etc.) and to build and maintain one's recognition (e.g., authors citing their own work, reviewers drawing an author's attention to the reviewers' publications, etc.). See Cummings and Frost (1985) for descriptions of such occurrences.

Citation as an Exchange Process

The social exchange of ideas, captured through citations, is part of the social construction of knowledge. Authors rarely develop new theories and methods independent of previous thought; rather, knowledge is constructed relative to some context (Price 1986). Furthermore, the context is embodied in the works of previous authors. Hence, citations represent the social passage of concepts underlying new ideas. In this respect, the citation process is viewed as a social exchange system in which, over an extended period of time, published authors exchange ideas (or manuscripts, which include citations of others' work) for future recognition (partly in terms of reciprocal citations). Citations can thus be viewed as frozen footprints that bear witness to the transfer of an idea (Cronin 1984).

Citation is one crude indicator that an author indeed has been read and has made a difference. Inhaber and Przednowek (1976) propose that citations can provide a clue to the extent to which a given scientist's work is used. As pointed out by Cummings and Frost (1985), there is much more status associated with being read than with just being published.

Cocitations as a Measure of Knowledge Exchange

By examining both citing (citations appearing in a particular journal article) and cited (citations of a particular journal article) patterns, it is possible to gain some insight into the nature of the relationships between consumer research and other related areas (such as those represented on JCR's policy board). By using this approach, it is possible to gain insight about knowledge exchanges that occur between fields and between journals.

Cocitations are based on the composite judgment of hundreds of citers, rather than on the judgment of a small group of experts (Culnan 1986). Therefore, cocitation patterns reveal evidence about cross-fertilization, the extent to which the research completed in one field is relevant to the current research frontier in a related discipline. In this manner, it is possible to track knowledge exchanges across the traditional boundaries that demarcate the social sciences.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGES INVOLVING JCR

Young disciplines typically rely on more established sciences to supply them with theories and methods. As a discipline matures, however, there is a tendency to become somewhat more parochial and to borrow less heavily from related fields (Whitley 1984). Using a citation analysis of five JCR volumes, Leong (1989) found that citations by JCR authors were most often from psychology (26.8 percent) and marketing (20.4 percent)
journals. Consumer behavior itself accounted for 18 percent of the citations in the five volumes studied. Other areas accounted for less than 6 percent each.

The extent to which a journal's literature is cited by subsequent authors is also an important indicator of knowledge use (Zinkhan et al. 1990). Cote et al. (1991) conducted a citation analysis (for the years 1974–1989) of journals citing JCR articles and found that consumer behavior and marketing authors and, to a lesser extent, psychology authors are the main users of information disseminated in JCR.

With respect to knowledge exchange, we are interested in the extent to which communication flows between consumer research and other disciplines are unilateral, reciprocal, or segregated. Figure 1 shows such a model of knowledge diffusion between JCR and other disciplines. Disciplines not communicating with JCR (cell I) are, from JCR’s perspective, segregated communities across which little or no knowledge is being diffused. At the other extreme, reciprocal communication flows (even exchanges of knowledge transfer) may be found between JCR and other journals (cell IV). Finally, cases of unilateral diffusion may exist when the knowledge exchanged between disciplines is disproportionate. Its interdisciplinary mission suggests that JCR’s communications with its policy-board disciplines should be in cell IV; however, past research on citations in JCR (Leung 1989) suggests that cells I and II more likely capture JCR’s relationship with many of its sister disciplines.

From a social exchange perspective, how do JCR and consumer research fit into the larger interdisciplinary communication network? By examining information exchanges across disciplines, JCR’s position and status in the broader scientific community can be assessed. Information exchange can occur through sending and receiving functions, leading to a sending/receiving ratio. The information-sending function of a journal is measured by the frequency with which its articles are cited by those in other journals, while information receiving is a measure of the frequency with which a journal’s articles cite those published in other journals (Eagly 1975).

The sending/receiving ratio is indicative of the journal’s role in knowledge exchange. Ratios greater than 1.0, for example, suggest that the journal is a “feeder” of network information, while low values (less than 1.0) suggest that the journal is a “storer” of network information. High values are indicative of the journal’s innovative role as a wellspring of seminal ideas in the discipline as well as an index of the journal’s relative prestige (Eagly 1975).

METHOD

Citing and cited data were collected from the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) data base for the 12 years of 1977–1988. For 1988 alone, the SSCI Journal Cit-

JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH

FIGURE 1

A MODEL OF KNOWLEDGE DIFFUSION BETWEEN JCR AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

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Citation Reports were based on more than 10.5 million citations, including more than one million articles appearing in over 7,000 diverse journals. From this data base, citing and cited listings are reported for the social science journals. Although JCR was first published in 1974, the SSCI data base did not begin assessing JCR citations until 1977.

We studied both citing and cited journal listings for JCR in SSCI. “Citing” in this case refers to journals that JCR authors referenced, and “cited” refers to journals whose authors referenced JCR articles. While a few journal references contained citations to periodicals other than academic journals, these were not included in the present study. To study communication and cross-referencing patterns between JCR and other publications, we examined cited patterns and also compared them with citing data. We used multidimensional scaling (MDS) as a method of cocitation mapping to demonstrate JCR’s position in the interdisciplinary network of knowledge development. For the MDS analysis, data were collected for the 46 journals that had the greatest incidence of cocitations with JCR for a recent three-year period (1985–1987).2 For the MDS map, journals were omitted from the cocitation analysis if SSCI categorized their citations as “not available.”

Each journal reference was categorized according to the scientific discipline to which it belonged, and most journals were easily classified. The Journal was placed in the consumer-research category.

RESULTS

Cited and Citing Patterns

As revealed in Table 1, consumer behavior is the literature most likely to cite JCR (over the 12-year period, 1988).

2The lag time for SSCI to publish citation data is approximately 1.5 years. At the time this research was conducted (late 1989), the three-year period of 1985–1987 offered the most current citation data available.

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29.8 percent of all citations of JCR were found in consumer-behavior journals. The marketing literature is the second most likely to cite JCR (23.2 percent). Consumer behavior and marketing together account for over 50 percent of all JCR citations. The percentage of marketing citations fluctuates over time, but appears to have reached a peak in the early 1980s; percentages varied between 28.5 percent, 27.0 percent, and 31.0 percent for 1980, 1981, and 1982, respectively. In the mid-1980s, the percentage of marketing citations remained fairly constant, hovering around the 20 percent level.

The psychology literature is the third most likely to cite JCR (6.4 percent), whereas it ranked first in terms of being cited by JCR (Leong 1989). There is a rather sharp decline in citations of JCR after this point; no other discipline accounts for more than 5 percent of the cites of JCR.

Citing patterns are not presented here in tabular form. However, we performed a citation analysis by discipline and refer to these results (rank order by discipline) in the following discussion. When cited patterns are compared with citing patterns, one of the largest variations occurs for economics, which is fourth most important in terms of being referenced in JCR but only eighth most likely to cite JCR. A similar result appears in the sociology literature, which is the eighth most important citing source for JCR authors but is fifteenth in terms of citations of JCR. Although marketing authors read and cite JCR, this is less often true for other social science authors.

However, there are two areas that are more likely to cite JCR than vice versa: general business and law. Authors in the general business literature cited JCR 183 times over the 12-year period, while JCR contained only 104 citations of general business literature. On closer examination, this outcome is primarily due to heavy citations in the Journal of Business Research and, to a lesser extent, the Journal of Business. Within the legal literature, Southern California Law Review was the heaviest cite of JCR (27 citations in 1986), while six other law reviews also referenced JCR in various years.

We examined these legal citations in more detail by obtaining the back issues for those legal journals that had cited JCR. The authors of these citing articles were all professors of law or economics; none of the authors were marketing professors. The legal authors were primarily interested in three related streams of consumer-
behavior research; literature on product quality and the price-quality relationship (e.g., Archibald, Haulman, and Moody 1983), findings related to information overload (e.g., Malhotra 1984), and literature that described consumer decision-making strategies (e.g., Johnson and Meyer 1984). In all three instances, the legal scholars desired to understand the processes and strategies that consumers used to make decisions and then utilized this knowledge to discuss the implications that these decision-making styles have for legislators and regulators. That is, the legal authors would argue: if consumers make decisions in this way (and are therefore potentially deceived by this type of marketing action), then our laws and regulations should take the following form. This particular use of JCR knowledge reveals that academic scholarship can have a significant impact on public policy. For example, state legislators frequently use law review articles as inputs in designing new regulations. It is encouraging to find that economists and law professors look to JCR to gather evidence about how consumers make choices.

**Knowledge Diffusion across Journals**

An interesting way to assess JCR’s impact on other disciplines over time is to examine sending/receiving ratios. We examined the three sociology journals that JCR is most likely to cite (American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, and Journal of Marriage and the Family). The first two journals made no citations of JCR over the 12-year time period, and the Journal of Marriage and the Family made only three citations in 1987. An analysis of the citations of JCR prior to 1988 indicates that JCR has yet to make an impact on the sociology literature; thus, there is a unilateral diffusion pattern between JCR and sociology journals (see Fig. 1).

A slightly different picture emerged when we examined two other journals from cognate areas: *Annual Review of Psychology* (ARP) and *Journal of Economic Psychology* (JEP). As shown in Table 2, most psychology journals did not cite JCR during the three-year period. However, ARP and JEP each cited JCR articles over 100 times each; therefore, we took a closer look at these two journals.

Between 1977 and 1988, ARP authors cited JCR articles 122 times, for an average of more than 10 citations per year. Ninety-six of these cites came in two years, 1982 and 1986 (years in which former JCR editors wrote review pieces in ARP). These 122 JCR citations accounted for 0.3 percent of all citations that ARP made in that 12-year period. In contrast, psychology journals accounted for more than 40 percent of the citations found in psychology journals. Thus, ARP authors are 134 times more likely to cite the psychology literature than they are to cite JCR. A large percentage (89 percent) of the 1986 ARP citations of JCR appeared in a review article written by a former JCR editor (Bettman 1986). This deeper examination of ARP and JCR communication flows indicates that JCR has not had as strong an impact on psychology as the raw data would indicate.

The *Journal of Economic Psychology*, like JCR, is an interdisciplinary journal. However, JEP is focused more on macroeconomic issues, societal problems, public policy, and the fundamentals of economics (Van Raaij 1986). In the data base, SSCI tracked the journal from 1984 through 1988. During that period, JEP authors were much more likely to cite the psychology literature (which accounted for 11.5 percent of all citations) than they were the economics literature (6.6 percent of all citations). Between 1984 and 1987 there were over 84 citations of JCR articles, and these represented 2.9 percent of all citations as monitored by SSCI. Thus, JEP authors are only four times more likely to cite the psychology literature as they are to cite JCR. Overall, JCR has made an impact on this interdisciplinary journal.

**Diffusion of Knowledge across Disciplines**

Although JCR has had little impact on some of its sister disciplines, trends in knowledge diffusion should also be considered. We selected four cognate areas to explore such diffusion patterns: economics, sociology, psychology, and marketing. Results indicated that the first two areas made almost no citations of JCR during the 12-year period. Sociology made three citations of JCR in 1987. Otherwise, there were no citations of JCR by either sociology or economics. In contrast, JCR cited economics journals an average of 18.18 times per year and cited sociology journals only 11.55 times on average. Thus, although JCR is influenced by these areas, it has not yet begun to exert much reciprocal influence. For sociology and economics, knowledge diffusion appears to be unilateral.

A different pattern emerges for the psychology and marketing areas. In the 12-year period, JCR made an average of 213.7 citations of psychology literature and was cited, in turn, an average of 32.19 times. This yields a citing/cited ratio that is greater than one in all time periods and that averages 11.28, indicating that psychology journals were more than 11 times more likely to be cited in JCR than to cite JCR themselves. Thus, the diffusion pattern between consumer research and psychology is also unilateral and has remained stable over time. It appears that knowledge diffusion between consumer research and psychology has not changed.

Marketing journals are much more likely than psychology journals to cite JCR (the mean number of marketing citations per year is 171). And marketing is, in absolute and percentage terms, less likely to be cited by JCR (the mean number of JCR citations of marketing journals is 105). In 11 of the 12 time periods, the citing/cited ratio is less than one, indicating that marketing journals were more likely to utilize JCR information than JCR authors were to draw upon marketing knowledge. In many of the years, however, the ratio is close to one; hence, although JCR has had a clear impact on

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<td>Multivariate Behavioral Research</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Psychological Reports</td>
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<td>Percentage of 27 most cited journals</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>64.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total citations</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>4,086</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Values are percentages. An ellipsis indicates that there were no citations.
*Percentage of 27 most cited journals per total citations.
**Total number of 27 journal citations.

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marketing, knowledge diffusion between the two disciplines appears to be reciprocal. One obvious explanation for this finding is that the same authors are writing in both fields.

In summary, JCR remains more of a knowledge receiver than a knowledge sender. Only in the marketing area is there evidence that a reciprocal pattern has evolved; JCR has almost no apparent impact on the sociology or economics literature. One explanation for this pattern of results is the fact that consumer-behavior researchers serve on marketing faculties, and marketing professors rarely publish in the sociology or economics literatures.

The Journal's Position in the Interdisciplinary Network

Figure 2 shows a two-dimensional MDS map of co-citation patterns for the 46 journals that cite and are most often cited by JCR. The map is constructed according to a Euclidian distance model with data from 1985 through 1987. Three years were chosen because prior maps of interdisciplinary networks have used three years to achieve stability of communication patterns (Cronin 1984). The distance measures that were input into the model consist of the total number of citations that the 46 pairs of journals made of each other during the three-year period.

Journals that appear close together tend to cite each other quite frequently, while those farther apart are less likely to cite each other. This sort of map is especially

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7 Included with these 46 journals is Advances in Consumer Research (ACR). Although ACR is not a journal, its frequent citing of and citation by JCR make its inclusion relevant in identifying the boundaries between JCR, ACR, and other disciplines. Between 1985 and 1987, ACR cited JCR 712 times, accounting for 26.9 percent of all citations. During that same period, JCR cited ACR 349 times, accounting for 5.7 percent of all citations.

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useful for revealing communication patterns among journals and for identifying potential boundaries between disciplines.

As shown in Figure 2, there are four loose clusters of journals. One cluster, found in the lower left quadrant, is composed of business- and marketing-related journals and also contains a communication branch, which includes such publications as *Journal of Advertising* and *Journalism Quarterly*. A second cluster, in the lower right quadrant, consists of behavioral and psychological journals. This second cluster is loosely connected to a sparse third cluster (located in the upper right quadrant) that is composed of sociology journals. The final cluster, in the upper left quadrant, consists primarily of economics journals.

Of those journals that appear in the business and marketing group, the *Journal of Marketing* is the closest to the economics grouping. Of particular interest here is the placement of *JCR* within this map. To some extent, *JCR* appears to play a bridging role between the behavioral and business journals. Other publications that play a similar role include *Multivariate Behavioral Research (MBR)* and * Advances in Consumer Research (ACR)*. The *Journal* is fairly distant from both the economics and the sociology clusters.

This map is constructed with cotiations as a measure of communication intensity. Thus, when two journals appear close together, it may be that one journal is doing all the citing, while the second journal completely ignores the first. Table 2 confirms that *JCR*’s frequent citing of psychology journals (rather than the reverse) leads to its positioning close to these journals.

An interesting finding is that *MBR* and *JCR* serve similar bridging functions between the behavioral and the business literatures. For example, *MBR* cites the behavioral group 399 times and is cited by this group 184 times. *Multivariate Behavioral Research* especially cocites the psychology “wing,” which is closest to *JCR* and which includes such journals as *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Psychological Review*, *Psychological Reports*, and *Psychometrika*. At the same time, *MBR* has a moderate relationship to the business cluster; it shares 46 cotiations with that group. Thus, *MBR* and *JCR* appear close together on the MDS map because they cite similar literatures, but the authors who write in these journals do not pay particular attention to one another, at least in terms of citing patterns. Perhaps *MBR* is a journal that *JCR* readers and authors might be interested in tracking more closely in the future.

**DISCUSSION**

Our main purpose has been to assess the scientific status of the consumer-research discipline via citation analyses. In some respects, the field of consumer research appears to be gaining stature. The *Journal*, as the field’s flagship journal, has begun to rely on its own archives to generate new knowledge. Self-generation of knowledge is often perceived to be the hallmark of a maturing discipline, and *JCR* has been moderately successful in attracting readers (and citers) from a variety of fields.

**Communication Flow between *JCR* and Other Journals**

In general, more knowledge is received by consumer research than is sent out into other disciplines. That is, *JCR* tends to cite other journals with much greater frequency than other journals cite *JCR*, particularly in the case of behavioral science and management journals.

Marketing is one field that has begun to draw on consumer research’s knowledge archives in a fashion approaching reciprocity or mutual influence. Other consumer-research publications (e.g., *Journal of Consumer Affairs*) also reciprocally communicate with *JCR*. Over time, there is a trend for marketing and consumer-behavior authors (groups that are not mutually exclusive) to cite *JCR* articles more frequently.

When the journals that cite *JCR* are considered, there are a few surprises. For example, there are at least seven law reviews that have cited *JCR* authors over the time period studied. It is also somewhat surprising that *JCR* and *MBR* perform such similar bridging roles (between the psychology and business literatures), yet these two journals only rarely communicate with each other (in terms of citations). As a topic for future research, it may be interesting to determine which specific kinds of *JCR* knowledge are found useful by related (and unrelated) fields. In a similar vein, it would be interesting to know which particular authors are citing *JCR* articles.

**General Interdisciplinary Network**

In general, *JCR* authors appear to rely on the psychology and marketing archives as a source of new ideas, with lesser contributions coming from management, sociology, and economics. As such, *JCR* does seem to serve a bridging role between psychology and marketing—a conduit, perhaps, for psychological knowledge to flow to marketing. One simple explanation for this finding may be that many *JCR* authors were trained in psychology.

A slightly related explanation involves a consideration of the process of research application. Traditionally, consumer researchers have drawn heavily on psychological theory to help understand human behavior within a consumption context. Therefore, studies that appear in *JCR* may be more applied than are the studies that appear in some psychology journals. The degree of application increases further when the same theories are applied by marketing researchers, whose goals include not only understanding behavior in a consumption context, but also making their findings relevant for
managers. In turn, the marketing archives contribute to consumer research when marketing theories are applied to consumer situations.

Interdisciplinary Communications among JCR's Constituent Disciplines

One disheartening finding is the lack of communication between JCR and the majority of sister disciplines that are represented on its policy board. Our analysis revealed minimal communication between JCR and the sociology, economics, and management literatures. Communication from JCR to the anthropology, statistics, communications, and home-economics literatures appeared virtually nonexistent. The anthropology case likely occurs because of citations of books and edited volumes rather than journals tracked by the SSCI database. Nonetheless, given the importance of these fields to the goals and direction of JCR, their absence from the communication network is cause for concern.

Assuming that each of these fields does warrant a place in the field of consumer research, ways of fostering communication with them may be sought. There are a number of possibilities. For example, one way to foster communication is to encourage consumer-behavior researchers to publish in related (e.g., psychology) journals. Although this may encourage communication flows, it may also decrease the number of potential manuscripts that are received by JCR. However, our analyses show that a main mechanism by which consumer-behavior ideas begin to appear in cognate journals is when a consumer-behavior researcher publishes an article in another journal.

Unfortunately, there may be organizational impediments that restrict the number of manuscripts that are submitted outside the field of authors' expertise or training. For example, some colleges or departments may not reward authors who publish in journals that are perceived to be "outside" core college disciplines. With little external incentive to risk the review process associated with less familiar journals, consumer-behavior researchers may be reluctant to submit manuscripts to publications that are perceived as alien or unknown territory. In this sense, the internal politics of many universities may conflict with behaviors that have the potential to contribute to the greatest good of the discipline.

Scientific Status and Consumer Research

The communication transfers to and from consumer research indicate that the field appears to be gaining in stature. The exchange of knowledge, as measured via citation analysis, shows that, over time, JCR is becoming more of a sending journal. Fields such as marketing and management continue to find that JCR is a knowledge resource, and what were once one-way flows to JCR have become more reciprocal. In addition, JCR has increasingly relied on its own archives to generate new knowledge. Thus, in Gergen's (1976, p. 374) terminology, there is an increasing likelihood that consumer-behavior researchers will be "invited to join the dance of scientific respectability."

Yet JCR, for the most part, continues to function as a receiving journal, borrowing or applying knowledge from other disciplines without being cited in return. Given that heterogeneity and interactions are often keys to creating new logics and paradigms (Maruyama 1976), the absence of knowledge sharing between these fields and consumer research is problematic. Combined with our findings that psychology and economics do not draw heavily on JCR, the scientific status of consumer research is unsettled, especially given JCR's goal of fostering interdisciplinary research. Although some users of JCR (such as marketing and management researchers) seem to attribute high status to consumer research, other disciplines do not.

Consumer Behavior as a Unique Field of Inquiry

In recent years, consumer-behavior researchers have been increasingly concerned with establishing a unique identity for their field of inquiry. There is a desire to create a body of consumer-behavior knowledge and research that is separate from marketing, psychology, and other sister disciplines. This tendency to create a "knowledge core" and establish discipline boundaries is the natural, historical path that many developing disciplines have followed (Cole and Cole 1973).

Our findings suggest that consumer behavior is beginning to solidify as a unique area of scholarly inquiry. For example, our analysis of the journals that cite JCR shows that both marketing and psychology journals have less influence on consumer behavior in the 1980s than in the 1970s. Throughout the 10-year period studied, consumer behavior accounted for 29.8 percent of all JCR citations. This provides some evidence that the consumer-behavior literature is becoming somewhat independent and established as a scholarly field of study.

SUMMARY

The Journal shows signs of maturity as a scholarly journal. Its increasing reliance on its own knowledge base and developing relationships with psychology and marketing journals are indicators of consumer behavior's scientific status. Consumer research seems to have solidified its position as an important source of ideas (and citations) within the marketing community. For other fields, however, it is not viewed as a rich source of knowledge.

If, as Bloom and Milne (1991) have argued, it is important to "market" consumer-behavior ideas, then perhaps JCR needs to consider ways in which its
knowledge can be made more accessible and more meaningful to fields other than marketing. If this can be accomplished, consumer behavior's scientific status within the broader scholarly community may begin to evolve and JCR may expand its role of performing an interdisciplinary bridging function.

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