

How to Get Great Research Cited

Adam Lindgreen, Copenhagen Business School and University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science^{1,2}

C. Anthony Di Benedetto, Fox School of Business, Temple University³

Roderick J. Brodie, University of Auckland Business School⁴

Julia Fehrer, University of Auckland Business School⁵

Michel van der Borgh, Copenhagen Business School⁶

¹ Adam Lindgreen, Department of Marketing, Copenhagen Business School, Solbjerg Plads 3, 2000 Frederiksberg C, Denmark and University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science, 26 Melville Road, Illovo, Johannesburg, South Africa. E-mail: adli.marktg@cbs.dk.

² All authors contributed equally.

³ C. Anthony Di Benedetto, Fox School of Business, Alter Hall 523, 1801 Liacouras Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19122-6083, USA. E-mail: tonyd@temple.edu.

⁴ Roderick J. Brodie, Department of Marketing, University of Auckland Business School, Owen G. Glenn Building, 12 Grafton Road, Auckland 1010, New Zealand. E-mail: r.brodie@auckland.ac.nz.

⁵ Julia A. Fehrer, Graduate School of Management, University of Auckland Business School, Owen G. Glenn Building, 12 Grafton Road, Auckland 1010, New Zealand. E-mail: j.fehrer@auckland.ac.nz.

⁶ Michel van der Borgh, Department of Marketing, Copenhagen Business School, Solbjerg Plads 3, 2000 Frederiksberg C, Denmark. E-mail: mvdb.marktg@cbs.dk.

ABSTRACT

Academic success traditionally has been assessed by publications in highly ranked journals. Other measures of research quality such as citations are now available, and these measures offer a wider perspective of academic contribution beyond simple article counting. Citations now are an important consideration when evaluating research impact and quality. Google Scholar, Scopus, and other programs are readily available to provide citation counts; and other measures such as Hirsch's h-index have also been developed. In this editorial, we discuss the issue of research citation, focusing on strategies that can be used to ensure that one's research output is read by the intended academic and practitioner audiences. We first examine why articles get cited including a consideration of types of articles and types of citations. We then outline how to set up and present research. This includes a discussion of the research's strong contributions to the field; conceptual and theoretical development; compelling findings; and clear conclusions and implications. Third, we provide guidelines to create visibility and understanding of the article's contribution in the offline research community and beyond. Fourth, we examine the critical role of the online environment in creating visibility for an article. Here, after having given an overview of academic search, we discuss keywords; design and structure; graphics; metadata and university research repositories; and interactive social media content. We conclude by cautioning about unethical practices to increase citations.

Keywords: Academic Search Engine Optimization (ASEO); Academic Research; Citation; Citation type; Repository; Self-citation; Social media content; Visibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic success traditionally has been assessed by publications of articles in highly ranked journals. Hence, it is important to understand the different rankings when profiling research. Different groups of scholars and research groups that are committed to maintaining the very best research have developed different journal rankings. For example, in the UK, most business schools follow the Academic Journal Guide (AJG) from the Chartered Association of Business Schools, while business schools in Australasia adhere to the Australian Business Deans Council's (ABDC) journal quality list and business schools in France frequently rely on the Comité National de la Recherche Scientifique's (CNRS) categorization of journals in economics and management, and business schools in Germany follow the JOURQUAL list from Der Verband der Hochschullehrer für Betriebswirtschaft e.V. (VHB). And, of course, there are the *Financial Times*' list of the 50 journals (FT 50) used for ranking global business schools, as well as the UT Dallas' list of the 24 leading business journals. Other business schools, such as Rotterdam School of Management, have developed their own journal rankings. Thus, many different rankings exist, with different criteria for journal ranking.

In recent years, however, other research quality measures have become available, and these offer a wider perspective of academic contribution beyond simple article counting. Citations now are an important consideration when evaluating research impact and quality. Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and other data aggregators are readily available to provide citation counts. Other measures such as Hirsch's h-index, Egghe's g-index, and the hg-index, to name a few, have also been developed. Furthermore, there are measures that provide a finer view than citation counts. The Field Wright Citation Index, for instance, assesses the number of a researcher's citations relative to the average obtained by other similar publications as indexed by Scopus. PlumX Metrics (focus on online interaction) and others can offer additional perspectives on research output and use. In this changing environment, citations are increasingly viewed as a measure of the impact of a researcher's work, and directly or indirectly impact the evaluation of that researcher by his/her institution. In this editorial, we discuss the issue of research citation, focusing on strategies that can be used to ensure that one's research output is read by the intended academic and practitioner audiences.

Before examining how to get great research cited, the topic of this editorial, it is important to revisit the conditions that lead to great research. In a previous editorial, Lindgreen et al. (2019) reflected on this, suggesting it is necessary to have research problems that lead to research opportunities that are of practical and academic interest, which lead to new research

opportunities. It is also valuable to be embedded in a network of talented scholars with complementary abilities. The team needs to refine their research to obtain clarity in expression so that the contribution clearly can be understood. To make a significant original contribution, fresh thinking about the role of theory and theorizing plays a valuable role (Brodie and Peters, 2020). Finally, a crucial challenge is to have the persistence to get research accepted in highly ranked journals.

Once a manuscript is accepted for publication, the challenge is to build citations. This requires the publication to become visible and its original contribution understood. Use of the online environment and social media plays an important role here. Platforms for knowledge sharing and dissemination of academic research include ResearchGate, ResearcherID, mySCOPUS, ORCID, Publons, GoogleScholar, LinkedIn, and others. Authors need to become active participants on these platforms.

In this editorial, we first examine why articles get cited. We then outline how to set up and present research. Third, we provide guidelines to create visibility and understanding of the article's contribution in the offline research community and beyond. Fourth, we examine the critical role of the online environment in creating visibility for an article. We conclude by cautioning about unethical practices to increase citations.

2. WHY ARTICLES GET CITED

2.1. Types of Articles

Different types of articles are cited for different reasons. For an overview of types of articles, we refer to Benoit et al. (2017). In the following, we will discuss the types that typically get cited.

Articles that elaborate on methods generally get well cited, especially tutorials. For example, Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer's (2001) article is a highly cited tutorial on a methodological issue. The authors propose four critical steps for constructing indexes based on formative indicators. Following that, they suggest two methods for testing the validity of formative measures. As such, this article will be highly relevant to many researchers' work and therefore frequently cited.

It is also possible to pick a topic that is not well understood or used and write a primer on this. Articles reviewing the literature also generally get well cited. Consider, for example, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, a journal with an impact factor that has increased significantly over the years. Its current impact factor is 7.6, and in the ISI Journal Citation Reports Ranking, the journal ranks 8/147 in Business and 8/217 in Management. This

journal's first special issue ever considered the topic of corporate social responsibility (cf. Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010). All articles in this special issue were literature reviews/overview articles and, including the guest editorial, were among the journal's 12 most accessed pieces in the year of their publication; and in each year since then, several of the pieces have been among the journal's most downloaded pieces. In fact, this special issue made a substantial contribution to the improved impact factor and the raised profile that *International Journal of Management Reviews* has enjoyed.

Many journals, in fact, publish compelling special issues that raise debate and attract widespread citations. Typically, a hot, high-potential topic is singled out, and with the permission of the special issue editor, guest editors solicit a collection of research articles on the topic, selecting the best of them for publication in the special issue. Thus, special issues serve two functions: alert the journal's readers to the growing importance of a topic while summarizing what is known so far about it, and present the newest research, often authored by a mix of senior academics and the best and brightest of the most recent generation of assistant professors. A special issue ideally becomes the go-to issue for researchers interested in that topic for many years to come. The result is that articles in these special issues have a good chance of getting highly cited.

A variant of the literature review is the meta-analysis, or the summary of 'where we are' in a research stream, which might be part of a journal's special issue on the topic (and therefore probably stands a higher chance of being included in this special issue). In *Industrial Marketing Management*, some of the 'citation classics' articles (cf. Lindgreen and Di Benedetto, 2018, 2019) are of this special issue type. Another example is the special issue that *Journal of Product Innovation Management* published a few years ago (Biemans et al., 2010) where three of the five top articles were meta-analyses. These articles were judged by the journal's editorial board members in terms of impact, not strict analysis of citation counts.

Conceptual articles that introduce new core concepts to a field is one of the best ways to attract citations. Writing conceptual articles is challenging, however. One reason is that many editors and reviewers resist accepting new ideas, constructs, and theories. Editors and reviewers prefer more well-known ideas, constructs, and theories. One strategy for authors to mitigate this challenge is to emphasize how they are building on the "shoulders of giants," as they say, even if their ideas, constructs, and theories are quite different. Rather than saying that "the Smith-Jones model from the 1970s is now outdated and obsolete, and here is a newer and better model," it might be good—if possible—to position one's work as an extension or alternative to Smith-Jones. Doing that means that researchers using the older and more popular model are

more likely to find and cite your article. Another benefit is that Smith or Jones, or one of their students, is probably going to be one of the reviewers of your article. Thus, if you speak well of their model while showing your contribution (and avoid implying the Smith-Jones model is obsolete), they will be more receptive to your article.

2.2.Types of Citations

The nature of the scientific impact of the cited articles is an important consideration in understanding why articles get cited. Stremersch et al. (2015) distinguish between five citation types:

- *Application citations* occur when authors cite an article because they use the article's concepts, methods, or findings.
- *Affirmation citations* occur when authors cite an article because their results confirm the findings of the cited study.
- *Negation citations* occur when authors cite an article because they critique, attack, or disconfirm the cited study.
- *Review citations* occur when authors cite an article to illustrate what prior literature has been studied.
- *Perfunctory mentions* occur when authors cite an article without really using it.

Application, affirmation, and negation citations indicate a higher level scientific influence of the cited article than review citations. More specifically, application citations reflect the scientific contribution through the direct usage of the concept, technique, or theory proposed by the cited article, while affirmation citations reflect contribution because the cited article confirms the correctness of the cited article. Negation citations contribute to an academic debate by highlighting theories or concepts that need revision or show some kind of contradiction. In contrast, review citations clarify the scope or contribution of the cited article or justify the cited article. Because of that, such cited articles are regarded as playing a less significant role for theory development. Finally, perfunctory citations, by definition, do not contribute to the development of a concept, and might even be wrong. Perfunctory citations are usually used to signal a reference to a certain research field, but this citation type does not refer to the specific concepts developed in the specific article that was cited.

Following their distinction of citation types, Stremersch et al. (2015) report the first large-scale study of the scientific impact of citation types in marketing journals. They examined the citation types of 659 articles in leading marketing journals (*International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing*

Research, and Marketing Science) over the period 1990–2007. Their analysis showed that for the cited articles, there were 10% application citations, 5% affirmation citations, 53% review citations, and 32% perfunctory mentions. They conclude that only 15% of citing articles (i.e., application, affirmation, and negation types of citation) used the cited article in a way that made a substantial scientific contribution. Review citations were much more common if the cited article made a lesser contribution. Of note: almost a third of citations were perfunctory, thus indicating no scientific contribution, and hence the citations should not have been made in the first place.

Recent research by Li et al. (2018) challenges the generalizability of Stremersch et al.’s (2015) findings. A similar approach that was used by Stremersch et al. (2015) examined the impact of two conceptual articles that have had a foundational influence on the development of a new research stream on customer engagement. The articles were “Customer engagement: conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research” (Brodie et al., 2011) and “Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: an exploratory analysis” (Brodie et al., 2013). Li et al.’s (2018) analysis for these two seminal conceptual articles showed that over 35% of the citations were due to application and over 55% to review citations. Less than 5% were perfunctory citations. It can be argued that the reason for this somewhat different distributions of citations for these three articles relates to their role in developing a new field of research. The two articles are seminal for the development of engagement research and thus arguably represent a new category of citations, one that refers to original work in a field. On a more general level, the type of citations likely relate to the type of study conducted.

We suggest that when describing the contribution of potentially great articles, authors should clarify the scientific contribution, and hence the potential for citation. Are citations likely to occur because authors refer to an article that is seminal in an emerging field, illustrates what prior literature has studied, or the article’s concepts, methods, or findings are central for specific research questions the researchers want to examine? Purely perfunctory citations are problematic, as they blur knowledge development in a field and send wrong signals. Authors, reviewers, and editors need to be aware of perfunctory citations and reduce their usage.

3. HOW TO SET UP AND PRESENT RESEARCH

All leading journals prefer articles that make significant contributions to the field. LaPlaca, Lindgreen, and Vanhamme (2018) discussed ways of how authors can improve their publishing success with such journals. We discuss some of these ways next.

3.1. Strong Contributions to the Field

Research will be judged, and published in top-rated journals, after consideration of its contribution to the literature stream. Before undertaking a research project, one should be sure that there is some potential for a valuable contribution. The researcher can ask academic colleagues their opinions on the research topic and their assessment of likely publication. It is also a good idea to consult associations such as the Marketing Science Institute and/or the Institute for the Study of Business Markets, who regularly publish research priorities. The highest-priority topics are likely to be both very publishable and also important to decision-makers in the practitioner community. By doing this homework up front, the researcher increases the likelihood of writing articles that have potential for citation, a consideration of great importance to journal editors.

In performing their gatekeeping duties, editors and reviewers insist on seeing clear research objectives. In the article's introduction, the researcher should clearly show a gap in the literature stream, and/or evidence of equivocal research findings. This is not enough, however; the researcher also has to clearly present why it is important to study this gap or this equivocality, and how the research will contribute theoretically or conceptually to the literature stream. Therefore, as a starting point to any research project, the author should try to answer the following questions:

- What is the research problem? Are there existing solutions?
- Is the proposed research new and interesting? What is the main limitation in existing theory?
- Is the proposed research challenging? Does the proposed research challenge the *status quo*?
- Is the proposed research directly related to the literature on a current hot topic? How does the proposed research add to this literature?
- Will the proposed research provide solutions to any difficult problems? What do you hope to achieve?

If yes to the above questions, then there might be the promise of a great manuscript. Thus, a manuscript may present new, original results or methods, or rationalize published results. A manuscript may also present a review of a particular field or summarize a particular topic. Literature reviews survey critical points in current literature relevant to a particular topic. By describing, synthesizing, and evaluating critically previous work relating to a topic, such

reviews should make a significant contribution to our understanding of a topic by providing integrative framework(s) and/or paths for further research.

However, just because some research has not been carried out before, this is no justification for undertaking that research now. For example, research that is purely descriptive or lacks theoretical implications is not interesting. Ultimately, the chance of having a manuscript accepted for publication depends on whether the authors are able to build a convincing story and show ‘something’ that was not known before and that will change the way we think about this ‘something’. To improve a manuscript’s focus and clarity, the story line should be kept comparably simple (i.e., does the manuscript pass the ‘grandma test’?). In a nutshell, manuscripts must answer the ‘so what?’ question.

3.2. Conceptual and Theoretical Development

Lindgreen et al. (2019) discuss five necessary initial conditions that determine the success of a research stream:

- *Research problems leading to research opportunities*, that is, the capability to identify an important research problem, which is of practical and academic interest that creates future research opportunities.
- *Initiation of a research stream*, that is, the capability to initiate the research stream by bringing together talented groups of scholars to realize research opportunities.
- *Clarity in expression*, that is, the capability to provide clarity in academic arguments that provide foundations for the emerging research stream.
- *Teamwork within a network of scholars*, that is, the capability to develop a network of talented scholars who continue to embrace research opportunities.
- *Platform to consolidate knowledge*, that is, the capability of the network of scholars to produce research that consolidates the knowledge in the area.

Additionally, there are five key conditions that build on these initial conditions and also impact the success of a research stream:

- *Role of theory and theorizing*, that is, greater emphasis needs to be given to the process of theorizing rather than to the focus on theory.
- *Sustained leadership and innovation*, that is, a process needs to be put in place to sustain leadership and innovation.
- *Acceptance of research*, that is, scholars within the research stream have the persistence to get research accepted in high-quality journals.

- *Recognition of research*, that is, the research stream needs to become visible and understood by other researchers.
- *Tenacity and resilience*, that is, the researchers must possess these two qualities.

Researchers have been successful in their conceptual and theoretical development when they have developed a clear and convincing logic to their theory so that researchers can see how the theory fits in the field; when they have defined concepts clearly and concisely so that other researchers can use them in their own research; have ensured there is a clear rationale for the conceptual development so that other researchers can understand why they should use the concepts, methods, or theories; and, finally, have ensured that propositions and hypotheses are specific, well argued, grounded in the theory, and not tautological.

3.3. Compelling Findings

In its discussion, a manuscript needs to refocus the reader on the research question(s) or purpose(s) of the manuscript; re-establish the frame of reference for the reader; and demonstrate the gap in knowledge that the manuscript has filled. That is, the authors need to ensure congruence with their original research motivations, objectives, and questions. Accordingly, authors turn their descriptive material from the manuscript's findings section into a meaningful discussion or answer to the research question(s), and how the contribution to knowledge described earlier is now substantiated. Findings can be related to the frame of reference and theoretical development previously established in the manuscript. The discussion section permits the authors to explain their research results as they accomplish the following:

- Describe how the results relate to the original research motivations, objectives, and questions.
- Provide interpretation for the results presented.
- Show how the results are consistent with what other investigators have reported or explain how and why the results are different.
- Demonstrate the importance of the research and why it deserves publication.

3.4. Clear Conclusions and Implications

As noted above, it is important to state clear research objectives in the introduction section. It is equally important to return to these in the conclusions, to show how these objectives were achieved. Again, playing the gatekeeper's role, the editor and reviewers will want to see evidence of the quality of contribution, and the researcher should seize this opportunity and write a strong conclusion that shows the research objectives were met. Needless to say, the conclusion should not be a mere repeat of the results section. The researcher should offer

evidence that the presented research is important and relevant. A strong managerial implications section may be required by the target journal, increases relevance and visibility to the practitioner community, and is valued by business schools who increasingly prioritize relevance of academic research. While not overstating the importance of the research, the researcher should avoid phrases such as “may make an impact” or “might be useful to managers in the future,” which cast doubt and uncertainty about the importance or usefulness of the findings.

Finally, the manuscript needs to discuss limitations of the research, as well as avenues for future research:

- Mention any limitations of the research and its design and why, despite these limitations, the research is important and adds to our knowledge base.
- Describe logical extensions of the research and provide directions for future research.

4. CREATING RECOGNITION OFFLINE: THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

We will now discuss different ways of creating recognition of the article offline, that is, in the research community and beyond.

Collaborating with top authors in a particular field may drive citations, as the article probably will be recognized easier. For example, the creation of value is key in marketing, as the role of business is to cocreate value for its customers that is superior to competitors’ offering. Many researchers, therefore, will include considerations of value in their research streams and, as a consequence, cite top authors in the field and see what they might have written since their first articles—and this is where your coauthored article with one of these top authors could be cited.

Publishing multiple articles on a particular topic to create a critical mass around a certain topic is another interesting idea. Researchers could contemplate running a conference session around a topic or idea that they write articles on; other researchers will then perhaps cite these articles. The same goes with having a special issue or a research volume where researchers could raise interest in their research.

Make sure to use the correct labels of concepts, methods, and theories and to choose outlets wisely is paramount to getting cited. Sometimes, a researcher introduces a concepts as the first one, but then is not cited because the labeling is not adopted or is incorrect, and/or the article is published in an outlet that is not read by the main target group. For example, Patrick

Matthew, a gardener in Scotland, arrived (crudely, though) at the principles of natural selection in 1831 and published his thoughts in an appendix of the book *Naval Timber and Arboriculture*. When Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace presented their joint publication of natural selection many years later, in 1859, they did not cite Patrick Matthew who was infuriated. A very apologetic Charles Darwin explained, in his defense, that he had never come across the book! Maybe a little closer to home, the classic Utterback-Abernathy model of product and process innovation, depicting the development of the “dominant form,” was first published in *Omega* (Utterback and Abernathy, 1975), *Technology Review* (Abernathy and Utterback, 1978), and in a book (Abernathy, 1978). While these two journals are well-respected, they might not have been the first places where an innovation researcher would have looked!

Send your articles out not only to top authors in the field, but also other authors who are working in the same area—and who might become the next top authors. Some authors include their recent published articles in their e-mail signature so that, with a click, one is taken to the journal where the article appears. It is interesting to know that if an article has been cited within its first year of publication, it is much more likely that the article will garner even more citations. This also means that authors should not wait sending out their articles or including their recent published articles in their e-mail signature. The reason why such articles accrue more citations probably relates to the fact that one should try and reference more recent articles.

Publish in high-impact journals as opposed to lower-ranked journals because articles in such journals generally are cited more. To some extent, a researcher can self-cite, but not excessively and really only when relevant. A researcher can also collaborate with coauthors who might also (again, net excessively and only when relevant) self-cite, and their combined network will be wider than just the researcher’s own network, and so their contacts will add to the pool of those aware of the researcher’s work who might cite the researcher! We caution, though, that both are walking a fine line! Thus, one could report Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science citations without self-citations.

Attending relevant conferences to present research work is a way for researchers to raise their profile additionally. Increasingly, researchers set up a profile on sites such as ResearchGate, ResearcherID, mySCOPUS, ORCID, Mendeley, SSRN, Kudos, Publons, GoogleScholar, and LinkedIn where interested people can follow their latest updates.

A focus on writing fewer but more impactful articles ensures that one’s CV is not polluted. Lots of publications might not necessarily be considered a good thing, especially if they are not all in top-notch journals. With fewer articles, it is possible to write more comprehensive articles with more content and impact.

Write managerially-oriented interpretations of your articles. This expands your readership outside the academic community, since practitioners probably will not read the academic journals publishing your work. With timely relevance and interest to practitioners, you might try developing a managerially-oriented version with the technical part streamlined and the focus on implications for improving competitiveness. Journals such as *Business Horizons*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Journal of World Business*, and *Sloan Management Review*, among others, are possible targets.

And a few more ideas for creating recognition of the article offline: Researchers always should cite their work correctly. Increasingly, this means that researchers should use a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) to describe the location of their article. If possible, they should also publish their data because when other researchers can check (and trust) the data, they are more likely to cite the article. Researchers could also contemplate publishing other types of works in journals: for example, research notes sometimes are cited heavily, as they introduce something new for other researchers to take further.

5. CREATING RECOGNITION ONLINE: ACADEMIC SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

5.1. Overview of Academic Search

Getting an academic manuscript published is often perceived as the final step, celebrating a successful finish of a multi-year journey of wrestling and engaging with reviewers, editors, and coauthors. The publication should, however, not be viewed as the final step. There is one more milestone to consider in today's networked age: Academic Search Engine Optimization (ASEO). Social media and the digital landscape request additional tasks from authors, some of which can be outsourced (e.g., social media content creation), and some that refer more directly to the design and structure of the article and therefore should be thought of when polishing the manuscript during the revision.

Authors need to ensure that their articles and research profiles are indexed correctly by academic search engines such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, ResearchGate, and others. This greatly increases the visibility of their work in their academic community and beyond. Equally important is that the indexed articles rank high on Google Scholar and other databases, that is, ideally the articles should show on the first page of the search list for as many searches as possible (Beel et al., 2010). While, as emphasized in the previous section, citations and the authors' reputation play an important role to rank high in academic search engines,

there are several additional elements, which can be optimized and influenced, even by an early-career researcher with single digit h-index and no “big name” author on the article.

Optimizing academic articles for search requires some knowledge of how search engines work, and how other researchers use them. We consider five elements of particular importance: 1) keywords, 2) design and structure, 3) graphics, 4) metadata and university research repositories, and 5) interactive social media content (For more practical advice, see a recently published blog by one of the authors in collaboration with the digital marketing agency Pure SEO, <https://pureseo.com>).⁷

5.2. Keywords

Keywords are the building blocks of any search engine optimization (SEO) strategy. Academic search engines, however, use specific ranking mechanisms to determine in which position an article is displayed. Common ranking factors include publication date, citation count, author, journal name, citations and reputation of authors, and, most importantly, the relevance of the article for specific search terms (Bell et al., 2010). The relevance is a function of how often and where search terms occur in the article.

Relevant search terms are particularly important in the title, abstract, and keywords of an academic article. For example, if the article contributes to understanding phenomena in the sharing economy, it is—from an ASEO perspective—recommended to have the phrase ‘sharing economy’ in the title, as a keyword, multiple times in the abstract, and frequently in the main body of the article. While arguably the word ‘collaborative economy’ describes many of the empirical phenomena in the field better than the phrase ‘sharing economy’, it is important to be aware of the fact that most researchers—and thus potential citation providers—would still search for the more established term ‘sharing economy’. Thus, authors need to consider carefully whether they use the more accurate or the more common language when designing their manuscript and describing their concepts. If authors, in this case, decide for the term ‘collaborative’, it is crucial to still create the link to ‘sharing economy’, for example by mentioning this latter term in the keywords, abstract, and introduction of the article. This way, the article ranks for both searches on ‘sharing economy’ and ‘collaborative economy’.

Another very important principle for ASEO is that an article should rank for as many searches as possible. This can be achieved through smart combinations of more general

⁷ Google Search Marketing for Academic Articles SERVSIG. Posted 18 December 2019. See: <http://www.servsig.org/wordpress/2019/12/google-search-marketing-for-academic-articles/>.

keywords⁸ (e.g., engagement, if your article is on business-to-business engagement) and more specific, so called long-tail keywords (specific word phrases, for example, SME business-to-business engagement) (Conway, 2019). While it is unlikely that one will rank on the first page for the search ‘engagement’ a couple of months after publication, it is more likely to rank high for more specific searches. At the same time, it is important to make sure that keywords are not too specific because researchers might search for broader or similar terms such as, for example, ‘small business engagement’.

The above examples illustrate that keywords should not be viewed as an afterthought, to be filled in carelessly when submitting a manuscript for review. Keywords are critical for navigating the readership and thus most central for reads and citations. Keywords require careful strategic consideration and planning. Indeed, early-career researchers sometimes have difficulties with keyword selection: they work with too many key terms, too few, or poorly-worded ones that will rarely be searched for. Tools such as Keyword Planner can support to determine keywords (Conway, 2019). However, observations of academic colleagues’ search practices might be even more effective for deciding informed about relevant keywords. Different from websites where keywords can be changed at any time, academic articles remain. This makes the choice of the right keywords even more central.

5.3. Design and Structure

The title and abstract are central and not only from an academic, but also from an ASEO perspective. While an article might, for example, at its core explore the “the design of business models in increasingly digital sociotechnical systems from a combinatorial evolution perspective,” this might be something that only very few researchers would search for. This article might, however, more generally offer a “new design approach for digital business models.” Thus, there is, again, a trade-off for authors to decide between a more general “encrypted” and search-optimized or a more accurate title. From an ASEO perspective, a title like “A new design approach for digital business models” would work better because it relates to a broader academic readership.

The abstract should include the topic, argument, and conclusions of the article, while using central keywords, as mentioned previously, throughout. The abstract needs to be written concisely and communicate well. The abstract and the title are the elements of the article, which are always open-access and available for all academic search engines. Thus, the abstract and

⁸ With keywords in this section we mean not only the specific keyword section of an article, but more general – as it is understood in SEO – important terms and phrases in an article.

the title need to be very convincing so that even researchers who do not have full access to the journal will make the effort to contact you in person or pay for the article to get access to your work.

Further, many journals now ask to provide the highlights of an article. These highlights should be written for practitioners and attract broader audiences than the immediate research community. Finally, the main body of an article should be keyword-optimized and—from an ASEO perspective—structured in a way that algorithms can “make sense” of it. That is, clear hierarchical structures are recommended. For example, it needs to be clear where the literature review ends, and where the development of the new conceptual framework starts, where the findings are, and what refers to future research avenues. To sum up, many of the recommendations regarding the design and structure of an article for ASEO also hold in general and refer to good practice in academic writing, as mentioned previously.

5.4. Graphics

Search engines cannot read images, yet. Thus, image-based raster graphics (e.g., jpeg, .png, .pdf, and .gif) cannot be understood by search engines. Many publishers however, provide figures and tables as open access, even if the full article is not available open access. This makes graphics an important, but often missed, opportunity to reach a broader audience. Graphics have great potential for broader impact because, if produced in a smart way, they appear not only in academic search engines, but more broadly in Google image search. From an ASEO and SEO perspective, there are three important elements to consider:

- Graphics, independently of how they are created, need a good description. That is, a graphic only described as “Figure 1” does not do the trick. Ideally, graphics should include relevant keywords and describe precisely what they depict because this description is what the search engine can read (Conway, 2019).
- Graphics should communicate their essence in a stand-alone manner without its surrounded text. This is critical, as Google image search only presents the graphic.
- Vector graphics (e.g. .svg, .ai, .eps, and .emf), instead of raster graphics, should be used. Vector graphics can be linked, copied, and adjusted in scale without losing their readability. Furthermore, text in figures can only be indexed if embedded in a vector graphic (Bell et al., 2010).

5.5. Metadata and university research repositories

Search engines use bibliographical metadata to identify documents. While the publisher is usually responsible for including the complete meta-information to articles, there are two points to consider.

First, most editorial systems nowadays allow for linking the metadata of an article to the author's ORCID Identifier. This has the advantage that all work of the author is connected by one unique identifier, which then is used by the academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, or Web of Science) to create author profiles. These profiles—as previously discussed—are particularly important for early-career academics, as they give an indication about the potential impact of their academic work.

Second, while published articles, if setup correctly, are linked directly with a researcher's academic profile and usually also with the researchers' university website, it is—from an ASEO perspective—of central importance to deposit the accepted manuscript in university research repositories. Such repositories are indexed by Google, Google Scholar, and other academic databases. That is, having the metadata, abstract, and accepted manuscript stored in the university research repository increases visibility and discoverability of academic research. Depending on the agreements with publishers, which are usually checked carefully by university librarians, accepted manuscripts can be published via the university research repositories and thus create greater access to academic work. University research repositories are further a particularly relevant source for universities in emerging countries that cannot afford licensing of the established academic databases.

5.6. Interactive social media content

Finally, for great impact, academic work needs to be in the social media buzz within and beyond the academic community. That is, it is important to market and shape markets for academic knowledge. This includes interactions with journalists, university communications, PR, and social media marketing. While it is somewhat controversially discussed if authors should invest time into their own social media marketing, we suggest at least to use and cocreate with the resources that are available. For example, many publishers offer support for communicating research on social media. Most universities nowadays are very supportive when it comes to creating social media content, in particular related to research that is within their strategic directions. Further, there is an increasing number of online platforms that have expertise in translating research to business practice. Usually, online platforms offer such service for free to researchers. Finally, we recommend researchers to link their academic work to their personal and professional social media profiles. Social media activities, at least

indirectly, influence ASEO. Research that is in the social media buzz gains traction and consequently increases in search. This positively influences the relevance of an article and hence its search rank in academic search engines in general, and Google Scholar in particular.

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Goodhart's Law famously states that "when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure." Since citations are used as a measure of research quality and impact, and increasingly as a consideration in evaluation of an academic's research portfolio, there is the temptation to try to 'game' citations unethically. Researchers should view citations as a measure of the value of their research, not the so-called target in and of itself.

We have already addressed one ethical issue above: self-citation, which could be done in an unscrupulous manner. It is inevitable that a researchers' work will extend on, or borrow from, work they have done in past years, so some self-citation is inevitable, and acceptable. The generally-accepted rule is that one should apply the same rules to self-citation as to any other citation. For example, consider Stremersch et al.'s (2015) citation categories and avoid perfunctory citations and, by all means, avoid overstuffing the reference list with one's own work just to boost citation numbers. But, there are other concerns as well, such as the unethical use of citation clubs (where everyone agrees to cite everyone else's work as much as possible), 'fake' citations (citing one's own unpublished and unreviewed manuscripts), citing both a conference paper and a journal article (that overlap greatly and say much the same thing), or even cherry-picking one's own articles to boost one's h-index. There are other unethical practices involving citations as well: some unscrupulous journal editors require authors of accepted manuscripts to include several articles from their journal to boost impact factors; reviewers insist on adding references to several of their own articles when recommending a revise and resubmit, and so on.

It is beyond the scope of this editorial to address these and related ethical issues in detail. However, it bears mentioning here that one must not lose sight of the objective. It should not be to get as many citations as possible, perhaps even acting unethically in the process. If one is writing impactful work, as we have outlined in this editorial, this work will be recognized by the academic community and the citations will follow.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The academic publishing landscape has changed in numerous ways, and it is up to us to keep up with these changes to ensure our work reaches the desired academic and practitioner

audiences. As we have outlined in this editorial, the academic objective has not changed: we as always seek to make a strong theoretical or conceptual contribution to our chosen research area. However, citation counts are now readily accessible metrics, and we work in an environment, which increasingly uses these metrics as a measure of research quality and, directly or not, as a consideration in academic contribution. We must therefore also be aware of the ways by which we can increase the visibility of our research, not only to our academic colleagues, but also to the practitioner community who can benefit from our work. To that end, we have examined ways by which the academic researcher can create online recognition, select keywords properly, and use social media effectively, among other considerations, without compromising ethics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This editorial is part in a series of the co-editors-in-chiefs' reflections on important aspects of planning, undertaking, and publishing research in business-to-business marketing management, reflections that should help prospective and early-career researchers eventually to see their findings published in *Industrial Marketing Management* and other top journals. Previous pieces include Di Benedetto et al. (2019), LaPlaca, Lindgreen, & Vanhamme (2018), LaPlaca et al. (2018), Lindgreen & Di Benedetto (2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2020), Lindgreen et al. (2019, 2020), and Lindgreen et al. (2019). The authors would like to thank Thomas Ritter and Tobias Schäfers for input.

REFERENCES

- Abernathy, W.J. (1978). *The Productivity Dilemma*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Abernathy, W.J. & Utterback, J.M. (1978). Patterns of industrial innovation. *Technology Review*, 80(7): 40–47.
- Beel, J., Gipp, B., & Wilde, E. (2010). Academic search engine optimization (ASEO) optimizing scholarly literature for Google Scholar & Co. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 41(2): 176–190.
- Benoit, S., Scherschel, K., Ates, Z., Nasr, L., & Kandampully, J. (2017). Showcasing the diversity of service research: theories, methods, and success of service articles. *Journal of Service Management*, 28(5): 810–836.

- Biemans, W., Griffin, A., & Moenaert, R. (2010). In search of the classics: a study of the impact of *JPIM* papers from 1984 to 2003. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 27(4), 451–484.
- Brodie, R.J., Hollebeek, L.D., Juric, B., & Ilic, A. (2011). Customer engagement: conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. *Journal of Service Research*, 14(3): 252–271.
- Brodie, R.J., Ilic, A., Juric, B., & Hollebeek, L.D. (2013). Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: an exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1): 105–14.
- Brodie R.J. & Peters L. (2020). Increasing contribution in service research: fresh thinking about the process of theorizing. *Journal of Service Marketing*, in press.
- Conway, R. (2019). *How to Get to the Top of Google Search: A practical SEO Guide*. Auckland: Penguin Random House New Zealand.
- Diamantopoulos, A. & Winklhofer, H.M. (2001). Index construction with formative indicators: an alternative to scale development. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38(2): 269–277.
- Di Benedetto, C.A. & Lindgreen, A. (2019). Editorial: Commentaries on the Citation Classics in *Industrial Marketing Management*. 79: 1–2.
- Di Benedetto, C.A., Lindgreen, A., Storgaard, M., & Clarke, A.H. (2019). Editorial: How to collaborate really well with practitioners. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 82: 1–8.
- LaPlaca, P., Lindgreen, A., & Vanhamme, J. (2018). How to write really good articles for premier academic journals. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 68(1): 202–209.
- LaPlaca, P., Lindgreen, A., Vanhamme, J., & Di Benedetto, C.A. (2018). How to revise, and revise really well, for premier academic journals. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 72(5): 174–180.
- Lindgreen, A. & Di Benedetto, C.A. (2018a). Editorial: Citation classics from *Industrial Marketing Management*: celebrating forty-seven years of publications on business-to-business marketing management. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 73: 1–6.
- Lindgreen, A. & Di Benedetto, C.A. (2018b). Editorial: Continuous improvement at *Industrial Marketing Management*: suggestions from the Editorial Review Board. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 71: 1–4.
- Lindgreen, A. & Di Benedetto, C. A. (2018c). Editorial: The future of *Industrial Marketing Management*. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 67(8): 1–4.

- Lindgreen, A. & Di Benedetto, C.A. (2020). Editorial: How to become a top business-to-business marketing scholar. *Industrial Marketing Management*, in press, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.01.014>.
- Lindgreen, A., Di Benedetto, C.A., Brodie, R.J., & Naudé, P. (2019). Editorial: How to build great research groups. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 81: 1–13.
- Lindgreen, A., Di Benedetto, C.A., Brodie, R.J., & Naudé, P. (2020). Editorial: How to translate great research into great teaching. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 85: 1–6.
- Lindgreen, A., Di Benedetto, C.A., Verdich, C., Vanhamme, J., Venkatraman, V., Pattinson, S., Clarke, A.H., & Khan, Z. (2019). How to write really good research funding applications. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 77(2): 232–239.
- Lindgreen, A. & Swaen, V. (2009). Corporate social responsibility. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 12(1): 1–7.
- Li, L., Brodie R.J., Fehrer J.F., & Juric B., (2018). Developing the customer engagement stream: exploring the role of seminal papers. *Proceedings of ANMAC Conference*, Adelaide.
- Stremersch, S., Camachoa, N., Vanneste, S., & Verniers, I. (2015). Unraveling scientific impact: citation types in marketing journals. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 32(1): 64–77.
- Utterback, J. M. (1974). Innovation in industry and the diffusion of technology. *Science*, 183: 620-626.
- Utterback, J.M. & Abernathy, W.J. (1975). A dynamic model of process and product innovation. *Omega*, 3(6): 639-656.
- van Doorn, J., Lemon, K.N., Mittal, V., Nass, S., Pick, D., Pirner, P., & Verhoef, P.C. (2010). Customer engagement behavior: theoretical foundations and research directions. *Journal of Service Research*, 13(3): 253–66.