CURRENT RESEARCH PARADIGMS IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STUDIES: THEMES, CONCEPTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

This study examined the status of contemporary knowledge management studies in the last decade with citation and co-citation analysis. Using the data collected in SCI and SSCI this study identified the most important publications and the most influential scholars and journals in knowledge management area, and then mapped the major research paradigms in knowledge management research. The results help profile the invisible network of knowledge production in knowledge management and provide important insights on the change of research paradigm of current knowledge management studies.

With the upcoming of knowledge economy, knowledge management has gradually developed into an independent academic field and scholars from different fields have joined the studies of knowledge management. The past decade has especially seen extensive research on knowledge and knowledge management (Marymalavi & Leidner, 2006). Yet even though knowledge management has established itself as an academic discipline, its establishment has been a slow process because researchers in this area prefer to publish their best work in more established journals. Another major obstacle to the development of knowledge management lies in the subject’s unusually high degree of interaction with other disciplines. This overlapping blurs the boundaries of knowledge management and as a result its distinct theoretical model and analytical tools are unjustly attributed to other competing fields. With limited resources contributing to the development of knowledge management, the cross-fertilization of ideas between scholars of knowledge management will be much more difficult to obtain. Consequently, while there is no doubt that there is an area or field of knowledge management, the question remains somehow unclear on what it is, how good its work is, and what are its prospects and needs for future development.

The objective of this study is to provide knowledge management researchers with a unique map to better understand knowledge management related publications and to provide a systematic and objective mapping of different themes and concepts in the development of knowledge management field. This study also attempts to help identify the linkage among different publications and confirm their status and positions in their contribution to the development of knowledge management field. The principal methods used are citation and co-citation analysis, social network analysis, plus a factor analysis which is performed to identify the invisible network of knowledge generation underlying the knowledge management literature.