



Mapping the field of arts-based management: Bibliographic coupling and co-citation analyses[☆]

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ABSTRACT

The literature in the field of arts-based management acknowledges that the combination of formal and informal dimensions that artists see can provide valuable insights for modern entrepreneurs and business managers. Due to the progress achieved to date, this study aims to map the field of arts-based management based on a systematic review of 137 scientific articles published in refereed scientific journals from 1973 through 2015. Specifically, based on two different citation analysis methods – *bibliographic coupling* and *co-citation* –, the results allow for the identification of some of the most active and influential articles, journals and authors in the field, revealing rankings, collaboration networks and clusters of contributions to the literature. This type of analysis is important to enhance our understanding of the intellectual structure of the field, and can be used to support the identification of new lines for future research.

1. Introduction

Creativity, imagination, innovation, inspiration, emotion, stimulation, reflection, energy, vision, passion, challenge, culture, being open to novelty... all these terms are common expressions in the field of the arts. And, as Adler (2006), Antal and Strauß (2013), and Schiuma (2011) point out, modern entrepreneurs and business leaders too have recently discovered the potential of artistic thinking to improve their management skills at the individual, group and organizational level. Indeed, while the 21st-century manager might be armed with digital devices rather than a painting palette or a musical instrument, the combination of formal and informal dimensions that artists see can provide valuable insights for modern entrepreneurs and business managers (Anderson, Kupp, & Reckhenrich, 2009; Antal & Strauß, 2013; Breznitz & Noonan, 2014; Klerk, 2015).

Because creativity and innovation are processes aimed at changing perceptions of reality, artistic thinking and arts-based management call for ever greater creativity and for more effective strategic planning, communication and foresight (Austin & Devin, 2010; Brabandere & Iny, 2010; Cummings & Angwin, 2011). In this respect, the power of artistic thinking in organizations relies, precisely, on “interspaces” (i.e., spaces of possibility), where “participants experience new ways of seeing, thinking, and doing things that add value for them [personally and

collectively]” (Antal & Strauß, 2013, p. 3).

In light of the increasing interest it has been garnering, this promising field of research (i.e., arts-based management) has required its content to be reviewed. Although literature reviews of the area exist, with somehow different emphases (e.g., Antal & Strauß, 2013), no prior evidence of a systematic literature review using bibliometric tools in the field has been found. This seems to be particularly important, however, if one takes into account the network of informal communication links that typically exists among the most influential researchers in the scientific structure of a research field (cf. Ferreira et al., 2016). In this sense, this study aims to map the field of arts-based management, providing data on its level of activity and allowing influential authors, journals and articles to be revealed. The results can then provide researchers with a solid basis for positioning current contributions and detecting new lines for future research. In fact, mapping the literature allows key research areas in the field to be identified, as well as those already working within them. This is of great interest for both new and existing researchers in the field, in terms of knowing how to direct their work. From a managerial point of view, it systematizes the research in the field, allowing managers to more easily access this knowledge and how to translate it into practice within their firms.

Based on a systematic review of 137 scientific articles, a categorized bibliometric analysis for the period from 1973 through 2015 is

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presented. This bibliometric analysis is grounded on two different citation analysis methods, namely: *bibliographic coupling* and *co-citation*.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section presents a brief overview of the field of arts-based management. The following section presents the methodological procedures followed and maps the field by presenting the results of the bibliographic coupling and co-citation analyses. The last section concludes the study, presenting final remarks and suggesting avenues for future research.

2. Arts-based management: a brief overview

Within the context of unpredictability, volatility and dynamism brought by the current economic climate, it has been argued that the arts can be a powerful agent of personal, institutional, and community change (cf. Broeck, Cools, & Maenhout, 2008; Crainer, 2008; Darsø, 2004; Harris, 1999; Jacobson, 1996; Kamoche & Pina e Cunha, 2001). Although the definition of “the arts” has been the subject of a long-standing debate among experts – the general connotation of the term represents “a special kind of quest for excellence” (Lee, Chen, & Wang, 2014, p. 3) –, the ability of the arts to potentially influence business performance has been significantly reported in the literature (cf. Gahan, Minahan, & Glow, 2007; Meisiek & Barry, 2014; Nissley, 2010; Reckhenrich, Anderson, & Markides, 2008). Clearly, as Chia (1996), and Schiuma (2011) reinforce, this possibility exists because the recourse to the arts can provide new avenues for exploring relational patterns and frames of understanding the present-day business environment. Indeed, as pointed out by Nissley (2010), “the arts offer a means for us to make sense of the growing complexity that managers and leaders are confronted with” (p. 11).

For the last 30 years or so, several organizations, such as Benetton, have aimed to link the arts and business to improve both society and corporate performance (cf. Dell’Era, 2010). This approach has been used in a wide range of different business activities and contexts, namely: (1) *business idea creation and R&D projects* (Heinonen, Hytti, & Stenholm, 2011; Kratzer, Gemunden, & Lettl, 2008); (2) *business teaching* (Amidon, 2005; Clark & Stewart, 2012; Freeman, Dunham, Fairchild, & Parmar, 2014; Madden & Smith, 2015); (3) *human resources management* (Townsend, 2000); (4) *marketing and strategy* (Huettl & Gierl, 2012; Lee et al., 2014; Szulanski & Amin, 2001; Witkowski, 1990); (5) *strategic information systems* (Sakthivel & Mandell, 1998); (6) *communication and corporate identity* (Cummings & Angwin, 2011; Hoeken & Ruikes, 2005; Kerr & Darsø, 2008; Kottasz, Bennett, Savani, & Ali-Choudhury, 2008); (7) *leadership* (Kuran, 2013; Mitra, Hsieh, & Buswick, 2010; Thomson, 2010); (8) *sponsorship* (Thomas, Pervan, & Nuttall, 2009); (9) *tourism* (Aquino, Phillips, & Sung, 2012); and (10) *fashion and design* (Aage & Belussi, 2008). In this respect, and translated into broad terms, arts-based management “educates feelings, imagination and emotions, all fundamental to human communication and the appropriate functioning of organizations” (Nissley, 2010, p. 15).

It is worth noting, however, that the business activities and contexts mentioned above are just examples where the relationship between the arts and business has proven value (for further discussion, see Oliveira & Silva, 2011; Reaves & Green, 2010; Rogers, 1998; Styhre & Eriksson, 2008); and much has changed over the past few years due to the impact of this relationship on business performance, making it very difficult to say how much larger the field of arts-based management has grown. While debate on the strengths and limitations of arts-based management methods will always exist, it is noteworthy that the field already embraces sufficient research and empirical evidence to allow us to better understand the effectiveness of its practicality (for discussion, see Merritt, 2010; Szulanski & Amin, 2001).

In light of these considerations, and bearing in mind the increasing interest that has recently been given to the arts-based management research field, this study aims to provide an up-to-date bibliometric analysis of the area and characterize its level of activity, identifying

some of the most influential authors, journals and articles. Overall, as already pointed out, the analysis should provide researchers with a solid basis for positioning current contributions and detecting new lines for future research.

3. Bibliometric analysis of the literature

3.1. Methodology and selection of articles

Bibliometric analyses are important because they allow influential authors to be identified and their interrelations to be revealed, which in turn provides researchers with a solid basis for positioning current contributions and detecting new lines for future research. Because this type of analysis involves the statistical treatment of scientific publications and respective citations, it provides data on the level of activity in a certain research field, allowing the outcomes to be used to evaluate the research performance of researchers, journals, countries and institutions (cf. Ferreira et al., 2016; Merigó, Mas-Tur, Roig-Tierno, & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2015).

In conducting a bibliometric analysis, two different citation analysis methods are often used to outline the publications in a certain field of research in detail, namely: (1) *bibliographic coupling*, which takes place when two articles reference a common third article in their bibliographies, indicating that a probability exists that the two articles treat a related subject matter – the “coupling strength” of two given articles is higher the more citations to other articles they share (cf. Kessler, 1963; Martyn, 1964) –; and (2) *co-citation*, which occurs when two articles are both independently cited by one or more articles (Small, 1973). Fig. 1 differentiates both methods.

Because bibliographic coupling has been criticized for being retrospective in nature (i.e., the information used to establish the similarity relationship between articles is lagged and static); and because two articles may reference a completely unrelated subject matter in the third (cf. Garfield, 2001), the co-citation method has been pointed as a better indicator of subject similarity (cf. Small, 1973). It is worth noting, however, that because one of the methods is “retrospective” and the other is “forward looking”, both methods complement each other. For this reason, both types of analysis (i.e., upstream and downstream analyses) are performed in this study.

The analysis carried out in this study serves to identify clusters of articles on arts-based management, who the most influential authors in the field are, where they come from, and the respective networks of authorship. For the construction of the bibliometric maps, the software used is the VOSviewer (www.vosviewer.com).

The data was obtained through the *Scopus* database, which contains information about thousands of scholarly publications, including authorship, affiliation and citations. It is noteworthy that other databases, such as *Thomson Reuters* – widely known as *ISI Web of Knowledge* –, could had been considered. However, *Scopus* is the database that, in the particular field of arts-based management, covers more indexed publications.

The sample used in this study is limited to articles *published* (including those in *forthcoming* status) in international journals. To guarantee the homogeneity of the sample, books, conference proceedings and reports were not considered in the analysis. The search terms used were “arts” and “business”, and the selected articles were exclusively those allocated to the category of “business, management and accounting”, without the use of any chronological filter. The initial search resulted in 824 publications. Of these, 687 were excluded from the analysis either because they were out of the scope of the present study (for instance, state-of-the-“art” reviews on other research fields) or simply because they address other research topics not (directly) related to arts-based management (such as history of “art” and religion). After this content/filter analysis, the search performed resulted in 137 scientific articles with publication dates between 1973 (2 articles) and 2015 (5 articles). Fig. 2 shows the number of articles on arts-based

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