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A Comparative Study on the Logistics Research between International and Korean Journals

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare and analyze differences and similarities between some Korean and international logistics-related journals. To this end, this study reviewed academic journal articles published between 2007 and 2011 in three international journals. A total of 990 articles were reviewed and categorized in terms of research topics, research methods, and analytical techniques, and subsequently compared. This study is, to the authors' knowledge, the first attempt to evaluate and compare prestigious international journals and Korean journals in the logistics-related research field similar to studies undertaken in scientific journals. The differences and similarities revealed in this study will help logistics researchers understand the interaction and communication between international and Korean journals, and how they can be used to develop logistics research at both the international and local levels.

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1. Introduction

Since the acknowledgement of logistics as a core component of firm and country-level competitiveness, it has become a popular area of study. The logistics industry has sought innovation and performance improvement to meet ever-complicated customers' demand and to adopt technological advancement in operations. A number of studies have suggested that the field of logistics has grown not only in volume, but also in the evolution in themes, theory, and methods to reflect and analyse these changes (e.g., Burgess et al., 2006; Georgi et al., 2013; Liao-Troth et al., 2012; Woo et al., 2011; Keratas-Cetin and Denktas-Sakar, 2013). The supply chain management (SCM) research has increasingly adopted theories and rigorous methods with this higher research volume (Liao-Troth et al.,

2012). A geographical transition in publications is also evident: from the dominance of North American and European countries to the emergence of Asian and Latin American countries in the 2000s (Liao-Troth et al., 2012; Woo et al., 2011; 2013). It is also suggested that SCM studies published in the top management journals extends the spectrum of research by scholars beyond their academic boundaries (Grimm et al., 2014).

These observations are primarily from major academic journals published internationally in English and listed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) or Association of Business School (ABS) List (Liao-Troth et al., 2012; Georgi et al., 2010; 2013; Maloni et al., 2009)

such as Journal of Business Logistics (JBL), International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management (IJPDLM), International Journal of Logistics Management (IJLM), Journal of Supply Chain Management (JSCM) among others. These journals can serve as more trustworthy data source for review studies in logistics and SCM research than non-indexed journals or journals published domestically and in local languages. In addition, researchers tend to publish more papers in international journals such as SSCI listed journals since publication in such journals provides greater international diffusion and visibility for their work.

Korean journals, however, still have an important role as outlets in which local researchers can publish their work and communicate with each other. These journals also have an advantage in that they are more open to studies focused on local issues than international journals seeking general rules and trends that are internationally applicable. Korean journals offer a source of research topics, since local issues discussed in Korean journals sometimes develop into new research agendas that draw researchers' attention internationally. These journals function as a channel through which academic knowledge and theories are transferred from the international to local levels and vice versa. A healthy communication between international and domestic journal (e.g. Korean journals) can create sound and sustainable development in logistics research. Despite the academic contribution of domestic journals, there also exists a perception that there may be gaps between international and Korean journals in terms of research agendas, methods, and eventually research quality. Therefore, a comparative study between international and Korean journals would be useful and necessary in understanding how they interact and in which directions they communicate.

Landry et al. (2001) provides this study with theoretical support suggesting models explaining the relationship between social science research and knowledge users as shown in Figure 1. The 'science supply push model' emphasizes the supply of advances in research findings from academics and researchers as the major determinant of knowledge utilization whereas, in 'the demand pull model', the initiative shifts from the researchers to the users who define the problems and request research that identifies and assesses alternative solutions to specific problems. Their empirical analysis, however, suggested that knowledge transfer or dissemination is better explained by 'the interaction model', which suggests that knowledge utilization depends on various disorderly interactions occurring between researchers and users rather than on linear sequences beginning with the needs of the researchers or the needs of the users. Relying on the interaction model, it is assumed that international journals and domestic journal interact each other bringing similarities and differences in research themes and approaches.

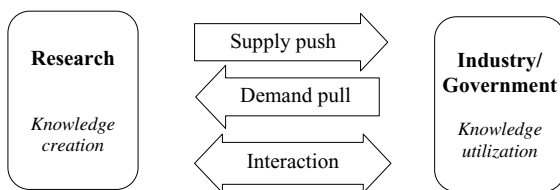


Fig. 1. Knowledge utilization model

Source: Illustrated by authors based on Landry et al. (2001)

This study, therefore, aims to investigate similarities and differences between international and domestic journals in research topics, research methodologies, and analytical techniques. To this end, this study collected 990 articles published in three international and three Korean journals

from 2007 to 2011. Domestic journals are represented by Korean Journals in this study due to language limitation. The collected papers were subsequently categorized in terms of research topics, research methods, and analytical techniques and a comparison was made between these journals. This study is, to the authors' knowledge, the first attempt to evaluate and compare international prestigious journals and domestic journals in the logistics research field, although a few similar studies were undertaken in scientific journals (e.g. Rey-Rocha and Martin-Sempere, 2004). The results from this study will help logistics researchers understand the interactions and communication between international and domestic journals, and how this can be used to develop logistics research at both the international and local levels.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Collection of Papers

Although there are quite a few international journals in the logistics research field, three journals were selected based on the rankings of previous studies such as Menachof et al. (2009), Carter et al. (2009) and Sachan and Datta (2005). They were *Journal of Business Logistics (JBL)*, *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management (IJPDLM)*, and *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal (SCMIJ)*. Language issue limited this study to Korean journals, leaving the possibility that this study could be extended in the future to include domestic journals published in other countries. The Korean journals were the *Korea Logistics Review (KLR)*, *The Journal of Korea Logistics Society (JKLS)* and *The Journal of Korean Association of Shipping and Logistics (JKASL)*. These journals are peer-reviewed and listed in the Korea Citation Index list published by the Korea Research Foundation. Research articles published in 2007 to 2011 were collected from academic databases such as Emerald and Wiley for the international journals, and the Korea Citation Index and Korean Studies Information Service System for the Korean journals. Table 1 show that 499 papers were collected from international journals and 419 from Korean journals.

Table 1 Number of papers published by six major logistics journals

	Journal Title	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
International Journal	JBL	16	27	25	29	28	125
	IJPDLM	41	38	39	39	45	202
	SCMIJ	32	36	34	35	35	172
	Sub-total	73	101	98	103	108	499
Korean Journal	KLR	34	44	49	50	53	230
	JKLS	13	13	16	21	26	89
	JKASL	31	33	41	35	32	172
	Sub-total	78	90	106	106	111	491
Total	167	191	204	209	219	990	

2.2 Classification Framework

During the initial review of the collected papers, authorship information such as institutional affiliation and the nationality of institution for each paper was logged using Microsoft Excel. The subsequent and more intensive review attempted classification of the collected papers by research topic, method and analytical technique, if applicable. Category

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