

Most cited articles and authors in global strategy research[☆]

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Abstract

Recent reviews of global strategy research have documented a number of top contributors based on the number of their publications. However, no citation analysis has been conducted to ascertain the impact and influence of this research. In response, we have conducted the first ever citation analysis of 393 global strategy articles in nine leading journals published during the 1990s. Our findings identify the 25 most cited articles in the nine journals, the top 40 authors who publish these most cited articles, and the most cited articles in each of the 16 categories (subfields) of global strategy research. We also find that there is relatively little correlation between the set of 30 most prolific authors identified by Lu [Lu, J.W., 2003. The evolving contributions in international strategic management research. *Journal of International Management*, 9, 193–213.] and our set of 40 most cited authors. Among the 30 most prolific contributors, only eight (27%) have authored one of the top 25 most cited articles. Conversely, 32 (80%) of the 40 authors who publish the top 25 most cited articles are not on the list of most prolific authors. The eight leading authors who excel in both volume and influence of their research—Paul Beamish, John Hagedoorn, Jean-Francois Hennart, W. Chan Kim, Anoop Madhok, Arvind Parkhe, Mike Peng, and Aimin Yan—are surveyed to offer their insights on how to craft high impact research.

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As an important area in international business and strategic management, global strategy research has attracted substantial attention among scholars (Peng, 2005, 2006). The 1990s was predicted by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1991), Lyles (1990), and Ricks et al. (1990) to be a particularly strong period of growth for this research. Recent reviews of this literature completed after the 1990s by Bruton et al. (2004), Lu (2003), Peng (2001), and Werner (2002) have confirmed that strong growth indeed took place during that decade. As a body of literature develops and expands, it is useful to examine its influence. Existing reviews have endeavored to do that by producing lists of articles (Lorhke and Bruton, 1997; Lu, 2003; Peng, 2001; Werner, 2002) and top contributors (Lorhke and Bruton, 1997; Lu, 2003; Peng, 2001; Griffith et al., 2006). While all published journal articles can be argued to be high quality research which makes a contribution, the impact is not likely to be equal. All top contributors to this literature identified by Griffith et al. (2006), Lorhke and Bruton (1997), Lu (2003), and Peng (2001) are based on the total number of publications. The implicit assumption is that the impact of each of these contributions is equal.

While a high number of publications in top journals indicate that a scholar has been prolific and successful in generating high visibility output, such a number, which would earn a scholar a position in the lists of top contributors based on publication counts, gives us no information about whether this output has a significant *impact*. While there are a variety of ways to measure scholarly impact (such as surveying scholars and administrators, see MacMillan, 1991), the most objective and thus most widely used measure is citation analysis — an examination of how an article is cited by other scholars and journals (Beamish, 2006; Li and Tsui, 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2005; Ramos-Rodriguez and Ruiz-Navarro, 2004; Tahai and Meyer, 1999). To the best of our knowledge, there has been no citation analysis performed on the impact of global strategy research. Therefore, we have endeavored to extend the earlier publication-count-based work of Lorhke and Bruton (1997) and Lu (2003) by performing the first ever citation analysis of the global strategy literature published during the 1990s. We believe that our analysis will shed additional light beyond the existing lists of top contributors based on the number of publications. The questions guiding our efforts are: What are the most cited articles in global strategy research? Who are their authors?

1. Citation analysis

Given that one of the leading objectives of scholarly research is to influence the thinking of other scholars and — in the aggregate — the field, citing a given article “provides a public acknowledgment of an influence whereas the other possible influences cannot be objectively verified” (Tahai and Meyer, 1999: 279). It is important to note that citations are not the only measure of influence — citations are a *subset* of scholarly influence. While citations “measure influence,” they “do not measure quality or intellectual rigor” (Starbuck, 1994: 2). Sometimes, certain works are cited not because of their direct intellectual influence but because of the legitimacy they provide to certain topics (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999). One may call this the “herd effect.” Consequently, some high quality articles are not widely cited, whereas many relatively low quality articles may be extensively cited. Also, theoretical, conceptual, and review articles tend to receive more citations than do empirical articles.¹ In addition, there are incidences of

¹ For example, on average, articles in the *Academy of Management Review* are cited more than those in the *Academy of Management Journal*. But few scholars would argue that this reflects a quality difference between the two journals (Starbuck, 1994).

significant mis-citations (Harzing, 2002).² Therefore, like all methods, citation analysis has significant limitations, which attract legitimate criticisms.

Despite the limitations, citation analysis remains the most widely used method for evaluating scholarly impact (Beamish, 2006; Li and Tsui, 2002). Responding to critics, Baird and Oppenheim (1994: 8) argue:

What is embarrassing for the critics of citation counting is this fact: whatever measures you take for the eminence of an individual scientist or of a journal or an institution, citation counts provide strong correlation with that result. This must be very frustrating for the people who criticize citation counting, but demonstrates that, despite the 'noise' produced by the vagaries of citations, the 'signal' still comes through strongly.

It is based on this premise — citations are a reliable, although imperfect, indication of scholarly influence — that we proceed to carry out our citation analysis. While citation analysis has been undertaken to evaluate the entire field of international business (Chandy and Williams, 1994) and strategic management (Boyd et al., 2005; Ramos-Rodriguez and Ruiz-Navarro, 2004), much of this work focuses on the influence of journals (Franke et al., 1990; Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Podsakoff et al., 2005; Tahai and Meyer, 1999) but not the influence of individual articles and their authors. In both international business and strategic management, all lists of top contributors, such as those generated by Lohke and Bruton (1997), Lu (2003), and Peng (2001) noted above on global strategy and by Chan et al. (2006), Griffith et al. (2006), Kumar and Kundu (2004), Inkpen and Beamish (1994), and Morrison and Inkpen (1991) on international business, are based on the number of publications. *None* has used the number of citations. It is this important gap that we intend to fill.

2. Methodology

“Global strategy” (or “international strategic management”) is an important field of research at the intersection between international business and strategic management (Peng, 2006).³ Different definitions of its universe may lead to different selections of articles to be assessed (Nag et al., 2005). Delineating the boundaries of this field is beyond the scope of our investigation here (see Bruton et al., 2004; Nag et al., 2005 for recent efforts). Instead, we have drawn on Lu’s (2003) comprehensive review of global strategy research. Specifically, we include all the 393 articles identified by Lu (2003), which were published in the nine top journals during 1991–2000 (inclusive).⁴ These nine journals include three top international business journals (*Journal of International Business Studies*, [*Columbia*] *Journal of World Business*, and *Management International Review*) and six top strategic management journals

² A mis-citation occurs when an article is cited to support point A, while it really supports the opposite, point B. See Harzing (2002) for an alarming, large-scale example.

³ Global Strategy has become one of the seven interest groups recently recognized by the Strategic Management Society (SMS—the other six are Competitive Strategy, Corporate Strategy and Governance, Knowledge and Innovation, Strategy Process, Practice of Strategy, and Entrepreneurship and Strategy). The first author is the first elected officer of the Global Strategy Interest Group at SMS, serving as Associate Program Chair, Program Chair, and Chair during 2005–08.

⁴ A full list of the 393 articles can be seen in Lu (2003: Table 1, 197–199). Complete references can be found at Professor Jane Lu’s website at <http://www.mysmu.edu/faculty/janelu/jim.doc>.

Table 1

The top 25 most cited articles published in the nine journals during 1991–2000 (inclusive) in global strategy research¹

Rank (total citations/ excluding self-citations)	Article
1 (351/351)	Hamel G., 1991. Competition for competence and interpartner learning within international strategic alliances. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (Special Issue), 83–103.
2 (139/134)	Hennart J.-F., 1991. The transaction costs theory of joint ventures: an empirical study of Japanese subsidiaries in the United States. <i>Management Science</i> 37, 483–497.
3 (126/126)	Collis D., 1991. A resource-based analysis of global competition: the case of bearings industry. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (Special Issue), 49–68.
4 (114/111)	Parkhe A., 1993. Messy research, methodological predispositions, and theory development in international joint ventures. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 18, 227–268.
5 (118/112)	Yan A., Gray B., 1994. Bargaining power, management control, and performance in United States–China joint ventures: a comparative case study. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 37, 1478–1517.
6 (110/103)	Parkhe A., 1991. Interfirm diversity, organizational learning, and longevity in global strategic alliances. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 22, 579–601.
7 (104/99)	Gupta A.K., Govindarajan V., 1991. Knowledge flows and the structure of control with multinational corporations. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 16, 768–792.
8 (101/95)	Inkpen A.C., Beamish P.W., 1997. Knowledge, bargaining power, and the instability of international joint ventures. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 22, 177–202.
9 (96/94)	Geringer J., Hebert L., 1991. Measuring performance of international joint ventures. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 22, 249–263.
10 (93/87)	Barkema H.G., Bell J.H., Pennings J.M., 1996. Foreign entry, cultural barriers, and learning. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 17, 151–166.
11 (89/88)	Chatterjee S., Wernerfelt B., 1991. The link between resources and type of diversification: theory and evidence. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12, 33–48.
12 (86/85)	Agarwal S., Ramaswami S., 1992. Choice of foreign market entry mode: impact of ownership, location and international factors. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 23, 1–27.
13 (80/80)	Kim W.C., Hwang P., 1992. Global strategy and multinationals' entry mode choice. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 23, 29–53.
14 (80/73)	Hitt M.A., Hoskisson R.E., Kim H., 1997. International diversification: effects on innovation and firm performance in product-diversified firms. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 40, 767–798.
15 (79/74)	Hagedoorn J., Schakenraad J., 1994. The effect of strategic technology alliances on company performance. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 15, 291–309.
16 (78/66)	Peng M.W., Heath P.S., 1996. The growth of the firm in planned economies in transition: institutions, organizations, and strategic choice. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 21(2), 492–528.
17 (75/74)	Kobrin S., 1991. An empirical analysis of the determinants of global integration. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (Special Issue), 17–31.
18 (75/73)	Dyer J.H., 1997. Effective interfirm collaboration: how firms minimize transaction costs and maximize transaction value. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 18, 535–556.
19 (74/74)	Schneider S., DeMeyer A., 1991. Interpreting and responding to strategic issues: the impact of national culture. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12, 307–320.
20 (73/73)	Chang S., 1995. International expansion strategy of Japanese firms: capability building through sequential entry. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 38, 383–407.
21 (70/70)	Rosenzweig P., Singh J., 1991. Organizational environments and the multinational enterprise. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 16, 340–361.
22 (65/65)	Kogut B., 1991. Country capabilities and the permeability of borders. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (Special Issue), 33–47.
23 65/64)	Erramilli M., 1991. The experience factor in foreign market entry behavior of service firms. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 22, 479–501.
24 (65/63)	Nohria N., Garcia-Pont C., 1991. Global strategic linkages and industry structure. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (Special Issue), 105–124.

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Table 1 (continued)

Rank (total citations/ excluding self-citations)	Article
25 (63/59)	Madhok, A., 1997. Cost, value and foreign market entry mode: the transaction and the firm. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 18(1), 39–61.

¹All citation numbers are as of December 31, 2004. These numbers are almost certainly going to be higher by the time of publication of the present article (in 2006).

(*Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Management Science*, and *Strategic Management Journal*). These journal selections are supported by influential (and generally non-controversial) surveys in both international business (Chan et al., 2006; Dubois and Reeb, 2000; Griffith et al., 2006; Kumar and Kundu, 2004; Phene and Guisinger, 1998) and strategic management (Boyd et al., 2005; MacMillan, 1991; Park and Gordon, 1996; Podsakoff et al., 2005).

There are at least three advantages associated with our approach. First, we avoid “reinventing the wheel,” which would entail proposing a new universe of global strategy research and its relevant journals. Second, we rely on a list of articles agreed upon by two groups of earlier reviewers of this research published in this *Journal*. Specifically, Lu (2003) directly incorporates the 134 articles published during 1991–95 that Lorhke and Bruton (1997) identify and, using the same criteria, adds 259 new articles published during 1996–2000, resulting in a total of 393 articles. Third, Lu’s (2003) list on “international strategic management” is also the most relevant and most comprehensive. In comparison, Peng’s (2001) list of 61 articles only focuses on those which adopt a certain perspective (the resource-based view). Werner’s (2002) list of 271 “international management” articles not only includes substantial non-strategy work, but also comes from a shorter period (1996–2000). Therefore, Lu’s (2003) explicit focus on “international strategic management” research and her longer coverage (the entire 1990s) gives us a most relevant base upon which we can conduct our analysis.

Despite the relatively objective nature of citation analysis, biases are still likely. Given the cumulative nature of citations, older publications on average are likely to generate more citations. Articles published 1–2 years ago, regardless of how strong their long-run impact may eventually be, are not likely to be extensively cited and then published in other work. However, if we wait too long, citation analysis will generate a measure of articles’ long-run impact but not necessarily a measure of their recent influence. Tahai and Meyer (1999: 293) report that over 50% of the citations will be *four* years old or younger. In other words, four years after publication would represent the mode of the citation distribution. They thus recommend the first four years since the publication of an article as a reasonably balanced cut-off to capture both the short-run impact and (likely) long-run impact. Consequently, we conducted our citation analysis, based on the Social Science Citation Index published by the Institute for Scientific Information, on December 31, 2004, which would give articles published in 2000, the most recently published work in our database, four full years to accumulate necessary citations.

In summary, we analyze the citations generated by the 393 articles in global strategy research published in nine leading journals during 1991–2000. The focus on the 1990s is driven by (1) the widely noted growth of research during that decade (predicted by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1991), Lyles (1990), and Ricks et al. (1990) and confirmed by Lorhke and

Table 2
The most cited articles in each of the 16 categories (subfields) in global strategy research¹

Category	Article	Total citations/excluding self-citations
<i>Environment</i>		
Environmental/ industry analysis	Peng M.W., Heath P.S., 1996. The growth of the firm in planned economies in transition: institutions, organizations, and strategic choice. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 21, 492–528.	78/66 (top 16)
Cultural (national)	Barkema H.G., Bell J.H., Pennings J.M., 1996. Foreign entry, cultural barriers, and learning. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 17, 151–166.	93/87 (top 10)
Scenario development/ political risk analysis	Boddeyn J., Brewer T., 1994. International business political behaviors: new theoretical directions. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 19, 119–143.	46/46 (not in top 25)
<i>Leadership and organization</i>		
Internal coordination	Gupta A.K., Govindarajan V., 1991. Knowledge flows and the structure of control with multinational corporations. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 16, 768–792.	104/99 (top 7)
Boards of directors	Hitt M.A., Hoskisson R.E., Kim H., 1997. International diversification: effects on innovation and firm performance in product-diversified firms. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 40, 767–798.	80/73 (top 14)
Decision making	Calori R., Johnson G., Sarnin P., 1994. CEOs cognitive maps and the scope of the organization. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 15, 437–457.	46/41 (not in top 25)
Structure	Malnight T.W., 1996. The transition from decentralized to network-based MNC structures: an evolutionary perspective. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 27, 43–65.	23/22 (not in top 25)
Culture (corporate)	Nohria N., Ghoshal S., 1994. Differentiated fit and shared values: alternatives for managing headquarters-subsidiary relations. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 15, 491–502.	35/35 (not in top 25)
<i>Strategy</i> ²		
Strategy typologies	Morrison A., Roth K., 1992. A taxonomy of business-level strategies in global industries. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 13, 399–418.	44/43 (not in top 25)
Corporate strategy formulation	Dunning J.H., 1998. Location and the multinational enterprise: a neglected factor? <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 29, 45–66.	53/53 (not in top 25)
Corporate strategy implementation	Nohria N., Garcia-Pont C., 1991. Global strategic linkages and industry structure. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (Special Issue), 105–124.	65/63 (top 23)
International diversification	Parkhe A., 1991. Interfirm diversity, organizational learning, and longevity in global strategic alliances. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> 22, 579–601.	110/103 (top 6)
Strategic alliances	Hamel G., 1991. Competition for competence and interpartner learning within international strategic alliances. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (Special Issue), 83–103.	351/351 (top 1)
Business-level strategy formulation	Collis D., 1991. A resource-based analysis of global competition: the case of bearings industry. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12 (special issue), 49–68.	126/126 (top 3)

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Table 2 (continued)

Category	Article	Total citations/excluding self-citations
<i>Strategy</i> ²		
Business-level strategy implementation	Dyer J.H., 1997. Effective interfirm collaboration: how firms minimize transaction costs and maximize transaction value. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 18, 535–556	75/73 (top 18)
Turnaround/decline	Stopford J., Baden-Fuller C., 1994. Creating corporate entrepreneurship. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 15, 521–536.	35/35 (not in top 25)

¹All citation numbers are as of December 31, 2004. The categories are used in earlier reviews by Lohke and Bruton (1997) and Lu (2003). One category, “Performance” is omitted here, because the most cited paper in this category, Hundley and Jacobson (1998), only has 9 citations — we thank Reviewer 2 for making this suggestion.

²Under the general label of “strategy,” one of the categories, labeled “Enterprise strategy (social issues)” by Lu (2003: 198), contains only one article (Nigh and Cochran, 1994). Further, because this article is published in *Management International Review*, a journal which is not covered by the Social Science Citation Index, its citations are not available. See also Footnote 5 in the text.

Bruton (1997), Lu (2003), Peng (2001), and Werner (2002)), (2) the availability of such a comprehensive list provided by Lu (2003), and (3) the necessity to wait a few (preferably four) years to allow articles published in the late 1990s to have a fair chance to accumulate sufficient citations.

3. Findings

This section not only reports the total number of citations generated by the top articles, but also highlights the top citation-generating articles in each of the 16 categories (subfields) of research identified by Lohke and Bruton (1997) and Lu (2003). We also compare the list of most prolific authors generated by Lu (2003) with our list of most cited authors.

First, Table 1 lists the top 25 articles out of the 393 articles in the nine journals which generated the largest number of citations as of December 31, 2004. Because of self-citations, we also report the number of citations excluding self-citations. Hamel (1991), which is cited 351 times (no self-citation), is the most frequently cited article. The second most frequently cited article is Hennart (1991), which is cited 139 times (134 times excluding self-citations). Since older articles are likely able to generate more citations, not surprisingly, only six out of the top 25 are published in the second half of the 1990s. They are Barkema et al. (1996), Hitt et al. (1997), Inkpen and Beamish (1997), Peng and Heath (1996), Dyer (1997), and Madhok (1997). Overall, the 25 top cited articles are published by five journals — *SMJ* (11 articles/44%), *JIBS* (5/20%), *AMR* (5/20%), *AMJ* (3/12%), and *MS* (1/4%).

One of the most noticeable aspects of Table 1 is the uneven distribution of the top cited articles among various subfields within global strategy research. One subfield which stands out is strategic alliances. Seven out of the top ten most cited articles (including four of the top five) deal with strategic alliances. All together, nine out of the top 25 focus on strategic alliances. Given the diversity of global strategy research, it is also interesting to examine the number of citations of the top articles in each of the 18 categories (subfields grouped under the four broad labels of environment, leadership and organization, strategy, and performance) identified by Lohke and Bruton (1997) and Lu (2003). Because two categories, performance and enterprise strategy (social issues), have very little citation activity, Table 2

Table 3
The most prolific authors versus the most cited authors¹

Rank	30 most prolific authors (total number/adjusted number of authored articles)	Authored top 25 most cited articles?	Rank	40 most cited authors (total number/adjusted number of authored articles among the top 25 most cited)
1	Yadong Luo (6/5.5)	No	1	Arvind Parkhe (2/2)
	Arvind Parkhe (6/5.5)	Top 4 and 6	2	Sea Jin Chang (1/1)
3	Paul Beamish (11/5.25)	Top 8		David Collis (1/1)
4	Julian Birkinshaw (9/5)	No		Jeffrey Dyer (1/1)
5	Kendall Roth (7/4.17)	No		Krishna Erramilli (1/1)
6	Stephen Tallman (7/4.08)	No		Gary Hamel (1/1)
7	Yigang Pan (7/3.67)	No		Jean-Francois Hennart (1/1)
8	Jean-Francois Hennart (6/3.33)	Top 2		Stephen Kobrin (1/1)
9	Brian Mascarenhas (4/3.33)	No		Bruce Kogut (1/1)
10	Jiatao Li (4/3.25)	No		Anoop Madhok (1/1)
11	Andrew Delios (6/3)	No	11	Sanjee Agarwal (1/0.5)
12	Jeffrey Reuer (5/3)	No		Paul Beamish (1/0.5)
13	James Taggart (3/3)	No		Savan Chatterjee (1/0.5)
14	Lance Brouthers (6/2.83)	No		Arnoud De Meyer (1/0.5)
	J. Myles Shaver (6/2.83)	No		Carlos Garcia-Pont (1/0.5)
16	Massaki Kotabe (7/2.67)	No		Michael Geringer (1/0.5)
17	W. Chan Kim (6/2.67)	Top 13		Vijay Govindarajan (1/0.5)
18	Keith Brouthers (5/2.67)	No		Barbara Gray (1/0.5)
19	Shige Makino (6/2.5)	No		Anil Gupta (1/0.5)
20	Anoop Madhok (3/2.5)	Top 25		John Hagedoorn (1/0.5)
	Sharon O'Donnell (3/2.5)	No		Peggy Heath (1/0.5)
	Rakesh Sambharya (3/2.5)	No		Louis Hebert (1/0.5)
23	Will Mitchell (7/2.33)	No		Peter Hwang (1/0.5)
24	Marjorie Lyles (5/2.33)	No		Andrew Inkpen (1/0.5)
25	Mike Peng (4/2)	Top 16		W. Chan Kim (1/0.5)
	Allan Rugman (4/2)	No		Nitin Nohria (1/0.5)
27	John Hagedoorn (3/2)	Top 15		Mike Peng (1/0.5)
	Kent Miller (3/2)	No		Phillip Rosenzweig (1/0.5)
	Aimin Yan (3/2)	Top 5		Jos Schakenraad (1/0.5)
	Srilata Zaheer (3/2)	No		Susan Schneider (1/0.5)
				Habir Singh (1/0.5)
				Sridhar Ramaswami (1/0.5)
				Birger Wernerfelt (1/0.5)
				Aimin Yan (1/0.5)
			35	Harry Barkema (1/0.3)
				John Bell (1/0.3)
				Michael Hitt (1/0.3)
				Robert Hoskisson (1/0.3)
				Hicheon Kim (1/0.3)
				Johannes Pennings (1/0.3)

¹In both most prolific and most cited authors' lists, when two or more scholars' rankings are tied, the alphabetical order of their last names is used. The list of the most prolific authors is from Lu (2003: 206). Lu compiles a total of 393 global strategy articles published during 1991–2000 (inclusive) from nine leading journals — three top international business journals (*Journal of International Business Studies*, [Columbia] *Journal of World Business*, and *Management International Review*) and six top strategic management journals (*Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Management Science*, and *Strategic Management Journal*).

only shows 16 categories.⁵ Nine of the most cited articles in each of the 16 categories are among the top 25 most cited articles overall — in other words, in seven categories, even their most cited articles are not among the top 25 most cited articles overall.

All together, a total of 40 scholars authored the top 25 most cited articles in the nine journals. It is therefore interesting to compare our list of these most cited authors with the list of most prolific authors provided by Lu (2003), who covers the same area of research during the same period as in our analysis.⁶ Specifically, in Table 3, we calculate the total number of articles in the set of top 25 most cited articles authored by these 40 scholars and also the adjusted number of articles after giving partial credit for coauthored articles. This is the same method used by Lu (2003) — as well as Lohke and Bruton (1997), Inkpen and Beamish (1994), Morrison and Inkpen (1991), and Peng (2001). The results are illuminating. Out of Lu's (2003) 30 most prolific authors, only eight (27%) authored one of the top 25 most cited articles. Conversely, among the 40 scholars who published the top 25 most cited articles, only eight (20%) are among the top 30 most prolific authors identified by Lu (2003). Overall, there is relatively little correlation between the set of most prolific authors and the set of most cited authors — a finding which is recently corroborated by Boyd et al. (2005: 853).

4. Discussion

4.1. Contributions

Overall, our citation analysis, the first ever such study conducted to assess the influence of top global strategy articles and authors, makes four contributions. First, this analysis sheds light on the source and magnitude of the scholarly influence in global strategy research. As a part of cumulative research efforts, we have built on and extended previous reviews of global strategy research — especially Lu (2003) but also Lohke and Bruton (1997) — by adding an objective measure of scholarly influence.

Second, our citation analysis objectively supports one of the key observations made by previous reviewers of the global strategy literature who use a subjective (impressionist) approach: namely, the rising popularity and influence of research on strategic alliances (Lu, 2003; Peng, 2001; Werner, 2002). While we do not have data to directly investigate the cause of such a large number of citations, there are several possibilities which are plausible: (1) Since the late 1980s, research on strategic alliances has developed into a critical mass (Contractor and Lorange, 1988). Such growth has continued relatively unabated (Beamish, 2006; Beamish and Killing, 1997; Contractor and Lorange, 2002). (2) Since citations are influenced by the number of people working in an area, we suspect that there is some herd or bandwagon behavior behind the proliferation of strategic alliance citations (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999). (3) Theoretically, strategic alliances not only are an interesting

⁵ Lu (2003) has identified 18 categories. However, one of the categories, labeled “enterprise strategy (social issues),” contains only one article (Nigh and Cochran, 1994). Further, because this article is published in *Management International Review*, which is not covered by the Social Science Citation Index, its citations are not available. Another category, “performance,” has little citation activity. Its most cited article, Hundley and Jacobson (1998), only has nine citations (no self-citation). Therefore, upon Reviewer 2's advice, we have taken out the “performance” category from Table 2, resulting in 16 categories which have more active citation activities.

⁶ Lohke and Bruton (1997) also have a list of most prolific authors. However, because they only cover global strategy articles published during 1991–95 and because their work has been directly extended by Lu (2003) who adds articles published during 1996–2000 using the same criteria, we have decided not to include the Lohke and Bruton (1997) list given our interest in capturing work published in the *entire* 1990s.

phenomenon in itself, but also enable scholars to engage relatively newer theoretical perspectives, ranging from transaction cost theory (Hennart, 1991) and organizational learning (Lyles and Salk, 1996; Parkhe, 1991) in the early 1990s to real options theory (Tong et al., *in press*) more recently. Given the cumulative nature of scholarly research, it is not surprising that later work cites earlier articles on strategic alliances more, thus fueling the number of citations.

Third, we are also able to document the relatively weak influence of certain subfields and areas, which previous reviews are unable to do. Most notably, we find that research on organizational structure does not seem to generate many citations. Its most cited article, Malnight (1996), has generated 23 citations (22 after excluding self-citations). In addition, research on relative performance seems to have even less influence, with its top cited article, Hundley and Jacobson (1998), having generated only nine citations (no self-citation). These findings do not imply a criticism of these articles. Rather, they may simply indicate a lack of critical mass of research in these areas, which may grow in the future once a critical mass has been assembled.

Fourth and perhaps most importantly, our citation analysis reveals that volume (as measured by the number of publications) and influence (as measured by citations) of research on global strategy do *not* significantly overlap. One may intuitively hypothesize that prolific authors tend to be cited more because the more frequently publications appear, the more likely they are read and consequently cited. However, our findings refute this hypothesis. Among the top 30 most prolific authors identified by Lu (2003), only eight (27%) have authored articles which are among the top 25 most cited. These eight scholars whose research excels in *both* volume and influence are (in alphabetical order) Paul Beamish, John Hagedoorn, Jean-Francois Hennart, W. Chan Kim, Anoop Madhok, Arvind Parkhe, Mike Peng, and Aimin Yan. Conversely, 32 (80%) of the 40 most cited authors are not among the most prolific authors. Our findings are not meant as a criticism for the research of the most prolific but not widely cited authors, which is certainly influential in its own right given the sheer number of such contributions. However, our findings do point out that given the relative lack of correlation between the most prolific and most cited authors, it may not be advisable to equate scholarly influence with the total number of publications. Even with the acknowledgment that citations are *not* a perfect and complete measure of scholarly influence (as noted earlier), we are comfortable about this caution against equating scholarly influence with the volume of output. Echoing Boyd et al. (2005: 853), we believe that a *combination* of output and influence may be a more balanced way to make claims about scholarly influence.

4.2. Characteristics and guidelines for high impact research

Having identified eight leading authors who excel in both output and impact, we have emailed them a short survey with three questions: (1) When you wrote, revised, and published that most cited paper, did you predict that it would become one of the 25 most cited papers in the nine journals? In other words, are you surprised by the high citation number of this particular piece of research? (2) In your opinion, what are the characteristics of high impact papers? Does your paper have such characteristics? (3) How to craft high impact research which can lead to high citations? We are grateful for their enthusiastic responses: All eight of them responded within about one week of receiving our email, resulting in a very rare, 100% response rate. The full text of their answers can be seen in Table 4.

Among the eight leading scholars, only one (Anoop Madhok) admitted to have some expectation at the time of publication that his paper would eventually be widely cited. In terms of the characteristics of high impact research, the answers converge on originality embodied in interesting questions, novel data, and willingness to engage conventional wisdom. Paradoxically,

Table 4
How the eight leading authors share their views on high-impact research¹

Leading authors (in alphabetical order)	Question 1: When you wrote, revised, and published that most cited paper, did you predict that it would become one of the 25 most cited papers in the nine journals? In other words, are you surprised by the high citation number of this particular piece of research?	Question 2: In your opinion, what are the characteristics of high impact papers? Does your paper have such characteristics?	Question 3: How to craft high impact research which can lead to high citations?
Paul Beamish	(on Inkpen and Beamish, 1997, <i>AMR</i> — top 8 most cited) Once our paper was finally accepted at <i>AMR</i> , we hoped it would be reasonably well received because of the contribution to theory. That said, neither of us made any predictions about eventual citation levels.	In my experience, highly cited papers usually fall into one of three main categories: (1) theory development, (2) meta analyses/major reviews, or (3) new methods. Real impact to me results from getting people to now approach an issue, in theoretical terms, differently than how they did so previously.	Same to Q2
John Hagedoorn	(on Hagedoorn and Schakenraad, 1994, <i>SMJ</i> — top 15 most cited) In the early 1990s, citations, impact scores, all of that was pretty unknown, certainly in my part of the world. I am pretty sure that when I submitted the paper, I was only thinking of getting it published. I don't think that the thought on possible impact of the paper crossed my mind, not even for a split second.	Something new and appealing. The interesting thing about the paper was that it made an attempt to measure the effect of alliances through a simple S-C-P model with some LISREL features. The results were not even that convincing but it was probably better than the single-case study based stories that were floating around at that time.	I guess it is a mix of luck, experience, craftsmanship, and a feeling for new issues. I think the feeling for new issues and a good piece of research probably explains 60% of the likelihood that a paper will do something, the rest is luck, but maybe I am too optimistic.
Jean-Francois Hennart	(on Hennart, 1991, <i>MS</i> — top 2 most cited) This article, which studied the choice made by Japanese firms in between entering the United States with wholly owned affiliates vs. joint ventured manufacturing affiliates, features a number of "firsts." ... It provided a better test of the theory of joint ventures, so I thought it	I think that high impact papers are those which provide the first and/or the best contribution to address an issue which is in the minds of researchers. This article came out at the time when strategic alliances were gaining in importance and when scholars were looking for theories that could explain them, and I think it provided a fairly	Choose an important issue which is in the minds of practitioners and scholars; find a new way to think of the problem (develop new theory) or a new way to test old theory that is markedly superior to what has been done before. This is a good recipe for rejection by referees but if you are lucky enough to survive the review process, you may have a high impact paper.

W. Chan Kim	<p>was making a contribution; however, I could not foresee that it would be so widely cited. (on Kim and Hwang, 1992, <i>JIBS</i> — top 13 most cited) While we believed that the paper has new perspectives, we did not know in advance that the article would be highly cited.</p>	<p>convincing test of some reasonable propositions.</p>	<p>Same to Q2</p>
Anoop Madhok	<p>(on Madhok, 1997, <i>SMJ</i> — top 25 most cited) At the risk of sounding immodest, the answer is yes. I say this because the paper from the outset provoked first disagreement and then some engaging discussion among the reviewers themselves... Having said this, we all realize that how much of a crap shoot the whole thing is.</p>	<p>Generally, a high impact paper has three characteristics: (1) It has new perspectives that allow us to see existing things and issues in a new way. (2) It has theoretical/empirical robustness. (3) It has rather broad applicability. (1) One that starts a new line of inquiry or redirects an existing line of inquiry; (2) one that asks very simple but fundamental questions and grapples with them diligently; (3) one that is not afraid to question conventional wisdom yet also seeks to provide fresh insights; (4) one that goes beyond the confines of an immediate audience and seeks to engage a broader set; (5) one that shows not just intellectual curiosity but also exudes passion. I would like to think that my 1997 paper (and some of the highly cited authors) do possess some of these characteristics.</p>	<p>See Q2. Also, writing can be agonizing and requires a painful amount of drafting and re-drafting to get it right. Better to take more time up front and increase the probability of a revision than rush it out and risk rejection. Of course there has to be some balance between the two. Finally, I actually believe that there is a curvilinear impact of getting input from others. It's important to get feedback from some colleagues but more than a few can result in "too many cooks spoiling the broth." After a certain stage, let your inner voice dominate. And then hope for the best!</p>
Arvind Parkhe	<p>(on Parkhe, 1993, <i>AMR</i> — top 4 most cited and Parkhe, 1991, <i>JIBS</i> — top 6 most cited) 1993 <i>AMR</i>: No, I could not have predicted that this would become one of the 25 most-cited papers, and yes, I was surprised.1991</p>	<p>It seems to me that an attractive starting point for a paper is an interesting research question. What is being asked, and why is it salient for the advancement of theory AND management practice?... As Thomas Kuhn observed in <i>The</i></p>	<p>Same to Q2</p>

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Table 4 (continued)

Leading authors (in alphabetical order)	Question 1: When you wrote, revised, and published that most cited paper, did you predict that it would become one of the 25 most cited papers in the nine journals? In other words, are you surprised by the high citation number of this particular piece of research?	Question 2: In your opinion, what are the characteristics of high impact papers? Does your paper have such characteristics?	Question 3: How to craft high impact research which can lead to high citations?
Arvind Parkhe	<i>JIBS</i> : Again, yes, I was surprised by the high citation counts (and the subsequent 2001 <i>JIBS</i> Decade Award) of this paper.	<i>Structure of Scientific Revolutions</i> , scholarly investigations are very much a paradigm-driven process, and paradigms are developed by individuals with passion and originality. Thus, a researcher who assumes that the low-hanging fruit has been picked, asks research questions that are most pressing and important to him/her, and proceeds to answer the questions with creativity and boldness will (1) face a greater risk of rejection, and (2) if the paper is accepted, make a greater mark on the field. (I will let others judge whether my papers possess the characteristics of high impact papers.)	
Mike Peng	(On Peng and Heath, 1996, <i>AMR</i> — top 16 most cited) My coauthor and I submitted the paper in 1994 as 3rd year PhD students. It was based on a PhD seminar paper I wrote in my 1st year. We were only hoping to get it published. We did not know anything about citations, so of course did not predict that it would be so highly cited. However, in retrospect, I was not surprised	High impact papers tend to have one (or more) of the following characteristics: (1) trail blazers which fill some major gaps and enjoy certain first mover advantages, (2) comprehensive reviews which consolidate previous work and propel it to new heights, and/or (3) novel data and groundbreaking findings which challenge and/or refute prevailing thinking. Since my 1996 paper is a theory	In addition to the three attributes in Q2, the paper also has to be exceptionally well written to clearly and forcefully communicate its message. Some randomness in the publication process aside, it is possible for scholars to strategically increase the odds of generating high impact work. (1) Keep an active mind by raising and addressing interesting but challenging

because (1) this was the first paper published in *AMR* on business strategies in a broad range of emerging economies, and (2) research focusing on emerging economies has taken off more recently, thus fueling more citations (see Peng, 2005).

Aimin Yan

(On Yan and Gray, 1994, *AMJ* — top 5 most cited) I certainly didn't make such predictions. However, I am not very surprised by the citations. Other than the reasons I will discuss below, this was the piece that consumed a tremendous amount of my time, and I made my highest personal commitment to the research, as well as the difficult review process.

paper, (3) does not apply here. However, it does contain elements of both (1) and (2). Prior to this paper, the last time *AMR* published a remotely relevant piece was 15 years ago — in 1981 and on a single country, China. An expanding literature had been developing, although not necessarily in Academy journals. To me, the topic was obviously important yet I was frustrated by the field's lack of attention to it at that time — which I later discovered to be a gap which this paper and my subsequent work started to fill. In my view, these papers might have the following: (1) a subject that has a wide potential readership, at least not too narrowly focused; (2) a subject that is generating increasing interests but prior research has been somewhat inconclusive; (3) data that are new, novel, or somewhat difficult to collect; (4) rigorous methods. My piece has a little bit of all of these: It was on control and performance in joint ventures and it used an analytical induction method. It was a qualitative piece printed in a journal (*AMJ*) dominated by quantitative works. I was told that only 5–6% of *AMJ* pubs are qualitative articles.

questions which are not previously well explored. (2) Read widely beyond the “usual suspects” everybody in the field rounds up — in other words, need to avoid generating “me-too” work and look for novel combinations of ideas and data. (3) Ask whether the topic is broad enough to generate interest among a sufficiently large group of researchers — work on very narrow or dead end topics is not likely to generate high impact

In addition to the subject matter and the processes described above, you have to dare make your investment in time and commitment. When I presented an early version of the paper at a small conference, Kathy Harrigan of Columbia, a widely renowned expert in the subject, commented, “This is the type of work the field badly needs. But if you keep doing this type of work, you won't be tenured.” I assume that she meant that the type of work is too time and energy consuming and too slow in publication; and that qualitative work is not as much appreciated by the field/schools as quantitative work. It was an

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Table 4 (continued)

Leading authors (in alphabetical order)	Question 1: When you wrote, revised, and published that most cited paper, did you predict that it would become one of the 25 most cited papers in the nine journals? In other words, are you surprised by the high citation number of this particular piece of research?	Question 2: In your opinion, what are the characteristics of high impact papers? Does your paper have such characteristics?	Question 3: How to craft high impact research which can lead to high citations?
Aimin Yan			honest but scary comment to me as I was a late-stage doctoral student at the time! I was fortunate however because the major chunk of work was done before I entered the tenure track.

¹Some of the comments are edited because of space constraints. We have permissions from all these eight leading scholars to quote their answers in our survey.

despite a possible herd or bandwagon effect discussed earlier, *all* eight leading authors argued that high impact research is characterized by offering something novel. In their own words:

- Paul Beamish talked about “approach an issue, in theoretical terms, differently.”
- John Hagedoorn pointed out “a feeling for new issues.”
- Jean-Francois Hennart urged us to “find a new way to think of the problem.”
- W. Chan Kim mentioned “new perspectives.”
- Anoop Madhok suggested to “let your inner voice dominate” (against the herd effect).
- Arvind Parkhe advised us to “answer the questions with creativity and boldness.”
- Mike Peng characterized such research as “trail blazers which fill some major gaps.”
- Aimin Yan encouraged us to engage in high quality qualitative research against the herd effect centered on quantitative methods.

Finally, in terms of how to undertake such research, some leading scholars add the necessity to have a strong passion, take risk, and craft exceptionally well written pieces.

Overall, while these answers are interesting, the fact that the majority of these very experienced and accomplished scholars did *not* anticipate their particular paper would eventually be highly cited speaks volumes about the difficulty of predicting citations a priori.⁷ As a result, some luck will be necessary (according to John Hagedoorn and Jean-Francois Hennart). While resource and time constraints prevent us from surveying more scholars, these answers from the entire population of leading scholars who excel in both output and impact in our field do provide a guidepost for other scholars interested in generating high impact research (however uncertain the process is) and a baseline for more rigorous future research on this interesting topic in itself. Clearly, the collective wisdom of the leading scholars for authors is to take some risk by engaging in creative and novel research that will shed new light. For journal editors and reviewers, these insights suggest that they need to take some risk as well, because eventually highly cited work will contain a dose of creativity and novelty which initially may be viewed as “risky” by the gatekeepers.

4.3. *Limitations and future directions*

At least six limitations of our study need to be acknowledged, which lead to a number of future directions. First, our approach provides no clue on how to craft most cited research. The ability to produce both high volume and high influence research may be — using the language of the resource-based view — a set of highly valuable, rare, and hard-to-imitate skills which are not easily codifiable and imitable. While our survey of the eight leading scholars is a useful first step, future researchers may want to engage in content analysis of the eight leading scholars’ work and/or interview them in order to tap into their “secrets” more deeply.

Second, our exclusive focus on journal articles prevents us from investigating the influence of books. A recent study on all works cited in *SMJ* during 1980–2000 reports that 18 out of 20 most frequently cited works are books and only two are journal articles (Ramos-Rodriguez and Ruiz-Navarro, 2004: 999). Thus, future research may pay more attention to books.

⁷ At an Academy of Management “meet the editors” session in August 2005 in Honolulu, Arie Lewin, drawing on his experience as former Editor-in-Chief of *Organization Science* and Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of International Business Studies*, shared with the audience the difficulties of predicting citations a priori.

Third, among citation methodologies, we have used a relatively simplistic, count-based approach. In future work, there is potential to undertake more sophisticated approaches (Tahai and Meyer, 1999). For example, longitudinal tracking of the total number of citations to different categories (subfields) may yield more insights on the evolution of global strategy research. Future work may also probe deeper into the determinants of citations in our field.

A fourth limitation is our focus on individual articles and scholars, which does not cover institutional rankings (Chan et al., 2006; Griffith et al., 2006; Kumar and Kundu, 2004; Meyer and Peng, 2005; Trieschmann et al., 2000) and journal rankings (Podsakoff et al., 2005).

Fifth, the categories we use in Table 2 may not necessarily be mutually exclusive and some articles may conceivably be classified into two (or even more) categories. While being aware of this limitation, we have decided to stay with the current categories, because we are interested in extending a continuous line of work originated by Lohke and Bruton (1997) and expanded by Lu (2003). In other words, we believe that the drawbacks of these current categories from Lohke and Bruton (1997) and Lu (2003) do not outweigh the drawbacks of “reinventing the wheel” by developing another set of new categories. This certainly does not preclude future work from developing better classification schemes to map this literature more effectively — for example, an emerging new category can be on strategies of firms based in emerging economies (Dunning, 2006; Mathews, 2006; Meyer, 2006; Peng, 2005; Tung, 2005; Wright et al., 2005).

Finally, instead of citations and impact on researchers, one may argue that a more relevant measure is impact on the profession.⁸ While it will be fascinating to investigate how many of the most highly cited articles and authors have made a significant impact on the profession, such research probably will need to employ more subjective methods (such as executive interviews) which, unfortunately, are not supportable by our citation data.

5. Conclusion

What counts in global strategy research? We believe that in addition to the number of publications, the number of citations matters a great deal. In the intellectual marketplace, there is no higher authority governing whether or not a certain article should be cited. Scholars voluntarily and selectively cite the literature when crafting their research. While most scholars will cite relevant and insightful research out of scholarly and professional integrity, they are increasingly urged to pay attention to improve the weight-to-contribution ratio of their work given the limited journal space. Therefore, authors often have to downsize their reference list. Under these pressures, on average, it seems plausible that only the most relevant and most insightful prior research would be cited. In conclusion, we suggest that when making claims about scholarly impact, the influence of research, as measured objectively by the number of citations, needs to be assessed in addition to the quantity of research output.

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⁸ We thank Reviewer 3 for raising this thought-provoking issue.

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