

Paper Summary

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Title: When Rigor Meets Relevance: the Development of Hybrid Actionable Knowledge Production Systems

Authors: Thomaz Wood Jr, Edvalter Becker Holz, Renato Souza

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11213-022-09596-x>

Year: 2023

Publication Type: Journal

Discipline/Domain: Management / Organizational Studies

Subdomain/Topic: Actionable Knowledge, Hybrid Research Systems, Rigor–Relevance Gap

Eligibility: Eligible

Overall Relevance Score: 92

Operationalization Score: 88

Contains Definition of Actionability: Yes

Contains Systematic Features/Dimensions: Yes

Contains Explainability: No

Contains Interpretability: No

Contains Framework/Model: Yes (Hybridization process model)

Operationalization Present: Yes

Primary Methodology: Qualitative (Inductive, interpretive case studies; grounded theory)

Study Context: Business schools as hybrid research systems

Geographic/Institutional Context: Canada and Brazil

Target Users/Stakeholders: Business school researchers, practitioners, institutional leaders (deans, directors)

Primary Contribution Type: Conceptual + Empirical (Model development)

CL: Yes

CR: Yes

FE: Yes

TI: Partial

EX: No

GA: Yes

Reason if Not Eligible: N/A

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When Rigor Meets Relevance: the Development of Hybrid Actionable Knowledge Production Systems

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Actionable Knowledge, Hybrid Research Systems, Rigor–Relevance Gap

****Contextual Background:****

The paper examines how business schools can develop research systems that produce knowledge that i

****Geographic/Institutional Context:****

Canadian Business School (CBS) and Brazilian Business School (BBS), both top-tier, AACSB/EFMD/AM

****Target Users/Stakeholders:****

Researchers, practitioners, institutional leaders (e.g., deans, directors), policymakers in higher education

****Primary Methodology:****

Qualitative — inductive, interpretive case studies using grounded theory and “knowing-from-within” episte

****Primary Contribution Type:****

Conceptual + empirical — development of a three-stage hybridization model for AK generation.

General Summary of the Paper

The paper challenges the dominant “bridging theories” of actionable knowledge, which assume rigor and

Eligibility

Eligible for inclusion: ****Yes****

How Actionability is Understood

AK is defined as knowledge that is both ****rigorous**** (advances theoretical understanding) and ****relevant****

- > “AK refers to knowledge that both advances the theoretical understanding of phenomena and allows for
- > “...embodying the features of both systems in a way that one could not distinguish them in the final mat

What Makes Something Actionable

- Integrates **scientific rigor** and **practical relevance** in the same output.
- Involves **multi-stakeholder participation** and recognition.
- Supported by **institutional structures** that embed this integration.
- Produces outputs (e.g., reports, journal articles, cases) **valued by both academic and practitioner audi**
- Sustains **legitimacy** across both academic and practice communities.

How Actionability is Achieved / Operationalized

- **Framework/Approach Name(s):** Research Hybridization (three stages: coexistence, juxtaposition, mingling)
- **Methods/Levers:** Institutional entrepreneurial/supportive actions; structural mechanisms for regulation
- **Operational Steps / Workflow:**
 1. **Coexistence** — bring together rigor- and relevance-oriented components via projects, partnerships
 2. **Juxtaposition** — formalize and couple processes, regulations, revenue models.
 3. **Mingling** — produce outputs embodying both rigor and relevance seamlessly.
- **Data & Measures:** Project portfolios, partnerships, publication and dissemination outputs, stakeholder
- **Implementation Context:** Business schools with research offices and hybrid research units.
- > “We developed a conceptual model to describe the process by which... knowledge systems are hybridi
- > “Institutional entrepreneurial and supportive actions aimed at creating multivoiced knowledge-based pro

Dimensions and Attributes of Actionability (Authors' Perspective)

- **CL (Clarity):** Yes — clarity in communicating research values to both academics and practitioners (p. 1)
- **CR (Contextual Relevance):** Yes — strong emphasis on solving real, context-specific problems (p. 1)
- **FE (Feasibility):** Yes — structurally embedded processes ensure actionable outputs are deliverable
- **TI (Timeliness):** Partial — urgency of emerging topics noted as a challenge (p. 13).
- **EX (Explainability):** No explicit linkage to actionability.
- **GA (Goal Alignment):** Yes — alignment between institutional mission, academic outputs, and societal
- **Other Dimensions Named by Authors:** Institutional legitimacy, stakeholder participation, economic su

Theoretical or Conceptual Foundations

- Hybridism (Battilana & Dorado 2010; Battilana & Lee 2014)
- Actionable knowledge literature (Tenkasi & Hay 2004; Sharma & Bansal 2020)
- Grounded theory methodology
- Knowing-from-within epistemology (Shotter 2008)

Indicators or Metrics for Actionability

- Publication in both **top-tier academic journals** and **practice-oriented outlets**.
- Stakeholder recognition and engagement levels.
- Revenue generation from practice-linked projects.
- Diversity of dissemination formats (books, cases, reports, events).

Barriers and Enablers to Actionability

- **Barriers:**
 - Loss of academic talent to private sector (p. 13)
 - Pressure to diversify revenue (p. 13)
 - Bureaucratic overload (p. 16)
 - Skepticism from traditional academics (p. 18)
- **Enablers:**
 - Institutional entrepreneurial actions (p. 21)
 - Structural governance mechanisms (p. 23)
 - Multi-stakeholder networks (p. 24)

Relation to Existing Literature

Contrasts with bridging theories, which rely on temporary, discretionary collaboration between researchers

Summary

This paper reconceptualizes actionable knowledge (AK) generation by replacing the “bridging” paradigm

Scores

- **Overall Relevance Score:** 92 — Strong conceptual clarity on actionability, explicit features, and novel contributions
- **Operationalization Score:** 88 — Detailed three-stage process with mechanisms and institutional practices

Supporting Quotes from the Paper

- “AK refers to knowledge that both advances the theoretical understanding of phenomena and allows for
- “...views, norms, forms and practices... are materialized in the form of outputs that embody characterist
- “Institutional entrepreneurial and supportive actions aimed at creating multivoiced knowledge-based pro
- “Support from contract experts is also important because some projects involve researchers from other

Actionability References to Other Papers

- Babüroglu & Ravn (1992) — Normative action research
- Tenkasi & Hay (2004) — Theory–practice linkages
- Sharma & Bansal (2020) — Co-creating rigorous and relevant knowledge
- Battilana & Dorado (2010); Battilana & Lee (2014) — Hybrid organizations
- Beer (2020) — Developing actionable knowledge for practice and theory