Enhancing the Information Literacy Conversation by Engaging the Voice of New Zealand Small Businesses

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Business Studies in Communication Management

at Massey University, Distance Learning – Manawatu, New Zealand

Mke Ninces

July 2017
Abstract

This research contributes to a small but expanding body of research about information literacy in the workplace. Through the development of a conceptual framework and through a survey of New Zealand small businesses (NZSBs), the goal of this research was to explore the links among the concepts of information literacy, information culture, knowledge management and organisational learning. The survey of NZSBs also identifies NZSBs' current information practices, the value of information-related skills to NZSBs and how familiar NZSBs are with the terms of information literacy, information culture, knowledge management and organisational learning. This research is significant, being the first of its kind when it comes to attempting to add the voice of NZSBs to information literacy. Amongst other things, the research findings raise questions about source acknowledgement in the workplace, and reinforces the idea of social interaction being a vital aspect of information literacy in the workplace.
Acknowledgements and Dedication

Firstly, I must thank everybody who participated in this research. Without you, I would not have a thesis.

Secondly, to Dr. Angela Feekery and Dr. Niki Murray. Angela, thank you for agreeing to supervise your first thesis and thank you for introducing me to the concept of information literacy, or putting a label on something I have known for all my life. I hope my thesis has done the concept justice. Niki, thank you for agreeing to be the co-supervisor for this thesis. I admire your persistence in the survey research field and I appreciate the guidance you have graciously given me and Angela. I also wish to thank both of your families for enabling you to support me.

To Dr. Andrew Chrystall and Dr. Margaret Brunton, when I started your papers in semester one, 2013, I had taken a leap of faith by changing from a Bachelor of Arts, to a Bachelor of Communication. Your papers made me feel like I was home. I hope that one day, I can make a future student feel the same. Your advice, wisdom and input will always be treasured.

My caseworkers at Geneva Elevator: Belinda, Tessa, Momina, Sheridan & Libby. I want you to know that your loyalty and long hours don’t go unnoticed and are much appreciated.

This thesis would not have been possible without the TalkLink Trust so a massive thanks to the TalkLink Trust, especially to Ann Smaill. You gave me a voice and I hope it is a voice that will inspire many.

Long time friends, Amy Nielson, Aline Rohr, Shayna Lawton, Sharon Jooste and Darius Braun; Sailability Auckland especially Steve Cranch; Sailability Hawkes Bay – Katy, Mark, Paul, Dennis, Otis, Tim, Annabelle and their extended families. You keep me sane by providing me with social and sporting outputs.

I wish to acknowledge my grandparents: Brenda and Lennard Nicholson, Kevin and Pat Kench, and Jacqueline and Cyril “Lucky” Walles. Your dreams for me mean everything and I hope your dreams are now a reality, or at the very least, are a work in progress.
Finally, I would like to acknowledge my parents Amanda and Neil, my sisters Bailey and Latitia, their respective partners Jonathan Suckling and Preekesh Patel; my aunty Bernadette Walles, my cousin Lauren Walles and family friend Sarah Wilkinson. Like a plant, I thrive in the right conditions and wilt when the conditions are precarious. Thank you for putting up with my unpleasantness when the conditions have not been all that rosy. Thank you for the proof-reading and encouragement over the years. Thank you for making sure I had a mainstream education, even if it was tough. This thesis is the fruit of everybody’s love and support. Also, this thesis is the result of 18 months hard work, where all the conditions have been right, enabling me and my to grow and blossom.

This thesis is dedicated to Amy Rose Bonallack (October 1997 - May 2011), and Samuel Peter Gibson (July 1976 – May 2016); Dr. Radha O’Meara and Dr. Sean Phelan, and all my teachers and teacher aides from CCS, Milford Kindergarten, Campbells Bay, Wairau Intermediate and Rangitoto College. Each of you have played a significant part in my life and reinforced my determination and self-belief, even if you don't remember doing so.
# Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................................. ii  
Acknowledgements and Dedication ................................................................................ iii  
Contents ........................................................................................................................... v  
List of Tables ................................................................................................................... x  
List of Figures ............................................................................................................... xii  
Part I: Research Background ......................................................................................... - 1 -  
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction ........................................................................................... - 1 -  
  1.1 Scope and Significance of This Research ................................................................ - 2 -  
  1.2 Research Questions and Objectives ......................................................................... - 3 -  
  1.3 Organisation of Thesis ............................................................................................... - 4 -  
Literature Review .............................................................................................................. - 5 -  
  2.1 Introducing Section 2.1 ............................................................................................. - 5 -  
  2.1.1 What is information? ................................................................................................. - 5 -  
  2.1.2 Information behaviour .............................................................................................. - 7 -  
  2.1.3 Information Literacy ................................................................................................. - 12 -  
  2.1.4 Workplace information literacy research ............................................................... - 21 -  
  2.1.5 Skills employers value .............................................................................................. - 29 -  
  2.1.6 Key themes in information behaviour and workplace information literacy research ................................................................................................. - 31 -  
  2.1.6.2 Information sources ............................................................................................... - 31 -  
  2.1.7 Section Summary .................................................................................................... - 34 -  
  2.2 Connecting between Information Literacy, Information Culture, Organisational Learning, and Knowledge Management .............................................. - 34 -  
  2.2.1 Information Culture ................................................................................................. - 35 -  
  2.2.2 Organisational Learning .......................................................................................... - 36 -  
  2.2.3 Knowledge management .......................................................................................... - 38 -  
  2.8 Summary .................................................................................................................. - 41 -  

PART IV: Research Contributions .......................................................... 88
CHAPTER SIX ........................................................................................... 88
Discussion ..................................................................................................... 88
6.1 Research Question 1: What comprises the information landscape(s) of NZSBs? ................................................................. 88
   6.1.1 What kinds of information do employees use on a daily basis? .... 88
   6.1.2 How do employees access information? ................................. 89
   6.1.3 What kinds of information do NZSMEs find reliable and trustworthy? ................................................................. 89
6.2 Research Question 2: To What Extent is Information Literacy and its Related Abilities Valued in NZSBs? ................................. 90
   6.2.1 The importance of information literacy and information-related abilities to NZSBs ......................................................... 90
   6.2.2 The perceived difficulty of information literacy and information-related abilities within NZSBs ................................. 90
   6.2.3 Perceived possession of information literacy and information-related abilities amongst staff ......................................................... 91
6.3 Research Question Three: How do the concepts of information culture, organisational learning, and knowledge management relate to information literacy? ................................................................. 93
   6.3.1 Information literacy ................................................................. 93
   6.3.2 Information culture ................................................................. 93
6.3.3 Organisational Learning ................................................................. 94
6.3.4 Knowledge management ............................................................... 94
6.3.5 Associating rather than defining ................................................... 95
6.4 Summary ......................................................................................... 95

CHAPTER SEVEN: .................................................................................... 97
Conclusion ............................................................................................ 97

7.1 Addressing the Research Questions ............................................... 97
  7.1.1 Research question 1: What comprises the information landscape(s) of
      NZSBs? .............................................................................................. 97
  7.1.2 Research question 2: To what extent is information literacy and its related
      abilities valued in NZSBs? ................................................................. 98
  7.1.3 Research question 3: How do the concepts of information culture, organisational
      learning, and knowledge management relate to information literacy? .......... 99

7.2 Limitations ..................................................................................... 99
7.3 Future Research ............................................................................. 100

References ........................................................................................... 101

Appendices .......................................................................................... 116
  Appendix A: Knowledge Practices and Dispositions from the 2015 ACRL
    Framework .......................................................................................... 116
  Appendix B: Copy of Survey Instrument .............................................. 122
  Appendix C: Development of Ability Statements .................................. 143
  Appendix D: Copy of Survey Cover Letter ......................................... 149
  Appendix E: Copy of Pilot Survey Feedback Questionnaire ................. 152
  Appendix F: Thematical Analysis of Job Titles ...................................... 154
  Appendix G: Thematical Analysis of Qualitative Survey Responses relating to
    Research Question 3 ......................................................................... - 155 -
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Taylor’s Eight Types of Information Uses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Five Ways that Managers Understand and Experience Information Use</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Examples of Various Literacies under the Information Literacy Metaliteracy Umbrella</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>The Six Components of the 2015 ACRL Framework</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Bruce’s Seven Faces of Information Literacy</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Bruce’s Seven Faces of Workplace Information Literacy</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Top 10 Soft Skills Desired by Employers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>Five Steps of Knowledge Management</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Refinement of Statements Used in the Survey</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Question Statements Used in the Survey</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>Responding NZSBs by Industry</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12</td>
<td>Location Breakdown of Businesses in Sample</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 13</td>
<td>Age and Gender Demographics of Individual Respondents</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 14</td>
<td>Frequency of the Information Sources Used, Information Sources Accessed and Information Sources Found Trustworthy and Reliable Among NZSBs</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 15</td>
<td>Agreement with Statement that Certain Abilities are Important in Participant’s Workplace</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17 ......................................................................................................................... - 64 -  
Agreement with Statement that Certain Abilities were Explicitly Assessed as a Part of the Participant’s Workplace’s Performance Review ......................... - 64 -  
Table 18 ......................................................................................................................... - 67 -  
Agreement with Statement that Certain Abilities were Considered Difficult in Participant’s Workplace ................................................................. - 67 -  
Table 19 ......................................................................................................................... - 70 -  
Agreement with Statement that Certain Abilities are Possessed by the Majority of Staff in Participant’s Workplace ......................................................... - 70 -  
Table 20 ......................................................................................................................... - 73 -  
Ranking of the Abilities Across the Statements....................................................... - 73 -  
Table 21 ......................................................................................................................... - 77 -  
A Conceptual Framework Relating the Concepts of Information Literacy, Information Culture, Knowledge Management, and Organisational Learning - 77 -  
- Workplaces’ and Respondents’ Familiarity with Information Literacy and Other Organisational Communication Concepts (n=73) .............................. - 81 -  
Table 23 ......................................................................................................................... - 85 -  
Association of Information Literacy Concepts with Specific Abilities by Respondents (bolding denotes concept most associated with ability) ........ - 85 -
List of Figures

Figure 1. Relationship between communication and information........................ - 7 -