CHAPTER

21 Creating Evidence-Based Management Textbooks

Jone L. Pearce

Abstract

A close look at textbooks helps to illustrate that we do not now translate research into practice in our teaching. There are two areas in which our textbooks fail: by too often reporting as research evidence information for which there is no reliable supporting scholarship, and by undermining the field by persisting in wasting scarce space (and students' attention) on theories that have long been debunked by rigorous research. Why textbooks too often fail to accurately present research and what the chapter author has done to make her teaching more evidence based are described.

Key Words: textbooks, debunked theories, EBMgt (EBMgt) teaching, executive education, systematic review, MBAs

Evidence-based management (EBMgt) seeks to help managers more easily draw on research evidence for information to support their policies and practices. One of its central purposes is developing decision supports that aid managers to be informed by the best evidence available (Rousseau, 2006; 2012). That is, EBMgt seeks to facilitate integrating research evidence into organizational decisions and practices. Many in our scholarly field who struggle with the idea of EBMgt believe that it is not new, but something that we are already doing in our professional work as scholars and teachers. One approach to fostering evidence-based practice is in the formal communication of what our research says for practice through our textbooks. After all, textbooks are the most common way that those who are now or who hope to practice management learn how research can inform their decisions. This chapter asks, How well do management textbooks facilitate the use of evidence in management practice? I will focus on introductory textbooks in organizational behavior, a required course in most business programs, and one that is often found in public administration, education, and other programs intending to train managers. I contend that a review of introductory-organizational-behavior textbooks suggests we are not now doing a good job of basing our teaching on the research evidence. Taking a close look at our textbooks helps to illustrate that our translation of research into actionable practice does not live up to our assumptions about it.

If we assume that an important purpose of organizational-behavior textbooks is to introduce the best available scientific evidence about the behavior of individuals and teams doing organizational work, textbooks should accurately present the most up-to-date research-based knowledge, should refrain from presenting ideas that have never been examined or have been debunked by research, and should help all readers distinguish between what we can confidently conclude from research and reasonable practical implications that can be generalized from that research. That is, you might assume that introductory-organizational-behavior textbooks are in the business of translating and communicating scholarly research that can inform practice, but most do

not. Too often, textbooks in management and organizational behavior misrepresent what research does show, they persist in reporting theories that have long been debunked, and they do not distinguish between what the research demonstrates and commonsense advice for action. I will lay out the case for these strong claims and then describe how I took action to try to create an organizational-behavior textbook that was more evidence based.

Are Our Textbooks Really Reporting Research Evidence?

There are two areas in which our textbooks fail. First, too often they report as research evidence information for which there is no reliable supporting scholarship. I will provide an example of this failure from one area, where I conduct my own research. Second, too many textbooks persist in wasting valuable space (and students' cognitive capacity) on theories that have long been debunked by rigorous research. The database for these two inquiries consists of eight organizational-behavior textbooks, including the most popular textbooks (Robbins & Judge, 2011, and Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2010), the top sellers according to www.amazon.com, and the ones on my shelves (the other six are George & Jones, 2008; Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007; Nelson & Quick, 2009; Osland, Kolb, Rubin & Turner, 2007; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999). This is a convenience sample; however, the books on my shelves were not selected with this small inquiry in mind but, rather, arrived based on decisions made by publishers' salespeople who sent unsolicited copies of these books. I can think of no reason why these textbooks would not be representative of the textbooks presenting organizational behavior to students.

I first reviewed these books for the accuracy of their representation of what research says about what causes interpersonal trust, or the relative trust one individual might have in another. This is an area in which I had systematically collected research data from the fields of management, decision sciences, sociology, and psychology for my own research. The importance of trust in one another among those who must work together is a constant theme repeated by advice-giving practitioners. All the surveyed textbooks note the value of interpersonal trust for actions such as citizenship behavior, innovation, team performance, as well as the organizational costs of employee distrust. These statements of the importance of workplace interpersonal trust beg an important question: What leads someone to be more likely to trust someone else? If it is important to me that my clients, subordinates, peers, and bosses trust me, how can I gain that trust?

There might be many other ways that textbooks can facilitate evidence-based action by their readers. For example, they might assist the readers in how to diagnose and categorize issues, so they know where to look for the relevant evidence, or they might organize the material into holistic systems that might help readers to organize and make sense of the material. For this brief discussion, I am only focusing on whether the introductory textbooks accurately present research evidence for a selection of topics, as one necessary but not sufficient requirement to help our textbooks facilitate EBMgt.

Here I consider systematic research on interpersonal trust to be a study that has established that the factor purported to cause trust really is causal, either through the use of experiments (in which the factor was manipulated and the level of interpersonal trust assessed as the dependent variable) or through longitudinal field studies in which causal direction could be tested. I eliminated the large number of one-shot correlational studies in which trust was correlated with other variables, because we cannot confidently conclude that trust was caused by or caused the factor, or that it was caused by an unmeasured factor in such studies. Because virtually every introductory methods course warns that one-shot correlations cannot be confidently interpreted as supporting causality, I do not think I was being overly strict in eliminating these reports. However, I note that these correlational studies, with confident conclusions about what causes interpersonal trust, dominate the organizational-behavior literature, and this may be a reason for the textbook representations reported later.

Two of the sampled textbooks noted the importance of interpersonal trust but did address the causes of trust (Nelson & Quick, 2009; Schermerhorn, et al., 2010). This is reasonable: all textbook authors face space constraints and must make decisions about what to include and exclude. No textbook author should be faulted for excluding someone else's favorite topic.

Five of the textbooks did report what leads others to trust someone else at work; their statements and whether there is solid research evidence supporting these statements are provided in Table 21.1, with an illustrative research citation supporting (or debunking) the statement provided. We can see that no textbook reported causes of interpersonal trust that were supported in full by the research

Table 21.1 Comparison of Textbook Statements on Causes of Trust with Systematic Research

George and Jones (2008, pp. 83–84)	
Share personal values and goals.	No research
Share important values.	No research
Other is in a good mood.	Yes–Dunn and Schweitzer (2005)
Greenberg and Baron (2008, pp. 431–432)	
Propensity to trust.	Yes–Parks and Hulbert (1995)
Reputation for trustworthiness.	Yes–Polzer (2004)
Meet deadlines.	No research
Follow through as promised.	No research
Hellriegel and Slocum (2007, p. 243)	
Encourage two-way communication.	No research
Share critical information.	Yes–Tenbrunsel and Messick (1999)
Reveal their perceptions and feelings.	No research
Osland, et. al (2007, pp. 3–5)	
Share information.	Yes–Tenbrunsel and Messick (1999)
Accessibility.	No research
Answer hard questions.	No research
Deliver on promises.	No research
Recognize and appreciate.	No research
Show personal concern.	No research
Robbins and Judge (2011, pp. 395–396)	
Honesty.	No research
Integrity.	No research
Benevolence.	Not, if "nice" Komorita, Hilty, & Parks (1991)
Ability.	No research
Trust propensity.	Yes–Parks and Hulbert (1995)
Time	Yes–Sniezek and Van Swol (2001)
Avoided Opportunism	Yes–Tenbrunsel and Messick (1999)
Competence	Yes–Butler and Cantrell (1984)

evidence. The best performers are Greenberg and Baum (2008) and Robbins and Judge (2011) with 50 percent of their claims supported by the empirical evidence. Unfortunately, best-selling Robbins and Judge's (2011) comparatively positive record is undermined by the figure they report on p. 396, which lists only integrity, benevolence, ability, and propensity to trust as causing trust, whereas only one of these (propensity to trust) enjoys empirical support as a cause of trust. It is unclear why the

claims unsupported by research evidence are given this visual prominence when those that are supported by research evidence do not appear in a figure. Other textbooks range from only one out of six of the reported causes of trust supported by systematic research (Osland et al., 2007) to one-third (George & Jones, 2008; Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007) of the claims supported. Thus, in this sample of the best-selling organizational-behavior textbooks, the majority of statements about what leads someone to trust another at work are not supported by empirical research.

Second, our textbooks undermine the field by persisting in wasting scarce space (and students' attention) on theories that have long been debunked by rigorous research. All seven of these textbooks devoted substantial space (much, much more space than they devoted to all discussions of trust combined) to Herzberg's (1987/1959) two-factor theory and Maslow's (1970) need hierarchy of motivation. I need not remind the readers of this chapter that these theories were roundly and confidently disproved over 40 years ago (see, King, 1970; Hall & Nougaim, 1968; Goodman, 1968). Any organizational-behavior doctoral students making the claims for Herzberg's and Maslow's theories reported in these textbooks would be summarily failed out of their doctoral programs. Many (but not all) of these textbook authors state that there are controversies about these theories, and that their claims may not apply in all circumstances. However, there are no real controversies here. There is simply no evidence whatsoever that some workplace incentives serve as hygiene factors whereas others are motivators (does anyone doubt the power of money to motivate investment bankers?), or that, after employees have had their esteem needs gratified at work, they automatically begin to desire self-actualization. No one who knows the organizational-behavior research would make these claims, yet they appear in every single one of these seven prominent textbooks. What is worse, these disproven theories are given a great deal of space, usually with multicolor graphic illustrations. In short, a lot of textbook space is devoted to ideas these textbook authors surely know are not consistent with the research evidence.

To be fair, apparently, this isn't only a problem in organizational-behavior textbooks. Recently, Tavris and Wade, in an interview in the Association for Psychological Science's Newsletter (Changes in Psychological Science, 2010) note that one of their challenges in updating their introductory psychology textbook (Tavris & Wade, 2010) is how to include "material that 'has always been there' even if it is now outdated," implying that they are expected to do so. In the same article, Susan Nolen-Hoeksema says that many psychology instructors now (but apparently not before) want theories that have not been empirically verified to be excluded from their introductory-psychology textbooks (Nolen-Hoeksema, Fredrickson, Loftus, & Wagenaar, 2009).

Are these examples of statements not supported by empirical research in organizational behavior textbooks isolated incidents? I did not conduct the same review of every statement made in these textbooks that I did for the causes of interpersonal trust. I am sure that there are many, many statements in these textbooks that are based on the best research evidence available. However, it is incontrovertible that not all claims in our most prominent organizational-behavior textbooks are based on research evidence, and that decades of disconfirming research evidence have not dislodged favored theories from their featured places in our textbooks. Taken as a whole, we certainly cannot claim that our textbooks, and, therefore, what we are teaching our students, is evidence-based organizational behavior.

Why Our Textbooks Have Strayed so Far from the Research Evidence

How could this have happened? There seem to be two primary reasons that I will address in turn: consensus on what constitutes evidence in the field, and the pressures of the textbook marketplace to be all things to as many people as possible.

Inconsistent Use of Evidence

First, not all textbooks claim to be basing their statements on the research evidence. For example, Osland, et al. (2007) are explicit that their listed causes of interpersonal trust are not research-evidence based, quoting a list of causes developed by the consultant Robert Levering (Levering, 2004). Certainly, we do not have systematic research on every practical concern that textbook authors wish to address. However, these textbooks do claim to report evidence from a scholarly field, and, therefore, such mixing of personal advice, experience-based hunches, common sense, and research evidence threatens to undermine the field's claims to being a social science.

Second, as noted earlier, much of the research on the question of the causes of workplace interpersonal trust in the field of organizational behavior consists of correlational reports in which trust is found to correlate with a factor that common sense

suggests should probably cause people to trust someone else. It is not clear who is at fault here. Textbook authors might reasonably conclude that they do not have the time to investigate the scholarly rigor of so many different studies on the hundreds of different topics they must address. If the paper appears in a respected scholarly journal in their field, perhaps they feel it is not their responsibility to second-guess these journal editors' and reviewers' standards. It is a case of the scholarly field not taking care to follow sound methodological practices for confident causal claims, and the textbooks simply reflect a "weak field." This takes us to a core debate within EBMgt about what counts as evidence, and this is addressed in other chapters in this volume.

The Textbook Marketplace

Textbooks are published by businesses seeking to make profits, and there are many, many organizational-behavior textbooks competing in that marketplace. This means that textbook authors must respond to market pressures, and so we need to understand the market pressures on our textbook authors. The textbook market is complex, consisting of the publishers who bring the books to market, the instructors who decide whether to adopt the book, and the students who purchase the books and provide the instructor evaluations.

The publishers are the ones who make decisions to publish (commission, produce, market, and deliver) textbooks. Publishers are businesses, and people in business need to worry about the bottom line. Large textbook publishers have high fixed costs and many have judged that those costs can only be covered with large-volume sales. So textbook publishers are very much concerned with volume; they have to be. That is, the more instructors who adopt their textbooks, the more sales. Further, the more large classes in large schools that use their textbooks, the more sales. Who are the instructors who teach those large-volume introductory courses in large schools? The instructors are often doctoral students or lecturers who may not have been trained in organizational behavior or scholarship. This means that publishers feel they need to include a great deal of ancillary materials to support new instructors, and those with no scholarly training in the subject matter. Publishers do not worry about the content of what goes in textbooks, this is the author's responsibility not theirs. They are not subject-matter experts and are in no position to review their textbooks for the quality of the research presented. It is their job to know what will sell.

Further challenges are created because textbook sales are not driven by the students who pay for the books but by the instructor who adopts the textbook for a course. This means that textbook sales are most dependent on decisions by adopting instructors (and their textbook committees for those schools that make department-wide adoption decisions for their courses). What criteria do they use to make these decisions? No doubt they want books that are clearly written and appealing to the particular students in their courses. However, they also want to make sure that the books include every topic they personally think is important. And in a field as eclectic as organizational behavior, with instructors with widely diverse interests and trained in the full range of the social sciences, this means that authors are under pressure to include every conceivable topic. Because instructors will not adopt textbooks if they do not cover their own personal topic of interest, authors are advised by publishers to include everything. This is why textbooks look like endless lists of so many topics. Textbook authors cannot possibly know the systematic research on all of them.

What is more, too many instructors of introductory courses do not themselves respect or value research evidence. Either they were not trained in rigorous research or they do not value it for other reasons. There really are instructors out there who will not adopt a book if it does not discuss Maslow's hierarchy of needs. They see this theory as foundational and really do not care what the research evidence says. For all these reasons, there is not much pressure from adopting instructors to rely exclusively on what the research evidence says.

Finally, students also are important players in the textbook market. Although students are not as important as adopting instructors, their voices do matter. Students complete teacher evaluations and no instructor wants to get a poor evaluation because students did not like the assigned readings. So, what do students like? Students taking organizational behavior courses differ in what they want—the 18-year old freshman wants something different than the 40-year old middle manager in an executive MBA program.

We already know that the publishers target the students in large introductory courses because that is where the volume is. Young, inexperienced students like lots of examples, and they want those examples to be up to date; they want to learn about the latest and most trendy companies. They like glossaries with vocabulary lists they can quickly memorize the night before the test instead of reading the entire

book. Finally, they want lots of interesting gee-whiz stories and tips for action. Students in large introductory courses do not know what research is and have not yet been trained in the limitations of common sense, bias, and wishful thinking. I think I can be confident in my belief that no student in an introductory-organizational-behavior class has ever complained that a textbook was not sufficiently based on research.

In summary, textbook authors have to meet a lot of demands—large-volume sales, demands for books that are easy to read, inclusion of all possible topics that adopting instructors from a very heterogeneous field might want to cover, lots of material to support inexperienced teachers and student exam preparation, and numerous current examples and engaging graphics. The principle players in the textbook marketplace do not insist that textbook claims be based on research, but isn't that because they assume their textbooks are based on research? These players may not all be trained in rigorous research, but if you asked publishers, introductory-course instructors, or students, wouldn't most say that they assume that the statements and conclusions in their organizational-behavior textbooks are based on research? That they are not is a dirty little secret that we all should hope does not get out.

What I Did about This Problem

Like all academics, I began by putting my complaints into writing (Pearce, 2004). However, I decided that it was not enough to complain; if I really thought this was a problem, I should do something about it. What I did was to start from scratch to write a textbook that would be based on research evidence. However, this undertaking required several preliminary decisions.

Which Market?

Because I was teaching executive MBAs and was dissatisfied with textbooks aimed at teenagers, I decided that my target market would be experienced MBA students. Instructors of experienced students have long recognized that textbooks do not address their students' needs. These students want practical help, are better able to recognize nonsense, and do not want to be treated like teenagers. How have instructors for these students coped? By using articles from various sources—good summaries of research for practice like Locke's (2000), but also practitioner articles and popular books. These readings focus on these students' needs for clarity and practicality, but they are not always (or even often) based on rigorous research. I decided to keep the focal audience clear: experienced MBA students taking an introductory organizational behavior course.

What Content and Format?

I needed to address both main market players: experienced students and adopting instructors. I decided to place the students first. The first problem I had to confront in making the book attractive to students was how to select topics that they would find useful and interesting. I decided not to try to engage their interest through trendy examples and stories about popular organizations. Rather, I sought to engage their interests by addressing their own problems and concerns—relying on them, experienced managers, to select the topics from organizational behavior that best addressed their own challenges. The textbook was not going to be a history of the field of organizational behavior (covering topics with no practical relevance to them, or those that had been debunked decades ago) but a compilation of what systematic research could tell them about their own most pressing practical problems today.

What topics would experienced MBA students find the most useful? Because I had been teaching these students for years, I thought I knew what they wanted. I had been gathering their "important organizational-behavior problems" for years. At the beginning of each class, these executive MBA students had been asked to write down "what their most important organizational problems were." In preparing class sessions, I would review their problems in order to expand and contract material in the course. For the textbook, I took the past several years of these expressed most-important problems and grouped them into topics. Examples included, "giving performance feedback," "getting the corporate office to realize that our customers here in California need to be handled differently," and so forth.

However, I was concerned that our particular population of experienced MBA students might be a skewed sample—they come primarily from small and medium-sized high technology, design, and health-care companies. Their organizational problems could be quite different from those of managers in other industries. Because I wanted to be sure that I had collected as many of the problems that experienced students faced as I could, I decided to also gather practical problems from the shelves of my local bookstore. I reasoned that the books sold in bookstores to practicing managers

needed to appeal to the purchaser (unlike textbooks, which are intended to primarily appeal to adopting instructors). Such books must address managers' challenges or they would not sell and, therefore, would not be able to command valuable shelf space in a bookstore. Therefore, I spent several weeks systematically going through the books in the management and leadership sections of my local bookstore and writing down the problems such books addressed either explicitly or implicitly. I then added these topics to the ones from my own students, and worked to address these problem-based topics and to resist adding topics from the field that I thought interesting but that did not address their problems.

In addition to selecting those topics from organizational behavior that would be most interesting to these experienced MBA students, I also wanted to develop a way of presenting the material that would seize and hold their interest. I decided to make use of true-false questions around common misconceptions. I am a fan of Davis's (1971) argument about what makes a theory interesting. He proposes that the important theories in the social sciences are not the ones that are true, but the ones that question their readers' assumptions about what is true. So, for example, Sigmund Freud's theories became important not because it is true that human psyches are composed of an ego, super ego, and id, but because he made claims that questioned readers' assumptions at that time—assumptions like Freud's assertion that the behavior of children, primitives, neurotics, and adults in crowds, as well as dreams, jokes, and slips of the tongue and pen, which were considered at the time he wrote to be unrelated, are, in fact, all various manifestations of the same instinctual drives. In my teaching, like many instructors, I had been explaining how research debunks the usual practitioners' commonsense assumptions, such as "happy workers are more productive workers." So, I decided to expand that approach throughout the book, drawing on the many commonsense assumptions and claims that were not supported by research taken from those practical management and leadership books from the bookstore shelves. These popular books turned out to be a rich source of nostrums that were only rarely supported by research; examples include, "Having employees engage in self-evaluation makes performance appraisals more democratic," and "The most effective organizations have strong corporate cultures."

So, I thought I knew how to address the needs and desires of experienced MBA students in their introductory-organizational-behavior courses. However, this effort would be useless if I did not address the needs of those most important market players of all: the adopting instructors. How to serve both of these markets and be faithful to what research says? First, I decided to organize the experienced managers' problems into chapters that would be familiar to organizational-behavior instructors, and I placed the chapters in the order usually found in most textbooks and courses. However, instead of calling the chapters Individual Differences and Personality, Motivation, Teams, and the like, I gave them the names of the problems managers would use that knowledge to address: Individual Differences became How to Hire, Motivation became Managing Performance and Managing Incentives, Leadership became Mastering Power. In addition, I also made sure the index included the academic topic names and terms that instructors would expect to cover. In this way instructors could continue to cover the topics they usually did, but could now frame them in ways (I hoped) that would make their relevance and importance to their experienced students clearer. I had faith that others who teach experienced students were as motivated as I was to make the value of organizational behavior clear to these demanding experienced managers, and that they would find my own best case for its value as useful as I would.

Finally, and most importantly, how could I be honest about what the research actually says and still say something useful to practicing managers? We all know that research is often conducted in sterile environments with only limited applicability to the complex multiplex environments in which practitioners work. Those taking practical action cannot "hold everything else constant." Even field-research conclusions may only apply to the particular circumstances of those settings, so I believed that systematic research could be useful, but didn't want it to be used for the kind of dictatorial "do-this" advice that so many overwhelmed managers craved. I tried to address this challenge in three ways.

First, I explicitly stated this conundrum in the first chapter. In the introduction, readers are first warned of the limitations of common sense and our own narrow personal experiences, and then the limitations of scholarly research were described. I advised the readers to treat the scholarly research as additional information—no better and no worse—than the information they have gained from their own experiences. Readers are advised to approach any organizational problem with a good diagnosis by testing their assumptions, finding out how others

Table 21.2 Illustrative Applications Drawn from Research

Application — Get an Honest Assessment of an Applicant's Performance from Others

- Inoculate yourself for confirmation bias before the call by reminding yourself that your first impressions could be wrong and by dwelling on the pain and difficulty of hiring the wrong person.
- Call references before deciding who to bring in for interviews. If applicants do not want a current employer to know they are job hunting, ask to call someone they had worked with in a previous job or someone they trust to keep the search confidential.
- Ask the reference to describe behavior, not the applicant's personal characteristics. Suggest specifics scenarios: "Last time 'X' occurred, could you please describe what happened." You want accurate descriptions, not ill-considered theories.
- Ask questions focused on what successful employees actually do. For example, to assess conscientiousness you might ask, "Has [name] ever missed a deadline? Stayed late to complete an important assignment? Not delivered on what was promised?" Be sure to ask for specific examples.
- Snowball references. Ask each reference to suggest someone else who has worked with the person and so can describe the applicant's performance. If applicants try to restrict you to a narrow list of references, ask why. Persistent managers who ask specific questions about applicants' prior performance can get a lot of information.
- If applicants do not give permission to contact any references until you are about to make them an offer, or if they want to restrict your contacts to a narrow list of people, let them know that this will eliminate them from consideration. Explain that it is your policy to use reference descriptions of past performance in deciding whom to interview for all hiring decisions, and stick to this policy. Good employees will be confident in what you will learn, and poor employees will be eliminated before you have wasted too much time on them.

view the situation, developing alternative explanations, and being clear about the difference between theory and data. They are asked to try to be objective about what they know about the challenge, and what they do not know. This diagnosis, or systematic analysis can then guide them if they need to collect additional information. Once they have as much information as they can practically obtain, they are in a position to see if their own experience or the systematic research can provide the best guidance. Experienced students will never want to throw out their own experience, but they can recognize its limitations and welcome the opportunity to discuss and evaluate it in light of others' experiences and research.

Second, I clearly distinguished what the research says from any practical generalizations from that research. Practical implications are set off in separate boxes, labeled as "applications." An example of applications drawn from research on employee selection appears in Table 21.2. In this way, the experienced students get the clear guidelines for action that they crave, without any dishonest suggestions that the "research says you should do this."

Third, I avoided misleading and potentially embarrassing trendy examples. I felt I really did not have enough information to know exactly why and how today's media darling is successful. Business magazines may praise the executive's employee-centered management practices, but the reality could be a draconian slave-driving climate or the good luck to have the right product at the right time. We all know that today's excellent company is likely to be tomorrow's failure. I didn't want next month's headline executive indictment for fraud to make the book a laughingstock. If I was to be true to scholarly caution, I needed to acknowledge that, unless I had direct experience with an organization, I really did not know the actual basis for their successes or failures.

Which Publisher?

I began by deciding to solve my own classroom challenge, and I figured that if I just put photocopied manuscript pages in a course reader, that would at least help me as an instructor. But, of course, if I am going to go to all the trouble of writing something this ambitious, it would be nice if others could use it, too. That meant I needed a marketing channel, that is, a publisher. However, careful analysis suggested that what I wanted to do was too different from existing textbooks to be attractive to publishers. After all, I was addressing a problem they didn't believe they had (a textbook that actually was based on research evidence) directed to a market that was too small to be attractive to them. In addition, due to industry consolidation, most textbook publishers already had multiple organizational-behavior textbooks; why would they want another? Producing something this different would be risky for them. They are in the business of assessing markets and then suggesting to textbook authors what to add in the next revision. In addition, even if a publisher

did want to publish this kind of textbook, I had a pretty good idea that I would be facing pressures from them to conform to standard textbook format and coverage, pressures in direct conflict with the goals of this textbook. This would not be a contest I could win: if I sign a contract, the publisher owns the book, and if I became troublesome, the publisher could dump me and recruit another author more willing to accept the revisions the editor believed the market wanted.

So this would have been where things stood—me with my photocopied chapters for my own students alone—if I hadn't bumped into Karl Vesper at the University of Washington. He had published his own introductory entrepreneurship textbook himself and had now gone through multiple successful editions. Wow! Karl very kindly spent many hours answering my questions about marketing (I learned this is straightforward for textbooks: just put a free copy into the hands of any potential adopting instructor), the mechanics of producing a book (most of it is easily available through contracted services), and so forth. So instead of writing a prospectus and taking it around to the textbook publishers, I decided to become a micro enterprise and publish it myself (see Pearce, 2009, for the results).

Has It Worked?

In some ways my approach has worked well, and in others I am disappointed. What has worked well was my ability to produce the book and get it into the hands of the instructors who have used it in their courses (and the many managers who have somehow found out about the book). The third edition is in production, and more and more instructors are adopting the book or a few chapters of it for their course readers. I was very worried about the amount of time this effort might require. I found that some aspects take surprisingly little time (sales and fulfillment), some more time than it seems they should have (proofing and correcting the typesetter's pages), and some are more frustrating than I would like (getting the few deadbeat reader services to pay for the books and chapters they have already sold at a profit to students). However, on the whole, it has been worth the time and effort. I now do not need to use consultant-written articles in my executive MBA course; I have been able to cover the costs of putting those photocopied pages into book form and have been able to convey my own enthusiasm for the practical value of organizational-behavior research to more than just the few students who stumble into my own courses.

My area of greatest disappointment is the paucity of good systematic reviews, as described in Briner and Denyer's chapter 7 of this volume, of what organizational-behavior research says that can be used in this textbook. I rely a great deal on my own time-consuming digging in electronic databases and in conference paper and journals' citations, but too often I am forced to read and evaluate research far outside my own specialty. I search in the allied social sciences, and I try my best to be comprehensive, cite sources, and distinguish between what research says and the practical implications of that research. However, I constantly worry that I am not fully and systematically representing what the research evidence tells us when I step outside my own research specialization. Any further development of evidence-based systematic reviews in organizational behavior would be a great service to me, to all textbook authors, and especially to our students.

Better information about what we do and do not know in our field would not only allow us to better represent what we know with some confidence on particular topics, but it could also have numerous other benefits. For example, it could free others to develop their own better, more creative approaches to organizing evidence in ways that can assist managers in their difficult jobs. A growing body of systematically summarized evidence also would make it easy for alumni to keep up, since they could consult the abstracts of such systematic reviews that could be posted online. However, today introductory-organizational-behavior textbooks too often fail to accurately represent what the evidence actually says, and so serve as a reflection of how far organizational behavior now is from an evidence-based discipline.

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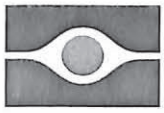

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PART 5

Criticism