

Letter from the Editor

This issue of MOR closes out volume 11, which has witnessed the transition of the journal's domain to attract and publish social science research underlying an across-the-board range of themes in management, organizations, strategy, and public policy in the context of China and all transforming economies. The challenge for MOR is to be open to indigenous theories of management, organization, entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development. However, this is not about contradicting the accumulated body of extant management and international business scholarship. At its core the intellectual challenge is to recognize that history, stage of economic development, institutional configuration, cultural differences, and national ambitions have the potential to give rise to new forms of organization and management. The challenge for MOR is to encourage and publish such research that meets the state-of-the-art scholarship criteria of the social sciences.

Moreover, if MOR is to be open to research in the context of all transforming economies it must implement an editorial structure that gives voice to such scholarship by attracting and appointing Senior Editors with contextual knowledge of transforming economies. Beginning with volume 12, the Senior Editor team was expanded to cover India, Latin America, and Russia, including Eastern Europe and Ex-Soviet Republics. This is, of course, a work in progress. However, I am pleased to welcome Alvaro Cuervo-Cazzura (Northeastern University), Carl F. Fey (Aalto University), Jing Li (Simon Fraser University), Peter Ping Li (Xian Jiantong-Liverpool University and Copenhagen Business School), Jiangyong Lu (Peking University), Gerry McDermott (University of South Carolina), Shameen Prashantham (CEIBS), and Yeda Swirski de Souza (Unisinos Business School) as new Senior Editors. The MOR Editorial Advisory Board has also been similarly expanded. I am deeply appreciative to welcome Herman Aguinis, Jose de la Torre, Charles Dhanaraj, Nikolay Filinov, Tarun Khana, Bruce Kogut, Ram Mudambi, Rajneesh Narula, Ravi Ramamurti, Debra L. Shapiro, Jitendra V. Singh, Sushil Vachani, and Gordon Walker. Professor Tony Fang (Stockholm Business School) has also joined MOR as Deputy Editor for Artwork and Abstract Translation. Beginning with volume 12 abstracts of papers published in MOR will

appear online alongside published articles (www.journals.cambridge.org/MOR) in Chinese, Hindu, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

As MOR expands to cover all transforming economies, we must also be diligent in ensuring a high level of research rigor. As a case in point, this past year social science research has been the subject of criticism on many fronts. Empirical scholarship has low explanatory power, is increasingly incremental and unimportant, and its reliability and validity are being questioned as never before. Moreover, the research fails to address new phenomena of sustainability, social and income inequality, corporate social responsibility, and economic policies that disproportionately favor high income economies and the challenges facing transforming economies to leapfrog the middle income trap.

In addition, recent headlines of retracted papers that were not rigorously reviewed and replication studies that bring into question the reliability of some studies have raised important questions. To combat these issues, some journals have adopted policies intended to increase confidence in the reliability of published papers. For example, some policies require that authors make their data available for a specified period of years following the publication of a paper in the journal. The empirical files to be preserved include actual data sets, data transformations, analyses, output files, survey questionnaires, experimental procedures, instructions, interview recordings and transcripts, as well coding procedures, etc. All leading science journals and many in economics require that authors publish on the journal's website the data set underlying the paper. Those data are available for as long as the paper is available, i.e., in perpetuity, not just 'for a specified period of years'. Details of this policy at AER can be found here: www.aeaweb.org/aer/data.php

I believe that the issue of data transparency and replication of published empirical results requires further dialog and consideration. Advances in the physical sciences such as physics and chemistry, to a large extent, were and are enabled by the requirements that authors publish their experimental procedures, ensuring replication as the basis of advancing and deepening the underlying science. Moreover, some societies, such as the American Chemical Society, undertook independent replication of published studies in ACS papers. Physics relied on an open online publication process, which encouraged a very active discourse and vetting process. By the time a physics paper appears in a journal it is basically considered to be archival.

However, social science research is fundamentally not a science in the sense of the physical sciences. In retrospect, J. D. Thompson's (1956) inaugural editorial in *ASQ*, in which he envisioned a social science empirical world modeled after the precision of physics, is to a great extent responsible for the quantitative race in social science research. However, it also eschewed the reality of the complexity of the social science phenomena to be studied and the reality of multiple theoretical lenses and ideologies that drive social science research, each having some small explanatory power (see Letter from the Editor in MOR 10.2). There is no question that quantitative rigor has been very important in elevating the rigor of social

science scholarship and in calibrating the explanatory power of empirical findings. But even the physical sciences theories and empirical studies that we admire are affected by ideological divides (see Mitroff, 1976).

Given the complexity of these issues, my hope is to start an internal MOR dialog and debate on the issue of data transparency, replication, and how best to advance the rigor and relevance of scholarship published in MOR. I invite MOR readers, authors, and the MOR editorial community to share their ideas and thoughts on these issues. We need to develop a shared understanding on realistic approaches to ensure rigor of empirical papers published in MOR. For example, should MOR reviewers be given access to the data files (and coding schemes, rules by which outliers are eliminated, etc.) underlying papers under review in MOR? Under what conditions should replication be considered as a criteria for publishing an empirical paper in MOR? Should authors of statistical papers be required to qualitatively discuss effect size of significant estimated coefficients? For logit model estimations, papers increasingly incorporate and discuss odds ratio calculations for significant estimated coefficients. I think that many MOR readers would benefit from the drive toward greater meaning and fewer asterisks, and more reliable results, even if less flashy ones. Such a discourse is underway at the Strategic Management Society for their journals.

Replication clearly has merit, but exact replication may only be feasible in special cases, such as psychology lab experiments and for studies utilizing certain data sets (as in economics). In the social sciences we may need to develop a more nuanced form of replication. By, for example, encouraging application of alternative or competing theories to the same empirical question using the original or additional data. It is important to remind ourselves that context is extremely important in social science research and that scholars grow up within ideological/theoretical churches that all have some 'truth'. Perhaps we can increase transparency of empirical research by reporting positive as well as contradictory findings? Indeed contrary to Fisher's admonition we hardly ever study the outliers (see, for example, Massini, Lewin, & Greve, 2005).

It is my hope that over the course of the next few months the MOR community will rise to the occasion and share ideas on these issues. Please direct all communications to me care of MOR Managing Editor (MOR[managingeditor@cambridge.org](mailto:MORmanagingeditor@cambridge.org)) with subject of 'Rigor and Relevance'. At the same time, to further stimulate discourse and debate and to attract attention to research published in the journal, starting with issue 12.1 MOR will publish Readers' Letters to the Editor. Readers are invited to comment on topics that are of interest (or should be) and perhaps offer anecdotal evidence. Letters can also address recently published articles, providing an opportunity to comment on exceptional studies or express a difference of opinion. Letters are not meant to introduce primary data. Hence, they will be short (under 500 words) and may contain just a handful of references. Letters may be reviewed and will generally be edited for length and clarity.

Finally, I wish to close this Letter from the Editor by directing attention of readers to the Call for papers for a special issue 'Celebrating and Advancing the Scholarship of Kwok Leung'. Also please note the announcement for the second MOR Research Frontiers Conference that will be held October 5–7 and 13–15 at Guanghua School of Management, Peking University and at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. The Inaugural MOR Research Frontiers Conference which was hosted by Hong Kong University of Science and Technology School of Business has resulted in the forthcoming Cambridge University book *China's Innovation Challenge: Overcoming the Middle Income Trap*.



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