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### **Making a difference**

Thoughts on management scholarship from the editorial team

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# EDITORIAL: Making a Difference: Thoughts on Management Scholarship from the Editorial Team

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## FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I am delighted to usher in my second year as Editor-in-Chief having witnessed a substantial increase in both the quality and quantity of articles submitted for review. While the *European Management Journal (EMJ)* is well established as the leading voice of management scholarship in Europe, and growing globally according to current metrics, we continue to strive for excellence and our goal of joining the handful of top multidisciplinary management journals.

In this pursuit, I am lucky to have on my side a team of Associate Editors who are all recognized and rising scholars in their respective fields. And it is for them that, in this Editorial, I make way so that they can express their views and engage directly in a dialogue with prospective authors and readers. In the following sections, *EMJ's* Associate Editors reflect on their respective areas and outline their visions for the journal's development; consider problems, pitfalls and opportunities; seek to inspire; provide guidance; highlight trending and innovative topics; and offer good advice on the quality standards required from authors wishing to publish with *EMJ*.

Needless to say, as I am close to my colleagues, I know and share their ideas and concerns. As for my own specific views, I point to my Editorial (Kastanakis, 2018).

Readers will, without doubt, enjoy reading Sarah Robinson's big but important questions aimed at creating better future workplaces; Yannis Tsalavoutas's practical guidelines on pushing the boundaries in accounting and finance research; Mario Fernando's call for understanding what it means to be human; Claudia Jonczyk's encouragement to build bridges among disciplines and find ways of imagining the world; Uriel Stettner's invitation to explore risky, less travelled territories; Ioannis Thanos's reflections on strategy, emerging global themes, research design issues and reasons for rejections; Barak Aharonson's insightful exploration of unknown territories in entrepreneurship research; Kristina Potočnik's views on emerging areas in HRM, methods and the types of papers to submit; Haina Zhang's outlook on an interdisciplinary theoretical lens for current international management themes; Antonia Erz and Sylvia von Wallpach's analysis of the trends currently reshaping the landscape of marketing; Andreas Diedrich's overview of management and organization studies and commentary on safely analysing qualitative data to generate accurate and useful theories; Chris Leupold's views on profound issues facing organizations around the world today and encouragement for better studies that generate practically significant insights; and, finally, Liz Breen's ideas on thought provoking and impactful supply chain and operations's research.

Reading through these fascinating contributions, I can't but think that we, scholars, often stand at the start of diverging roads leading to the unknown – in terms of choosing topics, going through ideas, evaluating new concepts, utilizing methods and interpretation approaches. Following the comments of my AEs, I encourage our prospective authors and readers not to fear taking the road less travelled by, as long as they can defend this choice. At *EMJ* we will always be open to risk and innovation. And that could make all the difference.

*EMJ* will continue to publish research that not only answers current, innovative and difficult questions for management scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and society at large, but also uses tested or novel, state-of-the-art methods and thoroughly developed, generalizable theories.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone in our community of Associate Editors, reviewers and scholars who seek to publish their best work with *EMJ*. I am very much looking forward

to your best submissions. If you are interested in submitting a paper, please read the following sections and send me a short summary of your intention.

*Minas Kastanakis*

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## **FROM THE ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

**Radial change and managing differently: a call for fine-grained research and innovative responses** (*Sarah Robinson, Co-Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editor for human resource management, organizational behaviour, and organization studies*)

Across Europe and beyond, we are currently facing many social, economic, political and technological changes that have widespread implications for how organizations are managed and impact on individuals' workplace experiences. Scholarship on the impact of such changes from organizational behaviour, organization studies and human resource management perspectives requires not only fine-grained qualitative, quantitative and comparative research into what is currently happening in organizations but also theoretically- and empirically-driven critical responses as to how organizations can be managed differently and how workplace experiences can be improved.

Firstly, in terms of socio/economic change, I would welcome research on the impact of the growth of the gig economy, and on zero-hour contracts and other forms of workplace precarity, focusing in particular on how people view their psychological contract with their employing organization and how such organizations view and treat employees. Secondly, in relation to socio/political changes, there has been a resurgence of populism and extreme right-wing political movements in Europe over the past decade, opening debates about immigration and migrant work and providing platforms for racism and xenophobia which cannot but effect workplace relations, as has been witnessed in the UK, for example, since the decision to leave the European Union. Political changes such as Brexit potentially change employment status for millions of workers; so how might HRM functions manage such uncertainty and change? Thirdly, technological changes such as automation are set to lead to job losses; how then can

displaced workers be supported and retrained? Will this privilege the younger, digitally literate generations (which is potentially problematic given ageing workforces)? How might older workers be supported and inter-generational tensions managed? Finally, the increasing pace and intensity of work in many sectors has led to an increase in work days lost to stress-related illness, a phenomenon recently highlighted by tragic cases of work-related suicide. What are organizations doing to deal with this and to what extent are wellbeing initiatives and discourses sincere and effective. Are they in fact adding to stress and work overloads by putting the onus on individuals to attend to their own health and well-being without any change in working conditions?

These are all big but important questions in need of careful investigation with the aim of improving how work is conceived and organized so that better future workplaces can be created.

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**Pushing the boundaries in accounting and finance research** (*Yannis Tsalavoutas, Associate Editor for accounting and finance*)

Accounting and finance (A&F) are two, inter-connected, broad areas under the umbrella of management scholarship. Related research fields include auditing, financial reporting, management accounting, taxation, corporate social responsibility practices and disclosures, business valuation, financial analysts' forecasts, integrated reporting, corporate governance, executive compensation, asset pricing, banking, personal finance, capital structure, cost of capital, mergers and acquisitions, crash risk, cash holdings, and bankruptcy prediction, among others.

Reflective of *EMJ*'s aims to encourage and promote innovative and high-quality research in the broad domain of European business and management, the A&F section welcomes rigorous and theoretically founded articles on any of these fields. Data does not need to be confined exclusively to European countries and submissions do not need to provide comparative analysis between European and non-European countries either. However, the setting and research questions explored need to be contextualized for the interest of researchers, practitioners and policymakers in Europe. Additionally, considering how quickly business environments, capital markets and regulations evolve, many established theories and existing evidence on many of these fields are now challenged. Thus, we welcome articles that challenge the status quo by employing rigorous research designs and drawing on recent regulatory changes, interdisciplinary theories and datasets or contexts to provide new insights to existing knowledge. Some ideas for future projects, as far as accounting is concerned, can be drawn from Gepp et al. (2018) and Weetman (2018).

The A&F section does not have a preference in terms of methodological approaches followed. All research paradigms are welcome, provided that the related literature and theories are thoroughly considered and elaborated. A common reason for rejecting submissions is the lack or inadequate discussion of a relevant theoretical framework. Additionally, methods need to be very rigorous and well discussed/explained. In many instances, we encounter submissions that employ weak methods or methods that are not suitable for answering the study's research questions and this discourages the initiation of the review process. Finally, the research findings need to be discussed/interpreted in view of the relevant theoretical framework and related literature. It is not uncommon for papers to report the key findings without further reflection of the related background and this is an area where our reviewers recommend significant improvements. If present in *EMJ* submissions, all these features will enable reviewers as well as future readers to appreciate the validity and reliability of the findings reported along with the contributions they provide.

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**Understanding the nature of being human** (*Mario Fernando, Associate Editor for business ethics*)

Increasingly, we are subjected to unprecedented tragic events caused by a member of our species that make us ask: What does it mean to be human? In our private and professional lives, doing what is right is becoming more and more precarious yet critical. Why do we at times choose the unethical option over the ethical and how can we stand up against wrongdoing that challenges our moral base to the core? In this context, I invite scholars to engage in academically rigorous debates through conceptual and empirical studies about being human in organizations. For example: How can we project the best example of ourselves at work? Why can't we continue to deny the needs of others? How can we develop a culture of compassion through authentic responsibility? How can culture and context influence our behaviour in organizations to promote respect, equity, social justice, empowerment and cultural diversity? These and other human beliefs, attitudes and behaviour-related questions can be interrogated through class, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual preference, etc., in micro and macro sites of human endeavour using traditional or novel organizational behaviour research methods (e.g. neuroscience). Such inquiries can focus on not only identifying human, organizational and societal challenges to promoting humanity in organizations but also how these challenges could be overcome.

**Encouraging authors to build bridges** (*Claudia Jonczyk, Associate Editor for organizational theory*)

As a network scholar the topic of bridge building is part of my focus of study: we look at how individuals and/or organizations branch out, build bridges and manage networks of relationships. As academics we often hear the call for building bridges between disciplines to benefit from the cross-fertilization of ideas, theories and concepts to generate new insights. Yet, at the same time the experiences of academic bridge builders are not always positive: I know colleagues who tell me that not clearly identifying with one single field of discipline will eventually hurt you in the review process and that mixed method approaches are good in theory but that such papers will either disappoint the quantitative or the qualitative expert (and they will be too long anyhow).

In spite of these preconceptions I would like to invite researchers and prospective contributors to *EMJ* in general and the strategy and organizational theory domains in particular to dare to build bridges. Such bridges can be within the same discipline but widen the focus of study and combine micro and macro (or meso) levels of analysis. Submissions may tease out the value that only research questions at the interface of two disciplines can generate or they may demonstrate how the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods may lead us to see and understand dynamics we would not uncover otherwise.

To name just a few examples, I can imagine contributions that bridge strategy and international business or contributions that look at bridge builders themselves, such as bi-culturalists, network brokers or cosmopolitans. The bridge building may even go further and look beyond classical management science literature. For example, how can different literary genres contribute to lessons for strategic management or organizational theory? In that sense, I encourage you all to build bridges.

**Exploring the territory less travelled** (*Uriel Stettner, Associate Editor for business strategy*)

Incremental contributions to business strategy and organizational theory are of great value, yet we must also strive at times to explore new grounds, new domains, new methods and data to arrive at truly novel and unexpected insights. As management scholars we must find ways to keep up with developments and trends that surface as business environments interact with structures and functionings of human society. These developments and trends span different industries, countries and institutional settings and invite deeper apprehension of not only distinct value creation and appropriation mechanisms, but also the spillover effects on society at large.

Indeed, human agency and action increasingly interact with and rely on technology and digitization of these mechanisms with implications for how individuals within and across different forms of organization create and diffuse knowledge. Advanced technologies have remarkable implications for how individuals draw from and rely on different sources of knowledge. Digitization expands access to product and corporate markets and provides opportunities for the realization of novel business models. Moreover, technologies and digitization have profound effects on how individuals and collectives perceive time and

urgency – both on the supply and demand side. In other words, advanced technologies and digitization shape and are shaped by society, pose challenges to business and trigger adjustments to organizational forms and designs that can generate novel value propositions in a timely manner.

Inevitably, tackling these emerging contexts and phenomena requires drawing on multiple theoretical approaches, a wide range of methodologies and novel data sources. Both incremental and groundbreaking contributions to science demand solid theory building and a tight theory–method fit if they are to shape and advance the way we think about the nexus between business and society. Exploring less travelled territory may be risky as the traditional peer review system may at times fail us. Yet, the potential rewards are enormous.

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### **Emergent topics in business strategy and organization theory for *EMJ* (Ioannis Thanos, Associate Editor for business strategy)**

Business strategy and organization theory (BSOT) is a broad area with many sub-fields including strategic decision-making, strategy implementation, digital strategy, international strategies, mergers and acquisitions, strategic alliances, strategy as practice, strategic change, organizational design, etc. The BSOT section of *EMJ* is open to submissions on all of these topics. We are keen to consider papers that synthesize theoretical perspectives, draw on related disciplines and use novel data from various national locations, industries and types of firms, and produce notable contributions for theory and practice. We are also keen to see how strategy topics are linked to major and global themes such as sustainability, paradoxes and global warming. Similarly, big data and strategy is another emerging area for research that we would like to see in future submissions.

Addressing grand challenges, studying underexplored but critical contemporary phenomena and producing novel theoretical and empirical insights requires a journal that is open to papers employing a wide range of research methods. *EMJ* is this type of journal but with the additional requirement that authors pay careful attention to the match between research design and research question. Unfortunately, in BSOT we still receive papers that may have an interesting idea to present but have relatively poor research methods. A current key reason for rejections is that papers are testing causality and change with the use of cross-sectional research designs. Another key reason relates to survey research with measures suffering from validity issues. **These are also viewed as major causes for rejections by other management outlets (Bono and McNamara, 2011).**

We hope that in the years to come, scholars will pay more attention to the fit between research questions and research design and to reliability and validity issues.

Last but not least, in addition to empirical papers employing various research methods, we welcome critical literature reviews and quantitative syntheses/meta-analyses on any aspects of BSOT that provide cumulative evidence, shed light on empirical inconsistencies and provide meaningful avenues for future research and practical implications.

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**Expand the boundaries – think entrepreneurship and innovation** (*Barak Aharonson, Associate Editor for entrepreneurship and innovation*)

While entrepreneurship is widely **studied** across disciplines there are numerous issues that remain unknown, of which I will highlight but a few. First issue is the antecedents to entrepreneurs. Prior work suggests that various factors do not influence the likelihood of individuals becoming entrepreneurs – such as age, education level and professional background (e.g. Culpin et al., 2015; Schoon & Duckworth, 2012). So what are the factors that induce individuals to become entrepreneurs? How can policymakers ensure more entrepreneurial activity within their regional domain (especially in relation to the creation of new ventures)? The elements highlighted by prior work may not be effective across all industries, yet they may

have a role in specific industries. Are the factors that induce entrepreneurship in one industry likely to induce/diminish entrepreneurial activity in another industry? A related second issue is the environmental factors that induce entrepreneurial behaviour and influence the growth and demise of these new ventures. For example, how different entities (such as the government and anchor organizations (e.g. universities, the army, research institutes and multi-national corporations)) influence the formation and growth of local entrepreneurs.

A third issue stems from a recent study suggesting that entrepreneurial spirit is transferred through a socialization ‘inheritance’ process (Ellis et al 2017). This study implies that more in-depth understanding of the socialization process that turns individuals into entrepreneurs is needed. A fourth issue relates to the mindset of entrepreneurs (e.g. Shepherd & Patzelt, 2018): How are their decisions different from those of CEOs, corporate managers, the top management team (TMT) and mid-levels, or other individuals? Do corporate individuals who behave in an entrepreneurial manner have the same mindset and characteristics and do they make choices in a similar manner to entrepreneurs who founded new ventures? Related issues in corporate entrepreneurship include: How do we foster more entrepreneurial spirit/activity within corporations? How are the factors that induce more entrepreneurial-like behaviour effective for corporations? What are the boundary conditions for all these issues (e.g. are some factors more influential in some industries)? Finally, a fifth issue is social mobility. Studies suggest that individuals can use entrepreneurship to change their social–economic status by moving from one level to another (Schoon & Duckworth, 2012). Are individuals using entrepreneurship to change their status from choice or as a last resort to ensure their welfare? Can we learn from this phenomenon to reduce the increasing social gap worldwide? What is the price – the tradeoffs for society and individuals – when we promote social mobility?

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**Addressing big problems from a managing people perspective** (*Kristina Potočnik, Associate Editor for human resource management*)

Human resource management is a broad field with many sub-areas, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance and reward management, and employment relations, to name but a few. We are looking for papers in all these areas, although we encourage prospective authors to submit material with a focus on more recent and pertinent workplace issues, such as the potential and caveats of big data for HRM, the impact of automation and artificial intelligence on employee behaviour and job design, and ethical, sustainable and green HRM. We also invite papers that explicitly investigate the temporal and contextual elements in our field, for instance, by examining the dynamics or organizational–cultural boundary conditions of managing people. Moreover, submissions exploring workplace issues within the context of new forms of employment, such as multiple jobholding or those found in the gig economy, are welcome. Above all, for papers to be considered for publication they need strong theoretical foundations and must make novel contributions to HRM literature.

Unlike many other journals, we are keen to see papers that innovate in their use of methodology. For instance, we are keen to consider papers that: a) are based on mixed methods, b) combine primary with secondary archival data, c) use experimental designs and d) study workplace issues using video material and other innovative techniques. Empirical papers that rely exclusively on self-reported cross-sectional data will only be considered under special circumstances, for instance, if the research is radically novel and the sample is very unique. Finally, we would also like to encourage the submission of systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses that advance future research across HRM areas.

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### **International management** (*Haina Zhang, Associate Editor for international management*)

The international management side of *EMJ* is devoted to promoting and advancing understanding of issues in both cross-cultural and comparative management. It covers a broad scope and within this theme *EMJ* publishes theoretical and empirical research addressing management issues (such as organizational behaviours, human resource management, business ethics, strategy and entrepreneurship, among others) in cross-cultural contexts and cross-border domains (such as multinational enterprises (MNEs)). Also, by adopting a comparative approach *EMJ* aims to advance and disseminate research focussing on the specific cultural and/or institutional impact on management issues.

Recently emerging paradigms, such as dynamics, aesthetics and processes, in international management call for a move beyond a single disciplinary perspective. Indeed, the value of interdisciplinary research for advancing theoretical development in international management is of contemporary importance. Therefore, we invite papers that explore these particular topics in depth by adopting an interdisciplinary theoretical lens and/or methodological approaches. Overall, to be considered for publication, papers should make a novel contribution to the development of international management literature and practice.

### **Re-thinking marketing as an inclusive field with multiple stakeholders** (*Antonia Erz and Sylvia von Wallpach, Associate Editors for Marketing*)

Looking at the plethora of marketing-related themes covered by *EMJ* in the past years, such as social media, services, sales and branding, or central constructs such as customer loyalty, trust, value and satisfaction, *EMJ* is truly emphasizing its position as a journal that covers a broad array of relevant topics. From a methodological perspective, *EMJ* has, over the years, welcomed both qualitative and quantitative approaches and encouraged authors to contribute with conceptual developments to the field (Kastanakis, 2018). Pursuing *EMJ*'s strategy in the

area of marketing, we continue to welcome high-quality submissions covering various topics and approaches. In addition, through our work as researchers, we have witnessed trends that we consider inspirational for advancing not only the field of marketing but also *EMJ*'s position within it.

The first trend is digitalization and its impact on all relevant marketing stakeholders, including firms, suppliers, customers, media and investors. Whether it is social media redefining brand–customer relationships; automation and two-sided markets affecting sales processes and channels; or innovative business models disrupting markets and marketing practices; digitalization is ubiquitous and continues to challenge current thinking and models in marketing.

The second trend is the ever-changing landscape of marketing, fuelled by digitalization, that brings about new ethical challenges on societal, economic, individual and environmental levels that need addressing from a marketing perspective. In recent years, there have been calls for marketing to take on a responsible role, not just in the form of cause-related or corporate social responsibility marketing campaigns but also in leading the way in finding viable solutions to pressing issues.

Addressing these trends might require re-thinking marketing as an inclusive field where various stakeholders contribute to value creation and, vice versa, ideally derive value for themselves. In this stakeholder–ecosystem perspective various actors are given equal consideration, which makes room for new perspectives on the marketing discipline. We are looking forward to receiving inspiring and thought-provoking papers that contribute to the advancement of the marketing field.

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**Zooming in on organizing practices and processes** (*Andreas Diedrich, Associate Editor for organization studies*)

The field of management and organization studies (MOS) has developed over the course of more than a century, from the early efforts of Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Fayol to the more recent works by James March and Karl Weick. The field has also increasingly been influenced by other disciplines, such as sociology, social anthropology, science and technology studies, ethnology, philosophy and literature studies, to name a few. These developments have had a profound impact on how we understand and analyse management and organizations. As a scholar interested in practices and processes, I have particularly welcomed the steadily growing body of research within MOS advocating a shift from nouns to verbs, actors to actions and organizations to organizing.

And as organizing and managing have today, without doubt, become central phenomena in contemporary societies, it is important that we continue to study them from a range of perspectives, in a variety of settings (from online gaming communities in Nigeria and high-tech startups in India to US military field hospitals in Afghanistan, grassroots lobbyists in Spain and municipal refugee units in Sweden, to name but a few possible options), and by paying equal attention to their past, their present, and their future. It is also important that we embrace in our research the new complexities and challenges all around us, such as diversity, equality, cultural encounters, environmental concerns, conflicts, and robotization, artificial intelligence and other novel technologies.

And finally, I believe it is important that we continue to build on one of the major strengths of the MOS field: its focus on qualitative, ethnographically inspired field studies of organizing practices and organizing processes unfolding over time. While such studies have received much praise for their ability to highlight the complexities and ambiguities of managing and organizing, as well as their consequences, others have cautioned that the huge quantities of empirical data they usually generate have proved challenging for researchers when analysing and generating new and useful theories. Today, however, a large number of generic strategies for meaningfully analysing such large amounts of process data are available within MOS. I thus encourage contributors to *EMJ* to zoom in closely on organizing practices and processes and to analyse their data in novel and creative ways to provide thought-provoking insights to the field of MOS.

**Studying complexities with purpose** (*Chris Leupold, Associate Editor for organizational behaviour*)

Pausing for a moment to reflect on the evolution of organizations over the past few decades, let alone the past century, can be a dizzying experience. Was it really not that long ago when organizational behaviour was studied within the narrow and stable confines of what Taylor and Fayol wrote? Since then, the colossal scope of change in organizations has somehow been eclipsed by the pace at which it occurred ... and this pace continues to accelerate. A far cry from the simple closed system models of yesteryear, today's organizations are infinitely more complex units of analyses. Perhaps studying organization behaviour was easier a century ago, but it certainly doesn't seem as exciting, or, frankly, as inspiring as the opportunities before us today. Naturally, issues related to ongoing globalization, technological advancements and changing workforces should continue to hold prominence in research agendas if we organization researchers intend to stay relevant. Managing matrix and distributed organizations, recruiting and leading increasingly diverse workforces, leveraging and integrating social media, capturing and coordinating inordinate quantities of data and knowledge, and adapting to the demands of social justice and environmental sustainability movements are a sample of the profound issues facing organizations around the world today, and each is begging to be studied better.

Regardless of the topic, to best serve our readers and practitioners, we must pose research questions that are purposively designed to create real value in their results and conclusions. Rather than 'to fill a gap in the literature' our work should be guided by the eventual utility it brings. Of course, the meaningfulness of our contributions is predicated on methodological best practices and rigorous analytical procedures. And to the last point, practical significance should be considered as important as statistical significance when stating any conclusion or recommendation.

In summary, authors should be inspired by a sense of urgency to serve and help organizations and their members navigate through the unprecedented complexities and challenges in today's environment. Furthermore, they should keep in mind that these parties, not reviewers, are the ultimate consumers and beneficiaries of any published study. I believe this mindset is our calling and one we are poised to adopt. And, not for nothing, such a results-oriented approach to organizational behaviour research is something Frederick Taylor would definitely recognize and applaud.

**Optimal Operations Management research – keeping it simple, structured, collaborative and applied** (*Liz Breen, Associate Editor for Supply Chain and Operations Management*)

Operations Management/Supply Chain Management (OM/SCM) as a discipline is incredibly broad and as such we proactively seek submissions from studies focussing on and relating to operations management, supply chain management, quality management, and project management across all industry sectors. This subject area lends itself very well to interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary agendas. As such, we welcome studies that embrace the embodiment of such collaboration by focussing on a specific area of exploration in a specific manner (e.g. building teams of experts across disciplines to design and undertake a study leading to a more successful outcome). Ethical and moral dilemmas encountered in the execution of specific aspects of OM/SC are also very overlooked and are a critical aspect of practice and processes within any organisation. Such analysis is also an excellent learning aid for all academic researchers.

As OM/SCM studies tend to be very applied in nature there will always be a need to be current when contextualizing studies, otherwise the significance and impact of the paper outcomes will be undermined or obliterated. Conceptual papers are also an excellent opportunity to move theoretical debates forward or construct new theories, and these will be warmly received in this journal stream.

Quality submissions are typified by a clear and concise title that guides the delivery of the paper and what the paper itself delivers to. Moreover, simplicity is key to the understanding of a clear logical thread and takeaway message from any paper. The structure and narrative should be clear, the agenda of the paper explicit and the methodological stance and implementation appropriate and sympathetic to the study aim and objectives.

We aim to offer educational insights and inspiration in the papers that we publish. As such, we accept papers that are novel and innovative, not only in their topic but in how they reposition seminal works/theories within the discipline. Excellent papers are those which are simple in their execution, but also thought provoking and impactful.

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