

Call for Papers in *Journal of Management Scientific Reports*

Special Issue: Theory Testing, Replication and Refinement in the African Context

Special Issue Editors:

Moses Acquaah, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA

Anastacia Mamabolo, Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, SA

Samuel Aryee, University of Surrey, UK

Despite growing concerns about the proliferation of and even obsession with theories in management scholarship (Hambrick, 2007; Pillutla & Thau, 2013), theories are fundamental to our understanding and explanation of management phenomena (Aguinis & Cronin, 2022; Cronin, et al., 2021). As explanatory tools, theories contribute to the advancement of knowledge and therefore uncovering of generalities or regularities in management phenomena. However, many of the theories in management are developed predominantly in western advanced economies (Kamoche et al., 2012; Jackson, 2015; Zoogah, 2008). Considering the rediscovery of context (Johns, 2018) and the goal of management scholarship to produce universal knowledge, the western-centric nature of these theories and their applicability to non-western-contexts has engendered a flurry of scholarly conversations (Edwards, 2010; Krlev, 2023; Tourish, 2020; Wood, Phan, & Wright, 2018). One response, witnessed predominantly in the increasingly advanced economies of Asia, is a move away from context-general theories to a contextualized or context-specific theorizing (Bruton et al., 2021; Fisher, et al., 2021; Tsui, 2004; Whetten, 2009). A second form of context-specific theorizing witnessed across the emerging economies of the global south, is research that examines how, why and when contextual conditions constrain or strengthen the generalizability of western-centric theories. With its focus on theory testing in the form of replication and extension (Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007), this research tradition contributes to uncovering the robustness of the underlying assumptions as well as limits of western-centric theories (Kraimer et al., 2023; Pratt et al., 2020)

Given the growing importance of Africa in the global economy and the need for management knowledge to provide an actionable base for management of Africa-based organizations, Africa provides an interesting context to subject management theories to empirical scrutiny (Barnard, et al., 2017; George et al., 2016; Kamoche & Wood, 2024; Nachum et al., 2023; Zoogah, 2025). For example, George and colleagues (2016:379) observed that 'As management scholarship expands its geographical interest from Western and Eastern developed economies to the rest of the world, it is time to bring Africa in to our mainstream research and theories.' Indeed, growing research has documented the influence of contextual factors including its colonial history (Decker, 2010), culture (Jackson, 2015), and institutional weaknesses (Khanna & Palepu, 2001) on the practice of management in Africa. These observations suggest that individuals and firms have "work about" strategies to survive despite the challenges (Sydow et al., 2022). While existing management theories offer valuable frameworks, their applicability and explanatory power in African settings warrant replication.

Anchored in the second tradition of context-specific theorizing, this special issue calls for submissions that replicate and extend existing theories developed in the advanced western

economies within the broader African management scholarship. Specifically, we call for submissions that replicate previously published empirical studies, empirical investigation of the foundational assumptions of existing theories, and/or examination of previously published yet untested theories or theoretical models within the African management domain. **A key criterion for this special issue is that the data (whether secondary or primary) be from an African country, whether it be macro-level, firm-level, team-level, or employee-level, to enhance the generalizability of the original published study and have implications for future research on the topic of interest within the African context.** We are open to a variety of methodological approaches as long as they are robust, consider levels of analyses appropriately, and adhere to open science principles adopted by *JOMSR* (see *JOMSR* Methods Checklist at <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/MSR>). Specific emphasis should be given to how the study refines or extends theory, resolves controversy, addresses past methodological weaknesses, or addresses boundary and contextual conditions. As per the mission of *JOMSR*, papers will be considered regardless of the significance of the findings and can be initially reviewed with the results “masked” (i.e., while the study must be fully completed, the initial submission may include only the introduction, hypotheses, and methods, and must not include the results and discussion sections). While not an exhaustive list, and not meant to curtail submissions in other areas, the following examples highlight areas that could address this call:

Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management)

- Organizational behavior replication studies could investigate the interaction between individual- and team-level factors on employee performance, decision-making processes, careers and career-making processes, work-life balance and stress, job roles, organizational culture, diversity and inclusion, group-level factors such as the team composition, structures, and leadership for effective management (e.g., Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Research could replicate findings across multiple regions considering the moderating roles of contextual factors such as national cultures.
- Research testing leadership could focus on how leadership styles influence individual/follower and organizational-level outcomes (Ng, 2017). The richness of the culture could be used as a variable to refine leadership theory. Also, indigenous practices such as *Ubutu* (humanity to others) and *Kgotla* (participatory decision-making) could be included as new constructs to advance leadership theories (Barnard et al., 2017; Beugré, 2015).
- Human resource management research could explore the impact of practices such as performance management systems on individual and organizational outcomes. The studies could also include the international human resource management practices adopted by foreign multinational companies (MNCs) operating in Africa (Boehnlein & Baum, 2022; Monzani et al., 2021) and African MNCs that are operating globally.

Strategy, Corporate Governance, Supply Chain, and Operations)

- Strategy papers could focus on strategic management decisions and practices and firm performance extending beyond for-profit firms to other organizational forms (e.g., social enterprises in Littlewood & Holt, 2018). Further, research could focus on the factors influencing decision-making, such as the personality characteristics of the CEO and senior executives and their capabilities and human capital investments. Lastly, the research could replicate studies that show linkages between micro-meso-

macro conditions (Cowen et al., 2022) adopting the intra- and inter-Africa lens (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018).

- Research could replicate and extend studies focusing on corporate social responsibility, sustainability and responsible leadership issues (Tyan et al., 2024). It should be noted that research on corporate governance could also be an interplay between meso and macro factors (e.g. Weber et al. 2024). For example, contextual factors like South Africa's King Code on Corporate Governance, which is a non-legislative framework on ethics and leadership, could be introduced as a moderating condition.
- Supply chain management (SCM) research at the meso level could interrogate the practices that contribute to performance, investigate sustainable and resilient SCM practices/processes, and examine infrastructure, technology, and logistics for efficient production performance. The macro level could focus on how institutions and cultural practices affect SCM practices (Belhadi et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurship, International Business, and Technology

- Research could explore the factors that drive entrepreneurship, focusing on resources, institutions, human capital, social capital, and community networks (e.g., Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Crawford et al., 2022). Such research could refine theory by considering the role of informality as a contextual mechanism that explains entrepreneurship (Bu & Cuervo-Cazurra, 2020) and explore other forms of entrepreneurial activity, such as social, ecological, and impact entrepreneurship.
- Africa's diverse characteristics offer the potential to serve as a context for testing international business theories showing: the role of institutions in entry mode strategies, knowledge transfers between subsidiaries and MNCs, human capital strategies for subsidiary performance, headquarters-subsidiary relations, the role of formal and informal institutions in predicting foreign direct investments, macro-level factors and international business outcomes and underlying mechanisms, diaspora networks, governance quality and inter-regional connectedness (see Barnard et al., 2017; Dau et al., 2022; Nachum et al., 2023).
- The advent of digital transformation in enhancing competitive advantage requires replication in the African context. Research in this area could assess digital transformation strategies, big data analytics assets and capabilities, digital innovation, digital business models, and firm/economic outcomes (e.g., Ciampi et al., 2021). The role of the socio-political-cultural environments could be considered the moderating conditions (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017).

Submission process and timeline

To be considered for the Special Issue, all manuscripts, including those prepared with results masked, should be submitted by the **final deadline of 31st March 2027, midnight GMT**. Submitted papers will undergo a double-blind review process and will be evaluated by at least two reviewers and a special issue editor. Final acceptance is contingent on the review team's judgments of the paper's contributions on three key dimensions:

- **Contribution to theory refinement.** Original research manuscripts should test hypotheses that are clearly grounded in existing theory. Manuscripts should clearly explain how the study either confirms, generalizes, limits, or refutes existing theory.
- **Methodological rigor.** Hypotheses tested with a rigorously designed study that balances internal and external validity will be more positively evaluated. The study design should be appropriate for testing the theory and hypotheses. Multiple studies within a single paper are not expected.
- **Implications for researchers.** The study's findings should have clear implications for future research testing of the specific unit theory (i.e., specific model or hypotheses) and for advancing the programmatic theory (i.e., general knowledge of the research domain (e.g., leadership research)).

Authors should prepare their manuscripts for blind review according to the JOMSR's Submission Guidelines, which can be found at the following website:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/MSR>

Manuscripts can be submitted electronically at: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jomsr>

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