



Reviving the aspiration, fostering impactful research, and contributing to the sustainable development and societal impact at Asian Business and Management

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We are living in disruptive times in which individuals, organizations, businesses, and societies around the world encounter unprecedented challenges, some of which are due to natural or humanitarian disasters. The notion of disruption prevails across multiple domains and dimensions, such as digital technology with its expediated manifestations of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), the effects of the COVID-19 global health crisis on healthcare systems and the global economy, concerted global endeavours aimed at countering climate change for a green and net zero economy, the strategic and dynamic relationship between China and the USA, and the emergence of an alliance-based—rather than economic logic-driven—fragmented globalization (Lewin & Witt, 2022). All these disruptions have a strong bearing on economic recovery and business development in Asia and elsewhere. Individuals, organizations, and societies have to accommodate these disruptions and trends, which will likely not be easily alleviated for the foreseeable future. For the sake of simplicity, the current global economy is characterized by high inflation, high interest rates, high debt, and low growth (United Nations, 2024). The world is on the lookout for innovation, creativity, courage, collaboration, and actionable ideas aimed at economic recovery, revitalization, and growth—with Asian countries potentially continuing to assume the role of ‘growth engines’ for the world.

What do these disruptions mean for Asian business research and management practice? Thriving scholarship and vibrant research, with a focus on the Asian context, testify that Asian countries are endowed with a vast knowledge, practical experience, and a long history that can be shared with the world, with important implications for contemporary business and management practices; or, at the very minimum, with the ability to provide alternative perspectives for the world to think and act upon. The rapid development and industrial transformation seen in multiple industries across Asia may challenge the status quo. For instance, the emergence of electric vehicles in China is reshaping the automotive industry landscape, which

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had previously been dominated by MNCs (Kenney et al., 2024; Teece, 2019). For example, China's BYD recently overtook Tesla as the world's biggest EV car manufacturer (FT, 2024). The business and management implications of the COVID-19 pandemic from an Asian perspective can shed some revealing light on the individual and organizational responses, governmental policies, and implementation options suited to develop timely coping strategies for the rest of the world in the fight against the global health crisis (Liu et al., 2020). Furthermore, over their developmental trajectories, Asian countries have accumulated useful experience and have learned lessons in relation to dealing with crises (Liu & Froese, 2020).

However, the increasing uncertainty and plausible deterioration that manifest themselves in global geopolitical tensions (Teece, 2022), the competition and rivalry-oriented way of thinking and framing (Allison, 2017), and the rise in de-coupling and de-risking narratives (Witt et al., 2023) can be detrimental to the world's understanding of Asia and of its unique positioning and contributions to a sustainable global development. The Asian twenty-first century necessitates a more balanced and candid articulation, with open-mindsets, inclusiveness, and diverse viewpoints (Mahbubani, 2022). Therefore, a nuanced understanding of Asia, including but not limited to its cultures, philosophies, history, institutions, businesses, and societies would be critical for people and organizations that are directly or indirectly connected to it in important ways. Even more importantly, effective communication and mutual exchanges between Asia (the East) and the West would determine the future global developmental trajectory, with far-reaching and significant implications. As an anecdote, on his 100th birthday, the late Henry Kissinger told an interviewer that "the Great Wall in China was built for defence, not for offence." This simple message highlights the importance for the world of understanding Asia's past, present, and future. Thus, ABM strives to provide a platform for scholars, practitioners, and the general public to comprehend and learn about the ideas, novel practices and contemporary implications in relation to Asian business and management, and to serve as an effective and inclusive communication platform to hold conversations and debates in the 'East-meets-West' context.

UN sustainable development goals and rethinking business and management research

In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development proposed a set of universal goals aimed at addressing the urgent environmental, social, political and economic challenges facing the world. In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides "a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future" was adopted by all the United Nation's member states. The importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been widely recognized, receiving wide-ranging consensus from academics, policy-makers, the business community, and the non-profit sector. Given the timeline and the ongoing and recent abrupt societal and economic global challenges, achieving the UN's SDGs on time is an audacious objective; yet, one that provides an inspirational blueprint and actional guidelines in the pursuit of sustainable development for



humanity and the planet. We believe that Asia should and can play an important role in achieving the SDGs for the world, making impactful contributions and steering the future development agenda.

Addressing the SDGs is closely linked to societal and economic grand challenges, whereby scientists—including those involved in business and management research and in the broader social sciences disciplines—can generate important insights to understand, predict, and interfere with the present and future grand challenges (George et al., 2016). As grand challenges are complex, sophisticated, ambiguous, and fraught with uncertainty, we often need new ways of seeing and thinking (Shaw et al., 2017) with creativity and imagination. For example, international business research has been encouraged to ask the big questions to address grand challenges (Buckley et al., 2017). Responsible innovation may provide a novel perspective suited to design and organize innovation activities aimed at tackling environmental challenges, as illustrated in the context of the circular economy (Liu et al., 2023). Apart from the UN's SDGs dimensions and indicators (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>), an increasing number of organizations and institutions have begun to provide individuals and businesses with toolkits useful to thinking and acting sustainably and responsibly. Springer Nature has also created a platform that carries practical guidelines (<https://www.springernature.com/sdg-programme>) to map out research activities related to the SDGs in order to align, mobilize, and amplify the societal impact of research endeavours.

We encourage two approaches to effectively engaging with the SDG agenda: (1) collaborative partnerships and boundary spanning and (2) science communication and public engagement. In addressing societal and economic grand challenges, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches should be encouraged in relation to conceptualizing, designing, and conducting research. Arguably, international business and management research is ready for a paradigm shift that requires disruptive knowledge (Tung et al., 2023) and cross-disciplinary interchanges that break out from individual discipline silos and foster cross-fertilization (Teece, 2022).

Going beyond the disciplinary boundaries—which requires collaborative partnerships (Liu et al., 2017) and boundary spanning endeavours—is easier said than done. Not only may scholars encounter difficulties in forming and managing collaborative partnerships with their counterparts from other (even adjacent) disciplines, they also may face enormous uncertainties and challenges in publishing the interdisciplinary work. We are keen to cultivate an inclusive-mindset with an open-eye in the review process with the goal to encourage interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches and to publish interesting and important research with societal impact. Needless to say, the good quality bar and 'industry standards' need to be met properly; they will be raised over time alongside the publishing industry trends.

Furthermore, science communication and public engagement has become ever more important, especially when grand economic and societal challenges rapidly emerge and are expedited into wider society and public discourse. Conducting research properly is the baseline; it is the scientists' responsibility to communicate your research output and implications effectively to the appropriate audiences and stakeholders. Science communication has become and will continue to be a determinant for shaping academic influence in the digital economy age. We encourage



authors to engage with multiple stakeholders and the general public to promote your research and enhance your impact, especially when your research activity can contribute to the SDG agenda and to sustainable development for Asia and beyond.

The role of the Asian context

To generate a comprehensive understanding of Asian business and management, it is important to highlight the role played by the Asian context and its implications for theory and practice. Context has been emphasized numerous times in mainstream management and organizational studies (Stahl et al., 2023)—such as organizational behaviour (Johns, 2017), international business and emerging economies (Meyer & Peng, 2016), innovation studies (Liu & Huang, 2018), and entrepreneurship research (Neck & Liu, 2021), among others. Notably, context consists of multiple dimensions—e.g., social, political, technological, cultural, and institutional—that need to be carefully examined in research activity. Furthermore, the micro-foundational perspective may be conducive to disentangling the complexity of context (Liu et al., 2022).

The distinctive qualities of ABM rely on its emphasis and appreciation of the Asian contexts. Context plays a critical role in understanding the management and business phenomenon, in designing appropriate interventions for business and society, and in advancing theoretical development. Asian contexts exhibit unique characteristics that deserve serious consideration and need to be incorporated into the research endeavours. In so doing, it can engender revealing insights to advance, challenge or change existing theory. To rephrase and emphasize the role played by the Asian context in business and management research, we invite authors and reviewers to contemplate in greater depth (1) why the Asian context is appropriate to test theory and (2) how the Asian context shapes the boundary conditions or assumptions of the theories being examined (George, 2014).

The multifaceted role played by the Asian context in theoretical elaboration and practical articulation can be investigated in several practical ways. I provide some examples to illustrate. A large body of knowledge in Triple Helix (the interactions between government, industry and university for regional entrepreneurship and innovation) research has been generated based on the observation and analysis of prominent examples found in advanced Western economies, such as Silicon Valley or Cambridge. However, China—as one notable Asian emerging economy—differs from Western economies along multiple dimensions. Its dynamic regional development and entrepreneurship offers a novel context suited to disentangle the intertwined relationships among government, industry, and university and anchors university capability as a micro-foundation for the Triple Helix model (Liu & Huang, 2018). Relatedly, the context of returnee entrepreneurship in Asian countries provides a fresh lens through which to explore the meanings of risk and the coping strategies in building resilience (Liu, 2020). Furthermore, open innovation in Korean small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can affect eco-innovation in the context of meta-organizations (Roh et al., 2023).



Alongside the recent rise of globalization endeavours among emerging market multinationals (Liu & Meyer, 2020), context can play an important role in shaping strategies and influencing performance when emerging market firms venture into advanced economies (Liu & Vrontis, 2017). Another example can be found in organizational behaviour, whereby the occupational context deserves careful consideration to garner a nuanced understanding of resilience and wellbeing for both individuals and organizations (Liu et al., 2019). Therefore, we welcome studies that explore the factors at different levels of analysis, including the individual, team, organizational, industrial, institutional, and societal levels. Simply put, we encourage authors to seriously consider the role played by the Asian context in conducting your research and framing your arguments by leveraging the power of context. In particular, the *how* and *why* of incorporating context may advance our understanding of the business phenomenon and management practice, and the extent to which they may contribute to theoretical development, either in refining or advancing. In particular, we value an integrative approach in advancing theory. Integration is not a juxtaposition of concepts, but rather their overlap and articulation. Therefore, ABM will favor theoretical efforts advancing conceptual bridges between levels and among several theoretical perspectives in order to offer a relevant and rigorous voice in the business and management research.

Continuity and innovation at ABM

ABM was founded by Professor Harukiyo Hasegawa, who has the vision of better connecting Asian business with global management scholarship (Hasegawa, 2002). Michael Witt continued to set an agenda on Asian business systems (Witt, 2012). Fabian Froese expanded the scope and emphasized impact at multiple dimensions (Froese, 2018). The 20 years anniversary issue was a signature compilation aimed at celebrating ABM's growth and diverse topical areas (Froese et al., 2022). Against the background of global disruption and increasing uncertainty, we embark on this upward trajectory. It is my honour and privilege to take up the baton as Editor-in-Chief to continue growing and developing ABM with quality and impact.

To ensure continuity, we will sustain publishing high quality research that can reflect the contemporary Asian business and management insights (broadly defined) with significant contributions to theory and management practice. Understanding the role played by the Asian context can prepare us to better predict and design interventions for individuals, organizations, and society. Not only should the Asian context be incorporated and meaningfully articulated in your research, we also encourage an international comparative perspective by connecting Asia (the East) with the West to discern the commonalities and distinctive characteristics that reflect the uniqueness of Asia and its contribution to the global business and management knowledge and the sustainable development agenda. Importantly, the international comparative approach between Asia and the rest of the world can generate revealing insights for both theory and practice.

By following the fast-changing journal publication landscape, ABM will keep innovating with experiments and initiatives. I hereby highlight three areas. First, we



will uphold research integrity and responsible scholarship. Research integrity has emerged as a critical issue in every research field. Data transparency and replication studies serve the purpose of restoring the public trust of research, which has unfortunately been distorted by a few instances of misconduct. As a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), ABM will uphold ethical principles across all its processes. Notably, the emergence of generative Artificial Intelligence is going to shape the production of academic work and scholarship (Grimes et al., 2023). We resonate with the contemporary consensus and emphasize human reflexivity and scientific responsibility in knowledge creation (Lindebaum & Fleming, 2023). We will not accept AI as a co-author or contributor to the creation of knowledge. As a prerequisite for consideration of publication at ABM, we will require each submitting author to clearly state that nothing in their submitted manuscripts is AI-generated.

Second, in designing and carrying out research, we will welcome interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches and embrace cross-fertilization endeavours. Social sciences, especially business and management studies, can and should address pressing grand societal and economic challenges. Addressing global challenges requires an open mindset and the willingness and ability to span disciplinary boundaries through inter- and multidisciplinary work. Accordingly, all empirical methods are welcome, including, but not limited to, qualitative, quantitative, field, laboratory, meta-analytic, and mixed methods. From the Asian perspective, we can capture this global opportunity by engaging with emerging themes and topics for the achievement of the UN's SDGs (e.g., climate change and net zero economy, industry 4.0 and digital disruption, innovation and entrepreneurship, healthcare and behavioural science, and societal impact). In a nutshell, we will encourage authors to spell out the Asian wisdom, business insights, and management experience to tackle grand economic and societal challenges for the betterment of humankind and global prosperity.

Third, responsible management research has gained momentum in research communities and international organizations, such as the Responsible Research for Business and Management (RRBM) community, and UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). The accreditation bodies for business schools also embrace the responsible management agenda—such as the AACSB's 2020 guideline, with an emphasis on societal impact. Research endeavours should not just pursue 'interestingness', but also be 'useful and impactful' for business and society (Hideg et al., 2020). The diversity and inclusion agenda is one pertinent theme of responsible research. Gender equality will continue to be important for all ABM stakeholders. We will further enhance the awareness of gender equality by encouraging female authors, reviewers, members of the editorial team, and members of the editorial board. Among Asian countries, diversity and inclusiveness should be contextually considered and incorporated into scholarly inquiry.

To conclude, I would like to recall Professor James G. March's eminent statement that scholarship is not a job but a calling, and we wish to inspire and invite you, our readers and authors, to reflect and act upon a scholar's quest (March, 2011). Academic journals should not only offer academics opportunities to publish their work, but also provide platforms for responsible and impactful research. Scholars, as public intellectuals, should bear with the responsibility to share their knowledge with



the general public for the betterment and well-being of individuals, organizations, and societies. We extend our candid invitation to our readers, authors, reviewers and all stakeholders to join this exciting journey by contributing efforts with creativity and rigour, and conducting impactful scholarship for the attainment of sustainable development in Asia and globally.

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