

# A Roadmap for Navigating Phenomenon-Based Research in Management

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*McNamara and Schleicher have identified four principal paths for contributing to the Journal of Management (JOM): theoretical insights, phenomenon-driven research, research methodologies, and review papers. This editorial focuses on phenomenon-based research, emphasizing its potential for enhancing management knowledge by offering a nuanced understanding of real-world phenomena. Unlike traditional approaches, phenomenon-based research prioritizes the complexity of phenomena over the immediate generation of theoretical contributions. Grounded in established theory, phenomenon-based research utilizes the phenomenon itself as the primary source of insight, facilitating the development of relevant organizational frameworks. We propose a multistep framework encompassing phenomenon selection, framing, data collection, and study constraints, highlighting criteria—Pertinence, Reach, Insightfulness, Magnification, and Expediency (PRIME)—to guide scholars in identifying meaningful phenomena. Additionally, we discuss constraints that may limit research, including cultural, logistical, ethical, academic, and resource-related challenges (CLEAR). By addressing these considerations, we encourage management scholars to explore diverse and impactful phenomena, ultimately aiming to position JOM as a leading platform for phenomenon-based research and its contributions to real-world organizational challenges. This editorial advocates for a balanced approach that values both theory-driven and phenomenon-driven research in advancing management scholarship.*

**Keywords:** *general methods; research design; phenomenon-based research*

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McNamara and Schleicher (2024) recently identified four main paths to make valuable contributions at the *Journal of Management (JOM)*: a theoretical insights path, a phenomenon-driven path, a research methodology path, and a review paper path. This editorial aims to explain *JOM*'s suggestions regarding phenomenon-based research and shed light on specific opportunities and challenges associated with such research.

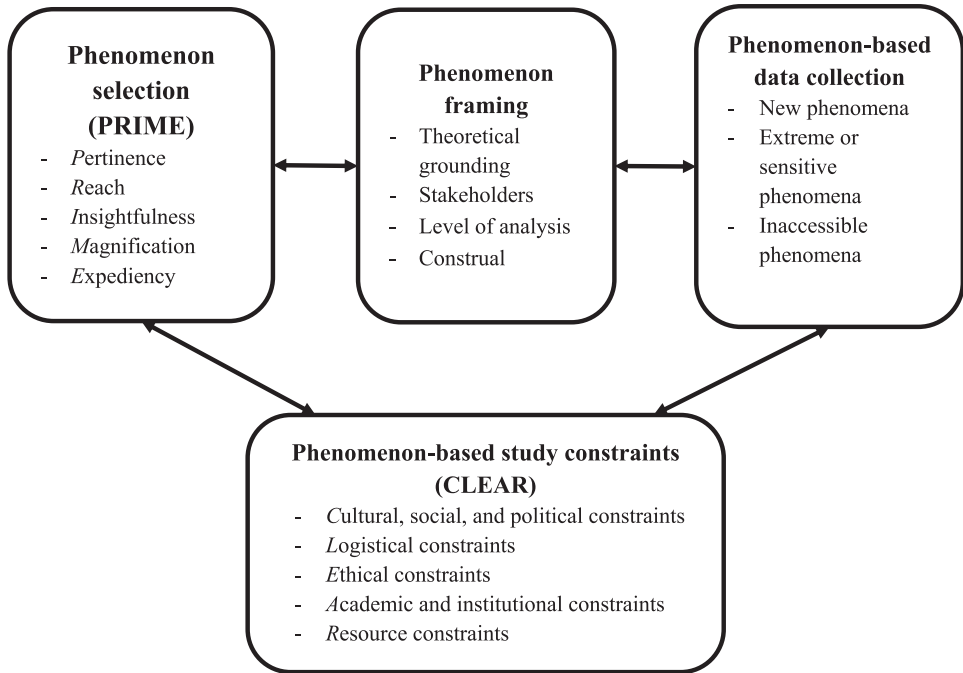
"Phenomena" broadly refer to facts or events in nature or society (Oxford University Dictionary). Phenomenon-based research, then, aims to identify, capture, document, and conceptualize a specific phenomenon in order to facilitate the creation and advancement of knowledge. Unlike traditional research approaches—where making a novel and significant theoretical contribution often takes precedence—phenomenon-based research prioritizes achieving a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon itself. It involves recognizing and understanding a real-world phenomenon and then identifying or proposing a theory that can fully capture its inherent complexity (Doh, 2015; Schwarz & Stensaker, 2014; Van de Ven, 2016; von Krogh, Rossi-Lamastra, & Haefliger, 2012) by transcending artificial distinctions such as disciplinary silos or the micro-macro divide.

Importantly, while *JOM* does not require a novel and significant theoretical contribution per se (i.e., the explicit building or extension of theory), this type of research should not be "theory-free" (McNamara & Schleicher, 2024) or, as Schwarz and Stensaker (2014: 488) remind us, phenomenon-based research "should not be misinterpreted as atheoretical." Indeed, phenomenon-based research must still be grounded in theory by applying established theory from management or an adjacent field. This approach thus positions the phenomenon itself as the primary source of insight and knowledge, and theory as a tool to facilitate the understanding of the phenomenon, rather than the other way around.

Phenomenon-based research in management research is valuable because it generates insights highly relevant to real-world organizational challenges by uncovering the nuanced, context-dependent mechanisms underlying complex phenomena. Additionally, this approach can better inform how organizational practices adapt to changing business environments by encouraging interdisciplinary perspectives. As such, phenomenon-based research can stimulate and extend the development of new frameworks, perspectives, and theories, and shed light on other related phenomena. Scholars have emphasized the importance of advancing knowledge and addressing real-world problems, advocating for the reporting of rich details about interesting phenomena and the generation of facts to inform theory development (Fisher, Mayer, & Morris, 2021; Graebner, Knott, Lieberman, & Mitchell, 2023; Hambrick, 2007). Phenomenon-based research holds promise in advancing our understanding of new and existing managerial issues and addressing practical challenges. While such research offers promising opportunities, it also comes with challenges and limitations. It requires clear definitions of key concepts, considerations of boundary conditions, and a focus on specific aspects of the phenomenon to develop meaningful contributions (Ployhart & Bartunek, 2019).

For several decades now, leading management journals have advocated for more studies that delve deeply into specific phenomena, emphasizing the unique opportunities and insights that such research can provide, especially when compared to theory-driven research. In a *JOM* editorial, Daniel Feldman (2004: 566) made an assertion that resonates to this day: "There should be room in our field for both theory-driven and phenomenon-driven research." Since then, most other top management journals have run similar calls to recognize the importance of phenomenon-based research (e.g., Dencker, Gruber, Miller, Rouse, & von

**Figure 1**  
**A Multistep Framework for Phenomenon-Based Research**



Krogh, 2023; Hambrick, 2007 in *Academy of Management Journal*; Fisher et al., 2021; Ployhart & Bartunek, 2019 in *Academy of Management Review*; Buckley, Doh, & Benischke, 2017 in *Journal of International Business Studies*; Graebner et al., 2023 in *Strategic Management Journal*).

However, despite this growing interest in phenomenon-based research, there is little guidance on *how* to effectively pursue and leverage this approach. As summarized in Figure 1, we propose a multistep framework for tackling phenomenon-based research and organize our discussion on (1) phenomenon selection, (2) phenomenon framing, (3) phenomenon-based data collection, and (4) phenomenon-based study constraints.

### Phenomenon Selection

This section aims to offer guidance to management scholars on identifying relevant phenomena for research. The selection of a phenomenon of interest is a pivotal decision in conducting phenomenon-based research that will profoundly influence the advancement of management knowledge and its implications for stakeholders. As Alvesson and Sandberg (2024) observe, phenomena are rarely “off-the-shelf,” but are often indeterminate, ambiguous, and constructed through the research process itself. The characteristics of a phenomenon are significantly shaped by scholars’ theoretical frameworks, ontological stances, and the very practices used to investigate them.

Because *JOM* is a “big tent” journal welcoming works from all subfields of management (Devers, 2024: 7), an overarching criterion for phenomenon selection is whether the research can contribute to an in-depth understanding of organizational issues at any level of analysis. As management scholars, we possess a unique advantage in generating research insights that can benefit a variety of stakeholders, ranging from students and alumni to industry partners and policy makers. We argue that expanding the scope of research to include a broader range of phenomena can offer a more comprehensive understanding of organizational practices, inform decision-making, and promote positive societal impact.

We specifically identify five key criteria—Pertinence, Reach, Insightfulness, Magnification, and Expediency (under the acronym PRIME)—that management scholars can consider in selecting a phenomenon. It is important to note that while we provide a list of criteria, we recognize that it may not encompass all possible considerations for phenomenon selection. We also acknowledge that a phenomenon does not necessarily need to meet all of the criteria in order to be worthy of consideration.

### *Pertinence*

The first selection criterion is that phenomena carrying significant potential to shed novel and meaningful light on organizational issues should take priority in research. The pertinence of a phenomenon refers to its relevance and significance in informing, enhancing, or challenging current management theories and practices. Pertinent phenomena are those that may provide insights that can improve managerial effectiveness, uncover new management challenges, or expand existing management frameworks. For instance, the rise of the gig economy, characterized by the prevalence of temporary and flexible work arrangements, is highly pertinent for management research. Studying this phenomenon can yield critical insights to inform, enhance, and challenge current management theories and practices related to workforce management, organizational structures, human resource policies, creativity and innovation, and digital transformation—all crucial issues in the evolving world of work.

### *Reach*

The second criterion is the breadth of impact of a phenomenon. Scholars should consider the far-reaching social, economic, political, technological, and/or environmental implications of the phenomenon. The scope of potential impact includes its magnitude and reach in terms of the number of actors and stakeholders affected (not just academics). The broader the implications across stakeholders, industries, and countries, the more valuable the study becomes in terms of generating practical insights. For example, the global proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies exhibits high reach, as it has far-reaching social, economic, political, technological, and environmental implications that span a wide range of stakeholders, industries, and countries. Studying the phenomenon of AI can yield valuable insights on various organizational issues, from workforce transformation and economic competitiveness to regulatory frameworks and various kinds of sustainability.

### *Insightfulness*

The third criterion is the potential of a phenomenon to address neglected or emerging management research areas. By focusing on these phenomena, scholars can contribute to a

more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the field. For example, the experiences and management of disabled workers represent a neglected phenomenon that could prove highly insightful for management theory and practices. Despite the global prevalence of disability, accounting for 15% of the world's population, there is a relative dearth of research on the challenges, accommodations, and management practices related to this underrepresented group of workers. Studying topics such as workplace accessibility, disability disclosure, and career development for individuals with a disability can contribute to filling this understudied area and enhance our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the organizational context.

### *Magnification*

The fourth criterion is the revelatory and inspirational nature of the phenomenon and the unique and generative insights it can provide. This approach can stimulate “new ways of seeing” in management research (as discussed extensively by management scholars) and highlight anomalies that existing theories fail to explain. One phenomenon with a high magnifying potential for management research is the study of organizational responses to extreme events (Hällgren, Rouleau, & de Rond, 2018), such as natural disasters. These high-stake situations expose organizations to intense pressures, uncertainties, and complexities, and they serve as a revelatory lens to uncover unique insights that can challenge, prune, and expand existing management theories, be fertile ground for applications of existing theory in new contexts, and inspire new theory building. By analyzing how organizations prepare for, respond to, and recover or even thrive from natural disasters, scholars can gain a more in-depth understanding of resilience capabilities, leadership, organizational communication, human resource practices, and stakeholder management during crisis situations, ultimately contributing to the development of more robust frameworks for managing in high-stake environments.

### *Expediency*

The final criterion is the timeliness, urgency, and pressing nature of the phenomenon of interest. Scholars may prioritize phenomena that demand immediate attention due to their societal importance, novelty, or potential for rapid transformation. Sudden events like the COVID-19 pandemic or emerging technologies that rapidly change organizations and ways of working and organizing on a global scale (e.g., AI, blockchains) may warrant immediate research attention due to their unprecedented impacts and the need for swift managerial action or policy interventions.

By proposing the PRIME criteria, we hope to allow management scholars to better identify and select phenomena that are not only intrinsically important and interesting but also offer the potential to generate valuable, impactful, and timely insights for both academics and practitioners. Yet, after selecting a phenomenon of interest, scholars need to decide how to frame it.

## **Phenomenon Framing**

Framing a phenomenon in management terms involves choosing an entry point and comprehensively analyzing and interpreting a particular event or concept in relation to

management theories, principles, and practices. This entails several key steps. First, one must clearly define the phenomenon, highlighting its nature, characteristics, and specific features. Next, one can identify relevant management concepts or perspectives based on their applicability to the phenomenon under investigation. Then, one can break down the phenomenon into its constituent parts, allowing one to examine how each element aligns with or extends the chosen management perspective.

We propose four specific means of framing a phenomenon of choice—theoretical grounding, stakeholders, level of analysis, and construal.

### *Theoretical Grounding*

Theoretical grounding is a critical element for contributing to *JOM* through the phenomenon-based approach (McNamara & Schleicher, 2024). Existing theories provide a solid foundation and framework for interpreting and making sense of the observed phenomenon as they guide the investigation of what is to be analyzed. They help the researcher position their work within the broader body of knowledge and academic discourse. The key is then for scholars to use relevant theories as a lens or framework to explore, position, and interpret their phenomenon of interest. This theoretical foundation is essential, as it allows the researcher to move beyond mere description of some observations. The theoretical grounding provides the conceptual scaffolding upon which phenomenon-based research can build and advance the field's understanding in a rigorous and impactful way. For instance, AI can be analyzed through the lens of various theoretical frameworks, such as social cognitive theory to understand human–AI interactions, organizational learning theory to examine how AI systems are integrated into organizations, or innovation diffusion theory to explore the adoption and impact of AI technologies, thereby allowing the scholar to choose what they consider the most appropriate or interesting conceptual angle to provide the necessary theoretical grounding for rigorous and impactful phenomenon-based research on the organizational implications of AI.

### *Stakeholders*

It is important to consider different stakeholders through which the phenomenon of interest can be analyzed, as each stakeholder brings unique perspectives and interests. For instance, in the context of war, private military companies (PMCs) serve as a specific stakeholder group with distinct roles, interests, and influences. Analyzing the phenomenon of war through the viewpoint of PMCs—compared with other stakeholders, such as governments and official military, civilians, media, or NGOs—is likely to reveal their significant impact on operational strategies, resource allocation, and the dynamics of armed conflicts.

### *Level of Analysis*

Depending on the phenomenon of interest, single- or multi/cross-level analysis may be more appropriate. For instance, when examining individual innovation with the assistance of AI, a single-level analysis may focus on individual creative processes, whereas a multi/cross-level analysis could explore the influence of collective factors (e.g., interorganizational collaborations, knowledge networks, organizational support) on collective innovation and individual creative processes.

### *Construal*

The same phenomenon can be construed as either a process or an event. For instance, the implementation of a major organizational change, such as the adoption of new technology, can be analyzed as a process that entails various stages/subprocesses and strategies/actions, or as an event triggering organizational change and performance as well as stakeholder relationships. Different means of construing a phenomenon call for different theoretical and empirical approaches.

## **Phenomenon-Based Data Collection**

After selecting and framing the phenomenon of their choice, empirical scholars need to engage in data collection (we acknowledge that this process, presented here in a sequential way, is often iterative). Like theory-based research, phenomenon-based research requires rigor and transparency for data collection. Below, we focus on three types of phenomena as illustrations—new, extreme/sensitive, and inaccessible—each of which poses specific challenges to data collection. Although this typology is not exhaustive and does not necessarily cover all types of phenomena, we discuss some appropriate approaches to data collection for these three categories.

### *New Phenomena*

Completely new or emerging phenomena are exciting and intriguing to scholars. A good example is the decentralized autonomous organization (DAO). However, scholars face the challenge that there may be no established database or data source available to them. Therefore, they must collect primary data through various qualitative and/or quantitative methods such as in-depth interviews, ethnographic observations, case studies, surveys, and experiments. The goal of such efforts is to gain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics, boundaries, and implications of the new or emerging phenomenon. Meanwhile, scholars can also leverage alternative data sources such as social media, online forums, and industry reports to gather additional insights that supplement those from primary data. If possible, scholars can also consult or collaborate with domain experts and key stakeholders to access their tacit knowledge and first-hand experiences. As new or emerging phenomena evolve over time and their fundamental properties and forms change quickly, it is critical for scholars to have an open mind and be ready to adapt their data collection methods.

### *Extreme or Sensitive Phenomena*

Extreme or sensitive phenomena are often simultaneously high-risk, and of particular interest to scholars. They can help build new theories and extend, revise, or prune existing ones. Nonetheless, when studying these phenomena, scholars face methodological, ethical, and/or safety concerns regarding data collection. Managing risks thus becomes very important. Scholars need to be prepared to halt or modify data collection if, at any point, the risks outweigh the potential benefits. An example is research on the experiences of victims and survivors of human trafficking. Data from these individuals are highly sensitive and can expose them to high risk. Therefore, collecting data from such individuals requires careful

assessment of the potential risks and ethical concerns. Typically, institutional review boards (IRBs) review this kind of research very carefully, ensuring that scholars mitigate risks to participants, ensure their safety and confidentiality, and safeguard sensitive data. It is also important for scholars to develop strong rapport and trust with participants to promote open communication. In some projects, research ethics can be a significant concern when scholars observe the unfolding of extreme phenomena “live”; in such cases, besides using an interview-based approach, scholars may adopt indirect or unobtrusive methods to collect data, such as archival records or secondary data sources.

### *Inaccessible Phenomena*

Some phenomena may be limited in accessibility, making it difficult, time-consuming, and costly for scholars to collect data. Focusing on such phenomena can be of particular interest for scholars trying to contribute around what we call above “Magnification.” Investigating the organizational dynamics and cultural practices of highly secretive or closed-off organizations, for instance, such as actual deliberations and decision processes of boards of directors, is inherently challenging for scholars. These types of organizations are geographically dispersed and maintain strict access controls, limiting scholars’ ability to directly observe and collect data. To overcome these barriers, scholars may need to employ multi-site and longitudinal study designs, leveraging technology for remote data collection. Importantly, building strong relationships with members of these closed communities is critical, as it enables scholars to recruit participants and gain insights that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Employing creative sampling strategies is also key to identifying and engaging with the limited pool of potential study subjects within these secretive organizations.

In Table 1, we provide three specific illustrations of different approaches to phenomenon-based research, drawing on our personal experiences examining blockchain (Lumineau, Wang, & Schilke, 2021), the future of work (Dries, Luyckx, & Rogiers, 2024), and pay for performance (Kong, Park, & Peng, 2023).

## **Phenomenon-Based Study Constraints**

Finally, we examine the reasons why certain contexts and phenomena in management scholarship have remained relatively understudied and acknowledge the presence of various potential constraints to phenomenon-based research: (1) cultural, social, and political constraints; (2) logistical constraints; (3) ethical constraints; (4) academic and institutional constraints; and (5) resource constraints (under the acronym CLEAR). We discuss these constraints not to dissuade scholars from pursuing phenomenon-based research; rather, understanding these constraints is essential for directing research efforts toward neglected areas, and ensuring that studies are ethically conducted, logistically feasible, and methodologically rigorous. The constraints we identify here are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive, and multiple constraints may coexist for a particular phenomenon. These constraints are also likely to manifest at different stages throughout the research, in particular when selecting the phenomenon and collecting data.



**Table 1**  
**Illustrations of Different Approaches to Phenomenon-Based Research**

Phenomenon Selection	The Future of Work (Lummeau et al., 2021)	Pay for Performance (Kong et al., 2023)
<p><b>Pertinence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examines how blockchain, as a novel technological innovation, can fundamentally change the way collaborations are organized and governed, which has significant implications for management and organizational studies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies blockchain's potential to disrupt a wide range of industries and sectors, from finance and insurance to healthcare and supply chain management, thus affecting a diverse set of stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Insightfulness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sheds light on the social and organizational implications of blockchain technology beyond its traditional cryptocurrency applications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Magnification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shows how blockchain, as a technological innovation, can serve as a revelatory lens to uncover unique insights about how organizations can adapt to and leverage new technological capabilities in their collaborations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expediency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Captures recent developments and insights in the field of blockchain technology.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pertinence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maps and explains competing predictions about the future of work (e.g., automation) made in the media by experts.</li> <li>- Provides guidance to managers as to the confusing question of how to "read" such competing predictions—which expert is right?</li> </ul> <p><b>Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates that all predictions about the future of work are ultimately fictional and political.</li> </ul> <p><b>Insightfulness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problematizes the fact that most empirical research on the future of work studies technological trends (i.e., only one aspect of "work") in the <i>present-day</i> workplace (i.e., not that of the "future").</li> </ul> <p><b>Magnification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates empirically that competing predictions made by experts can be almost entirely explained by the disciplinary "field frames"; they are socialized into.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expediency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasizes that the future of work is a very hot topic, considering current trends in AI and robotics, with many questions about labor market implications.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pertinence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examines the puzzling incentive effect of pay for performance, as perceived by employees from a motivational perspective (stress appraisals and [dis]engagement), especially given Dahl and Pierce's (2020) recent large-sample finding about the neglected and yet important implication of such pay plans for employee mental ill-being (as a neglected or emerging phenomenon).</li> </ul> <p><b>Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shows theoretical implications for both human resource management research and organizational behavior research, thereby bridging the two subfields of management.</li> <li>- Informs organizations and leaders in various sectors and countries (given the prevalence of pay for performance practices on a global scale) about the importance of employees' perceptions of pay for performance and the role of leaders as sensegivers in implementing pay for performance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Insightfulness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stresses and shows the interactive effect of perceived pay for performance practice and leader characteristics on employee motivational processes that lead to employee task performance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Magnification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies two separate psychological processes (a novel insight); perceived pay for performance interacts with leader competence in shaping employees' challenge appraisal of pay for performance, work engagement, and task performance, and it interacts with leader warmth in shaping employees' threat appraisal of pay for performance, work withdrawal, and task performance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expediency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Addresses an important and pressing organizational issue, given the mental health challenge societies face and the prevalence of pay for performance in organizations around the world.</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Blockchain (Lumineau et al., 2021)	The Future of Work (Dries et al., 2024)	Pay for Performance (Kong et al., 2023)
<p><b>Phenomenon Framing</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical grounding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transaction cost economics</li> <li>- Literature on collaboration</li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examines blockchain governance from the perspective of different stakeholders, such as industry regulators, technology developers, and users, and reveals their unique perspectives and interests in shaping the adoption and implementation of blockchain technology.</li> <li>- Analyzes the social implications and organizational outcomes of blockchain governance for stakeholders like employees, customers, and investors and provides insights into the impact on their roles, relationships, and decision-making processes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Level of analysis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finds that cross-level analysis of blockchain governance can explore the interorganizational collaborations, industry-wide standards, and regulatory frameworks that influence the adoption and diffusion of blockchain technology across multiple organizations and sectors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Constraint:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Argues that studying blockchain governance as a process enables researchers to analyze the stages involved in the implementation, adoption, and evolution of blockchain technology within organizations and industries.</li> <li>- Suggests, alternatively, that studying blockchain governance as a specific event could also allow for an examination of the immediate impact and outcomes, such as changes in transaction costs, trust, and transparency, of the deployment of blockchain technology in real-world applications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Phenomenon-Based Data Collection</b></p> <p>Conceptual analysis with the use of examples.</p>	<p><b>Theoretical grounding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Framing contexts</li> <li>- Field frames</li> <li>- Narrative subscription</li> <li>- Correspondive mechanisms</li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explicitly takes a multi-stakeholder approach in analyzing the news media and survey findings. Finds that the dominant stakeholders making predictions about the future of work are tech entrepreneurs, journalists/authors, and economy professors.</li> <li>- Advocates for a more democratic debate that also includes HR people, workers and union representatives, and policy makers and government officials.</li> </ul> <p><b>Level of analysis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uses mixed-method analyses at the level of both competing narratives and individuals in each category of stakeholder (i.e., experts), aggregated into categories that can be understood through the theory of field frames.</li> </ul> <p><b>Constraint:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contrasts the paradigm of predicting the future to the paradigm of imagining.</li> <li>- Argues that, as the phenomenon under study (the future of work) is inherently future-focused, temporality plays a major role in the theoretical underpinning (i.e., foresight, prospective theorizing).</li> <li>- Describes the empirical data points themselves as a snapshot—potentially for future historians to look back at—of how experts saw the future of work in 2024.</li> </ul> <p>Analysis of 485 print media articles from the last 5 years (Study 1); multi-stakeholder survey of 570 experts (Study 2).</p>	<p><b>Theoretical grounding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transactional theory of stress</li> <li>- Role engagement theory</li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focuses mostly on employees and their respective supervisors (direct leaders) in its research design.</li> <li>- Generates implications for a range of stakeholders that advocate for, design, and implement pay for performance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Level of analysis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides individual-level analysis of employees' reactions to perceived pay for performance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Constraint:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasizes the value of studying employee perception of pay for performance as a more proximate determinant of employee motivational responses and performance.</li> <li>- Focuses on employees' motivational responses to perceived pay for performance as a two-step process (stress appraisal and work (dis)engagement), inspired by recent research on pay for performance and employee mental health.</li> <li>- Presents a dual-path model that captures the complex psychological processes: perceived pay for performance interacts with leader competence in shaping employees' challenge appraisal of pay for performance, work engagement, and task performance, and it interacts with leader warmth in shaping employees' threat appraisal of pay for performance, work withdrawal, and task performance.</li> </ul> <p>Two multi-wave, multi-source survey studies for primary data collection (coupled with a supplementary experiment and supplementary analyses of survey data).</p>

### *Cultural, Social, and Political Constraints*

Scholars may face sociocultural constraints, particularly when studying certain socioculturally sensitive or controversial phenomena. For instance, conducting research on gender inequality in conservative societies may face sociocultural barriers due to societal taboos around discussing sensitive gender-related issues or potential backlash against scholars challenging traditional norms. This makes it important for scholars to consider the generalizability of study results across societies or contexts. Political interference or censorship may also limit the scope of research in countries with restricted academic freedom, impacting the ability of scholars to investigate politically sensitive topics, such as corruption or human rights abuses (Lumineau & Wurtz, 2024). It is crucial to exercise caution and restraint when framing management phenomena, avoiding the temptation to pursue increasingly extreme or sensationalized contexts solely for the sake of novelty or attention seeking. To mitigate the impact of these constraints, we encourage scholars to build trust and rapport with local stakeholders, and consider collaborating with in-country partners who can provide valuable cultural insights and help navigate the sociopolitical landscape.

### *Logistical Constraints*

Scholars may encounter logistical challenges when investigating understudied or infrequent phenomena. For instance, scholars examining the management of disaster response efforts may face significant logistical challenges. Sudden natural disasters that disrupt infrastructure can make it difficult to access affected areas and collect timely data. The infrequent and unpredictable nature of these events further compounds the hurdles, as scholars must deploy rapidly with limited advance planning. Securing permits, arranging accommodation, and coordinating with authorities amid a crisis pose substantial barriers to studying disaster response management. Overcoming these constraints requires meticulous pre-planning, strategic partnerships, and flexibility in research design and execution. When facing logistical constraints, scholars should establish partnerships with local organizations and authorities to facilitate access and coordinate logistics in advance, where possible. They may also need to consider innovative data collection methods, such as utilizing remote sensing technologies or crowdsourcing, to overcome physical access challenges.

### *Ethical Constraints*

Ethical considerations can play a significant role in limiting the study of certain phenomena. Scholars must navigate and comply with ethical guidelines and obtain necessary approvals when studying sensitive or controversial topics—such as ideological or cultural wars—to ensure the protection of participants and the ethical conduct of research. Additionally, ethical barriers can arise when research topics involve controversial or morally sensitive issues that scholars or research participants may perceive as objectionable or unethical and may thus be reluctant to explore. In this case, scholars should engage in extensive stakeholder consultation and ethical review processes to identify and address potential ethical concerns proactively.

### *Academic and Institutional Constraints*

The academic environment, including publication bias and the dominance of traditional research paradigms, can contribute to a lack of study of certain contexts and phenomena. For example, academic journals may prioritize research on well-established topics or with statistically significant results, discouraging scholars from examining certain less-explored or more complex areas. It is our hope that *JOM*'s efforts to encourage phenomenon-based research, which enhances the understanding of important organizational phenomena without necessarily requiring novel and significant theory building, help mitigate some of these constraints.

### *Resource Constraints*

Resource constraints, including limited access to financial resources and data, can hinder the exploration of certain phenomena. For instance, scholars may struggle to secure funding for projects that investigate the impact of informal economies on local communities due to a lack of immediate practical applications or perceived relevance to funding agencies. Additionally, accessing reliable data from certain contexts, such as conflict zones or remote regions, can be challenging due to limited infrastructure or the sensitivity of the information. This lack of resources may discourage scholars from venturing into certain topic areas, thus contributing to their underrepresentation in the literature. Scholars can explore collaborative partnerships with local organizations or community groups to leverage their knowledge, resources, and access to data, potentially reducing costs and improving data quality. Additionally, utilizing open-source tools and datasets, as well as seeking alternative funding sources such as crowdfunding or smaller grants from non-traditional sources, can help overcome financial barriers and expand research possibilities in underrepresented areas.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this editorial aims to encourage submissions to *JOM* that explore a wide range of phenomena related to management. By specifying the critical considerations and constraints for phenomenon-based research, we want scholars to embrace and develop an in-depth understanding of a broad spectrum of phenomena related to management. We encourage scholars to use their imagination, generate insights, creatively use existing theories, and build, prune, or extend theories. *JOM* thus aims to strengthen its position as one of the central fora for phenomenon-based research in the field of management.

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