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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As digital technologies become increasingly embedded within organizational processes, understanding how CEOs and top management teams (TMTs) strategize and leverage digitization for product innovation and firm internationalization has emerged as an important frontier for management research. At a broader societal level, examining how city-level digitization influences corporate environmental investment, and how e-government resources shape citizens' intentions to engage in e-participation, also presents promising avenues for scholarly inquiry. The articles in this issue collectively contribute to advancing these conversations.

The first set of studies focuses on the strategic role of digitization within firms. Zong, Wang, Lin, and Huang (2026) surveyed 178 machine-building firms in China and demonstrated that CEOs with higher cognitive flexibility achieve superior digital product innovation outcomes. This effect operates through enhanced information acquisition and processing, and is amplified when CEOs engage more extensively in boundary-spanning activities and when firms possess stronger social capital. Complementing this work, Chen and Huang (2026) conducted in-depth case studies of six small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Taiwan. Their findings reveal that SMEs prioritize digital investments in primary and downstream activities to improve foreign market delivery, responsiveness, trust, and visibility, while digital upgrades in support functions primarily facilitate internal coordination and subsidiary replication. The authors identify three mechanisms – inter-firm value enhancement, inter-firm relationship enhancement, and intra-firm management enhancement – that explain how activity-specific digital capabilities support SMEs' international expansion. Additionally, survey evidence from exporting SMEs in China shows that exploitative learning is positively associated with overseas business ties, whereas exploratory learning is positively associated with overseas ethnic ties (Li, Yuan, & Huang, 2026).

The second group of studies examines digitization at the city and societal levels. Using longitudinal data from 2,358 Chinese listed firms in environmentally sensitive industries, Jiang, Zhang, and Zhou (2026) find that city-level digitization is positively related to corporate environmental investment. This relationship is stronger in regions with higher environmental regulatory or social salience, and among firms with greater state ownership or higher TMT ownership. In the article for the special issue on Chinese technology ventures in the digital era, the authors (Peng, Wang, Jiang, Wang, Li, & Peng, 2025) report a meta-analysis of 126 empirical studies that reveal a positive association between e-government resources and citizen e-participation, and moreover, the strength of this relationship varies depending on whether the delivery channel is social or official, whether the target is specific or public affairs, and whether the context is a developing or developed country.

Importantly, the editorial essay for the special issue (Wei, Wei, & Kellermanns, 2026) addresses three distinctive challenges in the digital era: new approaches to strategic leadership, decision-making processes, and governance. The authors start by describing the evolution of the innovation of Chinese firms over the past five decades, highlighting the interplay between technological development and government policy in driving the emergence and growth of Chinese technology ventures. They then identify how key characteristics of the digital era affect Chinese technology ventures on these three challenges by examining the organizational dynamics shaped by technology and state involvement. They conclude by proposing avenues for future research that underscore the critical importance of understanding strategic leadership, decision-making, and governance as an integrated system within the evolving digital landscape.

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Finally, the article by Li and Liu (2006) addresses a classic yet enduring challenge for top managers: interpreting evolving policy signals and crafting strategic organizational responses. Through a longitudinal narrative case study of a privately owned firm in China, the authors develop a holistic process model that elucidates the temporal dynamics of managerial sensemaking.

I hope you find this issue of *MOR* both insightful and thought-provoking.



Xiao-Ping Chen, Editor of *MOR*

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