

WELCOME TO THE *ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT DISCOVERIES* (AMD)

We hope you will find that *AMD* contains interesting and important empirical research about poorly-understood phenomena that advances our understanding of management and organizations. In this inaugural issue we would like to introduce you to *AMD*'s mission of publishing discoveries and what that means. We will discuss how claims about phenomena may be empirically grounded in ways that make those discoveries interesting and important for advancing future research on management and organizations. We will also discuss *AMD*'s editorial policies and strategies for achieving our mission. Finally, we will conclude by suggesting how *AMD* can contribute to building our community of management scholars by inviting you, our readers, to submit, review, and comment on articles for *AMD*.

THE MISSION OF *AMD*

The mission of *Academy of Management Discoveries* is to publish new empirical research that strengthens our understanding of substantively important yet poorly understood phenomena concerning management and organizations. *AMD* welcomes phenomenon-driven research that employs quantitative and/or qualitative methods at any level of analysis (e.g., individuals, groups, organizations, industries, societies). *AMD* publishes articles that present strong and persuasive evidence, and provides readers clear and timely implications for understanding and improving management and organizations.

AMD is a member of the family of journals from the Academy of Management (AOM). As such, we view the *AMD* mission as distinct from, but complementary with other AOM publications. *AMD* focuses on reporting novel findings or unusual empirical patterns that are not adequately explained with current theories. This in turn inspires future theory-building and testing. In other words, we view *AMD*'s niche as a source journal that publishes nascent or “pre-theoretical” empirical knowledge that scholars can use as a basis for subsequent theory development and testing in other journals. Similar to other AOM journals, *AMD* applies stringent requirements (of logical reasoning, acknowledgment of relevant literature, technical adequacy, and readability), but the requirement for a “contribution to theory” is replaced with this test: “*Does the paper have a high likelihood of stimulating future research that will substantially alter*

managerial theory and/or practice?” (Hambrick, 2007: 1350).

AMD is a “big tent” journal inviting discoveries from all management areas and AOM divisions. *AMD* seeks to have an inclusive spirit—open to a variety of empirical methods without prejudice tied to particular disciplines, levels of analysis, or national contexts, and to be a playful, inquisitive, innovative journal—driven to discover!

This includes being receptive to different philosophies of science, ranging from positivism (which sharply distinguishes facts or data from theory) to relativism (which emphasizes that all data have a theory component and reflect underlying biases). Whatever one's philosophy of science, *AMD* invites empirical papers that employ state-of-the-art methods of inquiry.

DISCOVERIES

This openness to all forms of inquiry begins with a broad definition of discoveries as referring to something that is recognized to exist in the natural or social world, but that had not been seen or noticed before. Seldom are discoveries stumbled upon as though they existed independent of our mental imaginations. We do not view the world with a blank slate. Instead we view reality with our heads filled with specific theoretical expectations or perspectives that were gained from prior learning experiences. Thus, instead of thinking of knowledge creation or revision as being analogous to drafting on a clean sheet of paper, it is more helpful to think of it as the process of erasing, inserting, revising, and reconnecting ideas scattered on many papers in our heads that are scribbled full of experiences, insights, and musings of our own and others (Van de Ven, 2007).

As the American pragmatist, Charles Peirce (1955) and the philosopher of science, Norman Hanson (1958) argued, theory building follows an abductive (neither deductive nor inductive) form of reasoning. This form of reasoning begins when data call attention to some surprising anomaly, problem or unexpected phenomenon. This anomaly may originate in the practical world of affairs, a theoretical discipline, or a personal experience. It may be perceived to represent an unsatisfying circumstance, a promising opportunity, a breakdown in expected arrangements, or simply a phenomenon not encountered or adequately addressed before.

Grounding the Discovery

However one construes a discovery, *AMD* has the potential to address common difficulties in grounding, diagnosing, and resolving anomalies. Grounding a discovery is often rushed or taken for granted. As a result, important dimensions of a discovery are not adequately understood, and opportunities to advance knowledge are missed. Too many social science studies suffer from elaborating theories that are based on an insufficient diagnosis of the phenomenon, its context, and what is known about it. As a consequence, discoveries tend to be grounded in myths and superstitions.

Merton points out that often times in science as in everyday life, “explanations are provided of matters that are not and never were” (Merton, 1987: 21). In legal proceedings, establishing the case is mandatory for pursuing it. Merton cautioned that an important first element in the practice of science is *establishing the phenomenon*. Evidence and arguments should clearly indicate that the phenomenon in its context has enough importance or regularity to require explanation. In this way pseudo facts that induce pseudo problems are avoided.

Another common difficulty is that even when phenomena are grounded in reality and the literature, their diagnoses may not be worth our time because important advances in understanding the organizational world are not likely to result. You may ask, how do we know what unexpected findings are interesting and important? Louis Pasteur and Murray Davis gave us some clues for answering this question.

Pasteur stated, “Chance favors the prepared mind.” The scholars who know the literature about the phenomena deeply and broadly are more likely to identify and distinguish the wheat from the chaff. For example, we may enjoy seeing birds alight on our bird feeders, but will not likely recognize a new bird because we are not trained ornithologists. The kind of discoveries that we want to publish in *AMD* should reflect a prepared mind, not only with the particulars of the phenomenon in its indigenous context, but also a deep appreciation of the existing body of knowledge in the literature that does NOT adequately explain the anomaly. By definition, an anomaly is not a discovery if it is adequately explained.

Related to the above, Murray Davis (1971) points out that what is interesting and important is found in the assumptions of the listeners in the audience, not the speaker. Findings that tweak the assumptions of the audience are interesting. Those that turn assumptions upside down are dismissed as lunatic quacks, and those that are completely consistent

are boring. So the message to *AMD* authors is come to know your audience well!

Thus, not all discoveries are important, merit further investigation, or publication in *AMD*. Many are trivial, not interesting, or not important for advancing science. It is only those poorly-understood discoveries that have interesting and important implications for changing management theory or practice that we seek to publish in *AMD*.

This also applies to *AMD* being open to replication studies. Replication studies provide a formalized way to detect anomalies by systematically investigating whether data in similar contexts and circumstances conform to a prior study. If the findings confirm what we expect then we gain confidence in the robustness of the findings. But seldom do replication studies precisely replicate the initial study findings. It is the findings that do not replicate that provide the anomaly or puzzle that motivates us to come up with the germ of an idea that may develop into a new theory. *AMD* seeks to publish replication studies with findings that have interesting and important implications for advancing management and organization knowledge.

AMD Strategies

To achieve *AMD*'s mission, we are developing four strategies related to *AMD*'s image, authors, readers, and electronic media.

In terms of image, ***AMD seeks to be an exciting source journal for all kinds of interesting and important empirical studies that focus on managerial phenomena that are poorly understood.*** As a source journal, *AMD* seeks to provide empirical information and new ideas about managerial phenomena that can be used to stimulate subsequent theory building papers and hypothesis-testing research that can be submitted to and published in the other journals of the Academy of Management. *AMD* encourages submissions about poorly-understood phenomena that are at the pre-theory or nascent stage of knowledge development (e.g., phenomenon-driven empirical discoveries that do not necessarily conform to existing understandings or theories about the phenomena) and not on the down-stream stage of hypothesis testing and filling theoretical gaps. As stated before, *AMD* is a “big tent” journal open to discoveries from all areas and divisions of management without prejudice to any particular philosophies, disciplines, qualitative or quantitative methods, and levels of analysis. In terms of style, we want *AMD* to be a playful, inquisitive, innovative journal-driven to discover!

*AMD seeks to be **author-driven*** in the sense that it seeks to review manuscripts in a way that preserves the author's voice. We encourage developmental editing and reviewing but without overstepping our role as reviewers and editors by imposing our agenda or preferred perspective. We request reviewers to provide concise, specific, constructive reviews of the core issues in a paper (typically two pages or less). We also seek to minimize the number of "revise and re-submit" steps and will strive, whenever possible, to make final acceptance decisions after only one revision.

*AMD also seeks to be **consumer/reader-driven*** in the way we present content and communications. We encourage authors to illustrate and bring their discoveries to readers in clear and exciting ways. We also encourage authors to provide access to some or all of their data and analytic procedures so that readers can re-examine the data to determine if they arrive at similar conclusions. If readers' interpretations of findings are substantially different from the authors', they may be invited to submit their commentaries on the *AMD* papers in question. In addition, readers are invited to submit a Dialogue piece to comment on papers and suggest alternative further ways to study discoveries. In these ways, we hope that *AMD* can help resurrect the traditional notion that social science represents the informed dialectical interactions among the community of social scientists (Giere, 1988).

Finally, *AMD is adopting an **electronic media strategy*** that provides meaningful and important electronic supplements to the articles we publish. Our media strategy focuses not only on using electronic media to illustrate and engage readers in the content of papers, but also on using electronic media to make substantive contributions to scientific knowledge. *AMD's* media strategy consists of three levels of intersection between scholarship and digital technologies, moving from using digital media for basic engagement in scholarly conversations to more sophisticated forms of evidence and experience.

1. At the *Engagement level*, publications could include video abstracts that supplement text abstracts. They also include hyperlinks to interview excerpts, video clips, pictures, digital data, text references, etc. that illustrate substantive content. A Dialogue section enables interaction among readers and authors.
2. At the *Evidence level*, digital technologies may enable authors to make better arguments as they present data and analyses (e.g., dynamic modeling and audiovisual recordings) of the sort that cannot occur within print journals.

3. At the *Experience level*, new forms of scholarship are possible (e.g., documentaries and creative projects), which entail new ways of showing and knowing that are common in other fields but would be new to the field of management.

Authors are responsible for creating and submitting all content in any form of media they choose to submit. AOM will provide guidance to authors in creating digital content for the evidence and experience levels of the media strategy. To date, all *AMD* submissions have been in the print medium, and authors of accepted papers have been encouraged to supplement their print papers with engagement-level media enhancements. Production of these electronic enhancements is undertaken, of course, with the voluntary informed consent of the authors and subjects.

In order to achieve the evidence and experience levels of *AMD's* media strategy, we encourage submissions from scholars whose work is especially suited to online publication, such as work that uses dynamic modeling or video ethnography. Members of the *AMD* media team will assist authors in preparing their submissions.

AMD ARTICLE FORMAT

The *AMD* website provides information for contributors to prepare and submit their papers to *AMD*. We are frequently asked about the most desirable format for an *AMD* paper. Although we hesitate to suggest a cookie-cutter template, the foregoing discussion of the *AMD* mission and strategies does imply a paper format with a shorter beginning and a longer ending than papers in other management journals.

Specifically, the shorter front end might entail:

- Grounding the topic or issue with careful description and diagnosis of the phenomenon, and positioning the paper within the conversation or literature to which it contributes.
- Justifying the inquiry—What is the problem, missing link, or anomaly? What don't we know that we should? And why is this important?
- Replacing hypotheses with research questions and/or general hunches.

In turn, the longer back end might focus on:

- Theoretical implications for a number of different theories, rather than just one or two. Emphasis should be placed on the possible meaning of the findings for those theories, and also how those theories could be used in future research related to the findings.

- Practical implications that are rich and truly meaningful.
- Detailed ideas for future research.

CONCLUDING INVITATIONS

In conclusion, your help is needed in three specific ways to launch *AMD*:

1. Submit your discoveries to *AMD*.
 - See [Information for Contributors](#).
 - [Contact us](#) with any questions.
2. Help us return to the initial model of reviewing papers.
 - Let the authors' voices be heard!
 - Focus reviews on major points without attempting to rewrite the paper.
3. Express your consumer/reader preferences.
 - Suggest discoveries you want to read about.
 - Participate in Dialogue which provides electronic forum on reader views and comments.

Thank you for your help and support in launching this exciting new journal!

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