Editorial

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Artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally altered the way we live and think. It has profound implications for the very frameworks through which we theorise and understand the world. In this editorial, I aim to examine both the potential benefits of AI for comparative management research and the pitfalls that accompany its uncritical use.

AI has revolutionised both our access and approach to information. It has aided literature search, and now we are able to synthesise an astounding amount of information documented in different media and languages. As a result, we can develop more thorough and relevant research questions. I have observed this in the most recent papers I have been asked to review. Today's authors are formulating more robust research questions and utilising innovative analysis that expand the boundaries of traditional inquiry.

That said, it is difficult to know the type of data the AI model has been trained on, and the assumptions that govern its algorithm. This can give rise to a sense of intellectual certainty among its users that is unwarranted. In other words, the skewness in the database can lead us astray, as the data AI uses to answer our queries may not truly represent the most inclusive knowledge base. In addition, we must be cognizant of the fact that most available data tend to be generated in the West. Despite the theoretical universality of the phenomenon under study, the empirical base may be lopsided and give us a partial or even a false version of reality.

The assumptions governing the model may have biases of various kinds that may impact the inferences supplied to us. These have serious implications for students of comparative management – the data drawn from different comparators may not even be comparable in the strict sense of the word. The information base for one comparator could be vast, varied and robust while for the other, it may be small, skewed and fragile, making the scientific value of the comparison tentative at best. AI cannot exercise scholarly judgement on such comparisons. And without epistemological openness we cannot even be sure of the truth of our findings.

I am of the view that AI is here to stay. We as a community should explore its value and extract it intelligently to facilitate the advancement of our craft. AI can enhance the technical competence of our work, but we should exercise ethical vigilance to retain its value. Evidence-based management is one area where AI has made serious inroads. Our ability to gather relevant evidence based on rigorous research and actionable findings has increased by an order of magnitude. We can now generate and deliver practical evidence in real time for business managers to make confident decisions. AI does not change the retrospective nature of evidence-based management. However, because it helps codify existing evidence, creative destruction and subsequent innovation can proceed without fear of duplicating prior knowledge. At the end of the day, AI has challenged the way scholarship unfolds. It is forcing us to think differently about data, method, analysis, and

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evidence. Rather than replacing human agency in scholarship, AI now serves as a collaborator, offering unique capabilities that enable us to pose more insightful questions and generate deeper understanding of the worlds we choose to study.

I write my editorials with the hope of inspiring our readers to pursue research that engages with the issues I raise, so that future editions of *IJCM* may feature such work. In this issue, we present five papers that illustrate the vast and varied nature of comparisons. The first paper compares exploratory and exploitative leadership in China and documents their differential impact on organisational ambidexterity. The second paper addresses the role of choice on organisational outcomes. More specifically, it compares the impact of shift work on work attitudes and mental health between China and India. It shows that while shift work impacts both work attitudes and mental health, the role of choice in shaping those outcomes is modest. The third study uses the movie *Gung Ho* to explore how cultural differences influence the implementation of quality management practices in Japan and the USA. The fourth paper is a systematic comparison of sustainability reporting standards on six parameters that include specificity of norms, legitimacy, implementability, accountability, geographic scope and industry focus. Both commonalities and differences are presented, and their implications are discussed to enable the development of sustainability accounting frameworks worldwide. Using a neural network model and data envelopment analysis, the final paper reports on comparative efficiency evaluations of State Cooperative Banks in India. In line with the scope of *IJCM*, these papers are in different geographic regions and offer comparative intelligence on topics of interest to students of management.

I hope you enjoy these articles and find them both insightful and inspirational. May they also spark new ideas for future inquiry.

Dr. V.V. Baba

Editor-in-Chief