Editorial: Advancing management research in an era of technological transformation and sustainability

It is an honour to share editorial note of Volume 23, Issue 2 (2026) of VILAKSHAN – XIMB Journal of Management. The nine scholarly articles in this regular issue reflect the changing priorities of the current management research agenda in a variety of organizational, technological and socio-economic settings. The articles collectively address the reactions of organizations, institutions and societies to rapid technological developments, sustainability issues, capability building of organizations, financial inclusion, consumer behaviour and capital market dynamics. Although the research runs across several sectors and traditions of research methods, they all aim for the same goal: the development of knowledge for evidence-based management that is theoretically-based and practically relevant.

The modern world of business is defined by technological disruptions, the environment, evolving expectations of employees, and greater market uncertainty. Organizations are thus forced to not only strive for efficiency but also build adaptability to make sure they can remain resilient and sustainable in the long run. This issue's articles collectively show how increasingly competitiveness in the current economy relies on technological innovation, organization learning and sustainability practices and human capability development. The papers are not only about these themes, but also reflect the interconnection of the themes in organizational and societal settings.

The entire volume summary share with three parts:

Part 1

The issue begins with the ***first contribution*** an insightful ***conceptual analysis by Soumya Sarala*** on one of the most pressing challenges arising with AI in knowledge-intensive tasks. The paper proposes an innovative concept, the "apprenticeship void", which claims that AI augmentation is becoming a major driver of the loss of low-level activities that served as a form of learning for building professional competence. This study uses situated learning theory, cognitive apprenticeship theory, social cognitive theory and human capital theory. It proposes a conceptual framework for understanding the fundamental change in capability development in organizations caused by AI. The framework also points to three key implications, each highlighting the structural effects of AI-enabled work on organizational learning and future talent development: synthetic readiness, the fragility of promotion, and pipeline thinning. In addition to a novel conceptual framework, the paper raises important questions about the AI-redesign of work systems to ensure experiential learning and productivity. The work is valuable because it offers a timely theoretical basis for future empirical studies on capacity building in AI-enabled workplaces.

The ***second article focuses*** on ***sustainability blended with green human resource management in the manufacturing industry in India. Nanditha Dev and Johney Johnson*** explore the factors that affect Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and its impact on corporate sustainable performance. The study uses an innovative hybrid methodology that combines Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) to examine relationships among sustainability-oriented organizational factors, both linear and non-linear. The findings reveal that stakeholder pressure, green transformational leadership,

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green intellectual capital and green CSR are important factors that influence the adoption of GHRM, making GHRM a mediator between them and improves corporate sustainable performance. The study combines the RBV, stakeholder theory and institutional theory with advanced analytical techniques. Itproposes a framework that adds to the existing body of knowledge on sustainability-oriented organizational practices, and presents priorities for managers to implement environmentally responsible HR strategies. The combined use of SEM and ANN also provides an example of the increasing methodological sophistication of current management research.

The spirit of environmental sustainability remains as a main theme of the ***third contribution*** by ***Annet Bakunzi Iragaba, Rehema Namono, Sudi Nangali and Ibrahim Abaasi Musenze***, who look at ***the work being done on the issue of environmental sustainability in the manufacturing sector in Uganda.*** The study concentrates specifically on the importance of managerial decision-making autonomy and internal factors in the organizational context in fostering sustainable organizational behaviour. The authors show, using hierarchical regression analysis, that the role of managerial discretion is particularly important in the context of achieving the goals of resource efficiency, waste management and pollution control initiatives. The internal organization features, such as organizational culture and resources, further reinforce sustainability practices to a comparatively lesser extent. The study contributes to the ongoing debate on the managerial autonomy as a strategic tool for moving towards sustainability, going beyond technological or regulatory explanations and highlighting the role of organizational governance and leadership in environmental goals. The research results offer immediate lessons for industry players in developing economies, and are a reminder of the broader relevance of organizational capabilities to tackling sustainability issues.

Part 2

In the ***fourth article***, co-authors ***Peter Dithan Ntale, Justine Namaganda and Hassan Bashir explore how digital skills relate to the productivity of coffee cooperatives in Uganda and how action learning mediates this relationship***. Using a cross-sectional survey of 222 managing directors and correlation, regression, and mediation analyses, the study shows that digital competences positively contribute to action learning and cooperative productivity. More significantly, there is a mediating effect of action learning, suggesting that the value of digital technologies for productivity gains depends on learning processes that enable organizations to translate digital knowledge into effective organizational practice. The study adds to knowledge of capability development in resource-poor agricultural organizations and underlines the need for organizational learning mechanisms to be in place if technology is to be adopted. The results have meaningful implications for cooperative leaders interested in boosting productivity by transforming their cooperatives into digital organizations and continuing to learn within their organizations.

The ***fifth contribution*** by ***Bob Ssekiziyvu, Aaron Ecel and Rashid Kisseka*** examines the road transport industry and the concept of sustainable competitiveness through the lens of ***dynamic capabilities theory***. The study follows an exploratory qualitative approach, and interviews conducted with senior managers are analysed using the Gioia methodology. The research reveals the following critical organizational mechanisms for sustaining competitiveness in the context of volatile and resource-constrained conditions: sensing, seizing and transforming. The results show how organizations expect market shifts to affect their business, how they can adapt to the market through technology and partnerships, and how they can continually change their internal processes through learning, governance, and workforce development. The study shows that competitiveness cannot be defined in terms of comparatively static organizational resources but is instead a continuous ability to adapt to the environment. The paper thus expands the scope of dynamic capabilities theory to a new and under-researched industry and to the context of developing countries, while providing practical recommendations for managers and policymakers who wish to improve organizational resilience and long-term competitiveness.

The ***sixth article*** extends the theme of its scope to examine a relevant socio-economic challenge that transcends the boundaries of any organization. ***Vandana Upadhyay and Kanchan Devi explore the concept of labour migration and the vulnerability of women in Arunachal Pradesh by examining employment, economic, social*** and workplace insecurity from an intersectional perspective. Results from survey responses of migrants and non-migrants, a composite vulnerability index, and beta regression models indicate clear gender and religious differences, as well as significant differences in vulnerability by education and geographical location. The results show that a disproportionate share of migrants is women, who are more likely to be in informal and low-paying jobs, and that a higher education significantly lowers vulnerability. The results for each district provide other examples of how local labour market conditions shape migrants' experiences. The study brings together several aspects of vulnerability within a single analytical framework, adding valuable evidence to the body of literature on migration, social protection, and inclusive development. In addition to its empirical contributions, the paper also emphasizes the need for ongoing policy efforts, gender-specific educational programs, and institutional support systems to mitigate structural inequalities faced by migrants.

Part 3

The ***seventh one focuses*** on one of the most important developments in today's ***financial systems: the increasing*** role ***of financial technology in improving financial inclusion. Aina Rafat, Smriti Srivastava and Divya Gangwar*** explore the factors that affect the adoption of FinTech in emerging Indian markets in their paper titled "Transforming inclusion: role of Fintech in reshaping financial accessibility in emerging Indian economy" which extends the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The study adds financial literacy to the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and social influence model to provide a broader perspective on technology adoption among financially underserved populations. The results show that financial literacy is vital for facilitating meaningful access to FinTech services, and that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and social influence have a significant impact on the intention to use FinTech services. The study highlights the need to enhance financial literacy and increase users' confidence in digital financial platforms to drive financial inclusion and address inequalities. The article thus advances the growing body of literature on digital finance by showing that technological innovation can have a broader societal impact only if accompanied by an enhancement in users' capabilities and awareness.

The ***eighth article*** by ***Sujatha R., Uma Maheswari B. and Kavitha D. explores post-pandemic customer satisfaction and willingness to subscribe to over-the-top (OTT) platforms in the Indian context, within the*** rapidly changing digital service markets. The study is based on data from 200 respondents and uses structural equation modelling to examine the roles of customer engagement, facilitating conditions, social influence, and content availability in shaping customer satisfaction and willingness to pay for OTT services. The results show that there are important links between these factors and consumers' outcomes, but few links between frequency of use and willingness to subscribe. The study has managerial implications for OTT service providers seeking to develop their marketing strategies to serve customers across various demographic segments better. In addition to its immediate relevance, this article helps deepen our understanding of digital consumer behaviour by investigating how media consumption is shifting in the digital entertainment marketplace.

The ***last article*** widens the scope of this issue to the ***financial markets and entrepreneurial finance. "Beyond the listing mystique: unravelling underpricing in Indian startups' initial public offerings and its link to share performance"*** is a study ***by Aanchal Joshi*** on the performance of startups registered in India during 2021. The study shows that, despite the significant listing returns that start-up IPOs have posted due to underpricing, this advantage fades over time, as measured by listing returns, Sharpe ratio, year-to-date comparisons, and correlation analysis. The following period of poor stock performance led to a substantial loss of investor money: The study found that IPO underpricing was inversely related to long-term stock performance. The results suggest investing beyond the initial market excitement and thoroughly considering the business's fundamentals before investing. On the flip side, the article also has strong implications for practitioners and policymakers regarding the mechanisms for pricing an IPO, investor protections, and the regulatory regime for future IPOs, and contributes empirical evidence to a little-explored line of research in start-up finance in the Indian context.

All nine articles in Volume 23, Issue 2 (2026) of this journal demonstrate the diversity of research and the evolving nature of management research at present. These articles examine issues related to artificial intelligence, digital transformation, environmental sustainability, organizational capabilities, financial inclusion, labour migration, and consumer behaviour and capital market performance. The studies are located in different sectors and geographies. However, they contribute to the common aim of understanding organizations' and societies' responses to the changing technological, institutional and economic environments. One of the strengths of this issue is the variety of methodological approaches used, including conceptual development, qualitative research, cross-sectional survey research, mediation analysis, hierarchical regression, structural equation modelling, Artificial Neural Networks and the Gioia methodology. This diversity demonstrates the richness of research on contemporary management and the need to adopt appropriate methodological approaches to address complex questions in organizations and society.

This issue is also highly practical. Throughout the articles, readers will learn how to redesign AI-supported processes, reinforce green HR practices, enable managerial decision-making, integrate learning into digital transformation programs, increase dynamic capabilities, mitigate migrants' vulnerability, increase financial literacy, improve customer engagement processes, and enable informed investment decisions. All of these insights enhance management scholarship's contribution to actionable knowledge for managers, policymakers and practitioners, as well as to theory development across several fields.

We sincerely thank all authors for their valuable contributions and the reviewers and Editorial Review Board for their rigorous evaluation and commitment to maintaining the journal's academic quality and integrity. We also express our gratitude to our readers, researchers and practitioners, and hope that the papers in Volume 23, Issue 2 (2026) inspire further scholarly dialogue, research, and meaningful contributions to theory and practice.

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