

Call for Papers in *Journal of Management Scientific Reports* Special Issue: Theory Testing and Replications in Leadership Science

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The field of management has long decried the research-practitioner gap (Bartunek & Rynes, 2010) and has been criticized for its lack of policy and/or business implications (Aguinis, Jensen & Kraus, 2022). One might argue that this is appropriate given that many of our theories remain either untested or lack replication (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). Consequently, our theories lack essential elements for scientific understanding (Kraimer, Martin, Schulze & Seibert, 2023).

Unfortunately, the push for theory and novelty in the study of management (Hambrick, 2007) has come “at the expense of validating existing theories” empirically (Kraimer et al., 2023, p. 8). Theory testing and replication can advance science by providing (dis)confirmation and veracity to scientific discoveries (National Academies of Sciences & Medicine, 2019). These fundamental and largely missing aspects of management science are necessary to validate research findings, provide insights into generalizability, help identify errors, biases, and methodological flaws, advance theory, and facilitate informed practice and policy (Kraimer et al., 2023).

The science of leadership is no exception to these concerns (e.g., Banks, 2023; Banks, Gooty, Ross, Williams & Harrington, 2018; Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden & Hu, 2014; Gardner, Lowe, Meuser, Noghani, Gullifor & Cogliser, 2020; van Knippenberg & Dwertmann, 2022; Wulff et al., 2023). Although leadership scholars have advanced, and continue to generate, a vast and diverse array of theories, the utility of such theories for understanding the complex, multilevel, and reciprocal process of leadership is unclear (Fischer & Sitkin, 2023).

Scholarly confusion about leadership is due, in part, to a lack of theoretical precision (Edwards & Berry, 2010) and rigorous empirical tests of extant theories (Ford, Harding & Gilmore, 2023; Leavitt, Mitchell & Peterson, 2010). Further, leadership research is plagued by extensive conceptual and methodological issues including construct redundancy, rater disagreements, measurement issues, levels of analysis ambiguity, predominately Westernized samples, lack of attention to context, and overreliance on survey research (e.g., Banks, 2023; Banks et al., 2018; Dinh et al., 2014; Gardner et al., 2020; van Knippenberg & Dwertmann, 2022; Wulff et al., 2023).

The emphasis on novelty in leadership science has led to a plethora of new and different theories, rather than a focus on properly testing and replicating existing theories (e.g., Antonakis, 2017; Banks et al., 2018; Lemoine, Hartnell & Leroy, 2019; van Knippenberg & Dwertmann, 2022). For instance, a recent review by Fischer and Sitkin (2023) identified issues arising from the conceptual and empirical conflation of intent, behavior, quality of execution and effects for eight positive (e.g., authentic, ethical, servant, transformational) and two negative (abusive supervision and authoritarian leadership) leadership style constructs. Others have called into question whether authentic, ethical, and transformational leadership are unique theories (e.g., Lemoine et al., 2019). Because of the overreliance on survey data, perceptions have been conflated with behaviors (Banks, 2023). Thus, many measures of leadership have been argued to be redundant or simply capturing more basic underlying constructs, such as affect (e.g., Martinko, Mackey, Moss, Harvey, McAllister & Brees, 2018).

The purpose of this special issue is to “verify, refine, redirect, or question individual theories,” in leadership science, broadly defined (Kraimer et al., 2023). Specifically, we call for the evaluation of competing theories, empirical investigation of the foundational assumptions of existing theories, and examination of previously published yet untested theories or theoretical models within the leadership domain. The ultimate objective is to refine existing theories and foster a more unified understanding of leadership (Banks, 2023; Leavitt et al., 2010). Moreover, given contextual shifts in the workforce (e.g., the rise of women leaders, virtuality) and advances in methodology, leadership theories can be tested and replicated to better capture the intricacies and complexity of the leadership process, allowing a more nuanced and deeper understanding of its relationship to context, and its reciprocal and multilevel nature. Further, these advances can help disentangle issues of measurement with regard to perceptions, affect, and behavior, achieving more precise and accurate insights into leadership phenomena.

We encourage submissions that test, refine, replicate and extend existing leadership theories. We are open to a variety of methodological approaches as long as they are robust, consider levels of analyses appropriately, and adhere to open science principles adopted by *JOMSR* (see *JOMSR* Methods Checklist at <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/MSR>). Specific emphasis should be given to how the study builds or extends theory, resolves controversy, addresses past methodological weaknesses, or addresses boundary and contextual conditions. As is the mission of *JOMSR*, papers will be considered regardless of the significance of the findings and can be initially reviewed with the results “masked” (i.e., while the study is fully completed, the initial submission includes only the introduction, hypotheses, and methods, and does not include the results and discussion sections). While not an exhaustive list, and not meant to curtail submissions in other areas, the following examples highlight areas that could address this call:

- Refinement of moral approaches to leadership (Fehr, Yam & Dang, 2015; Solinger, Jansen & Cornelissen, 2020; also see Lemoine et al., 2019);
- The role of affect in leadership (Martinko et al., 2018);
- Paths forward in leader member exchange research (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels & Hall, 2017; Scandura & Meuser, 2022);

- Further testing and refinement of theoretical models such as:
 - Adaptive dynamic leadership theory (DeRue & Ashford, 2010)
 - Shared leadership schema (Wellman, 2017)
 - Intergroup leadership (Hogg, van Knippenberg & Rast, 2012);
- Reconceptualization of ethical and servant leadership (Banks, Fischer, Gooty & Stock, 2021);
- Tests to assess construct redundancy across two or more leadership styles/constructs, see for example:
 - Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, & Wu (2018) with respect to ethical, authentic, servant, and transformational leadership styles.
 - DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey (2011) with respect to trait and behavioral theories of leadership;
- Broad societal changes such as Black Lives Matters, the #metoo movement and the impact of issues like race, gender, intersectionality, culture, or more broadly, context, on our current understanding of leadership theories (e.g., Ladkin & Bridges Patrick, 2022; Oc, 2018; Shen & Joseph, 2021);
- Methodological advances, such as machine learning (e.g., Lee, Inceoglu, Hauser & Greene, 2020).

Submission Process and Timeline

To be considered for the Special Issue, all manuscripts, including those prepared with results masked, should be submitted between October 1 and December 1, 2024, **with a final deadline of December 1, 2024, midnight U.S. Eastern Time**. Submitted papers will undergo a double-blind review process and will be evaluated by at least two reviewers and a special issue editor. Final acceptance is contingent on the review team's judgments of the paper's contributions on three key dimensions:

- **Contribution to theory refinement.** Original research manuscripts should test hypotheses that are clearly grounded in existing theory. Manuscripts should clearly explain how the study either confirms, generalizes, limits, or refutes existing theory.
- **Methodological rigor.** Hypotheses tested with a rigorously designed study that balances internal and external validity will be more positively evaluated. The study design should be appropriate for testing the theory and hypotheses. Multiple studies within a single paper are not expected.
- **Implications for researchers.** The study's findings should have clear implications for future research testing the specific unit theory (i.e., specific model or hypotheses) and for advancing the programmatic theory (i.e., general knowledge of leadership research).

Authors should prepare their manuscripts for blind review according to the JOMSR's Submission Guidelines, which can be found at the following website:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/MSR>

Manuscripts can be submitted electronically at: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jomsr>

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