



Editorial

Adaptive Leadership and Engaged Scholarship

Liderança Adaptativa e Pesquisa Engajada



Paula Chimenti*¹

The most gratifying moments in the editorial process of a journal like RAC are accepting a manuscript and publishing a new issue. Accepting a new article is rewarding because, as a researcher myself, I cannot help but imagine the smile on the face of the author who, after so much effort, finally receives that long-awaited email saying, “Congratulations! Your work has been accepted for publication.”

Publishing a new issue, on the other hand, is fulfilling because it celebrates the hard work of the journal’s team. Here, I extend special thanks to Simone Rafael and Eduarda Anastacio. Each new issue crowns the efforts of the authors, associate editors, and reviewers who made its release possible.

Beyond this source of satisfaction, this set of articles has made me particularly happy because it showcases the kind of research RAC aims to publish. These are engaged articles that tackle the broad dilemmas of contemporary times while maintaining scientific rigor in seeking solutions. They advance theorization and provide a comprehensive understanding of issues and solutions based on specific cases. They are versatile in terms of formats and structures.

We have theoretical-empirical studies, technological articles, teaching cases, and thought-provoking essays. These different formats enable connections and conversations with various segments of society, which is exactly what we seek. Why? Because, as researchers and educators, the knowledge

we acquire is not a weapon that grants us power but something to be shared for a stronger society.

Andrew Van de Ven argued that engaged scholarship seeks dialogue with key societal stakeholders to solve complex problems. In his book *Engaged Scholarship*, he critiques how academia has gradually distanced itself from the practical world, widening the theory-practice gap. This distancing, while problematic in absolute terms, becomes even more critical when considering the role that journals from developing countries should play. Should a journal based in a country like ours tolerate even a fraction of disengagement from generating results that benefit society?

It seems evident that management practitioners will not be able to untangle all their challenges alone. I believe that the mission statement of a management researcher should include an item that, in my view, is not up for debate: producing knowledge that improves the lives of practitioners and other members of society.

Ronald Heifetz, in his book *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, offers a particularly useful definition of leadership. He sees leadership as the practice of mobilizing people to confront difficult realities they would prefer to avoid. This is a practice we can engage in whether or not we hold a position of authority.

*Corresponding Author.

1. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Instituto COPPEAD de Administração, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.



I am not sure if Heifetz and Van de Ven (Heifetz, 1998; Van de Ven, 2007) ever met, but I like to imagine a conversation between these two brilliant minds. Combining their definitions, we would likely conclude that researchers must exercise leadership in fulfilling a substantive mission. They must question easy solutions and reject cookie-cutter approaches. They cannot succumb to the temptation of outsourcing to AI the uniquely human and natural capabilities that only they possess. As Amoore et al. (2024) recently argued, researchers must explore models of what the world is and what it could be, beyond the probability distributions that large language models maintain internally. Ultimately, what is at stake in management research is the reach of the natural intelligence of researchers — intelligence that is expected to generate applicable knowledge and contribute to improving the world.

This does not mean that the technical problems faced by management will not increasingly be solved with the help of AI. On the contrary, what I assert here is that we, as natural beings, are responsible for defining the objective functions that will optimize outcomes for all actors involved. As these elements continue to evolve — and will do so even more — this will always be an adaptive challenge that we must confront.

In summary, management research is, in itself, an individual adaptive challenge. It is not a technical problem and thus cannot be approached like someone searching for lost keys under a streetlight when they were actually lost far from there. Does it make sense to repeat studies of models that have already been exhaustively tested just to arrive at the same conclusions? The keys that need to be found are increasingly distant.

REFERENCES

Amoore, L., Campolo, A., Jacobsen, B., Rella, L. (2024). A world model: On the political logics of generative AI. *Political Geography*, 113, 103134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2024.103134>

Who will find them? Us or artificial entities? I would bet on us, but that will require significant adaptive leadership to transform ourselves while making the most of what artificial intelligence has to offer. What kind of leader of yourself are you? What goals do you pursue? What new methods do you compel yourself to learn? When was the last time you stepped out of your comfort zone as a researcher and ventured into uncharted waters?

I am not advocating a complete rupture with known methods. However, in a world changing at its current pace, failing to be an adaptive leader of oneself is a risky stance. If we merely wander through the familiar paths we have already traveled, I dare say we will be swallowed up by the probability distributions used by AI models. For an author, the worst thing that can happen — and this, unfortunately, already occurs — is to produce a text that seems to have been written by AI. You would be surprised to know how often I get that impression.

This issue has made me optimistic about these scenarios. The future seems to belong to researchers who can lead their own research projects adaptively — those who, from time to time, can, in the words of poet Robert Frost, declare:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

To the courageous, my solidarity and my deepest thanks!

Van de Ven, A. H. (2007). *Engaged Scholarship in a Professional School*. In *Engaged scholarship: A guide for organizational and social research* (Cap. 1). Oxford University Press.

Heifetz, R. (1998). *Leadership without easy answers*. Harvard University Press.


Authorship

Paula Chimenti*

Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Instituto COPPEAD de Administração

Rua Pascoal Lemme, 355, CEP 21941-918, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

E-mail: rac-eic@anpad.org.br

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6492-4072>

* Corresponding Author

Conflict of Interests

The author has stated that there is no conflict of interest.

Funding

The authors reported that there was no funding for the research in this article.

Plagiarism Check

RAC maintains the practice of submitting all documents approved for publication to the plagiarism check, using specific tools, e.g.: iThenticate.

Copyrights

The author retains the copyright relating to her article and grant the journal RAC, from ANPAD, the right of first publication, with the work simultaneously licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC BY 4.0).

SCIENTIFIC EDITORIAL BOARD AND EDITORIAL TEAM FOR THIS ISSUE:

Editorial Council

Emílio José Montero Arruda Filho (UNAMA, Belém, PA, Brazil; UFPA, Belém, PA, Brazil)

Gabrielle Durepos (Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada)

Rafael Alcadipani da Silveira (EAESP/FGV, São Paulo, SP, Brazil)

Patricia Guarnieri dos Santos (UnB, Brasília, DF, Brazil)

Silvia Gherardi (University of Trento, Trento, Italy)

Editor-in-chief

Paula Chimenti (UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil)

Associate Editors

Ariston Azevedo (UFRGS, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil)

Carolina Andion (UDESC, Florianópolis, SC, Brazil)

Cristiana Cerqueira Leal (Universidade do Minho, Portugal)

Denize Grzybovski (IFRS, Erechim, RS, Brazil)

Elisa Yoshie Ichikawa (UEM, Maringá, PR, Brazil)

Fernando Luiz Emerenciano Viana (Unifor, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil)

Gaylord George Candler (University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, USA)

Gustavo da Silva Motta (UFF, Niterói, RJ, Brazil)

Keysa Manuela Cunha de Mascena (Unifor, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil)

Leonardo Marques (Audencia Business School, France)

Ludmila de Vasconcelos Machado Guimarães (CEFET-MG, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil)

Marlon Dalmoro (UFRGS, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil)

Natália Rese (UFPR, Curitiba, PR, Brazil)

Orleans Silva Martins (UFPB, João Pessoa, PB, Brazil)

Tatiana Iwai (INSPER, São Paulo, SP, Brazil)

Scientific Editorial Board

André Luiz Maranhão de Souza-Leão (UFPE, Recife, CE, Brazil)

Aureliano Angel Bressan (CEPEAD/UFMG, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil)

Bryan Husted (York University, Canada)

Carlos M. Rodriguez (Delaware State University, USA)

Data Availability

RAC encourages data sharing but, in compliance with ethical principles, it does not demand the disclosure of any means of identifying research subjects, preserving the privacy of research subjects. The practice of open data is to enable the reproducibility of results, and to ensure the unrestricted transparency of the results of the published research, without requiring the identity of research subjects.

Diógenes de Souza Bido (Mackenzie, São Paulo, SP, Brazil)

Erica Piros Kovacs (Kelley School of Business/Indiana University, USA)

Elin Merethe Oftedal (University of Stavanger, Norway)

Fábio Frezatti (FEA/USP, São Paulo, SP, Brazil)

Felipe Monteiro (INSEAD Business School, USA)

Howard J. Rush (University of Brighton, United Kingdom)

James Robert Moon Junior (Georgia Institute of Technology, USA)

John L. Campbell (University of Georgia, USA)

José Afonso Mazzon (USP, São Paulo, SP, Brazil)

Jose Antonio Puppim de Oliveira (United Nations University, Japan)

Julián Cárdenas (Universitat de València, Spain)

Lucas Ayres B. de Campos Barros (USP, São Paulo, SP, Brazil)

Luciano Rossoni (UnB, Brasília, DF, Brazil)

M. Philippe Protin (Université Grenoble Alpes, France)

Paulo Estevão Cruvinel (Embrapa Instrumentação, São Carlos, SP, Brazil)

Rodrigo Bandeira de Mello (Merrimack College, USA)

Rodrigo Verdi (MIT Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA)

Valter Afonso Vieira (UEM, Maringá, PR, Brazil)

Editing

Typesetting and normalization to APA standards: Eduarda Pereira Anastacio (ANPAD); Simone L. L. Rafael (ANPAD, Maringá, Brazil).

Frequency: Continuous publication.

Circulation: Free open access to the full text.

Indexing, Directories and Rankings

Scopus, Scielo, Redalyc, DOAJ, Latindex, Cengage/GALE, Econpapers, IDEAS, EBSCO, Proquest, SPELL, Cabell's, Ulrichs, CLASE, Index Copernicus International, Sherpa Romeo, Carhus Plus+, Academic Journal Guide (ABS), DIADORIM, REDIB, ERIHplus, OAJI, EZB, OasisBR, IBZ Online, WorldWideScience, Google Scholar, Citefactor.org, MIAR, Capes/Qualis.



Available in:

<https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=84083063001>

How to cite

Complete issue

More information about this article

Journal's webpage in redalyc.org

Scientific Information System Redalyc
Diamond Open Access scientific journal network
Non-commercial open infrastructure owned by academia

Paula Chimenti

**Adaptive Leadership and Engaged Scholarship
Liderança Adaptativa e Pesquisa Engajada**

Revista de Administração Contemporânea

vol. 29, no. 1, e250095, 2025

Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em
Administração,

ISSN: 1415-6555

ISSN-E: 1982-7849

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2025250095.en>