

Emerging Practical Research on Leadership, Corporate Governance, Digital Technologies, and AI

by

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This Fall 2025 issue of the *Journal for International DBA Studies (JIDS)* is comprised of nine colorful articles on emerging practical research innovations on leadership, corporate governance, financial management, digital technologies, and artificial intelligence (AI). These scholarly works seek to influence policy and practices across industries and geographies. A key lesson from curating these articles is that evolving, emerging, and disruptive innovations are driven by multiple reinforcing factors.

Three articles highlight the critical importance of leadership models and corporate governance at both theoretical and practical levels. Tan Guo Qiang's "Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance in Singaporean SMEs," addresses the gap to understand better transformational leadership's influence on employee performance within Singaporean SMEs. The study shows significant relationships of intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration and suggests that leaders' encouragement is more likely to foster higher performance in the organization.

Hao L. Bai's article "Triadic Leadership in Remote Teams: A Qualitative Case Study of a Sustainability Initiative in L'Oréal China" examines how servant, transformational, and adaptive leadership styles helped a remote team address problems such as information gaps, trust deficits, psychological disengagement, and coordination inefficiencies. It offers a pragmatic triadic leadership framework and practical recommendations for managers designing remote projects while ensuring balance, trust, purpose, and agility across regions and functions.

The article, "The Impact of Corporate Governance on Financial Performance: An Analysis of Small-Cap Companies Listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange" by Patrick Wong, examines how board independence, Chair/CEO duality, and audit committee activity affect the financial performance of small-cap firms listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange using a mixed-methods approach. The study reveals that higher board independence and frequent audit meetings have limited or negative effects, while Chair/CEO duality reduces performance, highlighting the challenges of symbolic governance and concentrated authority.

Still on corporate governance and finance, Qi Peng and Biqiong Zhang in “A Study on the Impact of Equity Pledges by Controlling Shareholders of Listed Firms in China on Corporate Social Responsibility” analyzes corporate social responsibility reports of listed companies 2010 to 2020 and finds that the pledge of controlling shareholders' equity is negatively correlated with CSR performance. It also shows that agency costs are significantly effective in reducing CSR obligations.

AI and digital technologies are the main themes in four articles. The article, “AI-Augmented Learning Pathways: Ethical and Organizational Implications for Engineering Professionals in Singapore,” of Albert Lee K H adopts a conceptual approach to look at how AI-augmented learning in Singapore is transforming engineers' professional pathways that support the Smart Nation agenda. The study finds that AI is reshaping professional learning and knowledge acquisition, ethical tensions emerge around accountability, bias and human oversight and engineers are transitioning into hybrid techno-managerial roles requiring digital fluency and identity adaptation.

From a Hong Kong experience, Jimmy Kwong in his article, “Can Transformers Transform WCO Data Model Interoperability? A Transformer-Based, Human-in-the-Loop Pipeline: A Design-Science Ex-Ante Evaluation” discusses interoperability in public sector use of IT and AI. It proposes a transformer-assisted mapping pipeline which extracts candidate DM elements from authoritative texts, re-ranks them for precision using a cross-encoder, enforces strict constraints on data types, cardinalities, and code lists, and routes uncertain cases to human review.

Comparing two Asia-Pacific experiences, Kevin Shepherson, Celine Chew, and Seema Purohit in their article “Practice-Led Case Study of Workforce Transformation through National AI Prompt Design Challenges in Singapore and the Philippines” shows how non-technical professionals can transition from AI consumers to AI creators in GenAI bootcamps and competitions. The practice-led study reveals persistent gaps in workflow integration and responsible AI but offers helpful insights for policymakers and educators by highlighting the need for inclusive capability-building strategies that balance innovation with ethical and organizational readiness.

The intersection of emerging technologies and policy in developed and developing countries is also highlighted in this JIDS issue. Runbin Liu's article, “Policy Support Pathways for Emerging Technologies in the U.S. and the Synergy Mechanism with Financial Capital,” examines how U.S. policy support for ET — such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, clean energy environment, and biotechnology — works synergistically with financial capital overcome high research and development costs, commercialization delays, and technological risks. In its identification of four policy support streams, the study shows the need to integrate policy formulation to address short-term liquidity demand levels of capital and long-term technological innovations.

The connection between public private partnerships and comparative policy innovations is the underlying focus of Serge Ijabo Ngarambe's article, “Attracting Private

Investment in Public Infrastructure: Comparative Policy Innovations and Best Practical Models for Accelerating Infrastructure Financing in Developing Countries.” Drawing upon Rwanda and international exemplars, it examines how governments can mobilize private investment in public infrastructure by combining credible institutions, fit-for-purpose instruments, and risk sharing, proposes a Retail Infrastructure Mobilization Model that will enable citizens and diaspora to co-invest in sustainable, and sequenced pathway for Rwanda.

Keywords: transformational leadership, corporate governance, AI-augmented pathway, equity pledges, controlling shareholder, corporate social responsibility