

Weiss, Matthias; Baer, Markus; Hoegl, Martin

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The human side of innovation management: Bridging the divide between the fields of innovation management and organizational behavior

Matthias Weiss¹  | Markus Baer²  | Martin Hoegl³ 

¹Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Organization, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany

²Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri, USA

³Institute for Leadership and Organization, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Munich, Germany

Correspondence

Matthias Weiss, Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Organization, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Overbergstr. 17, 44801 Bochum, Germany.
Email: matthias.m.weiss@rub.de

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Abstract

The human side of innovation management focuses on the people that are carrying out innovative endeavors in organizations. It marks the intersection between research on innovation management and organizational behavior. However, these two research areas are not well integrated in the current literature, despite the many promises such an integration holds to address the challenges innovative organizations, as well as their employees, are facing in general and in times of uncertainty and transformation in particular. This editorial provides an overview of the special issue and illustrates the divide between research on innovation management and organizational behavior. Applying bibliometric analysis, we point to the need to bridge research in these two areas. Aimed to act as a catalyst for such bridging efforts, this special issue on the human side of innovation brought together research based on different theoretical perspectives and diverse methodological approaches. In this regard, the analysis of the intellectual structure of the special issue articles, reported in this editorial, provides evidence the effectiveness of the intended catalysis.

KEYWORDS

bibliometrics, citation analysis, creativity, innovation management, organizational behavior

1 | INTRODUCTION

Several decades of research on the management of innovation have revealed important drivers of innovation and contingencies thereof, with a substantial share of this research having been published in the *Journal of Product Innovation Management (JPIM)*. Among these success factors, one that has emerged as critical is what we refer to as the “human side of innovation management” (Brenton & Levin, 2012). The human side of innovation

management focuses on leading and organizing the very people that are carrying out innovative endeavors in organizations (Verona, 1999). After all, it is people who individually or in groups make use of their creativity, generating ideas for new products and services (Nagaraj et al., 2020; Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017; Salter et al., 2015). It is people who plan and carry out innovation projects to implement these ideas (Baer, 2012; Schepers et al., 2019; Sivasubramaniam et al., 2012). It is people who bring new products and services to market

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and sell them (Feurer et al., 2019; Homburg et al., 2019). And it is people who envision and advocate strategies for future directions of innovative efforts to investors, customers, and fellow organizational members (Kaufmann et al., 2021; Tellis, 2006)

Despite the burgeoning research on the human side of innovation, some important questions remain unanswered. One reason for this might be that research on the human side of innovation is located at the intersection between two distinct areas of inquiry—innovation management and organizational behavior—with independent histories and different theoretical perspectives (Brenton & Levin, 2012). Among other aspects, this is reflected in the fact that these areas form their own divisions in the *Academy of Management*. In addition, research in the field of innovation management traditionally has focused on the macro level of analysis (i.e., organization, industry, or country level), considering strategic and economic drivers of innovation while research in the area of organizational behavior has predominantly focused on the micro and meso levels (i.e., individual or team level), primarily based on psychological theories. Hence, bringing together these communities and integrating their perspectives in the study of the human side of innovation management does not happen organically and regularly.

Integrating these areas of inquiry is important, though, given the many and decisive challenges today's organizations and the people working for them experience in the pursuit of innovation. This relates to aspects such as increasing pressure to innovate due to global competition (Schubert et al., 2018), enhanced time pressure due to shortening development cycles (Baer & Oldham, 2006; Griffin et al., 2019), an increasingly diverse workforce (Weiss et al., 2018; Zhan et al., 2015), increased blurring of industry and project boundaries (Mortensen & Haas, 2018; Whalen, 2018), as well as a higher probability of the occurrence of errors, setbacks, and failures (Lei et al., 2016; Morais-Storz et al., 2020; Todt et al., 2018).

Especially the latter aspects have gained greater relevance during the work on this special issue, as this period witnessed the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Slotegraaf et al., 2021). Such large-scale shocks and crises not only affect how organizations are running their innovation activities and how they adapt their strategies accordingly (Argyres et al., 2019; Bundy et al., 2016; Horn et al., 2021) but they also affect the individuals working in these organizations. Such shocks and crises threaten people's health, safety, and professional prospects to an unprecedented extent. It is therefore essential that managerial responses to maintain and build organizational capabilities to innovate consider the human side of innovation management.

In addition, we are witnessing profound changes to innovators' workplaces, involving newly emerging technologies (Marion et al., 2014) like virtual and augmented reality (Cipresso et al., 2018; Harz et al., 2021), increasingly capable artificial intelligence and algorithms (Garbuio & Lin, 2021; Muhloth & Grottke, 2022; Verganti et al., 2020), or new communication and collaboration tools (Fang & Hu, 2018; Hoornaert et al., 2017; Park et al., 2021). These digital technologies and their implementation in organizations are shifting the way innovators communicate, collaborate, and coordinate. All this is happening in the face of new types of distractions and interruptions (e.g., through incoming messages via email or instant messaging services or updates from shared folders and virtual workspaces) (Chen & Karahanna, 2018; Puranik et al., 2020; Solis, 2019) as well as of the availability of ever-greater amounts of information (Cappa et al., 2021; Lee & Berente, 2012; Rindfleisch et al., 2017; Yoo et al., 2012). Such changes require new knowledge about the essential elements that support employee creativity and innovation in order to ensure that new work arrangements are not running counter to innovation efforts in organizations. Moreover, managers require adequate leadership skills to implement these changes in order to maintain, or even enhance, their innovators' performance. Hence, a better understanding of the human side of innovation could help to better leverage new digital technologies for innovative activities in organizations.

The purpose of this special issues is to offer some fresh insights on the human side of innovation, by stimulating multidisciplinary research that refines, broadens, and develops novel understandings and theories on this issue. The hope is that these efforts allow us to gain a deeper understanding of the human side of innovation and to ultimately advance innovation management practice.

2 | THE DIVIDE BETWEEN RESEARCH ON INNOVATION MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

To better illustrate the need to bridge research on innovation management and organizational behavior, we conducted a bibliometric analysis of the research articles published in prominent specialty journals from these two fields since 1990. Bibliometrics uses quantitative analyses to examine the knowledge structure of a given corpus of literature (Antons et al., 2016; van Eck & Waltman, 2017). It enables the construction of networks based on the interrelationships between journals, authors, or keywords in this corpus (van Eck & Waltman, 2010; van Eck & Waltman, 2017)

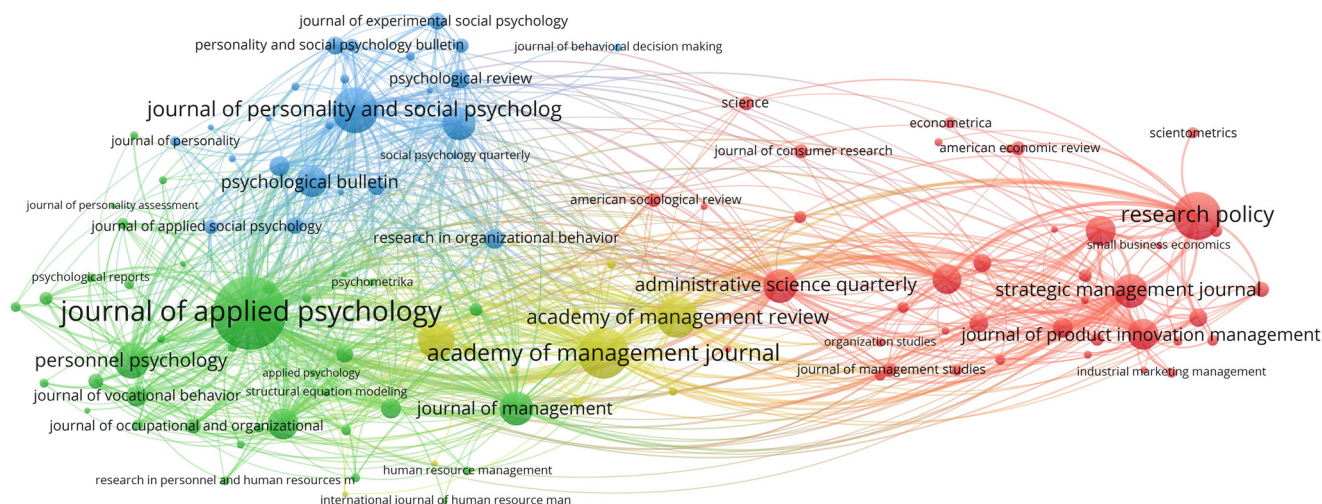


FIGURE 1 Journal co-citation patterns between the fields of innovation management (red) and organizational behavior (green/blue) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

In our analyses, we focused on specialty journals and did not include general management journals. We did so because the latter publish articles from both areas. If we were to include these more general management journals in our analysis, we would not be able to distinguish between articles from organizational behavior, innovation management, or even other fields. This would introduce unnecessary noise to the data and substantially reduce the discriminatory power of our analysis.

With regard to innovation management, we included in our analysis *Creativity and Innovation Management*, *IEEE Transactions in Engineering Management*, *JPIM*, *R&D Management*, and *Research Policy*. In the area of organizational behavior, we included *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Leadership Quarterly*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, and *Personnel Psychology*. Although we are aware that other journals from these areas could have been included, we would expect our analysis to be robust against the inclusion of alternative journals. From these sources, we extracted all published articles from 1990 to 2020, along with their bibliometric data and cited references from Scopus. Excluding a small number of articles for which no bibliometric data were available on Scopus, this corpus comprised 16,305 articles.

For the citation analyses, we used Version 1.6.15 of the software VOSviewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), which has found wide application in bibliometric analyses and is the predominant tool for such purposes (Pan et al., 2018). VOSviewer enables the construction of bibliometric maps (Waltman et al., 2010). Specifically, VOS (short for “visualization of similarities”) mapping in this software allows for the generation of a cartography of nodes for certain items (i.e., keyword, journal) and the

illustration of distance between these items based on density calculations (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

For our purpose, we performed an analysis of co-occurrence in terms of keywords as well as citation analysis to show the connections between journals that have been cited in the articles of the selected corpus. Together, these analyses reflect the intellectual structure of the two focal research areas and the extent to which they are integrated with each other. In the maps we created (see Figures 1 and 2), the size of each item is determined by the cumulative strength of its links with other items, while the thickness of the connections between the items is determined by the link strength between the respective two items. In the case of keywords, the link strength represents the number of articles that report these keywords together; in the case of journals, the link strength represents the frequency with which articles in two journals cite each other. Based on the strength of links between several items, VOSviewer groups items into clusters that are more closely connected to each other.

In the map of journal co-citation (see Figure 1), we see that research on innovation management and organizational behavior clearly represent distinct clusters. Although this finding is not surprising as such, the relative weakness of direct links between these two clusters is striking. Most connections between the two fields require an intermediate step through more general management journals, such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, or *Journal of Management*, which act as bridges. Thus, it appears that absent these indirect linkages through the “big-tent” journals in the field of management, there is a noticeable lack of direct integration between these two research areas.

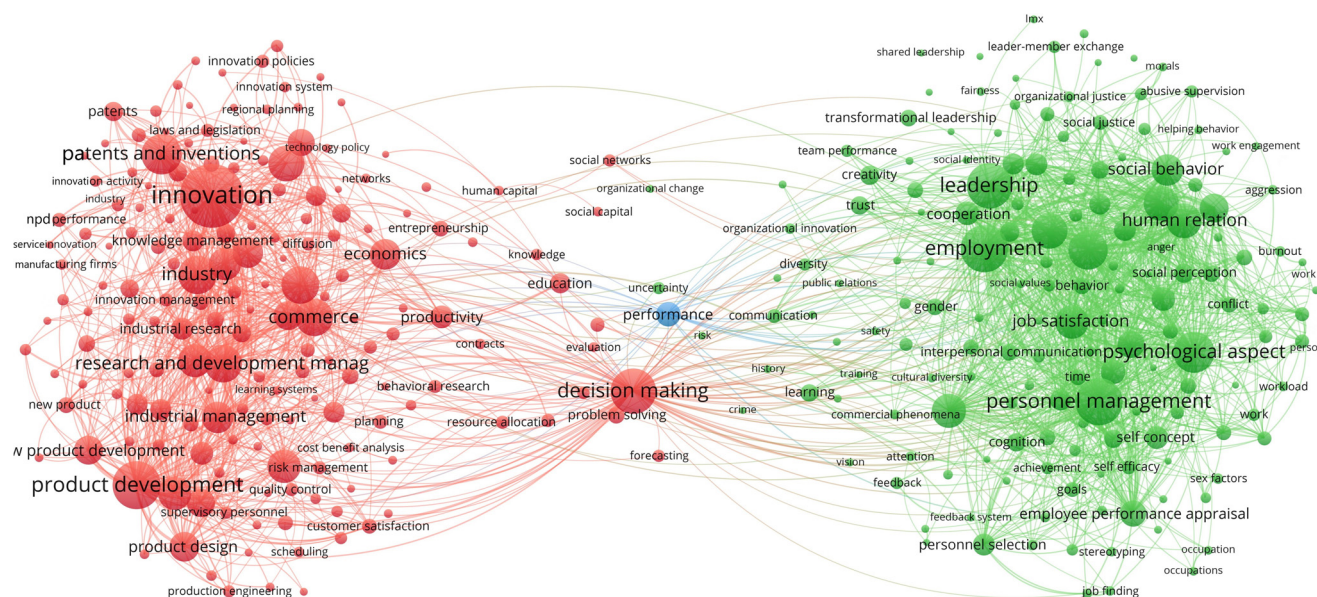


FIGURE 2 Keyword co-occurrence patterns between the fields of innovation management (red) and organizational behavior (green)
[Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

In the map of keyword co-occurrence (see Figure 2), we can observe a similar pattern. Here, research on innovation management and organizational behavior also form two markedly distinct clusters of associated keywords. What is striking here as well is the relatively few and weak direct links between the keywords from the two clusters. As in the case of connections between journals, there are several more generic keywords, most prominently “decision making” and “performance,” which serve as connectors between the two clusters. Consistent with the journal mapping, this clearly indicates the need for greater integration of these two areas of inquiry by nurturing more direct linkages between them

3 | THIS SPECIAL ISSUE: BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

To offer a first step toward integration, the goal of this special issue was to encourage scholars from the fields of innovation management and organizational behavior to join forces in the study of the human side of innovation management. Our hope was that such collaborations would stimulate the development of new theory on innovation in organizations and on how to organize and lead people to facilitate the development and management of innovation. The direct outcome of this special issue are the eight research articles it features. Out of 57 submissions, covering a multitude of different theoretical and methodological approaches, we accepted seven articles. One additional submission underwent the regular *JPIM* review process, edited by one of the two editors-in-chief,

Charles Noble. Each submission underwent a double-blind review process, using at least two reviewers with expertise in the respective domains. All accepted articles went through at least two rounds of revisions to meet the high *JPIM* quality standards. We thank the many reviewers for their invaluable feedback and the authors of the featured articles for their contributions and responsiveness during the editorial process

The result is an inspiring set of articles with diverse theoretical foundations. The collection of articles in this special issue offers insights resulting from a variety of qualitative and quantitative empirical efforts, spanning different levels of analyses, and comprising diverse approaches, such as ethnography, text analysis, multiwave surveys, and multilevel analysis. We hope that by highlighting this set of articles in a special issue of *JPIM*, a flagship journal in the area of innovation management, we encourage scholars from both areas to consider how their expertise may contribute to theory development in the area of the other and to leverage insights from both.

At this point, as editors of this special issue, we also have to ask ourselves whether we accomplished the very goal we set for ourselves and whether we were able to stimulate the integration of theories and perspectives from the two areas. Of course, we cannot tell at the time of publication whether it will have the desired impact on the readers of the articles in the special issue. However, we can examine whether the articles included in this special issue do help to bridge the two fields. To this end, we conducted an additional citation analysis to illustrate the extent to which the articles in this special issues span the divide between the two areas and whether this pattern of

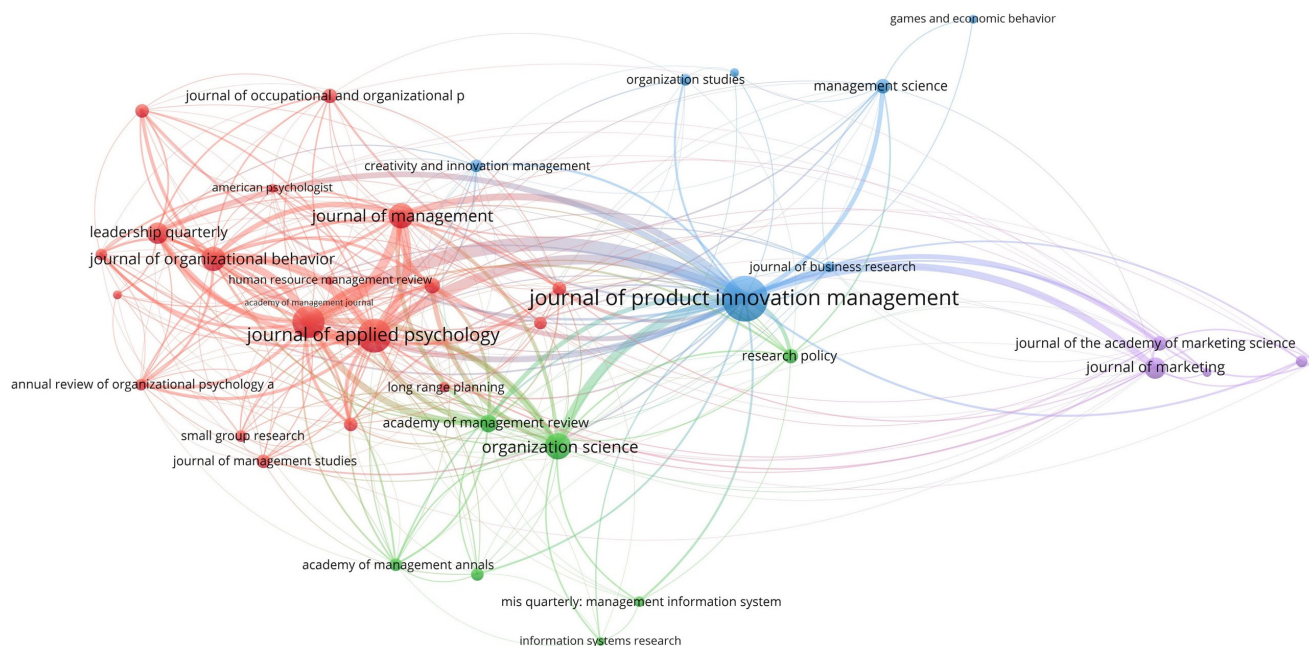


FIGURE 3 Journal co-citation patterns of the articles in this special issue [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

integration differs from what we observed in the general analysis presented above. We repeated the analysis for citation patterns in the articles of the special issue, in which we inserted all the journal-based sources cited by the special issue articles into VOSviewer and examined the extent to which these sources cite each other. The result is the citation map depicted in Figure 3. This figure can be interpreted to represent the intellectual structure of the special issue articles.

In Figure 3, we see that the intellectual structure of the special issue offers a strong and, most importantly, more direct connection between the areas of inquiry it intended to bridge. This is a marked difference to the overall citation analysis presented above. In this analysis, the connection between most organizational behavior specialty journals (most prominently, *Journal of Applied Psychology*) and innovation management journals like *JPIM* was an indirect one, brokered by general management journals, such as *Academy of Management Journal* or *Journal of Management* that served as bridges between these areas. Still, we also see that this connection is still underdeveloped for some relevant journals from organizational behavior, such as *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* or *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, where new bridges are yet to be built. Hence, we can conclude that our effort did pay off to some extent. However, more integrative action is required to even better connect the two areas to enhance the study of the human side of innovation management. We hope, and are optimistic, that the publication of this special issue serves as a catalyst to this end.

4 | THE ARTICLES IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

The articles published in this special issue cover a broad variety of topics, theoretical perspectives, and empirical approaches. Collectively, they span the innovation process in its entirety, from the beginning of the process, when ideas for new products, services, or processes are generated, until the final stages of the process, when these innovations need to be monetized in some way. In this last part of this editorial, we will briefly introduce each article.

In the first article “Another Day, Another Chance: Daily Workplace Experiences and Their Impact on Creativity,” McKay et al. (2022) use latent profile analysis to examine daily workplace experiences over time and how they relate to creativity. Basing their analysis on a large archival data set of daily surveys about the work environment in organizational projects, they identify specific daily workplace experience profiles that influence employee creative performance. Thereby, they take a holistic perspective of the creative climate employees find themselves in and offer a new perspective as to how to support people engaging in creative behaviors, thereby enhancing a firm’s ability to innovate.

The second article, “Interpersonal Relationships and Creativity at Work: A Network Building Perspective” by Ozer and Zhang (2022) investigates the human side of social networks for innovation. Using a multisource and multiwave survey, they find an indirect relationship between employees’ *tertius iungens* orientation (i.e., the

orientation to connect previously unconnected members of a network) and their creativity, mediated through high-quality interpersonal relationships. Thus, Ozer and Zhang (2022) highlight that employees' efforts to build social networks at work largely drives their creativity by allowing them to nurture high-quality relationships at work.

In the article, "Mitigating The Dark Side of Agile Teams: Peer Pressure, Leaders' Control, and the Innovative Output of Agile Teams," Khanagha et al. (2022) highlight potential drawbacks and problems of an approach that currently enjoys wide application and popularity in the management of teams and projects. Applying a multi-level perspective on control and a multilevel, multisource study of self-managing software development teams, they demonstrate that control mechanisms may enhance peer pressure among team members in agile teams, which, in turn, hampers innovative team output. Pointing to several contingencies of this relationship, they offer recommendations for managers how to address the negative side effects of elevated peer pressure.

In the article entitled "Illuminating Opposing Performance Effects of Stressors in Innovation Teams," Razinskas et al. (2022) examine the role that different kinds of stressors play in affecting team innovation. Adapting the challenge-hindrance stressor framework to the team level of analysis and utilizing multisource data of innovation teams, the authors provide insights into the unique team-level mechanisms that transmit both the positive and negative effects of challenge and hindrance stressors on team innovation.

The article by Becker et al. (2022), entitled "Leadership in Innovation Communities: The Impact of Transformational Leadership Language on Member Participation," deals with the widespread problem of online innovation communities to sustain continued, high-quality member participation within them. These authors examine this issue through the lens of transformational leadership. Based on a large text analysis of firm-hosted innovation communities, they show that these innovation communities' moderators' language cues are key to enhancing members' participation quality and quantity. Importantly, different elements of transformational leadership language result in differential consequences for participation quality and quantity, in some cases even showing negative effects. These findings point to the double-edged sword nature of transformational leadership language and provide actionable guidance to managers and moderators as to what language to use in virtual collaboration aimed at stimulating innovation.

Mukerjee and Metiu (2022) present an ethnographic study on the reciprocal relationship between play and psychological safety in innovative endeavors. In their

article "Play and Psychological Safety: An Ethnography of Innovative Work," they offer an in-depth qualitative examination of how different forms of playful behavior may facilitate psychological safety among employees, with positive consequences for innovation. In so doing, they shed light on the mechanisms that underlie these beneficial properties of play at work and how managers can strengthen and leverage them.

Gamber et al. (2022) adopt a behavioral perspective on the generation, development, and promotion of ideas on online ideation platforms in their article "Which Effort Pays Off? Analyzing Ideators' Behavioral Patterns on Corporate Ideation Platforms." Combining archival data from a corporate ideation contest with participants' survey data, they report the surprising finding that greater amounts of effort invested during the ideation process does not necessarily correspond to greater idea success. Rather, the return on invested effort appears to depend on the stage of the ideation process, with more effort in the later stages of this process likely to result in greater success. Moreover, they offer additional nuance by identifying eight types of specific innovative behavior in such contexts.

In the final article "The Ambivalent Role of Monetary Sales Incentives in Service Innovation Selling," Alavi et al. (2022) examine the role of salespeople in the commercialization of complex new services. Building on self-focus theory and a data set blending surveys of salespeople and archival company records, they find a curvilinear relationship between salespersons' incentives and their success in selling these complex service innovations. Specifically, the authors show that this relationship is driven by the effects of incentives on salespersons' problem-solving behavior and effort. In sum, the article shows that managers need to be mindful when designing monetary sales incentive systems, as such systems may also harm the successful selling of complex service innovations.

To conclude, we hope that this special issue inspires scholars from both sides of the divide to examine the human side of innovation management as a worthwhile avenue for future research. We are convinced that more research along the lines outlined in this special issue will stimulate theory development on innovation management and the critical human factors contributing to it. Therefore, we sincerely hope that this special issue and the articles within it will provoke new thought and inspire scholars to further explore the intersection between innovation management and organizational behavior.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors have read and agreed to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) international standards for authors.

ORCID

Matthias Weiss  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0447-760X>

Markus Baer  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4000-3455>

Martin Hoegl  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4339-8616>

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Matthias Weiss is Professor of Innovation Management and Head of the Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Transformation (CEIT) at Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Germany). He earned his PhD in management at WHU—Otto Beisheim School of Management in Vallendar (Germany) with a stay as visiting researcher at Bocconi University (Milan, Italy). After working as postdoctoral researcher at WHU—Otto Beisheim School of Management, he served as Assistant Professor of Management at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Germany). His main research interests are located at the intersection of innovation management and organizational behavior, with a particular focus on adverse conditions for innovation, teamwork, and creativity. On these topics, he has published results of his research in journals such as *Human Relations*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, and *Leadership Quarterly*.

Markus Baer is Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis. He earned his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research focuses

on the determinants and consequences of the various activities (i.e., problem formulation, idea generation, solution evaluation, and implementation) comprising creativity and innovation in organizations. His work has been published in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Management*, *Leadership Quarterly*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Organization Science*, *Strategic Management Journal*, and *Strategy Science*. He was formerly associate editor of *Academy of Management Journal* and currently is associated editor of *Journal of Product Innovation Management* and *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*.

Martin Hoegl is Professor of Management and Head of the Institute for Leadership and Organization at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Germany). Before joining LMU München, he served on the faculties of Washington State University, Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) and WHU—Otto Beisheim School of Management (Vallendar, Germany). Moreover, he held visiting professorships at the Kellogg School of Management

(Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA), Curtin University (Perth, Australia), University of British Columbia (Vancouver, BC, Canada) and at the National Sun Yat-Sen University (Taiwan). His main research interests include leadership, collaboration, and innovation in organizations. His research has been published in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Leadership Quarterly*, *Organization Science*, and *Research Policy*.

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