

Perceived context typicality and beliefs in the generalizability of management research findings

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Abstract: Despite growing calls for a greater internationalization of management research, the discipline still struggles with the challenge of integrating diverse national contexts. While recent decades have seen a change toward a more equitable treatment of all national contexts, the belief that research conducted outside the United States is less generalizable remains strong. In this research note, we explore the general perceptions of what is considered a “typical” study context by associating them with authors’ variable tendencies to report threats to external validity. Using a sample of 400 papers from seven top-tier management journals, we find that research based on non-US data tends to report more external validity threats, which makes it appear less generalizable. While the belief that the US constitutes a “typical” study context is shared by both US and non-US author teams, non-US co-authors tend to exhibit a relatively stronger bias against the generalizability of non-US samples in their studies. Collectively, our results contribute to the literature on external validity threats, generalizability, and biases in peer review, while also responding to recent calls for a more diverse and inclusive management research program.

Keywords: Biases in peer review, Empirical context, External validity, Generalizability

1. Introduction and conceptual background

Most research in management studies is context-dependent (Johns, 2006, Johns, 2017). However, authors often fail to discuss threats to external validity (Brutus et al., 2013, Brutus et al., 2010; Brutus and Duniewicz, 2012), which makes assessing the generalizability of their results difficult. In this research note, we seek to explore whether studies conducted in all empirical contexts are equally likely to report threats to external validity, and whether all contexts are perceived as equally typical by the management research discipline.

Exploring this question is important at least for two reasons. First, exposing the differences in validity threats reporting is likely to inform the peer review process and the editorial policy, leading to more methodologically sound papers. Second, if the inequality in reporting external validity threats exists, it may lead to a bias in the review process, with research originating from contexts which are believed to be typical (and thus not exposed to validity threats) more likely to be accepted than research originating from other contexts.

1.1. Reporting threats to external validity

A normal course of science involves validity assessment, that is, an evaluation of the correspondence between the obtained results and the empirical reality that was studied (Simons et al., 2017). This assessment usually covers four dimensions: statistical conclusion validity, internal validity, construct validity, and external validity (Cook and Campbell, 1979). External validity—the focal concern in this study—can be defined as an inference “to what populations, settings, treatment variables, and measurement variables [the predicted] effect can be generalized” (Campbell and Stanley, 1963, p. 5). Scholars are rarely interested in providing results from the sample alone. Rather, most research is driven by the desire to use the sample to infer something about the population. Thus, analyzing and reporting threats to external validity, that is the “specific reasons why we can be partly or completely wrong when we make an inference” (Shadish et al., 2001, p. 39), is of great importance. While these threats should be addressed by using a proper study design and the inclusion of controls, it is often impossible, or impractical, to eradicate them entirely (McGrath and Brinberg, 1983; Shadish et al., 2001).

The first step in evaluating external validity involves properly

reporting the study's setting. While reporting all dimensions of context is important, it is particularly more so for a study's country or national setting (Addae et al., 2013; Bamberger, 2008; Crossland and Hambrick, 2011; Rabl et al., 2014), given that the institutional (Fainshmidt et al., 2018; Zhu and Chung, 2014), economic (Archibugi et al., 2013; Cerrato et al., 2016), and cultural (Chen et al., 2009) differences between nations may impact results.

Nonetheless, reporting generic context variables, such as the country of analysis or a location within the country, is often insufficient to allow for a thorough evaluation of external validity. Authors typically possess unique and intimate knowledge of their study samples and designs; therefore, they are best suited to engage in a detailed analysis of the threats to external validity (Brutus and Duniewicz, 2012). They are able to deliver suggestions regarding threats that may otherwise escape readers' attention if not explicitly stated, for instance by highlighting how negotiating access to a firm could have affected the study's results (Johns, 2006). Authors can also alleviate concerns related to external threats that were likely to occur but did not.

However, as documented in past studies, authors tend to make short shrift of reporting threats to external validity (Brutus et al., 2013, 2010; Brutus and Duniewicz, 2012). We propose that reporting threats to external validity is based on beliefs regarding the typicality of the study context. Extant literature delivers several cues as to which national settings are more likely to be perceived as "typical." While the non-US academic communities, such as the European (March, 2007) or the Asian community (Barkema et al., 2015; Mangematin and Baden-Fuller, 2008; Tsui, 2007), have been growing, US-based studies still outnumber studies based on other national contexts (Barkema et al., 2015). For instance, nine out of ten most frequently mentioned firms in the top journals are from the United States (Collinson and Rugman, 2010). Since the readers of top management journals are most likely to encounter a US-based study, we expect the US context to be perceived as more "typical" than other national contexts.

Furthermore, the US is often presented as the "epicenter" of management research, while the rest of the world is considered as the "periphery" (Bruton et al., 2022; Tietze and Dick, 2013; Üsdiken, 2014), as authors originating from the former outnumber the latter (Podsakoff et al., 2008). When the development of management science in Asia (Adler et al., 1986; Adler and Jelinek, 1986; Tsui, 2007) or Europe (March, 2004, 2007) is discussed, it is commonly portrayed against the backdrop of American dominance, contributing to the belief that the US is the natural reference point. Integrating these insights, we argue that the perceived generalizability of US-based research stems from the assumption that the US context is typical and, hence, less likely to incur external validity issues. Authors who believe that their context has little or no impact on the validity of their results are thus less likely to report any external validity threats in their study. Moreover, it is essential to determine whether beliefs regarding the typicality of the research context are also embraced by authors who do not reside in the United States, possibly due to their exposure to predominantly US-based studies. Consequently, we investigate how the overall percentage of non-US authors within the author team influences the team's inclination to report external validity concerns due to sample location in their study. If authors residing outside the US tend to be more attuned to the external validity limitations of their non-US-based samples, teams with a majority of non-US authors might exhibit a higher propensity to report such issues compared to teams predominantly composed of US authors. Lastly, we also analyze whether the change in the composition of the management scholars community is associated with the beliefs regarding context typicality. Top management journals increasingly feature research conducted in other settings, such as Europe or Asia (Barkema et al., 2015; Engwall and Danell, 2011), giving their authors (and readers) increased confidence in the typicality of their work. Therefore, it is possible that as the number of non-US-authored papers in top-tier management journals increases over time, the propensity of non-US-based authors to signal external validity issues goes down.

2. Data, methodology, & analysis

Given their disproportionate impact on the management research discipline (Adler and Harzing, 2009; Starbuck, 2005; Vogel, 2012), as well as on the general hiring and promotion practices of business schools (Aguinis et al., 2020; Ramani et al., 2022), we limited our analysis to top-tier journals only. To be included in the dataset, a journal had to meet the following three selection criteria: (1) be self-defined as a generalist management journal that primarily publishes empirical research, and (2) be listed in the UT Dallas Top 100 Business Schools Research Rankings or (3) be jointly listed in the following three lists: Financial Times 50 (FT50), Australian Business Deans Council Journal Quality List (ABDC, A* rank), and Academic Journal Guide (AJG, 4* rank). We added the last condition to allow for at least one non-US journal to be included in our sample. Seven top-tier management journals were ultimately selected as meeting these criteria: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Management*, *Management Science*, *Organization Science*, *Research Policy*, and *Strategic Management Journal*, with *Research Policy* being the only journal published outside the US.

We randomly picked two empirical articles from each journal and volume from 1990 to 2019, resulting in a sample of 400 papers. Non-empirical articles, notes from the editors, and studies conducted in more than one country were excluded from the selection process. Further, 20 papers were dropped as their authors had not reported the location of the sample in the paper. All but one of those papers had a US-based scholar listed as the first author.

2.1. Coding procedure and criteria

Since our phenomenon of interest—authors' beliefs in the generalizability of their study findings—is impossible to observe directly, we captured it using a proxy measure defined as the number of reported threats to external validity. The higher the number of such threats reported in the paper, the lower the authors' beliefs in the generalizability of their results. A preliminary analysis of the sampled articles, combined with insights from the literature on external validity reporting (Brutus et al., 2013, 2010; Brutus and Duniewicz, 2012), allowed us to develop the following ten categories of generalizability threats: samples not generalizable to other (a) countries/continents, (b) national cultures, (c) institutional environments, (d) locations in the same country, (e) populations of organizations (industry, size), (f) populations of employees (age, gender, race, profession), (g) organizational cultures, and (h) time periods, as well as (i) data sample too small to allow for generalization and (j) other threats to external validity.

Even though our analysis only focuses on threats associated with the geographical location of the study, from which categories (e)–(j) were excluded, we asked the coders to use all ten categories of threats to increase the validity of their coding. This approach made the coders more sensitive to empirical nuances of the studied texts and allowed them to avoid errors in coding (e.g., a sample not generalizable to other organizational cultures could be incorrectly coded as "not generalizable to other national cultures"). The coding procedure began with presenting coding instructions to both coders, who then coded and discussed five sample articles during a training session. Next, the coders were each asked to code the same 20 articles independently. The resulting codes were compared and differences in coding were discussed to arrive at a mutual understanding of the coding criteria. Finally, all 420 articles in our original sample were coded independently by two coders based on the ten categories discussed above. The inter-coder agreement ranged from 84 % to 100 %. In the event of disagreement, the coders and the authors of this research note would discuss the reasons and decide on the final coding.

2.2. Descriptive findings

In the figures below, we first provide some descriptive findings based on an exploratory analysis of the data. The first chart reveals that papers based on non-US samples are far more likely to report external validity threats than US-based papers (Fig. 1, Panel A). The same chart also shows that while US-based first authors are more likely to report external validity threats when they study US-based samples (as do non-US first authors), both groups of scholars concur that US-based datasets exhibit fewer concerns regarding external validity. The second chart, however, signals some variability among the journals (Fig. 1, Panel B). For example, US first authors who publish in *Organization Science* tend to report threats for every single paper based on non-US data, while US first authors publishing in *Research Policy* and in the *Journal of Management* do not report such threats at all.¹ A histogram of the threats to external validity reported in US-based versus non-US based studies corroborates these general trends (Fig. 1, Panel C), showing a higher number of papers with zero reported threats in the first group. Finally, the five-year moving average of the number of papers reporting validity threats (Fig. 1, Panel D) shows that since 1995 papers based on non-US samples were consistently more likely to report such threats than non-US-based papers.

Looking at the national level (Fig. 2), we observe that studies based in China have the highest average number of reported validity threats (1.0). Two countries with the lowest average numbers of reported threats are Canada (0.14) and, as expected, the United States (0.09).

The differential treatment of US and non-US based samples is also evident in the titles, abstracts, and methods sections of the studied papers (Fig. 3). Only 6 % of the papers based on US data report the study location in the title, compared to 34 % of the non-US based papers (Fig. 3, Panel A). In terms of equal treatment across all national contexts, we find that *Management Science* demonstrates the highest equality, while *ASQ* shows the greatest inequality (Fig. 3, Panel B). The same pattern emerges in the abstracts, where 26 % of US-based papers report the sample location, compared to 65 % for non-US based papers (Fig. 3, Panel C). The largest difference is observed between *Research Policy* and *ASQ* (Fig. 3, Panel D).

Finally, we see similar patterns in the methods sections where study location should normally be specified by default (Fig. 3, Panel E). Here, we find a clear indication of sample location for 71 % of the US-based studies versus 93 % of the non-US based ones. The largest difference in methods occurs between the *Academy of Management Journal* (58 % vs. 100 %) and *Research Policy* (96 % vs. 88 %) (Fig. 3, Panel F). In the former case, we note that a substantial fraction of 42 % of the analyzed US-based *AMJ* papers fail to report the country of sample location in the methods altogether. In the latter case, by contrast, we see an interesting opposite effect whereby *Research Policy* papers based on US datasets are somewhat more likely to report their sample locations than papers using non-US datasets.

2.3. Findings from explanatory analysis

The key result stemming from the previous exploratory analyses is that authors of articles with US-based samples have a substantially lower tendency to report external validity threats to their studies than authors

¹ For simplicity, we present figures with the location of the first author only. In subsequent explanatory analyses, we additionally create a continuous operationalization of the authorship construct, defined as the percentage of non-US authors, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. In the robustness checks, we further expand our analysis beyond authors' university affiliation to include their country of birth. There, we employ the percentage of non-US-born authors as an alternative measure of author team composition. The Supplementary material contains a version of Fig. 1 based on the country of origin, rather than affiliation, of the first author.

of papers located outside the US. To make the first step toward a possible causal explanation of this finding, we analyzed its potential correlates by estimating a series of panel regression models. As the dependent variable, the models utilized the *Number of Validity Threats* reported by the authors. Since this variable is a non-negative count, we estimated Poisson regression models, which are generally recommended for count dependent variables (Greene, 1990). In addition, because our sample was defined as a 30-year panel dataset from 1990 to 2019 with repeated annual observations for each journal, to mitigate the problem of serial autocorrelation we applied the panel version of Poisson regression with fixed effects specified at the journal level. We ascertained that the fixed-effects estimator is preferred by conducting the Hausman specification test (Hausman, 1978). Finally, due to the presence of heteroscedasticity in the data, we estimated our models with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

To analyze the potential explanatory factors related to the differences in validity threats reporting between US-based versus non-US-based studies, we defined the following covariates. First, we used a dummy variable denoting the country of sample location, labeled *Non-US Paper*. This variable was equal to "1" if the country in which the study was conducted was other than the US, and "0" otherwise. Second, to capture the extent to which the focal paper was co-authored by scholars from different geographical locations, we used the percentage of non-US scholars in the author team, labeled *Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)*. This continuous variable ranged from 0 for a fully US-authored paper, to 100 % for a paper co-authored by a team of scholars exclusively affiliated with non-US universities. As the decision to report and discuss threats to external validity could be the result of a consensus-driven group process within the author team, in addition to the linear term of this variable we also specified its squared term, labeled *Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)²*. Both terms were subsequently interacted with the *Non-US Paper* dummy to capture their joint moderating impact on the relationship between the paper's country of sample location and the number of reported external validity issues.

Third, in addition to exploring the aggregate impact of sample location on the authors' tendencies to discuss external validity concerns, we also considered a journal-level dependence of this outcome. Notably, our sample included both US and European journals, as well as journals representing rather distinct traditions and policies with respect to data collection, analysis, and publishing. For example, while journals like *AMJ* and *SMJ* are known to publish mainly papers based on empirical data, other journals such as *Management Science* are quite receptive to formal models and simulated data. To capture these underlying differences, in addition to the journal-specific fixed effects estimated within the panel models, we also added a set of six interaction terms between *Non-US Paper* and each journal dummy, holding *AMJ* as the reference category.

Fourth, we extended our analysis to the possibility that the observed differences in validity threats reporting could be related to the overall tendency of top management journals to publish research of non-US scholars. Specifically, we tested whether a greater overall tendency of the journals to publish non-US-based work could result in a lower average propensity of all authors to report external validity issues. To conduct this test, we used additional data from the Web of Science (WoS) on the affiliations of all authors who had published in the sampled top-tier journals between 1990 and 2019. Based on this information, we defined the moderator *Percent of Non-US Authors (Year)* as the percentage of non-US based authors appearing in all the seven sampled journals within a given year. The values ranged from a minimum of 16 % for 1991 to a maximum of 43 % for 2008, with the all-year average of around 32 %. We entered this variable both as a standalone effect and in interaction with the *Non-US Paper* dummy.

Lastly, we complemented our models with a set of control factors. Since certain study types could be considered as less prone to threats to external validity (Brutus et al., 2013), we introduced a categorical variable *Type of Study* (i.e., "quantitative", "qualitative", "laboratory

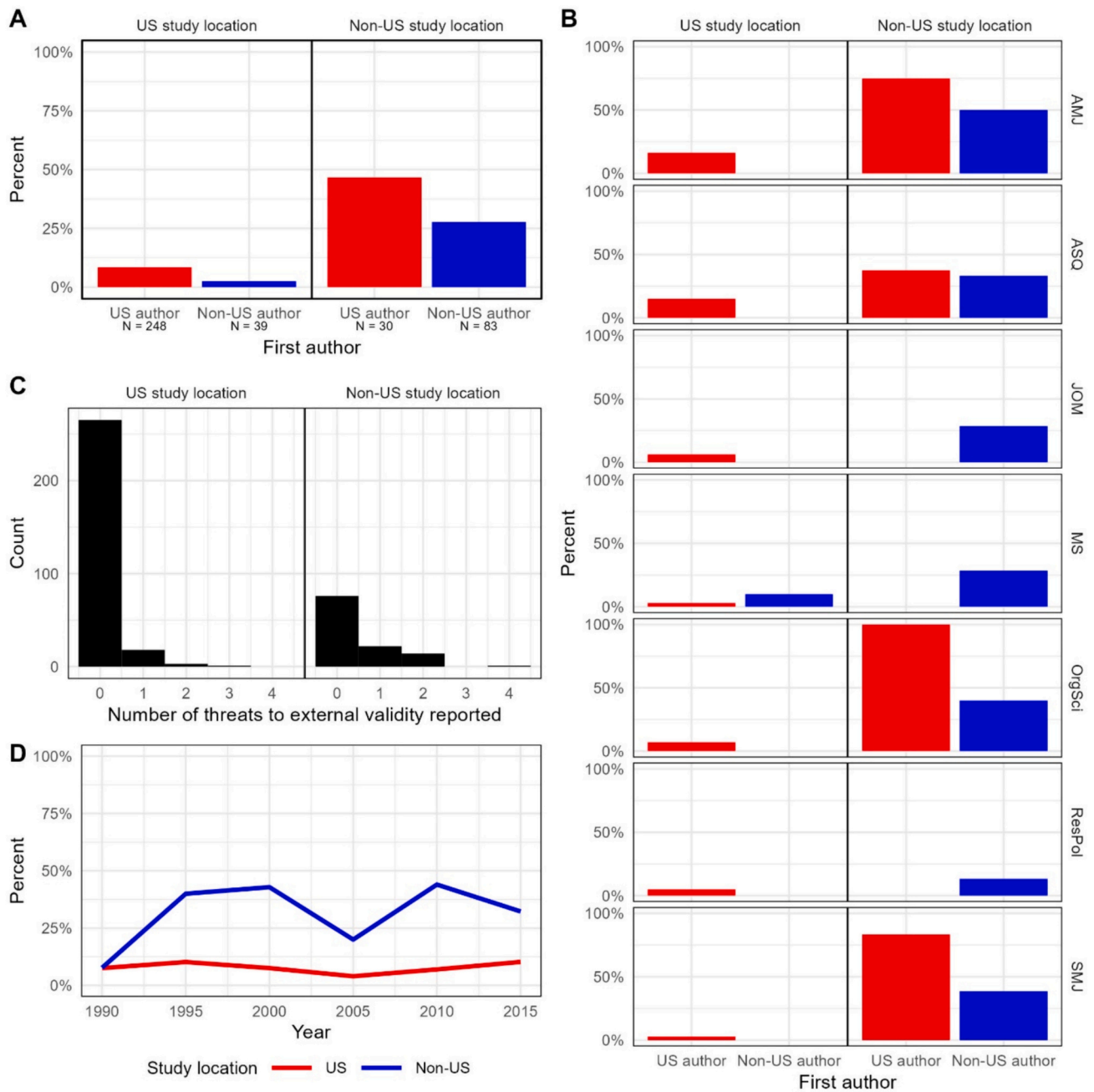


Fig. 1. Reporting threats to external validity in a random sample of 400 papers published in seven top-tier management journals: Panel A. Percentage of papers reporting at least one threat to external validity by study location (US vs. non-US) and the first author's affiliation (US vs. non-US); Panel B. Percentage of papers reporting at least one threat to external validity by study location, the first author's affiliation, and the journal; Panel C. Histogram of the number of threats to external validity reported in US-based and non-US based studies; Panel D. 5-year average of the percentage of papers reporting at least one threat to external validity by study location (US vs. non-US).

experiment”, and “mixed-methods”) to directly control for this effect. These categories were subsequently entered as dummy variables, using “quantitative” as the baseline category. Further, we checked whether a separate *Limitations Section* (i.e., a “0/1” dummy) was present in the paper to verify if papers containing this section could be more sensitive to reporting threats to external validity. Finally, to adjust for any unobserved time heterogeneity in our panel data analysis, we included a set of year-fixed effects from 1991 to 2019, with 1990 held as the default year.

Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations; Table 2 reports the full results of our statistical models. Model 1 reports the control effects only. In Models 2–4, we provide our main Poisson

estimates of the explanatory variables. The models reveal several interesting associations. First, as expected, Model 2 suggests that studies using non-US-based samples are believed to be significantly less generalizable than US-based studies ($b = 1.9339$; $p < 0.01$). Holding *AMJ* as the baseline category, the model explores this effect further for each individual journal, showing that *ASQ* ($b = -0.7354$; $p < 0.1$), *JOM* ($b = -0.3633$; $p < 0.1$), and *Management Science* ($b = -0.5972$; $p < 0.1$) all have lower propensities to report external validity concerns regarding their non-US based samples, while *Organization Science* ($b = 0.7470$; $p < 0.05$) and *SMJ* ($b = 1.3230$; $p < 0.01$) have significantly higher propensities. However, authors publishing in *Research Policy*, the only non-US journal in our data, seem least concerned about this threat given the

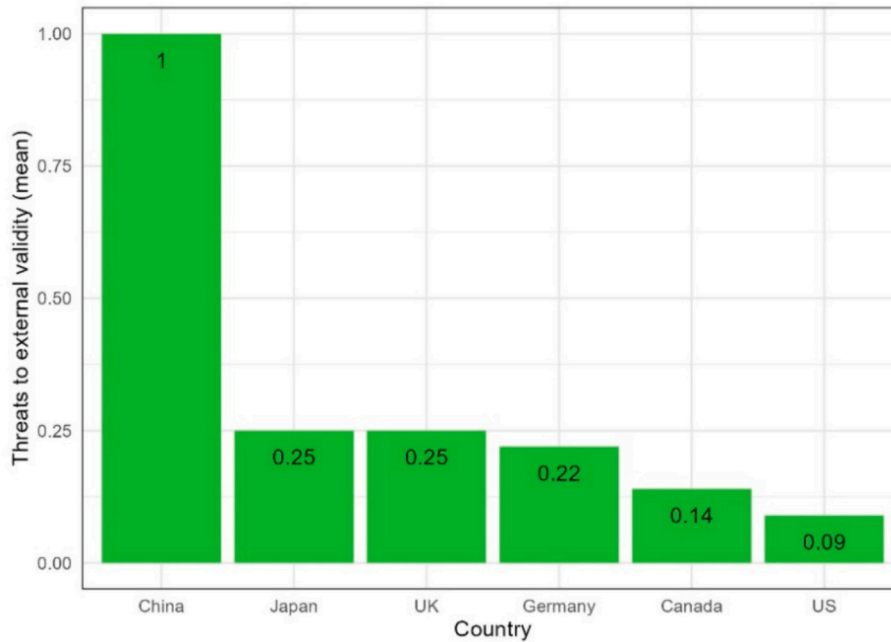


Fig. 2. Reporting threats to external validity by the study's country of location. Depicted countries each have more than five studies in the sample.

insignificant result for this journal. Notably, such an insignificant effect was also suggested by our prior descriptive analyses that singled out *Research Policy* as an outlier.

Model 3 signals a positive and non-linear moderation of author team composition on the main effect of non-US sample location ($b = 4.2517$; $p < 0.1$). To provide a clearer interpretation of this result, we employ the marginal effects approach proposed by Busenbark et al. (2022). This method offers concrete guidelines for understanding the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable in the presence of a continuous moderator. We conducted the marginal effects analysis using a combination of the “*margins*” and “*marginsplot*” commands in STATA 18, and Fig. 4 displays the results. The y-axis represents the average marginal effect denoting the influence of *Non-US Paper* on our dependent variable, *Number of Validity Threats*, at specified values of the moderator, *Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)*, which are depicted on the x-axis. The gray-shaded region around the plotted curve marks the 95 % confidence interval for the marginal effect estimate. Any effect estimates that do not include “0” within this interval (as marked by the red dashed line) are statistically significant (cf. Busenbark et al., 2022).

In line with our previous exploratory analyses, the moderator exhibits a statistically significant, non-linear, and positive interaction with the main effect of a non-US-based sample. As seen in the marginal effects plot, this interaction is consistently evident across all values of the moderator and strengthens as authorship includes a greater share of non-US authors. This result is supported by both the positive and increasing slope of the marginal effects curve, and the 95 % confidence interval consistently remaining above the zero line (Busenbark et al., 2022). Notably, the marginal effect only commences substantial growth for teams that feature around 30 % non-US members. Thus, while teams ranging from all-American to approximately 30 %-American authors typically report around two additional validity threats for their non-US-based samples, teams at the extreme end of all non-US authors report over twice that number. In summary, while our analysis indicates a significant reporting tendency for any author team that uses non-US data, whether fully composed of US-based or non-US-based scholars, it also shows that teams with a majority of non-US scholars exhibit far greater concerns regarding external validity threats, possibly due to sharing more pessimistic views about the generalizability of their data.

Finally, Model 4 reveals that the overall inclination of authors to

report external validity issues goes down ($b = -46.9642$; $p < 0.01$) as journals increasingly feature research led by non-US researchers. Interestingly, however, this effect is consistent across all sample types and does not exhibit a statistically significant difference between US-based and non-US-based samples.

2.4. Additional analyses

We conducted a number of additional analyses to assess the robustness of our results to alternative dependent variables, construct definitions, and sample specifications. First, we substituted our original dependent variable, *Number of Validity Threats*, with an alternative proxy serving as a measure for authors' beliefs regarding the typicality of their national context. A fundamental feature of the notion of typicality is that entities or qualities that are considered typical, regular, or normal do not need to be mentioned as they are taken for granted (Weick, 1995). To operationalize authors' beliefs regarding the typicality of their national context, we thus measured authors' propensity to directly name the country of sample location in the paper.

More specifically, since readers first see the paper's title and abstract, authors of a more “typical” (i.e., US-based) study—led by the belief that the US context can be taken for granted—should be less likely to name the US sample location in their title and abstract. This contrasts with the authors of a less “typical” (i.e., non-US based) study who—led by the opposite belief—should be more likely to signal the country of sample location from early on as it potentially represents a unique case. Similarly, while a proper methods section requires informing readers about the location of the study, entrenched beliefs regarding the typicality of the US context may lead authors of US-based papers to fail to report such information even if such a practice is considered an academic norm. In contrast, authors of non-US based papers may decide to comply with this norm, believing that their context is “atypical” and, hence, needs to be explicitly stated.

To construct this alternative dependent variable, we followed a similar coding procedure to the one described before. Inter-coder reliability ranged from 96 % to 100 % for the presence of a study location in the paper's title, abstract, and methods. The resulting measure was a count, as well, leading us again to estimate a set of Poisson models with journal-specific fixed effects. The results of Models 2 and 4 were

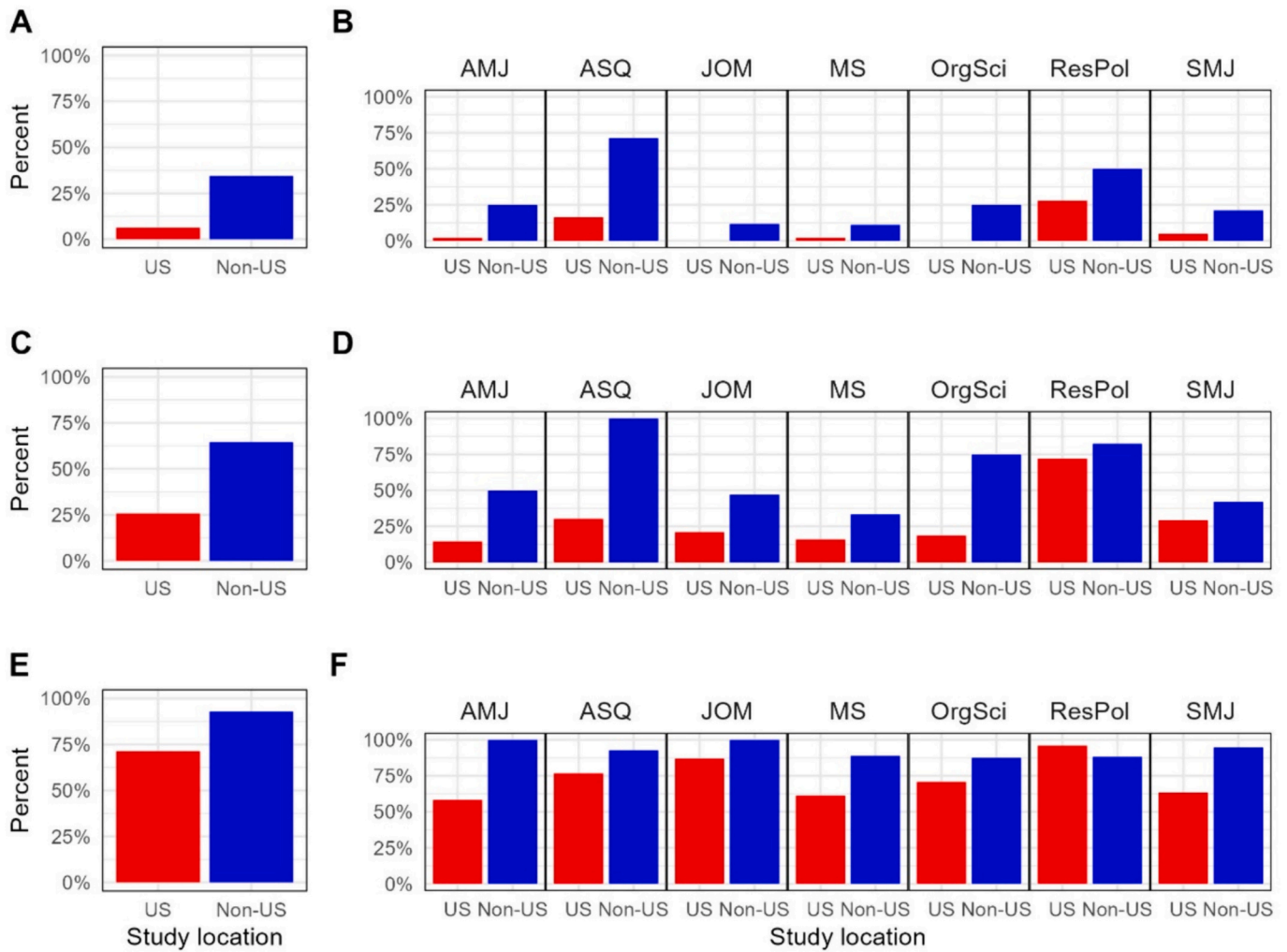


Fig. 3. Reporting country location in the title, abstract, and methods in a random sample of 400 papers published in seven top-tier journals: Panels A and B. Papers reporting location in the title (total and by journal). Panels C and D. Papers reporting location in the abstract (total and by journal); Panels E and F. Papers reporting location in the methods section (total and by journal).

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations (excluding year-specific and journal-specific fixed effects; $N = 400$).

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 DV: Number of Validity Threats	0.203	0.541	0.000	4.000	1.000							
2 Type of Study: Experimental	0.280	0.450	0.000	1.000	0.117	1.000						
3 Type of Study: Qualitative	0.073	0.260	0.000	1.000	-0.033	0.040	1.000					
4 Type of Study: Mixed	0.125	0.331	0.000	1.000	-0.072	-0.067	-0.106	1.000				
5 Non-US Paper	0.045	0.208	0.000	1.000	0.053	-0.055	-0.061	-0.082	1.000			
6 Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)	0.283	0.451	0.000	1.000	0.320	0.054	-0.004	0.082	-0.002	1.000		
7 Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper) ²	0.303	0.416	0.000	1.000	0.079	0.019	-0.035	0.095	-0.023	0.621	1.000	
8 Percent of Non-US Authors (Year)	0.265	0.407	0.000	1.000	0.041	-0.004	-0.038	0.117	-0.010	0.605	0.979	1.000

consistent with our main results, providing the same conclusions with respect to the effects of non-US study location (Model 2), and the overall percentage of non-US first authors publishing in top management journals (Model 4) (see Supplementary material: Table S1). In addition, the latter effect showed a significant negative interaction with the non-US sample dummy, thus indicating that, in some model specifications, the overall propensity of top-tier journals to publish the work of non-US authors could mitigate entrenched beliefs regarding an “atypical” provenance of the data (see Supplementary material: Table S1 and Fig. S2). Lastly, Model 3 failed to replicate the previous moderation effect of author team composition.

In a series of additional robustness checks, we introduced an

alternative construct related to the background of the authors' team. While in our main analyses, we utilized the percentage of authors affiliated with non-US universities as a proxy for potential social biases against non-US-derived samples arising from institutional norms and academic conventions of the place of work, we further explored this mechanism by replacing national university affiliation with an author's country of origin. Subsequently, we defined an alternative measure for author team composition based on the overall percentage of non-US-born co-authors. Data for constructing this measure were obtained through an extensive online search using various sources, including the authors' professional profiles on university websites, posted CV's, LinkedIn profiles, Google Scholar entries, and the ORCID database.

Table 2

Explanatory analysis of authors' variable tendencies to report external validity threats.

Variables	Fixed-effects panel regression models			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Control factors				
	0.6013	0.5450	0.4231	0.6098
<i>Limitations Section</i>	(0.555)	(0.388)	(0.389)	(0.393)
<i>Type of Study: Experimental</i>	-0.4045	-0.4727	-0.6561	-0.4562
	(0.619)	(0.869)	(0.848)	(0.885)
<i>Type of Study: Qualitative</i>	-0.7214	-0.8413	-0.6419	-0.7684
	(0.615)	(0.655)	(0.647)	(0.550)
<i>Type of Study: Mixed</i>	0.7761	0.9287*	1.0074*	1.0097*
	(0.572)	(0.563)	(0.601)	(0.571)
Explanatory factors				
<i>Non-US Paper</i>		1.9339***	1.6920***	2.8133
		(0.257)	(0.247)	(2.177)
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>ASQ</i>		-0.7354*	-0.8096*	-0.6811*
		(0.408)	(0.425)	(0.365)
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>JOM</i>		-0.3633*	-0.3366	-0.3288**
		(0.209)	(0.223)	(0.146)
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>MS</i>		-0.5972*	-0.4763	-0.5495
		(0.327)	(0.402)	(0.585)
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>OrgSci</i>		0.7470**	0.7040**	0.8088***
		(0.291)	(0.350)	(0.262)
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>ResPol</i>		-0.1862	-0.0074	-0.1661
		(0.343)	(0.530)	(0.314)
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>SMJ</i>		1.3230***	1.4895***	1.2727***
		(0.337)	(0.298)	(0.380)
<i>Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)</i>			3.7483	
			(3.074)	
<i>Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)</i> ²			-6.8850**	
			(2.993)	
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)</i>			-1.2732	
			(2.306)	
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>Percent of Non-US Authors (Paper)</i> ²			4.2517*	
			(2.389)	
<i>Percent of Non-US Authors (Year)</i>				-46.9642***
				(7.441)
<i>Non-US Paper</i> × <i>Percent of Non-US Authors (Year)</i>				-2.6354
				(6.115)
Journal fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations (N)	400	400	400	400
Journals	7	7	7	7
Model log-likelihood	-175.2	-145.9	-142.5	-143.9
Wald chi ²	1486.19***	1748.93***	1333.12***	1696.99***

Journal-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses; two-tailed tests for all variables:

*** $p < 0.01$.

** $p < 0.05$.

* $p < 0.1$.

Collectively, we managed to identify the country of origin for all but three scholars in our sample, which represented 99.7 % of the entire list of 966 authors.

We then re-ran our statistical models using both linear and curvilinear specifications of the continuous moderator, *Percent of Non-US Born Authors (Paper)*, entering it in interaction with the main effect of the *Non-US Paper* dummy.² In contrast to our main findings, we observed that these results were statistically insignificant for both the linear and non-linear specifications of the moderation effect (see Supplementary

² In our Supplementary material (Fig. S1), we also offer a set of exploratory findings using this data to distinguish between US-born and non-US-born first authors. In contrast to the first authors' university affiliations, we observe that both author categories exhibit rather similar reporting patterns for their US-based and non-US-based samples.

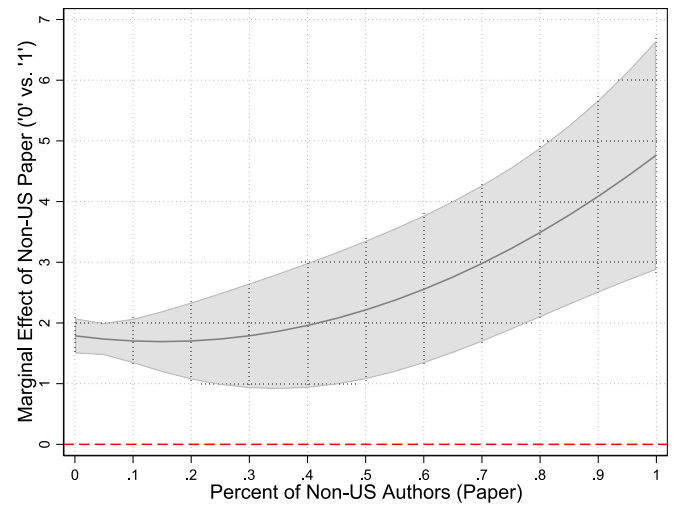


Fig. 4. The moderating effect of author team composition on the relationship between sample location and validity threats reporting. The exhibited marginal effects of the *Non-US Paper* dummy correspond to a discrete change from “0” to “1”. The shaded region represents the 95 % confidence interval, while the dashed red line indicates the absence (i.e., zero) of a significant moderation effect. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

material: Table S2). This outcome suggests that, while our primary measure of authors' non-US affiliation at the time of journal publication can effectively reflect authors' ingrained beliefs and biases regarding context typicality, which may be a byproduct of their current institutional environment, their original cultural background linked to the country of birth is probably too distant to be deemed a valid alternative construct offering the same level of empirical precision.³

To further strengthen our explanatory conclusions, we performed three additional checks. First, since non-US-based samples could be mainly studied by non-US authors (e.g., in our data, 73.5 % of the non-US based studies had a non-US first author), one could argue that different scholarly traditions (e.g., North American vs. European or Asian) are variably sensitive toward reporting external validity concerns. Therefore, we compared the reporting of *non-location-related* external validity threats between the US and non-US scholars using the propensity-score matching procedure (Abadie and Imbens, 2006). Our treatment model specified the treatment effect based on having a non-US based data sample, and it then predicted this effect using the linear and squared specifications of the percentage of non-US affiliated authors. We additionally included journal-specific fixed effects among the treatment predictors to account for any possible journal dependence in the application of the treatment condition (cf. Abadie and Imbens, 2011). Results utilizing these comprehensive assignment factors revealed no statistical differences between the non-US and US-based papers in terms of reporting *non-location-related* validity threats (see Supplementary material: Table S5). This finding thus supports our main conclusion that the observed effects could be attributed to different author perceptions of context typicality, rather than general academic traditions and norms regarding the reporting of external context.

Second, to rule out the possibility of bias in our results due to sample specification, we repeated the entire analytical procedure on a smaller

³ To reinforce this conclusion, we estimated that the pairwise correlation between both versions of the continuous moderator variable, one utilizing university information and the other derived from data on the co-authors' home countries, was around 0.6. Moreover, the pairwise correlation between a dummy variable representing non-American university affiliation of the first authors only and a dummy denoting their non-US national backgrounds was 0.53.

subsample of quantitative papers and mixed quantitative-qualitative papers only ($N = 321$). All the results were consistent with those reported here (see Supplementary material: Table S3 and Fig. S3). Third and finally, to explore whether the reporting of external validity threats is influenced by authors' beliefs or is possibly suggested during the review process by the editors and/or the reviewers, we attempted to identify when the discussion of validity threats could be introduced into the paper. To this end, we conducted a comprehensive search of drafts and conference proceedings for all the papers in our sample that reported at least one threat to external validity, utilizing the Internet archive (i.e., The Wayback Machine), SSRN, and Google Scholar. Among the sampled articles, we found earlier versions of ten only, with eight of them already listing threats to external validity at the manuscript stage. While this sample size was too small to make any generalizations, it nonetheless suggested that reporting external validity issues could be driven by authors' beliefs regarding context typicality rather than the influence of editors and reviewers.

3. Discussion

Our descriptive and explanatory findings jointly suggest that authors who study contexts that are considered as "typical" or "representative" by the international management community are less likely to report threats to external validity of their research. Specifically, studies that report a lower number of external validity threats are predominantly based on US data. While prior research showed that authors embedded in a given national context generally perceive it as more typical (Rousseau and Fried, 2001), this study suggests that this phenomenon is actually more nuanced. It is not the actual physical context (i.e., the place of residence) of an author but, rather, the social context constructed by papers published in top management journals that dictates beliefs regarding what is considered "typical," and what is not. This is possibly why authors using non-US data are more likely to cite threats to external validity even if they are physically embedded in non-US contexts, at least as suggested by our collective findings.

Moreover, since the choice of study location is strongly correlated with the author's place of residence, our results imply that the bias against non-US samples may easily translate into a bias against non-US authors. That is, a paper gets rejected not because it was written by, say, a Vietnamese author but because it was conducted in Vietnam, a context believed to be atypical. Unlike an author's name or affiliation, the context cannot be easily removed from the paper, and thus it is impossible to ensure a review process that is entirely blind to the paper's location.

Finally, our findings indicate that perceptions of generalizability can have dual consequences for the broader perception of non-US based studies. Firstly, these studies may remain underutilized due to the perception of limited generalizability. Secondly, as the "non-US based" status is often indicated in the title and abstract, the paper may not even be read due to its association with an "atypical reality." As a result, non-US studies may face challenges not only in publication but also in future citations, thereby contributing less to the advancement of the field.

3.1. Possible theoretical mechanisms behind our results

One limitation of the present study is that a theoretically motivated examination of the causal mechanisms underlying authors' decisions to report external validity threats exceeds the scope of our research note. While our primary objective was to provide a stimulus for an early empirical investigation into this phenomenon, we thus conclude by presenting some initial thoughts concerning the possibility of a theory-driven study. We propose that several distinct micro and macro-level factors could jointly explain the observed variable inclinations of authors to discuss concerns regarding the "non-typical" provenance of their data. These factors include: (1) authors' deeply rooted perceptions and biases, (2) competition among scholars vying for publications, and

(3) the institutional norms and conventions of the management discipline.

(1) Perceptions and Biases Regarding Context Typicality

Our findings strongly suggest that the reporting of external validity threats is contingent upon authors' deeply rooted perceptions and biases regarding the typicality of the US context. From a theoretical perspective, such biases may originate from social construction processes (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Ocasio et al., 2015), rather than a careful examination of the data at hand. For instance, samples of college students are sometimes believed to be of limited generalizability (Bernsten et al., 1975; Gordon et al., 1986), despite being inferior only when compared with fully random samples drawn from the entire population (Greenberg, 1987), which are rarely used in management research (Short et al., 2002). Likewise, these micro-level effects could extend to national contexts, as well, with the US being perceived as "typical."

The literature in psychology provides some cues as to why the US setting, which is clearly overrepresented in top management journals, could be perceived as more "typical" than other national settings. First, repeated exposure tends to shape human perceptions of case typicality (Barsalou, 1985). Second, research on judgment heuristics (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974) shows that frequently occurring cases are more likely to be recalled, and are thus perceived as more likely to occur. Therefore, contexts frequently featured in top management journals, such as the US context, might be considered generally more typical compared to less common ones. Finally, the psychology literature also suggests why prominent US authors may have difficulty in taking the perspective of less prominent authors from other countries, effectively assuming that their context is more typical (Galinsky et al., 2016). Conversely, less prominent authors may be more prone to adopt the views of their more prominent colleagues (Lammers et al., 2008), thus leading to a commonly shared belief in academia in the typicality of the frequently studied US setting.

(2) Competition Among Authors

Another potential mechanism explaining authors' avoidance to report their study contexts and the associated threats to the external validity of their results could be related to academic competition (Brutus et al., 2010). To publish successfully, authors must convince journal editors and reviewers that their submissions surpass others in terms of relevance and quality, deserving journal space and readers' attention. Top journals, in turn, seek broadly generalizable results that can contribute to theory (Bamberger, 2008; Cappelli and Sherer, 1991; Rousseau and Fried, 2001). As a result, authors may be incentivized to present research sites in a manner that downplays external validity issues, avoids discussing boundary conditions, and makes findings seem as generalizable as possible (Busse et al., 2017; Johns, 2006, p. 404).

(3) Institutionalized Conventions and Norms of the Management Discipline

Lastly, the likelihood of reporting external validity threats could also be influenced at the macro level by the institutional norms and conventions of the management research discipline. While established expectations exist for discussing internal, construct, and statistical conclusion validity (Amrhein et al., 2019), external validity lacks quantification and a standardized template for addressing it (Johns, 2018). Consequently, authors are often left to their own devices when reporting external validity issues (Johns, 2006; McGrath and Brinberg, 1983). Without any institutional constraints and driven by the desire to publish, authors may assume their context is typical and unaffected by external validity threats, unless their deep beliefs suggest the opposite.

In conclusion, while the scope of our current research note limits

extensive theorizing and hypothesis development, there is an opportunity to systematically examine the multilevel conceptual drivers behind our findings. As this initial discussion suggests, a combination of micro and macro-level factors is likely to contribute to the results presented in this study, prompting the need for further systematic investigation of these effects in future research.

3.2. Other limitations and future research

This study likely suffers from a somewhat limited external validity in and of itself, as the beliefs regarding context typicality identified above may not necessarily generalize to the entire population of management journals. Our research note primarily focused on top-tier journals due to their strong influence on the research practices and careers of management scholars. However, examining less prominent journals could provide valuable insights into whether the inequality observed in top journals could manifest at other levels, as well. Nonetheless, even if our results are not directly valid for the entire population of management journals, they still have relevant implications due to the outsized impact of the seven sampled top-tier outlets. A further limitation arises from the fact that our sample comprised published papers only, since we were unable to observe submissions that would eventually get rejected. However, should the perceptions of context typicality be one of the possible reasons for non-US-based studies to be rejected during the review process, the actual extent of social bias could be even greater than observed here.

Other than the already mentioned theory-driven research, our study suggests several other intriguing avenues for future research. First, it is possible that a similar set of explanatory factors to the ones explored above could operate in other dimensions of the empirical context. For instance, certain industries or professions that are studied more frequently could also be perceived as “typical” (Maloney et al., 2016), allowing authors to claim more generalizable conclusions. Second, further investigation is necessary to elucidate the specific content of the shared beliefs that influence the propensity of authors to report external validity issues. Are some authors genuinely convinced that they are studying atypical contexts, or do they feel compelled to report such threats to increase their publication chances based on the assumption that their context is perceived as “atypical” by other members of the management research community? Third, our study also raises an interesting question regarding subsequent reception of US-based studies compared to non-US-based ones. In an initial exploration of this issue, we discovered that both categories of studies receive comparable future citation rates. However, US-based studies conducted by non-US authors appear to face a citation penalty, ultimately experiencing 43 % fewer citations (see Supplementary material: Table S4). This surprising finding undoubtedly necessitates further investigation.

Finally, an important question for future research is whether the observed decrease in bias against non-US based samples, as identified in our combined results, leads to a more equitable treatment of all samples, or whether it is replaced by another form of bias. For example, Western European samples may increasingly be regarded as typical and generalizable as more studies from those countries are featured in top-tier management journals. However, could this effect also extend to studies conducted in other parts of the world? In fact, general beliefs regarding the typicality of a particular national context may remain as strong as before, with only the definition of what constitutes a “typical” context expanding as more countries join the reference group.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Przemysław Hensel: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Adam Tatarynowicz:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology,

Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2024.105020>.

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