

Adaptive Structuration within Isomorphism in Strengthening BKPSDM of Southwest Papua Province

Ignatius Randhy Frieder¹, Badu Ahmad², Muh. Akmal Ibrahim³, Didik Iskandar⁴
Hasanuddin University¹²³, Makassar State University⁴
Corresponding email: randhylisya18@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Submission : 07-05-2026
Received : 12-06-2026
Revised : 20-07-2026
Accepted : 02-08-2026

Keywords

Adaptive Structuration
Appropriation
Agency Capacity
Symbolic Adaptation

ABSTRACT

Adopting national structures, systems, and procedures does not automatically yield institutional effectiveness; what matters is the process of appropriation and adaptation by organizational actors, which becomes critical under the constraints of an affirmation setting. This study analyzes adaptive structuration across three dimensions—structure as rules and resources, the duality of structure and agency, and appropriation and adaptation—in the adoption of personnel systems and procedures at BKPSDM of Southwest Papua Province. An interpretive qualitative case-study design was used, relying on in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, analyzed with the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña under Adaptive Structuration Theory. Rules, resources, systems, and procedures are complete on paper but not yet meaningful in practice; officials' capacity to interpret, negotiate, and modify national provisions is low, so they tend to receive structure passively; and appropriation stops at the procedural level and is often misaligned with the systems' original intent. The study yields a typology of adaptation—procedural, pragmatic, and substantive. The three dimensions form a chain that breaks in the middle because the agency dimension is weak, so the adaptation that forms is dominated by the symbolic type; weak agency is the decisive link, while the typology becomes a basis for practice-based institutional-maturity measurement

Introduction

Strengthening BKPSDM in Southwest Papua Province cannot be separated from how the organization turns isomorphic pressure into real working practice. Adopting formal structures, SOPs, and technology systems does not automatically yield institutional effectiveness; what matters is the process by which rules and resources are appropriated and adapted by organizational actors into real work contexts. Under affirmation conditions marked by limited human resources, uneven infrastructure, and work needs not always compatible with a uniform design, this adaptation process determines whether institutional strengthening is substantive or merely administrative.

Symptoms appear across three dimensions. On structure as rules and resources, BKPSDM cannot yet operationalize the national personnel systems (SIASN, e-Kinerja, Talent Management System) optimally; limited ICT infrastructure outside Sorong and low

digital competence leave the systems present as a formal obligation but unembedded in practice. Rules and resources are effective only when actors can interpret and use them meaningfully (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994; Rossi et al., 2025a). On the duality of structure and agency, the capacity to negotiate or modify national policy to fit the affirmation context is weak—a joint training evaluation with LAN Makassar (September 2024) showed over 60% of participants struggling with material too technocratic, signaling that actors lack room to reshape structure (Giddens, 2017; Rossi et al., 2025a). On appropriation and adaptation, modules and procedures from other provinces are adopted without substantive adjustment, so appropriation is misaligned with the systems' original spirit and stops at procedural compliance (Wæraas & Nielsen, 2016).

The problem can be stated thus: BKPSDM undergoes a failure of adaptive structuration—the rules, resources, and systems adopted are not appropriated in an aligned way into local working practice, owing to weak internal agency capacity, limited infrastructure, and narrow room for modification—so the adaptation that occurs is more symbolic than substantive.

Theoretical justification and Justification of the Selected Framework

Three traditions address structural adaptation. Contingency Theory ties effectiveness to structure–environment fit, (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) showing differentiation inversely related to integration; configuration questions have lately revived (Joseph & Sengul, 2025), though Shenkar & Ellis, (2022), in a "theoretical autopsy," attribute the original formulation's decline partly to determinism — it names the factors that should shape structure without explaining how structural decisions are reached or accounting for actors' interpretive work. That silence matters most in public organizations, which Frumkin, (2004) find more susceptible than firms or non-profits to coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures, making the "environment" a field of institutional prescription rather than task demand; form adopted for legitimacy yields the hollow compliance Meyer & Rowan, (1977) called decoupling, later disaggregated into policy–practice and means–ends variants by Bromley & Powell, (2012). Structuration Theory answers at the level of principle: (Giddens) (2017, 1986) holds that structure exists only as instantiated in practice, explaining why identical arrangements yield divergent practices — a divergence convergence-focused institutional accounts underplay (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Yet it specifies what structure is, not what to observe, a gap Po-An Hsieh et al., (2008) document across 331 information systems articles, consistent with the over-reach and tautology Alvesson & Spicer, (2019) diagnose in grand social theories.

Organizational Ambidexterity treats adaptation as allocation: March, (1991) showed over-investment in exploitation because its returns are nearer and more legible, though Wilden et al., (2018) note his behavioural roots were largely abandoned; O'Reilly & Tushman, (2021) recast ambidexterity as a culturally shaped dynamic capability, with government applications multiplying (Alfiani et al., 2024). Its premises are demanding — senior-team consensus, a functioning exploitative core, discretionary resources — and where

baseline capacity is absent the tradeoff is not the binding constraint, the condition Andrews et al., (2013) call the capability trap, in which isomorphic mimicry reproduces the appearance of performance while implementation capacity stagnates, and which Pritchett et al., (2013) term "looking like a state."

Adaptive Structuration Theory answers this operationalization problem directly. DeSanctis & Poole, (1994) developed AST after observing that intended changes often fail to materialize despite technology being formally present; it retains the structuration insight while supplying the observable constructs Giddens does not. Structure as rules and resources holds that systems become effective only insofar as actors attach meaning to them: a rule's presence does not constitute structure. Duality of structure and agency treats actors as capable of reproducing or modifying structure through use, with one qualification — Rossi et al., (2025b) find that frontline officials implementing an information system exercise agency individually while organizational and institutional conditions constrain both that agency and implementation outcomes; agency is real but bounded, and the boundary is an empirical question. Appropriation and adaptation ties effectiveness to alignment between actual use and the design's spirit, admitting that a system may be procedurally faithful yet appropriated against its purpose — a pattern established in the translation literature (Spyridonidis et al., 2016; Wæraas & Nielsen, 2016) and reported in Indonesian organizations adopting external governance models (Afif et al., 2023). Selection rests on level of analysis, not relative quality.

This study concerns an organization that has adopted the prescribed form and installed the mandated systems yet whose practice remains unaltered. Contingency theory cannot address this because the structure, on its own criteria, already fits; ambidexterity cannot, because the constraint lies upstream of its tradeoff (Andrews et al., 2013b); structuration can in principle but offers no observable constructs (Po-An Hsieh et al., 2008b). AST alone explains how an organization interprets and operationalizes systems, rules, and procedures into local practice — the core of institutional adaptation — and its dimensions convert into indicators: whether actors can make meaning of available rules and resources, whether they have room to modify structure through use (Rossi et al., 2025c), and whether appropriation aligns with the design's spirit (Wæraas & Nielsen, 2016). The framework is analyzed in the arena of adopting national personnel systems and procedures (Figure 1).

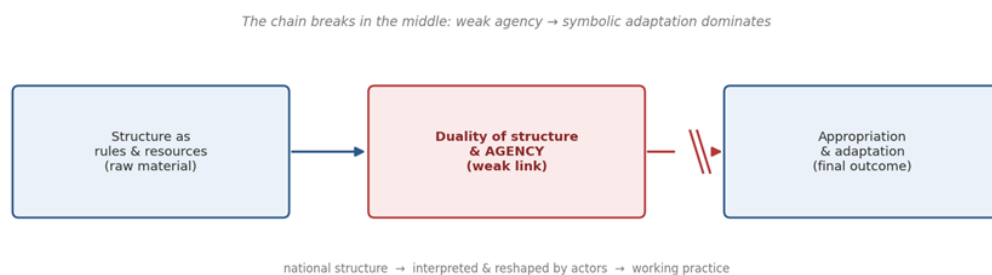


Figure 1 Analytical framework: three dimensions of adaptive structuration

Method

The study uses an interpretive qualitative approach with a case-study design to understand in depth the appropriation and adaptation of structure in the working practice of BKPSDM officials in Sorong City—chosen because the institution must operationalize national systems and procedures under limited capacity and infrastructure. Primary data come from implementing officials, structural officials, and personnel-system operators directly involved in using SIASN, e-Kinerja, and training procedures; secondary data come from SOPs, system documentation, and training-evaluation reports.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with system users, participant observation of daily practice, and documentation study of SOPs and system-implementation evaluations. Analysis used the interactive model (Miles et al., 2020), with AST guiding the mapping of appropriation patterns—aligned or misaligned—for each adopted structural element. Trustworthiness was maintained through triangulation of five informant groups, five groups of secondary documents, and observation.

Results And Discussion

Structure as rules and resources: available but not yet meaningful

Personnel rules—national regulation and technical procedures alike—are complete and documented, but officials’ understanding is uneven: some grasp them deeply, others only as far as their daily tasks. Activity documents record that socialization and technical guidance are neither regular nor comprehensive, so understanding grows more from experience than from planned mentoring. The problem is not the existence of rules but the uneven capacity of actors to make meaning of them.

On the resource side, authority, data, and budget are limited—most acute for data and authority, since some are managed centrally, so work is often delayed awaiting data. The use of national personnel systems is formally enacted at a high level (80–92%) but embedded in practice far less (30–50%): the gap is widest for the Talent Management System (about 50 points) and narrowest for personnel SOPs (about 42 points), since written procedures are easier to apply than technology-based systems (Figure 2). Procedures too are available but inconsistently used—some simplified or skipped in execution without documentation.

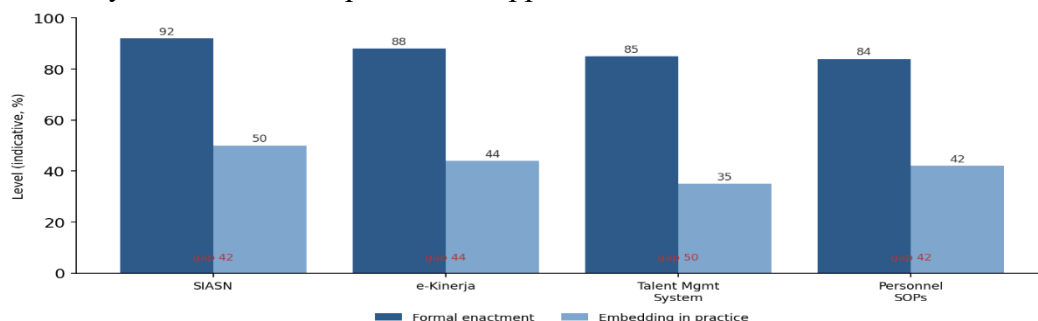


Figure 2 Use of personnel systems: formal enactment vs embedding in practice

Source; BKPSDM Southwest Papua

All four confirm one pattern: rules, resources, systems, and procedures are available at the document level but not yet meaningful in practice. Structure becomes effective only when actors can interpret and use it (Table 1).

Table 1 Findings matrix — structure as rules and resources

Sub-finding	Evidence base	Category
Understanding of rules	Regulation set, socialization documents	Medium
Supporting resources	Personnel data, budget documents, workflow	Weak
Use of national systems	System implementation reports, obstacle notes	Weak
Functioning of procedures	Procedure documents, observation notes	Medium
Availability–meaning gap	Cross-reading of all documents above	Weak

Source: compiled from research, 2026.

Duality of structure and agency: a one-way relationship

Officials' capacity to interpret national policy is limited: policy is received in fixed form and run to the letter, even when it does not quite fit field conditions. Follow-up documents are usually circulars that repeat the wording without contextual interpretation guidance—this absence is evidence that interpretation is not institutionalized. Room to negotiate national provisions is narrow too: no documents record adjustment proposals or negotiation with the center, so actors cannot modify structure even when they see the mismatch.

The ability to modify procedures for context is also low: adjustments are on-the-spot simplifications, not designed, study-based modifications—no procedure-revision documents built on contextual fit were found. As a result, officials tend to receive structure passively; but this passivity springs not from indifference but from limited room and capacity. The one-directional document pattern—receiving and executing, not proposing or reshaping—reveals a structure–agency relationship that runs one way, from structure down to actors, never returning (Table 2).

Table 2 Findings matrix — duality of structure and agency

Sub-finding	Evidence base	Category
Capacity to interpret policy	Follow-up documents; absence of interpretation guidance	Weak
Room to negotiate provisions	Training/recruitment documents; absence of proposals	Weak

Sub-finding	Evidence base	Category
Ability to modify procedures	Procedure documents, observation; no study-based revision	Weak
Passive receipt of structure	One-directional document pattern	Consistent
Structure–agency imbalance	Imbalance in count and type of documents	Weak

Source: compiled from research, 2026.

Appropriation and adaptation: stopping at the procedural level

Appropriation of systems and procedures tends to stop at procedural use: systems are run and procedures followed, but more to meet obligations than to improve work—reports are dominated by activity-target fulfillment and rarely record resulting work improvement. Alignment with original intent is often unmet too: the performance-appraisal system mostly produces administrative reporting rather than improvement plans, and training mostly meets activity-count targets rather than examining capability gains. This is deepened by dependence on external institutions: without independent accreditation, training content and pattern are largely set by providers, narrowing the organization’s control over the very structure it uses.

From the whole process a typology of adaptation emerges—procedural (stopping at format compliance), pragmatic (partial adjustment), and substantive (genuinely changing working capacity). Its distribution is skewed: practice is dominated by procedural adaptation, only a small share is pragmatic, and substantive is very limited (Figure 3). Appropriation at BKPSDM thus yields symbolic adaptation more than substantive (Table 3).

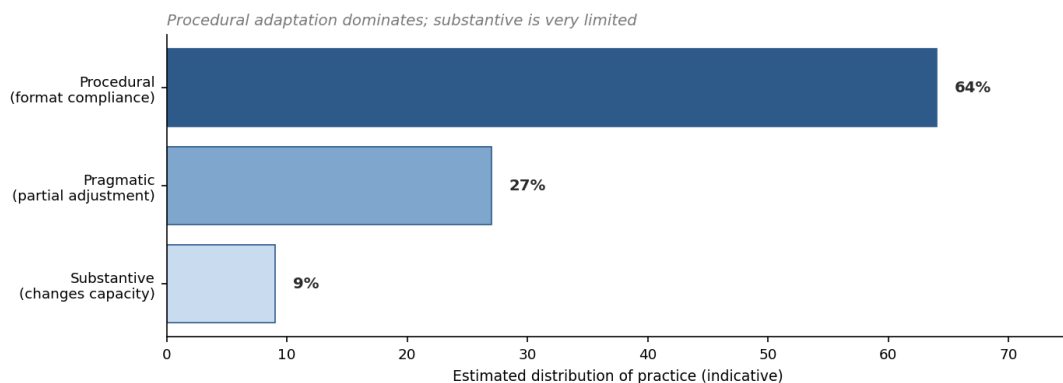


Figure 3 Distribution of the structural-adaptation typology at BKPSDM

Table 3 Findings matrix — appropriation and adaptation

Sub-finding	Evidence base	Category
Procedural appropriation pattern	System implementation reports, activity reports	Shallow

Sub-finding	Evidence base	Category
Alignment with original intent	Performance & training reports; rare follow-up	Misaligned
External dependence	Cooperation documents, accreditation status	High
Adaptation typology	Implementation documents, activity reports, observation	Procedural
Dominance of symbolic adaptation	Documents: formal fulfillment without capacity change	Symbolic

Source: compiled from research, 2026.

Cross-dimension synthesis

The three dimensions link sequentially: structure supplies the raw material, the structure–agency duality determines whether actors can interpret and reshape it, and appropriation determines whether the final result is substantive or symbolic. Because the middle dimension—agency—is weak, the chain stalls at procedural appropriation. This is why adopted national structure does not turn directly into effective practice: between the two sits a limited internal agency capacity, so appropriation tends to be symbolic (Table 4).

Table 4 Synthesis of the linkage among the three dimensions

Dimension	Core finding	Role in the adaptation flow
Structure (rules & resources)	Structure available but not yet meaningful to actors	Supplies the raw material for adaptation
Duality of structure & agency	Limited agency capacity; structure received passively	Determines the ability to reshape structure
Appropriation & adaptation	Appropriation stops at procedural & symbolic levels	Determines the final institutional-adaptation outcome

Source: compiled from research, 2026.

If the previous part traced how isomorphic pressure produces structure beyond capacity, the next question is what happens once that structure is adopted. The first thing that appears is a paradox of completeness: rules are available, systems installed, procedures neatly documented—yet almost none of it truly lives in practice. At BKPSDM, structure is present as potential, not as an active guide to action—and here DeSanctis & Poole, (1994) basic proposition is relevant: structure is effective only when actors can interpret and use it meaningfully; without that, it stays dead on paper. What matters is not to misread where the

problem lies. The easiest temptation is to blame the structure—too few systems, too few rules—yet the evidence points the other way: rule documents are complete while socialization is limited. The weakness is not the availability of structure but what we might call the infrastructure of meaning-making (Frumkin, 2004b; Shenkar & Ellis, 2022). The implication is sharp: if meaning-making capacity is low, adding new rules or systems strengthens nothing—it merely piles on one more formal layer as unmeaning as the last.

From here we reach the heart of the matter: how actors stand before structure. In DeSanctis and Poole (1994), inherited from Giddens (1984), actors are not passive recipients but agents empowered to reproduce and to modify structure—two-way. Yet the findings show the opposite: limited interpretive capacity, narrow negotiating room, near-absent ability to modify, so what occurs is passive receipt. One distinction must not be missed: this passivity springs not from indifference but from limited room and capacity—a distinction that keeps the analysis from moralizing about people and returns it to the structural problem. The contrast with the literature sharpens it: (Joseph & Sengul, 2025) find that public organizations that successfully adapt policy are those that actively negotiate the use of structure to their unit's capacity, not those that swallow it whole. BKPSDM stands at the opposite pole, and the absence of proposal documents, interpretation guides, and study-based revisions marks one thing: a duality that should be two-way runs one way only. This is the weakest link, for it is agency that bridges the availability of structure to meaningful use; when that middle bridge is fragile, even the best structure never reaches substantive practice.

The effect of weak agency is plain at the chain's end. Appropriation stops at the procedural level and often strays from the systems' intent: performance appraisal that should yield improvement plans stops at reporting documents; training that should raise capability settles for meeting participant targets. This is what DeSanctis and Poole (1994) call misaligned appropriation—structure is used, but the way it is used departs from its animating spirit, so only surface compliance forms, with no capacity change beneath. Simpson et al., (2020) & Tetteh et al., (2021) meet an almost identical face in Ghana's local governments. At BKPSDM the condition is deepened by dependence on external institutions for lack of independent accreditation, which narrows control over the content of the structure it uses—though aligned appropriation requires precisely such control.

From reading the three dimensions comes the most distinctive contribution: a graded typology of adaptation—procedural, pragmatic, substantive—that enriches AST, which has read appropriation in black and white (aligned versus misaligned). This gradation is finer and more usable for reading capacity-limited public organizations, and it grounds a practice-based measure of institutional maturity—shifting the yardstick from document completeness toward depth of appropriation. Set together, the three dimensions form a sequential chain that breaks in the middle: because agency is weak, the available raw material is never truly worked, so the dominance of symbolic adaptation at BKPSDM is not chance but the logical consequence of a blocked agency dimension.

Conclusion

On the structure dimension, rules, resources, systems, and procedures are complete on paper but not yet alive in practice: understanding of rules is uneven, data and authority are limited by centralization, and system use stops at meeting reporting obligations. Structure is present only as potential, and its weakness lies not in availability but in the infrastructure of meaning-making. On the duality dimension, actors tend to receive structure passively—limited interpretive capacity, narrow negotiating room, low modification ability—not from indifference but from limited room and capacity, so a duality that should be two-way runs one way only. This is the weakest link. On appropriation, weak agency leads to use that stops at the procedural level and is often misaligned with original intent, deepened by dependence on external institutions, so adaptation is dominated by the procedural level and substantive is very limited.

The three dimensions form a chain that breaks in the middle: structure supplies the raw material, agency determines whether it can be worked, and appropriation determines whether the result is substantive or symbolic; because agency is weak, the available raw material is never truly worked. Formally adequate structure settles as unrealized potential, and here adding new rules or systems strengthens nothing but piles on unmeaning formal layers. From this diagnosis the direction of strengthening emerges: moving structure from document status into practice by strengthening agency capacity, not by adding structure. Three openings appear—building the infrastructure of meaning-making (institutionalized policy-interpretation mentoring), opening and documenting agency room (so actors can interpret, negotiate, and modify procedures), and reducing external dependence (including through independent accreditation). By raising adaptation from procedural toward pragmatic and substantive, genuine institutional strengthening becomes possible, because the yardstick shifts from document completeness to depth of appropriation

References

- Alfiani, H., Kurnia Aditya, S., Lusa, S., Indra Sensuse, D., Wibowo Putro, P. A., & Indriasari, S. (2024). E-Government Issues in Developing Countries Using TOE and UTAUT Frameworks: A Systematic Review. *Policy & Governance Review*, 8(2), 169. <https://doi.org/10.30589/pgr.v8i2.932>
- Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2019). Neo-Institutional Theory and Organization Studies: A Mid-Life Crisis? *Organization Studies*, 40(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618772610>
- Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., & Woolcock, M. (2013a). Escaping Capability Traps Through Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA). *World Development*, 51, 234–244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.05.011>
- Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., & Woolcock, M. (2013b). Escaping Capability Traps Through Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA). *World Development*, 51, 234–244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.05.011>
- Bromley, P., & Powell, W. W. (2012). From Smoke and Mirrors to Walking the Talk: Decoupling in the Contemporary World. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1), 483–530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2012.684462>

- DeSanctis, G., & Poole, M. S. (1994). Capturing the Complexity in Advanced Technology Use: Adaptive Structuration Theory. *Organization Science*, 5(2), 121–147. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.5.2.121>
- Frumkin, P. (2004a). Institutional Isomorphism and Public Sector Organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 14(3), 283–307. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muh028>
- Frumkin, P. (2004b). Institutional Isomorphism and Public Sector Organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 14(3), 283–307. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muh028>
- Giddens, A. (2017). The Consequences of Modernity. In *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, 6(11), 951–952.
- Giddens, Anthony. (1986). The constitution of society : outline of the theory of structuration. Polity.
- Joseph, J., & Sengul, M. (2025). Organization Design: Current Insights and Future Research Directions. *Journal of Management*, 51(1), 249–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063241271242>
- Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1967). Differentiation and Integration in Complex Organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2391211>
- March, J. G. (1991). Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning. *Organization Science*, 2(1), 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.71>
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340–363. <https://doi.org/10.1086/226550>
- Miles, M. B. ., Huberman, A. M. ., & Saldaña, Johnny. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis : a methods sourcebook*. SAGE.
- Mufti Afif, Ahmad Agus Hidayat, Ahmad Suminto, Taufiqul Alvin Abidin, & Fahmi Akhyar Al Farabi. (2023). Analysis of Zakat Management with Institutional Isomorphic Theorizing Approach. *Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance Studies*, 4(2), 214–235. <https://doi.org/10.47700/jiefes.v4i2.6333>
- O'Reilly, C. A., & Tushman, M. L. (2021). *Lead and Disrupt*. Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503629639>
- Po-An Hsieh, J. J., Rai, A., & Keil, M. (2008a). Giddens's Structuration Theory and Information Systems Research <scp>1</scp>. *MIS Quarterly*, 32(1), 127-A14. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25148831>
- Po-An Hsieh, J. J., Rai, A., & Keil, M. (2008b). Giddens's Structuration Theory and Information Systems Research <scp>1</scp>. *MIS Quarterly*, 32(1), 127-A14. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25148831>
- Powell, W. W. ., & DiMaggio, Paul. (1991). *The New institutionalism in organizational analysis*. University of Chicago Press.
- Pritchett, L., Woolcock, M., & Andrews, M. (2013). Looking Like a State: Techniques of Persistent Failure in State Capability for Implementation. *Journal of Development Studies*, 49(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2012.709614>
- Rossi, P., Tuurnas, S., & Stenvall, J. (2025a). Street-level bureaucrats as policymakers in the implementation of information system in social services. *Public Management Review*, 27(3), 702–721. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2024.2362247>
- Rossi, P., Tuurnas, S., & Stenvall, J. (2025b). Street-level bureaucrats as policymakers in the implementation of information system in social services. *Public Management Review*, 27(3), 702–721. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2024.2362247>
- Rossi, P., Tuurnas, S., & Stenvall, J. (2025c). Street-level bureaucrats as policymakers in the implementation of information system in social services. *Public Management Review*, 27(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2024.2362247>

- Shenkar, O., & Ellis, S. (2022). The Rise and Fall of Structural Contingency Theory: A Theory's 'autopsy.' *Journal of Management Studies*, 59(3), 782–818. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12772>
- Simpson, S. N. Y., Tetteh, L. A., & Agyenim-Boateng, C. (2020). Exploring the socio-cultural factors in the implementation of public financial management information system in Ghana. *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change*, 16(3), 349–368. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAOC-10-2018-0100>
- Spyridonidis, D., Currie, G., Heusinkveld, S., Strauss, K., & Sturdy, A. (2016). The Translation of Management Knowledge: Challenges, Contributions and New Directions. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 18(3), 231–235. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12110>
- Tetteh, L. A., Agyenim-Boateng, C., Simpson, S. N. Y., & Susuawu, D. (2021). Public sector financial management reforms in Ghana: insights from institutional theory. *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies*, 11(5), 691–713. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAEE-06-2020-0134>
- Wæraas, A., & Nielsen, J. A. (2016). Translation Theory 'Translated': Three Perspectives on Translation in Organizational Research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 18(3), 236–270. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12092>
- Wilden, R., Hohberger, J., Devinney, T. M., & Lavie, D. (2018). Revisiting James March (1991): Whither exploration and exploitation? *Strategic Organization*, 16(3), 352–369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127018765031>