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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** G. Keong Leong is a Professor and the Chair of the Management Department in the College of Business, University of Nevada Las Vegas. He received an MBA and a PhD from the University of South Carolina. He has published papers in *Journal of Operations Management*, *Decision Sciences*, *Interfaces*, *Journal of Management*, *European Journal of Operational Research* and *International Journal of Production Research*. His current research interests include supply chain management, international operations, operations strategy and technology management. He has co-authored three books, won research and teaching awards and received an Educator of the Year award from the Asian Chamber of Commerce in Las Vegas. He has also held leadership positions in the Decision Sciences Institute such as Editor of Decision Line, At-Large Vice-President, Associate Program Chair, Chair of the Innovative Education Committee, Chair of the Doctoral Student Affairs Committee, and Co-Chair of Manufacturing Management Track. At the Academy of Management, he has served as the Operations Management Division Program Chair.

Keah-Choon Tan is an Associate Professor of Operations Management at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. He received his PhD in Production and Operations Management from Michigan State University. He has published papers in the areas of supply chain management, quality and operations scheduling in a number of trade magazines and academic journals, including *Decision Sciences*, *European Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, *International Journal of Production Research*, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *Omega* and *Quality Management Journal*. He is a co-author of the *Principles of Supply Chain Management: A Balanced Approach*. He is the executive editor of the *International Journal of Integrated Supply Management*, and also serves on the editorial board of the *Industrial Management and Data Systems Journal*.

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## 1 Introduction

We are very pleased to present this Special Issue on *Supply Chain Management in the Information Age*. This special issue seeks to address critical issues, problems and solutions in managing operations and information systems in manufacturing and services

environments; and to present emerging and applicable knowledge and best practices to improve operations and systems performance throughout the supply chain. The emphasis on supply chain management is increasing around the world, and we are seeing an ever-increasing number of interesting, thought-provoking and high-quality research projects taking place. Along with this trend, *IJIEM* is building a reputation for publishing many of these papers, and we certainly appreciate the many supply chain researchers using *IJIEM* as their publishing outlet.

This special issue has six outstanding papers, covering the topics that include the drivers of product return in the information age, the effects of IT implementation on supply chain collaboration, a study into the creation of feral information systems, the impact of organisational factors at different levels of inter-organisational Information Systems development on supply chain partnerships, supply chain management issues in Korea and simplification of the procurement process by using e-commerce. A brief summary of each of these papers are presented as follows.

The paper, 'The drivers of product return in the information age', by Honggeng Zhou, R. Daniel Reid, and W.C. Benton Jr., notes the increasing importance of managing product returns over the past two decades due to its impact on costs. Using the data from a study of 125 North American manufacturers, the authors develop a scale for product return practices. The result of this study indicates that factors such as information quality, manufacturing technology, just-in-time production, delivery process, cost leadership strategy and the supply chain dynamism have a positive significant effect on product return practices.

Supply chain collaboration has been an important research topic due to its influence on performance. Ling Li in her paper entitled 'The effects of information technology implementation on supply chain collaboration', analyses data from the 133 Chinese companies to test several hypotheses associated with technology implementation, staff training and supply chain collaboration, business decision communication, production improvement and market competitiveness. The research stresses the importance of staff training in information technology implementation and finds that the impact of information technology implementation on market performance is mediated by successful collaboration among supply chain members and effective communication in the decision-making process.

SAP represents one of the most widely implemented Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software solution and have enjoyed global success. However, there are detractors who claim that SAP is highly structured and that changing to SAP is complex and challenging. The paper, 'A study into the creation of feral information systems as a response to an ERP implementation within the supply chain of a large government-owned corporation', by Luke Houghton and Don Kerr concludes that the rigid structure of SAP most likely contributed to the development of the feral system in a large government-owned corporation. The authors define feral system "as an information system that is developed by individuals or groups of employees to help them with their work, but is not condoned by management nor is part of the corporation's accepted information technology infrastructure".

Previous studies have found that organisational factors have an impact on partnership cooperation and collaboration. Elizabeth A. Williamson, Mike Jordan and David K. Harrison in their paper entitled 'The impact of organisational factors at different levels of IOS development on supply chain partnerships', describe three case

studies of companies at various levels of information systems development. This study examines the impact of organisational factors such as trust, power, organisational culture and management leadership style on supply chain partnerships.

Many researchers have found that a long-term orientation is necessary for developing successful relationships between supply chain members. The paper, 'Does culture matter? Collectivism, long-term orientation and supply chain management in Korea', by Sungmin Ryu, Jang-Hui Han and Jonathan Frank investigate the effect of collectivism, an important cultural factor, on supply chain partnerships in an empirical study of 105 companies in Korea. They find that collectivism influences the development of a long-term orientation for the supply chain partners.

Finally, Mateja Podlogar in the paper, 'Simplifying the procurement process by using e-commerce', presents several factors that simplify the procurement process and provide operational benefits to the company. This study analyses survey data from a sample of large enterprises in Slovenia and finds that processes such as bidding, access to suppliers' goods or catalogues, ordering from the supplier and order tracking can be simplified using e-commerce.

We hope these papers provide guidelines for practitioners and create ideas for further research.

### **Acknowledgements**

A large part of our success is due to our Editorial Review Board members – without them, this special issue would not exist. Our reviewers are able to provide many value-enhancing suggestions to the submitted manuscripts and we have been fortunate enough to find reviewers who can complete the reviews according to schedule, enabling us to provide quick feedback to the authors. Thus, we wish to offer a tremendous thank you to the members of the review board for a job well done. We also would like to extend our appreciation to all the authors who submitted manuscripts to this special issue and to the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Eldon Li, for his encouragement and assistance in preparing this special issue. We also congratulate the authors of the manuscripts, which have been accepted for publication in this issue, for their enthusiasm, patience and cooperation.