
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Kamil Omoteso received his PhD in Accounting Information Systems from De Montfort University, UK where he is currently a Senior Lecturer in Accounting and the Programme Leader for MSc Project Management. He began his academic career in 2001 at Lagos State University, Nigeria after a five-year work experience in an accounting practice. His research interests cover ICT impact on organisations, auditing, accountability and governance. He currently supervises doctoral students within these research areas. He is also the Chair of Centre for African Resources Research and Development.

Gbolahan Gbadamosi received his PhD in Management from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. He has over two decades of experience in HE and currently a Senior Lecturer at the University of Worcester, UK. He is on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of African Business* and regularly reviews manuscripts for other scholarly journals. He has undertaken research into various aspects of management in developing countries especially contemporary Africa. He currently supervises doctoral students and is an active member of the 'Centre for People at Work' at his university. He has published extensively in reputable journals including *Management Decision* and the *Journal of Management Development*.

The papers in this special issue highlight some of the most cutting edge research in the specialised area of decision making models and computer-based decision aids. All the selected papers deal with the multi-faceted perspective of evaluating decision support systems and intelligent-based systems for strategic decision making. Such strategic decisions are capable of shaping the future direction, position and earnings of business organisations.

It is certainly valuable to shed light on the motivation – including the how and why – for the use of various decision models and decision aids in strategic management. While the impact of such decision making tools on the quality of strategic decisions and the overall performance of the organisations involved may seem obvious, yet there are challenges posed by the very use of these tools and techniques as well as vital future implications.

In the first paper, Severine Sperandio and Philippe Girard focus on improving strategic decision making processes in their paper ‘Decision-making framework methodology: risk assessment in strategic management’. Using a company that produces ice cream as case study, the authors analyse risk management procedure for strategic projects in order to facilitate decision making at the senior management level and consequently enhance global performance of organisations. The method they advocate could be useful in both preventive and autonomous maintenance in many work environments.

Luiz Flávio Autran Monteiro Gomes, Helen Moshkovich and Adriano Torres, in their paper ‘Marketing decisions in small businesses: how verbal decision analysis can help’, examine the ORCLASS method of verbal decision analysis in a real application. Decision making in small business can be more complex and risky than many acknowledge, and this paper demonstrates that adopting a qualitative method of decision support can benefit the marketing of small businesses significantly.

In their paper on ‘Trade credit evaluation for Taiwan’s broadband communications equipment manufacturers’ Yi-Hui Chiang and Chih-Young Hung propose an effective fuzzy multiple-criteria-decision-making (MCDM) structure for trade credit evaluation in Taiwan. Using the broadband telecommunication equipment manufacturers as example, the authors provide a comprehensive and scientific framework of trade credit evaluation which may be applicable in other settings.

Magdy M. Kabeil’s paper demonstrates the validity of the analytical hierarchy process (AHP) and quality function deployment (QFD) approaches as a framework for developing a decision support system for crisis management in his paper ‘An AHP-QFD approach to developing DSS for crisis management’. Using an illustrative example, the paper posits that this framework should be used as a guide allowing the development of a realistic system that is capable of meeting most expected scenarios. Consequently, the framework can be a foundation for the development of flexible, accurate and reusable DSS for crisis management.

Khurram Shahzad and Ghulam Mustafa evaluate the concept of ‘Virtual data warehouse’ with the aim of providing reliable and consistent information for decision support and they also developed an exploratory four-dimensional tool with the capability of implementing virtual data warehouse. They found that implementing virtual data warehouse enhances schema and content flexibility as well as improves data for decision support purposes, but, perhaps more interestingly, that when the size of the data warehouse is not too large, the performance of the conventional data warehouse is slightly better than that of virtual data warehouse.

Mukaila Rahman, Harison Longe, Olaide Abass and Safiriyu Elegbede focus on ‘Agent-based decision-making support in virtual enterprise systems’. Using product manufacturing management as a case study, the authors proposed a multi-agent system framework for a virtual enterprise (VE) involved in the manufacturing of products. The model further illustrates how the existing decision support system (DSS) in the enterprise systems is enhanced and made more efficient by agent technology. This framework,

Rahman et al. argue will improve managerial decisions concerning supply chain management, enhance the organisation of businesses and aid the development of unique capabilities for competitive advantage.

We hope that this special issue of the journal on: 'Decision models, decision aids and strategic decision making' stimulates future rigorous research on decision support systems, decision models, decision aids and strategic decision making. Studies like the ones reported in this special issue will certainly facilitate further advancements in theory and practice thus extending the boundaries of knowledge in this special area of management and decision making.

Finally, we would like to seize this opportunity to thank all the authors who submitted their manuscripts for this special issue as well as the referees who reviewed these papers for their efforts, time and invaluable suggestions. We also like to thank the Editor-in-Chief of *Inderscience*, Dr. Dorgham, and his team for this opportunity to serve as guest editors.