
Editorial

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Manufacturing industry has been transformed from the traditional factory-oriented system towards international and inter-firm networks. And these networks are now experiencing further fundamental challenges globally under several major drivers such as the last year's financial crisis, emerging economies' participation in globalisation, and social and ecologic sustainable requirements. These changes and eagerness for new thinking and guidance are incubating many not only novel business practices and creative industrial solutions but also fresh theoretical observations and promising theories in the globalised operations and production management territory. Traditionally, classical operations and production management as well as manufacturing or industrial engineering have more focus on factory-oriented strategic and operational issues. In the last 20 years, inter-firm supply chain management has pushed the discipline towards more complex networks scenarios. Network-based empirical observations and theoretical developments have energised our classical body of knowledge and excited our practitioners, researchers and teachers. However, how can we face the current challenges from multiple aspects including finance, competition, international politics, and technology, social and even ecological environment? We think it is very timely for our discipline to explore wider range of theoretical territories including innovation, globalisation and sustainable development. It is also urgent to address the interaction between the above issues on even higher levels towards corporate, inter-firm network, industrial sector, and country.

This special issue is seeking to address various kinds of global supply chain issues in turbulent business environment. It focused on the explorations of emerging business models to tackle the current and emerging challenges and to pursue higher value creation and appropriation in multinational corporations and/or globally collaborative networks. The special issue will also take advantage of the 4th International Supply Chain Management: Symposium and Workshop in Madrid, Spain, 22–24 September 2010 (SCMMadrid, available at <http://symposiumscm2010.ie.edu/>).

Thus, the articles in this special issue of the *International Journal of Business Excellence* address business excellence through the documentation and diffusion of best practices in global supply chain management. They have been subjected to multiple and rigorous reviews at all levels of submission (conference and journal). Over 40 professors participated in the review process and deserve special recognition for their service and their dedication to quality. The end result is a special issue of exceptional quality.

In the first article, Hong and Kim discuss the significance of business network excellence in creating competitive advantage. The study aims to examine the emerging concept of business excellence from a value chain network perspective and presents critical dimensions of business network excellence in terms of governance, network process details, supportive infrastructure, and performance measures for sustainable competitive advantage. Successful Korean firms have been family-owned and thus shown strong ownership governance, which enabled them to take risky projects and make speedy decisions and support system throughout the supply chain. They also designed and developed excellent business network via forward and backward integration and streamlined from supply to demand chains.

Nahm et al. address the importance of employees' perceived job security in order for lean implementation to succeed. Basing on a survey of 180 production workers in the Midwest, USA, the study finds the critical role of perceived job security, trust in management, and lean training in enhancing the perception of personal benefits of lean, which leads to lean implementation success. The results support the notion that lean implementation success depends upon conducive mindset for lean among production workers, which objects to the prevalent goal of reducing laying off people to implement lean practices.

Park et al. discuss the impact of product architecture on integration manufacturing information systems by comparing Japanese and Korean firms. Despite superior technology and excellent quality performance of Japanese firms, global competitiveness of Japanese electronic firms has been deteriorating in 2000s. In contrast, Korean counterparts have emerged as significant global competitors. The research contributes the difference to product architecture and manufacturing information systems. While Japanese firms have solid base of monozukuri system from product concept planning to delivery to customers, Korean firms integrate product architecture with integrated manufacturing information system. In addition, Japanese firms suffer from closed product architecture compared to Korean firms that adopted open modular architecture instead.

Shymko and Diaz explore the sustainable partnership in buyer-supplier relations. Reconciling resource dependence, social network and contingency theories, the research examines the role of context and actors in the dynamics of strategic alliance development, and their effect on its subsequent sustainability. Basing on Rolls-Royce and Airbus partnership case, the study finds that general uncertainty, the rate of industry growth and industry concentration are the most important contingency factors that affect alliance sustainability. Moreover, managers seeking to pursue their company's goals through sustaining its strategic partnerships have to learn to manage perceptions and maintain the balance of bargaining power within an alliance.

Montañés and Díaz discuss facilities network redesign in the context of reduced life-cycles (requiring more frequent restructuring of the supplier base), off-shoring, and mergers and acquisitions. This article shows, through an action research retrospective analysis of pallet and container service provider CHEP, how those inter-related

transformations should occur. The transformation described, driven by increases in the network complexity required to support their operations, include the previous and post situation for the company, with emphasis on the transformation process of the facility network, systems and organisation from an island-like, country-based organisation to a Pan-European network.

In an exploratory study, Hong et al. tackle crisis management mechanisms of small and medium enterprise (SMEs). The study presents a general crisis management model that represents crisis management processes in terms of detection, occurrence, recovery and resolution and validate and refine the research model after conducting a multiple-case study. The case study results show that SMEs, in spite of their resources constraints and relatively weak market positions, display resilient leadership to bear crisis management challenges and use their crisis experiences for growth and expansions. This study further suggests that what matters is not crisis itself but proactive and constructive business mindsets that boldly face and effectively move beyond the crisis events.

In assessing global supply chains, the selection and usage of performance measures are critical issue for objective evaluation and comparison. Lee and Roh, based on contingency theory, points out that different measures carry dissimilar emphases and disparate national financial and business practices can exert innate bearings in the measures. Using longitudinal 2,400 international observations, the research confirms that although accounting- and market-based performance indicators exhibit different weights among countries and country groups, sustained growth rate, growth rate in sales, and composite performance scores are invariant of locus across leading countries in Asia, North America, and Europe.

Last but not least, Youn et al. posit mutual trust as the moderator that determines the link between information sharing and information quality. Different from the previous studies, the research explicates four contexts of information sharing in accordance with the directions to receive and share information with suppliers and customers. Resorting to attribution theory and transaction cost theory, the study finds that self-serving bias is very likely to occur when a focal company provides customers and suppliers with information. The study also reports that the relational capability of a firm, characterised as mutual trust, is a critical link that connects information sharing to information quality, which, in turn, improves supply chain flexibility. A strong trust among partners becomes a source of competitive advantage. Another important finding is the mediating role of mutual trust between information sharing and information quality when a firm receives information from suppliers, but not when a firm receives information from customers.

We appreciate all the members of the 4th International Symposium and Workshop in Global Supply Chains that were hosted by Instituto de Empresa, Spain for making the conference an overwhelming success. Special thanks to Dr. Luis Solis and Dr. Angelo Diaz for working on multiple tasks. In addition, the 20 members of the international scientific committee are thanked for their assistance in promoting the conference and for reviewing the submissions. Finally, no conference can succeed without the participation of the researchers and participants. Your willingness to support the conference and to spend time with colleagues from around the world in the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro is appreciated.

We conclude by thanking Dr. Angappa Gunasekaran, Editor-in-Chief of *International Journal of Business Excellence* and Mrs. Barbara Curran of Inderscience Publishers for making this special issue possible. Your continued support of *IJBEX* is appreciated.