
Editorial: City competitiveness and development of business infrastructure

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One of the principal requirements of the emerging markets is to strengthen the social and the business infrastructure to attract domestic and overseas businesses and stay competitive in the global marketplace. The social infrastructure consists of health, housing, education, water and sanitation, energy, and social security while business infrastructure includes roads and transportation, information technology and communication, industrial power, and markets. In order to manage the increasing challenges in infrastructure sectors, countries growing with new markets must develop new strategic, organisational, and technological capabilities. The large demographic countries often face difficulties in re-inventing the capacity of public utility service providers to transform operational processes and enhance business performance of organisations. The state owned infrastructure development agencies often encounter the capacity building as a basic problem due to political, economic, and financial concerns. However, privatisation of infrastructure development projects has been successful in many countries like India where international airports have been built and managed by GMR Group. Hence, the state owned public sector companies are being disinvested in most countries that have compared the success of private sector involvement in infrastructure projects against the state owned companies. Infrastructure Development Finance Company has partial ownership from the Indian Government and it is engaged in building model for how private finance could be attracted to public infrastructure. As the nation grows economically, the company also grows and invests in implementing strategies for rapid infrastructure development offering a wide new range of financial products and participating in many aspects of the supply chain (Macomber and Balsari, 2010).

Business infrastructure organisations are able to improve, reinvent, and augment performance by identifying the relevant capability deficits and developing adequate strategies to implement the infrastructure projects. However, these strategies may deviate substantially across types of infrastructure due to differences in the goals pursued, the widespread adoption of strategic planning methods (Dominguez et al., 2009). As the population across the countries in the world is growing, the business operations are also pushing through the consumer segment and demand better infrastructure periodically. Thus, the problems created by this rampant urbanisation primarily include housing, water and sanitation, and energy supply among the most important challenges. Of all resource-management issues, housing and transit deserve the top priority. Since the late twentieth century the cities are being ranked based on the availability of commercial infrastructure to attract the foreign companies to establish their production and business operations. A competitive city provides features including housing, schools, hospitals, commercial malls, technology workstations, heating, cooling, waste management, financial institutions, and business security arrangement. Most multinational companies assume that business destinations reflect the state-of-the-art of the government. In order to implement solutions to the problems of urbanisation governments in developing countries need adequate financial resources, competitive differentiation in physical infrastructure, and administrative efficiency. It is also necessary for countries to develop significant alignments of interests among business organisations, public participation and government. Thus, growing cities find major opportunities towards co-creating value by improving resource efficiency for optimising both technological and financial innovation approaches to attract new businesses by offering lower levels of risk and high return, enhanced cash-flow priorities, and options for both short-term and long-term investment (Macomber, 2013).

City competitiveness is largely viewed by the business houses in reference to the availability of shopping malls, commercial complexes, and information technology hubs. High competitive commercial cities exhibit resource-based efficiency that combines technology, human, and business resources to develop an infrastructure capability, and allow corporations to strategically position their production and business operations and examine customer information quality in managing customer relationship systems. It is important for the growing cities to learn how firms bundle infrastructure capability and customer orientation to enhance the quality of customer information that enhances customer relationships and firm performance. The impact of quality on firm performance begins with infrastructure capability and customer orientation (Chuang and Lin, 2013). Globalisation has transformed urban centres into emerging destinations that are competing with each other to attract business. Arguably, some cities are capable of demonstrating high quality of infrastructure compared to others from the perspectives of development of infrastructure within a city and socioeconomic and environmental issues.

In this issue of the journal, there are five papers that address the issues of management of project risks, construction cost analysis, housing-related issues in developing countries, road infrastructure, technology and consumer choices. All papers discuss consumer centric research propositions and focus on role of infrastructure management and asset building for driving cities, business, and livelihood competitive. I hope the anthology of research papers in this issue will enrich the existing literature and stimulate future research.

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