
Editorial

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A cursory view of events in service operation and production planning indicates that continuous improvement is the key to 'winning the future'. This suggests that strengthening the firm's capability (resources, assets, routines, knowledge and systems) leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness of a firm, which translates into higher customer satisfaction and overall performance. Previous study further demonstrated that establishment of a robust knowledge sharing mechanism is prevalent in order to enhance the firm's efforts to sustain its competitiveness. In this issue, Yin proposed that the knowledge management process capability of a firm should be examined in the context of knowledge sources, generation, storage, exchange and application. This is because each element plays different role, collectively contribute to a firm's outcome. Therefore, in her paper, Yin argued that the firms are likely to benefit from capitalising the synergies derived through an effective knowledge management process capability. The evidence provided by Isoherranen and Kess indicates the complexity of production planning, with new demands from customers and the needs to improve efficiency and agility, have made steel production planning more challenging. The trigger effect of those challenges are derived from the shift of push-type production planning which resulted in a larger variation in production run. While achieving a balanced flow in production is not an easy task, Isoherranen and Kess found that variation at a single process phase would yield a total variation of the system. According to their experience, the system modelling and variation linkage analysis would be useful for operation optimisation.

Various approaches have been sought to describe and explain the complexity in managing the service operations often focus on maximising customer satisfaction and sustaining competitive advantage. While new perspectives have emerged in attempting to apply theories for better performance, service quality was still one of the prominent models used by the researchers to understand the customer's behaviour, specifically measuring customer satisfaction, in the services industry. A closer look at what was reported in the paper by Muhamad Rozkee, Jaafar and Abdul Jalal highlighted that business sales is particularly attributed to greater level of assurance and empathy. Meanwhile, the public transportation smart cards have diffused slowly on a global scale but rather rapidly in certain local contexts. Kinnunen, Kess and Majava provided evidence that smart utilisation of technology in order to enable the diffusion of new platform. Here, innovation is key. They have proven that adoption of original technology platforms is largely influenced by the institutional and societal factors rather than the technological frame.

The clear message of these studies is that, regardless from the qualitative or quantitative findings, a superior intellectual capital management and the quest for continuous improvement would generate positive firm's performance. The preceding discussion has sought to argue that it is crucial for firms to respond swiftly to the environmental changes across different industries. The firms' abilities to create the customers' demands and their commitment to fulfil such needs determine who will be the *Last Man standing!*