

We welcome you to our fourth issue of *IJPPM*! The diversity of research topic continues unabated, with this issue containing articles classified into: bureaucracy, continuous improvement, supply chain (SC) partnerships and HRM performance perspectives. We have papers reporting research and reflective practice endeavours from across the world: Europe, Asia and Australia.

On the topic of bureaucracy, Alom presents a conceptual model on proactive transparency which determines outward accountability using a traditional literature review and taking the perspective from organisational factors, such as: culture, structure and endowment. The study proposes a number of hypotheses which can be used for future research on this topic. Then, Damato, Angiola and Bianchi's article contains a longitudinal study of performance management within public universities in Italy, using quantitative methods and focussing upon the extent of bureaucracy therein.

On the topic of continuous improvement, Gopalakrishnan and Skoogh focus on machine criticality and maintenance prioritisation for productivity improvement. They use mixed-methods: web-based survey, semi-structured interviews and computer simulations. The findings suggest that in practice manufacturing organisations do not prioritise maintenance based on machine criticality but on situation-dependence by the maintenance staff. Furthermore, our reflective practice piece is provided by Randhawa and Ahuja, who describe manufacturing performance achievements resulting from the use of 5S within the Indian automotive organisations.

On the topic of SC partnerships, Rezaei, Ortt and Trott study SC partnerships, drivers and performance in 279 high-tech SMEs based in the Netherlands. They use SEM to analyse their results. Their findings point out that partnerships should be dependent on drivers and that business performance will be affected by the type of partnership chosen.

From the HRM performance perspective, Cunha, Vieira, Rego and Clegg report on the situation of workers in Portugal. They used 32 interviews and applied thematic analyses to gather different levels of constructs. The findings highlight three main weaknesses of performance management appraisals: insufficient planning, process and integrity issues, and a non-meritocratic logic, whilst Poovathingal and Kumar provide a study of the contribution of competencies in a medium-sized manufacturing organisation based in India. From their literature review, they propose different ways of computing contribution of competences. These measures are posited to be helpful to manufacturing organisations, e.g. improving the planning of their training. Finally, Gurmur and Aibinu present research on labour productivity within the Australian construction sector. They used mixed-methods consisting of interviews with experts and then a survey of construction workers. They identify 47 practices which are ranked using the Relative Importance Index.

We hope you enjoy our fourth issue!

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