

The 22nd International EurOMA Conference

The 22nd International EurOMA (EurOMA, 2015) Conference was held in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, hosted by Université de Neuchâtel, from 28 June to 1 July 2015. The title of the Conference was: “Operations management for sustainable competitiveness.” This topic addresses the changing requirements during crises and economic recovery. Research should explore, in particular, in which way operations management for products and services may achieve environmental and social performance objectives while keeping businesses economically and financially sound. Against the background of these comprehensive performance dimensions, operations management indispensably needs to contribute to the innovativeness of companies in order to keep them competitive. Following the tradition of the EurOMA conferences, we sought a balance between academia and practice, manufacturing and service aspects, public sector and private sector, etc.

The call for papers for the EurOMA Conference attracted 626 abstracts. Using a double-blind review process, the 130 members of the scientific committee reviewed the abstracts and provided a timely feedback to the authors. Out of the submitted abstracts, 481 were accepted and 145 were rejected. As a result, the Scientific Programme included 380 full papers. Three papers were subsequently withdrawn, and thus there were 377 paper presentations.

EurOMA 2015 continues the tradition of a truly international conference. The five countries with the highest number of conference participants were UK (115), Switzerland (47), Sweden (42), Denmark (31) and Italy (31). Finally, delegates from all continents joined the conference, i.e., North America (22), Latin America (21), Asia (35), Africa (three) and Australia (seven).

The themes of the conference were: supply chain management (44); sustainability in operations and logistics (including social and environmental aspects) (42); innovation, product and service development (30); managing inter-firm relationships in supply chains (24); lean and agile operations (20); empirical research in operations management (18); healthcare operations management (18); performance measurement and management (15); service operations management (15); global operations and strategic sourcing (14); information systems in operations (12); operations strategy (11); mass customization and servitization (nine); operations management in ETO-type industries (nine); operations risk management and resilience (nine); teaching and learning in operations management (nine); total quality management, kaizen and six sigma (nine); supply network design (seven); behavioral operations (six); decision support systems in operations (six); managing change in operations (six); purchasing and procurement (six), CSR and operations management (five); operations in the public sector (five), technology management in operations (five); operations planning, scheduling and control (four); disaster management (three); inventory management (three); logistics management and physical distribution (three); project management (three); sales and operations planning (three); operations improvement, growth and recovery from recession (two); simulation-based operations management research (two).

The Scientific Programme included 134 parallel sessions, and three keynote Speakers: Robert D. Klassen, Professor of Operations Management at Ivey Business School, Frank Binder, the Executive Director of International Supply Chain of the pharmaceutical company Celgene and Richard Strohmeier, the Chief Financial Officer of Longines. In addition, there were six special sessions dedicated to: teaching and learning in operations management; how can humanitarian logistics research become more relevant for practice?;



operations management in ETO-type industries; International Society for Inventory Research; developing a patient-centered healthcare delivery systems; and supply chain and process management in the justice system. Finally, the Scientific Programme comprised a “meet the editors” session, where editors and co-editors from high ranked operations management and supply chain management journals discussed interesting issues helpful for our community, as well as the *International Journal of Operations & Production Management* new reviewers’ workshop. The conference closed with three plant tours: Longines (watch-making), Straumann (dentistry equipment) and Tête de Moine (cheese production).

The special issue

This special issue is based on papers presented at the EurOMA 2015 Conference. In selecting papers, we analyzed the feedbacks and scores received from the Scientific Committee in the initial long-abstract evaluation process. Those papers which received the best scores were considered. In addition, we invited some keynote speakers and panelists of special sessions to submit research papers addressing the key issues raised during their sessions. In total, 14 papers were submitted for review. Five papers were accepted and published in this special issue, while two further papers are still under review and considered for publication in a regular issue of this journal.

The first paper is based on the EurOMA 2015 special session “How can humanitarian logistics research become more relevant for practice?” organized by Nathan Kunz, Luk van Wassenhove, Maria Besiou, Christophe Hambye and Gyöngyi Kovács, who are the authors of this paper. The increasing volume of studies published in the humanitarian logistics literature has not led to a proportional impact on practice. The authors of this viewpoint paper identified a number of barriers to making research in humanitarian logistics more relevant for practice. They proposed a charter of ten rules for conducting humanitarian research useful for practitioners. One major contribution of this paper is to enable the academic community and practice to better work together on relevant and impactful research projects.

The second paper seeks to understand how multiple temporal perspectives extend sustainable competitiveness. In operations and supply chain management, time is largely treated as one-dimensional. Robert D. Klassen and Sara Hajmohammad propose a framework to better incorporate multiple temporal perspectives as a basis for competitiveness in operations and supply chain management that includes both management and stakeholder behavior.

In the third paper, Guido Orzes, Fu Jia and Marco Sartor investigate the relationship between the adoption of SA8000 and firm performance, building on agency and contingency theories. The authors analyze secondary longitudinal balance sheet data of listed firms employing a rigorous event study approach and compare SA8000-certified companies to different control groups. The results show that SA8000 certification positively affects labor productivity and sales performance but has no effect on profitability. Further results demonstrate that the relationship between SA8000 and profitability is moderated by power distance and uncertainty avoidance.

The fourth paper explores the role of the external service partner network of a European manufacturer providing services in China. Jawwad Raja and Thomas Frandsen used a case study research to examine the parent company in Denmark, its subsidiary in China and the related service partner network. In their study, the authors rely on the motivation, opportunity and ability (MOA) framework. Their findings emphasize the need that MOA elements (motivation, opportunity and ability) be not only mutually reinforcing for the organization attempting to move toward services but also aligned between organizational units, as well as with the service partner network. Furthermore, the findings state that while

service partners are typically closer to the market, they may not be able to deliver the higher value-added services requiring customization.

In the last paper of this special issue, Kirstin Scholten and Anna Dubois describe and analyze in the field of supply chain management how the students' active learning process as well as their learning outcomes are influenced by the learning and teaching contexts. In particular, mechanisms are identified and illustrated of how educators can use the specific set-up of a course to enable students to actively engage in the learning process.

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Further readings

- Kunz, N., Van Wassenhove, L.N., Besiou, M., Hambye, C. and Kovács, G. (2017), "Relevance of humanitarian logistics research: best practices and way forward", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 37 No. 11, pp. 1585-1599.
- Klassen, R. and Hajmohammad, S. (2017), "Multiple temporal perspectives extend sustainable competitiveness", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 37 No. 11, pp. 1600-1624.
- Orzes, G., Jia, F., Sartor, M. and Nassimbeni, G. (2017), "Performance implications of SA8000 certification", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 37 No. 11, pp. 1625-1653.
- Raja, J.Z. and Frandsen, T. (2017), "Exploring servitization in China: challenges of aligning motivation, opportunity and ability in coordinating an external service partner network", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 37 No. 11, pp. 1654-1682.
- Scholten, K. and Dubois, A. (2017), "Advancing the skill set of SCM graduates – an active learning approach", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 37 No. 11, pp. 1683-1699.