

Welcome to the fifth issue of *IJPPM* this year. We have eight interesting papers in this issue representing studies in Asia, Europe and America, which continue to show a variety of topics. We have grouped them into: (Lean) Six Sigma, process integration, employee engagement as well as productivity and performance.

On the topic of (Lean) Six Sigma, Desai and Shaikh present an application of Six Sigma to a SMEs' production in the ceramic industry in India. Using a DMAIC methodology and the systematic application of Six Sigma, the findings show the reduction of the percentage of rejections. Continuing with the theme and extending to Lean Six Sigma, Antony, Rodgers, Coull and Sunder have written a reflective practice piece based upon a case study based on the policing services in Scotland. The context of organisational learning highlighted five main important findings: the team, change management, avoiding a silo mentality, getting hold of the necessary data and flexibility in deploying Lean Six Sigma to individual circumstances.

On the topic of process integration, Goyal, Samalia and Verma study the mediating role of process simplification in process integration and upstream supply chain flexibility. Using data from 86 Indian automotive organisations, they carried out a three-step mediation analysis in SPSS macro PROCESS. Their findings show that there is a complete mediation effect of process simplification between supplier relationship and upstream supply chain flexibility with a partial effect between top management commitment and upstream supply chain flexibility.

On the topic of employee engagement, Suhartanto and Brien used a survey questionnaire of 400 retail store employees in Indonesia; then, they applied PLS to assess their proposed hypotheses. Their findings indicate that there is a strong relationship between job engagement and organisation engagement as well as being determinants of store performance. Yin also utilised a survey questionnaire applied to computer sales and parts' SMEs in China to investigate influencing outcomes of job engagement of computer and computer-parts salesmen and women, using a social exchange theory perspective. Job engagement was found to have a positive influence on task performance and organisational citizenship, amongst other things.

On the topic of productivity and performance, Kamble and Wankhade develop a questionnaire tool to estimate productivity in manufacturing systems. Initially, a pilot study was done, followed by a survey of 311 Indian engineers, managers and workers. They applied explorative factor analysis followed by confirmatory factor analysis, then found 22 attributes which are grouped into five key factors, namely: human resource management, management strategy, organisational culture, production methodology and performance. Next, Radici Fraga, Bernardes, Vieira and Chain present an action research study investigating the implementation issues of design management indicator systems in four Brazilian product development companies. A number of rounds of interviews helped develop consensus on 20 performance indicators, though observations suggested that three of the four companies did not treat design in a particularly strategic way. Finally, Sayed and Lento's article reports their research, using semi-structured interviews, to develop KPIs within environmental consulting firms in Canada. Their findings identify KPIs which self-reinforce, complement each other and form a feedback loop. In addition, they found that the BSC's "learning and growth" perspective appeared central to the other three BSC perspectives.

We hope you enjoy our fifth issue!

**Nicky Shaw and Luisa Delfa Huaccho Huatucu**

