Foreword

Business Performance Management is a term that became widely used in the 1970s. The term represents a set of activities that assist the management of any organization to manage its resources and achieve its goals in an effective and efficient manner. Basically, it is a popular management tool that helps improve the performance of an organization. Performance management covers all aspects of a business. Literature is replete with numerous contributions from a wide variety of subject areas: for example, management, operations management, economics, finance, human resource management, marketing, accounting, organizational behavior, and public sector management. The depth of interest highlights the increasing interest in the subject. The purpose of this special issue of the journal is to contribute meaningfully to the increasing Business Performance Management literature.

This special issue of the Journal of CENTRUM Cathedra (JCC): The Business and Economics Research Journal is to focus on Business Performance Management. It includes seven research articles written by authors from seven countries: Brazil, The Netherlands, The United States of America, Australia, Greece, New Zealand, and Switzerland. Within the framework of Business Performance Management, researchers have proposed and applied different approaches in these articles to various industries, such as education, technology, computer-related services, e-waste recycling, healthcare, insurance, and manufacturing. Thus, this special issue of the journal reflects the multidisciplinary character of Business Performance Management from a global perspective.

The insurance sector plays a significant role in every economy and is, therefore, of great importance to various groups of interest, including policy makers, policyholders, investors, and managers. In the article, “Estimating and Explaining the Financial Performance of Property and Casualty Insurers: A Two-Stage Analysis,” Michael Doumpos, Chrysovalantis Gaganis, and Fotios Pasiouras proposed the application of the PROMETHEE II multicriteria method to provide an overall measure of performance of nonlife insurers, while simultaneously considering a number of conflicting criteria. Using a sample of approximately 2000 nonlife insurance firms operating in 91 countries between 2005 and 2009, regression analysis was applied to examine and explain differences in the performance of insurers based on various country-specific attributes. Results indicated that real GDP growth, inflation, income inequality, and stock market development resulted in a statistically significant effect on overall performance.

Productivity, defined as the ratio between outputs and inputs of an organization’s production process, is considered a core factor to allow the competitive advantage of an enterprise. In the article, “From Productivity Strategy to Business Case: Choosing a Cost-Effective Intervention for Workplace Innovations,” Peter Oeij, Michiel de Looze, Klaas ten Have, Gu van Rhijn, and Bart de Graaf presented an approach to developing cost-effective interventions for workplace innovations for entrepreneurs who seek to enhance the productivity of an organization. The Q4-model allows entrepreneurs to formulate productivity challenges, productivity strategies, workplace innovation interventions, and business case evaluations both uniformly and practically. Additional use of the business case method extends the Q4-model of productivity which allows the opportunity to trade off quantitative factors against qualitative factors, making the model applicable to both the profit and nonprofit sectors of industry. The authors set out the steps of the approach and present two case studies from different industrial sectors (public services and manufacturing) where the approach has proved applicable.

The allocation of scarce organs for organ transplantation and the prediction of the performance of planned organ transplantation is a critical problem that the healthcare service faces. In the article, “An Analytical Approach to Predict the Performance of Thoracic Transplantations,” Asil Oztekin presented a data mining-based model for variable filtering and selection to help predict the performance of thoracic transplantation via the graft survivability after the transplant. Results revealed that if the performance measure of the transplant is assigned the g-status, the thoracic organ recipients should be categorized into four risk groups, namely low, low-medium, medium-high, and high. The results further indicated that in addition to the list of predictors used in the existing literature, other variables (e.g., donor history in terms of alcohol dependency, cancer, and diabetes) should also be considered in predictive modeling for an improved performance measurement.

Electronic waste represents a rapidly increasing problem. The sheer volume negatively impacts the environment and different ecosystems, despite the huge economic benefits of electronic equipment. In order to help e-recycling companies achieve corporate sustainability, Chung-Hsing Yeh and Yan Xu developed a
new performance evaluation approach for evaluating the recycling sustainability performance of e-waste products in terms of the contribution of e-waste to the corporate sustainability of an e-recycling company. The article “Evaluating Recycling Sustainability Performance of E-Waste Products,” made use of the fuzzy TOPSIS technique. Authors also conducted an empirical study to illustrate the approach. The results of the sustainability performance evaluation would help the e-recycling company to identify the e-waste products that need improvement or the products that require the most focus to best enhance their corporate sustainability performance, and to provide useful insights to manage its recycling activities of specific e-waste products in terms of their relative contribution to its corporate sustainability.

Organizational capabilities are configured as higher order organizational processes, consisting of abilities converted into routines. The capabilities reconfiguration is a strategic decision-making model designed to support decision management, especially management inside technology-based companies. In the article “An Organizational Capability-Based Performance Measurement Model for Technology Conversion Process,” Tomoe D.H. Gusberti and Márcia E.S. Echeveste presented a proposal for the operationalization of this concept, thus developing an organizational capability measurement and evaluation model for technology conversion into products and services. The method embraces a report with graphical representation of the results. This allows qualitative analysis that guides several relevant discussions on the technology management and capability-based management approach. The proposed model was applied to a technology conversion enterprise located in Brazil.

Literature is full of numerous approaches dealing with the issues of accountability and public sector performance measurement and reporting. In the article, “Accountability and Performance Measurement: A Stakeholder Perspective,” Julie A. Harrison, Paul Rouse, and Charl J. De Villiers focused on accountability in a school context to identify performance-reporting essentials important to the wider public sector, including the identification of relevant stakeholders and the determination of appropriate performance models. The article describes both a framework for school performance measurement and an approach for the development of such frameworks.

The importance of the service sector in both industrialized and developing economies is well known at the moment. In the final contribution, “What Drives International Performance? Insights from Computer-Related Service Firms,” Reza Etemad-Sajadi and Valéry Bezençon strove to understand the drivers of international performance for service firms. Results showed that standardized services and services requiring limited face-to-face contact influence international performance positively. Furthermore, joint venture and establishment abroad are the two most effective modes of entry. Finally, firm size and international experience are significant drivers of international performance as well.

The efforts of many academics and researchers who contributed articles and the knowledge of the experts within the field who reviewed the articles have made this issue of the journal possible. We thank you. We further extend our gratitude to the administrative and editorial staff of CENTRUM Católica, CENGAGE Learning, and Language Online Editing. Special recognition goes to Professor Fernando D’Alessio, the Director General of CENTRUM Católica; and Professor Beatrice Avolio, the Deputy Director General of CENTRUM Católica for their support.

We believe that the articles published in this issue of the JCC should be of considerable interest to our readers. Thus, we wish you, our readers, informative reading.

Vincent Charles