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A low-angle photograph of the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, reaching towards a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The towers' distinctive tiered structure and glass facades are clearly visible.

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## Table of Contents

### Decision Analysis & Methods I

Simultaneous Consideration of Remanufactured and New Products in Optimal Product Line Design <i>Ridvan AYDIN, C.K. KWONG, Ping JI</i>	1
The Optimal Ordering Quantity with Uncertain Food's Safety Environment <i>Shu-Yen HSU, Tyrone T. LIN</i>	6
Reduced Recursive Inclusion-exclusion Principle for the Probability of Union Events <i>Shin-Guang CHEN</i>	11
A Bi-level Algorithm for Product Line Design and Pricing <i>Shuli WU, Songlin CHEN</i>	14
An Optimal Electricity Consumption Decision with a Limited Carbon Emission Concept <i>Tyrone T. LIN, Hui-Chen LAN</i>	19
An Integrated Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) and Hedge Accounting Approach for Risk Management Efficiency Measurement: Evidence From Derivative Market in Asia-Pacific Banks <i>Shahsuzan ZAKARIA, Sardar M. N. ISLAM</i>	24

### Decision Analysis & Methods II

A Fuzzy Linguistic Representation Model for Decision Making Under Uncertainty <i>Wen-Tao GUO, Van-Nam HUYNH</i>	29
Post Optimality Analysis of Pareto Optimal Set Through Weights Robustness <i>Maria KALININA, David SUNDGREN</i>	34
Adapting the ISO31000:2009 Enterprise Risk Management Framework Using the Six Sigma Approach <i>Bennie Seck-Yong CHOO, Jenson Chong-Leng GOH</i>	39
A Framework to Identify Sustainability Indicators for Product Design <i>Sam Yeon KIM, Seung Ki MOON, Hyung Sool OH, Taezoon PARK, HaeJin CHOI, Hungsun SON</i>	44
An Interactive Bi-criteria Heuristic Algorithm for the Coherent System Assembly <i>Abdel-Aziz M. MOHAMED</i>	49
Optimal Trial Number for D-optimal Designs Based on Efficiency-cost Ratio Analysis <i>XiuTing LIU, Sen LIN, Jun YANG</i>	54
Swarm Based Mean-variance Mapping Optimization (MVMO <sup>s</sup> ) for Economic Dispatch Problem with Valve - Point Effects <i>Khoa TRUONG, Pandian VASANT, Balbir Singh MAHINDER SINGH, Dieu VO</i>	59

### Operations Research I

A Multicriteria Decision Model for Technology Readiness Assessment for Energy Based on PROMETHEE Method with Surrogate Weights <i>Adiel ALMEIDA, Danielle C MORAIS, Luciana ALENCAR, Tharcylla CLEMENTE, Eduardo KRYM, C. Z. BARBOZA</i>	64
---	----

An Imperialist Competitive Algorithm for the Job Shop Scheduling Problems <i>Hamed PIROOZFARD, Kuan Yew WONG</i>	69
Impact Evaluation of MGNREGA Using Data Envelopment Analysis <i>Devaraj HANUMAPPA, Parthasarathy RAMACHANDRAN, T. G. SITHARAM</i>	74
Critical Literature Review on Maturity Models for Business Process Excellence <i>Saja ALBLIWI, Jiju ANTONY, Norin ARSHED</i>	79
A Modified Genetic Algorithm for Precedence Constrained Operation Sequencing Problem in Process Planning <i>Yuliang SU, Xuening CHU, Dongping CHEN, Dexin CHU</i>	84
Building Master Surgery Schedules with Leveled Bed Occupancy and Nurse Workloads <i>Zakaria ABDELRAHMAN, Nermine HARRAZ, Amr B. ELTAWIL</i>	89

## Operations Research II

Resolution of Resource Conflicts in the CCPM Framework Using a Local Search Method <i>Hiroki KOGA, Hiroyuki GOTO, Eishi CHIBA</i>	94
A Heuristic Algorithm for the Prize Collecting Steiner Tree Problem <i>Yuki HOSOKAWA, Eishi CHIBA</i>	99
3D Loading Problem Formulation Using Mixed Integer Nonlinear Programming <i>Mojahid SAEED OSMAN, Bala RAM</i>	103
A Hybrid PSO-TS Approach for Proportionate Multiprocessor Open Shop Scheduling <i>Tamer ABDELMAGUID</i>	107
An Improved Approach for the Quay Crane Assignment Problem with Limited Availability of Internal Trucks in Container Terminal <i>A. KARAM, Amr B. ELTAWIL, Nermine HARRAZ</i>	112
Asset Integrity of Deepwater Petroleum Production Facilities <i>Mayang KUSUMAWARDHANI, Tore MARKESSET</i>	117
Standardization Programs in the Industrial Plant Business: Best Practices and Lessons Learned <i>Michael GEPP, Jan VOLLMAR, Thomas SCHAEFFLER</i>	122

## Quality Control & Management I

Modeling Autocorrelated Process Control with Industrial Application <i>Siaw Li LEE, Maman Abdurachman DJAUHARI, Ismail MOHAMAD</i>	127
Estimation of Population Generalized Variance: Application in Service Industry <i>Revathi SAGADAVAN, Maman Abdurachman DJAUHARI, Ismail MOHAMAD</i>	132
Factors Affecting Quality in a Manufacturing Environment for a Non-repairable Product <i>Rene LOMBARD, Corro VAN WAVEREN, Kai-Ying CHAN</i>	137
Improving Quality of Operations via Industry-specific Empowerment Antecedents: A Study of the Oil and Gas Industry <i>Ngozi ONYEMEH, Chan Wai LEE</i>	143
Application of Six Sigma in Oil and Gas Industry: Converting Operation Data into Business Value for Process Prediction and Quality Control <i>Wai Kit CHENG, Amir Farid AZMAN, Mohamad Hisham HAMDAN, Rachel FRAN MANSÁ</i>	148

Mishandled Baggage Problem: Causes and Improvement Suggestions <i>Imad ALSYOUF, Fatima HUMAID, Shaima AL KAMALI</i>	154
--	-----

## Service Innovation & Management I

Priority Investment Components of Emotional Intelligence Effective on Marketing with AHP Method <i>Parissa TAVAKOLI-TARGHI, Yousef GHOLIPOUR KANANI</i>	159
Workforce Planning for Global Network Delivery Model <i>Sumit RAUT, Kishore PADMANABHAN, Muralidharan SOMASUNDHANRAM, Natarajan VIJAYARANGAN</i>	164
CSF in Product Innovation Process: A Comparative Study of Three Malaysian Manufacturing SMEs <i>Noor Hidayah ABU, Baba MD DEROS, Mohd Fitri MANSOR</i>	169
Supporting the Cross-disciplinary Development of Product-service Systems Through Model Transformations <i>Thomas WOLFENSTETTER, Konstantin KERNSCHMIDT, Christopher MÜNZBERG, Daniel KAMMERL, Suparna GOSWAMI, Udo LINDEMANN, Birgit VOGEL-HEUSER, Helmut KRCMAR</i>	174
Structural Investigation of a Healthcare Value Chain: A Social Network Analysis Approach <i>Vipul JAIN, Sumit SAKHUJA</i>	179
Investigating the Effects of Project Scales on the Patterns and Performance of Successfully Funded, Technology-oriented Innovative Crowdfunding Projects <i>Chien-Liang KUO, C.J.H. LIN, S.X.S. HUANG, Yu-Chen LIN</i>	184

## Supply Chain Management I

Supplier Selection Activities in the Service Sector: A Case Study in Nigeria <i>Dotun ADEBANJO, Matthew TICKLE, Frank OJADI, Petros IEROMONACHOU, Tritos LAOSIRIHONGTHONG, Roula MICHAELIDES</i>	189
Managing Supply Disruption in a Three-tier Supply Chain with Multiple Suppliers and Retailers <i>Sanjoy Kumar PAUL, Ruhul SARKER, Daryl ESSAM</i>	194
Collaborative Inventory Distribution Management in a Supply Chain: A Simulation Perspective <i>Joby GEORGE, Nimmy J.S., V. Madhusudanan PILLAI</i>	199
In-house Capacity Investment and Outsourcing Under Competition <i>Tarun JAIN, Jishnu HAZRA</i>	204
Optimization of Multi-commodities Consumer Supply Chains Part II: Simulation Modeling <i>Zeinab HAJIABOLHASANI, Romeo M. MARIAN, Lee LUONG</i>	209
Identifying Critical Success Factors for Green Supply Chain Management Implementation Using Fuzzy DEMATEL Method <i>Rakesh Kumar MALVIYA, Ravi KANT</i>	214
Warehouse Storage Assignment: The Case Study of a Plastic Bag Manufacturer <i>Chompoonoot KASEMSET, J. SUDPHAN</i>	219

## Manufacturing Systems I

Comparing Malaysian and Scottish Firms on Practices for Strategic Capability Management <i>Rob DEKKERS, Kanagi KANAPATHY</i>	223
---	-----



The Moderation Effect of the Cultural Dimension "Individualism/Collectivism" on Toyota Way Deployment - A Global Study on Toyota Facilities <i>Nihal JAYAMAHA, Jurgen WAGNER, Nigel GRIGG</i>	228
Assessment of the Teamwork Organization in a Production Plant of a Major German Automobile Manufacturer <i>Robert STRANZENBACH, Philipp M. PRZYBYSZ, Susanne MÜTZE-NIEWÖHNER, Stephan SCHEEL, Christopher M. SCHLICK</i>	233
Modeling Cognitive Network of a Physical System Using Design Knowledge Base <i>Shah LIMON, Om Prakash YADAV, Bimal NEPAL</i>	238
Theoretical considerations for Make-or-buy Decisions During ‘Product Design and Engineering’: Three Indian Case Studies <i>Rob DEKKERS</i>	243
Lean Transformation Efforts of the Wood Industry in Virginia <i>Omar ESPINOZA, Urs BUEHLMANN, C FRICKE</i>	249
Optimal Control Synthesis for a Flexible Manufacturing System Based on Minimal Cuts <i>Sadok REZIG, Zied ACHOUR, Nidhal REZG, Mohamed-Ali KAMMOUN</i>	254

## Technology & Knowledge Management I

A Behavioral Loyalty Model of Portable Computers <i>Mohammad Reza SHAHRIARI, Ali HAJIHA, Sara DEHGHAN</i>	259
Regionalization of Engineering - Framework and Scenarios <i>Thomas SCHAEFFLER, Rudolf KODES, Michael GEPP, Nadja HOßBACH, Arndt LÜDER</i>	264
The Marketing Strategy for Successful Product Development Performance in Iranian Nanotechnology-based Enterprises <i>Naser KHOSRAVI, Mohsen SADEGHI</i>	270
Forecasting of Diffusion Pattern: A Case Example of OLED Technology <i>Pawat TANSURAT, Nathasit GERDSRI</i>	275
Improving Management Practices Upon Organizational Characteristics - An Analysis of Japanese Manufacturing Subsidiaries in Vietnam <i>Nguyen Thi Duc NGUYEN, Atsushi AOYAMA</i>	280
Identifying Knowledge Components in Software Requirement Elicitation <i>Laleh TAHERI, Noraini CHE PA, Rusli ABDULLAH, Salfarina ABDULLAH, Mohammad Yaser SHAFAZAND</i>	286

## Information Processing & Engineering I

A Bayesian Accelerated Degradation Studies on Nitrile Rubber O-ring <i>Lizhi WANG, Xiaohong WANG, Yuxiang LI, Wenhui FAN</i>	292
Interview Study: Decisions and Decision Criteria for Development in Industry <i>Danilo Marcello SCHMIDT, Sebastian SCHENKL, Eduard MUNKHART, Susanne NILSSON, Markus MÖRTL</i>	297
Theoretical Analysis of RFID Security Protocols <i>Azam ZAVVARI, Mohammad Tariqul ISLAM, Masoud SHAKIBA, Mandeep Jit SINGH</i>	302
Analyzing and Visualizing News Trends Over Time <i>Lubaba Farin TANISHA, Bishwajit Banik PATHIK, Manzur H. KHAN, Md. Mamun HABIB</i>	307

A Novel Tool for Reducing Time and Cost at Software Test Estimation: An Use Cases and Functions Based Approach	312
<i>Shaiful ISLAM, Bishwajit Banik PATHIK, Manzur H. KHAN, Md. Mamun HABIB</i>	

Self-focusing Appearance in Ultra-compact 3×3 Multimode Interference Coupler Based on Silicon on Insulator	317
<i>Mehdi TAJALDINI, Mohd Zubir MAT JAFRI</i>	

## Healthcare Systems & Management

Healthcare Platforming for Healthcare Service Development in Hospitals	321
<i>Linda L. ZHANG, Michel ALDANONDO, Arun KUMAR</i>	

Design of a Dynamic Bi-objective Relief Routing Network in the Earthquake Response Phase	325
<i>Shadab SHISHEHGAR, Reza TAVAKKOLI-MOGHADDAM, Ali SIADAT, Mehrdad MOHAMMADI</i>	

Towards an Instrumented Tissue Expander	330
<i>Annette BÖHMER, Alexander ZÖLLNER, Ellen KUHL, Udo LINDEMANN</i>	

Health System Design: A Financial Perspective	335
<i>Hans-Jakob LUETHI, C. MANDL, Philippe WIDMER</i>	

An Employee Assistance Program by Analyzing the Correlation Between Work Stress and Dreams for Chinese Employees	340
<i>Kuei-Chen CHIU, Tsai-Wei HUANG, Shulan HSIEH</i>	

A Novel Simulated Metamorphosis Algorithm for Homecare Nurse Scheduling	345
<i>Michael MUTINGI, Charles MBOHWA</i>	

Education Management in Healthcare Communities	350
<i>Juha PUUSTJÄRVI, Leena PUUSTJÄRVI</i>	

## Intelligent Systems I

Study on the Production Forecasting Based on Grey Neural Network Model in Automotive Industry	355
<i>Bin LIN, Seng Fat WONG, Weng Ian HO</i>	

The Need for Integrating Statistical Process Control and Automatic Process Control	360
<i>Abdul-Wahid A. SAIF</i>	

Modeling Novices in Decision-problem Structuring for Collective Intelligence	365
<i>Dianne Lee-Mei CHEONG</i>	

Survey on Tools and Systems to Generate ER Diagram from System Requirement Specification	370
<i>Wasana C. UDUWELA, Gamini WIJAYARATHNA</i>	

A Methodology for Fuzzy Multi-criteria Decision-making Approach for Scheduling Problems in Robotic Flexible Assembly Cells	374
<i>Khalid ABD, Kazem ABHARY, Romeo M. MARIAN</i>	

Application of a Fuzzy Multi-criteria Decision-making Approach for Dynamic Scheduling in Robotic Flexible Assembly Cells	379
<i>Khalid ABD, Kazem ABHARY, Romeo M. MARIAN</i>	

Overtime Capacity Expansion in Order Acceptance with Node Based Estimation of Distribution Algorithms	383
<i>Watcharee WATTANAPORNPROM, Tieke LI, Warin WATTANAPORNPROM, Prabhas CHONGSTITVATANA</i>	

## Systems Modeling & Simulation I

Dynamic Modeling and Analysis of LM6000 Gas-turbine Synchronous Generator <i>Roosbeh ESHRAGHIA, Randy J. KLEEN</i>	389
Simulation Based Lean Six Sigma Approach to Reduce Patients Waiting Time in an Outpatient Eye Clinic <i>Weidong LIN, Xianfei JIN, Sie Yong CHIA</i>	394
Combining Set-based Concurrent Engineering and Function- Means Modelling to Manage Platform-based Product Family Design <i>Dag RAUDBERGET, Marcel MICHAELIS, Hans JOHANNESSON</i>	399
Simulation of New System Departure Terminal Soekarno-Hatta International Airport <i>Dimas NOVRISAL, Nuraida WAHYUNI, Nadia HAMANI, Abderrahman ELMHAMED, Tresna SOEMARDI</i>	404
Numerical Simulation of Stress Distribution of a Femur-Menisci-Tibia Bone During Normal Standing, Normal Walking, and Standing with a Cane <i>Angkhana PROMMARAT, Athassawat KAMMANEE, Thitikom PUAPANSAWAT, Farida CHAMCHOD</i>	409
Statistical Analysis and a Social Network Model Based on the SEIQR Framework <i>Benjamas CHIMMALEE, Wannika SAWANGTHONG, Rawee SUWANDECHOCHAI, Farida CHAMCHOD</i>	414
Placing a Liaison with Long Communication Lengths to the Same Level in an Organization Structure <i>Kiyoshi SAWADA</i>	419

## Project Management I

Setting Up An Intellectual Properties Intermediary Service: DMAIC Way <i>Kim SLOW</i>	423
Modular, Building Blocks - Based Approach for Information and Documentation Management in Planning Projects <i>Daniel OEHME, Ralph RIEDEL, Egon MÜLLER</i>	428
Establishing the Development Mechanism of ERP Report <i>Te- King CHIEN, Hou-Yi LIN</i>	433
Multi-objective Optimization and Risk Assessment in System Engineering Project Planning by Ant Colony Algorithm <i>Pablo BAROSO, Thierry COUDERT, Eric VILLENEUVE, Laurent GENESTE</i>	438
Analyzing Implementation of Lean Production Control with the Viable System Model <i>Fatos ELEZI, Michael Timo SCHMIDT, Iris TOMMELEIN, Udo LINDEMANN</i>	443
Development of QuickKaizen <sup>TM</sup> Technique for Productivity Execution Management for Singapore SMEs <i>Chin Wei GAN, Ming Hon TOH, Roland LIM, Bin MA, Puay Siew TAN, Amrik Singh BHULLAR</i>	448
The Resource-constrained Project Scheduling Problem with Stochastic Activity Durations <i>Stefan CREEMERS</i>	453
A Comparative Study Among Stakeholders on Causes of Time Delay in Malaysian Multiple Design and Build Projects <i>Ramanathan CHIDAMBARAM, Narayanan SAMBU POTTY</i>	458



## Human Factors I

Enhancing Work System Design and Improvement by Further Developments of Value Stream Mapping <i>Peter KUHLANG, Thomas EDTMAYR, Alexander SUNK, Thomas MÜHLBRADT</i>	464
Influence of Human Factors Over Idea Generation: a Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of an Enterprise of the Graphic Sector in Medellin <i>Manuela ESCOBAR SIERRA, Luz Dinora VERA ACEVEDO</i>	470
The Effect of Font Size on Typing Performance and Sitting Posture <i>Haruetai LOHASIRIWAT, Temsin WATTANAPANICH, Panmeq SAECHAN</i>	475
Improvement of Workstation by Providing Ergonomically Designed Chair and Table for the Water Hyacinth Weaving Department of the Villar Foundation <i>Devie Ann GAMATA, Ralph OROZCO, J K. C. LASERNA, J. A. MEDINA, Sheily MENDOZA, R J. U. GARCIA</i>	480
The Effect of Psychosocial Stress on Trapezius Muscle Activity During Computer Work: A Review <i>Mohd Firdaus MOHD TAIB, Myung Hwan YUN</i>	485
Parametric Modeling of 3D Human Faces Using Anthropometric Data <i>Chun-Yang TSENG, I-Jan WANG, Chih-Hsing CHU</i>	491
Developing Transfer of Learning Through Reflective Framing and Design Thinking: An Engineering-games Design Approach <i>Chien-Sing LEE, K. Daniel WONG</i>	496

## Production Planning & Control I

Process Family Planning: An Optimization-based Approach <i>Roel LEUS, Linda L. ZHANG, Daniel KOWALCZYK</i>	501
Efficient Symmetry-breaking Formulations for Grouping Customer Orders in a Printing Shop <i>Philipp BAUMANN, Norbert TRAUTMANN</i>	506
Continuous Precise Workload Control Method <i>Hakan AKILLIOGLU, Joao-Dias FERREIRA, Antonio MAFFEI, Pedro NEVES, Mauro ONORI</i>	511
Economic Level of Detail for Assembly Planning <i>Achim KAMPKER, Peter BURGGRÄF, Yvonne BÄUMERS</i>	516
Scheduling a Dynamic Flowshop to Minimize the Mean Absolute Deviation from Distinct Due Dates <i>Ahmed W. EL-BOURI</i>	521
A Hybrid EOQ and Fuzzy Model to Minimize the Material Inventory in Ready Mixed Concrete Plants <i>Mehdi RAVANSHADNIA, Milad GHANBARI</i>	526
A Structural Equation Model Linking Forecasting, Planning and Controlling with SME Performance <i>Biju PUTHANVEETIL, Bhasi MARATH</i>	531

## Decision Analysis & Methods III

Design for Open Innovation (DfOI) - Product Structure Planning for Open Innovation Toolkits <i>Maik HOLLE, Udo LINDEMANN</i>	536
---	-----

Effects of Different Classifiers in Detecting Infectious Regions in Chest Radiographs <i>Wan Siti Halimatul Munirah WAN AHMAD, Rajasvaran LOGESWARAN, Mohammad Faizal AHMAD FAUZI, Wan Mimi Diyana WAN ZAKI</i>	541
--	-----

Parallelization of Industrial Process Control Program Based on the Technique of Differential Evolution Using Multi-threading <i>Rajeev AGRAWAL, Abhinav GOYAL, Debjani SAMBASIVAM, Arya K BHATTACHARYA</i>	546
---	-----

Weibull Component Reliability Evaluation With Masked Data <i>Jieqiong MIAO, Xiaogang LI, Renxi LUO</i>	551
---	-----

An Extension of PROMETHEE to Divisive Hierarchical Multicriteria Clustering <i>Yves DE SMET</i>	555
--	-----

Effectiveness Assessment for Waste Management Decision-support in the Arctic Drilling <i>Yonas Zewdu AYELE, Abbas BARABADI, Javad BARABADY</i>	559
---	-----

## Decision Analysis & Methods IV

Real-time Decision Support System for Resource Optimization & Management of Threat Evaluation and Weapon Assignment Engineering in Air Defence <i>Afshan NASEEM, Shoab Ahmed KHAN, Asad WAQAR MALIK</i>	565
--	-----

An Approach to Analyse Key Renewable Energy Technologies: A Case from Sri Lanka <i>Amila WITHANAARACHCHI, Julian NANAYAKKARA, Chamli PUSHPAKUMARA</i>	570
--	-----

Bibliometric Methodology to Detect Collaborative and Competitive Countries <i>Shino IWAMI, Francisco TACOA, Junichiro MORI, Yuya KAJIKAWA, Ichiro SAKATA</i>	575
---	-----

Fuzzy Decision Making in Shape Feature Design for Product Development <i>Ching-Hu YANG, Chung-Shing WANG, Chin-Fu CHEN, P.Y. LIN, Chung-Chuan WANG</i>	580
---	-----

An ANP-based Multi Criteria Decision Making Model for Supplier Selection <i>Hisham ALIDRISI</i>	585
--	-----

Multi-granules Evaluation Model Through Fuzzy Random Regression Analysis <i>Nureize ARBAIY</i>	589
---	-----

## Decision Analysis & Methods V

A Case Study on Mining Social Media Data <i>Hing Kai CHAN, Ewelina LACKA, Rachel W. Y. YEE, Ming K. LIM</i>	593
--	-----

Understanding Sustainability in Healthcare Systems: A Systems Thinking Perspective <i>Michael MUTINGI, Charles MBOHWA</i>	597
--	-----

Mitigating the Effort for Engineering Changes in Product Development Using a Fuzzy Expert System <i>Tobias KINDSMÜLLER, Florian G. H BEHNCKE, Benjamin STAHL, Klaus DIEPOLD, Martina WICKEL, Daniel KAMMERL, Konstantin KERNSCHMIDT</i>	602
--	-----

Information Communications Technology (ICT) Infrastructure Impact on Stock Market- Growth Nexus: The Panel VAR Model <i>Rudra P PRADHAN</i>	607
--	-----

A Mathematical Formulation for Low Carbon Electricity Planning in the Presence of Technology and Policy Interventions <i>Amrutha APPIYAH, Muthu MATHIRAJAN, Balachandra PATIL</i>	612
--	-----

Five Factors That Make Pervasive Business Intelligence a Winning Wager <i>Riccardo COGNINI, Flavio CORRADINI, Alberto POLZONETTI, Barbara RE</i>	617
---	-----

A New Hesitant Fuzzy Analytical Hierarchy Process Method for Decision-making Problems Under Uncertainty <i>S. M. MOUSAVI, Hossein GITINAVARD, Ali SIADAT</i>	622
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### Operations Research III

A New DEA Model for Six Sigma Project Selecting: Case Study on Esfahan Province Electricity Distribution Co (EPEDC) <i>Ali YOUSEFI, Amir Reza AQAMOHAMMADI</i>	627
---	-----

Vehicle Routing Problem for Hazardous Materials Transportation: An Overview. <i>Khaoula HAMDY, Nacima LABADIE, Alice YALAOUI</i>	632
---	-----

Electricity System Sustainability Transitions : An Integrated Methodology <i>Tarun SHARMA, Patil BALACHANDRA</i>	637
---	-----

Multi-project Flexible Resource Profiles Project Scheduling with Ant Colony Optimization <i>Elena ROKOU, Manos DERMITZAKIS, Konstantinos KIRYTOPOULOS</i>	642
--	-----

An Efficient Solution Framework for a Large Scale Delivery Problem <i>Suyan TENG, Edmund CHAN, Changjun YANG, Mingyen YU, Siow Hwei TAN</i>	647
--	-----

Second Order-response Surface Model for the Automated Parameter Tuning Problem <i>Aldy GUNAWAN, Hoong Chuin LAU</i>	652
--	-----

### Operations Research IV

A Bootstrap Data Envelopment Analysis (BDEA) Approach in Islamic Banking Sector: A Method to Strengthen Efficiency Measurement <i>Shahsuzan ZAKARIA, Mad Ithnin SALLEH, Shamsuriati HASAN</i>	657
--	-----

A Rule-based Heuristic Procedure for the Container Pre-marshalling Problem <i>Mohamed GHEITH, Amr B. ELTAWIL, Nermine HARRAZ</i>	662
---	-----

Operational Excellence Frameworks - Case Studies and Applicability to SMEs in Singapore <i>Amrik Singh BHULLAR, Chin Wei GAN, Andy ANG, Bin MA, Roland LIM, Ming Hon TOH</i>	667
---	-----

A Mathematical Model and a GRASP Metaheuristic for a Faculty-course Assignment Problem for a University in Saudi Arabia <i>Khaoula HAMDY</i>	672
---	-----

Multi-objective Vehicle Refueling Planning Using Mixed Integer Programming <i>Shieu-Hong LIN</i>	677
---	-----

Solving the Toll Optimization Problem by a Heuristic Algorithm Based Upon Sensitivity Analysis <i>Vyacheslav KALASHNIKOV, Nataliya KALASHNYKOVA, Roberto Carlos HERRERA-MALDONADO</i>	682
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### Global Manufacturing & Engineering

Drivers and Barriers in Sustainable Manufacturing Implementation in Malaysian Manufacturing Firms <i>Norani NORDIN, Hasbullah ASHARI, Mohamad Ghazali HASSAN</i>	687
---	-----

Choose Whom to Date Wisely: Explaining the Performance Variation in Strategic Alliances <i>Mait RUNGI, Valeria STULOVA</i>	692
Smart Factories in Industry 4.0: A Review of the Concept and of Energy Management Approached in Production Based on the Internet of Things Paradigm <i>Fadi SHROUF, Joaquin ORDIERES, Giovanni MIRAGLIOTTA</i>	697
Application of Lean Manufacturing in Mass Production System: A Case Study in Indian Manufacturing Unit <i>Mahadevan KISHORE KUMAR, A. JOHN RAJAN, R. KAJA BANTHA NAVAS, S. SAHAYA RUBINSON</i>	702
Simultaneous Configuration of Product Families and Supply Chains for Mass Customization Using Leader-follower Game Theory <i>Dong YANG, Roger J. JIAO</i>	707

## Operations Research V

Management of the Care Activities in Home Health Care Services: the Routing and Scheduling of Caregivers Level <i>Rabeh REDJEM, Eric MARCON, Xiaolan XIE</i>	712
Optimal Cost Drivers in Activity Based Costing Based on Artificial Neural Network <i>Noppadol AMDEE, Kawin SONTHIPERMPOON, Thongchai ARUNCHAI, Phanboonmee WARAWUT</i>	719
Icing and Performance of Offshore Production Facilities in Cold Climate Region <i>Rezgar ZAKI, Abbas BARABADI</i>	724
Petri Net Representation for 0-1 Integer Programming Problems <i>Akito KODAMA, Tatsushi NISHI</i>	729
Algorithms for the Min-max Regret Generalized Assignment Problem with Interval Data <i>Wei WU, Manuel IORI, Silvano MARTELLO, Mutsunori YAGIURA</i>	734
Network Optimization for Capturing and Transporting CO <sub>2</sub> <i>Ho-Yoeng YUN, Lianxi BAI, Kyung-Sup KIM, Suk-Jae JEONG</i>	739
Laboratory Measurement: Chlorophyll-a Concentration Measurement with Acetone Method Using Spectrophotometer <i>Fairooz JOHAN, Mohd Zubir MAT JAFRI, Hwee San LIM, Wan Maznah WAN OMAR</i>	744

## Quality Control & Management IV

Comparative Analysis of Taguchi's Crossed Array Approach vs Combined Array Approach to Robust Parameter Design: A Study Based on Apparel Industry <i>Pramila GAMAGE, Nihal JAYAMAHA, Nigel GRIGG, Manjula NANAYAKKARA</i>	749
Total Quality Management in Product Life Cycle <i>Dinh Son NGUYEN</i>	754
Fuzzy Mean and Range Control Charts for Monitoring Fuzzy Quality Characteristics: A Case Study in Food Industries Using Chicken Nugget <i>S. Mojtaba ZABIHINPOUR, M. K. A. ARIFFIN, S. H. TANG, A. S. AZFANIZAM, Omid BOYER</i>	759
One Hotelling T <sub>2</sub> Chart Based on Transformed Data for Simultaneous Monitoring the Frequency and Magnitude of an Event <i>Yuan CHENG, Amitava MUKHERJEE</i>	764

Quality Operating of Information Systems and Service Level Agreement <i>David TCHOFFA, El Mouloudi DAFAOUI, Abderrahman ELMHAMED, Luminita DUTA</i>	769
Drilling Waste Minimization in the Barents Sea <i>Rezgar ZAKI, Abbas BARABADI</i>	773

## Service Innovation & Management II

Influence of Task Characteristics on Team Performance <i>Philipp M. PRZYBYSZ, Sönke DUCKWITZ, Christopher M. SCHLICK</i>	778
Multi-screen Services Adoption and Use-diffusion: The BEST Model Perspective <i>Hung Chih LAI, Yao Cheng YU, Yi-Min TUAN, Hui Shan KUO</i>	783
Effects of the Electromobility on Rescue Service Provisions <i>Francoise MEYER, Alexander RANNACHER, Sönke DUCKWITZ</i>	788
TRIZ Based Approach to Improve Public Bus Service Quality <i>Christina WIRAWAN, Astrid AYU</i>	793
Design and Development Waste Management System in Hong Kong <i>Carman Ka Man LEE, Trevor WU</i>	798
Maximizing Service Value: A Case Study of Online Hotel Reservation <i>Napaporn RIANHONG, Aussadavut DUMRONGSIRI, Youji KOHDA</i>	803

## Quality Control & Management II

Driving 'Soft' Factors for Sustaining Quality Excellence: Perceptions from Quality Managers <i>Mehran DOULATABADI, Sha'ri MOHD YUSOF</i>	808
Robust On-line Monitoring for Univariate Processes Based on Two Sample Goodness-of-fit Test <i>Chen ZHANG, Nan CHEN</i>	813
Critical Success Factors of Six Sigma: An Overview <i>Diego TLAPA, Jorge LIMON, Yolanda BÁEZ, Delia VALLES-ROSALES</i>	818
Human Values for Implementation of Total Quality Management: Proposed Conceptual Framework of an Automated Tool <i>Muhammad Noman MALIK, Sha'ri MOHD YUSOF</i>	823
Factors that Impact Project Quality at a Nuclear Power Plant in South Africa <i>Stanley FORE, W. GALETTA</i>	828
Improving Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE) Through the Six Sigma Methodology in a Semiconductor Firm: A Case Study <i>Kam-Choi NG, Kuan Eng CHONG, Gerald Guan Gan GOH</i>	833

## Quality Control & Management III

Optimal Integrated Maintenance Policy Based on Quality Deterioration <i>Meriem KOUKI, Sofiene DELLAGI, Zied ACHOUR, Walid ERRAY</i>	838
A Study on the Optimization of Wafer Pre-treatment Conditions for Thin Film Stability Monitor <i>Taicheng Kevin GONG, Yanju Lisa YU, Yan Kaily CAO, Xueliang Ruben ZHANG, Kaiyuan Kevin CHANG, Weiting Kary CHIEN</i>	843

Monitoring Correlation Structures Stability in Foreign Exchange Market <i>Siew Lee GAN, Maman Abdurachman DJAUHARI, Zuhaimy ISMAIL</i>	848
Control of pH Neutralization System Using Nonlinear Model Predictive Control with I-controller <i>Ayman HERMANSSON, S SYAFIIE</i>	853
An Efficient Discrete Particle Swarm Optimization for Solving Multi-mode Resource-constrained Project Scheduling Problems <i>Jianshuang CUI, Liruo yang YU</i>	858
Reliability Analysis Based on Three-dimensional Stochastic Differential Equation for Big Data on Cloud Computing <i>Yoshinobu TAMURA, Kenta MIYAOKA, Shigeru YAMADA</i>	863

## Supply Chain Management II

Sourcing Decision with Correlated Supplier Disruption: An MV Framework <i>Pritee RAY, Mamata JENAMANI</i>	868
A Brief Review on Information Sharing within Supply Chains <i>Farnoush FARAJPOUR, Mohammad Taghi TAGHAVIFARD</i>	872
Ant Colony Optimization for One-to-Many Network Inventory Routing Problem <i>Lily WONG, Noor Hasnah MOIN</i>	877
Analysis of Quantity Discounts for Multi-period Production Planning for Single Supplier and Retailer Under Uncertain Demands <i>Okiihiro YOSHIDA, Tatsushi NISHI, Guoqing ZHANG</i>	882
The Cluster Policies to Nation Competitiveness Based on Business Ecosystem Perspective - Case Study of Taiwanese Smart Phone Industry <i>Yan-Ru LI</i>	887
Mitigating Supply Chain Risk: A Real Options Approach <i>Nunzia CARBONARA, N. COSTANTINO, Roberta PELLEGRINO</i>	892

## Supply Chain Management III

SCM Trends and Challenges - Implications from a Cross-industry Analysis <i>Felix FRIEMANN, Markus GERSCHBERGER, Kathrin REITNER, Paul SCHÖNSLEBEN</i>	897
Vehicle Routing with Time Window for Regional Network Services - Practical Modelling Approach <i>Iman NIROOMAND, Amir H. KHATAIE, Masoud RAHIMINEZHAD GALANKASHI</i>	903
Development of a General Collaboration Model - Basis for the Establishment of a Collaboration Compass <i>Xiao-li CHEN, Antonia MAHLING, Ralph RIEDEL, Egon MÜLLER</i>	908
Solving Inventory Routing Problem with Backordering Using Artificial Bee Colony <i>Huda Zuhrah AB HALIM, Noor Hasnah MOIN</i>	913
Big Data Analytics for Supply Chain Management <i>Jens LEVELING, Matthias EDELBROCK, Boris OTTO</i>	918
Multi Objective Supply Chain Network Design Considering Customer Satisfaction <i>Mahdi BASHIRI, Hanieh KHORASANI, Mahdyeh SHIRI</i>	923
Supply Chain Risk Management: A Method and Tool Contributing to the Operational Aspects <i>Elena ROKOU, Konstantinos KIRYTOPOULOS</i>	928



## Manufacturing Systems II

Joint Optimization of Production-maintenance Plans Based on Optimal Production Rates <i>Jeremie SCHUTZ</i>	933
A New Bi-objective Mathematical Model for Sustainable Dynamic Cellular Manufacturing Systems <i>Farzad NIAKAN, Armand BABOLI, Thierry MOYAUX, Valerie BOTTA-GENOULAZ</i>	938
Optimization of Green Electrical Discharge Machining Using an Integrated Approach <i>JAGADISH, Amitava RAY</i>	943
A Conceptual Framework for the Performance Assessment of Lot Release Policies <i>Rashmi SINGH, Muthu MATHIRAJAN</i>	948
Applying Lean and TOC to Improvement Delivery Performance for Machine Tool Manufacturers <i>Chuang-Chun CHIOU, T.W. JHANG, Y. X. DENG, J.T. TSAI, C. PERNG</i>	953
Interactive Virtual Machining System Using Informative Data Structure and On-site Machine Tool Status <i>Aini Zuhra ABDUL KADIR, Xun XU</i>	958
A Simulation Based System for Manufacturing Process Optimisation <i>Hossam ISMAIL, Lina WANG, Jenny POOLTON</i>	963

## Manufacturing Systems III

Multi-skeleton Model for Top-down Design of Complex Modular Products <i>Dexin CHU, Xuening CHU, guolin LV, Yuliang SU, Dongping CHEN</i>	968
Optimized Tool Path Planning in 5-Axis Flank Machining using Electromagnetism-like Algorithms <i>Chi Lung KUO, Chih-Hsing CHU, Ying LI, Xinyu LI, Liang GAO</i>	973
Signal Propagation Model Calibration Under Metal Noise Factor for Indoor Localization by Using RFID <i>Seng Fat WONG, Xue NI</i>	978
Experiential Learning: Lean Team at Virginia Tech <i>Urs BUEHLMANN, Omar ESPINOZA</i>	983
The Backward Growing Method for Constructing 3D Process Models in the Machining Process Planning <i>Jinfeng LIU, Xiaojun LIU, Yalong CHENG, Zhonghua NI</i>	988
Proposal of a Decision Making Model to Select the Best Fitting Cost Estimation Technique in an ETO-MC Environment <i>Aldo DUCHI, Golboo POURABDOLLAHIAN, Davide SILI, Matteo CIOFFI, Marco TAISCH</i>	993

## Information Processing & Engineering II

Development of a Methodology for Cost-oriented Ramp-up Design <i>Achim KAMPKER, Christoph DEUTSKENS, Andreas MAUE</i>	998
Discovering Product Feature and Affective Associations Through Collaborative Tagging <i>S. C. Johnson LIM, Suhaili JAWARIS</i>	1003
Construction of an Interactive Behavioral and Feature Structure Model for Facebook <i>Tsung-Yi CHEN, Meng-Che TSAI, Yuh-Min CHEN</i>	1008

SWOT Analysis of NPTEL Knowledge Portal <i>Kalyan Kumar BHATTACHARJEE</i>	1013
Life Cycle Inventory Analysis and Equivalent Carbon Dioxide Emissions Calculation of the Mining and Ore Concentration Processes of PGM at The Anglo American Platinum Ltd, South Africa <i>Junior MABIZA, Charles MBOHWA, Michael MUTINGI</i>	1018

## Technology & Knowledge Management II

Methodology for Resource Allocation in the Tool and Die Industry <i>Guenther SCHUH, Martin PITSCH, Thomas KÜHN, Advan BEGOVIC</i>	1023
Measuring the Quality of Cooperation in Interdisciplinary Research Clusters <i>Stefan SCHRÖDER, Markus KOWALSKI, Claudia JOOSS, R. VOSSEN, Anja RICHERT, Sabina JESCHKE</i>	1028
Do We Miscount Patent Citations? An Empirical Study on the Impact of Overlooking the Citations to a Patent's Pre-grant Publication <i>Chung-Huei KUAN, Hsiang-Jui CHENG</i>	1034
The Contribution of Technology to Improving Meanings: The Quantitative Analysis of Meanings <i>Satoru GOTO, Shuichi ISHIDA</i>	1038
Advance of Research on Technology Acceptance <i>Ruiping YANG, Liyan ZHOU, Xinxin HOU, Yiming XIANG</i>	1042
Readiness of Malaysian E-Commerce Companies to Harness Web2.0's Competitive Advantage: An Engineering Management Approach <i>Ching Chieh KIU, Chien-Sing LEE</i>	1046
Educational Leadership: The Effects of Leadership in Students Educational Performance in Engineering Institutes <i>Subhashini GOPAL KRISHNAN, Vinesh THIRUCHELVAM</i>	1051

## Information Processing & Engineering III

An Efficient Method for Checking Overlaps and Construction Algorithms for the Bitmap Shape Packing Problem <i>Sho FUKATSU, Yannan HU, Hideki HASHIMOTO, Shinji IMAHORI, Mutsunori YAGIURA</i>	1056
Managing Conflict in Distributed Projects <i>Ramin SHAHZADI, Mohsen SADEGHI, Asal AGHAZ</i>	1061
Analysis of Scientific Research Structure in Singapore Using Bibliometrics and Network Analysis for Understanding Their Characteristics of R&D: A Case Study of Biomedical Field <i>Ken HAYASHIMA, Haruki SAWAMURA, Ichiro SAKATA, Yoichiro MATSUMOTO, Hajime SASAKI</i>	1066
Modelling Financial Flow of the Supply Chain <i>Mohammad Hossein JAHANGIRI, Franjo CECELJA</i>	1071
Role of Walsh Codes and Pseudorandom Noise Sequences in CDMA <i>Puneet CHAWLA, Balwinder SINGH</i>	1076
Learning from Past Changes - Towards a Learning-oriented Engineering Change Management <i>Christoph HOLLAUER, Martina WICKEL, Udo LINDEMANN</i>	1081
A Study of Applying Severity-weighted Greedy Algorithm to Software Test Case Prioritization During Testing <i>Yen-Ching HSU, Kuan-Li PENG, Chin-Yu HUANG</i>	1086

### Technology & Knowledge Management III

Fasten Your Seatbelts, Turbulence Ahead: Environmental Turbulence as a Determinant of Absorptive Capacity <i>Valeria STULOVA, Mait RUNGI</i>	1091
A Preliminary Survey on Modeling Customer Requirements from Product Reviews Under Preference Uncertainty <i>Anies ZAKARIA, S. C. Johnson LIM</i>	1096
Hybrid Intelligent Patent Mapping for Offshore Wind Industry Analysis <i>Chin Yuan FAN, Shou Hao CHANG, P. S. FAN, L. F. KAO</i>	1101
Users' Acceptance of IT and Its Impact on Knowledge Sharing: A Case in the South African Banking Industry <i>Abdulkadir Kolawole BELLO, Kai-Ying CHAN</i>	1106
Interpretive Structural Model of Key Performance Indicators for Sustainable Manufacturing Evaluation in Cement Industry <i>Elita AMRINA, Annike LUTFIA VILSI</i>	1111
What Innovation Managers Really Do - An Empirical Study About Tasks, Skills and Traits of Innovation Managers in Germany <i>Maximilian A. MAIER</i>	1116

### E-Business & E-Commerce

Adoption of Near Field Communication for Mobile Payment: Evidence from Macau <i>Kin Meng SAM, Chris CHATWIN, Jing Xin ZHANG</i>	1121
The Implementation Strategy of Key Task for ERP Activities <i>Te- King CHIEN, Ming-Sian CHENG</i>	1126
Consumer Attitudes Toward Online Video Advertising: An Empirical Study on YouTube as Platform <i>Keng-Chieh YANG, Conna YANG, Chia-Hui HUANG, Po-Hong SHIH, Su Yu Yang YANG</i>	1131
The Role of Perceived Value on Customer E-shopping Intention Using Technology Acceptance Model, (TAM) <i>Ali HAJIHA, Mohammad Reza SHAHRIARI, Nayereh VAKILIAN</i>	1136
Probation of the Private Enterprises' Informatization in Wenzhou <i>Jindong LI, Jixuan FENG</i>	1141
Cloud Manufacturing for a Service-oriented Paradigm Shift <i>Yuqian LU, Xun XU</i>	1146

### Reliability & Management Engineering

Software Hazard Rate Modeling with Multiple Change-Point Occurrences <i>Shinji INOUE, Shigeru YAMADA</i>	1151
Reliable System Design Under Uncertainty <i>Mengqi LI, Minghong HAN, Jiaqi XU</i>	1156
Integration of Failure Prediction Bayesian Networks for Complex Equipment System <i>Weitao SI, Zhiqiang CAI, Shudong SUN, Shubin SI</i>	1161

Prediction of Vehicle further Operation and Fault Based on Tribo-diagnostic Data <i>David VALIS, Libor ZAK, J. CHALOUPKA</i>	1166
Estimation of System Residual Useful Life Based on Selected Tribo Data <i>David VALIS, Ondrej POKORA</i>	1171

## **Project Management II**

Knowledge Transfer in Project-based Organizations. A Conceptual Model for Investigating Knowledge Type, Transfer Mechanisms and Transfer Success <i>Corro VAN WAVEREN, Leon OERLEMANS, Marthinus PRETORIUS</i>	1176
A Conceptual Multi-dimensional Evaluation Model for New Product Portfolio Management – Using Hybrid Fuzzy Model of AHP-DEA <i>Kiranmayi PULIPAKA, Muthu MATHIRAJAN</i>	1182
A Recommendation on PLUS Highway Development: A Social Network Analysis Approach <i>Norhaidah MOHD ASRAH, Maman Abdurachman DJAUHARI</i>	1187
Evaluating Risk Factors in the Operation of Virtual Teams in ICT Projects <i>Nikos RASSIAS, Konstantinos KIRYTOPOULOS</i>	1192
Instructional Design for Online Course Delivery in Engineering Management: Synthesizing Learning Styles, Pedagogical Perspectives and Contingency Factors <i>Senevi KIRIDENA, Premaratne SAMARANAYAKE, David HASTIE</i>	1198
Identifying Critical Project Management Techniques and Skills for Construction Professionals to Achieving Project Success <i>Jui-Sheng CHOU, Ngoc-Tri NGO</i>	1204

## **Systems Modeling & Simulation II**

An Ising-based Approach to the Study of Inter-organizational Team Dynamics <i>Ilaria GIANNOCARO, Ilario DE VINCENZO, Giuseppe CARBONE</i>	1209
Individual Versus Integrated Simulation Techniques in Healthcare Applications <i>Mohammed ABDELGHANY, Amr B. ELTAWIL</i>	1214
CFD Analysis of Chlorine Gas Dispersion In Indoor Storage: Temperatures with Wind Velocities Effect Studies <i>Mohsen SAFAKAR, S SYAFIIE, Robiah BT. YUNUS</i>	1219
Depicting Product-service Systems in the Early Phase of the Product Development <i>Daniel KAMMERL, Martin ENSELEIT, Robert ORAWSKI, Danilo Marcello SCHMIDT, Markus MÖRTL</i>	1223
No Clutch Fuzzy Logic-controlled Hybrid Transmission <i>Essam ESMail, Hamed HUSSAIN, Rahman HUSSAIN</i>	1228
Fractional Order PI Controller for Wind Farm Supervision <i>Boualem BENLAHBIB, Noureddine BOUARROUDJ, Farid BOUCHAFAA, Bachir BATON</i>	1234
Multi-objective Genetic Algorithm in Green Just-in-time Logistics <i>Ashkan MEMARI, Abdul Rahman ABDUL RAHIM, Robiah AHMAD</i>	1239

## **Safety, Security & Risk Management**

A Taxonomy of Security and Privacy Requirements for the Internet of Things (IoT) <i>Israa ALQASSEM, Davor SVETINOVIC</i>	1244
Friction Measurements on Floors Under Solid Contaminated Conditions <i>Kai-Way LI, T-Y PEI</i>	1249
Understanding Hazards and Risks in Modern Sociotechnical Systems: Systemic Approach to Identify Human, Organizational and Technical Factors <i>Haftay Hailay ABRAHA, Jayantha P. LIYANAGE</i>	1253
Effects of Demography and Occupational Traits on Consequence of Injury of Underground Coal Miners <i>Sanjay Kumar PALEI, Netai Chandra KARMAKAR, Rutwick S. M. REDDY</i>	1260
Risk Analysis and Rescue Operation for Machine Roomless Lift: A Case Study <i>Choo Yong LEE, Chin Huat LIM</i>	1265
Modeling of Tolerable Repair Time Without Affecting System Reliability <i>Aishwarya MISHRA, Pranab MURARI, Sanjay Kumar PALEI, Suprakash GUPTA</i>	1270

## **Production Planning & Control II**

Planning and Scheduling across the Supply Chain: Simulation-based Validation of the Unitary Structuring Technique <i>Premaratne SAMARANAYAKE, Senevi KIRIDENA, Dalin CAI</i>	1275
Optimal Planning of Biodiesel Supply Chain Using a Linear Programming Model <i>Maryam VALIZADEH, Syaftie SYAFIIE, I.S. AHAMAD</i>	1280
A Simple Multiple Objective Linear Programming Model on Customization Manufacturing for Metal Steel Making Effectiveness <i>Earl-Juei WANG, Chin-Shih TSOU</i>	1285
Mixture of Two Different Scheduling Policies in a Class of Discrete Event Systems <i>Hiroyuki GOTO, Hajime YOKOYAMA</i>	1290
A Cloud-based Approach for Collaboration of Serviced-enhanced Products <i>Bholaanathsingh SURAJBALI, Adrian JUAN-VERDEJO, Holger BAER, Spiros ALEXAKIS, Gerald HÜBSCH, Markus BAUER</i>	1295

## **Human Factors II**

Selecting a Shift System Based on the Analytical Hierarchy Process <i>Alexander RANNACHER, Susanne MÜTZE-NIEWÖHNER, Christopher M. SCHLICK</i>	1300
Differentiated Customer Needs' Analysis for User Experience <i>Danilo Marcello SCHMIDT, Josu URQUIDI GUERRERO, Ioanna MICHAILIDOU, Udo LINDEMANN</i>	1305
Deriving the Relationship Between User Satisfaction on Engine Sounds and Affective Variable Sets Based on Classification Algorithms <i>Wonjoon KIM, Gawon KIM, Yushin LEE, Myung Hwan YUN</i>	1310
Gesture Interface Appropriateness Analysis on Smart TV Functions <i>Jaehong LEE, Byungki JIN, Soo-chan JEE, Jiyeon HAN, Myung Hwan YUN</i>	1314

Employee Involvement and Training in Environmentally Conscious Manufacturing Implementation for Indian Manufacturing Industry <i>Perminderjit SINGH, Kuldip Singh SANGWAN</i>	1317
--	------

A Toolkit Based on NK Fitness Landscape for Behavioral Investigation in Complex Supply Chains <i>Ilaria GIANNOCARO</i>	1322
---	------

## Intelligent Systems II

A Priority Based Optimization Algorithm for Multi-objective Integrated Process Planning and Scheduling Problem <i>Muhammad Farhan AUSAF, Xinyu LI, Liang GAO</i>	1327
---	------

The Knowledge Sharing Model on Supply Chain Simulation Using Recurrent Neural Network <i>Fumiaki SAITOH</i>	1332
--	------

Implementation of Line Tracking Algorithm using Raspberry Pi in Marine Environment <i>Samreen AMIR, Ali Akbar SIDDIQUI, Nimrah AHMED, Bhawani Shankar CHOWDHRY</i>	1337
---	------

Physical Layer Design of Optical Networks with Practical Considerations <i>Kin Fan POON, Anis OUALI, Beum LEE</i>	1342
--	------

Developing Target Marketing Models for Personal Loans <i>Jen-Ying SHIH, Wun-Hwa CHEN, Yu-Jung CHANG</i>	1347
--	------

Developments and Trends in Shopfloor-related ICT Systems <i>Olaf SAUER</i>	1352
---	------

## Poster Session

A Study on RFID-based Kanban System in Inventory Management <i>Alireza GHELICHI, Ahmed ABDELGAWAD</i>	1357
--	------

The Economic Analysis Model of Operations Strategy <i>Chun-Ying SHEN</i>	1362
---	------

Solving an Economic and Environmental Dispatch Problem Using Evolutionary Algorithm <i>Forhad ZAMAN, Ruhul SARKER, Tapabrata RAY</i>	1367
---	------

Message Sequencing of Rational and Emotional Appeals: A Study on Consumer Brand and Product Attitudes <i>Weng Marc LIM, Pei-Lee TEH, Pervaiz Khalid AHMED</i>	1372
--	------

A Conceptual Neural Model for Business Selection in Multi Business Unit Firms <i>Saeed KHODAMORADI, Jalal ABDELLAHI</i>	1377
--	------

Optimal Inventory Policies for Remanufacturing Inventory Systems with Multiple Returns <i>Xue-Ming YUAN, Z. L. TAN, Amrik Singh BHULLAR</i>	1382
--	------

A New Conceptual Design Approach for Context-aware Product Service System <i>Dongping CHEN, Xuening CHU, Yuliang SU, Dexin CHU</i>	1389
---	------

Evaluation of Equipment Renewal Based on Combination Weighting Method <i>Lei CHEN, Chunqing WANG, Xuedong LIANG, Zhaoxia GUO, Da WANG</i>	1394
--	------

Applied Cognitive Psychology in Software Debugging Process to Predict Software Reliability Growth <i>Kuei-Chen CHIU</i>	1399
--	------



Assessing Survivability for Damaged Aircraft in the Combat Environment <i>Yang PEI, Tao CHENG, Min XIE</i>	1404
An Efficient Genetic Algorithm for Flexible Job-Shop Scheduling Problem <i>Ali MOKHTARI MOGHADAM, Kuan Yew WONG, Hamed PIROOZFARD</i>	1409
A Integrated Inventory Model with Imperfect Production and Inspection Under Trade Credit Financing <i>Chia-Hsien SU, Liang-Yuh OUYANG</i>	1414
Least Cost Design of Green Buildings by Genetic Algorithms <i>Kang-Ting TSAI, Min-Lun LYU, Min-Der LIN</i>	1419
Performance Analysis of Autonomous Vehicle Storage and Retrieval Systems Depending on Storage Management Policies <i>Sascha KACZMAREK, Jonas GOLDENSTEIN, Michael TEN HOMPEL</i>	1424
Integrating Fuzzy Logic to Systems Dynamics for Decision Support <i>Ifeyinwa ORJI, Sun WEI</i>	1429
Effect of Inspirational and Motivational Leadership on Creativity and Innovation in SMEs <i>Wilson MALADZHI, Bingwen YAN</i>	1433
In Search of Measuring Organizational Culture: ICT Peculiarities <i>Maria KÜTT, Mait RUNGI</i>	1438
Investigating Factors Behind Choosing a Cryptocurrency <i>Aamna AL SHEHHI, Mayada OUDAH, Zeyar AUNG</i>	1443
Model of Human Reliability for Manual Workers in Assembly Lines <i>Yolanda BÁEZ, Manuel RODRÍGUEZ, Jorge LIMON, Diego TLAPA</i>	1448
Influence of Online Store Belief and Product Category on Impulse Buying: An Empirical Investigation on Consumer Perceptions <i>Qiong ZHOU, Xi CHEN, Yi-Wen CHEN</i>	1453
Exploring Effects of Ecosystem Clockspeed on Product Performance <i>Saku MÁKINEN, Ozgur DEDEHAYIR, Roland ORTT</i>	1457
Impact of Lean Development System Implementation on the Product Development Process <i>Uwe DOMBROWSKI, Kai SCHMIDTCHEN, Philipp KRENKEL</i>	1462
Internet-of-things Disrupting Business Ecosystems: A Case in Home Automation <i>Saku MÁKINEN</i>	1467
Postural Load Balancing in Daily Personnel Planning in an Assembly Line for Trailer Production by Working Posture Analysis <i>Christopher BRANDL, Alexander MERTENS, Jennifer BÜTZLER, Christopher M. SCHLICK</i>	1471
An Enterprise System Virtual Factories Platform for Collaborative Business Environment <i>Yuqiuge HAO, Ahm SHAMSUZZOHA, Petri HELO</i>	1476
Factors Affecting Product Quality and Reliability: A Comparison of Developed and Developing Countries <i>Pei-Lee TEH, Dotun ADEBANJO, Pervaiz Khalid AHMED</i>	1481
Towards Recursive Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycles for Continuous Improvement <i>Michael Timo SCHMIDT, Fatos ELEZI, Iris TOMMELEIN, Udo LINDEMANN</i>	1486
A Study on Developing the Indicators of Energy Conservation and Carbon Reduction for the Business <i>Liang-kong LIN, Walter DEN, Ying-Chyi CHOU, Hsin-Yi YEN, Ching-Hua LU</i>	1491



# Enhancing Work System Design and Improvement by Further Developments of Value Stream Mapping

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**Abstract** - The main goal of a company is to conduct target oriented rationalization efforts. Thus, the challenges are, among others, to transparency, to bundle, to adapt, to re-interpret and to develop personal and organizational competencies for systematic and methodic planning, designing and implementing, i.e. giving sustainable improvement of processes and value streams. This article describes the further developments of “Value Stream Mapping” (Value Stream oriented Process Management, Value Stream Mapping and MTM, evaluation of alternative value streams, cost development of value streams by changing input parameters). Existing, implicit knowledge will be explicated and systematically bundled along the value stream from different departments of a company in order to enhance work system design and improvement. The personal and organizational system and method competencies are therefore available to evaluate improvement measures and to perform their target-oriented implementation.

**Keywords** - Competencies, continuous improvement, MTM, productivity improvement, Value Stream Mapping, work system design

## I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous (manufacturing) companies were able to increase their productivity in the last 10-15 years, enabled by continuous improvement attempts as well as by applying lean methods. Nevertheless, improvement success rates are decreasing while utilizing these methods for longer periods of time. This diminishing gradient is mainly caused by a more and more difficult and expensive identification and elimination of inefficiencies and waste. Therefore, new ideas and attempts beside product and service innovations have to be generated to allow and ensure extensions and immersions of design and rationalization approaches in work system design. By concentrating and coordinating these efforts, new requirements arise for improving value streams, processes and work systems.

Thus, these challenges for organizations derive on the one hand from revealing existing competencies for systematically and methodically planning, target-oriented design, implementation, rationalization and sustainable improvement of value streams, processes and work systems, and on the other hand from further pooling, interpreting, adapting and developing these competencies. By applying systematic approaches and by concentrating these already existing, but decentralized personal and organizational competencies, they can be utilized for

evaluating improvement measures and for supporting their target-oriented implementation.

In recent years Value Stream Mapping, in particular, turned out as an easy to apply yet effective improvement methodology.

## II. FUNDAMENTALS AND STATE OF THE ART

### A. Definition of 'competence'

'Competence' in this paper means that individuals are characterized by competencies, and therefore they are able to organize and apply their abilities, skills and knowledge in combination with experiences, values and norms successfully in known and unknown (hence open-ended) situations. Competencies are abilities of individuals – as a consequence of organizations too – to act in a self-organized and creative manner in new situations [1]. This disposition for self-organization is one of the main preconditions while performing target-oriented planning, design, implementation and continuous improvement of value streams and socio-technical work systems in order to establish productive (efficient/effective) thus economic production/manufacturing processes, i.e. industrial (stable, deviation-resistant) value streams. They are again the premises for enabling efficient use of resources as well as ensuring the performance of manufacturing companies [2]. The personal and organizational system and methods competencies are contributing significantly to the self-organization disposition of companies and are for this reason described subsequently.

System competence represents the integral understanding of overall flows and individual performance on a systems' level, in order to guarantee a target-oriented alignment and prioritization of activities. In other words, system competence connects the close to reality understanding of overall flows with the capturing and evaluation of deviation in processes, e.g. in production/manufacturing or logistics processes, and deduces conclusive fields of actions. It also identifies targets and target-conditions from the superordinate objectives (strategic objectives, customer goals, factory goals, etc.) of the organization [3].

Methods competence refers to the application and the understanding of several methodologies, e.g. in Lean Management and Industrial Engineering. Knowing methodologies and tools, as well as being able to apply them is essential for developing a holistic understanding

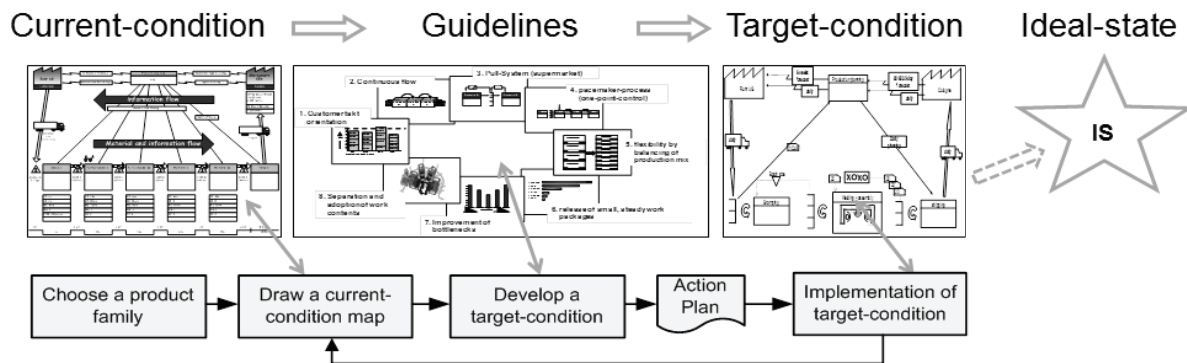


Fig. 1. 4-Step-Method and the orientation towards the ideal-state

of work system design, as well as for defining target-conditions and problem solving. Methods competence also includes the ability to select and apply suitable methodologies and tools [3].

### B. Value Stream Mapping

A value stream includes all activities, i.e. value adding, non-value adding and supporting activities that are necessary to create a product (or to render a service) and to make it available to the customer. This includes the operational processes, the flow of material between the processes, all control and steering activities and also the flow of information [4]. In order to assess possible improvement potential, Value Stream Mapping considers, in particular, the entire operating time compared with the overall lead-time. The greater the distinction between operating and lead-time is the higher the improvement potential.

By defining target-conditions, Value Stream Mapping uses a 4-Step-Method (see Fig. 1) consisting of the steps 'choose a product family', 'draw a current-condition map', 'develop a target-condition' and 'implementation of target-condition' as well as an 'action plan' to monitor the implementation, to describe necessary actions and activities (what, by whom, until when) to improve the value stream.

The ideal-state is like a navigation point ('true north') or like an aid the orientation for the definition or specification of the several different target-conditions for the processes [5, 6]. It is represented by characteristics like (a) customer takt, (b) 100% added value, (c) continuous one-piece-flow, (d) zero defects and (e) lack of impairment for employees. Target-conditions (Fig. 1) can be considered as a kind of 'milestone' along the way towards the ideal-state.

### C. Process Management

Process management delimits, analyses, visualises, operates, measures, controls, documents and improves processes in order to full fill customer requirements. The

Process Life Cycle (PLC) indicates and determines each stage of the life cycle of a process within a Process Management System. It starts with the incorporation of the process into the process map and it ends with the shutting down of the process. The PLC defines steps in the cycle of a process in the Process Management System in form of phases and phase transitions and is named the "large control-circuit" in Process Management. Phase 1 "Recording and Integration in the Process Map" and phase 2 "Process Definition" represent the design and conception of processes. Phase 3 "Operating, Controlling and Optimising" as well as phase 4 "Reporting and Monitoring" specify the recurring ("daily") work of performing and improving processes.

## III. VALUE STREAM ORIENTED PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Enterprises face the task of managing, designing and improving their processes in various different levels of detail – so from the main processes down to the operative work methods – on a daily base. Thus, a lot of established concepts and methods are applied practically. In most cases improvement attempts between these different levels are not linked methodically. For example, a consistent exchange of information and data between different improvement attempts does not take place.

Out of this, various problems present themselves and the following questions consequently arise. How can different improvement attempts within different levels of a value stream be combined usefully? How can value streams be managed, designed and improved in a structured and repeatedly recurring way?

Process Management provides the organizational framework for the systematization of Value Stream Mapping. This is based on embedding and integrating a value stream into phases 2 to 4 of the PLC. This conjunction of continuous improvement and innovation can be found in the Process Management System, in phase 2 and 3 of the PLC and enhances the 4-Step-Method (Fig. 2).

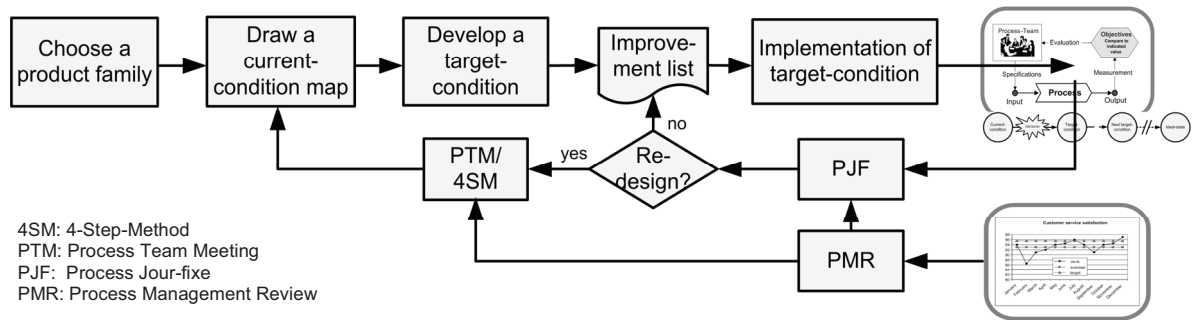


Fig. 2. Enhanced 4-Step-Method of the Value Stream oriented Process Management [7]

The determination of target-conditions, (during phases 2 to 3 utilizing information from phase 4), endorses the PLC by setting clearly defined intermediate goals along the way to the ideal-state ('true north'). Summarizing, the systematic improvement of a particular value stream is realized by its embedding into the phases of the PLC; reflecting an interplay of volatile changes, stabilizations and continuous improvements complemented by an ongoing monitoring [7].

#### IV. VALUE STREAM MAPPING AND METHODS-TIME MEASUREMENT (MTM)

The combined application of Value Stream Mapping and MTM is keen on increasing productivity and therefore to raise the added value of a company. Additional goals are the reduction of lead time and therefore of inventory accomplished by Value Stream

Mapping and the standardization of processes and a well-grounded time determination based on an international performance level – the so-called 'Urmeter for human work' – accomplished by MTM. MTM is the abbreviation for Methods-Time Measurement, meaning that the time required to execute a particular activity depends on the method performed for this activity. It is a modern instrument to describe, structure, design and plan work systems by means of defined process building blocks.

The benefits of this joint application arise from a coordinated design and improvement of work design and production-logistics aspects in work systems, their work methods and in the overall value stream. From a Lean Management point of view both approaches are contributing to identifying, assessing, reducing, eliminating and/or avoiding waste.

Fig. 3 visualizes where MTM may be applied in a value stream.

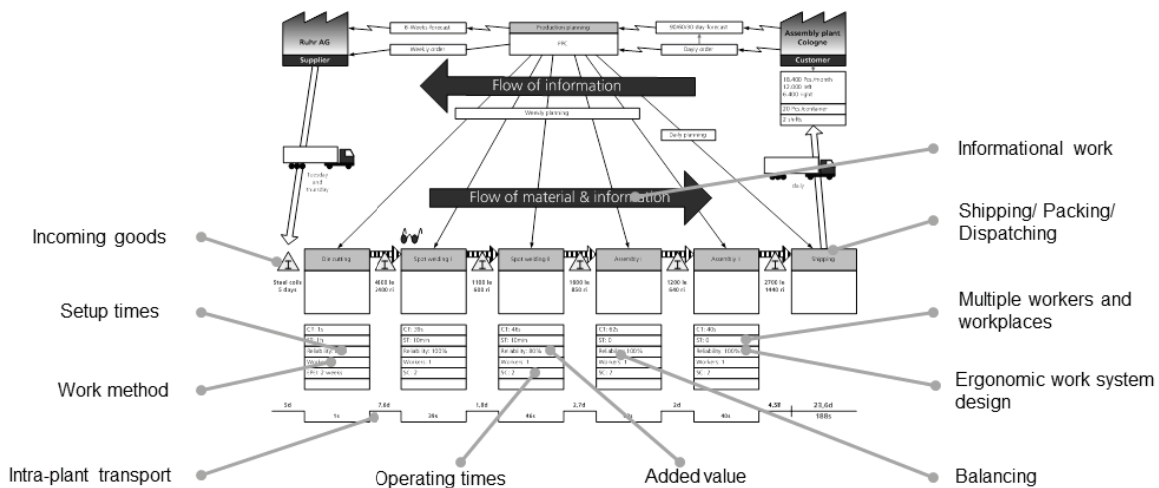


Fig. 3. Options to apply MTM in a value stream [8]

The following practical areas of application and possibilities for use result from the interplay of the combination of Value Stream Mapping and MTM (Fig. 3):

- assessment of added value rates
- assessment of production-logistics processes
- ergonomic assessment of work systems
- current/target-condition comparisons
- balancing
- layout design (overall and single level).

## V. APPROACH TO EVALUATE ALTERNATIVE VALUE STREAMS COMPREHENSIVELY

During the last years – as already mentioned – Value Stream Mapping was established as an approach to improve value streams, i.e. processes. Since lead time is often considered as a sole performance criterion, difficulties arise with Value Stream Mapping in selecting a unique variant out of alternative, i.e. different value streams (target-conditions). Subsequent cost calculations can only provide limited predictions about a best-case solution. In the light of these shortcomings, an approach is introduced that evaluates alternative value streams comprehensively in terms of costs and benefits. This evaluation considers both the material and the information flow of a company.

This approach evaluates alternative target-conditions and the derived improvement measures based on process-oriented performance indicators such as lead time, flow degree, flexibility indicator (EPEI - Every Part Every Interval, which describes the overall time in which all product variants can be produced by one defined resource), machinery indicators (e.g., OEE – Overall Equipment Effectiveness, which evaluates the effectiveness of a manufacturing operation) and indicators of the site layout – e.g., space in m<sup>2</sup> – as well as on economic indicators such as savings and expenses, investments and incomes, payback times and process costs.

The evaluation is carried out iteratively with an increasing level of detail. The calculation of a 'value stream assessment factor', based on the defined ideal-state (= highest monetary and non-monetary benefit) is made, as well as coupling of the two overall benefits in terms of indifference curves (see Fig. 4). This visualization of the results shows the position of the different alternative target-conditions, both in relation to each other and in relation to the current value stream and also in relation to the best in class value stream (ideal-state). Additionally, this indifference curves shows, which alternatives have the same relationship of costs and benefits. This factor helps to find the best alternative respectively the target-condition. Finally, an implementing plan is developed after selection of the appropriate alternative (of appropriate target condition), which is based on the taken actions and contains important milestones and responsibilities [9].

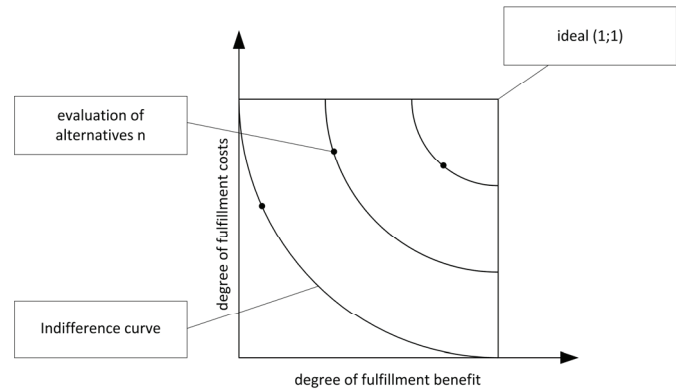


Fig. 4. Evaluation of alternative target-conditions by indifference curves [10]

## VI. APPROACH FOR MAPPING COST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXISTING VALUE STREAMS DEPENDENT ON CHANGING INPUT PARAMETERS

Since different production programs lead to different overall costs, it is necessary to benchmark the effects of changes in monetary values. To evaluate value streams concerning these scenarios (future developments i.e. changes of input parameters), the mathematical relations and dependencies of all processes and stocks, as well as bottlenecks and their possible adjustments have to be determined.

The flexibility indicator Every Part Every Interval (EPEI) is thereby the fundamental link between production program and costs within the value stream. On the basis of bottleneck-determination through EPEI and lot sizes, development of costs in value stream are mapped in changed scenarios i.e. production program.

To determine the different costs (cost-types) and cost drivers in the value stream, expenses are linked through assets, salaries and running costs such as energy and operating costs, set-up, storage, handling, space costs from the buffers and processes with the flexibility indicator EPEI depending on variants and quantities. By connecting with a specific production program the costs for the production processes, the costs of buffers and warehouses as well as the costs in supporting areas and finally the overall costs along the value stream are calculated (see table 1).

The overall costs are calculated for various production programs representing different scenarios. After all defined scenarios have been calculated, respective results are compared with each other by presenting changes of costs at changing quantities, costs at changing variants and possible intensity adjustments or changes of lot sizes [10].

Finally, the contributions of the presented further developments of Value Stream Mapping to system and methods competence are described.



TABLE I

APPROACH FOR MAPPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF VALUE STREAM COSTS  
DEPENDENT TO CHANGING INPUT PARAMETERS [11]

<b>Step 1:</b> Data capture of the current state
1. Resource- and variants specific data
2. Assets and expenses
3. Activities in supporting areas
<b>Result:</b> Mapping of the value stream, overall expenses current state
<b>Step 2:</b> Capacity leveling and possibly capacity adaption (no considerations of setup times and lot sizes)
<b>Result:</b> Necessary investments in capacity expansions (facilities, workers, overtime)
<b>Step 3:</b> Bottleneck determination by EPEI and evaluation of lot sizes
<b>Result:</b> $EPEI_{Bottleneck} = \max(EPEI_{min1}, \dots, EPEI_{minm})$ , Lot sizes as calculation basis for cost calculation
<b>Step 4:</b> Calculation of costs
1. in processes
2. in buffers
3. in supporting areas
4. summation value stream
<b>Result:</b> Overall costs of the value stream in the considered scenario (GK <sub>WS</sub> )
<b>Step 5:</b> change of scenario
→back to Step 2
<b>Result:</b> Input of a new production program
<b>Step 6:</b> Mapping of the cost development of different scenarios
<b>Result:</b> Change of costs by changing input parameters
<b>Step 7:</b> Interpretation of results
<b>Result:</b> Impact of the production program on EPEI on lot sizes on costs

## VII. CONTRIBUTIONS OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS TO SYSTEM AND METHODS COMPETENCE

An important consideration to enhance system and methods competencies can be found in the fact that known and proven methods from a variety of disciplines and areas of a company have to be brought together. Thus, implicit personal and organizational knowledge of the acting employees is made available and the cognitive capability of a social entity (collective intelligence) is increased. By concentrating competencies systematically along the value stream, they are available to support rationalization attempts in an appropriate application-oriented way. System and methods competence are addressed through the model of Value Stream oriented Process Management by imbedding Value Stream Mapping and a short-cyclic improvement routine into the organizational framework of Process Management to support a systematic improvement of value streams in different observation levels and degrees of details methodically. Similarly, these competencies are enhanced by a systematic immersion of the Value Stream Mapping with MTM, since a coordinated design and an improvement of work design and (production) logistical aspects in work systems and their work methods as well as along an entire value stream takes place. The system competence for the purpose of deflection of targets or target-condition from higher-levelled target-systems and

the associated prioritization of targets and measures addresses the procedure of alternative value streams especially. Similarly, the methods competence is enriched by numerous methodical improvements, e.g., definition of target-condition and determination of economic figures. The need for comprehensive determination of costs of existing value streams contributes significantly to the expansion of the system and methods competence of companies.

## VIII. SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

On the one hand these explanations show how practical approaches, i.e. rationalization concepts, are applied in industry (Process Management, Value Stream Mapping, short-cyclic improvement routine, MTM) are combined in order to manage and improve processes and value streams. On the other hand, these considerations demonstrate that the approaches to evaluate value streams offer comprehensive analysis and evaluation approaches to secure strategic planning processes.

The introduced systematic and methodical extensions and immersions prove the comprehensive and generally accepted further developments of the Value Stream Mapping. They also expand the portfolio of available lean methods to support rationalization attempts and work system design and improvement methodically. The further developments of Value Stream Mapping focus on the entire flow and on details, thus creating synergies for designing and improving value streams, processes and work systems. Due to these further developments, decentralized existing implicit knowledge is made explicit in different areas of a company. Further, known and proven methodologies from different disciplines and areas of a company are brought together and bundled along the value stream.

Thus, the personal and organizational system and methods competencies are available to evaluate improvement procedures and support their target-oriented implementation. The collective intelligence of a company enhances, since these competencies are made transparent, combined, adapted, reinterpreted and further developed. Therefore, systematic and methodical planning, target-oriented design, implementation and rationalization as well as sustainable improvement of processes, i.e. value streams, are enabled.

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