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# INDUSTRY-BASED FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AROUND STATE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM THE UNITED STATES

James Tanoos, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College

## ABSTRACT

*As American governors acquire enhanced regulatory and decision-making powers for economic development, the prevalence of statewide business scorecards and other factors are prompting voters to make these politicians and their agents responsible for the financial well-being of their states. Consequently, governors are expanding their policymaking authority and have gone to greater lengths to entice global executives to commit their increasingly mobile capital to their locales in efforts to increase jobs. More than any other sector, manufacturing is the area in which American incoming foreign direct investment is concentrated or what this study will refer to as international industry investment. Data has been collected from three global-manufacturing related Bureau of Economic Analysis datasets, namely FDI in the US- Employment of Nonbank U.S. Affiliates, by State, FDI in the US- Manufacturing Employment of Majority-Owned Nonbank U.S. Affiliates, and Gross Property, Plant, and Equipment of Nonbank U.S. Affiliates, by State. Based on a cross-sectional analysis of this information and gubernatorial tenure, it has been determined that global executives are most likely to devote their industry-based capital to a state in the year after the reelection of a governor and in the second term of an administration.*

**JEL:** A11, B22, C21, D72, D73

**KEYWORDS:** Administration, Agents, Politics, Capital Mobility, Communication, Competitive Advantage, Economic Development, Election, Foreign Direct Investment, Trade

## INTRODUCTION

The structure of the American economy has altered dramatically during the past 50 years, particularly after the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (Chase, 2003). Fifty years ago, a third of all Americans were employed in manufacturing; currently less than a tenth of American workers work in factories, although many are trained in and have experience in industry (Hagenbaugh, 2002). During the past several decades, the US has lost its competitive advantage in production vis-a-vis developing countries, most notably China, especially when considering costs dedicated to wages and environmental customizations (Harney, 2009). The deindustrialization in locales around the US that once were booming with factories and high-paying jobs has contributed to economic hardships for many Americans and was the impetus for this study.

As global capital has become increasingly mobile, competition to attract industry from outside sources has risen in salience. Consequently, US lawmakers, particularly those in statewide offices, have been forced to take a proactive approach. Public pressure in America is now directed towards states to bring manufacturing capital to their regions in order to remedy the negative trends associated with lost factory jobs. American state leaders now commonly engage in strategies involving economic development policy, the use of governments and their agents to actively facilitate local strategies to promote job creation and an increased standard of living in a locale, a phenomenon which first started to take shape in the 1980s (Roberts, 2004; Feenstra, 1997). Goodman (1979) first pointed out that economic development policy and planning are no longer exclusively the practice of socialist governments.

# A STUDY ON THE ESTABLISH AND EVALUATION OF ADULT DAY CARE SERVICE CENTERS

Jui-Ying Hung, Chao-yang University of Technology

## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this paper is to aid in planning for the provision of adult welfare and care services, and to ensure that strategies are in place to effectively cope with the aging society. This investigation aims to review an operating assessment system for the execution of long-term care within Nantou County, Republic of China. Based on theoretical considerations and a hierarchical model of perspectives, the Balanced Score Card (BSC), was used to evaluate management. We also used a fuzzy Delphi method, and a Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP), to assess nonprofit organizations which manage senior day care centers. The model includes financial, customer, internal business process, and learning and growth perspectives. The results show the level of importance of the perspectives was: Internal business process perspectives; Customer perspectives; Learning and growth perspectives; and Financial perspectives. The performance assessment system provides an accurate representation when used to assess long-term care services. The various indicators can guide organizations to continuously improve their services, in order to provide the best possible service for the adults.*

**JEL:** I11; L31

**KEYWORDS:** Adult Day Care Service Center, Balance Score Card, Fuzzy Delphi Method, Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process

## INTRODUCTION

According to figures released by the statistics department of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), as of the end of 2010 Taiwan had over 24.8 million people older than 65 years. This equates to 10.74% of the total population. Executive Yuan of the Council for Economic Planning and Development (CEPD) forecasts 4,981,000 citizens aged over 65 by 2026, equating to 20.90% of the total forecast population at that time (Department of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Economic Planning and Development, 2009). Facing an ageing population, the Taiwanese government has actively promoted health care strategies including a pilot program for the development of long-term care systems, the new century health care plan, the aged intensive care service, the plan for the development of the care-services and welfare industry, and a ten-year plan for long-term care in Taiwan. In addition, the government is devoted to establishing a complete long-term care system, to plan for the welfare of the elderly, and to satisfying the welfare needs of the elderly, including catering to their probable future needs.

The ageing population trend is common to many countries. The United Nations proposed their Proclamation on Ageing in early 1991, disclosing 5 universal principles that elderly should have access to: independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment, and dignity. They declared 1999 the International Year of Older Persons, in apprehension of world nations adapting to the needs of elderly people. In addition the WTO proposed an active ageing policy framework, defining active ageing as providing the greatest chance of health, social participation, and social security during the ageing process so as to enhance Quality of Life (QOL) in old age (World Health Organization, 2002). A policy framework proposed by the WHO, shown in Figure 1, suggests that an active ageing policy should be built upon the three pillars of health, participation and security. In addition to fostering the mental health of individuals and their connection to society, all plans and policies possess an important goal of prolonging the healthy life expectancy of individuals, and maintaining good QOL during the ageing process.

# DIMENSIONS OF BRAND PERSONALITY IN MEXICO

María de la Paz Toldos Romero, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Guadalajara

## ABSTRACT

*The principal objective of this study was to develop an exploratory investigation of the dimensions of brand personality in Mexico. Furthermore, the brand personality dimensions were compared to study the differences between males and females. An estimated 400 undergraduate students participated. They were given a questionnaire to measure brand personality divided into two sessions (six brands of think products in one session and six brands of feel products in another session). However, not all the students attended class on both days, so some completed only one of the two sessions. In the end, 313 participants completed the questionnaire on the six brands of think products and 320 completed the questionnaire on the six brands of feel products. A total of seven factors were extracted from the brand personality scale: Success, Hipness/Vivacity, Sophistication, Sincerity, Domesticity/Emotionality, Ruggedness and Professionalism. The women rated the brands higher for Success and Hipness/Vivacity, while the men rated the brands higher for Domesticity/Emotionality, Ruggedness and Professionalism. The author discusses the implications of the research for marketing practice and the meaning of these brand personality dimensions in the Mexican cultural context.*

JEL: M310

**KEYWORDS:** Brand personality, gender differences, product category, personality traits

## INTRODUCTION

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as “a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.” Brands provide their customers with emotional and experiential benefits. The benefits that brands provide their customers are essential to building strong brand equity. In order to build this strong brand equity in the market, it is fundamental to understand the core dimensions of brand image, which is brand personality (Lee and Oh, 2006). Brand personality is an essential component of brand imagery—a soft attribute of an image—that helps create brand equity (Batra, Lehmann, and Singh, 1993; Biel, 1993). Plummer (1985) suggested that brand image consists of three essential features: (1) physical attributes or product attributes (e.g., green in color); (2) functional characteristics or consumer benefits (e.g., cleans teeth more effectively); and (3) characterization (e.g., youthful). Plummer (1985) termed this latter characterization process “brand personality,” and he believed that it is a key element in understanding consumers’ brand choices.

Therefore, brand personality is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). Aaker (1996) defines the associated personality of a brand as a set of human demographic characteristics like age, gender, and race; human lifestyle characteristics like activities, interest, and opinion; and human personality traits such as extroversion, dependability, and sentimentality. The brand becomes a living person and is often attached to a metaphor. In this way, the abstract intangible assets and characteristics can be visualized in a tangible way, and customers interact with brands as if they were human beings. Similar to human personality, brand personality is distinctive and enduring (Aaker, 1996, p.141-142). In contrast to “product-related attributes,” which tend to serve a utilitarian function for consumers, brand personality tends to serve a symbolic or self-expressive function (Keller, 1993). Customers associate human personality traits with brands because they relate to brands as they would to partners or friends (Fournier, 1998), because they perceive brands as extensions of themselves (Belk, 1988), or because marketers suggest that brands have certain characteristics.

# VENTURE CAPITAL PRE-INVESTMENT DECISION MAKING PROCESS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN MALAYSIA

Cheedradevi Narayansamy, National University of Malaysia

Athena Hashemoghli, National University of Malaysia

Rasidah Mohd Rashid, National University of Malaysia

## ABSTRACT

*Venture capital is an alternative source of funding for SMEs in Malaysia. Recognizing the importance of this industry toward economic growth, the Malaysian government has initiated various strategic plans. Despite promising growth of the venture capital market, past empirical findings reveal that the performance of venture capital backed companies (investee companies) over long run has been relatively poor, especially after venture capitalist exit. Thus, there is a need to understand the decision-making process practiced by Malaysian venture capitalists. Most decision making processes evolve from classical decision-making models. The current study purports to find disparity between the current practice and the classical venture capital decision-making model. The current study incorporates an exploratory research survey of 16 venture capitalists. Findings reveal significant similarities in the decision making procedure and investment criteria used to select investment with the classical model. As for investment criteria, greater importance is given to management integrity and exit opportunity rather than to the business idea. Findings also reveal that VCs experience does not correspond to expertise in decision -making.*

**JEL:** G24, M13, D81, L20

**KEYWORDS:** Venture capital decision making process, investment criteria, investment stage, investment sector, investment timing.

## INTRODUCTION

Venture capitalists (VCs) are professionals who pool funds from high net worth investors and invests these funds into promising young business enterprises (Jain, 1999). Traditionally, companies that have yet to meet listing requirements or qualify for bank loans (Florin, 2005) recognize VC as providers of financial support and value added services. However, over the years, the VCs role has become more challenging. They rely on new business ideas, which can withstand the competitive environment (Kaplan, Sensoy & Stromberg, 2009).

Due to the nature of uncertainties in the small business environment, VCs are very selective with their investments deals. Schweinbacher (2007) documented that VC specialize in financing large amounts of capital in small businesses that they find relatively attractive. Thus, not all-small business can attract VC investment. Jain (1999) documents VCs have the expertise to separate high quality firms from marginal ones. However, empirical findings in developing nations reveal that lack of experience and improper decisions on the part of VCs lead to adverse selection over the long run (Wang, Wang & Lu, 2003). Thus, it is interesting to note how VCs make decisions in an environment of high uncertainties. Do they have a structured decision making process? Can the VC decision-making process apply across different nations? Most of the study from 1970s – 2000s documents the influence of investment stages on venture capital decision making process (Wells, 1974; Tyebjee & Bruno, 1984; Hall, 1989; Fried & Hisrich, 1994; Boocock & Woods, 1997; Bliss, 1999; Larsson & Roosvall, 2000). These stages include “seed capital” characterized by small investment which enables young business enterprises to test their innovation (of product and services), “start up capital” characterized by investment pumped into actual

# OPTION PORTFOLIO VALUE AT RISK USING MONTE CARLO SIMULATION UNDER A RISK NEUTRAL STOCHASTIC IMPLIED VOLATILITY MODEL

Peng He, Investment Technology Group

## ABSTRACT

*This paper calculates option portfolio Value at Risk (VaR) using Monte Carlo simulation under a risk neutral stochastic implied volatility model. Compared to benchmark delta-normal method, the model produces more accurate results by taking into account nonlinearity, passage of time, non-normality and changing of implied volatility. Two parameters in the model: the correlation between underlying and the at-the-money implied volatility and the volatility of percentage change of the at-the-money implied volatility, can explain market skew phenomena quite well.*

**JEL:** C63, G13, G17

**KEYWORDS:** Stochastic Implied Volatility Model, Value at Risk, Market Skew Phenomena

## INTRODUCTION

The measurement of financial market risk is of primary importance for senior management and regulators. Value at risk (VaR) summarizes the worst loss of a portfolio over a given period with a given level of confidence (Jorion, 2000). VaR has become widely used by financial institutions, corporations and asset managers (Morgan 1996). The Basle Committee on Banking Supervision (BIS) and other central bank regulators also use VaR as a benchmark risk measure to determine the minimum amount of capital a bank is required to maintain as reserves against market risk (Pallotta, Zenti 2000). There are some methods to calculate option portfolio VaR. The most widely used is the Delta normal method. Even though this method is simple and straightforward, it does not take into account option non-linearity, passage of time, changing implied volatility and non-normality of market price distribution (Hull and White 1998).

If the percentage of underlying price change were to follow a normal distribution, then the implied volatilities of all options with different strikes would be equal to each other, and if we draw a graph with implied volatilities as Y-axis, option strikes as X-axis, and then we would get a flat line. However, that is not case in the real world. In option market of equity and equity index instruments, we see a consistent left skew graph pattern. In commodity option markets though, a consistent right skew graph pattern shows up. This is widely known skew phenomena in option market. There are many papers that explain this phenomenon (Derman and Kani, 1994, Rubinstein, 1994, Hull and White, 1987, Heston, 1993, Stein and Stein 1991). Peng He and Stephen Yau followed a relative new stochastic implied volatility framework and made some modification in the model setup. This paper calculates Value at Risk under this model using Monte Carlo simulation, and compares the result with the benchmark, the Delta Normal Method. In addition, this paper examines how the model parameters explain skew phenomena.

The next section gives a detailed literature background about models used to explain skew phenomena, and a review of the stochastic implied volatility model developed by Peng He and Stephen Yau. The following section covers steps to do Monte Carlo simulation under this model, and the benchmark method, delta normal method. The case study and result section compares the simulation result with the benchmark in a case study of two option portfolios. In addition, this section explains market skew

# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DISCLOSURE: EVIDENCE FROM LIBYAN MANAGERS

Nagib Salem Bayoud, University of Southern Queensland  
Marie Kavanagh, University of Southern Queensland

## ABSTRACT

*This paper explains the importance and benefits for Libyan companies of engaging in corporate social responsibility disclosure (CSRD). Libya, as a developing country, was chosen by the researchers as it has undergone many changes over a short period of time in terms of economic, environmental and social changes. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data relating to CSRD in Libyan companies. Perceptions of financial managers interviewed as part of the study reveal that CSRD is important for company performance. The paper reveals that CSRD in the annual reports is very important in terms of attaining company objectives to: satisfy the interests of stakeholders; protect employees' interests; clarify the extent of contribution of the company in both CSR activities and CSRD; and assisting investors to make appropriate investment decisions. The perceived primary benefits of CSRD were enhanced company reputation, and increased financial performance. It also improves ability to attract foreign investors, and results in higher consumer satisfaction leading to commercial benefits. Secondary benefits include demonstration of compliance with the law and improved employee commitment.*

**JEL:** M14, M41, L11, K21

**KEYWORDS:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Corporate Social Responsibility Disclosure (CSRD); Financial Performance; Corporate Reputation.

## INTRODUCTION

The institutional context of the emerging economy of Libya has experienced dynamic change over the last ten years (Mateos 2005). The main influential factor that leads to and regulates the attitude and behaviour of Arab societies, including Libya, is the Islamic religion. According to Ali (1996) the Islamic religion organises the social life in family and other social organisations and maintain their endurance and influence. Changes in regulatory environment may have an impact on companies in terms of their disclosures. The level of CSR disclosure in Libya has increased since 2000 (Pratten & Mashat 2009) due to pressures from stakeholders. This has led to development of the concept of CSRD.

The development of the concept of CSRD has passed through different stages; the first stage is the period 1970-1980. Empirical studies were focussed on developing methods to measure the incidence of information disclosure by firms which was voluntary. Most frequently disclosed was information about employees and products. At that time, managers, accountants, and the majority of their observers were not interested in environmental concerns, because it was invisible. Some empirical studies were used three environmental categories out of twenty seven (Ernst and Ernst, 1978 as cited in Mathews 1997). The second stage is the period 1980-1990. Many changes have appeared due to the focus of the social and environmental accounting literature, with increasing signs of specialization since 1980. For instance, value-added statements attracted a separate group of adherents and employee reports (Burchell et al., 1985). Environmental disclosure has become of greater concern than social disclosure, as firms consider alternative means of reducing environmental damage. Legally enforceable accounting standards, Means of conceptual frameworks, and legislation are features of this period that contribute to the increase in regulation of accounting disclosures. Empirical studies in this period were more analytical and less descriptive. The final stage is the period 1991-now. This stage has focussed on environmental issues

# A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INNOVATION

Perrine Ferauge, University of Mons

## ABSTRACT

*Innovation and sustainable development are major contemporary issues. Innovation represents an important tool for achieving corporate social responsibility while sustainable development is a challenge for business and emphasises the direction that innovation activities can take. The objective of this contribution is to specify innovation and social responsibility outlines and to propose a conceptual framework of their complementarity in a small and medium enterprise perspective. This approach enables us to reflect on the role of innovation in responsible entrepreneurship by illustrating a scheme which brings together these concepts in an integrated approach.*

JEL: M10, M14, O32

KEYWORDS: Sustainability, CSR, Innovation, Small business

## INTRODUCTION

The problem of sustainable development is not new. In 1987, the Commission of the United Nations, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, redefined the concept of ecodevelopment, now called sustainable development (Mathieu, 2005). Sustainable development has proved to be a way of responding to socio-economic and ecological crises of development in economies and society as well as to new needs that may arise. The problem of sustainable development was integrated into the microeconomics sphere and has been associated with smaller organizations such as enterprises (Mathieu, 2005). After large enterprises, SMEs became more aware of the impact their activities could have on sustainable development (CIDD, 2006; Spence et al., 2007). Many scientific and public communications on corporate social responsibility show interest in sustainable development and highlight the benefits of sustainable strategies (Quairel and Auberger, 2005).

On the other hand, companies also became aware of the utility of good innovation management which can allow them to strengthen their position in their market (Thouvenin, 2002; Tidd et al., 2006). Many managers are confronted with the necessity of developing new technologies, new products or new organizations. By being innovative, these businesses would be more suitable to meet the needs of new competitiveness (Carrier and Garand, 1996; Hoffman et al., 1998).

Having recognized the benefits of innovation for the business, it seems the innovation approach can be associated with that of corporate social responsibility (CSR). These two problems can be complementary in an organization. Thus, sustainable development can offer business opportunities and numerous occasions to innovate (EC, 2007; CST, 2001). Furthermore, sustainable development can introduce numerous improvements in the modes of consumption, production and organization (CST, 2001).

The literature on innovation, sustainable development and CSR is abundant and varied, underlining the interest they have excited over several years (Carrier et Garand, 1996; Laville, 2009). Regarding the complementarity of innovation and CSR activities, there is little work on their interaction, on how innovation can support CSR, in particular, far as SMEs are concerned (Mendibil et al., 2007).

# WHAT IS PROPELLING THE AMERICAN WORKER TO GO THE WAY OF THE HORSE?

Tony Mutsune, Iowa Wesleyan College

## ABSTRACT

*In today's increasingly dynamic global economy, many industrialized nations are developing comparative advantages that are derived from human effort rather than natural status in their export industries. This is evidenced by a global pattern of shifting man-made comparative advantages over time. Empirical evidence seems to lend support to Wassily Leontief's findings that would later contradict the previously accepted predictions of the factor endowment theory, which suggested that nations traded internationally based on their resource dispensations (Leontief, 1954). This study is a preliminary effort aimed at identifying meaningful factors that propel the development of human-based comparative advantages, and exploration of a testable theoretical framework that will aid a better understanding of the disposition of such factors for the United States exporting firms. Five intellectual property-intensive sectors are sampled. Primary findings indicate that the degree of economic freedom, patents enforcements and domestic lending rates may be important factors that help shape human-based advantages that lead to gains in export market share.*

**JEL:** F1; L1; E0

**KEY WORDS:** exports, innovation, workforce anatomy, transformation, comparative advantage

## INTRODUCTION

The utility of the horse during earlier times in human history is undeniable. Horses were used in service for man to ease burdensome tasks such as plowing fields and transportation, among several other practical uses. As society and economy evolved during the renaissance and industrial revolution periods, civilization became more advanced. Changes in society's interests and mechanism became inescapable. Horsemanship gradually transformed into an art form with the purpose of enhancing the horse's natural strength and beauty. Horses increasingly became specialized for artistic purposes as their use for practical ends was steadily replaced by Man's own growing usefulness to himself as he developed new mechanisms of accomplishing his work. Society's quest for improvement and advancement has been unrelenting throughout history. Human labor transition patterns that are comparable to those of the horse are evident around the world. The impact on the comparative advantages that nations hold is both dramatic and meaningful in international trade.

The findings of Leontief (Leontief, 1953), which are commonly referred to as "The Leontief Paradox" offer insights into the transformational changes that are unfolding in labor resources and the resulting influences on patterns of international trading among exporting nations. This study pays particular attention to United States (U.S.) export sector. In his study of U.S. export patterns, Leontief recognized that the U.S. seemed to have been endowed with more capital per worker than any other country in the world then. Thus, it was accepted that the US exports would have required more capital per worker than U.S. imports (Ohlin, 1933). However, Leontief's findings seemed to indicate a different outcome. U.S. imports were 30% more capital-intensive than U.S. exports. Subsequent investigations would reaffirm the findings (Leontief, 1956 and Robert Baldwin, 1971).

Leontief himself suggested an explanation for his own paradox. He argued that U.S. workers may be more efficient than foreign workers. Assuming that Countries around the world have identical

# COMMON SENSE LEADERSHIP: EVIDENCE FROM SENIOR LEADERS

Jon K. Webber, University of Phoenix

Gregory W. Goussak, Ashford University

Elliot M. Ser, Florida Atlantic University

## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is call for further academic conversations into how to recognize common sense leadership as it relates to the 21<sup>st</sup> century organization. This qualitative study was performed from July 29<sup>th</sup> through December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, which involved 26 participants from across the United States who were identified as senior leaders in their organization. These executives indicated that common sense leadership is a multi-pronged approach that requires flexibility to address both the needs and desires of the organization in conjunction with those of the members of the organization. Participants concluded that common sense decision making requires a sense of morality that sometimes supersedes organizational performance and profitability. Finally, study participants strongly believe that employee motivation that encompasses goal attainment and decision making, through a sense of morality, are important benchmarks in being a common sense leader.*

**JEL:** M1

**KEYWORDS:** Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Common Sense

## INTRODUCTION

Much like the definition of leadership, there is not one common word or phrase that seems to best describe what common sense is all about, just what attributes are encompassed in that term. With a plethora of human relations theories on better managing one's human assets, the researchers wanted to know why there seemed to be a missing hitch to connect these ideas so actual practice was engaged. Our study sought to find broad categorizations of what common sense can be identified as encompassing among senior leaders across multiple disciplines and various locations across the United States. What we discovered was that most of the senior leaders identified three broad areas where common sense practice appeared most in their organization. Decision Making was the most prominent areas identified with 46% of the comments in that area; Motivation was noted in 29% of the opinions expressed; and Goal Setting concepts came in at a close third at 25% of the classifications.

In the exploration of this study, the researchers discovered that a general conceptual recognition of common sense leadership was held among a diverse and wide-ranging population sample. Although a single clear-cut definitive explanation of common sense leadership is still elusive, a more defined parameter of what it is not was determined. This finding matches what is noted in the current literature where there are disparate opinions on whether common sense exists in the first place and, if so, how one identifies it outside of a cultural context. Our work adds to the existing literature by suggesting common sense decision making requires a sense of morality that sometimes supersedes organizational performance and profitability.

The following summarizes the findings of those who took part in this initial inquiry, which then can be used as a starting point for further dialogue among those who might pioneer this concept. The paper presents a rational approach format, proceeding from a discussion of the research background, followed

# ISSUES WITH INTRODUCING GENERIC OPTIMIZATION MODELS INTO SMEs IN SUB- SAHARAN AFRICA

Mengsteab Tesfayohannes, Susquehanna University

## ABSTRACT

*Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) play a vital role in the sustainable industrial development of the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). SMEs can benefit from use of productivity and efficiency enhancement optimization models. Even the simplest mathematical model application has the potential to help SMEs promote their competitiveness and sustainable growth. The application of optimization models has a proven supportive role in streamlining strategic and operational planning processes. This paper discusses conceptually the feasibility and problems of applying generic optimization methods in the operational planning of SMEs in the SSA nations. This will increase the awareness of SME entrepreneurs of how simple optimization models can help SMEs' improve their efficiency and effectiveness in scarce resources utilization activities. The paper develops generic optimization models with the topologies of suitable applications' modes operandi. Practical application will be subject to further research.*

JEL: 014

**KEYWORDS:** Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Economic Development Optimization Models, Sub-Saharan Africa, Decision Sciences, Production Planning

## INTRODUCTION

**S**mall and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) are major contributors to the sustainable industrial development process of emerging nations. The current accelerated advancement of information and electronic technology has made available a variety of user-friendly quantitative models' application software packages. In fact, SMEs in industrialized nations have continued improving their operational efficiency by applying appropriate mathematical (quantitative) models to planning and decision making processes. SME entrepreneurs in developing nations, like those in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), should also benefit from the appropriate use of vastly available resources and productivity optimizing quantitative tools. Even the simplest mathematical model has potential to contribute towards promoting competitiveness and growth. This is a wake-up call for SMEs' entrepreneurs in SSA nations to help their firms apply at least proven generic optimization models to help them to improve and enhance their strategic and operational planning process. SMEs operating in any environment can achieve competitiveness, sustainable growth and profitability if they engage in continuous improvement of their operational activities. This is a notable contribution to innovation and sustainable industrial development.

This paper presents a simple and application friendly resource optimization model called Production Plan Optimization (PPO). From an economic rationality point of view, the paper discusses the potential benefit of PPO for firm efficiency improvement endeavours. If SMEs in SSA apply appropriate optimization models, they can improve their efficiency and effectiveness in scarce resources utilization. Application of optimization models is a formidable task particularly in nations with a classical developing economy. However, using simple models can contribute to the optimal utilization efforts. Stakeholders need to be aware that even the simplest model can help if it is adapted to the objective realities on the ground. Thanks to the mushrooming of electronic technology, even in remote villages of Africa, special and general purpose computers are widely available in the SSA nations. Therefore, SMEs should use optimization models in their vital operational activities like production planning and scheduling, etc.

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