

# Perceiving and adjusting to new functional strategies and methodologies

<sup>1</sup>D.Rukmandhar Reddy, <sup>2</sup>Likhitha Reddy, <sup>3</sup>Pawar.Priyanka

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Assistant Professor

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Master of Business Administration,  
<sup>1,2,3</sup>Ashoka Women's Engineering College

## Abstract.

Here we discuss the rise of empirical operations management research in Manufacturing and Service Operations (M&SOM). Since its inception in 1999, M&SOM has produced 91 empirical articles that have been categorized by the data they use and the methods they apply in obtaining that data. Even though empirical research in operations management has made significant progress, analytic modeling still leads the way and more work has to be done. When it comes to case and survey research, it is vital that researchers in operations management employ more empirical methodologies and stress the need of filling methodological gaps. "combinative value" is a novel research paradigm that combines these two empirical methodologies (web scraping, big data analysis, and/or analytic modeling) with other approaches (such as web scraping and big data analysis) to better comprehend altering operational strategies and practices.

## 1. Introduction

To further empirical knowledge in the field of manufacturing and service operations management, we provide our findings in this publication (hereafter, operations management, or OM). Our profession has done a lot over the years, and empirical research has been more prevalent in our publications in the last decade, as seen by the increase in its presence (1). In addition, as the journal Manufacturing & Service Operations Management has documented, the science underlying high-quality empirical research has evolved substantially (M&SOM). However, empirical

research still lags behind analytic modeling, despite being an integral element of contemporary OM's toolbox. Boost your speed and extend your horizons as you tackle some of today's and the future's most challenging operational issues to increase your contribution to knowledge development in operations management (OM). Environmental dynamic convergence is occurring at such a rapid, worldwide rate that it necessitates a shift in the way operations and supply chain management research is conducted. New empirical data is crucial as we tackle the uncertain strategic problems that await us in the future.

It is based on Fisher's issue framing, Kuhn's cycle of empirical research, and OM's cycle of empirical research. Teaching and practicing OM are subject to a large range of environmental conditions that are always changing. For example, societal change, the emergence of disruptive technologies with unprecedented scope and reach, the growing need for corporate transparency and social responsibility, political upheavals, generational shifts, and the impact our field has on the global ecological footprint are all factors in play. Although we don't go into great depth about any of these outside influences, they serve as a helpful guide to a path forward that calls for an active, broadening, and inclusive OM research agenda.

One way ahead is to improve our understanding of "combinative research value," which we define as the ability to connect deductive and inductive research in a way that maximizes the benefits of both. Using secondary data from a catalogue dealer, we can illustrate the efficiency of dynamic programming in solving the problem of initial

replenishment ordering for short-lifecycle items..

This method, like the legendary "blind men and an elephant," helps us to learn more quickly because it employs a range of methods rather than relying on a single strategy to get to the bottom of a problem. Chapter IV of his book "Normal Science as Puzzle-solving" is devoted entirely to explaining the significance of long-established scientific research paradigms. Furthermore, the community can be shielded from those socially significant issues that cannot be reduced to the paradigm's conceptual and practical instruments. (2)

As a result, regular science with set issue choices and techniques frequently inside our narrow OM subgroup specialities may intrinsically stifle us in solving substantively challenging challenges and sustaining communication silos within our field more widely. To quote Kuhn, "their possession of a common language or specific dialect" is what binds scientific communities together.

The more complex and seemingly insurmountable problems that face operations management in the twenty-first century, particularly in the rapidly emerging fields that have a significant impact on operational practice, strategy, and policy formulation, will be better addressed by linking analytical and empirical research. There has been a rise in empirical research in M&SOM and a relaxation of the linguistic barriers since 2007. The gap between analytical and empirical research is narrowing, but there is still a lot of room for improvement.

## 1. Background

### 1.1. Linking OM's "Soft Side" and "Hard Side"

Since society, technology, and ecology are all moving at such a rapid pace in today's world, we feel that social scientific views such as behavioral and latent variable analyses should be included in empirical research frameworks outside the "hard" sciences. Herbert Simon, the Nobel Prize laureate in economics, incorporated

psychosocial theories into human decision-making processes as a challenge to neoclassical economic theory. A person's limited reason limits the amount of knowledge he or she can take in and comprehend at any given time.

According to him, developing a decision process that allows it to pursue a route that permits fulfillment at some stated degree of all of its demands was linked to his concern about human search tactics for problems and answers. When it comes to human decision-making, problem resolution is often competent but not always optimal. Alternative approaches to rational behavior theory, such as those based on psychological theories of perception and cognition and more closely aligned with laboratory and field observations, support our central premise that combinative research may be fruitful and important (3).

All knowledge is polluted by the biases of the human mind. The problem, assumptions, study design, variables, solution approaches, interpretation of results, and the target journal are just few of the things to keep in mind. Industrialized countries, for example, have historically relied heavily on services. As a result of this problem selection bias, until recently, OM academic research focused mostly on manufacturing and supply networks. This trend appears to have shifted in the other direction, as we observed in our review of empirical articles from the M&SOM. The healthcare and retail industries have constantly been at the forefront of this trend, which accounted for almost 58% of the articles in our sample.

1 The CMV virus has long been a source of frustration for survey researchers. Analytically demonstrate that nonlinear components in CMV regression models are not a cause for worry for researchers. The macroeconomic and macropolitical environments in which people live and work, as well as the microsocial and microcultural contexts in which they are immersed, can influence people's decisions. The study of context is one area in which primary data and other empirical approaches may alter the effect of OM research further.

### 1.1. Strategic Reframing of Problem Choices in Empirical Research and the Kuhn Cycle (1970, 2012)

In terms of production objectives, OM has undergone many paradigm transformations since the industrial revolution. Our OM community's views, attitudes, and assumptions about the work of transforming resources, labor, and technology into commodities and services are largely responsible for these transformations. A scientific paradigm is defined by Merriam-Webster as follows: "a philosophical and theoretical framework within which hypotheses, laws, generalizations and experiments of a scientific school or field are developed."

We have less time to adjust to significant advances in all fields, including OM. To what extent can we predict and adapt to a hypothetical new paradigm shift before or at least while the old one is being replaced?

Stakeholders may be losing faith in the traditional forecasts and prescriptions of OM science, as seen by indicators of inventory oversaturation and queuing, supply chain management and planning. This means we may not be using our full capacity to tackle today's most important issues. If you're looking for a new paradigm in model revolution, the OM community is well-equipped to investigate socially and ecologically responsible value chains. While the third phase of the Kuhn cycle, paradigm shift, has not yet been defined, seeds of change have emerged from a number of earlier investigations (6).

More recently, Roth et al. have explored how OM practices have changed as a result of the quality revolution and other paradigm shifts, and how this has influenced their OM strategy. Using case studies and surveys, as demonstrated in the examples above, it is possible to detect model drift and crises early on. By undertaking these sorts of studies, our research and education can have a greater impact on the practice and policies of the OM community. Analytic modeling and empirical research will benefit from this,

as well as the preservation of our OM community's long-term viability.

#### 1.1. Overview of Results

In light of the foregoing, we'd like to have a look at these issues: Currently, empirical M&SOM research is at a standstill. What changes have been made to the methods? Can you point out any methodological omissions? There are 91 empirical studies in M&SOM published between 1999 and 2018 that have been systematically reviewed in this area. Empiricism must be the major approach utilized in order for a publication to be classified as such in our categorization system. During the last two decades, these empirical research have helped to improve the OM knowledge base and provided insights into operational and supply chain practices and strategies across nearly every industry.

More than 80% of M&SOM publications used analytic models, followed by empirical studies (14%) and conceptual research, during the screening process (4.5 percent ). Since OM's empirical knowledge base is less established than other topics, the paucity of M&SOM publications with an empirical focus is not surprising to certain specialists (7). Even while this research does not cover analytical M&SOM publications, 16.3% of those articles use data to demonstrate the value or utility of their models, such as validating assumptions, estimating models' parameters, or conducting numerical studies. Our study is limited primarily by the complexity of entrepreneurial events and the predominance of unobserved unpredictability. The cross-sectional character of our data necessitates the use of conditional correlations to deal with the problems of reversible causation. Real-world data have been incorporated in one-fourth of the research published in M&SOM so far, which is encouraging (interviews, secondary data, etc.).

Some of the most common methods for gathering data include direct observations in the field, laboratory experiments (both natural and artificial), surveys, phone calls or online questionnaires, web scraping and other forms of data collection. Data from surveys and other

reporting techniques conducted by other parties (such as the United States Census Bureau) are also included in this study (e.g., company financial data). An empirical emphasis of our typology distinguishes the 91 M&SOM publications according to whether or not a paper uses first- and second- or third-hand sources of information to conduct its research.

It's been suggested in recent academic presentations, practitioner papers, and popular press that a significant quantity of empirical data is being generated regularly or scraped via machine-enabled data collecting. Everyday transactions, social media postings, online searches, material management systems (e.g. ERP or CRM), and retail sales may all involve AI-related topics such as sensors, videos, and communications equipment (e.g. mobile phone geolocation and tracking). For example, a written paragraph might represent qualitative or numerical data depending on the nature of the data (such as a table). According to the researcher's concept, webscraped data may be either primary or secondary, depending on how it is collected. As a result of this, secondary huge data for OM research is becoming more and more available (8).

1.1.1. Talks with the media. One-third of the research papers in our selection use interviews as a data collection method, ranging from unstructured conversations with managers (9) to more formalized approaches (10). Combining one strategy with another is one of the most prevalent ways to get information (such as secondary data sources). For a better understanding of the research site/setting, some of these investigations included interviews. Entrepreneurship can be motivated by a variety of factors, and the GEM data offers information on this wide range of factors (7). The dummy variables TEA need and TEA opportunity may therefore be used to identify the entrepreneurs who are motivated by a sense of urgency or an opportunity, respectively.

Survey data from a sample of manufacturing companies is used in the main study to identify alternative ERP implementation scenarios. In order to gain early input on the survey's

suggested content, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with a small number of competent manufacturing and SAP executives before producing and administering the final version.

1.1.1. In-depth Interviewing Looking further into our survey results, we find that 27.5% of the 91 publications examined incorporated survey data. A total of 9.3 percent of these studies (7 out of 25) cite secondary sources for survey data.

Additionally, they use survey data from the Vision in Manufacturing Project (VIM) for a variety of assumptions about knowledge-based resources (operational intellectual capital) and competences as well as performance in the industry. It's worth noting that the remaining 18 survey studies in our sample were conducted by the authors themselves. It's worth noting that just four of the 18 articles in this sample mention this as an entire laboratory experiment. Post-experiment information can be gleaned from participants via surveys.

Another example of a research report that relies on primary survey data. Their study technique is unusual in that it is descriptive and exploratory in character, focusing on the offshore and restoration processes of some of the world's most successful firms. Interviews conducted throughout data collection and for around 1.5 years afterward helped enhance regression models, understand results, and validate findings. As a result of these results, they propose four "descriptive statistics" hypotheses for future investigation (e.g. variations in production volume by area as a proportion of the sample). This study found that exploratory surveys can be very helpful in identifying areas where paradigm changes are most likely to take place.

1.1.2. Experiments.

Our collection includes both laboratory and outdoor experiments, with equal numbers of each kind (Table 1). Our example papers that undertake laboratory experiments look into some area of inventory management (e.g., the newsvendor inventory problem). Using data

from three separate investigations, the authors in this research examine a number of hypotheses that they have developed based on the existing literature. According to the findings of these tests, inventory management systems need significant revisions.

As a result, researchers may conclude with some degree of certainty that their findings are connected to the therapies they are testing, rather than something else entirely.

Experiments conducted outside of a laboratory can cover a far broader variety of topics than those conducted in a laboratory can. Exciting and new lines of study can be opened up by such a wide range of options. An analysis of 12 distinct consumer electronics retail locations was conducted using a quasi-experimental technique to see how a change in store manager incentives (due to a change in corporate ownership) affected performance. A wide number of locations must be visited by researchers in order to conduct good fieldwork (e.g., archival company records, newspapers, company annual reports, open-ended interviews).

1.1.3. Scanning of the internet for information. Web scraping is a new method of gathering data that involves either human or automatic data extraction from websites. However, this word is more generally used to describe the utilization of automated (rather than manual) scraping operations. Web scraping was used in just 7.8% of the publications in our study sample. this data collecting technique is expected to become more popular in the future.

When environmental accidents occurred at Chinese industries, Lo used data acquired from websites to analyze stock market reactions. It was necessary for researchers to collect data on the social responsibility-related awards that each of the Chinese manufacturers in their sample earned in order to operationalize one of their variables.

When it comes to the research of open-source software development, web scraping is an

essential component. According to their investigation, they scraped data from the Apache Software Foundation website using a variety of web crawlers that they created. For the purpose of validating their assumptions, they carefully combined the stolen data with data from a number of other sources. [...]

1.1.5. The sources of more data. Quite a few of the examples in the preceding paragraphs make use of secondary data. Secondary data has been used by researchers to study retail operations. There is one other paper worth mentioning that relies only on secondary sources of information. This study examines the connection between service quality competition and customer defection at both the customer and market levels of investigation. Many sources of data were used to create this analysis. The FDIC's Summary of Deposits database, a large US retail bank with branches in over 20 states, data from J.D. Power and Associates Retail Banking Satisfaction Studies, price data from the FDIC Quarterly Calls Reports database, and market-level demographic data from Esri were all utilized. Using this unique data collection and the associated research, the authors carefully test hypotheses in order to discover if they can anticipate customer outcomes.

## 1.2. Trends in Data Collection Methods

In 91 M&SOM empirical research, several of the data collection techniques were entertaining to watch. Surveys, experiments, and/or web scraping counts for publications published in the journal since its inception are depicted in Figure 2. In 2007, the number of studies in our sample that made use of at least one of these data collection methods increased significantly. Additionally, M&SOM published a special issue on empirical science applications in manufacturing and service operations.

As a sample of empirical publications we studied, the use of survey data (primary and secondary) has been consistent, albeit not quite so in our estimation. A laboratory experiment and a field experiment were the first two published in our sample's sample of

experimental publications in the mid-2000s. To a certain extent, the 13 laboratory experiment papers' publication dates are evenly spread between 2007 and 2018, although the 13 field experiment papers' publication dates are more recently. Among our sample, eight of these field studies have been published in the recent three years.

Researchers in OM are increasingly using experimental research designs to advance empirical science, as seen by the rising number of field experiments in the journal, as well as the steady number of laboratory experiments that have been published since 2007. While automated web scraping will continue to grow in popularity as a data collecting tool over the next few years, more methodological work is needed to ensure that the outputs meet high criteria, as mentioned previously in this piece (e.g., reliability, validity, generalizability, etc.).

Secondary data utilized in many of the original model articles has kept the quality of source metrics and other biases and limitations of the data gathering techniques in the shadows thus far. That is to say, more information is required to provide an accurate assessment of the quality of the data, including operationally specified concept definitions, assessments of metric reliability and validity, and any other restrictions deriving from the data source (s). It is our hope that future research will benefit from a more comprehensive, proactive description of the secondary data and gathering techniques. There should be more articles with rigorous case-based and survey research designs and high-quality measurements from the ODM community. A deeper understanding of the current and future socio-technical, economic, and ecological problems that face the globe will allow us to contribute to their solution.

Case studies and survey research designs were found to be the predominant techniques of data collecting for operations strategy research in a study of the larger OM literature. A paradigm change to strategic agility was signaled by several of the participants, who addressed the focused factory (11) and the Hayes-inspired

methods. Primary data collecting does not come as a surprise, given that case studies may be beneficial in understanding complex ecosystems as they change and producing theories (12). As with surveys, bigger and potentially more diverse samples may be used to acquire a deeper knowledge of emergent paradigms. Surveys can also be used for this purpose. In addition, survey research is ideally adapted to capturing what CEOs are thinking, and so identifying many routes forward for research, practice, and policy. Our analytical and empirical methodologies may be accelerated with additional case-based and survey research in OM, which is synergistic and mutually reinforcing.

## 2. Conclusions

This paper makes a call to action for the OM academic community, which calls for a more vigorous effort to enhance our methodological paradigms, specifically by (a) tightening the integration between analytical and empirical approaches, (b) fostering interdisciplinary interactions, and (c) expanding our knowledge base in empirical science to better understand the fuzzy, strategic challenges that lie ahead. Research findings can be framed in terms of analytic models, and vice versa. The two underestimated types of inquiry, case-based research and survey research, can be filled in by employing state-of-the-art social and behavioral sciences methodologies. Two key gaps in empirical research persist, notwithstanding the progress achieved by OM scholars in this area. In light of the ever-changing environmental conditions brought on in part by technical advancement and the escalation of social and environmental issues, we believe that OM needs a better method for determining when it is time to update its current operating model. In order to know when a paradigm change is taking place, we need better sensors. The use of case and survey studies, online scraping, and big data analytics might be used on a regular basis to track and improve our knowledge of existing OM practices.

Ethical research as a whole should be supported as well as well-executed case and survey research in particular, according to us. The former provides background, while the latter provides information on a larger range of socio-psychological aspects as well as other specifics that are generally absent from secondary data. That these thoughts will encourage other OM researchers to engage more in-depth conversations about when and if we should depart from some features of our usual science is something we wish for wholeheartedly. To enhance our area's debate on new concerns and stimulate discussion of alternate or complementary ideas, these methods will tremendously benefit us. In light of the rapid rate of change, case and survey research will enable our M&SOM community find systemic trends and anomalies and hone new operational methodologies that will highlight crucial paths forward for research, practice, and policy.. It is our recommendation that scholars explore for 21st century operational solutions using a combination of techniques. Combinative research value, generated via the complementary application of empirics and analytics, is highly successful in identifying anomalies, according to our findings.

Improved contact between analytical and empirical OM academics, as recommended in this article, will lead to new ways of looking at the current situation. As a result, we are more prepared to reevaluate our OM beliefs, assumptions, and values in the wake of paradigm changes

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