Editorial Introduction

There are five papers published in this issue, all of them selected under a rigorous blind review system. The referees who have analyzed the manuscripts are very well qualified researchers on production and operations management subjects.

The first paper is authored by Helder Jose Celani de Souza, Valério Antonio Pamplona Salomon, Carlos Eduardo Sanches da Silva and Dimas Campos Aguiar. Said paper applies a Fuzzy Expert System for evaluating Project Management Maturity (PMM), and it also reports the results of a survey, which used the Kerzner Maturity model, of 101 Brazilian companies, and uses a Fuzzy Expert System tool to deal with the model's subjectivity and to check the consistency of survey's responses.

The second one was written by Dalessandro Soares Vianna, João José de Assis Rangel, Sicilia Ferreira Ponce Pasini Judice and Marcilene de Fátima Dianin Vianna, and shows a parallel algorithm to simulate electric voltage profiles applied to the heating of the compression chamber used in the synthesis of superhard materials.

The third manuscript is authored by Renata Mendonça Rodrigues Vasconcelos, Pledson Guedes de Medeiros, Linda Lee H, and proposes an interesting economic approach to monitor the rate of non-conformities in a production by on-line process control. In order to design such type of process, this paper adopts an average cost per item achieved through the properties of an ergodic Markov chain.

The fourth paper was written by Fabiana Pereira, Fernando Oliveira de Araujo Pereira, and clearly demonstrates the application of the OEE (Overall Equipment Effectiveness) indicator in the production line of a company that fills PET bottles with beverages, in order to evaluate and assess the plant operational performance.

The fifth manuscript is authored by Sueli Aparecida Mingoti, Letícia Pereira Pinto, and proposes a creative alternative hypothesis test for the covariance matrix based on eigenvalues and multivariate normality. The proposal was applied over a set of statistical tests and the result was compared with those that come from classical generalized variance test by means of Monte Carlo simulation.

I would like to thank all those people who have kindly contributed to this issue: the authors, the reviewers, the advisory committee, the co-editors, the NEA's team and ABEPROS' board. Without their contribution, this issue would not be accomplished.

I wish the readers to get all the best from this issue.

Prof. Helder Gomes Costa
Editor-in-Chief

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