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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Tomás F. Espino-Rodríguez is a PhD and an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics and Business Management and was a Visiting Researcher in the Scottish Hotel School, University of Strathclyde during 2005. He received the Special Award for Theses in the Social Sciences Area. His main research interests are outsourcing, relational capabilities, operations management and supply chain management. Some of his papers have been published in international journals such as the *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Business Process Management Journal*, *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, *International Journal of Services and Technology Management* and *Tourism Management*.

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This Special Issue of *IJSTM* focuses on outsourcing in services and contains six papers. The first paper by Prodromos D. Chatzoglou and Lazaros Sarigiannidis (Democritus University of Trace) uses a sample of 106 Greek hotel managers to examine the impact of outsourcing on operational objectives such as flexibility improvements, access to new managerial and sourcing methods and quality improvements. It also examines the impact of outsourcing on organisational financial and non-financial performance. The results indicate that there is no evidence supporting the existence of a significant direct effect of outsourcing on the performance of hotels in Greece. The authors show that outsourcing is a tool that it can help hotels improve specific activities and achieve some, mainly non financial, targets.

The second paper, by T. Russell Crook (University of Tennessee), Paul Louis Drnevich (University of Alabama), Garry Adams (Auburn University) and James G. Combs (Florida State University), examine whether transaction costs play a role in service firms' integration decisions by aggregating results from 28 studies involving 31 samples via meta-analysis. The authors review the principal works that analyse the outsourcing of services from the perspective of the transaction costs theory. Their results reveal that the Transaction Cost Theory (TCT) offers limited explanatory power for service firms' integration decisions, and shows that the TCT needs to be augmented by other theories in order to explain how service firms govern such activities.

In the third paper, Ying-Chyi Chou (Tunghai University) and Hsin-Yi Yen (Feng Chia University) present two types of R&D service firms, namely, Professional Employment Organisations (PEO) and Contract Research Organisations (CRO), represented by Tecnos Corporation and ITRI, respectively. They analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each of these two respective organisation models. Consequently, this

study combines the characteristics of both organisations, recommending an operational model that can be described as a ‘virtual contract research organisation’ and has not been presented in the literature to date.

The fourth paper, by G. Kannan, P. Murugesan, P. Senthil and A. Noorul Haq (National Institute of Technology), proposes a structured, multicriteria decision making model for evaluating and selecting the best third party reverse logistics provider by considering factors such as third party logistics services, organisational performance criteria, organisational role, reverse logistics functions, using the fuzzy-technique for order preference by similarity to ideal solution. The authors apply the fuzzy model in a company in southern part of India

The penultimate paper, by Dawne Lamminmaki (Griffith University), uses Qualitative data by interviewing 15 senior managers in large hotels. She has examined the pertinence of the Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) attributes of frequency and uncertainty to hotel outsourcing decisions. Two departures from the TCE’s frequency tenet have been noted and extensions to the TCE theory have been provided. Her findings support the literature although some specific observations contradict the theory.

The final paper, by Qing Wu and Bin Dan (Chongqing University), aims to resolve the coordination problems of an outsourcing logistics channel comprising a Third Party Logistics Service Provider (TPLSP) and a client, by making eight propositions. This work addresses the issue of outsourcing logistics channel coordination when customer demand is influenced by levels of logistics service.

This Special Issue will benefit anyone interested in the outsourcing process in services, such as practitioners, researchers and academics. We hope you will find these papers very interesting and useful.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks for the collaboration of all the authors, referees and the editorial staff of the *IJSTM* and especially the Editor in chief, Dr. Mohammed Dorgham, who entrusted me with this Special Issue on outsourcing in services.