

GUEST EDITORIAL FROM JOHN WALSH, D.PHIL.

Welcome to the Volume 16, Issue 2 edition of the academic journal *Optimization*, which is dedicated to the advancement of managerial research in all aspects. I am delighted to be able to welcome six valuable and interesting papers in this issue. They are:

- Challenges and Policy Directives by Deobojyoti Kumar;
- Masstige: A Paradigm Shift in Luxury Marketing by Sddiqa Fatima;
- Cash Burn Model in Business: A Study of Select Start-ups Worldwide in Achieving Profitability by Charudev Gupta and Jitender Goel;
- The Impact of the Skill Gap on Employability: Study on Strategies and Skill Development in Higher Education by Dipti Singh;
- Understanding the Dynamics of Entrepreneurial Intent and Sustainability: A Synthesis and Future Research Framework by Arpita Srivastava and Nidhi Srivastava; and
- Auditor Independence and Financial Fraud: Unraveling the Connection by Anmol Chaturvedi and Ankit Singh.

These papers represent significant contributions to the field, and I am glad to have played some small part in them being brought to publication.

Deobojyoti Kumar's work concerns the management of India's economy, as the government grapples with the emergence of AI, machine learning, and big data and their possibly disruptive impacts on the traditional economy. This paper will be of interest to all scholars interested in the issue of industrial policy and the future of the Indian economy.

Sddiqa Fatima's work is involved with an area of increasing interest to scholars of marketing, the *masstige* sector—a neologism that joins mass with prestige. As economies such as India and China mature, they produce consumers with considerable amounts of disposable income on a large scale. What opportunities does this emergent sector represent, and how may they be best reached? Fatima argues that this development is a form of self-actualization, with which we will all be familiar from the work of Maslow.

Gupta and Goel consider the cash burn model in start-ups by examining three successful operations. The cash burn model can help in financial planning, investor confidence, and operator efficiency. The authors conclude that companies should aim for profitability after gaining a certain market share of that product, which for now can be achieved by some innovative ideas for properly monetizing the services they provide to their customers, and that can be achieved by changing the mindset of the consumers.

Dipti Singh provides a rumination on the nature of the skills gap that exists between what students customarily learn at university and those required by potential employers. This is a perpetual issue for those of us who work in tertiary education to worry over, and we will all welcome additional thoughts and reflections on the issue.

Srivastava and Srivastava conduct a bibliometric analysis of reputable papers that address the issue of the occasional incompatibility between the need for entrepreneurial activities and environmental sustainability. The authors conclude that more education is needed to resolve the incompatibility and that universities can play a role in providing that education.

Chaturvedi and Singh consider the relationship between financial fraud and the independence of auditors in the age of AI and enhanced internet connectivity, which have greatly enlarged the scope for fraud in a wide range of financial fields. They find a modest connection between the two phenomena and argue for the importance of vigilant overseers and sophisticated regulation to minimize the risks to stakeholders.

This diverse and intellectually rigorous set of papers has much to recommend it, and I am sure readers will find much to stimulate them therein. Researchers should, of course, be alive to the new research techniques that become available to them and to changes in the international environment that require new investigations. At every step, we find ourselves standing on the shoulders of giants, aiming to add our own contributions to academic knowledge to the mountains that have been amassed over the decades.

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