

Review of: "Mediating Role of Outsourcing on The Relationship Between Lean Manufacturing Practices and Profitability"

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The paper here addresses an interesting question and the authors' attempt is appreciated. However the paper is not clear in several places and requires revision.

- The abstract is good, but the introduction is lacking in clarity. I would have appreciated a clearer and more detailed statement of the motivation, the contribution, the methodology employed, and a short preview of the main results and their implication.
- The hypothesis is derived from a discussion of the literature. While the hypothesis is interesting, I believe more is needed here to provide a sufficient contribution. Are there other factors that we might want to control for? Does outsourcing modify the effect of lean management, rather than just mediate?
- Many of the papers cited in the discussion of the literature are old/outdated, as other reviewers have pointed out. I recommend highlighting some more recent work to motivate the reader's interest in the subject matter – seeing no citations within the last 10 years makes a reader think scholars do not care about this area anymore.
- There should be a better explanation of the methodology, as well as more detail on the data used. Some more descriptive statistics on the data and the sample used would be useful to see, as well as a discussion of the methods for a wider audience. Tell the reader in more detail what method is used and why it suits the setting/question. Write out the model and parameters being estimated, and explain clearly all components of it. Document all stages of the analysis done.
- The discussed implications of the empirical findings are not clear, and there should be a more detailed discussion of the effect documented and what the reader should interpret from it. I am unclear that what the authors document is a novel finding. Why should the reader care about the distinction of the direct and indirect effects on firm profitability?

In summary, the paper is a good attempt to answer an interesting question, but does not make a clear or convincing argument of the main findings. Needs more detail and clarity in discussion of methodology and results.