

# Editorial Preface

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In this era, many more people are becoming increasingly aware of the logistics processes that are working behind the scenes to support their every-day lives. However, logistics professionals still require significant guidance and research to support their decision-making at many points along the global supply chains.

This issue examines topics that are related to the globalization and opening of international trade systems, in a variety of contexts. We provide several manuscripts looking at a range of different topics of interest to members of the logistics and supply chain communities, ranging from those working with 3PLs through to those opening up global supply chains and dealing with distribution issues.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The first article examines the location-allocation problem (LAP) with a focus on dense demand. Using a geographic information system (GIS), the work proceeds to create maps with territorial design (TD) based on P-median and partitioning restrictions. The methodology can handle many types of geographic data including districts or states. By determining the ideal location for a distribution center (DC), improved service can be provided to communities at lower costs, through reduced transportation expenses. This type of research can contribute to the provision of community-oriented services, such as hospitals, and can be applied by governmental planning organizations.

The second article, based on an experimental work with radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology, demonstrates that tracking of trucks through the delivery chain can occur on a real-time basis for forest-based biomass. The drivers' use of an app on their smartphones enabled tracking and recording of activities to occur, coupled with the installation of specially designed RFID tags on the delivery containers. The acquisition of these data enabled a cost analysis of the efficiency to be undertaken, showing that container truck systems are (in this delivery chain) as cost-efficient as solid-frame truck systems.

The third article uses a case study analysis of public-private partnerships (PPP) undertaken by the French Port Authorities. Extensive interviews with senior members of the Port Authority has developed an improved understanding of how these investment and cooperation strategies are perceived and used by the decision-makers. The significant costs of improving logistics infrastructure mean that PPPs as a financing method deserve further examination, and this research progresses our understanding of the different motivations, implementations, and evaluation decisions that were undertaken.

The fourth article empirically investigates the SMEs in Finland to establish how they use export networks to develop global customer bases and undertake market entry. Using an online survey, the role of collaboration is explored, and perceptions and practice are measured. While collaborative actions and risk management methods are understood and valued, these methods appear to be poorly adopted in practice by the respondents. SMEs could benefit from the development of easily implemented risk management approaches.

The fifth article shows the importance for third-party logistics providers (3PLs) to understand their customer requirements as a significant service gap exists regarding the logistics service quality (LSQ). They demonstrate that many 3PLs emphasize elements of service quality that are not fully appreciated or valued by customers. Therefore, 3PLs should focus greater attention on the industry sector of customers, particularly regarding personnel contact quality.

## CONCLUSION

Developing effective provision of services and goods to customers requires a sequence of carefully designed processes. As we gain more information and data along the supply chain, we can begin to plan for improved location analysis and ensure cost effectiveness of transport solutions. The requirements of SMEs, often seen as the backbone of many smaller economies, can be catered for in a way that will enable them to flourish and participate more fully in the global supply chain. Firms providing logistics services to customers can pivot their attention to aligning their internal processes and investments with client requirements. Finally, along the chain, we see increasing opportunity for PPPs to be used effectively to enable regions to upgrade and further develop their infrastructure, supporting more trade and movement of goods.

While the complexity of emerging global trade networks and logistics flows has increased, many challenges in logistics have endured. These include effective solutions to analytical problems and service disconnects between providers and customers along the supply chains. Issues such as these recur many times and in many guises and morph as we adapt and learn to manage sections of global supply chains more effectively. As new technologies are brought to bear on these problems we manage to develop solutions to several issues and improve managerial analysis, but open up many more questions and areas for improvement in the process.

## Editor Note

Welcome to the *International Journal of Applied Logistics (IJAL)* and my first issue as Editor. I am very excited about the opportunity to contribute to the success of our journal, and see this as the chance to continue to build an outstanding outlet for research both on the application of logistics and also research showing how logistics theory and models can be used to solve real-world problems. The *IJAL* will continue with a very strong focus on the application of logistics theory, models, and technology management practices to real-world problems. All manuscripts should provide clear insights for logistics or supply chain managers and professionals. Purely theoretical work is welcome where the scholars can demonstrate a clear, practical, and important outcome from their work; therefore, where there is a significant applied potential, these papers will be welcomed.

During the review process, we will ensure each manuscript:

- Explains the application of academic research to logistics and supply chain/operations practitioners or logistics-related business issues;
- Explains advances in logistics knowledge as well as providing insight for logistics managers; and,
- Contains a summary that presents a clear transition/development from research conclusions to implementation approaches, providing benefit to both researchers and logistics and supply chain professionals.

My goal is that a logistics professional or manager reading the *IJAL* should be able to take away an understanding of how they can make a sustained improvement based on effective logistics. In the course of this journey, the *IJAL* should begin to push further in understanding how new logistics approaches fit within established theoretical frameworks and how our existing frameworks must adapt to evolve accordingly to accommodate new practices and innovations.

I would be delighted to hear from authors who are considering submitting a manuscript to the journal, even if the manuscript is in the early stages of preparation. Please get in touch with me if the outcomes of your logistics innovation or study hold significant potential for managers or practitioners. If you are a research student (or you are supervising research students) where the project focuses on applied logistics, please feel free to contact me to see whether your project may fit without our scope and would be of interest to our readers.

Over the next few years, I hope to continue the focus of *IJAL* over several themes including:

- Sustainability, following a stream of research including the analysis of sustainability and green logistics in developing nations (Thiell & Zuluaga, 2013), greening of suppliers and sustainability-focused innovation (Chan, Chiou, & Lettice, 2012), and specific cases of greening along the supply chain (Ergün, Uludağ-Demirer, & Kasap, 2013)
- Technology and new technological developments, exploring themes such as RFID (Liu & Shao, 2012), new protocols (Zhang, Zhang, & Wei, 2011), and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in service environments (Fellenz & Brady, 2010).
- Optimization and solutions to real-world problems, with adaptations of existing techniques (Dugardin, Yalaoui, & Amodeo, 2012), simulation of distribution scenarios (Ech-Cheikh, Elhaq, Rachid, & Douraid, 2014), and meta-heuristics (Ezzinbi, Sarhani, El Afia, & Benadada, 2014).
- The different logistics modes and industries, including maritime (Benghalia, Oudani, Boukachour, Boudebous, & Alaoui, 2014), air (Low, Tang, & Yuan, 2010), and motor carriers (Nadler & Kros, 2014).

The *IJAL* will continue to grow and publish valuable research focused on applied logistics, addressing both the art and science of logistics. The research focus of submitted manuscripts should be clear regarding how the research would be valuable in practice and use, ensuring a clear alignment with the scope and objectives of the *IJAL*.

If any authors, reviewers, or prospective authors have any questions, please feel free to get in touch as soon as possible.

*Lincoln C. Wood*  
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