

## Guest editorial for NOFOMA 2019 conference special issue

This special issue of the *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management (IJPDLM)* contains the best papers from the 31st NOFOMA Annual Conference that took place in Oslo, Norway, 12–14 June 2019. The conference was jointly organized by the Norwegian Defence University College and BI Norwegian Business School. The NOFOMA network is a society of Nordic researchers within the fields of logistics and supply chain management (SCM). The network started in 1989 as a meeting place for logistics scholars in the Nordic countries and has now grown to include institutions and researchers from many nations. The 2019 conference gathered a total of 94 researchers from nearly 20 countries, from Europe, North America, the Far East and Africa.

The main theme of the conference was “Supply Chains and Sustainable Development of Societies”, based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals – the SDGs (Resolution 70/1 of the UN General Assembly: The 2030 Agenda). By emphasising sustainability, we wanted to invite the logistics community to contribute by doing research related to the SDGs. The NOFOMA community did indeed respond. A sustainability track ran through the whole conference, along with other research themes that bring our societies forward. To live up to the SDGs, we also made the conference as sustainable as possible; we introduced a conference app to keep all documentation and communication digital, we produced no paper or giveaways, the lunches were certified green and we encouraged all participants to use public transportation to and from the conference. Moreover, to thank the Scientific Committee, we offset one ton of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for each committee member.

The call for abstracts resulted in 100 submissions. Of these, we accepted 39 as full papers after a double-blind peer-review process, and accepted 33 to be presented as works in progress. In total, 69 reviewers generously contributed their expertise and time to provide feedback on the full papers. An initial selection of high-quality papers was listed by the NOFOMA 2019 Scientific Committee based on *IJPDLM* review criteria, the committee’s reading of the papers and reviewers’ comments. From these, one paper was awarded as Best Paper and one as Best Doctoral Paper. We are grateful for the long-lasting co-operation by DB Schenker, who sponsors both these awards. The list of papers further served as the basis for selecting manuscripts for this special issue. The short-listed papers were revised at least twice by reviewers appointed by *IJPDLM*, before being accepted by the guest editors and finally by the *IJPDLM* Editor, Professor Chee Yew Wong.

Sustainability is a “new normal” and must be widely integrated in research and practice, rather than treated as an extraordinary issue. The papers in this special issue show the broad and cross-functional characteristics of SCM, and demonstrate how to incorporate sustainability as a foundation in future business areas.

Four papers are included in this NOFOMA special issue. The first paper, co-authored by Helena Forslund from Linnaeus University, Patrik Jonsson from Chalmers University of Technology and Stig-Arne Mattsson from Linnaeus University, Sweden, is titled “Supplier Flexibility in the Order-to-Delivery Process – A Customer Perspective”. Their study is grounded on the presumption that efficient use of resources presupposes flexibility, and that flexibility thus is an antecedent to sustainability. Through a perception-based survey amongst 289 Swedish purchasing managers, they explore this relationship in the order-to-delivery process and develop a supplier flexibility framework. They identified significant negative gaps between actual and demanded flexibility related to both volume and delivery, and also a significant positive gap for information exchange flexibility. Because they



identified these three supplier flexibility dimensions, their proposed framework will be a tool to better understand the link between supplier flexibility and sustainable logistics solutions.

The second paper, “Measuring the Gaps between Shippers and Logistics Service Providers on Green Logistics throughout the Logistics Purchasing Process”, is co-authored by Amer Jazairy and Robin von Haartman from the University of Gävle in Sweden. Their conference version of the paper received the DB Schenker Best Paper award. Performing a large-scale survey amongst Swedish shippers and logistic service providers (LSPs), they explore how LSPs and shippers value green logistics practices (GLPs) throughout the purchasing process. Although both shippers and LSPs are positive towards the GLPs in their study, they find that LSPs generally are more interested in offering GLPs than the shippers are in buying them, and that the attractiveness of different GLPs varies between different phases in the purchasing process. Their research adds to our understanding of the motivation to engage in GLPs, and subsequently of how to incentivise more GLPs.

The third paper, “Which Future Path to Pick? A Contingency Approach to Omni-Channel Warehouse Configuration”, is co-authored by Joakim Hans Kembro and Andreas Norrman from Lund University in Sweden. The paper explores contextual factors that influence warehouse configuration in omni-channel retailing. Through a multiple-case study with omni-channel retailers in Sweden, a multi-step analysis identifies 16 contextual factors. These factors are used to develop frameworks for analysing different omni-channel warehouse contexts, and for adapting various configuration elements to reach different strategic logistics goals. The frameworks can provide support for strategic retailer decision-making.

The fourth paper, “Energy Efficiency in Logistics through Service Modularity: The case of Household Waste”, is co-authored by Jessica Wehner, Ceren Altuntas Vural and Árni Halldórsson from Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden. The paper proposes principles for an energy-centric service design, developed from an in-depth study of a waste service provider and municipalities as buyers of waste collection services. The research incorporates an environmentally sustainable development perspective into service modularity and contributes to the literature by exploring how energy efficiency is improved by modular design of logistic services. The study is one of the first to use service blueprinting to analyse logistics service modularity, providing a methodological contribution to that field in general and to logistics in particular.

We would like to thank all authors for their constructive collaboration with this special issue. Likewise, reviewers both from the NOFOMA network and through Emerald/IJPDLM did an outstanding job. They helped authors achieve the best out of their research. In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to all participants at the NOFOMA conference for their papers, presentations and discussions. A particular thank you to all the doctoral students for attending Nordlog (the doctoral symposium). Their engagement during both the symposium and the main conference proves promising for the future of logistics and SCM research.

As organisers, we are indebted to our sponsors, both to our respective parent organisations that provided valuable resources and to our sponsors DB Schenker and TechnipFMC for financial support to the best paper awards and the conference.

Finally, we are very thankful for the invaluable support from Professor Chee Yew Wong as Editor, and Regional Editor, Professor Patrik Jonsson, who helped us during the review process.

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