

Guest editorial for NOFOMA 2017 conference special issue (SI)

This Special Issue of *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management* contains the best papers from the 29th NOFOMA Annual Conference. The conference was organized by the Faculty of Engineering at Lund University, Sweden, and took place June 7-9, 2017. NOFOMA, the Nordic network of researchers in logistics and supply chain management, has over time grown in popularity outside the Nordic countries. The NOFOMA Conference is a truly international event, where 127 researchers from 17 countries around the world met this year to share, discuss, and get feedback on their research in the Nordic atmosphere of informality mixed with rigorous scholarship. Hosted by the Lund University, which at the time of the conference was celebrating its 350 years anniversary, the event was characterized by both classic festivities and novel, rigorous, and relevant research related to the grand challenges of global logistics and supply chain management.

The call for abstracts resulted in 117 submissions, and following a double-blind peer-review process (two to three reviewers per submission) 47 full papers were accepted for presentation and publication in the Conference Proceedings. In total, 82 reviewers generously contributed with their expertise and time to provide feedback to the authors; without their support, the NOFOMA Conference would not be possible to carry through. Beyond the full papers, 28 work-in-progress papers were presented and discussed at the conference.

Four papers from the conference are included in this NOFOMA Special Issue. The papers were initially selected (together with other short-listed papers) based on the double-blind review process including feedback, comments, and ratings provided by the reviewers according to *IJPDLM* criteria. In a subsequent step, the NOFOMA 2017 Scientific Committee reviewed and ranked the short-listed papers in order to find the winner of the Best Paper award sponsored by D.B. Schenker. The review of the shortlisted papers also gave input to the guest editors' assessment of which of these papers had the novelty, relevance, and rigor to meet *IJPDLM* standards, and the level of completeness to be ready within the time limits for the SI. The authors of the selected papers were notified shortly after the conference. They also received a list of review comments from the guest editors that needed to be effectively resolved in order to further the papers. The revised versions of the papers went through a new double-blind review process with new reviewers. All papers were revised at least twice before being accepted by the guest editors and finally by the *IJPDLM* Editor, Professor Alexander E. Ellinger, who has again provided his strong support to the NOFOMA Conference. NOFOMA and *IJPDLM* have collaborated in publishing the best papers from the conference since 2003, and it is our sincere hope that the NOFOMA community will continue this close collaboration on a Special Issue with *IJPDLM*. We believe that a connection to this highly-ranked journal is an excellent opportunity for making research and leading-edge ideas from the NOFOMA community presented at the conference accessible for a global audience.

The first paper in this Special Issue, "Estimating the size of the national logistics market: a method to include both market-based demand and in-house services", is co-authored by Solakivi, Ojala, Lorentz, Töyli, and Laari from University of Turku, Finland. The conference version of this paper received the D.B. Schenker NOFOMA 2017 Best Paper Award. Congratulations once again to the authors! This paper develops a rigorous method for estimating the potential size of the logistics market that was tested in Finland. The method



combines longitudinal industry- and firm-level turnover data with survey data on logistics outsourcing and logistics costs. It also calculates the annual logistics expenditure and market demand for logistics services. The novelty of the paper is the combination of multiple data sources and the inclusion of in-house logistics services, which expands the scope of the logistics market potential compared to previous methods. The research is beneficial for logistics service providers and policy makers to get a truer estimate of the size of logistics markets.

In the second paper, “Balancing theoretical and practical relevance in supply chain management research”, Stentoft and Rajkumar from the University of Southern Denmark present a clear distinction and emphasize the balance between theoretical and practical relevance in SCM research. The authors argue that future SCM research should not only be grounded on rigorous concepts and methodologies but, as an applied discipline, also must focus on formulating both theoretically and practically relevant research questions. Moreover, scholars need to consider their skills in communication of results to attract practitioners toward academic journal articles for guidance on practical solutions and improved decision-making capability. To facilitate this change, the authors, for example, argue that the research community ought to reevaluate incentive systems to support increased engagement with practice and improved practical contributions of research papers published in SCM journals.

Andersson and Jonsson from the Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden authored the third paper “Big Data in spare parts supply chains: the potential of using product-in-use data in aftermarket demand planning.” This is an example of how close interaction between researchers and a company to develop practically relevant research questions. In contrast to previous literature in the field, the authors focus on applying a full range of causal-based forecasting methods using product-in-use data in a case company demand planning process. As results, the authors present eight different interventions of utilizing the product-in-use data and demonstrate how these enable improved demand planning. Ultimately, the authors provide six propositions that serve as a guide to future research efforts.

The fourth and final paper “When to integrate strategic and tactical decisions? Introduction of an asset/inventory ratio guiding fit for purpose production planning” is authored by Normann Asmussen, Steger-Jensen, Kristensen, and Vejrum Wæhrens from the Aalborg University, Denmark. The paper is also highly practically relevant and addresses the theory-practice gap for monolithic production planning models. The paper studies the combination of capital investments and production planning decisions, which usually transpire at different hierarchical levels and on different time horizons. The research analyses how the different characteristics of the production system and the planning environment influence the choice of monolithic or hierarchical planning to ensure fit for purpose. It has used an action research approach to investigate the consequences of hierarchical separation and developed, validated, and implemented its suggested model at an industry leading company.

Finally, we would like to thank the authors for collaborating with us on this Special Issue. It has been a pleasure. Also, all the NOFOMA reviewers deserve our sincere gratitude for their hard work and great feedback on the conference papers. We would also like to express our gratitude to all the NOFOMA participants for making this conference intriguing. It was a great pleasure to organize it, and we look forward to seeing you all in Denmark in June for the next NOFOMA Conference.

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