

Editorial for NOFOMA 2015 Conference special issue

The NOFOMA network is a society of Nordic researchers within the logistics and supply chain management (SCM) fields. The main activity of the NOFOMA network is to carry out an annual conference gathering for researchers primarily from the Nordic countries, but also from other countries around the world.

Molde University College, Specialized University in Logistics, hosted the 27th NOFOMA Conference in Norway June 2-5, 2015, in collaboration with NTNU in Trondheim. The conference theme was “Towards sustainable logistics and supply chain management”, reflecting an important topic that companies are facing today. The call for abstracts attracted 97 submissions for consideration that led to 52 full papers accepted for presentation and publication in the conference proceedings. In total, 25 of the papers were also presented as works in progress. Of the 52 full papers, ten focussed on issues related to the conference theme, as “green logistics,” “reverse logistics” and “sustainable value chains.” Three of these were related to transportation, which attracted another three papers. The majority of the papers, 22 papers, addressed research issues in the broad field of SCM, covering subfields such as supply chain flexibility, – risk and – resilience, supply chain services, global operations, purchasing and supplier development. Furthermore, seven papers examined topics related to information and communication technologies and logistics, including information sharing and visibility. Three papers addressed methodologies in logistics and SCM research, while the remaining papers addressed other topics within logistics like inventory management, urban logistics, optimization and simulation modeling and manufacturing.

As in previous years, NOFOMA was afforded the opportunity to publish the best conference papers in a special issue of the *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management (IJPDLM)* – a high quality, internationally recognized journal. Based on the initial double-blind reviews from the 77 NOFOMA Conference reviewers, a select number of papers were invited for submission to the NOFOMA 2015 special issue. These papers went through an additional review process with new reviewers, and the process yielded three papers that are presented in this special issue. The selected papers reflect a variety of research topics among NOFOMA scholars.

The first paper, authored by Hulthén, Naslund and Norrman, entitled “Framework for measuring performance of the sales and operations planning process” addresses an important field within operations, associated with the challenges of measuring sales and operations process planning process performance. Based on interviews carried out in five case companies, this study suggests a framework for measuring sales and operations planning process performance. The framework is comprehensive and combines measures of successful process execution as well as cross-functional measures. Moreover, the framework provides suggestions for organizations when developing measures to increase effectiveness and efficiency of the process, helping them to standardize measures and to enhance organizational transparency. Such frameworks are lacking, and the framework presented represents a promising starting

point for future research on performance measurement of the sales and operations planning process.

The second paper by Jonsson and Mattsson is titled “Advanced material planning performance: a contextual examination and research agenda.” The paper examines inventory practices in Swedish distribution and wholesaling companies, and analyses how contextual difficulties moderate the relationship between advanced materials planning and inventory performance. The analysis is based on a survey of material planning for purchased items in 292 companies, and finds that advanced material planning modes are not directly associated with inventory performance, which somewhat contradicts the established analytical material planning literature. This is explained with reference to external and internal contextual difficulties, having direct effects on inventory performance, and moderating the inventory performance effect of advanced material planning. Consequently, the study indicates that advanced material planning modes are not necessarily the solutions for dealing with contextual difficulties, but represent solutions for achieving high performance in non-difficult contexts. The study identifies several managerial guidelines for better understanding the nuances of advanced material planning, and proposes avenues for future practice-oriented research. Jonsson and Mattsson’s paper was awarded the DB SCHENKER Best Paper Award at the conference.

The third paper in this special issue by Papert, Rimpler and Pfaum entitled “Enhancing supply chain visibility in a pharmaceutical supply chain: solutions based on automatic identification technology,” addresses a topic of increasing importance to logistics and supply chain researchers and managers – supply chain visibility. In the article, the authors explore how a variety of available technologies can be used to enhance supply chain visibility, such as RFID, wireless sensor networks with sensor nodes (WRS), barcode and data matrix code. The paper analyzes a pharmaceutical supply chain in Germany, with special consideration to the regulative requirement mandated by recent legislation in this industry. The study presents practical solutions using automatic identification technologies, as well as more general propositions addressing how contextual factors relate to supply chain visibility and the implementation of these technologies in pharmaceutical supply chains. Particularly, this study illustrates that contextual factors both facilitate and restrict what available technology is feasible to implement with the aim of enhancing visibility.

Finally, we would like to thank the authors and the anonymous reviewers, as well as the Editor Alex Ellinger and Senior Associate Editor Patrik Johnson, for the collaboration resulting in this NOFOMA special issue. It has been a pleasure, and we have learned a lot. The initial NOFOMA reviewers also deserve our sincere thanks for their hard work and high quality feedback that is vital for improving the quality of research papers. We hope all readers will enjoy the papers as much as we did. The special issue represents an important opportunity for making research from the NOFOMA Conference accessible to a wider audience, and we sincerely hope that this cooperation will continue in the future.

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