

Maritime business logistics

This special issue is gathered from selected papers of the International Forum for Shipping, Ports and Airports and independent papers submitted to this special issue. The theme of the special issue is Maritime Business Logistics, and it consists of topics in maritime education, cruise operations, port terminal operations and management and legal perspectives in liner shipping. It covers a wide range of issues: from those encountered by shipping firms at the different management levels to topics such as repositioning of empty containers across liner shipping alliances. We would like to thank all authors for contributing to this special issue.

Liner shipping companies have evolved over centuries since shipping conferences first began in 1875. Shipping conferences have slowly disappeared because of stricter laws imposed by different regulatory regimes and eventually replaced by shipping alliances. Even though the objectives and nature of shipping alliances differ from those of shipping conferences, liner shipping companies face greater scrutiny in relation to anti-competitive behaviour in certain trade routes, namely, Asia–Europe and Trans-Pacific. Sun and Tang examined anti-competition behaviour of ocean shipping alliances from three legal perspectives (“Anti-competition of ocean shipping alliances: a legal perspective”). They reviewed landmark court cases and legislations in the USA with discussions on the EU and PRC’s treatments on shipping conferences and alliances.

Maritime education in Taiwan is traditionally taught in Chinese. Tseng, Richards and Pilcher identified the key indicators influencing the use of English as the medium of instruction in Taiwan by using analytic hierarchy process and fuzzy theory (“Constructing English-medium instruction indicators in the shipping courses of Taiwan’s higher education”). Teachers’ characteristics were deemed to be the most important indicator, whilst surprisingly, shipping knowledge was not considered as a key indicator.

Organisational behaviour is an established and distinct research field investigating topics such as motivation and job satisfaction. However, the application of organisational behaviour in shipping has not been researched in depth and provides opportunities for new research ideas. In “Organizational motivation, employee job satisfaction and organizational performance: an empirical study of container shipping companies in Taiwan”, Pang and Lu found that employees value monetary incentives, as well as a positive workplace with job variety and rotation and personal development. Furthermore, remuneration and job variety had a positive effect on financial performance, while job environment and job autonomy had a positive effect on non-financial performance.

The economy of a port’s hinterland directly affects maritime transportation. An expanding economy has a significant positive impact on the utilisation of a container terminal. The high utilisation rate of the Bangkok Port container terminal led to delays and congestions. Gosasang, Yip and Chandraprakaikul investigated feasible options for expanding an existing container terminal (“Long-term container throughput forecast and equipment planning: The case of Bangkok Port”) by using a vector error correction model.

Zeng, Wang and Ghoram used time series empirical mode decomposition to ascertain the impact of short- or long-term shocks on a cruise line’s company performance in the wake of deviating events (“The impacts of deviations from standard daily procedures on stock



performance – a case study of Carnival cruise line”). Multivariable linear regression was employed to identify the factors impacting the performance of the company.

Liner shipping companies have to deal with the complexities of empty container repositioning across its strategic alliances. Key research questions addressed the issue of the design of a cooperative mechanism and the modelling of the relationship between the design and demand change both locally and globally. Tong and Yan investigated how shipping alliances in Greater China Region can cooperate for further improvements in synergy and efficiency (“Equipment planning strategy for liners: empty container repositioning across alliances”). It was suggested that shipping alliances should consider cooperating with other alliances to take advantage of their different vessel arrival schedules, port rotations and vessel capacity arrangement to effectively address the shortage of empty containers.

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