
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Pedro M. Reyes is an Assistant Professor in the Hankamer School of Business, Baylor University. He received his PhD and MBA in Operations Management, an MS in Information Systems and a BS in Mathematics, from the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). He was a Lawrence Schkade Research Fellow of UTA College of Business and is an affiliate of the *Sloan Industry Studies* Programme. His area of research consists of the use of RFID in supply chain and logistics operations and operations planning and control systems. His research is published in *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *Production and Inventory Management Journal*, *Journal of Global Information Technology*, *Knowledge and Process Management*, *Applied Mathematics and Computation*, *Int. J. Integrated Supply Management*, *Int. J. Distance Education Technologies*, *Supply Chain Management: an International Journal*, *Int. J. Management Practice* and *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*.

For more than a decade, the effects of technology on supply chain operations have collected extensive research. With each technological advance, these supply chain operations continue to be transformed into critical strategies for effective competition. While the processes of supply chain operations have remained relatively the same over the years and will continue to remain the same for the next decade, what will continue to rapidly change is how the changing technologies will impact the continued migration from functional to process integration of supply chains.

For example, recent developments in Radio Frequency IDentification (RFID) have sparked massive interests with Wal-Mart, Target, Metro and other leading retailers seeing RFID as a way to transform their supply chains. The Department of Defence (DOD), aviation and automotive manufacturers and the pharmaceutical industry affirm that RFID can help them to reduce inventory, improve production and thwart counterfeiters. One place where RFID can have an immediate impact on supply chain operations is at the dock door. By automating processes around shipping and receiving, companies can reduce labour costs, boost inventory accuracy and improve customer service. But what is the real value?

This special issue of *Int. J. Integrated Supply Management (IJISM)* on 'The Role of Technologies in Integrated Supply Chain Operations' aims to collect recent developments and applications of technology as a solution for integrated supply chain operations in B2B. The normal *IJISM* review guidelines were followed. A brief overview of the five papers that appear in this issue is provided.

Boone, Drake, Bohler and Craighead, in their paper 'Supply chain management technology: a review of empirical literature and research agenda' present opportunities for the continued development and extension of the Supply Chain Management Technology (SCMT) research. They stress the importance of SCMT and describe its role in supply chain management as 'evolving'. In this research, they identify three 'lens' that the SCMT literature may be examined: managerial focus, technology adoption issues and technology focus. This literature analysis provides a foundation for future SCMT research.

The paper 'Radio frequency identification: past, present and future business applications', by Reyes and Frazier notes that RFID has become popular and has received the media and industry attention for 'good reasons' – referring to the recent technology advances that have provided new capabilities for improving supply chain performance. They further argue that supply chain managers should become familiar with RFID and its applications. This paper provides a brief history of RFID, its present use in supply chain management and future practical applications; followed by a description of several adoption obstacles that needs to be resolved before the widespread of RFID.

Choy, So, Lau, Kwok and Liu, in their paper 'Improving logistics visibility in a supply chain – an integrated approach with radio frequency identification technology', propose a generic operation model an Integrated Logistics Information Management System (ILIMS), an RFID-based integrated Logistics Information System (LIS). This is used to achieve an effective modelled collaboration among trading partners by enhancing the logistics and service visibility in a logistics service chain. In this case study, the ILIMS is designed for a medium-sized 3PL to illustrate how ILIMS is used for improving the business performance.

The paper by Wyld and Jones, 'RFID is no fake: the adoption of radio frequency identification technology in the pharmaceutical supply chain', examines the adoption of RFID technology in the pharmaceutical supply chain for addressing the unique challenges faced in this industry. They point out two major issues in drug distribution: medical errors in the administration of drugs and the growth of counterfeit drugs. This research provides a description of the role of RFID technology for addressing these two major issues. They further discuss some lessons learned, along with early return on investment perspectives, from first movers in the industry.

Hemsworth, Sánchez-Rodríguez and Bidgood, in their paper 'Information systems in purchasing: the impact on internal customer satisfaction within a quality management framework', explore the effect of information systems practice on the purchasing ability to meet internal customer requirements within a quality-oriented management framework. Using structural equation modelling, this empirical study researches the relationship between purchasing-related information systems and internal customer satisfaction. Their conceptual model contains three constructs, information systems, quality management practices in purchasing and their impact on obtaining internal customer satisfaction, used in this study.

I appreciate the efforts and support of all who were involved in making this special issue possible, which includes the Editor-in-Chief of Inderscience, editorial staff of *Int. J. Integrated Supply Management* and the editor of the journal. I further acknowledge the assistance of the referees who reviewed the manuscripts for this special issue.