
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Xiaowen Fu is a Senior Lecturer of Aviation and Maritime at the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies, University of Sydney Business School. He obtained his PhD from Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia. His main research area is transport economics which covers issues such as competition policy and government regulation, efficiency benchmarking, transport demand modelling and industrial organisation.

Chung-Lun Li is the Head and Chair Professor of Logistics Management at the Department of Logistics and Maritime Studies of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He holds a doctoral degree in Operations Research from Columbia University. His research interests include inventory management, logistics, scheduling, and supply chain management. He has published over 70 research articles in leading academic journals. He has served on the editorial boards of *IIE Transactions*, *Naval Research Logistics*, and *Production and Operations Management*.

The International Forum on Shipping, Ports and Airports (IFSPA) 2012 was held on 27–30 May 2012 at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The theme was Transport logistics for sustainable growth at a new level, the conference aimed to provide an interactive platform for international academics and industry practitioners to consider future issues related to logistics and maritime economics, policy and management. This special issue of *IJSTL* is devoted to publishing enhanced versions of selected papers presented IFSPA 2012, as well as papers which fit the theme of the conference. All papers submitted to this special issue have gone through a rigorous peer-review process. Five papers emerged from the review process are contained in this special issue. The following summarises the contents and contribution of each of these papers.

Fan et al. study joint pricing for fronthaul and backhaul trips in liner shipping. They analyse the pricing strategies for the two trips based on different levels of demand imbalance. The critical condition under which demand imbalance causes trade imbalance, and the relationship between fronthaul and backhaul prices in both balanced trade and

imbalanced trade are identified. Optimal pricing strategies are also examined in this study. Using the properties derived from theoretical analysis, Fan et al. also test the relationships between fronthaul and backhaul container freight rates for the Trans-Pacific, Trans-Atlantic, and Euro-Asia routes.

Tan and Thai's study identifies the knowledge sharing mechanisms present within liner shipping alliances, and establishes how knowledge sharing positively impact firm performance with geographical proximity as a positive but limited moderator. The authors conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with senior management executives from liner shipping firms, which allow them to gain detailed insights and understanding for the relevant research objectives.

Tang et al. study CO₂ emission of the free shuttle buses in Macau. They first investigate the operational conditions such as transit time and visitor volume of the free shuttle buses among fifteen casinos in the city. They then build a series of integer programming models to optimise the populations of the free shuttle buses, which achieve a 49.4% reduction in vehicle population. These investigation results suggest that the CO₂ emission of the free shuttle buses could be reduced by 60.4% while maintaining the existing service level.

Wan et al. empirically explores the impacts of hinterland accessibility on efficiency of the USA container ports. They implement a two-stage approach. They first measure the container port efficiency via data envelopment analysis. A Tobit regression is then utilised to explore the relationship between DEA scores and ground transportation conditions. One of their major findings is that provision of on-dock rail facility at container terminals is negatively correlated with container port efficiency.

Wu and Lin explore the sources of technical change and the associated technical change biases for the container shipping industry. They develop a translog variable cost function to measure the magnitude of the rates of technical change for three Taiwanese container shipping lines. One of their major findings is that the technical progress for a container shipping line should be focused on improving the operational efficiency with a view to reducing managerial and administrative costs, and on efficiently organising the network of service routes for the transshipment of containers.

Editing this special issue would not have been possible without the help of our referees. We thank them for their time and energy. We also wish to thank all the authors who responded to our call for papers by submitting their works for review. Sincere thanks are also given to all the conference speakers and guests, and the editorial board of the journal. Without their generous support, IFSPA 2012 could not have been a success.