
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Gianmaria Martini is a Full Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Bergamo. His research activities are focused on industrial economics, mainly efficiency and productivity applied to public utilities sectors and in particular air transportation and healthcare. He has published several papers on these issues on top of academic journals. He is currently an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Air Transport Management* and a Vice-President for Publication of the Air Transportation Research Society (ATRS).

Nicola Volta is Lecturer at the Centre for Air Transport Management in Cranfield University. His expertise is in benchmarking and performance measurement of transport systems.

The Air Transport Research Society (ATRS) held its 19th World Conference on 2–5 July 2015 in Singapore. The conference attracted over 280 delegates comprising top academics, researchers and industry practitioners from 31 countries and regions worldwide. It was jointly organised by the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Singapore Aviation Academy (SAA) at University Town in NUS. The four-day conference comprised of 40 sessions with 197 papers presented on topics ranging from air transport policy and airport operational strategies to safety and security challenges, covering not only current but also future challenges of concern for the aviation industry. The conference was held in the background of high expected air traffic growth in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions, despite the volatile global economy, that has affected the world's airlines diversely.

In this special issue of the *International Journal of Aviation Management* we, the guest editors, have selected four papers reflecting the theme of air transport innovation and efficiencies. We believe that they provide a glimpse into the topic and are valuable additions to the literature on air transport.

In the first paper, Heinitz and Hirschberger considers the European short and medium-range leisure flight market analysing the trade-off between catering service levels and the variations of air fares. Using stated preference surveys, the authors estimate the passenger preferences through discrete choice analysis techniques. The authors' findings highlight that there is evidence on a remarkable sensitivity of the respective customer to both improvement and deteriorations of in-flight service levels. Generally, the spread of fares by in-flight service levels provide the opportunity of extra revenue. However, the clientele is price-elastic, and onboard sales of the airline studied reveal only few spontaneous purchases of meals.

In the second paper, Ghosh et al. turn their attention into the modelling of possible future evolutions of the global air transportation system as alternative quantitative scenarios. The modelling proposed is based on socio-economics scenarios and deduces air passenger demand networks between cities. By projecting traffic indicators between regions, the methodology models discrete amounts of passengers and traffic between city pairs. The research allows the prediction of realistic insights on how new technologies, aircraft designs and operational measure influence the evolution of air transport systems.

In the third paper, Li provides an optimal model for discussing timetable rescheduling during peak hours. The model measures the flights taxiing time and the relative amount of time required to move between the gate and runway in order to obtain the minimum connection time. The research also measures the total waiting time of all flights and modifies the scheduled timetable in order to improve the window time and the timetables for peak hours. The outcomes of the model enhance operations within the airfield, potentially improving air traffic management strategies and airlines fuel savings.

The final paper by Usami and Akai focuses on airports fuel tax and its allocation scheme to the Japanese local governments. Based on trial calculations, the research provides recommendations to implement an allocation scheme based on transparency and clarity by taking into accounts the costs and the benefits of airport users. The authors suggest that In the light of future privatisations and airport concessions, the current scheme needs to be reviewed in order to assure transparency and autonomy to airport managements.

We would like to extend our thanks to the authors and the reviewers for their contribution to this ATRS special issue of the *International Journal of Aviation Management*. We believe that these papers will encourage further research on the respective topics, and offer valuable insights to our understanding of the airlines and airports.