

Editorial to the first issue of Logistics Research

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Dear Readers,

Current estimates of annual logistics spending are in the order of 900 billion Euros for the European Community, of 1,400 billion Dollars in the United States, of about 4,000 billion Dollars worldwide. These numbers are the financial shadows of an enormous volume of “real” jobs and work taking place daily in the field of logistics, of equipment employed, of the consumption of materials and immaterial resources, of challenges of organization and management. Over the last decades the “Logistics Industry” and the “Function” of Logistics have been recognized and established as very large and vital elements of the “real world” of modern business and economic activities.

The situation is different in the “academic world”—the world of ideas, hypotheses, methodologies, concepts, of research questions and answers: The “science” of logistics is not yet fully recognized there. It is not perceived on par with the older, established disciplines of Economics, Physics, Mathematics, and not even with the younger fields of Marketing, Informatics, Engineering, etc.

Some reasons for this are obvious. There is fragmentation by geographies and cultures: Communication between the American/Anglo-Saxon “communities” of logistics and supply chain researchers on one hand, the other communities of logisticians in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere, is progressing, but still far from perfect. Academics in logistics typically received their original education in Operations Research or General Business Administration, in Marketing, Engineering, Geography, etc. This is where their loyalty and sense of identity is primarily rooted.

And in the past, the field has been driven more by the adaptation of developments and best business practices, rather than by original results of research, and by a set of clear cut, broadly accepted academic standards, methods, paradigmatic approaches.

A quite practical consequence of this situation is the difficulty for young academics in logistics to get their work published in ways that they receive full credit and “rankings” that are ever more required for the advancement of their careers.

To overcome the disciplinary, geographical and cultures barriers that fragment and inhibit the field so far will be a huge challenge for the coming years.

The ambitious goal which the publishers and editors of our new journal LOGISTICS RESEARCH hat set for themselves, therefore, is to make a contribution towards meeting this challenge. We hope that LOGISTICS RESEARCH will complement the already existing options to publish academic work in a unique way through its mission of

- providing a platform that explicitly supports the exchange and integration of ideas not only between academics in the fields of *Business Management, Operations Research, Informatics, and Economics*, but also of *Engineering*—which, by our observations, is not yet available;
- seeking to publish international contributions from *all* continents in a balanced way—avoiding the dominance of one region or tradition;
- actively inviting and stimulating work on *innovative topics which will expand the reach and boundaries of our field of logistics*—such as the challenge of “hyper-competition” and the demands for “flexibility” and “adaptivity” addressed in this first issue of our journal.

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I am aware, that the statements made above about the current status of our “science of logistics” may be somewhat overdrawn, and the ambitions set too high. But we think we should try. We thank the publishers BVL and the house of SPRINGER for their support of this project. We hope you, the readers, will find it worthwhile. We ask for your interest and constructive criticisms and for your help as potential future contributors as well.

The first issue of LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT, which you hold in your hands, offers three original articles around our first thematic focus: “Supply Chain Management and Hypercompetition by the Denmark-based authors Kotzab/Grant/Halldorson/Teller, “How to Improve Supply Chain Flexibility by Strategic Supply Chain Networks” by Winkler from Austria, which is based on a larger research project about the flexibility of complex logistical systems,

and the paper based on the work of the international “Best-log” research group by Beckmann/Lindemann/Straube on “Organizational Support—an empirical investigation in to the Effect of Organizationall Support on the Success Emerging Market Sourcing”. In addition, you find Rekersbrink/Scholz/Reiter’s work on “A Distributed Routing Concept for Distributed Vehicle Routing Problems” and a review paper on “Logistics Research—A 50 years’ walk of ideas”.



Peter Klaus, Editor-in-Chief
October 2008.