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Celebrating IJPDLM's 50th anniversary: a reflection on its contributions and future directions

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Abstract

Purpose – This article celebrates the 50th anniversary of IJPDLM, reflects on the contribution of IJPDLM to the field of logistics and supply chain management (LSCM) and discusses future directions for the journal.

Design/Methodology/approach – Descriptive analysis of manuscripts received and accepted by IJPDLM during 2015-2019 is used to provide an overview of the journal. Content analysis of selected articles is used to highlight important contributions of the journal. Changes made since 2020 are highlighted to inform future directions of IJPDLM. Invited articles are discussed and used to clarify future directions.

Findings – IJPDLM has made tremendous progress in informing and shaping the field of LSCM. Key issues addressed include sustainability and reverse logistics, omni-channel, e-commerce, and retail logistics, risk, resilience, volatility, and complexity and digital technology innovation. The journal has expanded the use of methods beyond the typical qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the use of design science, experiment, conjoint analysis, qualitative comparative analysis, narrative analysis. The invited articles provide (1) a historical reflection of the purpose of the journal when it was launched, (2) new guidance on how to develop theories using literature review and grounded theories, and (3) understanding of startups and supply chain ecosystems.

Practical implications – Some exemplar articles are highlighted to explain how IJPDLM informs LSCM managers, companies and policy makers.

Originality/value – This article explains recent development and sets future directions for the LSCM field.

Keywords: Physical distribution, logistics management, supply chain management, theoretical contribution.

Paper type: Research Paper.

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Introduction

This special issue celebrates IJPDLM's 50th anniversary. The previous 45th anniversary editorial conducted a retrospective bibliometric analysis of IJPDLM from 2011 to 2015 and highlights the steady progress of the journal since its admission to the Web of Science in 2010 (Ellinger and Chapman, 2016). This article serves as the editorial for the IJPDLM 50th anniversary to highlight the contributions of IJPDLM. First, it provides an overview of the journal based on a descriptive analysis of manuscripts received and accepted during 2015-2019. Content analysis of selected articles is used to highlight important contributions of the journal. Changes made since 2020 are highlighted to inform future directions. It also highlights how invited articles (which are peer-reviewed) of this special issue inform the field.

Before presenting the findings, the journal would like to recognize some of the key people that have contributed to the consistent upward progress of IJPDLM in the recent years. First, the previous editor-in-chief (EIC) Professors Alex Ellinger, R. Glen Richey Jr (co-editor for three years) and Professor Benjamin T. Hazen (EIC, 2019-2020) have significantly improved the reputation of IJPDLM after its admission in Web of Science in 2010. The number of submissions continues to grow. IJPDLM received 1,792 submissions during 2015-19, with an average of 350 articles annually. The number of submissions rose to 379 in 2020. The 5-year impact factor of 2.322 in 2013 rose to 7.824 in 2020. When I took over the (EIC) role in April 2020, Professor Ellinger and Hazen have provided me with useful advice. I thank them for their support.

I would like to thank the interim EIC Professor Patrik Jonsson who helped manage the journal before I was appointed the EIC during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first few months in 2020, Professor Jonsson put lots of efforts to keep the journal running smoothly. My sincere thanks also go to Jo Jones from Emeralds Publisher who appointed me as the EIC and provided me with ample support. Both Jo and Daniel Ridge (who took over from Jo in 2020) gave me lots of support to ensure a smooth running of the journal during the challenging time caused by the pandemic. My sincere thanks also go to the current and past Senior Associate Editors (SAEs), Regional Editors and members of the Editorial Review Board (ERBs), Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) and reviewers who help keeping timely and high-quality reviews during this challenging time. Thank you everyone!

Descriptive and content analysis (2015-2019)

To provide an overview of the progress made since the last anniversary editorial by Ellinger and Chapman (2016), I conducted a descriptive analysis of manuscripts submitted and articles accepted during 2015-2019. During these five years, IJPDLM published 220 research articles in five volumes (Vol. 45, 46, 47, 48 & 49). Editorials authored by EIC and guest editors for special issues accounted for 11% of the total articles. The analysis reveals exciting progress we should celebrate. IJPDLM has increased its popularity globally. As mentioned, IJPDLM received in average 350 new submissions during 2015-2019. By early October 2021, the number of submissions has exceeded 420. IJPDLM is a truly international journal for LSCM. During 2015-2019, we received submission from seventy-six countries, while the published articles are contributed by authors from over thirty countries. Figure 1 shows major countries submitted manuscripts to IJPDLM that contributed to one third of the submissions. Countries contributed to the largest number accepted articles include United States of America (USA), Germany, United Kingdom (UK), Sweden, Denmark, China, Australia, Italy, Finland and Spain (more than ten articles in five years).

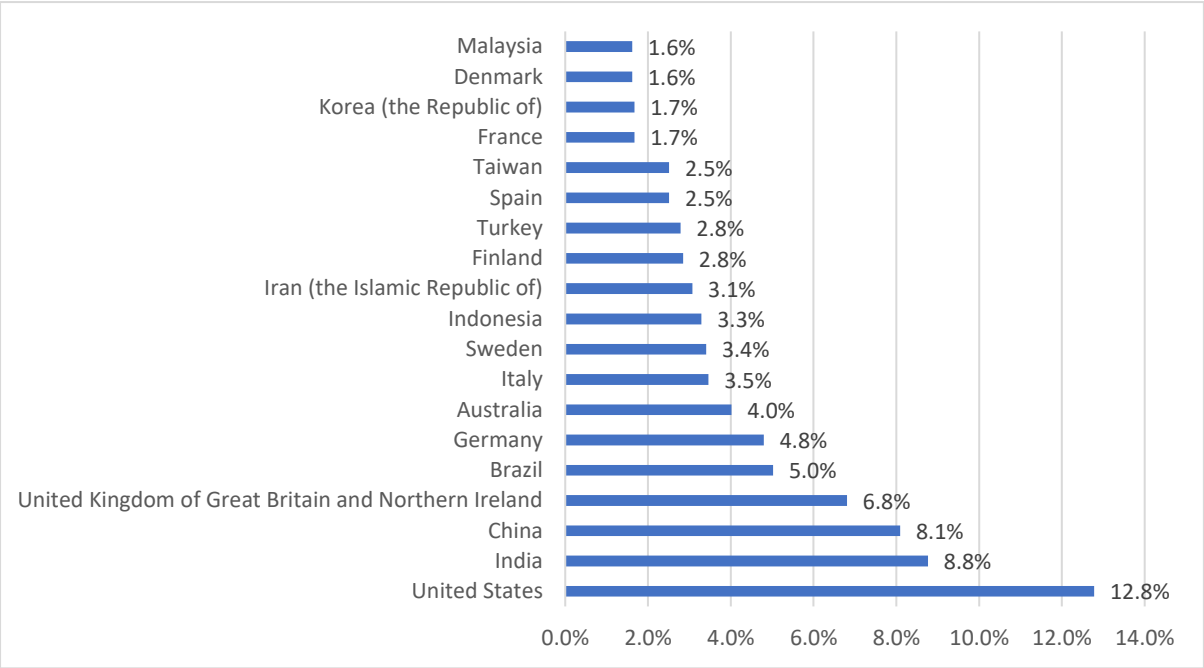

Figure 1. New manuscripts submitted in percentage by country (2015-19)

IJPDLM continues to publish empirical studies (quantitative and quantitative). Literature review and conceptual studies while analytical (mathematical modelling) studies remain out of its scope. Figure 2 shows the percentage of methods used by articles published in 2015-2019. The journal continues to specialize in quantitative studies (33%), qualitative studies (27%) and literature review (24%). There are few conceptual articles (3%) and studies using mixed methods (2%). Among the quantitative studies, 24% are based on statistical analysis of survey and secondary data, 9% used other methods (simulation, choice modelling, conjoint analysis, event study, etc). Among the qualitative studies, 14% are based on case studies and 13% are based on a mixture of other qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, grounded theory, qualitative comparative analysis, action research, native categories qualitative method, etc.).

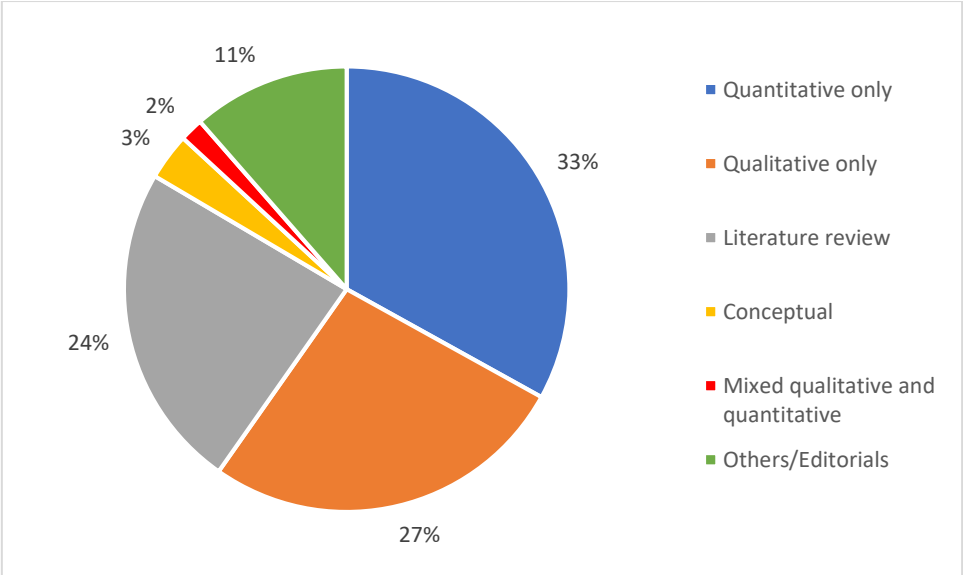

Figure 2. Types of articles in IJPDLM (2015-2019)

Like many other LSCM journals, IJPDLM encourages the use of methods new to LSCM field to complement the commonly used methods. While case studies, interviews, Delphi, survey, structural equation modelling (SEM), regression are the most common methods, about 9% of the published articles used other methods such as choice modelling or experiment (Williams et al., 2019), conjoint analysis (Gawor and Hoberg, 2019), event study (Filbeck et al., 2016), QCA or qualitative comparative analysis (Russo et al., 2019), native categories qualitative method (Richey et al., 2016) and narrative analysis (Tsvetkova, 2021).

While IJPDLM does not publish studies based on analytic or mathematic models, the journal publishes few studies that apply multi-method or mixed method. For examples, case studies are complemented by using methods such as AHP or other sources of data such as survey data and social media data (Bhattacharjya et al., 2016). Secondary database may complement the use of primary data. For example, point of sales data are used to complement interview and case study data to better understand the handling of unsaleable grocery products (Holweg et al., 2016). The motivations of reshoring are better understood by studying data from newspapers and magazines (Fratocchi et al., 2016). Database of socially responsible investments are used to complement case studies (Carbone et al., 2018; Zomorrodi et al., 2019). The business value of SC resilience can be understood using secondary data (Li et al., 2020). Data from conflict mineral reports are coded by Timmer and Kaufmann (2017) using fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) approach to inform policy such as the US Dodd-Frank Act.

The use of multiple methods or data sources is suitable for design science or action research that aims at contributing to both practice ad theory. I would like to highlight such studies because the journal is committed to inform LSCM practices. For example, Busse et al. (2017) developed a procedural model for identifying salient supply chain sustainability risks (SSCR) as a new artifact based on a small-scale field-testing study in a food supply chain of a Swiss retail firm. Morenza-Cinos et al. (2019) explored how autonomous robot can be used to perform stock-taking using RFID for item-level identification much more accurately and efficiently than the traditional method of using human operators with RFID handheld readers. They also contribute to research by developing some novel algorithm. García-Arca et al. (2018) conducted action research to implement OEE (overall equipment effectiveness) concept in transport management. Asmussen et al. (2018) developed a monolithic model integrating tactical production planning decisions, subject to upstream supply chain constraints to inform strategic investments decisions. The model was tested and implemented in a global OEM. Su et al. (2021) demonstrated how to apply a problem-solving action research (PAR) approach to complement the design science research (DSR) framework. Working with a supermarket chain to develop a smart route planning system, they established design propositions and mod-range theories to inform research.

IJPDLM aims to provide business practitioners, policy makers, consultants and academics with leading edge information and discussion of current developments in the field. Thus, I conducted a content analysis of the 220 published articles to identify the main audiences they tried to inform. I did so mainly based on abstracts, but also reading the articles in greater depth when necessary. Academic researchers are the main audiences of literature review and conceptual articles (27%). Close to a quarter (23%) of the articles could potentially inform logistics and supply chain management professionals. About 12% of the articles attempted to address issues facing logistics companies while 10% of the articles are dedicated to solving logistics problems facing e-commerce retailers. Beyond the LSCM professionals, about thirty-one articles (13% of the articles) concerns issues of the interest of sustainability professionals and 5% of the articles could benefit risk management professionals. There are also a few articles that address issues facing manufacturers, 3D printing companies, and

municipal waste management authorities, just to name a few. However, not many articles inform policy makers, which is a common phenomenon in the field that deserve more attention. Articles with potential implications to policy could be improved by considering societal impacts at the early stage of research design.

Many articles addressed traditional logistics and supply chain operations management issue e.g., international distribution, inventory, warehousing, logistics/transport, outsourcing, collaboration, customer services, planning, etc., and strategic issues e.g., supply chain strategies, supply chain management, extended enterprises, etc. The content analysis shows IJPDLM specializes in some aspects of the LSCM. For example, about 12% of the articles cover issues related to omni-channel, e-commerce, and retail or last-mile logistics. There are also emphases in managing risk, resilience, volatility, and complexity (10%), logistics, supply chain (knowledge) and technology innovation (7%), digital supply chain and data analytics (6%), supply chain finance (4%), offshoring, reshoring, and outsourcing (4%), transportation & urban logistics (3%), sales and operations planning (S&OP) and supply chain planning (3%). There are some efforts to address emerging issues at a societal level. For example, about 19% of the articles address some aspects related to (environmental) sustainability and reverse logistics. To drive research that contributes to society, IJPDLM encourages authors to help the society to understand and address important societal issues.

Leading emerging research areas

During 2015-2019, IJPDLM publishes twenty-five special issues. Table 1 summarizes the special issues published since 2015. I have also included the special issues published in 2020 (two special issues) and 2021 (five special issues) before this anniversary special issue. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all the guest editors and reviewers for their dedicated efforts. Particularly, there are guest editors who have contributed two or more special issues: Xenophon Koufteros, Benjamin Hazen, Alex Ellinger, Haozhe Chen, Erik Hofmann, Michael Bourlakis, Wendy L. Tate, Lydia Bals, Alan Mackleprang, Baofeng Huo. IJPDLM contributes to the LSCM field by being among the first that publishes and drives research in emerging areas such as supply chain finance (2016), 3D-printing (2017), retail and Omni-channel logistics (2016 & 2018). To drive the use of rigorous methods, IJPDLM publishes three special issues based on literature reviews (2018 and 2015). There are also special issues that investigate LSCM issues in emerging countries (2015, 2017, 2020) and bottom-of-the-pyramid markets (2019).

Table 1. Special issues published in IJPDLM (2015-2020)

Year	Vol (No)	Title	Guest editors
2021	51 (9)	Papers from NOFOMA 2020	Gunnar Stefansson, Heidi C. Dreyer, Gyöngyi Kovács, Henrik Pålsson, Jan A. Stentoft
2021	51 (6)	The future of S&OP: dynamic complexity, ecosystems and resilience	Patrik Jonsson, Riikka Kaipia, Mark Barratt
2021	51 (5)	Logistical Challenges for Sharing Economies	Aurélien Rouquet, Valentina Carbone, Christine Roussat
2021	51 (2)	Supply Chain Resilience and its Interplay with Digital Technologies: Making Innovations Work in Emergency Situations	Dmitry Ivanov, Jennifer Blackhurst, Ajay Das
2021	51 (1)	Papers from NOFOMA 2019	Tore Listou, Bente Flygansvær
2020	50 (5)	Advances in Omni-channel	Soroosh Sam Saghiri, Michael Bourlakis

2020	50 (3)	Logistics and distribution innovations in China: the new era	Yang Sun
2019	49 (10)	SCM 4.0: supply chain management in the digital age	Erik Hofmann; Henrik Sternberg; Haozhe Chen; Alexander Pflaum; Günter Prockl
2019	49 (5)	Global Supply Chain Management Issues in Bottom-of-the-Pyramid Markets	Wendy L Tate; Lydia Bals; Donna Marshall
2019	49 (4)	Papers from NOFOMA 2018	Stentoft, Jan; Freytag, Per Vagn; Kannan Govindan; Anne-Mette Hjalager (50 (1))
2019	49 (1)	Logistics customer service revisited	Benjamin Hazen; Alex Ellinger
2018	48 (10)	Papers from 5th P&OM world conference	Christian Durach; Ely Laureano Paiva
2018	48 (8)	Structured literature reviews in SCM and logistics Part 2	Xenophon Koufteros; Alan Mackelprang; Benjamin Hazen; Baofeng Huo
2018	48 (5)	Papers from NOFOMA 2017	Daniel Hellström; Joakim Hans Kembro; Andreas Norrman; Henrik Pålsson
2018	48 (4)	Omni-channel logistics	Soroosh Sam Saghiri; Michael Bernon; Michael Bourlakis; Richard Wilding
2018	49 (3)	Structured literature reviews in SCM and logistics Part 1	Xenophon Koufteros; Alan Mackleprang; Benjamin Hazen; Baofeng Huo
2017	47 (10)	3D printing: opportunities and applications for supply chain management	Helen Rogers; Christos Braziotis; Kulwant S. Pawar
2017	47 (9)	Strategic supply chain and logistics management in Greater China: evolution, innovation, and future challenges	Shong-lee Ivan Su
2017	47 (7)	Papers from NOFOMA 2016	Lauri Ojala; Juuso Töyli; Harri Lorentz; Tomi Solakivi
2017	47 (5)	Under the umbrella of sustainable supply chain management: emergent solutions to real world problems	Christian Busse; Diane A. Mollenkopf
2017	47 (2/3)	Outsourcing/offshoring insights: going beyond reshoring to rightshoring	Wendy L. Tate, Lydia Bals
2016	46 (9)	Papers from NOFOMA 2015	Lise Lillebrygfjeld Halse, Trond Hammervoll
2016	46 (6/7)	Retail logistics	Carlos Mena; Michael Bourlakis
2016	46 (4)	Supply chain finance	Erik Hofmann; Mark Johnson
2016	46 (1)	IJPDLM 45th Anniversary	Alex Ellinger; Karen Chapman
2015	45 (9/10)	Contemporary strategic supply chain management and logistics issues in Asia	Shong-lee Ivan Su
2015	45 (7)	Supply Chain Security	Jennifer Blackhurst, Daniel Ekwall, Bobby J. Martens
2015	45 (4)	Papers from NOFOMA 2014	Britta Gammelgaard; Günter Prockl; Peter Holm Andreasen; Hans-Joachim Schramm;

			Andreas Wieland; Malek Maalouf; Aseem Kinra
2015	45(3)	Asian SCM and logistics scholars from IJPDLM	Haozhe Chen
2015	45 (1/2)	Literature reviews in supply chain management and logistics	Maria Jesus Saenz; Xenophon Koufteros

The key role of special issues is to understand and address recent problems or to advance specific theoretical or methodological aspects important for the field. There is also a need to balance the number of special versus regular issues. In the future, IJPDLM aims to publish 3-4 special issues every year. Since 2020, IJPDLM announced several new special issues. The first group of special issues is dedicated to resilience and risk management related to COVID-19 pandemic. There is a special issue that reveals innovation in technology and supply chains driven by COVID-19 pandemic and another one focuses on how firms establish and cope with "new normal". To provide a richer understanding of how firms responded to the impacts of COVID-19, there is one special issue that focus on case studies. IJPDLM also tries to contribute to the field by focusing on developing or advancing theories that help create a deeper understanding of important LSCM problems. In 2021, there is another call for paper for research dedicated to deepening the understanding of two crucial concepts (i.e., agility and resilience). There are also call for papers to promote the broadening of scope in sustainability research to support sustainable development goals (SDGs) and social sustainability.

Ranking and citation analysis

Citation and ranking are not the best proxies that reflect the scientific merits and quality of journals or their articles. However, I understand authors may want to understand how IJPDLM is ranked and cited. Thus, I provide here with some analysis based on Scopus citation rankings for 2020. In terms of ranking, within the category "management of technology and innovation," IJPDLM is ranked 19/248. Scopus also ranks IJPDLM 10/113 in the transportation category. IJPDLM is ranked 28/343 and 12/216 respectively in SCIMAGOJR 2020 "management of technology and innovation" and "transportation" categories. These rankings confirm IJPDLM as the top 10% of the leading journals in the respective categories. These excellent rankings are reflected by its 2020 CiteScore of 9.1, which is based on the average citations received per document published in the serial. As a result, the impact factor for IJPDLM has also significantly increased from 4.744 in 2019 to 6.309 in 2020.

Table 2. Number of citations by related journals

Journal	Citations*
Journal of Cleaner Production	478
Sustainability Switzerland	420
International Journal of Production Economics	380
International Journal of Production Research	328
International Journal of SCM	269
International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management	253
International Journal of Logistics Management	237
Production Planning & Control	193
Benchmarking	192
Supply Chain Management an International Journal	192
International Journal of Operations & Production Management	171
Industrial Marketing Management	112

Industrial Management & Data Systems	93
Transportation Research – Part E	83
Journal of Business Logistics	80
Journal of Supply Chain Management	60
Journal of Operations Management	40
Production & Operations Management	34
Journal of Business Ethics	33
Transportation Policy	33
Decision Sciences Journal	28
International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics	27

*As of 14.09.2020 (Scopus)

Rather than citation counts, I want to focus on the contribution of IJPDLM. Table 2 lists the top twenty journals that have cited IJPDLM's articles since 2015. The table shows IJPDLM becomes the main sources of many other journals in the field of sustainability, logistics and supply chain management, operations and production management. The table also shows the main countries that have cited IJPDLM articles.

There are many reasons why other journals cite IJPDLM's articles. To understand this complex phenomenon, Table 3 lists some of the highly cited articles published in 2015-2019. There is one group of articles that typically apply systematic literature review to drive research in sustainable supply chain management (Meixell and Luoma, 2015; Touboulic and Walker, 2015; Wong et al., 2015). Articles published IJPDLM lead the field by publishing literature reviews and laying down research agenda for future studies. Some of the IJPDLM articles set new directions for research in supply chain resilience (Durach et al., 2015; Hohenstein et al., 2015), supply chain finance (Gelsomino et al., 2016), retail logistics and omni-channel logistics (Hübner et al. 2016; Ishfaq et al., 2016), offshoring and reshoring (Foerstl et al., 2016; Fratocchi et al., 2016) and 3D-printing or additive manufacturing (Sasson and Johnson, 2016). Even though (systematic) literature reviews serve important purposes, it is important to recognize that IJPDLM discourages the use of descriptive literature reviews that count authors, methods, topics and citations, and encourages literature reviews that advances theories (Wong, 2020).

While literature reviews mainly function as a springboard to drive future research, there are also articles that take takes stock of the supply chain management research, e.g., supply chain integration (Stevens and Johnson, 2016). Some empirical studies also receive a high attention. For example, the case studies about contextual barriers in supplier development for sustainability (Busse et al., 2016) and the examination of the impacts of strategic organizational orientation on green supply chain management (Kirchoff et al., 2016).

Table 3. 2015-19 articles with highest citations

Authors	Article title	Vol	No	Citations*
Touboulic A., Walker H.	Theories in sustainable supply chain management: A structured literature review	45	1/2	285
Hohenstein N.-O., Feise E., Hartmann E., Giunipero L.	Research on the phenomenon of supply chain resilience: A systematic review and paths for further investigation	45	1/2	229
Meixell M.J., Luoma P.	Stakeholder pressure in sustainable supply chain management: A systematic review	45	1/2	155
Gelsomino L.M., Mangiaracina R., Perego A., Tumino A.	Supply chain finance: a literature review	46	4	148

Hübner A., Wollenburg J., Holzapfel A.	Retail logistics in the transition from multi-channel to omni-channel	46	6/7	136
Stevens G.C., Johnson M.	Integrating the Supply Chain … 25 years on	46	1	134
Durach C.F., Wieland A., Machuca J.A.D.	Antecedents and dimensions of supply chain robustness: A systematic literature review	45	1/2	104
Wong C.Y., Wong C.W.Y., Boon-itt S.	Integrating environmental management into supply chains: A systematic literature review and theoretical framework	45	9/10	104
Ishfaq R., Defee C.C., Gibson B.J., Raja U.	Realignment of the physical distribution process in omni-channel fulfillment	46	6/7	102
Fratocchi L., Ancarani A., Barbieri P., Di Mauro C., Nassimbeni G., Sartor M., Vignoli M., Zanoni A.	Motivations of manufacturing reshoring: an interpretative framework	46	2	101
Kirchoff J.F., Tate W.L., Mollenkopf D.A.	The impact of strategic organizational orientations on green supply chain management and firm performance	46	3	98
Busse C., Schleper M.C., Niu M., Wagner S.M.	Supplier development for sustainability: contextual barriers in global supply chains	46	5	99
Foerstl K., Kirchoff J.F., Bals L.	Reshoring and insourcing: drivers and future research directions	46	5	87
Sasson A., Johnson J.C.	The 3D printing order: variability, supercenters and supply chain reconfigurations	46	1	84

*As of 31.08.2021 (Scopus)

While there is a time lag for more recent articles to get attention, this analysis finds some recently published IJPDLM that may have great potentials to inform the field. Here are just a few highlights of articles that have picked up more attention. Given the importance of supply chain risk management, the literature review of Fan and Stevenson (2018) attempts to link risk types of mitigation strategies, setting further research to theorize and verify such links. This is also highly relevant to the research that links mitigation strategies to different type of disruptions caused by COVID-19 pandemic. Another stream of research extends the concept of logistics service quality (LSQ) to understand the effectiveness of various omni-channel logistics strategies. The article by Murfield et al. (2017) drives studies that examines the effects of various combination of purchase (online/offline) and last-mile delivery solutions (ship-from-store, pickup-in-store) on LSQ.

The purpose of IJPDLM: Advance theory and practice

This anniversary issue invited Remko van Hoek to reflect on the root of IJPDLM. By interviewing the founding editor Professor Martin Christopher and co-editor Professor Dough Lambert and conducting a bibliometric analysis of the first volumes of the journal, Remko van Hoek (2021a) highlights four main timeless principles laid down by our founders that still apply to IJPDLM (since IJPD): (1) engaged scholarships, (2) integrative approach, (3) market (customer) centric and (4) global approach. The original aim of IJPDLM (IJPD) was to "*helped formulate new and improved distribution techniques and theories…*" (van Hoek, 2021a). During the 1970s, the editors such as Professor La Londe in the early

volumes tried to explain to managers the reasons to increase management attention for physical distribution, especially the use of scientific approach to inform business management for improving customer (logistics) service. I strongly recommend reading the article by van Hoek (2021a) to better understand the root of the field and how our founders drive meaningful research to inform practice. While our principles remain, IJPDLM has made one importance change. While there were some mathematical modelling articles in the early volumes, the later volumes of IJPDLM began to focus on management practices and theories and less so the use of mathematical models without the use of real-word data.

IJPDLM (IJPD) was launched to inform both academics (theory) and practitioners (practice) through new knowledge co-created by academics and practitioners. To facilitate relevant research that reflects changes in real time, IJPDLM has launched a new section called "Innovators and Transformers" (van Hoek et al., 2020) to specially allow practitioners to co-author with academics and publish shorter articles (4000-6000 words) that drive innovation and positive transformation in the LSCM. The first article published under this section reflects on the contributions of Henry Ford in modern supply chain management (van Hoek, 2021b). While the scope of the journal has expanded from logistics to supply chain management, IJPDLM continues this same purpose with the aim to inform not just academics, but also practitioners, consultants and policy makers. This means IJPDLM encourages academic researchers to develop novel theoretical insights that inform LSCM managers and policy makers to address critical issues they face in the real world. To serve this purpose, the new section encourages engaged scholarship with a focus on collaborating closely with managers in practice to (1) develop research idea, (2) collect real-world data, and (3) advance theories that help managers and researchers understand important managerial issues, (4) co-develop and implement practical solutions with managers.

Changes in editorial boards and review process

By early 2020 the editorial boards of IJPDLM compromised the Editor-in-chief (EIC), Senior Associated Editors (SAEs), Regional Editors (REs), and Editorial Advisory Boards (EABs). I have made some changes to the editorial boards to (1) improve the quality of reviews and feedback to authors, (2) to improve the timeliness and consistency of the reviews and feedback to authors, (3) to let SAEs provide more input to the review and decisions process.

Previously the SAEs were asked to assess reviews and manuscripts after the reviews by two (or more) reviewers were completed. SAEs were involved when the EIC required additional expertise to help make decisions, especially when there were split reviews. Since 2020, the EIC assigns a SAE to a new manuscript submitted to the regular issue. The SAE becomes the third reviewer alongside the (minimum) two other reviewers. This process is expected to increase the quality of the reviews while maintaining turnaround time. The SAE will also assess reviews from the two reviewers and make a recommendation to the EIC. To make sure all SAEs have the capacity and experience to perform such tasks, a formal process of appointing new SAEs was conducted. These appointments take three years and new appointments will be made before the end of these tenure to ensure continuity.

Previously Regional Editors (REs) performed a representative role in different geographical regions. In the new editorial board, the role of REs is removed. Some REs become SAEs. I would like to thank all the previous REs who have contributed to promoting IJPDLM to different regions, especially to emerging markets. The EAB is now divided into two: the Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) consists of experienced scholars many of whom have contributed significantly to the LSCM field and IJPDLM,

some of whom are previous editors of IJPDLM and other journals, and the Editorial Review Board (ERB) consists of active reviewers whose main job is to review manuscripts. ERB consists of experienced scholars but also some junior faculties. ERB serves as a platform to develop and appoint experienced SAEs. The appointments of ERB and EAB will be reviewed regularly.

The changes in the editorial boards especially the roles of SAEs are necessary to improve the review process. There are some major changes to the review process. Initially, the EIC will assess whether every new manuscript meets the aim, scope and quality expectations. The aim and scope of IJPDLM as stipulated in the journal website are:

> *"IJPDLM strives to provide authors and the community with "best in class" service through timeliness and fairness in the review process with an emphasis on inclusivity and fostering meaningful research impact. The Journal provides business practitioners, policymakers, consultants and academics with leading edge information and discussion of current developments in the field. It facilitates the interchange of information among stakeholders across the globe while providing a platform for new insights on problems and techniques related to all facets of supply chain management.*"

> "*IJPDLM seeks strategically focused, theoretically grounded, empirical and conceptual, quantitative and qualitative original research studies in logistics, physical distribution, purchasing, operations and supply chain management, and associated strategic issues. Quantitatively oriented mathematical and modelling research papers are not suitable for IJPDLM.*"

In terms of quality expectations, I would like to highlight phrases like "new insights on problems and techniques," "meaningful research impact" and "theoretically grounded" mentioned in the above aim and scope statement. IJPDLM emphasizes the use of relevant theories to produce novel theoretical and/or empirical insights that will help business practitioners, policy makers, consultants and academic to achieve positive and meaningful outcomes. The emphasis on meaningful research impact refers to positive outcomes for LSCM managers and organizations and the society beyond the LSCM. IJPDLM also emphasizes originality and novelty. Manuscripts that apply familiar concepts/theories to investigate a familiar phenomenon often fail to offer novel theoretical and empirical contributions. Originality and novelty in understanding important real-world problems can be achieved using new theoretical perspectives, data, measurements, analyses or simply challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions.

The quality expectations also cover rigour in research design, data collection, data analysis and the use of theories. IJPDLM emphasizes data and method transparency. IJPDLM is a signatory of the Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) Guidelines (https://www.cos.io/initiatives/top-guidelines), a framework that supports the reproducibility of research through the adoption of transparent research practices. Authors are encouraged to read the above link and the journal's author guideline. For example, authors are expected to cite and fully reference all data, program code, and methods in their manuscripts.

Another major change to the review process is the introduction of reject and resubmit decision. Manuscripts that meet the aim and scope of IJPDLM could be given a reject and resubmit decision because significant changes are required to meet the quality expectations. This applies to manuscripts

that have no serious flaws in data, methods and the use of theories, but significant changes are needed to reach the novel theoretical/empirical insights expected. This may also apply to manuscripts that require additional data and analysis or significant improvement in the use of theories. SAEs (and EIC) will be intensely involved in this process to provide authors with constructive feedback.

As mentioned earlier the acceptance rate has dropped. This is partly due to the increase in desk rejects (due to poor fits with the aim and scope, or submissions that do not meet the quality expectations) and the use of reject and resubmit decision. Manuscripts are sent for review only if they have a clear potential for generating novel theoretical/empirical insights, and no serious flaws in data, method and the use of theories. As mentioned, a SAE will be appointed as the third reviewer and follow through the entire revised and resubmit process to help improve the quality of the reviews i.e., to provide constructive feedback while ensuring inclusivity, timelines and fairness. The SAEs will make recommendation to the EIC, and it is the EIC who makes the final decision. We believe this process has significantly improved the rigour and theoretical/empirical contributions of the accepted articles. By encouraging reviewers to focus five principles - developmental, thorough, engaged, respect and being constructive, our reviews have improved the capabilities of the authors who have submitted their studies to the journal.

The new review process has significantly improved review turnaround time. Here are some important turnaround time statistics for original manuscripts (first submissions) submitted between July 2020 and June 2021. The average turnaround time for a desk reject (inappropriate or not meeting the aim and scope) was 2.39 days. New manuscripts were rejected after the first review round at an average of 21.57 days. These also include manuscripts rejected and manuscripts with a reject and resubmit decision. Al manuscripts submitted to the regular issues are thoroughly reviewed by the EIC and/or SAEs, and at least two reviewers. For new manuscripts that are given a revised and resubmit decision, it took in average 65.82 and 65.0 days to receive a major and minor revision decision, respectively.

Revised manuscripts submitted in the same period (July 2020 to June 2021) took a shorter time to receive a decision than the initial review round. For manuscripts that have gone through several rounds of reviews and required only some final minor revisions, it took in average 10.83 days for SAEs/EIC to make the final acceptance decisions. It took an average of 45.13, 46.34, and 32.71 days for revised manuscripts to receive a rejection, major and minor revision decision, respectively. From July 2020 to June 2021, accepted manuscripts took an average of 136.5 days and maximum of 280.9 days from original submissions to receive the final decisions. Despite the disruptions caused by COVID-19 pandemic, this new average turnaround time for acceptance of 136.5 days is less than half of the 342.9 days average in the previous period (June 2019 to June 2020).

Advancing theory through literature review

As mentioned, IJPDLM contributes to the LSCM field by driving the use of rigorous methodologies. In the past, IJPDLM does so by publishing special issues based on structure and systematic literature reviews. Since 2020, IJPDLM further expand this effort through an editorial (Wong, 2021). In this special issue, an invited article co-authored by Christian F. Durach, Joakim Hans Kembro and Andreas Wieland (2021) specially discusses how to advance theories using literature review.

The first effort questions the use of descriptive literature reviews (Wong, 2021). When proposing the use of systematic literature review in management research, Tranfield et al. (2003) clearly pointed out the use of “singular descriptive accounts” that does not really add knowledge to the phenomenon

under studied. Wong (2021) points out counting topics being studied is not the same as assessing the use of concepts, data, methods and theories to understand a phenomenon or managerial problem. “A literature review should interrogate knowledge about a real-world phenomenon” (Wong, 2021: 208). A literature review should inform scholars how LSCM managers understand and address important LSCM problems and assess whether the concepts, data, methods and theories researchers developed to understand the phenomenon should be challenged or improved. Rather than describing what past studies did, a literature review should put forward novel theoretical perspectives to advance understand.

The second effort is driven by the invited article “how to advance theory through literature reviews in logistics and supply chain management” by Durach et al. (2021). A literature review can advance theory through four paths: (1) literature reviews as inductive theory building; (2) literature reviews as contextual explanations; (3) literature reviews as theory testing; and (4) literature review as interpretive sensemaking. Like any inductive study, literature reviews as inductive theory building involves an iterative process of coding empirical data reported by the literature to identify “themes, patterns, relationships, and gaps in understanding” (Durach et al., 2021). Each study can be treated as a case, so that researchers can analyse within-study and cross-study to generate new conceptualization or identify new patterns in relationships between substantive concepts (Durach et al., 2021). For a more complete understanding, literature reviews as contextual explanation reveal “for whom,” “when” and “under what circumstance” a behaviour is expected. (Durach et al., 2021) This will help better understand how the principle causal mechanisms vary under different contexts and the activating mechanism of different contextual factors. Literature reviews as theory testing aim at integrating past empirical studies to validate and solidify knowledge about a phenomenon using meta-analysis or meta-review (Durach et al., 2021). By applying interpretive methods, literature reviews as interpretive sensemaking rely on raw data from published studies or research database to understand subjective perspectives of indivual actors (Durach et al., 2021). The introducing of these four literature review types complements the six ontological and epistemological idiosyncrasies (theoretical boundaries, unit of analysis, sources of data, study context, definitions and operationalization of constructs, and research methods) of Durach et al. (2017). It is hoped that these efforts provide the field with literature review methodologies that advance theories and understanding.

Leveraging grounded theory in supply chain research

Another invited article for this special issue is contributed by John Edmund Mello, Ila Manuj and Daniel John Flint (2021). This article aims to “identify and explain most frequently misunderstood steps in the use of grounded theory (GT) as a methodology and provide guidance on proper execution of these elements” (Mello et al., 2021). GT is a powerful method for gaining a deeper understanding of the complex social processes social processes that “people use and interpersonal relationships they manage to develop and execute business processes” (Mello et al., 2021). However, the field is still troubled by several misunderstandings particularly how to develop novel core categories and explain how a theory emerges from coding. It is suggested to use basic social processes (BSPs) to understand how actors solve problems through social interactions (e.g., communicating, negotiating, interpreting, co-creating) that underline the creation of trust and mutual goals between supply chain partners.

The article further explain how GT can be used to contribute to the development of mid-range theory and formal theory from empirical data. Many LSCM inductive studies describe and analyse LSCM practices and processes, which serve as a fertile ground for developing substantive theory that

can be used to formulate "higher levels of conceptualization and broader contexts in order to further our understanding of supply chain phenomena" (Mello et al., 2021). By highlighting how some LSCM studies use GT to develop substantive and mid-range theories, the article explains the essential elements of a well-conducted GT, including the question of theoretical sensitivity, the use of literature, theoretical sampling, coding, category development and formal theory development. It is hoped the guideline and examples provided by this article serves as a crucial reference for well-conducted GT studies.

Understand startups in the supply chain ecosystem

The special issue also invited Stephen M. Wagner (20210 to author an invited perspective on startups and supply chain ecosystem. While the LSCM field has put lots of emphasis in understanding supplier innovation very few studies expand our horizon beyond the existing supply base. This is because the field relies on a supply chain view rather than an ecosystem view. Today, many technological and digital innovations occur outside of the traditional supply base where startups and their wider ecosystems play significant roles. By engaging with startups as a supplier or a customer, LSCM organisations can learn about entrepreneurship and innovation (Wagner, 2021). This article represents a platform to understand startups and their roles in supply chain ecosystems. This is a fresh perspective to advance studies in supply chain innovation and it expands the scope of traditional supply chain management to an ecosystem view.

In the article, Wagner (2021) aims to "systematize the current roles and issues of startups in the supply chain ecosystem and derive opportunities for future research". The article highlights how our restricted supply chain view can be complemented by the (innovation) ecosystem view by including non-traditional supply chain actors like startups, financial institution, and technology platforms whereby "know-how, competencies or skills are created on the network level, and where value is created for the individual actor and the network" (Wagner, 2021). The article clarifies main characteristics of startups and then research issues associated with different scenarios: startups as customers, startups as suppliers, supply chain of startups and SCM startups as service providers. Further research opportunities to understand how to manage incubation and acceleration of SCM startups, financing of SCM startups are proposed. It is hoped that this seminal article drives a whole new research area alongside with research that examines the use of technologies, digitalization of supply chains and industry 4.0.

Future directions

Since the launch of IJPD in 1970, IJPDLM remains committed to facilitating the interchange of information among business practitioners, policy makers, consultants and academics across the globe through providing a platform for new insights on problems and techniques related to all facets of supply chain management. The goal of any academic journal is to understand real-life phenomena or managerial problems. To do so, we need to continue improving our toolbox – theories, assumptions, concepts, data, methods and perspectives. We have in this special issue kick-started this effort – by suggesting how to advance theories through literature review (Durach et al., 2011) and well-conduced GT (Mello et al., 2021). IJPDLM will continue to push the envelope and drive the field forward.

The principles laid down by our founders remain relevant: (1) engaged scholarships, (2) integrative approach, (3) market (customer) centric, and (4) global approach (van Hoek, 2021a). We also need

new and expansive views. As LSCM scholars we need to expand our horizon to address emerging and more complex societal challenges. The editors of Academy of Management Journal argue, “our goal—and, in particular, the goal of work published in AMJ—is to produce high-quality research that will make management and organizations better for all” (Hideg et al., 2020: 1681). I would like to draw our attention to the phrase “better for all” – management research is not just about better for profitable organizations; it should help shape a better society. This is the time for a more society-centric approach.

Not all large societal issues are created by supply chains, but supply chain research can certainly help to address some of these problems and drive progress. To include the societal values into LSCM research, we may apply systems perspectives such as supply chain ecosystems (Wagner, 2021) and sustainable development goals (SDGs) to our research. That means we do not just research how firms or supply chains can achieve profitability, customer service and cost efficiency. For example, we do not just explain how digital technologies improve the typical supply chain performance outcomes, we should question how technologies may affect jobs and the societies. We should learn more about how supply chains contribute to environmental degradation, pollution, global warming, labour and societal problems. Poverty, hungers, climate change, inequality, economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and so on require us to reflect on how we conceptualize the goals of supply chains and their roles in our societies. Even though LSCM involves lots of technocratic issues, to address societal problems, we also need to better understand basic social processes (BSPs) to facilitate changes, and therefore we need to master GT (Mello et al., 2021) and understand how changes at a system level can be informed by our research.

To address complex societal problems created by supply chains, we need to use engaged scholarships and engage with affected communities and partner with supply chains and other actors such as governments, non-governmental organizations, etc. There is a need for relevant research that impact progress against societal and business challenges. Given the emphasis in physical distribution and logistics management, IJPDM has published more articles that focus on downstream customer-focused issues. It is important to stress IJPDLM covers all aspects of SCM. Many societal and environmental issues occur upstream. It is mining, agriculture and forestry industries that provide the raw materials to the supply chains. This is also where the supply chains put most intense demand on energy and natural resources, and where horrendous damages to the natural resources, human beings (labours) and societies occur. While many scholars from advanced economies publish in IJPDLM; they are quite a long distance from the producing countries where mines, agriculture fields and forests are located. We need a more global and collaborative approach to do our research.

As a final remark, if our theories and methods are ineffective in making meaningful and positive changes in the society, we should consider developing new ones. We need to change the ways we view and conduct research. We need responsible research, not citation counts, h-index and the like.

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