
Editorial: Papers from the 25th International Symposium on Logistics (ISL)

Editorial

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The International Symposium on Logistics (ISL) has a rich history spanning the last 25 years or so, and it has been instrumental in discussing, debating and shaping the field of logistics and supply chain management. In early 1992, a proposal was made to the United Kingdom's Operations Management Association (OMA), which subsequently was expanded as the European Operations Management Association (EurOMA), to provide support for the inaugural ISL in Nottingham, UK, in July 1993. The launch of ISL came from the growing realisation that a common forum to bring together and stimulate the exchange of ideas between academic research and industrial practice did not exist. Since its inception, this event has alternated locations annually, between Europe and outside Europe. ISL has been held in many countries across Europe, whilst outside Europe, it has been to Japan, Australia, India, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Turkey, South Africa, Taiwan and Indonesia. During COVID-19, the 25th ISL was held online and has since offered a hybrid format.

During the early years, ISL focussed on assembling and establishing itself as a premier platform for knowledge exchange and research dissemination for the academic community. Eventually, the ISL expanded its reach, attracting participants and contributors from all corners of the world. This globalisation of the symposium broadened its perspectives and enriched the discussions on logistics practices and innovations. Over the last decade or so, the ISL community has embraced and debated major themes like globalisation, sustainability, the green agenda, global political and economic turbulence and the impact of digitalisation on logistics and supply chain operations. Similarly, the ISL community is privileged to have developed a strong and resilient relationship with the *International Journal of Logistics Management (IJLM)*.

The first special issue of *IJLM* featuring papers from ISL was published in 1994, with submissions from the 1st ISL conference held at the University of Nottingham in 1993. Since then, there has been a close relationship between ISL and *IJLM* (Gammelgaard, 2019), and with more regular publication of ISL special issues since 2008, there is now a strong association between the symposium and this journal. This clearly visible relationship is appreciated by the ISL community, encouraging good-quality papers that are published in *IJLM* as special issues or clusters and that make highly significant contributions in the field of logistics. We value this relationship and are thankful to the Editor-in-Chief, who takes a personal interest in ISL activities, for attending the symposium whenever possible.

This special issue focusses on submissions to the 25th ISL Conference held in 2021. The selected papers reflect how the field of logistics research has developed since the early days of ISL. Looking back at the research presented in the early years of ISL, there were only hints at how technology, sustainability and resilience may impact logistics, whilst research tended to focus on the Western world. Nowadays, significant bodies of research have developed around these concepts, with an increasingly diverse geography.

Valashiya and Luke (2023) highlight how there remains a reluctance to share information within South African supply chains. Their study of 3PLs in South Africa shows that information sharing can bring closer collaboration and lead to better coordination and improved customer service. As part of this, technology plays a crucial facilitative role. Ghadge (2023) also emphasises the importance of technology, this time in the context of



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humanitarian logistics. Using secondary data and systems thinking, a framework is created that highlights the increasingly important role of Internet-based tools for communication as part of a multi-agency response to disasters.

In terms of sustainability, [Ye et al. \(2023\)](#) examine the adoption of green supply chain management within a Chinese electronics manufacturer. Adapting existing taxonomies for categorising supply chains (such as volume and value), they show how the firm adopts different green strategies to gain a competitive advantage. High-volume, short-life products have a greater focus on reducing waste and recycling, whilst higher-value or -life products have more of a focus on repair. Focussing more on the circular economy, [Hofmeester and Eyers \(2023\)](#) develop the concept of product-agnostic remanufacturing. Here, remanufacturing operations are not constrained to a small number of products but have the capability to cope with a wide variety of products. This requires flexible, reconfigurable technologies, and they also highlight potential opportunities from MakerSpace settings.

Finally, [Tanuputri and Bai \(2023\)](#) examine resilience in the Indonesian tea supply chain, a major employer in the rural parts of the country. Their work highlights how the requirements of commercial plantations have a significant impact throughout the supply chain, and this increases the vulnerability of smallholders who supply these plantations. Therefore, vulnerability analysis is a key stage in building resilience, whilst collaboration is also important.

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