



GUEST EDITORIAL

Marketing perspectives of logistics service providers Present and future research directions

Michael Bourlakis

Kent Business School, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK, and

T.C. Melewar

Brunel Business School, Brunel University, Uxbridge, UK

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to introduce the special issue on the marketing perspectives of logistics service providers and the relevant papers. The paper also aims to introduce the concept of outsourcing in general and logistics outsourcing in particular that is directly relevant to the genesis of third-party logistics firms.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual paper largely based on analysis and discussion of the relevant literature.

Findings – The paper suggests possible avenues for future research in terms of this special issue and illustrates the contribution of the selected papers to the current literature.

Research limitations/implications – This is a conceptual paper that offers a plethora of suggestions for future research. Subsequently, the empirical testing of these suggestions is urgently required.

Originality/value – The value of this paper lies in examining a topic that has attracted limited attention by marketing scholars so far. The selected papers illustrate the possibilities for further original research in that area.

Keywords Distribution management, Marketing, Outsourcing

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

Logistics operations are responsible for the efficient and effective handling of a firm's goods and services with the ultimate aim to minimise any costs, to improve customer service and to create a competitive advantage (Christopher, 2006). Managing these operations has become a challenge for modern corporations considering, *inter alia*, the vast range of logistics functions, the inherent complexity when dealing with large product ranges and stock keeping units and the large capital investment required for logistics operations. In principle, firms could perform the logistics operations by using their own assets or have the option to outsource part or the whole logistics function to a

The Guest Editors would like to express their gratitude to the past and current Editors of the Journal, Professor Gilmore and Professor Carson at the University of Ulster and Professor Greenley and Professor Lee at Aston Business School. The authors would also like to thank all contributors and reviewers of this special issue for their invaluable help and for their speedy responses over the past couple of years.



specialised firm, the logistics service provider (LSP) which becomes responsible for the provision of these logistics operations (Razzaque and Sheng, 1998). These LSPs have become major firms over the past few decades, have developed strong expertise and capabilities and support the domestic and international expansion of various chain members such as manufacturers and retailers (see for retailers, e.g. Bourlakis, 1998; Bourlakis and Bourlakis, 2005). It is very surprising that these issues have attracted large interest by primarily logistics academics in the past but a very limited one by marketing scholars.

Hence, this special issue aims to generate extra interest towards this area of study. The selected papers support this aim by addressing key gaps in the literature and by recommending future research paths. The next section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of logistics outsourcing. It is followed by an analysis of the key selection criteria when appointing a LSP and the marketing-related outcomes (e.g. satisfaction) of the LSP's performance. In the last section, we comment on these selected papers and their contribution to the current literature and provide our thoughts for possible future research.

Logistics outsourcing: theoretical underpinning and third-party logistics firms

Transaction costs theory has been seen as fundamental to the outsourcing principle and it has been developed by many academics including Coase (1937), Simon (1957), Arrow (1969), Williamson (1975) and Rugman (1981). The basis of the transaction cost proposition was that when the transaction costs of an administered exchange are lower than those of a market exchange, then the market is internalised and firm's efficiency is thereby increased. Transaction costs are defined as (Hallwood, 1990, p. 7):

The costs of organising the business and include the ex ante costs of carrying out a market transaction such as finding a suitable transactor and informing it of the desire to transact, negotiation costs, the costs of drawing up contracts, policing costs and contract renewal costs, with the ex post costs incurring when opportunistic behaviour by one of the transactors occurs.

According to Williamson (1985), transaction costs analysis has been influenced by specific conditions such as asset specificity (the degree to which an asset can be redeployed to alternative uses), the degree and type of uncertainty (stemming from the environment or business partners' behaviour) and the frequency with which they recur. The issue of opportunism is very relevant that according to Powell (1990, p. 299) is the:

National pursuit by economic actors of their own advantage, with every means at their disposal, including guile and deceit.

Transaction cost economics has been examined widely in the distribution and logistics field (see for example, Aertsen, 1993; Bourlakis, 1998; Bourlakis and Bourlakis, 2005). For the latter, Dawson and Shaw (1990) argue that, in distribution operations, as a generalisation, external transactions (outsourcing) are likely to replace internal organisation when:

- no idiosyncratic/specific assets are required;
- many competitive suppliers are available;
- tasks are repetitive;

- the task environment is stable and not complex; and finally
- performance outcomes can be easily and accurately assessed.

Sheffi (1990) reasoned that very small corporations where the transportation and logistics function is relatively simple and very large corporations, which can afford sophisticated in-house staff, may not prefer to use outsourcing and the relevant LSPs. Muller (1993) also indicates the following four types of LSPs/vendors:

- (1) Asset-based vendors which focus on the provision of physical logistics assets to dedicated clients by employing their own trucks and warehouses.
- (2) Management-based vendors which focus on the provision of logistics management services via databases and information technology systems. However, these firms do not deal with any physical assets.
- (3) Integrated vendors which manage physical assets and have the ability to join forces with other vendors.
- (4) Administration-based vendors which focus on the provision of administrative services (e.g. payments).

This logistics outsourcing process has been also named as contract logistics (A.T. Kearney, 1994) or even logistics alliance (Bowersox, 1990). The LSPs which provide these outsourced services are also classified in the logistics literature as third party logistics (3PL) firms (Lieb and Randall, 1996). According to Lieb *et al.* (1993, p. 37), a 3PL is defined as:

... the use of external companies to perform logistics functions which have traditionally been performed within an organisation. The functions performed by the third party firm can encompass the entire logistics process or selective activities within that process.

Andersson and Norrman (2002) note that these 3PL services differ from purchasing any other services as they help the development of a close business-to-business relationship between the buyer and the service provider notwithstanding the complex nature of the logistics service bought. In terms of the evolution of the 3PL phenomenon, Berglund *et al.* (1999) note that the traditional LSPs of the 1980s were dealing only with transportation and warehousing. They were followed in early 1990s by companies which were able to offer more customised and tailor made logistics solutions and had the ability to offer more advanced services including inventory management and fleet management. In the late 1990s, the increasing role of information technology resulted in the entrance of many information technology and consulting firms. It is during that time when the fourth party logistics network started to emerge where the 3PL company becomes an integrator and a network manager of the firm's logistics operations (Bourlakis and Bourlakis, 2005). In terms of geographical application, the 3PL sector has been examined in different continents including studies dealing with USA and European (Lieb *et al.*, 1993), Australian (Dapiran *et al.*, 1996) and Asian firms (Sohail and Sohal, 2003). 3PL research has been applied to different supply chain members including manufacturers (Lieb *et al.*, 1993), retailers (Bourlakis and Bourlakis, 2005; Fernie, 1989) and primary suppliers (Bourlakis *et al.*, 2004). 3PL researchers have also borrowed and subsequently applied theories beyond the logistics discipline (see Knemeyer and Murphy, 2005) including the strategic management

competence theory (Halldórsson and Skjøtt-Larsen, 2004) and relationship marketing (Moore, 1998). Focussing on relationship marketing, Knemeyer’s and Murphy’s (2005) work examined the perspectives of the user and LSP by examining relationship marketing elements and outcomes including the aspect of satisfaction. Some of these issues are addressed in the next section.

Selection criteria for using a 3PL firm and outcomes of the 3PL performance

The critical decision for firms is whether to outsource and/or to internalise the logistics functions and the next table provides the key advantages and disadvantages (Table I).

Gattorna *et al.* (1991) outlined the aspects that influence the decision of a buyer of such logistics services and distinguished between control aspects and physical aspects. The control aspects include the exclusivity of service, a sufficient range of contractor’s managerial activities, continuity of the relationship, commitment and reliability attached to the relationship by the 3PL firm, ability for performance measurement, cost control, commercial and financial security, reliable customer service, and minimisation of problems related to industrial relations. The physical aspects include operational flexibility, the ability of the 3PL firm to cope with a vast range of physical activities, ability to maximise level of service, geographical coverage provided by the 3PL firm, and product and/or market specialisation of the 3PL firm. Minahan (1995) raised the point that buyers of these services should be examining only the 3PL firms’ physical assets but should also analyse the 3PL firms’ skills and how these skills support and extend what they have in their own operations. Subsequently, Razzaque and Sheng (1998, p. 98) mention that:

... it is crucial to match a third party’s strength to the firm’s weaknesses.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Reduction in capital investment in facilities, information technology and manpower	Loss of control
Firm becomes more flexible to adapt to changes and respond quicker to demands	Lack of appropriate information technology systems linking the various firms in that chain
3PL firms convert a fixed cost to a variable cost	Failure to select or manage 3PL firms appropriately
Inventory turnover rate is improved	Unreliable promises given by 3PL firms, inability to respond to changing requirements and lack of understanding of user’s business goals
It could be more cost-efficient compared with in-house operations	Apprehension in users’ employees about job security
Improving customer service and satisfaction	Difficulty in assessing any benefits and cost savings gained through outsourcing
Acquiring outside expertise	

Source: Adapted from Razzaque and Sheng (1998)

Table I.
Advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing

Therefore, companies should focus on their core competences and employ 3PL firms for the functions which do not have expertise (Andersson, 1997) that also helps towards risk spreading (Sink and Langley, 1997). In terms of the selection criteria towards using a 3PL firm, Jharkaria and Shankar (2007) provide a very comprehensive review that includes the following criteria: compatibility with the users, cost of service, quality of service, reputation of the 3PL company, long-term relationship, performance measurement, willingness to use logistics manpower, flexibility in billing and payment, quality of management, information sharing and mutual trust, operational performance, information technology capability, size and quality of fixed assets, experience in similar products, delivery performance, employee satisfaction level, financial performance, market share, geographical spread and range of services provided, risk management, surge capacity of provider, clause of arbitration and escape, and flexibility in operations and delivery. For small firms, Razzaque and Sheng (1998) suggest that they need to be cautious when applying selection criteria and to consider outsourcing as not a cost-cutting exercise but more strategically and especially as an opportunity to get a competitive advantage.

There are also contrasting views in the logistics literature about which selection criteria dominate the supplier evaluation decisions. For example, Fernie (1989), Kremic *et al.* (2006), Wilding and Juriado (2004) suggest that the issue of cost is always a key or even a top priority whilst Sink *et al.* (1996) note that the core competences of 3PL firms are leading motives during these decisions. But even for the cost element, Wilding and Juriado (2004) report its less important role within the consumer goods sector. They note that the outsourcing decision is based on service-related considerations including competencies of 3PL firms and operational flexibility. That confirms that the evaluation of these criteria will depend on the market environment and the client's needs (see also Sink *et al.*, 1996). Kremic *et al.* (2006) add the social cost element that may influence the outsourcing decision (e.g. low morale, high absenteeism within employees for the firm that uses outsourcing) and that there are no guarantees that any cost savings will actually materialise as in many occasions the costs are actually higher following outsourcing. Whatever the criteria used, Fernie (1998a, b) states that logistics outsourcing varies between countries and depends on the regulatory environment, the competitiveness of the third party sector and other distribution-related issues.

Past research has highlighted a range of issues following the usage of a 3PL firm including the need for their further performance improvement (see for example, Lieb and Bentz, 2005). Razzaque and Sheng (1998) make the association between logistics outsourcing and customer service (illustrating the resultant customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction) and note that the correct implementation and usage of the 3PL selection criteria is key for the future success of any relationship. They also stress (Razzaque and Sheng, 1998, p. 102):

Outsourcing is a specifically defined contractual relationship that is dependent on the supplier meeting the buyer's defined performance goals.

If these performance goals and criteria set are met then customer satisfaction is created and the firms could start engaging in long-term relationships and true partnerships rather than work on *ad hoc*, arms-length transactions. Wilding and Juriado (2004, p. 641)

stress that most companies “use some sort of formalised performance measurement” with most popular performance measurement criteria to include (given in a ranking order): delivery timeliness, cost, overall quality, inventory management, picking accuracy, responsiveness and flexibility. Laarhoven *et al.* (2000) note the use of written contracts in most user-3PL firm partnerships including detailed analysis of logistics activities required and specific performance targets to meet; they also note the increased use of penalty clauses over the past few years in case these targets are not met. The above are some defensive, safeguarding mechanisms against possible opportunistic behaviour by the 3PL firms.

Overall, 3PL firms are regarded as successful and most studies illustrate a successful partnership between a 3PL firm and a buyer of that service (see for example, Sink *et al.*, 1996; Laarhoven *et al.*, 2000; Wilding and Juriado, 2004; Sohail and Al-Abdali, 2006) that leads to a high renewal rate of that contract agreement (Laarhoven *et al.*, 2000). Laarhoven *et al.* (2000) examined a wide spectrum of sectors and illustrated the cost savings and service improvements when using 3PL firms. They also compared highly successful partnerships with less successful ones and identified the conditions for a successful logistics partnership. These conditions include a distinctive separation of responsibilities between the firms, a solid organisational structure which focuses on the user’s core skills and at the same time outsources the skills which are not core, a dedicated relationship between the two firms and a large focus on performance orientation including performance reviews and penalties during poor performance. Similarly, Wilding and Juriado (2004) mention that academic studies tend not to provide detailed analysis of user satisfaction for 3PL services received presenting a gap in the literature. In their work, Wilding and Juriado (2004) illustrate a positive, although weak, correlation level of satisfaction from the user’s point of view and the actual level of outsourcing allocated. Overall, the quest for customer satisfaction continues to be an important strategic initiative for most companies today. The predominant model suggests that consumer satisfaction is determined by a comparative process between prior expectations and performance perceptions (Oliver, 1993). There are several dimensions to expectations of performance and many of these are intangible and can vary significantly from business partner to business partner. Often companies can have undue expectations regarding 3PL performance for a variety of reasons (exaggerated statements made during promotion, decision makers being not fully informed etc.). However, other dimensions are more tangible and can be objectively assessed. These include delivery times, prices, delays resulting from various reasons, etc.

In addition, business partner dissatisfaction may have a negative impact on sales and revenue. Customer dissatisfaction can arise due to poor performance and/or the quality of service provided by the 3PL in comparison to selection criteria (prior expectations). In either case, it results in a negative impact on the overall business performance. This could be either due to the dissatisfied customers switching to competing 3PL provider and/or losing potential new customers due to negative word-of-mouth effect. The consequence of dissatisfaction is more difficult and costly to rectify and hence it is very important that 3PL provider avoids this occurring in the first instance. A proper contract between the company and 3PL providers and the monitoring of the provider’s actions are very critical for ensuring high level customer satisfaction (Murthy *et al.*, 2004).

The selected papers and future research

The above analysis has introduced few key aspects related to this special issue. The following selected papers co-examine the issue of logistics outsourcing and the role of LSPs/3PL firms from different angles and perspectives and add further strength to our analysis.

Specifically, the first paper by Paswan, Blankson and Guzman investigate the relationship between marketing strategy types and the extent of relationalism in marketing channels and their findings will be extremely beneficial to marketing and logistics managers. The second paper focuses on the online market where Xing, Grant, McKinnon and Fernie examine the issue of electronic physical distribution service quality for UK retailers and their LSPs and provide a plethora of original findings of strategic importance for these firms. It is followed by a paper that examines various marketing dimensions in relation to logistics and supply chain management. Specifically, Salam investigates the linkages between the behavioural and marketing determinants of supply chain management and their impact on commitment and process integration. Key findings emerge including the role of Confucian dynamism in shaping supply chain commitment.

The fourth paper by Songailiene, Winklhofer and McKechnie provides a comprehensive conceptualisation of the supplier perceived value. Therefore, they examine logistics firms in Lithuania and they propose a conceptual model that can be employed by both LSPs and their customers. In addition, Wallenburg and Lukassen provide a differentiated view on the relationship-specific proactive investment of LSPs as a driver of customer loyalty. Responses from the customer perspective were collected, mainly from German manufacturing and trading companies whilst structural equation modelling and multi-group analysis was followed in the analysis. On the other hand, Banomyong and Supatn also investigate the logistics service quality aspect focusing on the shippers' perspective during the selection of LSPs/3PL firms in Thailand. They identify specific freight logistics service attributes and their analysis can help 3PL firms during the development of successful marketing strategies. The last paper of this special issue focuses on maritime logistics where Yeo, Roe and Dinwoodie present the factors which influence the competitiveness of Northeast Asian container ports and offer a structure for their measurement.

Overall, these papers offer a range of new insights. For example, they illustrate comprehensive conceptualisations (see Songailiene, Winklhofer and McKechnie) and examine both the supplier (Songailiene, Winklhofer and McKechnie) and customer (Wallenburg and Lukassen) perspectives. Some of these papers focus on the European continent (see Wallenburg and Lukassen; Songailiene, Winklhofer and McKechnie; Xing, Grant, McKinnon and Fernie), other papers focus on the Asian continent (Banomyong and Supatn; Yeo, Roe and Dinwoodie; Salam) and the paper by Paswan, Blankson and Guzman focus on the USA. Specific and quite unique sectors are also investigated including, *inter alia*, the online market (Xing, Grant, McKinnon and Fernie), the maritime sector (Yeo, Roe and Dinwoodie) and the pharmaceutical sector (Paswan, Blankson and Guzman).

The authors are pleased to suggest a range of potential research avenues emanating from these papers. For example, Wallenburg and Lukassen introduce the aspects of innovation and customer loyalty in relation to LSPs and further research in that

direction will be very fruitful. Similarly, Songailiene, Winklhofer and McKechnie propose a conceptual model where further empirical testing is required notwithstanding a future examination for its universal applicability to other national logistics environments or even more generic business to business contexts. The two papers by Xing, Grant, McKinnon and Fernie, and, Banomyong and Supatn shed extra light on the service quality issue for LSPs. We believe that this topic provides many opportunities for future work considering the presence of numerous dyadic relationships in the logistics system (e.g. LSP and retailer, LSP and manufacturer etc.) and the plethora of logistics functions offered by LSPs (e.g. transportation, warehousing etc.) which have their own quality service problems and challenges to address. Yeo, Roe and Dinwoodie examine the issue of competitiveness in the maritime (port) sector and similar approach and rationale can be followed when examining other logistics and marketing channel management strategies. Salam also introduces the aspect of culture and its influence on business (and logistics) strategies that, according to our knowledge, has received scant attention in the logistics literature. Lastly, Paswan, Blankson and Guzman recommend the replication of their work in the whole supply chain network and its further testing, a recommendation which we endorse too.

References

- Aertsen, F. (1993), "Contracting out the physical distribution function: a trade-off between asset specificity and performance measurement", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 23-9.
- Andersson, D. (1997), PhD thesis, Department of Management and Economics, Linköping University, Linköping.
- Andersson, D. and Norrman, A. (2002), "Procurement of logistics services – a minute's work or a multi-year project?", *European Journal of Purchasing & Supply Management*, Vol. 8, pp. 3-14.
- Arrow, K.J. (1969), *The Organisation of Economic Activity: Issues Pertinent to the Choice of Market versus Nonmarket Allocation*, Joint Economic Committee, The Analysis and Evaluation of Public Expenditure: the PPB System, (1), Government Printing Office, Washington DC, pp. 59-73.
- Berglund, M., van Laarhoven, P., Sharman, G. and Wandel, S. (1999), "Third-party logistics – is there a future?", *International Journal of Logistics Management*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 59-70.
- Bourlakis, C. and Bourlakis, M. (2005), "Information technology safeguards, logistics asset specificity and 4th party logistics network creation in the food retail chain", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 20 Nos 2/3, pp. 88-98.
- Bourlakis, M. (1998), "Transaction costs, internationalisation and logistics: the case of European food retailing", *International Journal of Logistics: Research and Applications*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 251-64.
- Bourlakis, M., Tregear, A. and Allinson, J. (2004), "The potential of collective distribution schemes: the case of the UK northeast food and drink sector", paper presented at 9th Logistics Research Network Conference, University College Dublin, Dublin.
- Bowersox, D.J. (1990), "The strategic benefits of logistics alliances", *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, pp. 36-45.
- Christopher, M. (2006), *Logistics and Supply Chain Management*, Financial Times/Pitman, London.

- Coase, R.H. (1937), "The nature of the firm", *Economica*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 386-405.
- Dapiran, P., Lieb, R., Millen, R. and Sohal, A. (1996), "Third party logistics services usage by large Australian firms", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 26 No. 10, pp. 36-45.
- Dawson, J.A. and Shaw, S. (1990), "The changing character of retailer-supplier relationships", in Fernie, J. (Ed.), *Retail Distribution Management*, Kogan Page, London.
- Fernie, J. (1989), "Contract distribution in multiple retailing", *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Materials Management*, Vol. 19 No. 7, pp. 1-35.
- Fernie, J. (1998a), "Outsourcing distribution in UK retailing", Research paper No. 9801, University of Stirling, Stirling.
- Fernie, J. (1998b), "The internationalisation of the retail supply chain", in Fernie, J. and Sparks, L. (Eds), *Logistics and Retail Management*, Kogan Page, London.
- Gattorna, J., Day, A. and Hargreaves, J. (1991), "Effective logistics management", *Logistics Information Management*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 32-4.
- Halldórsson, A. and Skjøtt-Larsen, T. (2004), "Developing logistics competences through third party logistics relationships", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 192-206.
- Hallwood, C.P. (1990), *Transaction Costs and Trade between Multinational Corporations: A Study of Offshore Oil Production*, Unwin Hyman, Boston, MA.
- Jharkaria, S. and Shankar, R. (2007), "Selection of logistics service provider: an analytic network process (ANP) approach", *Omega: The International Journal of Management Science*, Vol. 35, pp. 274-89.
- Kearney, A.T. (1994), *Logistics Services in Europe*, A.T. Kearney on behalf of the European Logistics Association (ELA, Brussels, Belgium).
- Knemeyer, A.M. and Murphy, P.R. (2005), "Is the glass half full or half empty? An examination of user and provider perspectives towards third-party logistics relationships", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 35 No. 10, pp. 708-27.
- Kremic, T., Tukul, O.I. and Rom, W.O. (2006), "Outsourcing decision support: a survey of benefits, risks, and decision factors", *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 6, pp. 467-82.
- Laarhoven, P.V., Berglund, M. and Peters, M. (2000), "Third-party logistics in Europe – five years later", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 425-42.
- Lieb, R.C. and Bentz, B.A. (2005), "The use of third-party logistics services by large American manufacturers: the 2004 survey", *Transportation Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 24-33.
- Lieb, R.C. and Randall, H.L. (1996), "A comparison of the use of third party logistics service by large American manufacturers, 1991, 1994 and 1995", *Journal of Business Logistics*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 305-20.
- Lieb, R.C., Millen, R.A. and Van Wassenhove, L.N. (1993), "Third party logistics services: a comparison of experienced American and European manufacturers", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 35-44.
- Minahan, T. (1995), "Transportation: can't get a handle on freight costs? Give up trying", *Purchasing*, Vol. 23, pp. 35-6.
- Moore, K.R. (1998), "Trust and relationship commitment in logistics alliances: a buyer perspective", *International Journal of Purchasing and Materials Management*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 24-37.

- Muller, E.J. (1993), "The top guns of third-party logistics", *Distribution*, March, pp. 30-8.
- Murthy, D.N.P., Solem, O. and Roren, T. (2004), "Product warranty logistics: issues and challenges", *European Journal of Operational Research*, Vol. 156 No. 1, pp. 110-26.
- Oliver, R.L. (1993), "Cognitive, affective, and attribute bases of the satisfaction response", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 418-30.
- Powell, W. (1990), "Neither market nor hierarchy: network forms of organisation", in Cummings, L. and Staw, B. (Eds), *Research in Organisational Behavior*, JAI, Greenwich, CT.
- Razzaque, M.A. and Sheng, C.C. (1998), "Outsourcing of logistics functions: a literature survey", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 89-107.
- Rugman, A.M. (1981), *Inside the Multinational: The Economics of Internal Markets*, Croom Helm, London.
- Sheffi, Y. (1990), "Third party logistics: present and future prospects", *Journal of Business Logistics*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 36-49.
- Simon, H.A. (1957), *Models of Man*, John Wiley & Sons, London.
- Sink, H. and Langley, J.C. Jr (1997), "A managerial framework for the acquisition of third-party logistics services", *Journal of Business Logistics*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 163-89.
- Sink, H.L., Langley, C.J. Jr and Gibson, B.J. (1996), "Buyer observations of the US third-party logistics market", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 38-46.
- Sohail, M.S. and Al-Abdali, O.S. (2006), "Comparing third-party logistics usage in the service and manufacturing industries: a Saudi-Arabian perspective", *International Journal of Logistics Systems and Management*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 38-51.
- Sohail, M.S. and Sohal, A.S. (2003), "The use of third-party logistics services: a Malaysian perspective", *Technovation*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 401-8.
- Wilding, R. and Juriado, R. (2004), "Customer perceptions on logistics outsourcing in the European consumer goods industry", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 34 No. 8, pp. 628-44.
- Williamson, O.E. (1975), *Markets and Hierarchies: Analysis and Antitrust Implications*, Free Press, New York, NY.
- Williamson, O.E. (1985), *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism: Firms, Markets and Relational Contracting*, Free Press, New York, NY.

About the Guest Editors

Michael Bourlakis is a Senior Lecturer at Brunel Business School. He completed his PhD degree (2001) at the University of Edinburgh. He previously held academic positions at Newcastle University, Oxford Institute of Retail Management at Templeton College, Oxford University and Leicester University Management Centre. He has produced over 125 papers in numerous journals, books, conference proceedings and other academic and professional outlets and he has co-edited a book on *Food Supply Chain Management* (2004). He is an Editorial Board Member of five academic journals: *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, *British Food Journal*, *Journal of Chain and Network Science*, *International Journal of Cooperative Management*, and *International Journal of Economic Sciences & Applied Research*. His research interests are in the areas of marketing channels, logistics and supply chain management. Michael Bourlakis is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: michael.bourlakis@brunel.ac.uk

EJM
45,3

310

Professor T.C. Melewar (BSc, MBA, PhD) is Professor of Marketing and Strategy at the School of Management and Law, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland. He has previous experience at Brunel Business School, Warwick Business School, MARA Institute of Technology in Malaysia, Loughborough University, UK and De Montfort University, UK. He teaches Marketing Management, Marketing Communications and International Marketing on a range of undergraduate, MBA, and executive courses with companies such as Nestlé, Safeway, Corus and Sony. He is a Visiting Professor at Groupe ECS Grenoble, France and Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany. His research interests include Corporate Identity, Brand Management, International Marketing, Marketing Communications.

To purchase reprints of this article please e-mail: reprints@emeraldinsight.com
Or visit our web site for further details: www.emeraldinsight.com/reprints

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.