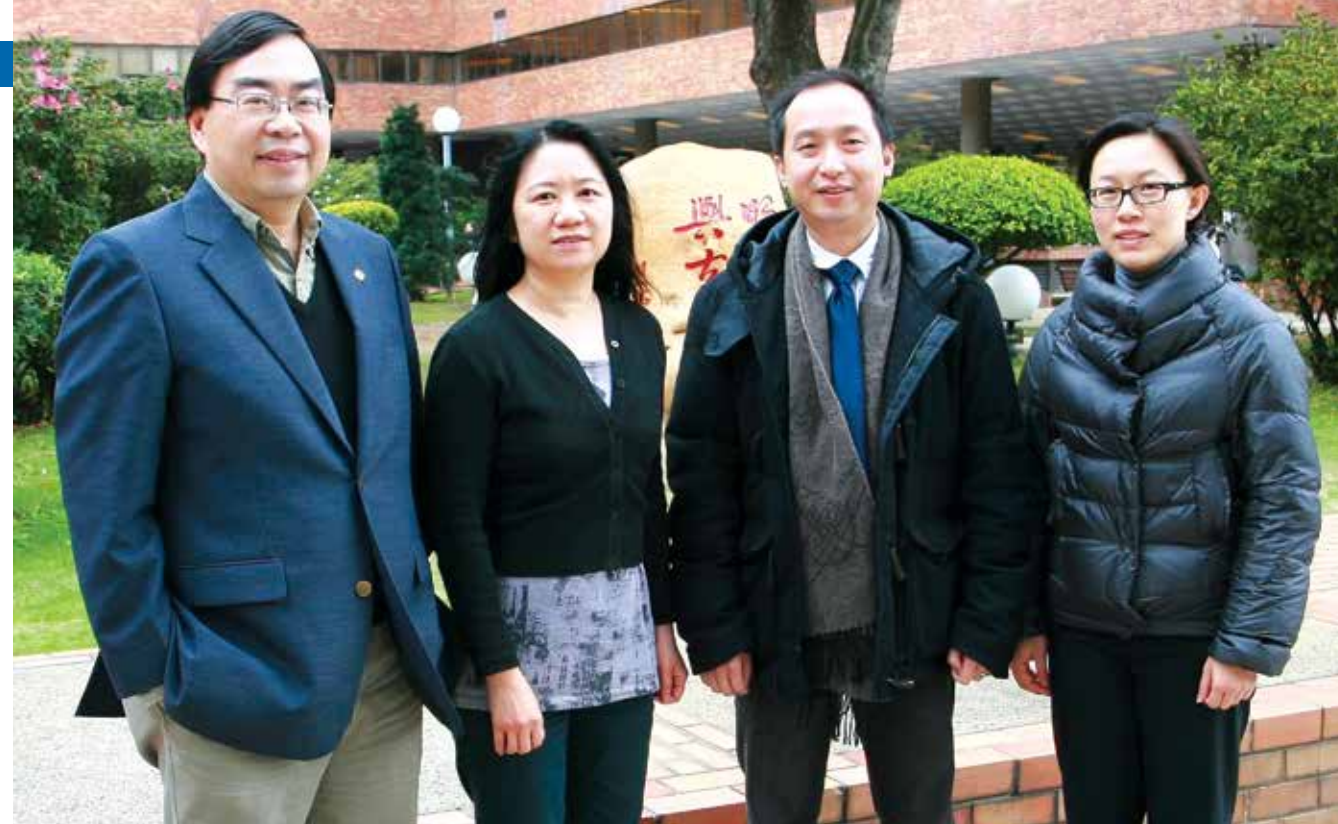


Supplier management vital to logistics operations

供應商管理對物流運作至關重要

The Shipping Research Centre at the Faculty of Business conducted a study on buyer-supplier relationships in container terminal operation. The findings suggest that “implicit contract” encourages but “business uncertainty” discourages supplier commitment.

工商管理學院的航運研究中心就買家與供應商關係在貨櫃碼頭運作中的重要性進行研究，結果顯示「內在合約」能夠提高供應商的投入程度，而「業務不確定性」則有礙供應商投入。



From left: Prof. Edwin Cheng, Dr Venus Y. H. Lun, Dr Lai Kee-hung and Dr Christina W. Y. Wong
左起：鄭大昭教授、倫婉霞博士、黎基雄博士及黃詠恩博士

Entitled “A study on the antecedents of supplier commitment in support of logistics operations”, the project addressed concerns expressed by enterprises about which factors nurture and damage supplier commitment. In the study, container terminals are the buyers while service providers of container terminals are suppliers. Data were collected from 358 service providers of a global container terminal operator. The respondents evaluated their relationships with the container terminal operator in terms of the mutual understanding of remedies for failure, the responsibilities of each party, coping with unplanned events, and handling and resolving disagreements.

The findings indicated that an “implicit contract”, or the mutual understanding and expectations of partner firms of their roles and responsibilities in buyer-supplier relationships, contributes to developing a trusting relationship and strengthening cooperation between different parties. It complements the “explicit contract”, which specifies the obligations of partner firms but does not take all contingencies into account.

The “business uncertainties” perceived by suppliers deter them from accommodating the needs of buyers and making long-term investments. To reduce uncertainty, the researchers found that buyers could improve the transparency of information about sales volume, demand requirements, order size and order cycle. Supplier input should be delivered at the right time, at the right quality and in the right quantity to fully satisfy the operations requirements of buying firms.

The research paper was published in the *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics* (Vol. 4, No. 1/ 2012, pp. 5–16) and has been included in Thomson Reuters’ Web of Knowledge’s Hot Papers list within a year. The paper’s co-authors include Dr Christina W. Y. Wong, Dr Lai Kee-hung, Dr Venus Y. H. Lun and Prof. Edwin Cheng.

這研究項目題為「供應商投入支持物流運作的前因研究」。在研究中，貨櫃碼頭是買家，碼頭的服務提供者是供應商，該研究解答了不少企業關於促進及妨礙供應商投入的困惑。研究人員分析一所業務遍及全球的貨櫃碼頭公司的三百五十八家服務供應商所提供的資料，回顧它們與貨櫃碼頭公司在處理故障、各自的責任、解決突發事件，以及調解糾紛上的默契。

「內在合約」指各夥伴企業就角色及責任方面的期望及互相理解，對於建立互信及加強合作具有積極作用。「外在合約」則訂明各夥伴企業的責任及義務，但未能盡列所有可能發生的情況，因此內在與外在合約可互補長短，發揮最大的效益。

另外，「業務不確定性」使供應商在考慮買家需要及長線投資方面卻步。要減少不確定因素，買家可提高信息透明度，包括提供有關銷量、需求、訂貨量及訂貨週期的詳情，而供應商信息必須適時、適量和準確，讓供應商能夠滿足買家在運作上的需要。

有關研究的論文於《國際貨運與物流雜誌》(International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics) 發表(二零一二年第四期(1) 5–16頁)，在短短一年內已成為湯森路透(Thomson Reuters) Web of Knowledge 平台上的熱門論文。該論文的合著者包括黃詠恩博士、黎基雄博士、倫婉霞博士及鄭大昭教授。