

Abstract

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PORT SERVICE QUALITY FROM SHIPPING LINES PERSPECTIVE Empirical Study on East Mediterranean Region

Abstract Maritime transport services have benefited from the economy of many regions around the world because ships transport more than 90% of world trade. Container terminals play a substantial role in global cargo transportation by serving as an intermodal between the maritime and by a variety of carriers therefore, containerization provides the mechanism that enabled companies to extend to international markets while improving reliability, flexibility, and costs of freight distribution. Through containerization, all competitors have the potential to gain the same level of access to the global cargo carriage system via port facilities. So seaports are very important to national economies by permitting higher levels of profitability, income, output, and employment in the logistics field. In the framework of the factors, multi-control determinants of container market and competition between the parties are dealing in that market, a strong competition between shipping companies arises. On the other hand, competition between ports receiving container ships has started to attract more clients such as freight forwarders, importers, exporters, shipping lines, ship owners and logistics service providers. The main purpose is to satisfy clients as one of the quality standards in ports. This research aims to investigate those criteria that can be applied by port clients (shipping lines only) when they Select their calling ports. The research builds a questionnaire to identify those criteria that are currently applied by shipping lines in the container market in East Mediterranean region. Such criteria are the cornerstone of the service quality provided by container terminals. Data is collected for this questionnaire through investigating previous literature on the same topic in addition to conducting several interviews with the operation managers of different shipping lines working in the east Mediterranean region. Afterwards, the questionnaire is sent to different shipping companies to Select the most important criteria from their perspective. The most important criteria identified by shipping lines are grouped into seven categories. Fuzzy AHP approach is applied in this research to show the weight of each criterion in the port feature category. The results were distributed again in a second questionnaire which is sent to the experts and academics in the field to highlight the basic criteria from their own perspective. Finally, the results of both questionnaires are given weight for each criterion through the AHP method of analysis and the results were applied on the actual data of different services inside each port. Thus, a new rank of ports is established based on the criteria identified by the shipping lines. It is concluded that the port charges criteria was the highest measure that is currently applied by the shipping lines in container market. In addition, the research comes up with a new index that measures the weight of the shipping lines' criteria and such index can be used for ranking the ports from the shipping lines perspective. Finally the researcher was able to develop a model for determinants of service quality in container terminals (Termiqua), the validity of such model can provide guidance for ports managers, maritime practitioners, decision makers, and quality experts to introduce a high service quality of container terminals, which will be reflected positively on the prosperity of the business, and on the benefit of all the stakeholders.