

Abstract

The analysis aims to provide a contribution to the debate on strategies for development of the Italian airport network by assessing the efficiency of the airports included in the Airports National Plan over the period from 2004 to 2013 characterized by the unfolding of the liberalization process, the economic financial crisis of 2008 and the development of the high speed rail transport. Considering as a starting point the previous works of Barros and Dieke (2008), Curi, Gitto and Mancuso (2011) and Gitto and Mancuso (2012), the article evaluates the operational and financial performance of airports through the DEA and Malmquist indices and assesses the impact of the high-speed rail development on the Italian airport system efficiency by applying the two-stage procedure of Simar and Wilson (2007). The analysis leads to two important conclusions. Firstly, the entry of private capital in the airport management is an achievable goal for those airports ensuring a satisfactory profitability in the short and/or medium term. The reduction of public participation in airport management company does not lead itself an increase in efficiency that seems more influenced by size class. Secondly, it is reasonable to believe that public sector investments in the high-speed rail transport network, have a favorable effect on the airport efficiency contributing to create a unique integrated transport system.