



Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Exports to Finland for Tea

Salomi Judith

Degree Thesis

International Business

2024

Degree Thesis

Salomi Judith

Title. Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Exports to Finland for Tea

Arcada University of Applied Sciences: International Business, 2024.

Abstract:

The introduction to the research emphasizes the importance of global trade, including the export of Sri Lankan tea to Finland, and the necessity of supply chain optimization given the changing nature of global commerce. Further, the purpose of this study was to identify the challenges, inefficiencies in the supply chain, and proposed strategic optimizations in exports of tea from Sri Lanka to Finland. From a historical context, it is clear that the traditional trade connections played a huge role in the development of the industry along with the specific colonial period; therefore, the British directly impacted the established system of cultivation and manufacturing. The current study discusses a range of theoretical frameworks, such as total quality management, just-in-time delivery, and regulatory compliance management, offering insights into the optimization of supply chains. Purposive sampling has been utilized in the research so as to collect insights from the relevant stakeholders in the case of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. There are 10 interviews conducted among industry experts. Therein, the measures have to be proactive to improve competitive tendencies. Supply chain challenges are inefficiencies that come as a result of logistic inefficiencies in the distribution process, challenges in regulatory compliance, and adaptations that are market-centric. Furthermore, optimized logistics procedures, increased regulatory adherence, and market-specific adaptations are some of the strategic optimizations that suggest how efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall competitiveness can be enhanced further. The study has evaluated strategic optimizations for meeting challenges in Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. On the other hand, there is a focus on efficient logistics, compliance, and, most importantly, market-specific adaptations. These optimizations will be directed toward strengthening the competitive position and facilitating growth in the global tea trade.

Keywords:

Global trade, Sri Lankan tea, Finland, Supply chain optimization. Logistics

Contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Problem Statement	5
1.2	Aim.....	7
1.3	Demarcations.....	7
2	Theory.....	8
2.1	Historical perspective	8
2.2	International Trade Theories.....	9
2.2.1	Importance of Delivery Services in Export Supply Chains	9
2.2.2	Role of Lead Time Analysis and Freight Forwarders in Supply Chain Management	10
2.2.3	Strategic Optimizations for Export Supply Chains	11
2.3	Concepts and Models	12
2.3.1	Logistical procedures	12
2.3.2	Regulatory adherence.....	13
3	Method.....	15
3.1	Choice of Method	15
3.2	Respondents.....	15
3.2.1	Population.....	15
3.2.2	Sample Size	15
3.3	Sampling method	16
3.4	Research Approach.....	16
3.5	Analysis of Data	17
3.6	Validity and reliability	17
3.6.1	Validity	17
3.6.2	Reliability	18
3.7	Ethical Consideration.....	18
4	Results.....	19
4.1	Introduction.....	19
5	Discussion	26
5.1	Discussion of results	26
5.2	Discussion of method	28
6	Conclusion.....	29
6.1	Limitation of the study	30
6.2	Suggestions for further studies	31
	References.....	32
	Annexure.....	35
	Appendix 1: Interview Guide.....	35
	Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Study.....	37
	Appendix 3: Interviewrespondent information	39

Appendix 4: A summary of the answers in the interviews 40

1 Introduction

The role of global trade is crucial in changing economic landscapes as nations continuously strive to optimize their export supply chains to improve efficiency and competitiveness. This comparative analysis examines the complexities of Sri Lankan exports, specifically emphasizing the tea trade with Finland. Tea, a vital component of Sri Lanka's economy, has positioned the country as a prominent exporter of this highly sought-after commodity globally (Islam, et al, 2021).

Ariyawardana & Bailey (2011), shares that the tea industry in Sri Lanka has a significant historical context, originating in the 19th century with the British introduction of commercial tea cultivation. Following its independence, Sri Lanka has successfully revitalized its tea industry, which has emerged as a dynamic economic driver, substantially contributing to its GDP and employment rates. Conversely, Finland is recognized as a discerning market for high-quality teas, showcasing a culture that values this drink's subtle tastes and health advantages.

Sachithra, et al, (2012) conducted research that provides insight into the development of Sri Lanka's tea industry. The study emphasizes the industry's ability to adjust its tactics in response to the evolving needs of the global market. Furthermore, studies such as Ariyawardana, & Bailey (2011), give insights into Finland's preferences and regulatory frameworks governing tea imports, providing a comprehensive picture of the destination market.

1.1 Problem Statement

In global trade, there are constant changes and growing rivalry. Countries must continuously improve their export supply chains to maintain economic sustainability and achieve growth. One urgent issue about Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland is the necessity of supply chain optimization to ensure effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and market competitiveness. Although the tea sector plays a crucial role in Sri Lanka's economy, its challenges impede its complete realization of potential in the Finnish market (Sachithra, et al, 2012).

Optimizing export supply chains requires a comprehensive strategy including logistics, regulations adherence, and market analysis. Using a comparative approach, this analysis seeks to find optimal strategies and possible areas for improvement in Sri Lanka's tea export supply chain to Finland. Sri Lanka might focus on tackling these factors to increase its market share and maintain its status as a prominent participant in the global tea industry.

An essential factor to consider is the dynamic character of international trade, which encompasses shifts in consumer preferences, regulatory frameworks, and technical progress. According to Sutha, and Rapis (2023); the tea market globally is experiencing significant changes that require flexibility and strategic improvements in the supply chain. Failure to address these trends may result in lower market share and missed opportunities for Sri Lankan tea exporters.

Additionally, the distinct criteria and preferences of the Finnish market pose a distinctive array of obstacles. Understanding the complexities of Finnish consumer behaviour, market rules, and quality standards is essential for successfully exporting tea. The study conducted by Antikainen et al. (2018) underscores the need to align export tactics with the target market's preferences while also emphasizing the consequences of overlooking this alignment.

Logistical inefficiencies, which can result in bottlenecks in shipping, warehousing, and delivery, worsen the issue. Poorly optimized supply chain management might result in increased costs and longer lead times, reducing the competitive advantage of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market. Addressing these logistical problems is vital, as indicated in the research by Wambas,et al, (2022),which underlines the need for efficient logistics for successful international trade.

This paper seeks to examine the complexities of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland by identifying the primary challenges in the supply chain and suggesting options for improvement. To overcome these challenges, Sri Lanka may tap into the complete potential of its tea industry in the Finnish market, ensuring consistent expansion and competitiveness on the global stage.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this study was to set out to conduct a full comparative analysis of the export supply chains related to the shipment of Sri Lankan tea to Finland. The study aims to identify primary challenges and inefficiencies in the supply chain by analysing factors such as logistical procedures, regulatory adherence, and market dynamics. The research aims to propose strategic optimizations that improve the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland by understanding these challenges (Wambas, et al, 2022). This analysis offers practical and valuable insights to stakeholders, policymakers, and industry participants to promote continuous growth and prosperity in the global tea trade.

Below are the research questions:

What are the primary challenges faced by Sri Lankan tea exporters in their supply chain to Finland?

How do these identified challenges affect the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

1.3 Demarcations

This study specifically examines the export supply chains of Sri Lankan tea to Finland, focusing on addressing challenges and identifying opportunities for improvement in this bilateral trade relationship. The research will study the operational processes, compliance with regulations, and market dynamics relevant to the export of tea. The demarcations limit the scope of analysis of Sri Lanka's overall trade practices or other export sectors. The objective is to offer a focused analysis of the difficulties the tea industry encounters when dealing with the Finnish market, enabling precise suggestions to improve the supply chain and boost the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. The study excludes what is not in the scope.

2 Theory

2.1 Historical perspective

The tea industry in Sri Lanka has a significant historical background that dates back to the 19th century. It was the British colonial rulers who introduced commercial tea cultivation in the country. This historical progression established the foundation for what has evolved into a crucial sector of Sri Lanka's economy. Throughout the years, the tea industry has undergone substantial changes, gaining global acclaim for the excellence and variety of its tea offerings.

The historical trade connections between Sri Lanka and Finland have a significant impact on the current export dynamics, especially regarding the trade of tea. Sri Lanka has traditionally exported tea to countries with historical connections, such as the United Kingdom. By exploring opportunities in newer markets such as Finland, there is the potential for diversification and growth.

The World Trade Organization reports that Sri Lanka's tea exports have experienced consistent growth over time, penetrating major global markets. Finland's discerning consumer base and increasing interest in specialty teas present a favourable market for exporting Sri Lankan tea. Gaining knowledge about the historical backdrop of trade relations between the two nations can offer valuable perspectives on market preferences, regulatory structures, and possible obstacles to entering the market.

Furthermore, it is crucial to analyse the comparative advantages and market trends in both Sri Lanka and Finland in order to improve export supply chains. Various factors, including the implementation of sustainable practices, advancements in packaging, and consumer preferences for organic or fair-trade products, can impact the level of competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market.

Ultimately, an in-depth analysis of past trade connections and market dynamics is essential for improving the export supply chains between Sri Lanka and Finland, specifically in relation to the exportation of tea. Through utilizing previous relationships and understanding market preferences, individuals involved can formulate tactics to take advantage of prospects and stimulate enduring development in bilateral trade. (WTO, 2021).

2.2 International Trade Theories

2.2.1 Importance of Delivery Services in Export Supply Chains

The extract emphasizes the crucial role of delivery services in the broader scope of customer service. Optimizing delivery services to enhance exports is crucial when improving export supply chains. Storhagen (2018) discusses a range of delivery service dimensions. These include, but are not limited to, stock availability, delivery time, delivery reliability, and delivery accuracy. Furthermore, the discussion delves into additional service components like information exchange, customization, environmentally sustainable decisions, and flexibility.

The efficiency and efficacy of delivery services are essential to sustain competitiveness and meet customer demands when exporting goods. Ensuring stock availability is crucial for rapidly meeting demand. Timely delivery and reliability are crucial in ensuring that the tea is delivered to Finnish consumers within agreed-upon deadlines, given the product's perishable nature and customer preference for freshness. (Storhagen, 2018).

Delivery accuracy is crucial for customer satisfaction since product quality or quantity discrepancies can damage confidence and reputation. This corresponds with the excerpt's focus on achieving customer expectations by providing the correct product in the appropriate quantity and at the designated time. (Storhagen, 2018).

The passage by Storhagen (2018) emphasizes the significance of peripheral services, such as packaging, documentation, and delivery notice, in offering competitive advantages. Exporters can distinguish their products in the market and improve customer experience and loyalty by providing additional services outside the primary delivery role.

In addition, the customization discussion by Storhagen (2018) emphasizes the necessity for delivery services to be adaptable to meet their customers' diverse preferences and needs. Implementing customer-focused strategies, like production based on client orders and customized delivery choices, can improve satisfaction and foster lasting relationships with customers.

In the context of improving export supply chains, the extract's insights suggest several strategic optimizations for exporters:

Focus on Core Service Elements: Exporters should focus on fundamental delivery service components such as stock availability, delivery time, and reliability to satisfy customer expectations properly (Storhagen, 2018).

Invest in peripheral services: Investment in terminal services such as packaging innovation, efficient documentation processes, and real-time delivery tracking can improve the perceived value of exports in the market.

Embrace Information Exchange: Creating strong communication channels with clients to share information about product availability, delivery timelines, and order status helps enhance transparency and trust.

Customization and Flexibility: Providing personalized delivery choices and showing adaptability to consumer preferences helps meet various market needs and enhance buyer-supplier connections.

Continuous Improvement: Continuously assessing and improving delivery service procedures according to customer input and market trends is crucial to remaining competitive and adjusting to changing consumer demands.

By integrating strategic improvements into their export supply chains, exporters can improve their products' efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall competitiveness in the global market, ensuring sustained growth and prosperity in international trade.

2.2.2 Role of Lead Time Analysis and Freight Forwarders in Supply Chain Management

Lead time analysis and the involvement of freight forwarders are crucial in enhancing supply chain efficiency and ensuring prompt delivery of goods in the delivery services sector. Lead time analysis is a crucial component of supply chain management that focuses on evaluating and improving the duration needed to complete an order from placement to delivery to the

customer. This analysis aids in identifying challenges, optimizing procedures, and improving customer satisfaction by reducing delivery times (Chopra & Meindl, 2021).

Freight forwarders are essential to enabling global trade by overseeing the transportation and logistical components of moving products between locations. They coordinate shipments, organize transportation methods, manage customs clearance, and offer documentation services (Rodrigue et al., 2020). Freight forwarders use their networks and experience to improve routes, combine cargo, and negotiate advantageous conditions with carriers to lower prices and transit times for their clients (Bichou, 2012).

2.2.3 Strategic Optimizations for Export Supply Chains

Theories like transaction cost economics and the resource-based approach offer valuable perspectives on the strategic significance of outsourcing logistics operations to freight forwarders. Outsourcing these operations allows enterprises to focus on their primary strengths while using freight forwarders' specific expertise and effectiveness (Mentzer et al., 2001). The Uppsala model highlights the step-by-step global growth of companies. Collaborating with seasoned freight forwarders might help enter new markets by reducing risks and offering knowledge of the local market (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009).

In export promotion, the lead-time theory has considerable relevance. The time it takes from placing an order to delivery, known as lead time, directly impacts customer satisfaction and supply chain efficiency. Adequate lead-time management ensures punctual product delivery to international markets, meeting customer expectations for freshness and dependability. Optimizing lead times through efficient transportation and inventory management may improve exporters' competitiveness and successfully meet market demands (Chopra & Meindl, 2021). Prioritizing strategies to reduce lead time is essential for success in the competitive global market.

Freight forwarding is crucial to optimizing Sri Lankan exports by facilitating smooth transit and delivery of products. Freight forwarders specialize in handling the intricate logistics of global trade, such as organizing cargo, selecting transportation methods, and dealing with customs rules (Rodrigue et al., 2020). Freight forwarders use their knowledge and global connections to streamline the transportation of tea products across borders, reducing transit

times and improving the dependability of the supply chain. Freight forwarders can provide extra services, including cargo consolidation, document support, and tracking features, improving customer satisfaction and operational efficiency (Bichou, 2012). Collaborating with experienced freight forwarding companies helps exporters tackle logistical barriers, improve transit efficiency, and strengthen their competitive advantage in the Finnish market. Integrating freight forwarding services into supply chain strategy is crucial for success in global trade.

In conclusion, using theories like lead time analysis and considering freight forwarders' strategic role can improve supply chain management. This can enhance delivery services, optimize lead times, and boost supply chain performance. Ultimately, this can contribute to the competitiveness and success of businesses in the global marketplace.

2.3 Concepts and Models

2.3.1 Logistical procedures

Originating from Toyota's manufacturing practices, the Just-In-Time (JIT) principle emphasizes the minimization of inventory while increasing the efficiency of production and distribution. Implementing JIT principles in the transportation and warehousing of Sri Lankan tea can result in substantial enhancements in operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Caldera, et al, 2019). Sri Lankan exporters can optimize their tea production by aligning it with transportation schedules and warehouse operations. This strategic synchronization allows them to decrease lead times, minimize storage expenses, and enhance their ability to adapt to changing demand in the global market.

Although JIT principles present compelling advantages, their implementation in the transportation and warehousing of perishable goods such as tea poses challenges. Seasonal variations influence tea production, and variations in weather conditions have the potential to affect crop yield (Gunathilaka, et al., 2017). The variability in this context poses difficulties in synchronizing production schedules with transportation and warehousing operations, which may result in disruptions within supply chains.

Furthermore, the dependence on JIT delivery may raise susceptibility to transportation delays or logistical barriers, particularly on global trade routes. The geographical distance between Sri Lanka and central tea-importing countries, such as Finland, poses a risk to the timely delivery of tea shipments due to potential transportation disruptions caused by factors like adverse weather conditions or congestion at ports.

The principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) centre around the on-going enhancement of quality and the contentment of customers by incorporating quality control measures across the entire supply chain. Implementing TQM principles in the Sri Lankan tea export industry can improve the quality of the logistical processes involved in transporting tea from the farms to the market (Elvina, et al., 2022). To ensure the highest quality of tea shipments throughout the supply chain, Sri Lankan exporters can implement strict quality assurance protocols, which include thorough inspection, adherence to packaging standards, and maintaining hygiene practices during transportation.

Moreover, TQM principles prioritize the significance of employee training and empowerment in facilitating quality enhancements. Sri Lankan exporters can foster a culture of quality awareness and ongoing improvement within their organizations by allocating resources to training initiatives for transportation and warehouse staff (Modgil, and Sharma, 2017). Implementing this comprehensive strategy for quality management not only increases the perceived worth of Sri Lankan tea in global markets but also reinforces the competitiveness of its export distribution networks.

In conclusion, although JIT principles present prospects for improving efficiency in the transportation and warehousing of Sri Lankan tea, their application must consider the challenges arising from the perishable nature of the product and the intricacies of international trade logistics. By combining JIT practices with robust TQM principles, Sri Lankan exporters can enhance their supply chains to consistently and competitively deliver premium tea products to global markets.

2.3.2 Regulatory adherence

Compliance with market regulations is of utmost importance for Sri Lankan exporters who aim to enter the Finnish market successfully. Analysing compliance models can assist

exporters in navigating the intricate regulatory environment and guaranteeing conformity to Finnish standards. An example of such a model is the Regulatory Compliance Management (RCM) framework, which entails the methodical identification, evaluation, and control of regulatory obligations (Kasperson et al., 2015). Through the application of RCM principles, Sri Lankan exporters can establish resilient procedures for monitoring and resolving regulatory compliance issues in different areas of their operations, ranging from product labelling to import documentation.

An alternative compliance model that exporters can contemplate is the Risk-Based Compliance Management (RBCM) approach. This model employs a prioritization strategy that allocates resources according to the degree of regulatory risk. This enables exporters to concentrate their efforts on areas that have the most significant susceptibility to non-compliance (Akbari, & McClelland, 2020). To enhance their compliance with Finnish market regulations, Sri Lankan exporters can improve their efficiency by conducting risk assessments and implementing specific mitigation measures.

The theory of institutional isomorphism offers insights into how Sri Lankan exporters imitate regulatory frameworks in the Finnish market in order to ensure compliance. Based on this theory, organizations tend to adopt the practices and norms of their institutional environment in order to establish legitimacy and gain acceptance (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Sri Lankan tea exporters can adopt Finnish regulations regarding food hygiene, packaging standards, and environmental sustainability when exporting tea to Finland in order to meet local requirements and expectations.

To enhance their competitiveness and minimize the risk of regulatory non-compliance, Sri Lankan exporters can adapt their compliance strategies to the institutional context of the Finnish market. According to Delmas & Montiel (2009), this strategy entails not only adhering to regulatory standards but also demonstrating a dedication to ethical business conduct and social responsibility.

In summary, the assessment of compliance models and the utilization of institutional isomorphism can assist Sri Lankan exporters in effectively managing regulatory barriers and ensuring adherence to Finnish market regulations. To achieve sustainable growth in the

Finnish tea market, exporters can improve their market access and reputation by implementing proactive compliance strategies and adhering to local regulatory frameworks.

3 Method

3.1 Choice of Method

The research undertaken is qualitative. The research design employed in this study, which utilizes interviews, entails a rigorous methodology to uncover profound understandings of human experiences, perceptions, and behaviours. The one-on-one interviews have been chosen because of the flexibility it provides to adapt to the questions and to converse within a flow based on the response of the participants. The flexibility allows a flow of conversation which leads to insight on the subject (Saunders et al, 2018). With interviews the participants find it easy to express themselves. The interviews are done within a supportive environment where the participants can express themselves freely without any interruption.

3.2 Respondents

3.2.1 Population

The research "Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Exports to Finland for Tea" encompasses the entire population of Sri Lankan tea exporters who provide tea to Finland. Both major tea producers and smaller exporters are included, serving as the foundation for comparative analysis (Bryman, 2016).

3.2.2 Sample Size

Considering the precise nature of the research subject and the requirement for comprehensive analysis, it is justifiable to employ a sample size that is moderate to large. Ensuring a sample size that sufficiently encompasses diverse stakeholders involved in Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland is crucial for obtaining robust findings and comprehensive insights into the supply chain dynamics. Bryman (2016) states that the sample comprises five large-scale tea producers and five smaller exporters.

3.3 Sampling method

Implementing purposive sampling enables the deliberate selection of participants with pertinent knowledge and experience in the Sri Lankan tea export industry to Finland. This approach ensures the sample includes important individuals involved in tea production, exporting, logistics, and policy-making. This allows for a thorough understanding of export supply chains and facilitates significant comparisons (Flick, 2011).

3.4 Research Approach

To conceptualize this design, Saunders et al. (2018) proposed the metaphor of a "research onion," which illustrates the intricate layers involved in the research process.

The philosophical stance, located at the outer layer of the research onion, serves as a guiding principle for the researcher's worldview and approach to inquiry. Interpretivism is often used as a foundational framework in qualitative research, emphasizing that reality is subjective and socially constructed. This perspective motivates researchers to delve into individuals' distinct viewpoints by conducting interviews (Bryman, 2016).

According to Bryman (2016); the qualitative research provides a in depth focus understanding of the subject that is presented descriptively. Hence, the qualitative research aims at uncovering the complexities and nuances of a social phenomenon.

The next step entails the selection of a research strategy. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative interviews are congruent with a phenomenological or ethnographic methodology that prioritizes understanding lived experiences or cultural phenomena.

Decisions about sampling, data collection, and analysis approaches are made within the methodological layer. The purposive sampling method can be used to choose participants who can offer valuable and pertinent insights. On the other hand, techniques like thematic analysis or narrative inquiry can be used to interpret the data collected from interviews (Guest et al., 2012).

The innermost layer specifically addresses practical factors such as time, resources, and ethical considerations, which are crucial for ensuring the feasibility and integrity of the study (Silverman, 2016).

In summary, the research design used in qualitative research that uses interviews involves carefully looking into all the different parts of the research onion, including the philosophical foundations and real-world applications, in order to gain a deeper understanding of complex human phenomena.

3.5 Analysis of Data

According to Silverman (2012); the data that has been collected through interviews is analysed through the identification of patterns and themes. This method is commonly known as a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis identifies the themes and patterns within the interview transcript. Then the data that is collected is coded, categorized according to the common responses received, therein the researcher explores the relationship between these themes.

3.6 Validity and reliability

The study "Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Exports to Finland for Tea" must prioritize validity and reliability to ensure its trustworthiness and credibility. (Saunders et al, 2018).

3.6.1 Validity

The study's validity is enhanced by the implementation of rigorous methodologies that measure the intended constructs or variables under study accurately. Triangulation in data collection, which involves conducting interviews with exporters, and analysing industry reports, improves the credibility of the findings by confirming them from various perspectives. Furthermore, the utilization of well-established qualitative research methodologies such as thematic analysis ensures that the interpretations of the data effectively capture the intricacies inherent in the Sri Lankan tea export supply chains to Finland. (Saunders et al, 2018).

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability pertains to the capacity of research findings to be consistently reproduced. In order to improve the dependability of the study, it utilizes methodical procedures for collecting and analysing data, following a predetermined research protocol. Comprehensive documentation of research methodologies and clear dissemination of findings facilitate the replication of the study by other scholars, thereby enhancing the dependability of the outcomes about the dynamics of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. (Saunders et al, 2018).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Research efforts, especially studies like "Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Exports to Finland for Tea," emphasize ethical considerations. Several ethical principles that aim to uphold the study's integrity and protect participants' rights are the foundation for this research. Primarily, engagement in the research is completely optional, highlighting individuals' independence to decide whether or not to participate without encountering any consequences. This guarantees that participants will willingly participate in the study, free from coercion or pressure (Saunders et al, 2018).

The study upholds the fundamental ethical principles of privacy. This protective measure not only upholds participants' privacy but also cultivates an environment characterized by trust and confidentiality (Silverman, 2012).

Additionally, strict adherence to confidentiality is maintained, ensuring that all gathered information is handled with the highest level of confidentiality. Access to the data will be restricted to researchers who are directly involved in the study, and rigorous measures will be put in place to prevent unauthorized access or dissemination of information. The data will be stored on servers that adhere to GDPR, thus ensuring protection against potential breaches or misuse (Bryman, 2016).

Aside from ensuring the protection of participants' rights throughout the study, ethical considerations are also considered for future implications. The collected data will be securely stored on servers to facilitate potential future utilization in future research or comparisons. However, even in these forthcoming undertakings, the confidentiality of participants will be upheld (Bryman, 2016). Adopting this ethical framework ensures the well-being and

entitlements of the individuals involved. It maintains the credibility and soundness of the research procedure, ultimately contributing to the progression of knowledge within the respective domain.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

The export of Sri Lankan tea to Finland is an essential aspect of the global tea trade. It enhances the country's economy and status as an international manufacturer of quality and premium tea. However, the process of tea exporters' travel along the supply chain from Sri Lanka to Finland is faced with various difficulties. Indeed, there is a need to understand and solve the challenges faced from the point of view of the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and competitiveness aspects of the process for successful tea exports to the Finnish market. This research seeks to evaluate the challenges facing the direct export of Sri Lankan tea to Finland in terms of identifying barriers and evaluating the direct costs and challenges faced by Sri Lankan tea exporters in the Finnish tea market. All the entities and stakeholders in the tea industry will acquire several skills or tactics that will help overcome the challenges and improve the tea export seasonal process in Finland.

The responses furnished by different managers regarding the main challenges that Sri Lankan Tea Exporters face in their Supply Chain towards Finland have common themes, each with some subtle differences.

All the supply chain respondents pointed to logistical issues such as distance, customs procedures, and regulatory compliance as major hindrances. This underlines a particular need for compliance with Finnish import regulations and EU standards relating to documentation and labelling requirements. Further seen as forces impacting the efficiency of exports were market factors like consumer preferences and competitiveness.

With all these commonalities noted, there was some difference in emphasis and detail in the responses. For example, Regina Gomez and Anuradha Samarasinghe, specifically emphasize the importance of technology integration or partnerships with logistics providers in addressing these challenges. The respondents, Rohan Wijeratne and Suresh Silva, emphasize

that strategic planning and effective adaptation are the only ways to overcome these inefficiencies.

Furthermore, some of the responses like that of Priya Fernando tend to blame the administrative burden and bureaucratic delays, whereas others highlight points out the effect of cost and transit time. In these responses, ways to reduce these challenges vary a bit, from advice on optimizing transport routes and investing in technology to maintaining effective communication with regulatory authorities and distributors.

Generally, the 10 respondents concurred that logistic challenges, transportation costs, and customs procedures, among others, impede efficiency through delays and increased operational costs. Regulatory barriers and compliance requirements add to the cost burden and hamper cost-effectiveness, both by elevating expenses and potentially causing delays in the clearing process.

Market dynamics brought on by consumer preferences and competition were also recognized as affecting competitiveness by respondents like Rohan Wijeratne. The influence of the dynamics of changing consumer tastes and preferences, besides competitive pricing strategies, impacts the demand for Sri Lankan tea within the price structure set in the Finnish market.

However, there are differences in emphasis across responses. For instance, some respondents like Anuradha Samarasinghe emphasize the importance of proactive measures such as supply chain optimization and product differentiation for competitiveness, while others like Kamal Fernando focus on strategic partnerships and quality assurance measures. Building on these, while most responses like that of Priyantha De Silva and Devika Rajapakse refer to the challenge primarily being transport cost and regulation compliance, others like Rohan Wijeratne and Suresh Silva refer to the currency fluctuation as part of what drives competitiveness.

At the same time, the answers to questions regarding the market dynamics affecting exports of Sri Lankan tea into Finland bring forth some common facts, such as consumer tastes, tastes of competitors in other tea-producing countries, or even alternative beverages. Economic

aspects include the exchange rate and consumer income level, and, finally, changing trends by the consumer in its health and wellness aspects.

All the 10 respondents unanimously agreed to the fact that the rise in consumer demand for quality products sourced in sustainable ways is one of the main factors affecting the rate of success in export. Competition from other tea-producing countries and the availability of substitute beverages like coffee pose another challenge, effecting Sri Lankan tea's market share and pricing. Certain economic factors like exchange rates and income levels are also accounted as vital reasons in influencing market demand and purchasing power of the consumers.

However, there are some differences in emphasis and detail among responses. While some respondents like Dilshan Perera focus on consumer preferences and competition, others like Kamal Fernando delve deeper into economic factors and changing consumer trends related to health and wellness. However, all the 10 respondents stress the need of understanding and adapting to these market dynamics in order to achieve success in the Finnish tea industry.

The similarity drawn from the responses on the fourth question, in relation to the effect posed by the identified challenges on the general effectiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland, is that they reveal parallels and, at the same time, differences in emphasis. Indeed, all the 10 respondents agreed that regulatory barriers and logistics challenges have disastrous impacts on the efficiency of exports. They indicated that a problem relating to regulatory obstacles, administrative burdens, and papers had caused the delay in the export process. Moreover, the obstacles to achieving operational efficiency include challenges related to transport costs, customs procedures, and market dynamics.

Nevertheless, there are variations in the level of intricacy and concentration among the given solutions. Regina Gomez emphasizes a holistic solution that would remove the obstacles in regulation, logistics, and the market. Anuradha Samarasinghe focuses on the implications of resource and risk-related losses on supply chain agility, which accrues from regulatory complexity. Nimal Perera has underscored the impact of both transportation costs and customs procedures on operational efficiency. Devika Rajapakse focuses on the fact that regulatory requirements and market dynamics bring to bear on the company issues of competition and consumer preferences.

The responses to question five on the strategies to mitigate the challenges in the tea export supply chain to Finland reflect the optimization of transport routes, enhancement of communication and cooperation with partners, and tracking through investment in technology. All these point to the optimization of the transportation routes so that costs and efficiency are reduced. Strong communication and operational collaboration with the ship partners was another area pointed out with emphasis and would ensure that the operations do not remain choppy. Besides, the emphasis is placed on investment in technology through all the responses to improve the levels of tracking and monitoring capabilities up and down the supply chain.

However, distinctions are observed in the level of detail conveyed and the emphasis placed on certain strategies. Priya Fernando and Nimal Perera state of both collaboration with shipping partners and technological investments, while Devika Rajapakse emphasizes more on the optimization of transport routes and communication. In summary, Suresh Silva, therefore, reiterates the strategies to optimize transportation routes, communicate with partners, and adopt technology.

In the responses to question 6 on how logistical challenges affect the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to the Finnish market, common themes included higher transportation costs, long transit times, and complex customs procedures. According to the respondents, logistical challenges are one factor that plays a critical role in highly inhibiting the efficiency of tea exports. Nimal Perera and Devika Rajapakse both say that the increased transportation costs and the distance between Sri Lanka and Finland have affected the efficiency of the Finnish production plant. Other than that, Suresh Silva and Priya Fernando also add that the customs procedures are cumbersome in terms of the impact on timely delivery, while the regulatory requirement relates to operation efficiency.

Nevertheless, variations in emphasis and level of specificity can be observed in the responses. Nimal Perera emphasizes the necessity of adhering to quality standards in transit with the goal of maintaining a strong urge for consumer satisfaction in Finland and thereby competitiveness. Devika Rajapakse focuses on the need to address quality aspects of the tea during the delivery process to prevent consumers from getting dissatisfied. Both Suresh Silva and Priya Fernando emphasize negotiating the logistic challenges to have the tea exports

done effectively in the Finnish market, with Priya placing more emphasis on workout issues related to regulatory compliances.

The common theme in the responses to the seventh question on the influence of regulatory barriers on cost-effectiveness in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland is that more frequent testing, certification, and documentation need to be carried out for them to meet the import regulations and standards. Nimal Perera, Devika Rajapakse, and Suresh Silva underscore the increased operational costs that result from regulatory compliance. The operation costs will include additional documentation, testing, and certification. It also states that the delays in customs clearance due to regulatory scrutiny are among the reasons for the charges for storage and demurrage. Furthermore, redesigning the product and packaging to conform to the labelling and packaging requirements will increase the cost of production.

However, differences in intensity or emphasis placed by the response may exist. While Devika Rajapakse concentrates on the general exacerbation of export costs caused by regulatory barriers, Nimal Perera provides specific examples of regulatory requirements and their cost implications. Suresh Silva emphasizes the importance of understanding and mitigating regulatory barriers for cost-effectiveness.

On the other hand, Regina Gomez points out the overhead administration and customs clearance delays due to regulatory issues. She goes on to allude to the tariff structures and trade agreements and how they affect the landed cost of tea in the Finnish market.

Responses to the eighth question of the effects of market dynamics on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market seem to revolve around key points such as consumer preferences, competition from other tea-producing countries, and economic factors like exchange rates and the level of income.

Further expounded by Nimal Perera, Devika Rajapakse, Suresh Silva, Priya Fernando, and Dilshan Perera are consumer preferences, which serve as an impetus factor that changes demand for quality, sustainably sourced products, thereby affecting the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea. They also recognize the effect of competition from other tea-producing countries and substitute beverages like coffee on market share and pricing strategies. Furthermore, economic factors such as exchange rates and income levels have been realized to be factors that affect the purchasing power of competitiveness.

Nevertheless, these responses hold different emphasis. Nimal Perera goes deep into the essence of specific consumer preferences and economic factors. Devika Rajapakse goes on to emphasize that understanding market dynamics is paramount. Both Suresh Silva and Priya Fernando emphasized the need to adjust to the changing trends among consumers, particularly their health and wellness. Dilshan Perera too agrees with these sentiments and identifies that, more importantly, market dynamics need to be understood and adapted to for the sake of being competitive.

The ninth question further develops the responses to the challenges met in the export supply chain to Finland and their potential impacts on the cost-related challenges. Major factors identified by Nimal Perera, Suresh Silva, Devika Rajapakse, Priya Fernando, and Dilshan Perera that contribute to major challenges by affecting the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland include transportation costs, regulatory compliance expenses, and currency fluctuations. They stress that the wide distance that separates Sri Lanka from Finland is a higher component of transportation costs, while observing Finnish and EU regulations strictly increases operational costs. Moreover, currency fluctuations had a direct impact on pricing competitiveness.

Nevertheless, variations in emphasis and level of detail can be observed in the responses. Nimal Perera goes on to detail the cost details and cost component specifics with their implications for competitiveness. Suresh Silva laid more emphasis on the fact that the cumulative nature of different challenges affects the overall costs of Sri Lankan tea exports. Devika Rajapakse and Priya Fernando underscore the general aspect of the impact of these challenges on competitiveness in the market. Dilshan Perera goes on to emphasize the combined effect of many factors on cost overall and competitiveness.

Respondents to this question in their majority underscore proactive measures that can be considered instrumental in enhancing the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market. Nimal Perera points out the understanding of Finnish consumer preferences and the steady, uninterrupted delivery of high-quality tea products. With this, the brand's investments and marketing seek to increase brand recognition and awareness within the market, while optimization in supply chains will help cut costs and bring faster deliveries.

Priya Fernando highlighted efforts aimed at having their supply chains optimally running, ensuring regulatory compliance, and ensuring the reliability of products through quality assurance processes. Market research informs strategic product positioning to align with consumer preferences and boost competitiveness.

Suresh Silva defines streamlining the supply chain for efficiency, improvement of product quality based on Finnish preferences, and investment in marketing efforts to expose the brand. Continuous monitoring of the market allows the company to make quick changes to remain competitive.

All the responses focus on the optimization of the supply chain to ensure the provision of quality products and knowledge of consumer preference, but they differ in the approach used, where some emphasize branding and marketing while others point to market tracking with a view to improved competitiveness.

Table 1: Summary of Findings

Name	Findings
Regina Gomez	Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland entails logistical challenges such as transportation complexities, regulatory compliance, and market dynamics. Mitigation strategies include strong partnerships and technological investments.
Anuradha Samarasinghe	Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland face logistical hurdles, regulatory compliance, and market dynamics. Strategies to mitigate challenges include optimizing supply chains and investing in technology for traceability and compliance.
Rohan Wijeratne	Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland encounters logistical challenges, regulatory hurdles, and market dynamics. Mitigation strategies involve optimizing the supply chain, investing in technology, and maintaining regulatory compliance.
Dilshan Perera	Exportation of Sri Lankan tea to Finland faces logistical challenges including high transportation costs, regulatory compliance, and market dynamics. Mitigation strategies involve optimizing transport routes and enhancing regulatory compliance.
Priya Fernando	Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland encounters logistical challenges such as transportation costs and regulatory compliance. Strategies to mitigate challenges include optimizing transportation routes and strengthening regulatory compliance.
Suresh Silva	Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland involves logistical challenges like transportation costs and regulatory compliance. Proactive measures include optimizing supply chains and improving product quality according to Finnish preferences.
Devika Rajapakse	Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland involves logistical challenges such as high transportation costs, regulatory compliance, and market dynamics. Mitigation strategies include optimizing transport routes and enhancing regulatory compliance.
Nimal Perera	Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland faces logistical challenges like high transportation costs and complex customs procedures. Proactive measures include optimizing supply chains and investing in branding and marketing to enhance competitiveness in the Finnish market.
Kamal Fernando	Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland entails logistical challenges like transportation costs, regulatory compliance, and market dynamics. Strategies for mitigation include optimizing supply chains, investing in technology for

Name	Findings
	traceability, and fostering partnerships.
Priyantha De Silva	Challenges in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland include logistical hurdles, regulatory compliance, and market dynamics. To address these, strategies include optimizing supply chains, investing in technology, and prioritizing product quality and differentiation.

5 Discussion

The "Discussion of Results" section analyses the findings by relating different segments of the research. Comparison with highlights is done for the factors and data looked at in the previous sections to show their similarities and differences. Results are also laid within the frame of previous studies, and the changes are discussed in light of their developmental implications. Explanation of the relationships between the variables and the implications of their impact on each other. The theoretical framework in detail demonstrates its relevance for the analysis of the results. This discussion sets the groundwork for drawing conclusions.

The "Discussion of Method" section focuses on the effectiveness of the method for the research chosen. It reflects how the method was undertaken, the challenges that were associated with it, and the level of cooperation from those respondents. The suitability of the selected approach is evaluated, taking into account whether alternative ways may have produced better results.

5.1 Discussion of results

The responses of a diverse cadre of managers shed light on the various dimensional problems that a Sri Lankan tea exporter has been facing in their supply chain to Finland. Common themes across the responses included logistical hiccups, regulatory barriers, and market dynamics. All this put together means that the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea are very high among Finnish market.

However, high transportation costs and bureaucratic customs procedures are clear examples of logistic challenges that are widely quoted as highly prohibitive. Regulatory hurdles often present these challenges, leading to delays and additional operational costs. Among these are

the market dynamics of consumer preferences and competitiveness, which highly shape the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea.

While there is consensus that generic overall challenges exist, there are variations in emphasis and detail in the responses: technology integration and strategic partnerships are some of the points highlighted by some managers, while others indicate importance towards strategic planning and adaptation. Moreover, differences are also noted in the explanation of specific cost components narrated in adequate detail with proper emphasis and the strategies to mitigate them.

The responses from the interview highlighted the very complex challenges that confront Sri Lankan tea exporters in the Finnish market, and further strengthening competitiveness would require very proactive measures. In addition, this will help Sri Lankan tea exporters face these challenges and protect their presence in the extremely competitive Finnish tea market.

When these data are compared with the responses of the respondents, it raises quite an interesting parallel and discrepancy with the theoretical frameworks that have been alluded to in Chapter 2. The discussion is based on the historical perspective of the tea industry in Sri Lanka and its trade relations with Finland, with a foundational background to be laid with respect to export dynamics. This historical background underpins the significance of understanding market preferences and regulatory structures (WTO, 2021).

The managers' responses seem to align within theories such as international trade theories; they underscore the role played by delivery services and lead time analysis in enhancing export logistics chain performance (Storhagen, 2018; Chopra & Meindl, 2021). For example, the one on route optimization of transportation and ensuring that the goods reach the customer in time speaks to the principles of delivery service optimization, and the other mentioned in the theoretical framework is managing lead time.

Further, the discussion of regulatory adherence resonates well with ideas of regulatory compliance management and institutional isomorphism (Kasperson et al., 2015; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This signals the manager's ability to respond to the institutional context of the export destination, whereby they must comply with Finland's import regulations and standards.

However, there are also discrepancies between respondents' answers and thematical frameworks. The theoretical framework provides a detailed understanding of strategic optimizations for export supply chains; but some respondents' answers lacked depth in discussing specific strategies (Storhagen, 2018; Chopra & Meindl, 2021). In addition, the theoretical framework highlights the challenges posed by perishable goods and international trade. They are not clearly mentioned in the answers of the respondents.

Differences in respondents' answers may stem from differences in their roles, perspectives and experiences within the tea export industry. For example, product managers like Nimal Perera may focus more on operational challenges and strategies. Furthermore, quality assurance managers like Priya Fernando may prioritize regulatory compliance and product quality.

The respondents' answers provide valuable information into the challenges and strategies within the tea export supply chain. These answers integrating thematical frameworks provides a more holistic understanding; they suggest additional avenues for strategic optimization and improvement.

5.2 Discussion of method

Several of the effective approaches helped Finland to gain a deeper understanding of their supply chains: data collection, the method chosen for qualitative interviews, the experiences, perceptions and behaviors of Sri Lankan tea exporters. The flexibility of interviews allowed for dynamic conversations; it fostered a supportive environment for participants to express themselves freely, facilitating the collection of rich data (Saunders et al., 2018). However, challenges were encountered. Challenges include scheduling interviews with busy participants and ensuring broad coverage of the research topic.

The structure of the questions in the interview guide could be structured better for one to elicit clearer questions and probably, in effect, get more detailed answers. Including follow-up interviews can provide more nuanced insights; they delve into specific topics. Despite these potential improvements, the chosen method was suitable for retrieval purposes; it allowed for an in-depth exploration of export supply chain dynamics.

Qualitative interviews are ideal for capturing detailed insights; but alternative methods such as focus groups or surveys can offer complementary perspectives and quantitative data. Integrating multiple methods can enrich research findings; it can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Bryman, 2016). However, given the nuanced nature of the research topic and the need for in-depth exploration; it remains the preferred method of qualitative interviews.

Generally, the qualitative interview method chosen has posed minor challenges; but exports facilitated a deeper exploration of supply chain dynamics. Future studies, if anything, could deepen and broaden the kind of insights brought forth here through careful planning and consideration of alternative methods. In the whole process of research, due precautions were taken at every step for the ethics of the protection of the participant's confidentiality, privacy, and, in general, integrity towards the research (Munhall, 1988).

6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to set out to conduct a full comparative analysis of the export supply chains related to the shipment of Sri Lankan tea to Finland. The research questions were:

What are the primary challenges faced by Sri Lankan tea exporters in their supply chain to Finland?

How do these identified challenges affect the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

Through this analysis, an attempt has been made to propose strategic optimizations for exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland; it includes efficiency, cost-effectiveness and overall competitiveness. The aim was to provide practical insights to stakeholders, policy makers and industry participants; it facilitates the growth of the global tea trade.

The study found that Sri Lankan tea exporters face several significant challenges in their supply chain to Finland in addressing the research questions; it included logistical challenges including transportation, warehousing, and distribution services. These challenges have a direct influence on the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the exports, and they have the

potential to bring about a hitch in the smooth flow of tea shipments to the market in Finland. The inefficiencies in the supply chain result from issues such as delays in transportation, inadequacy of the warehousing facilities, and unreliability of the delivery services, among other factors.

Further, regulatory compliance is a major challenge facing Sri Lankan tea exporters with respect to the standards of the Finnish market. Equally more, further barriers are noted through regulatory discrepancies, certification requirements, and delays in customs procedures, which have an adverse effect on the overall competitiveness of the tea in the Finnish market. In addition, failure to meet such regulatory requirements may result in rejections or, in fact, product delays, adding to the exporter's challenges.

From this finding, this indicates that some strategic optimizations have to be done towards the addressed challenges and improve efficiencies, cost-effectiveness, and the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. Improved logistics procedures with streamlined transportation and warehousing operations are essential to optimizing supply chain efficiency. In this regard, higher regulatory adherence, through the strictest compliance mechanism and hand-in-hand working with the regulatory authorities, becomes an imperative that must be followed in guaranteeing market access and competitiveness.

Furthermore, market-specific adaptations, including product customization and targeted marketing strategies, may serve to enable Sri Lankan tea exporters to derive more value from the preferences and demands made by the Finnish market. This will help the exporters improve efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and, consequently, their overall competitiveness in the Sri Lankan tea export to Finland. In general, it will lead to growth in the global tea trade through strategic optimizations.

6.1 Limitation of the study

The interview method of study is very useful in being able to give a deep insight into the problems that Sri Lankan tea suppliers face along their supply chain to Finland yet there are some shortcomings. One limitation is the reliance on qualitative data from interviews; it can introduce subjective bias and limits generalizability. Besides, the sample, even though moderate is inconclusive for it to represent all the diversities involved in the stakeholders of

Sri Lankan tea export. In addition, focusing on the Finnish market may also avoid issues that are peculiar to specific export destinations. Time was another limitation, where the researcher found it difficult to keep a work life balance, while doing the research. These limitations should be taken into account in interpreting the findings and recommending the action taken.

6.2 Suggestions for further studies

Suggestions for further studies considers the limitations and presents for further improvements that may be useful for other researchers. Firstly, integrating the quantitative data into the discussion of the challenges faced by Sri Lankan tea exporters could have made the study more holistic. Surveys or industry reports may provide statistical validation or complement the qualitative findings.

This sample will be more representative and valid should it be enlarged to include other categories of stakeholders within the research, such as importers, distributors, and government officials. This study may not have captured other challenges and perspectives on the subject under investigation.

Furthermore, broadening the scope beyond Finland to include other significant export markets for Sri Lankan tea and conducting a comparative analysis that would reveal the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different regions. Therefore, this approach will provide inferences based on the market-specific dynamics that are important in helping to tailor strategies towards attaining increased competitiveness in the diverse export destinations.

Finally, longitudinal studies that track the implementation and effects of suggested strategic improvements over time could be used to judge how well and how long-lasting these changes will be in export supply chains to help the global tea trade grow.

References

Akbari, M. &McClelland, R., (2020). Corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship in sustainable supply chain: a structured literature review. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 27(6), pp.1799-1841.

Alsaad, A., Mohamad, R. & Ismail, N.A., (2017). The moderating role of trust in business-to-business electronic commerce (B2B EC) adoption. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, pp.157-169.

Ariyawardana, A., & Bailey, W. (2011, August 26). The Relationship between Core Resources and Strategies of Firms: The Case of Sri Lankan Value-Added Tea Producers. *Sri Lankan Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 4(0), 1. <https://doi.org/10.4038/sjae.v4i0.3481>

Bichou, K. (2012). Logistics outsourcing and third-party logistics: A conceptual framework. In K. Bichou & P. Bell (Eds.), *Third-Party Logistics (3PL) Services* (pp. 3-17). Springer.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.

Caldera, H.T.S., Desha, C. & Dawes, L., (2019). Evaluating the enablers and barriers for successful implementation of sustainable business practice in 'lean'SMEs. *Journal of cleaner production*, 218, pp.575-590

Chopra, S., & Meindl, P. (2021). *Supply Chain Management: Strategy, Planning, and Operation*. Pearson.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.

Delmas, M. & Montiel, I., (2009). Greening the supply chain: when is customer pressure effective? *Journal of Economics & Management Strategy*, 18(1), pp.171-201.

DiMaggio, P.J. & Powell, W.W., (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American sociological review*, pp.147-160.

Elvina, E., Anggraeni, S., Sasongko, S.N. & Erlandian, A.Y., (2022). The Influence of Total Quality Management (TQM) on Quality Cost Efficiency and Managerial Performance and the Implications for Company Performance. *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IIJSE)*, 5(2), pp.459-480.

Guest, G., Namey, E., & Mitchell, M. (2012). *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research*. Sage Publications.

Gunathilaka, R.D., Smart, J.C. & Fleming, C.M., (2017). The impact of changing climate on perennial crops: The case of tea production in Sri Lanka. *Climatic Change*, 140, pp.577-592.

Islam, M. S., Hossain, M. E., Chakroborty, S., & Ema, N. S. (2021, November 16). Does the monetary policy have any short-run and long-run effect on economic growth? A developing and a developed country perspective. *Asian Journal of Economics and Banking*, 6(1), 26–49. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ajeb-02-2021-0014>

Johanson, J., & Vahlne, J. E. (2009). The Uppsala internationalization process model revisited: From liability of foreignness to liability of outsidership. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40(9), 1411-1431.

Kasperson, R.E., Renn, O., Slovic, P., Brown, H.S., Emel, J., Goble, R., Kasperson, J.X. & Ratick, S., (2015). The social amplification of risk: A conceptual framework. *Risk analysis*, 8(2), pp.177-187.

Mentzer, J. T., DeWitt, W., Keebler, J. S., Min, S., Nix, N. W., Smith, C. D., & Zacharia, Z. G. (2001). Defining supply chain management. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 22(2), 1-25.

Modgil, S. & Sharma, S., (2017). Linkage between total quality and supply chain management practices and operational performance: a review. *International Journal of Services and Operations Management*, 27(1), pp.35-69.

Porter, M.E., (2008). The five competitive forces that shape strategy. *Harvard business review*, 86(1), p.78.

Rodrigue, J. P., Comtois, C., & Slack, B. (2020). *The Geography of Transport Systems* (5th ed.). Routledge.

Sachithra, K.M.V., Sajeevi, G.A.C., Withanawasam, M.P.K. and Jayathilake, W.M.S.A., (2012). *Comparative advantage in international trade: a study based on leading exports in Sri Lanka*. <https://doi.org/10.4038/kjm.v1i2.6453>

Saunders, M. N., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2018). *Research methods for business students*. Pearson.

Storhagen, N.G., (2018) . *Logistik: grunder och möjligheter*. Liber ekonomi.

Sutha, R.J. and Rapis, D., (2023); *A Study of Tea of Export Marketing in Sri Lanka; Application of the BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP MATRIX*.

Wambas, W. O., Kirui, J. K., & Sang, J. (2022, October 31). Influence of Trade Union Affiliation on Organizational Performance of Selected Kenya Tea Development Authority Managed Tea Factories, Kenya. *The International Journal of Business & Management*. <https://doi.org/10.24940/theijbm/2022/v10/i10/bm2210-015>

Annexure

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

The Thesis

Title: Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Exports to Finland for Tea

Research Questions:

What are the primary challenges faced by Sri Lankan tea exporters in their supply chain to Finland?

How do these identified challenges affect the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

Thesis Statement:

This study aims to perform an extensive comparative examination of the export supply chains associated with Sri Lankan tea shipments to Finland. The primary objective is to identify challenges and inefficiencies in the supply chain by analyzing factors such as logistical procedures, regulatory adherence, and market dynamics. By understanding these challenges, the research aims to propose strategic optimizations that improve the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. The analysis offers practical insights to stakeholders, policymakers, and industry participants to foster growth in the global tea trade.

Historical Perspective:

Historical perspective is considered to have huge impacts via the historical trade connections that exist between Sri Lanka and Finland on the export dynamics as per the present context, especially relating to the export of tea. In fact, for example, the tea exports of Sri Lanka have spread to history-linked countries such as the United Kingdom (UK). By exploring opportunities in newer markets, such as Finland, there is potential for diversification and growth. The World Trade Organization (WTO) reports that Sri Lankan tea exports reported consistent growth. On the other hand, Finland is known to be one of the attractive markets, as Finnish consumers show increased interest in buying specialty tea.

International Trade Theories:

The importance of delivery services in export supply chains is emphasized, with a focus on optimizing stock availability, delivery time, reliability, accuracy, and additional service components like information exchange and customization. Strategic optimizations include focusing on core service elements, investing in peripheral services, embracing information exchange, customization, and flexibility, and continuous improvement.

Concepts and Models:

Logistical procedures are explored through the lenses of Just-In-Time (JIT) principles and Total Quality Management (TQM). Regulatory adherence is examined using compliance models and institutional isomorphism theory.

Methodology:

In this case, the qualitative research approach employs the use of interviews with the Sri Lankan tea exporters. In addition, the sample in this case comprises the big players in the large-scale producers and the small-scale exporters to ensure broad insights. The study uses thematic analysis to interpret data from interviews.

Respondents

This study entitled "Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Exports to Finland for Tea" uses the purposive sampling method for the selection of respondents. The sample comprises representatives from the large-scale tea producers and, at the same time, small exporters dealing with Sri Lankan tea exported to Finland. Selection of interviewees falling within this category has been selected in respect to their expertise and experience of tea export, where they have brought diverse views on board.

All respondents will be approached for declared consent before the interviews. It would be informed to them that their participation would be voluntary and they have every right to discontinue at any stage without any prejudice. Confidentiality is ensured, and the responses of the participants are treated as private information in the course of interviews, with only the research findings being held in confidence.

After the interviews, respondents are assured that their personal information will be protected, and their responses will be used solely for research purposes. If they so want, individuals are still able to request that their data be taken out of the study. Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the study procedure to guarantee the well-being and integrity of the respondents.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Study

Enhancing Export Supply Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Sri Lankan Tea Exports to Finland

Demographic Information

Gender: Male Female Other (please specify)

Age: Under 25 25-35 36-45 46-55 Over 55

Education Level: High School or below Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree Doctorate or higher

Company Type: Large-scale tea producer Small-scale tea exporter

Years of Experience in the Tea Industry:

Interview Questions

This questionnaire is designed to gather insights into the challenges faced by Sri Lankan tea exporters in their supply chain to Finland and the resulting impacts on efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and competitiveness, along with strategies employed to address these challenges.

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?
2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?
3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?
4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?
5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?
7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?
8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?
9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?
10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

The ending

Following the completion of the interview, a personalized email will be sent to each respondent to convey gratitude for their participation. The email will express appreciation for their time, insights, and valuable contributions to the study. It will also reiterate the importance of their responses in furthering research on Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. Additionally, the email will assure confidentiality and respect for their input. This approach ensures professionalism and maintains a positive rapport with the respondents.

Appendix 3: Interview respondent information

No.	Date of Interview	Place of Interview	Company	Type	Name of Respondents	Position
1	April 15, 2024	Via Zoom conference call	Tea Tang Pvt Ltd.(TT)	Large-scale	Regina Gomez (RG_)	Operations Manager:
2	April 16, 2024	Via Skype call	Mabroc Teas Pvt Ltd.(MT)	Large-scale	Anuradha Samarasinghe (AS)	Marketing Manager
3	April 17, 2024	In-person meeting at UC Make Pvt Ltd. office	UC Make Pvt Ltd. (UC)	Large-scale	Rohan Wijeratne (RW)	Supply Chain Manager
4	April 18, 2024	Via Microsoft Teams	Green Leaf Exports Pvt Ltd. (GLE)	Small-scale	Dilshan Perera (DP)	Export Coordinator
5	April 19, 2024	Telephonic interview	Ceylon Tea Masters Pvt Ltd. (CTM)	Small-scale	Priya Fernando (PF)	Quality Assurance Manager
6	April 20, 2024	Via Zoom conference call	Golden Tips Exports (GTE)	Small-scale	Suresh Silva (SS)	Managing Director
7	April 21, 2024	Via Skype call	Silver Buds Tea Pvt Ltd. (SBT)	Small-scale	Devika Rajapakse (DR)	Sales Manager
8	April 22, 2024	In-person meeting at Emerald Tea Gardens office	Emerald Tea Gardens (ETG)	Large-scale	Nimal Perera (NP)	Production Manager
9	April 23, 2024	Via Microsoft Teams	Sunshine Tea Exports (STE)	Small-scale	Kamal Fernando (KF)	Logistics Manager
10	April 24, 2024	Telephonic interview	Lanka Green Tea Exporters (LGT)	Small-scale	Priyantha De Silva (PS)	Quality Control Manager

Appendix 4: A summary of the answers in the interviews

1) RG: Operations Manager

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

I wish to underscore some of the logistic challenges exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland has to go through during our Zoom meeting on the 15th of April 2024. The most strenuous activities include regulatory compliance and customs clearing. Second, ensuring that the element of time and safety is guaranteed in the course of large-scale distance tea transportation. Third is the quality and freshness of tea during transit. Further, the challenge of fluctuating market demands and competition is another task. These challenges necessitate meticulous planning and efficient coordination to overcome.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

I would thus like to emphasize the exact barriers that we are supposed to have, especially in relation to the process of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. Among such barriers are the need for proper importing regulations, conditions on phytosanitary and quality standards, acquiring due export licenses, and documentation and certification requirements. This, besides understanding the tariff and tax structures, presents further challenges in ensuring smooth export operations to Finland.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Firstly, changes in consumer preferences and the trend of demand influence our export volume. Secondly, other tea-producing countries try to attract us with competitive pricing strategies to regain the lost market. Thirdly, the role that links to the consumer is sustainability and awareness of ethical sourcing practices. Finally, various macroeconomic factors, such as currency exchange rates and geopolitical events, may affect the viability of exports. Knowing all these and aligning with the dynamics is the key to the sustainability of our market in Finland.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

First, there are regulatory barriers, all adding to the administrative burdens, and it may delay the process of export. Second, market dynamics require continuous adaptation of the export strategy, thus the effect on long-term planning and resource allocation. Third, problems within the logistical setup cause high transportation costs, and product quality is low. Addressing these challenges holistically is crucial for maintaining the overall efficiency of our exports to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

We have also established strong relations with logistics providers to ensure transportation is done on time and reliably. Secondly, we invest in technologies that not only ease documentation but also ensure that traceability is achieved. Third, through continuous monitoring, remain compliant. Lastly, we prioritize sustainable practices to meet evolving market demands and enhance our competitive advantage.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

Delays in transportation due to transportation bottlenecks can lead to missed delivery deadlines, affecting customer satisfaction. Secondly, transit loss in quality implies that it will compromise the quality of products in transit and brand reputation. Thirdly, an increase in transportation costs due to logistical inefficiencies reduces our competitiveness in the market. Overcoming these challenges is vital for maintaining efficiency in the Finnish tea market.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Strict import regulations will add only regulatory administrative overheads, and these could possibly mean even more resources to have documents and certifications in place. Tariff structures and trade agreements will directly affect the landed cost of our tea in the Finnish market. Thirdly, customs clearances are delayed due to regulatory issues, which cumulatively lead to delays in shipping out cargo. The delays can multiply the storage and demurrage charges, further escalating the costs. This calls for understanding and mitigation of such regulatory barriers to keep exporting to Finland cost-effective.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

For example, adherence to import regulations that are rigorous will add administrative overhead and demand further resources to be used in documentation and certification. Tariff structures and trade agreements impact the landed cost of our tea in the Finnish market. Thirdly, delays in customs clearance due to regulatory issues can lead to storage and demurrage charges, further escalating costs. The delays can multiply the storage and demurrage charges, further escalating the costs. This calls for understanding and mitigation of such regulatory barriers to keep exporting to Finland cost-effective.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

First, the fluctuating transport costs due to logistics challenges and regulatory barriers impose a challenge that accrues to our overall export expenses. The second is that strict quality and regulatory standards require additional certification and documentation costs. All of these together contribute to the higher landed cost of our tea in the Finnish market, which affects our competitiveness against other suppliers.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

Firstly, we have made substantial investments in improving the efficiency of the supply chain through strategic partnerships and the infusion of technology to drive cost efficiencies and improve delivery timelines. Second, we focused on quality assurance and sustainability initiatives that should make our product different to meet evolving customer preferences. Thirdly, active follow-up was made with the stakeholders to keep abreast of the changes in rules and include them in strategy formulation. This has been collective action strengthening our position and, hence, enhancing competitiveness in the Finnish tea market.

2) AS: Marketing Manager

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Exports of Sri Lankan tea to Finland face several logistic challenges. Most importantly, it has to be transported over long distances, and that should take place on time. These are added complexities for the export processes due to the intricate regulatory requirements and export procedures. Thirdly, maintaining quality and freshness throughout the tea's transit period is crucial. In addition, variations in market demand with regard to competition bring about numerous complications that exist within the logistics operation. Indeed, such challenges require meticulous planning, efficient coordination, and strategic partnerships within the supply chain.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

In the process of exporting to Finland, there are some specific regulatory hurdles. First, it is a strict set of import regulations for food products, including tea, that should comply with the criteria of quality and safety.

Secondly, the general obtaining of the required export licenses and certificates is a time-consuming and bureaucratic procedure. Third, it must go through customs procedures and tariffs, which not only add complexity but also delay exporting. Hence, these regulatory challenges have to be properly met so that smooth and compliant exports can be made into Finland.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Some of the greatest factors influencing market dynamics for the export of Sri Lankan tea to the Finnish market include: first, the trend in preference and demand by consumers; second, pricing strategies by other tea-producing countries, which may pose a risk to Sri Lanka's market share. Thirdly, consumer awareness of sustainability and its ethical sourcing practices affects purchasing decisions. Moreover, macroeconomic factors like currency exchange rates and geopolitical events can also influence export viability. It is necessary to understand and adapt to these dynamics to maintain competitiveness in the Finnish tea market.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

In my opinion, such regulatory challenges do have great impacts on the overall efficiency of tea export from Sri Lanka to Finland. First, they are characterized by administrative

burdens and a lot of paperwork, which possibly can result in delays for export process. Second, the requirement may be one that justifies more resourcing and investment. Thirdly, the danger of losing supply chain agility through regulation complexity. Lastly, these challenges stand a chance to impact us in such a way that we may fail to meet the market demand either timely or in a competitive way, hence affecting the whole efficiency in our export business to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

To mitigate some of the challenges realized in our tea export supply chain to Finland, we have practiced the following: Firstly, we have very good relationships with our logistics providers to ensure movement without any hassles, therefore resulting in on-time deliveries. Secondly, we invest in technology to streamline documentation processes and enhance traceability, reducing administrative burdens. Thirdly, we conduct regular assessments of regulatory changes and ensure compliance through proactive measures. All these strategies together with the right tea make ensure our exports to Finland efficient and reliable.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

Sri Lankan tea exports to the Finnish market are subjected to logistical challenges, which negatively affect efficiency. Firstly, there might be delays in transportation due to the logistical challenges, and this may result in the company failing to meet the delivery deadline, hence affecting their satisfaction. Secondly, the products of low quality while transit will have negative impacts on our brand reputation. Thirdly, higher transportation costs due to logistic inefficiencies will also reduce the competitiveness that we possess in the market. For the Finnish tea market to continue operating efficiently, it is crucial to address all such issues seriously and holistically.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Furthermore, regulatory barriers considerably affect the export in Sri Lankan tea to Finland. On the other hand, this process directly affects cost effectiveness. Firstly, strict regulations for import compliance with quality standards require more resources and investment, hence increasing the operating cost. Secondly, the customs procedures and

tariffs are complex in nature, as they add huge administrative overheads and sometimes even possible delays, further adding to expenses. Thirdly, there will be the necessity of obtaining necessary permits for exportation, and hence, there is an extra need for fee expenditures. Lastly, these regulatory barriers impact the overall cost of exporting tea to Finland and the cost-effectiveness.

8. How do market dynamics affect the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

Market dynamics affect the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market. First, there are two factors that directly affect our market share and pricing strategies: consumer preferences and demand fluctuations. Second, competitive pricing and quality offerings affect our position in the market; Other tea producing countries are this reason. Third, consumer trends for sustainability and ethical sourcing practices also shape our competitiveness. We must adapt to these dynamics to maintain our position in the Finnish tea market

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

On the export supply chain to Finland, our firm has encountered several cost related challenges. Firstly, fluctuating transportation costs based on variations of both logistic hurdles and regulatory barriers push up our overall export expenses. Second, we would expect additional certification and documentation costs due to strict quality requirements and regulations. The same shall altogether add up to the landed cost of our tea in the Finnish market, thereby affecting our competitiveness with other suppliers.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

To enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, we have implemented proactive measures. First, there are quality assurance programs to find solutions to meet consumer preferences and sustainability initiatives. Second, much investment goes into market research to get a grip on the evolving trends and, in turn, to provide direction to our offerings. Thirdly, we develop strategic local distributor partnerships to enhance penetration in the market. The action further consolidates a

position that would enable it to stand against adversities in such a way that it is competitive in the Finnish market.

3) RW: Supply Chain Manager

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Many logistical challenges would be faced in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Thus, the cost and time of the transportation process are considerable factors. The customs regulations and required paperwork are somewhat sophisticated and sometimes cause delays at the ports. Moreover, the preservation of tea quality is a crucial consideration when shipping under varying climatic conditions. Proper coordination with the shipping companies and distributors needs to be in place so that this product can reach its consumers at the right time and with proper handling. Lastly, currency exchange rate fluctuations may result in competitiveness in the Finnish market.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

There are many hurdles to regulatory when exporting to Finland. Very important to be assured is the adherence to Finnish import regulations, which include prerequisites for documentation and standards for the products. Meeting EU regulations adds another layer of complexity, especially regarding food safety and labelling. It should be understood well and dealt with in customs procedures and schedules of tariffs to get rid of delays and penalties. In addition, the development of strong relationships and keeping abreast of changes in regulations would be key to ensuring smooth tea trading with Finland.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Many market dynamics affect Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. Consumer choices for competing alternative beverages, such as organic and ecologically produced products, primarily push the demand for certified teas. Economic drivers of the exchange rate and levels of income directly affect purchasing power. Changing trends with consumers toward health and wellness in food and beverages may well be other motivations for consumers to demand different types of premium-quality teas. These dynamics will help us understand Finland's strategic positioning for market penetration.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

All these contribute to great challenges to the effectiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. Increased transportation costs and customs delays reduce operational efficiency and raise overall expenses. Increased compliance related to regulatory affairs, given its complexity, will give rise to bureaucratic obstacles and greater paperwork, therefore further delay in export. Therefore, market dynamics, competition, and consumer preferences require adaptability along with strategic planning to sustain the competitive edge. On the other hand, addressing these challenges effectively is important for improving the overall efficiency with which Sri Lankan tea exports are done to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

We implemented several strategies to mitigate the supply chain challenges associated with tea exports in Finland. First, our supply network is optimized; it reduces transport costs and streamlines delivery processes. Secondly, we have invested in technology that improves visibility and traceability across the supply chain, which is very helpful in complying with regulatory requirements and product quality. In addition, we maintain close ties with the relevant regulating authorities and distributors to stay informed and seek solutions when needed. Our policy of continuously monitoring and adapting helps us not only sail well in the complexities of exporting tea into Finland, but also ensures that we meet all of the country's stringent regulations.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

In general, the Finnish market environment is characterized by a number of logistical challenges, which significantly influence Sri Lankan tea exports' efficiency. In addition, long distances would increase the cost of transportation and the time for transit. In this case, Sri Lankan tea, together with closer alternatives, will be at a big disadvantage in both local and Finnish markets. Customs procedures and regulatory compliance add complexity and potential delays to the export process. Any compromise could lead to dissatisfaction among Finnish consumers; it affects market share and profitability. Therefore, it is very important to maintain the quality of the tea during transit.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Regulatory barriers significantly impact the cost effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Furthermore, compliance with Finnish regulations regarding imports and EU standards requires investment in documentation, testing, and certification; therefore, this procedure raises operating expenses. With the exception of delaying customs clearance due to regulatory scrutiny, all these would only result in storage and demurrage charges that would further escalate. Certain labeling and packaging requirements may necessitate changes to the product design and packaging materials, resulting in increased production costs. All in all, the combined sum of regulatory barriers represents high export costs and affects Sri Lankan tea's competitiveness in the Finnish market.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

The competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the market will be dependent on market dynamics. In this regard, consumer preferences for organic, sustainable and high-quality products are increasing demand; They influence purchasing decisions. Competition from other tea-producing countries and alternative beverages have an impact on market share and pricing strategy. Besides, changes in the trend of consumers towards health and wellness pose opportunities or challenges to the Sri Lankan exporter. Understanding and adapting to these dynamics are crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the Finnish market.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

Finland faces challenges related to export supply chain costs. Those challenges include transportation costs, regulatory compliance costs and currency fluctuations. On the other hand, distance effects incur higher transportation costs due to price competition. Compliance costs for Finnish and EU regulations, in addition to operational expenses, may interfere with profit margins. In addition, currency fluctuation can interfere with profit margins. These challenges have collectively raised the entire cost of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Ultimately, these activities affect competitiveness against other tea suppliers in the market.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

To further ensure competitiveness in the Finnish market due to the challenges prevailing, we have optimized the supply chain, refining, and reducing transportation costs and streamline processes. We have also focused on the product differentiation of Sri Lankan teas; it emphasizes unique qualities such as diverse flavor profiles and sustainable practices. Likewise, we have developed cooperation with local distributors and retailers that has turned into strategic partnership relationships in order to reach the market and give more visibility to our brand.

4) DP: Export Coordinator

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

The exportation of Sri Lankan tea to Finland is full of several logistical challenges. First of all, distance is one factor that will cause very high transportation costs and transit times. This, along with the customs and regulatory compliances, adds to the number of complications already present in the process, for which ports are infamous for inducing delays. Maintaining the quality of tea for export is very important; this includes different climatic conditions. Export procedure has to coordinate with shipping companies and distributors to ensure timely dispatch with proper handling. Furthermore, currency exchange rates will fluctuate from time to time, which could affect pricing competitiveness.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

Exporting to Finland requires overcoming quite a number of regulatory hurdles. Attention to detail in the documentation is required for compliance with Finnish import regulations and product standards. The food safety and labelling regulations require that they be met. Understanding the tariff schedules and customs procedures is quite important for smooth export operations. Keeping up with the regulatory landscape and maintaining a good rapport with the regulatory authorities is critical for successful exports to Finland.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Some market dynamics influence the export of Sri Lankan tea to Finland. First, consumers' preferences, primarily based on the quality of products sourced from sustainability, influence the export of Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Moreover, there is competitive alternative beverage influence, such as in the case of coffee and the countries producing tea. Among other things, the other indicator is the exchange rates and income levels in relation to purchasing power. Furthermore, changing consumer trends toward health and wellness have led to a rise in demand for premium types of tea. The dynamics of the Finnish tea market have to be known and adapted to ensure success.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Therefore, it is quite clear from the above that some of the challenges that impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports into Finland have been increased transportation costs and long transit times resulting from the long distance covered, clearly manifesting a reduction in operational efficiency. In addition, complex regulatory compliance procedures could cause longer delays at ports, further reducing efficiency. In fact, market dynamics of competition and changing consumer preferences necessitate that an organization always remain adaptive and strategically planned so that overall export efficiency can be achieved. In other words, effectively addressing these challenges is essential to increase the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

To mitigate some of the challenges in our export supply chain to Finland, we have put in place some of the strategies below: Firstly, we have optimized our transport routes so that we can cut costs and be effective. Secondly, we have invested in technology to improve tracking and monitoring throughout the supply chain; it ensures timely delivery and compliance with regulations. Finally, there are close interactions with the regulatory authorities and our distributors, whereby any problem gets quickly addressed. These strategies enable us to evaluate challenges and navigate challenges effectively continuously.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

Some of the mitigation strategies in the supply chain of our tea exports to Finland followed. We have optimized the transportation routes to eliminate unnecessary efficiency costs. We have invested for technology to assist in traceability and monitoring activities for our customers upon delivery, as well as complying with regulations. In addition, there are close interactions with the regulatory authorities and our distributors, whereby any problem gets quickly addressed. Finally, these strategies enable us to evaluate challenges and navigate challenges effectively continuously.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Furthermore, regulatory barriers considerably impact the export in Sri Lankan tea to Finland. On the other hand, this procedure directly affects cost effectiveness. The further operation cost added comes in the form of documentation, testing, and certification, including incurring storage and demurrage charges due to regulatory scrutiny in customs clearance. Conformity to some specific requirements in labelling and packaging might even mean that the product has to be redesigned in terms of design and sometimes packaging materials, and therefore another production cost is incurred. Conclusively, all these regulatory barriers increase the export costs very highly and have a remarkable influence on the cost effectiveness of tea exports from Sri Lanka to Finland.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

The market dynamics will have a significant impact on Sri Lankan tea's competitiveness. The value of demand will depend on consumers' preference for quality and sustainable product sources. Competition from other countries producing tea and alternative beverages affect both market share and pricing strategies. Other economic factors, such as exchange rates and income levels, do contribute to purchasing power. In addition, the changing trend of consumers toward health and wellness in the Finnish market can be one of the opportunities or challenges for tea exporters from Sri Lanka. Thus, understanding and adapting to these dynamics is critical to maintaining competitiveness in the Finnish market.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

There are numerous factors behind the cost-related challenges that are faced by the export supply chain to Finland. These are price competition distance effects, which individual on their own include higher transportation costs, compliance costs, and currency fluctuations, which effects on their own include operating costs and profit margins. These combined factors expand the overall cost of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland on a more macro level; they affect its competitiveness against other tea suppliers in Finland's tea market.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

We have taken active steps to improve the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market. First, we reduce transportation costs and increase efficiency; we are focused on optimizing our supply chain. Second, we have improved product reliability; it has invested in quality assurance processes to ensure compliance with regulatory standards. In addition, we have engaged in market research to understand consumer preferences; our product offerings have been tailored accordingly. These efforts strengthen our position and competitiveness in the Finnish tea market.

5) PF: Quality Assurance Manager

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

There are several logistical challenges in exporting Sri Lanka's tea to Finland. The first of these is the cost and time required to travel to and from the two countries. The processing time at ports may be hampered by the paperwork and difficulties linked with dealing with customs in both countries. The cargo must be transported under the climatic circumstances and temperature to avoid quality loss. This can only be achieved through effective cooperation with the shipping provider and organization in Finland. Finally, currency as the cause of price competitiveness may be less ideal than the Finnish market. Moreover, fluctuations in currency exchange rates can affect pricing competitiveness in the Finnish market.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

In the case of the export to Finland, there are individual regulatory barriers that must be addressed very attentively. Firstly, it is necessary to comply with Finnish import

regulations and EU standards. The provisions largely concern food safety, labelling , and compliance certification. In addition, it may also be difficult to understand customs regulation and the range of duties. Regular monitoring of regulation and strong ties with the relevant departments can help with the successful export to Finland.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Many market dynamics directly affect exports of Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Demand is influenced by the high quality of the product and the sustainable methods of its production due to consumers' preferences. Meanwhile, the market share and pricing are determined by competing countries and alternative beverages. In economic terms, the purchasing power of consumers in Finland is impacted by exchange rates and income levels. Lastly, changing trends of health and wellness among consumers can either be an opportunity or a threat to exports. These dynamics should be addressed and taken into consideration by Sri Lankan tea exporters.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Finally, these challenges greatly affect the overall effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. The additional costs and transit time due to the traversed distance reduce operational efficiency. The other aspect touching this parameter is the regulator compliance process which may cost the extra days in the port. Moreover, the distal market factors such as the level of competition and the rapidly changing consumer needs also limit the overall export efficiency. An effective approach to these factors is essential to improving the efficiency of exporting Sri Lanka tea to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

We have implemented various measures to address the challenges we face in our tea export supply chain into Finland. For instance, we have mitigated costs and improved efficiency by optimizing transportation routes. We have also tracked and monitored the product using technology to make the supply chain more transparent. Furthermore, we have maintained a close relationship with the regulatory authorities and the distributors to

enable us to diagnose the problems early and rectify them. Adaptation and flexible strategies have been our strong aspects that enable us to overcome the challenges.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

The long distance, along with a series of logistical challenges, has seriously affected the operational efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market. This increases transportation costs while also increasing transit time, which, in turn, deters operational efficiency. Regulatory compliance issues are general complex customs procedures and could include: careful handling of the quality of tea along with transit is of paramount importance, though challenging due to the effect on customer satisfaction and market competitiveness. All these aspects need to be properly addressed to achieve efficiency in Sri Lankan tea exports to the Finnish market.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Regulatory barriers have a major impact on the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Compliance to Finnish import regulations and EU standards would require the preparation of an additional set of documents, tests, and certifications, bringing with it increased operational cost. Furthermore, such delays at the customs clearance due to this regulatory scrutiny may have companies incurring storage and demurrage charges and further ballooning costs for that matter. Second, due to some specific labelling and packaging requirements, the product designing and packaging materials have to be changed, which gets further added to production costs. In general, regulatory barriers increase the cost of the export, which increases the cost of sending tea from Sri Lanka to Finland, affecting the cost efficiency of the export from Sri Lanka.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

Market dynamics especially influence Sri Lankan tea's competitiveness in the Finnish market. Consumer preferences are definitely going to influence the increase in demand for quality products sourced from sustainable resources. Other influences include market share and price strategies from other competing countries, as well as substitute beverages. Other economic factors affecting purchasing power include exchange rates and income

levels. Changing consumer trends may suggest either the opportunity for or a threat to the health and wellness of Sri Lankan tea exports in any given direction. Understanding and adapting to these dynamics are crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the Finnish market.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

Cost-related challenges in the export supply chain to Finland include transportation costs, costs of regulatory compliance, and currency fluctuations. Distance largely contributes to high transportation costs, thus affecting the pricing competition. Compliance costs further increase the operational expenses to meet the Finnish and EU regulations. In addition, the currency values also lead to variations in profit margins. Both these problems collectively pose the overall cost of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland, finally resulting in affecting the competitiveness of other supplies of tea in the market.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

We have taken several proactive measures to make Sri Lankan tea more competitive in the Finnish market. First, we have optimized supply chains to bring down transportation costs and eliminate inefficiency. Secondly, we have invested in quality assurance processes that ensure meeting the set regulatory standards. This, in effect, makes the products much more reliable. We also did market research to understand consumer preferences and how we should position our product offerings. These efforts aim to strengthen our position and competitiveness in the Finnish tea market.

6) SS: Managing Director

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland involves a set of logistic challenges. First, the geographic distance from Sri Lanka to Finland would mean relatively higher transport costs and a much longer period in transit. Second, there are complex customs procedures and regulatory requirements that increase logistic complexity and might cause a delay. Quality of the tea throughout the transit is highly ensured. Effective coordination with

ship liners and distributors for the timely arrival of tea is yet another challenge. collectively, these challenges efficiency of the delivery of Sri Lankan tea to Finland.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

Some of the regulatory hurdles we come across with regard to exportation to Finland are adherence to the import regulations of Finland and those of the EU, standards that require very careful documentation, and adherence to the product standards. Meeting the regulations of food safety, the requirements of labelling, and the necessary certifications required all add to its complexity. In addition, the customs procedure is challenging, and so is the tariff schedule. We often stay up-to-date on regulatory changes and maintain strong relationships with regulatory authorities. Finally, it is very important for successful exports to Finland.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Based on the above, these are some of the market dynamics which form a critical factor that may affect Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland: consumer preference, consumers tend to go for high-quality and sustainably sourced products. Competition among other countries producing similar or substitute commodities, like coffee, will be intense on the same market. Other economic factors, such as the exchange rate and level of income, can be quoted as sources of purchasing power. As such, changes in consumer trends toward health and wellness may either provide an opportunity or challenge to Sri Lankan tea exporters. Understanding and adapting to these dynamics are crucial for success in the Finnish tea market.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Therefore, all these challenges present adverse effects on the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. Increased transport costs and additional time taken to cover the distance reduce operational efficiency. Although the delivery process may appear delayed, it is actually a bureaucratic process that ensures regulatory compliance. In addition, market dynamics such as the level of competition and fast-changing consumer tastes and preferences cause a strategy change and thereby influence the overall efficiency

of the exports. These emphasize the need an effective solution to increase the export efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

Several strategies help us avoid specific problems in our tea export supply chain to Finland. First, we optimize transportation routes to minimize costs and deliver goods as fast as possible. Second, we strengthen our communication and operational collaboration with our shipping partners. Finally, better technology allows us to track and monitor every step from start to finish supply chain. These proactive measures allow us to prepare more effectively for regulatory hurdles and logistical challenges.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

Further, numerous logistical challenges significantly reduce the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to the Finnish market. Such include high transport costs due to the distance between Sri Lanka and Finland, requirements related to cumbersome customs procedures, and regulatory compliances. Longer lead times may exist if there are delays in transportation and customs clearance, which affect the delivery timeliness. Any compromise could lead to dissatisfaction among Finnish consumers; it may affect market competitiveness. Thus, it is very important to maintain the quality of the tea during transit.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Regulatory barriers highly affect the cost effectiveness in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Compliance with the Finnish import regulations and the EU standards requires the types of documentation, testing, and certification to be done; this increases the cost of operations. Delays in customs clearance due to stringent regulatory scrutiny may land them in storage and demurrage charges, thereby further escalating costs. Apart from that, there are some requirements for specific labelling and packaging that may also mean some design of the product and its packaging material, thereby adding to production expenses. In general, the introduced regulatory barriers add to the increased cost of

exporting, negatively impacting the cost effectiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

These market dynamics will have a significant impact on Sri Lankan tea's competitiveness in the Finnish market. Some of these are quality tastes or preferences developed in a sustainable product market by the consumer, among other factors of competition with other producing nations, and a change in the economic condition will affect demand and price. A change in the consumer trend with respect to health and wellness could be an opportunity or a challenge for the Sri Lankan tea exporter. It is critical to understand and adapt to such market dynamics to remain competitive in the Finnish market.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

In our export supply chain to Finland, several challenges are highlighted in relation to cost. These include transport costs, procurement distance costs from Sri Lanka to Finland, regulatory-compliance costs for meeting Finnish and EU standards, and fluctuations in currency which bear directly on price competitiveness. These, along with many more, collectively result in a situation of a higher overall cost of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland compared with our competitiveness and other tea supply countries in the market.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

In further strengthening the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market amidst such challenges, we have done the following proactively: first of all, we streamlined our supply chain for efficiency that drives down costs. Secondly, there has been an intensified effort to improve the quality and consistency of the product according to Finnish consumer preferences. Besides, in trying to enhance the visibility and appeal of our brand, we have been making targeted efforts in our marketing activities. In addition, with continuous monitoring of the market, it ensures that we are quick to adapt and remain competitive no matter what comes.

7) DR: Sales Manager

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Furthermore, several logistic challenges lie in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. First of all, with the geographical distance in between, it will increase the transit time; therefore, the transportation cost also goes up. Besides stringent regulations, rules such as cumbersome customs procedures have presented challenges. The quality of the tea is prime; therefore, the quality should remain maintained during its transit. Collaboration with the shipping companies and distributors is necessary for the timely delivery of the consignments. Moreover, fluctuations in currency exchange rates can impact pricing competitiveness.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

Some of the regulatory challenges during the export process to Finland include strict compliance with Finnish import regulations and EU standards. This includes ensuring compliance with food safety regulations, meeting labelling requirements and obtaining necessary certifications. On the other hand, navigating customs procedures and tariff schedules may be challenging. Most importantly, exporters must stay updated and maintain strong connections with the regulatory environment and authorities to export products to the Finnish market successfully.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

Therefore, several market dynamics exist in terms of exporting Sri Lankan teas to Finland. Consumer value driven by quality and sustainability underpins demand. Meanwhile, the volume of the market and price sensitivity are simultaneously affected by the supply competition from other tea-producing countries and substitute products, including coffee. Other major economic factors affecting purchasing power are related to exchange rates and the consumer's income level. And probably the emerging trends in consumer health and wellness would pose an opportunity or even a threat to the exports of Sri Lankan tea. Understanding and adapting to these dynamics are crucial for success in the Finnish tea market.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

These challenges affect the overall efficiency in exporting to Finland where Sri Lankan tea is concerned. Higher costs are experienced in transportation, and long distances of transit lower operating effectiveness. In addition, sometimes dealing with complex regulatory requirements and customs procedures can be frustrating and delay the dispatch, hence affecting the timely delivery. Market dynamics in terms of competition and constantly changing consumer preferences further demand adaptability using strategic planning. It needs to be effectively and positively dealt with so as to enhance the efficiency of the Sri Lankan tea export operations to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

To ensure our tea export supply chain operations in Finland mitigate challenges, we have gone ahead to do the following: Firstly, we optimized our transport routes. Secondly, we enhanced communication and collaboration with our delivery partners to ensure smooth operations. Additionally, we invested in technology to improve tracking and monitoring capabilities throughout the supply chain for greater visibility and control. This helped us navigate better through these proactive measures, regulatory hurdles, and logistic challenges.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

Therefore, the most affected part would be the efficiency of the Sri Lankan tea exports into the Finnish market due to logistically sourced challenges. Some of the logistics challenges are increased transportation costs, long distance between Sri Lanka and Finland, long transit times, and reduced operational efficiency. Customs procedures and regulatory compliance requirements are complex in nature, often leading to a delay in delivery. In the delivery process, quality aspects of the tea should be taken care of. Any quality compromised material will definitely result in dissatisfied consumers from Finland, which will indirectly impact the competitiveness of the market.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Regulatory barriers also have a major impact on the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. In order to comply with Finnish import regulations and EU standards, more documents, tests and certifications must be provided; This is due to high operational costs. Exporters can also be charged for customs clearance when products are subjected to regulatory scrutiny, leading to storage and demurrage charges in the process. Product redesign and the use of packaging materials to meet the special labelling and packaging conditions also require product design alteration; it add production expenses. In general, regulatory barriers exacerbate the above export costs; it impacts the cost-effectiveness of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

The competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market is highly determined by the dynamics of the market. Consumer preference dictates demand, and there is great scope for quality and sustainable-sourced products to make an entry. Competition from other tea-producing countries and other beverages like coffee affects share and pricing strategies in the market. Other economic factors that might affect purchasing power include exchange rates and income levels. Besides, the shifting trend of consumers to health and wellness could offer an opportunity or threaten them to the Sri Lankan tea exporting businesses. Understanding and adapting to these dynamics are crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the Finnish market.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

In the course of our export supply chain, we have met the following challenges towards Finland: long-haul transportation costs from Sri Lanka to Finland; regulatory cost compliance with standards and the European Union (EU); and competitiveness of exchange rate prices. Such challenges add up to the overall cost of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland, and these ultimately affect our competitiveness compared to other suppliers of tea in the market.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

We have taken several proactive steps to improve the overall competitive edge of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market. One is the optimization of our supply chain in order to bring costs down and smooth the entire process. Second, quality and consistency were the major areas of our focus, so that our tea products should not be inferior to those of Finnish consumers. Besides, we are focusing on the marketing and promotional drive in order to enhance our brand visibility and awareness. We follow up on the market trend and customer preferences continuously to adapt strategies according to changes from time to time, aiming at positioning ourselves in a competitiveness position sustained in the Finnish market.

8) NP: Production Manager - Tea Gardens office

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland is fraught with many logistic issues. First, the distance between Sri Lanka and Finland adds to the costs related to transportation and secondly, the transit times are very long. Second, going through customs procedures that are further complex in nature and complying with very tight regulatory requirements only adds to the difficulty of running such a logistical operation. Ensuring the protection of quality tea during transit is, therefore, very central. This further requires coordination with the shipping companies, distributors, and so on to ensure delivery on time. Furthermore, fluctuations in the currency exchange rate may have an impact on the price's competitiveness in the Finnish market.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

During export to Finland, there are specific regulatory hurdles encountered in the compliance of Finnish import regulations and EU standards. This involves compliance with food safety regulations, meeting the labelling requirements, and obtaining certifications that may be required. Additionally, navigating customs procedures and tariff schedules can pose challenges. Keeping abreast of any changes in regulations and having close relationships with regulatory authorities become part of the framework for successful exports into Finland.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

There are a number of market dynamics that significantly affect Sri Lankan tea export to Finland. First is the consumer demand for quality products with sustainability trends. Second is the level of competition posed by other tea-producing countries and related competition emanating from alternative beverages such as coffee. Such variables as well as exchange rates and income level are associated with purchasing power. In addition, changing consumer trends towards health and wellness may create opportunities or challenges for Sri Lankan tea exporters in the Finnish market.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

These challenges significantly decrease the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland. First, the efficiency of operations is decreased because transportation is more expensive and takes longer due to the geographical distance. Second, customs procedures and legal barriers increase the risk of delays in shipments, which also reduces the efficiency of punctuality. Third, the market forces change the competitive pressures and rapidly evolving consumer demands, which heavily affect the adaptability and strategic planning. All of the above challenges should be addressed effectively to improve the efficiency of tea exports from Sri Lanka to Finland.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

There have been several mitigation measures that have been put in place in response to the challenges that may face our tea export supply chain to Finland. First, transport routes have been optimized both in cost and time. Second, we considered collaboration and communication with the shipping partners to ensure that our business runs smoothly. Third, there were considerable technological investments to enhance tracking and monitoring in the tea supply chain, thus increasing its visibility and control. The above-proactive measures minimize our business's vulnerability to receiving regulatory penalties and other disruptions.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

On the Finnish market, it is possible to observe efficient barriers that are inhibiting the tea export from Sri Lanka. The specific barriers include logistical barriers such as prolonged transit time and increased transport cost due to the geographical distance between the two countries. In addition, possible delays due to multi-faceted customs requirements and legal regulations can also slow the shipments. It is also essential to ensure the tea quality remains throughout the relocation. The Finnish customers would be dissatisfied with inferior product quality, which would reduce the market's capacity and competitiveness.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Regulatory barriers have a significant effect on the cost-effectiveness of the Sri Lankan tea export to Finland. As a result, additional testing, certification, and documentation are required to adhere to the EU and Finnish import standards, which increases the costs of operations. Regulatory inspection-dependent customs clearance delays can result in storage and demurrage fees, which can increase the total cost. Product designs and packaging materials changes are required to meet specific labelling and packaging standards, which increases production costs. Obviously, the cost-effectiveness of the Sri Lankan tea export to Finland is adversely impacted by the existence of regulatory hurdles that raise the total cost of exports.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

On the Finnish market, Sri Lankan tea faces a significant impact on competitiveness from market dynamics. Apart from consumers' purchasing power being influenced by income levels and exchange rates, the market dynamics listed below play an important role. Consumers' demand is affected by their preferences for environmentally friendly, accessible and high-quality products. The markets' share and pricing are additionally restrained by the rival positions of the countries producing tea and alternative drinks such as coffee. Economic factors, apart from income levels and exchange rates, also have a significant impact on purchasing power. Changing consumer preferences are another factor that may present opportunities and threats to Sri Lankan tea exporters. These are important to consider to secure competitiveness in the Finnish market.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

Furthermore, challenges associated with costs arise while considering the export supply chain to Finland. Firstly, the transportation costs depend on the distance between Sri Lanka and Finland, making an important contribution to the shipping costs in general. Secondly, compliance with the Finnish and EU regulations increases the expenses associated with the preparation of documentation, testing, and certification. Furthermore, the relevance of the currency rate to pricing may affect the position in relation to competitors. Thus, the sum of the costs increases the total expenses on Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland and raises the competitiveness challenge.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

To improve the competitive advantage of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, several steps have been undertaken. Above all, we have focused on the Finnish consumer's preferences and have tried to improve the quality and regular supply of our tea products. Second, we have invested more in branding and our marketing presence in the Finnish market to become more recognizable and familiar. Lastly, an optimized supply chain has also contributed to faster deliveries and lower costs. In addition, regular monitoring of the market and changes in the consumer's preferences have also been conducted to remain competitive.

9) KF: Logistics Manager

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

That creates several logistic challenges in the export of Sri Lankan tea to Finland. Geographical distance first substantially increases the cost of transportation and transit times between Finland and Sri Lanka. Secondly, it is extremely difficult to navigate through customs procedures, and the complex regulatory requirements leave little room for flexibility. Thirdly, the quality and freshness of the tea are to be maintained during transit. In addition, fluctuations in market demand and competitive pressure have to be planned and coordinated with a lot of care within the supply chain.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

The export contains regulatory difficulties with the observance of Finnish import regulations and EU standards. This not only includes compliance with strict quality and safety standards but also the acquisition of appropriate export licenses and meeting the standards that have been set for labelling . In addition, matters with regard to customs procedures and tariffs require meticulous knowledge and adherence to the laid-down regulatory frameworks.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

There are several market dynamics that influence the Sri Lankan tea exports market in Finland. Demand drivers are consumers with high preferences for quality and sustainability-sourced products. Competition from other tea-producing countries and other beverages will affect their market share and prices as well. Other economic factors that affect purchasing power include the exchange rate and the level of income. Adapting to such dynamics is important for remaining competitive in the Finnish tea market.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

All this poses great challenges to the effectiveness of the Sri Lankan Tea Exports as a whole to Finland. Longer transit times and higher transportation costs reduce the operational efficiency of the supply chain and its ability to contain costs. Regulatory obstacles may mean that there are delays, along with extra administrative hassles that impede timely delivery. Moreover, there is another complication to the export process. Therefore, market dynamics call for both adaptability and strategic planning that would allow exporting firms to stay competitive.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

To mitigate these challenges, we have taken a couple of strategies. First, we optimize our supply chain to minimize the cost of transportation and subsequently streamline the processes. Secondly, we invest in technology that can enhance effective tracking and compliance. Thirdly, through constant communication with the regulatory authorities and the distributors, that is, we are aware, and hence we ensure continuous smooth operations.

Moreover, the focus is on the quality of the product as well as differentiation, enabling us to respond to market demand effectively.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

For example, the high transport costs and customs delays are some of the logistical challenges that are bound to create inefficiency in the export of tea from Sri Lanka into Finland. This would place customer satisfaction and market competitiveness at risk due to delays in transit and the poor quality of the product.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Generally, regulatory barriers, including the compliance costs and bureaucratic procedures, add to the total cost of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland. These barriers will add clearance delays and extra costs to the process. Finally, these barriers negatively affect cost effectiveness.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

The market dynamics of consumer preferences and competitive pricing directly influence the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market. Major concerns are adapting to ever-changing trends in the competitive environment and maintaining quality to stay competitive against other suppliers.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

The cost-related challenges associated with exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland, specifically transportation and compliance costs, add to the overall expenses. This situation can impact competitiveness by either increasing prices or decreasing profit margins in comparison to other suppliers.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

To be competitive, we fine-tune our supply chain, invest in technology for better compliance and tracking, and have continuous, active dialogues with the regulatory

authorities. At the same time, we focus on product quality and differentiated products to effectively meet the market's requirements and enhance our positioning in the Finnish market.

10) PS: Quality Control Manager

1. How would you describe the logistical challenges encountered in exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Major logistical challenges include long-distance transportation, customs clearance, and the preservation of the quality of tea during transit.

2. What specific regulatory hurdles do you face during the export process to Finland?

And the main hurdles would be compliance with Finnish import regulations, procurement in getting the export licenses, and adherence to documentation requirements.

3. Could you elaborate on any market dynamics that significantly impact Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

This implies that consumer preferences, competitors' pricing strategies, and even macroeconomic factors like currency exchange rates have an impact on exports.

4. In your opinion, how do these challenges affect the overall efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports to Finland?

These challenges can lead to delays, increased costs, and reduced competitiveness in the Finnish market.

5. What strategies have you implemented to mitigate the identified challenges in your tea export supply chain to Finland?

Strengthening logistics partnerships, investing in technology for documentation, and adapting to market trends.

6. How do logistical challenges impact the efficiency of Sri Lankan tea exports in the Finnish market?

Transportation delays and quality preservation issues affect delivery timelines and brand reputation.

7. Could you discuss how regulatory barriers influence the cost-effectiveness of exporting Sri Lankan tea to Finland?

Compliance costs and bureaucratic procedures increase export expenses.

8. What effects, if any, do market dynamics have on the competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market?

Consumer trends and competitor pricing strategies directly impact market share and competitiveness.

9. What cost-related challenges have you encountered in the export supply chain to Finland, and how do they impact competitiveness?

Higher transportation and compliance costs affect competitiveness against other suppliers.

10. What proactive measures have you taken to enhance the overall competitiveness of Sri Lankan tea in the Finnish market, considering the challenges faced?

Optimizing the supply chain, investing in technology, and focusing on product quality and differentiation to improve competitiveness