

Various Aspects of UK-Greece Food Supply Chain

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Abstract: The study aims to investigate the sustainability aspect in procurement as well as the relationship of suppliers and buyers in the context of Greek and UK, taking into account the involvement of risk factors in food supply chain. The research represents the viewpoints of authors based on three case studies and literature reviews. Three features of Greek-UK food supply chain have been identified: sustainability in procurement, collaboration with suppliers where power imbalance is observed and involvement of risk factor related to policy adopted by bank in Greece which is difficult to mitigate. The research findings in this report emphasises on the perspective of Sustainable Supply Chain Management issues in the context of three major supermarkets in UK.

Keywords: Supply chain management, strategic procurement, supplier relationship management, sustainability, risk, Greek agriculture, UK grocery business.

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I. Introduction

This is the age of globalization. Globalized economy has made the movement of goods very easy. This easy movement has increased both the expectation of the consumers and the competition among the rivals (Passaris, 2006)[1]. As a result, the enterprises are adding value to end users by selling high quality product in lower price. This has been seen in Aldi and Tesco's case where Aldi's sell increased and Tesco's sale dropped by 3.7% during Christmas timewhich was the result of price differentiation (UK Grocery Report, 2015)[2]. In order to survive, the enterprises are transforming the supply chain into value chain through adopting policy of strategic procurement, global outsourcing and long term relationship with suppliers (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2007)[3].

This report will look into the concept of supply chain management from various aspects, such as, supply chain network including supplier relationship, value chain including strategic procurement, global outsourcing and risk. The report will focus on three case studies based in UK, Tesco Plc., Morrison and Sainsbury Plc. alongside with their Greek suppliers. It will investigate the supplier relationship management, sustainable procurement and risk factors that can dictate the food supply chain market.

II. Literature Review

This section will focus on supply chain management and the following core elements: supply chain, Supplier relationship, strategic procurement, global outsourcing sustainability and risk. The section starts with the concept of supply chain management.

2.1 Supply Chain Management

Lysons & Farrington (2012)[4] defined supply chain management as "the management of the interconnection of organisations that relate to each other through upstream and downstream linkages between the process that produce value to the consumer in the form of products and services". Baily, Farmer, Crocker, Jessop & Jones (2008)[5] included flow of information and fund in supply chain management. Porter (1985)[6] first added the term value chain in supply chain. Added value means each activity of the chain is being evaluated by how it adds value and increases/decreases cost (Emmett & Crocker, 2010)[7].

Therefore, supply chain management focuses on supply, demand and value chain including flow of information and fund where Demand chain represents demand of consumers. Supply chain represents fulfilment and value chain represents performance. The elements of supply chain management have been shown in "Fig. 1". It illustrates that supply chain bridges the gap of demand and supply through the process of value addition. Flow of product indicates suppliers supply goods/services to customers. Information expresses consumer's demand/order. Intellectual capital means innovation/ideas to develop new product and physical capital means infrastructure.

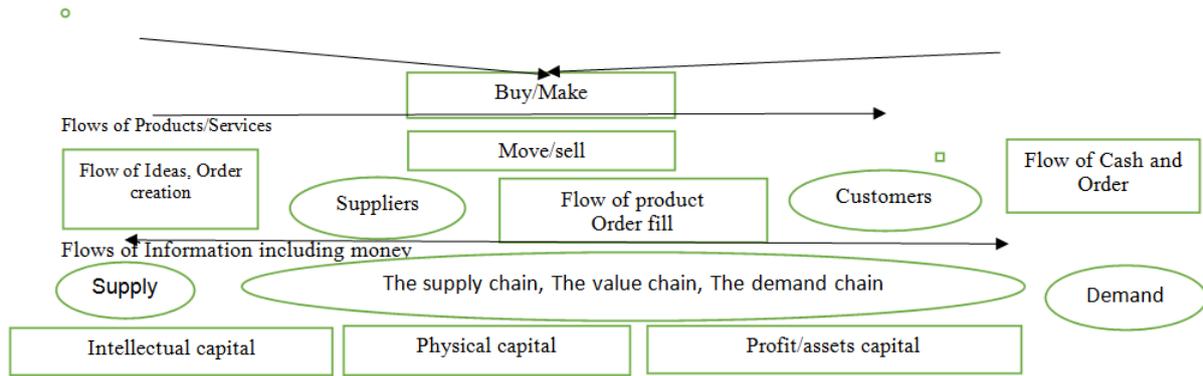


Figure 1: Elements of supply chain management (Emmett & Crocker, 2010)

The following sections will be looking at these aspects more critically.

2.2 Supply Chain

Supply chain is a process that integrates, co-ordinate and controls the motion of goods/materials and information from sources through a series of consumer to end users (Emmett & Crocker, 2010)[7]. They suggested that the supply chain contains various sectors like primary (raw materials), secondary (milling, refining, assembling) and tertiary (packaging, distribution). Emmett & Crocker (2010) [7] indicated supply chain as a network. This illustrates that organisations may have many supply chains (internal and external) which interact through a number of simple or/and complex networks.

2.3 Supplier relationship

Flynn, Hue and Zhao (2010)[8] argued that supplier relationship is the most importance element in supply chain. He defined it as “the degree to which a manufacturer strategically collaborates with its supply chain partners and collaboratively manages the process”. Successful supplier relationship has been observed in the case of Aldi. Aldi is successfully collaborating with his suppliers. Around 94 percent suppliers are satisfied with Aldi (Report on relationship with suppliers, 2015)[9].

According to Landry (1998) [10], long term relationship, sharing market demand and commitment have positive impact on success. The research and development division of Siemens identified that involvement of supplier during design stage reduces 18 percent cost and improve time to market cycle by 10-20 percent (Siemens Plc, 2009)[11].

2.4 Demand Chain and Value chain

Market understanding and how to meet the differing need of customer are the basis of demand chain (Juttner, Christopher & Baker, 2007)[12]. Every company develops product according to customer’s demand. It helps to maximize profit. Thompson and Strickland (1996) [13] stated value chain as creation of value for customers.

2.5 Procurement

The Chartered Institute of Purchase and Supply (CIPS) (2013)[14] defined procurement as “the business management function that ensures identification, sourcing, access and management of the external resources that an organization needs to fulfil its strategic objectives”. The objectives of procurement are to select the best suppliers, develop new products, reduce cost and maintain quality. In the past, procurement was reactive as price was the main variable. Negotiation was based on win/loss. At present, procurement is strategic/proactive where purchasing adds values and avoids defective supplies. Now, procurement is being treated as acquisition management and procurement process is a value-adding activity that leads to end user’s satisfaction. The negotiation criteria is win-win basis (Russill, 1997)[15]. Barrar and Gervais (2006) [16] identified outsourcing as a further step of procurement. Baily, Farmer, Crocker, Jessop & Jones (2008)[5] defined it as the strategic use of outside resources to perform activities traditionally handled by internal staff and resource. Sun Micro-system purchases around 75% of micro-chips and processors from external sources. So, it can be stated that strategic procurement is key factor to manage value chain network.

2.6 Selection of suppliers

Emmett and Crocker (2010)[7] suggested that selection of quality suppliers can decrease input costs. Russill (1997) [15] also supported them by saying that company’s profit largely depends on the highest level of performance in continuation with the best supplier and commitment. Brown (2005)[17] suggested that increasing agility is a key aspect of profitability. Improvement of product or marketing of new product is needed

when a specific product is already in mature stage. Supplier’s skill of changing supplied items according to market demand is essential to increase company’s profit. As an example, Apple’s iPod changed the landscape of competition through coupling with iTunes. The combination of hardware, software and content of music made a unique value chain.

2.7 Sustainability

Wolf (2011)[18] defined sustainability “as development that meets the present generation’s needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. It refers to taking initiatives for society’s benefit from economic, social and environmental aspect. Achievement of sustainability depends on the collaboration of up and downstream integration capability through the organizational and strategic integration process. The success of upstream integration capability depends on efficient management of supplier and risk. Downstream integration includes the understanding of shareholder’s expectation and integration of expectation with decision making policy. Sustainability is being observed in case of Starbucks. It created C.A.F.E. to ensure the processing of coffee by evaluating economic, social and environmental aspect of coffee production.

2.8 Risk

According to Wideman (1992) [19], “Risk is an estimation of the probability of loss from a large population of unwanted circumstances”. Risk makes supply chain vulnerable (Garlick, 2010)[20]. He identified supply, operation, demand risk and environmental risks in the supply chain. The types of risk and mitigation process are mentioned in the “Table 1”.

Table 1: Types of risk and their management

Risk	How to manage
Supply risk: It includes reliability of supply, sources of supplier etc.	Long term strategic relationship can increase commitment and reliability of supplier. Multiple sourcing: if one source faces problem to deliver product, another source can help the buyers to manage the risk.
Operational risk: It may affect firm’s internal ability of production.	Identifying and prioritizing risk from the beginning of the business.
Demand risk: This risk arises from non-reliable demand forecast.	The best possible demand signals (point of sale, demand forecast) should be leveraged. The planning should be scenario-based. The company should focus on product and channel optimization for enhancement of cash flow.
Business risk: It includes supplier’s financial or management stability.	The company can verify the supplier’s financial turnover, bank statement. Information about structure, employees of supplier can ensure its management stability.
Environmental risk: It includes social, climate factor, government policy etc.	Company can search for politically stable and less disaster prone country.
Manufacturing and planning risk: These are caused by disruption of operation, inadequate assessment and planning respectively.	Strong monitoring with fixed performance indicator and proper planning is essential.

III. Research objectives and method

The aim of the study are to see various aspect of supply chain management such as, supply chain network, to observe supplier relationship, value chain including strategic procurement, global outsourcing and risk and to see how the Tesco applies “Toyota Production System (TPS)” in case of procurement. Mainly review and case study method have been used to conduct this study. Secondary sources of data was used. This study has been conducted on the three super markets of United Kingdom named Tesco, Morrison and Sainsbury Plc.

IV. Case studies

This section illustrates three case studies of UK buyers Tesco, Morrison and Sainsbury plc. focus on the sustainability in procurement, relationship with Greek suppliers. It takes into the risks involved in the food supply chain along with the features of Greek agriculture and grocery business in UK.

4.1 Background of case studies

This part focuses on the competitiveness of UK grocery sector and the strength of Greek agriculture which made Tesco, Morrison and Sainsbury Plc. interested to outsource their food from Greece.

4.1.1 Grocery business in UK

The value of highly competitive UK grocery market was worth £177.5bn in March, 2015 (IGD Retail Analysis, 2015)[21]. The rivalry in the grocery market is intensive (Hackney, Grant and Birtwhistle, 2014) [22]. Big super market like Tesco, Morrison, ASDA and Sainsbury, Aldi, Lidl are the main competitors. “Fig2” shows that the size of the market increased £3.5bn whereas growth decreased from 2.8% to 1.7% in 2015. “Fig3” shows that sale of hypermarket is the highest (\$71.7bn).

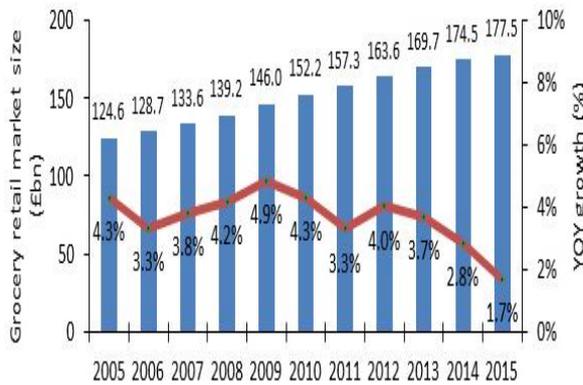


Figure 2: Size of UK grocery market (IGD Retail Analysis, 2015)

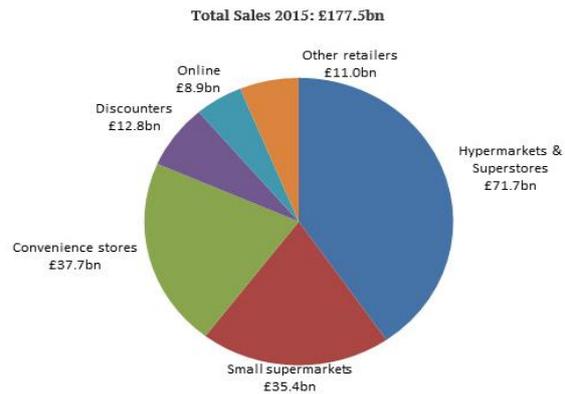


Figure 3: Sale of UK grocery (IGD Retail Analysis, 2015)

Tesco and Sainsbury choose Greece for its strength in agriculture. The following section looks at this aspect of Greek agriculture.

4.1.2 Greek Agriculture

GDP of Greece is 283.5 billion Euro and real growth rate is 0.8%. The contribution of agriculture in GDP is 3.5%(CIA, 2015)[23]. Agriculture sector of Greece is diversified. “Fig.4” shows that the production of industrial crops, milk, olive oil, sheep and goats were 9.9%, 11.3%, 9.8% and 7.8% respectively. The gross value added in this sector was 5139 million Euro in 2014 (Eurostat Yearbook, 2014)[24].

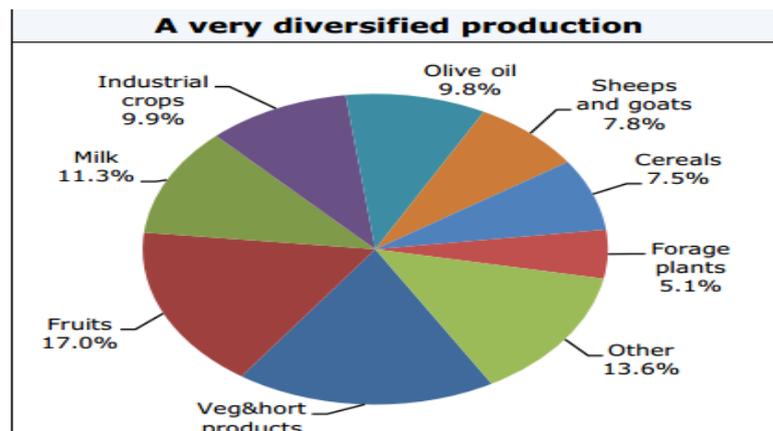


Figure 4: Production of Greek agriculture (Eurostat and Rural Development Report, 2014).

In 2014, Greek exported food and oil of \$376.2 million to UK(International Trade Centre, 2015)[25].Greece is situated at the intersection of Asian and European trade route which helps companies to transfer their products in less time. It tends to lower the cost(Eurostat and Rural Development Report, 2014)[26].In agriculture, experienced labour force, high quality raw materials, low operating and logistic cost produce European standard product at lower price (Olympios, 2014)[27]. All these factors make Greece an ideal candidate for food supplier.

4.2 Case study 1

Tesco buys 45 products including fruits, Cheese, honey, pasta, olive oil, wine from The Greek Deli (Tesco Performance report, 2015). [28]Sale of the organic product is more than 70% of total product (Organic UK food sales report, 2015). [29]Like all the Greek suppliers the Greek Deli also supplies organic food to Tesco (Photopoulos, 2002).[30]Tesco adopts long term strategic agreement policy with suppliers (Report on agreement schemes of Tesco, 2013). [31]Tesco renews contract with The Greek Deli after every two years. Tesco deducts money unfairly as fine from the bill of supplier without following the contract and pays the bills 90 days later than the due date (Tesco acts like a Godfather, 2015). [32] So, uneven balance of power and practice of enforcement are clearly observed in the relationship. Tesco launched an online supplier network which connects 5000 suppliers to identify how suppliers are being treated (Report on relationship with suppliers, 2015). [9]The core strategies of Tesco shown in “Fig5” indicates that it gives emphasis on procurement and supplier relationship. The strategy of strengthen competitiveness via strategic alliance, bargaining with supplier and

developing new quality product from different location are directly related with supplier relationship and procurement.

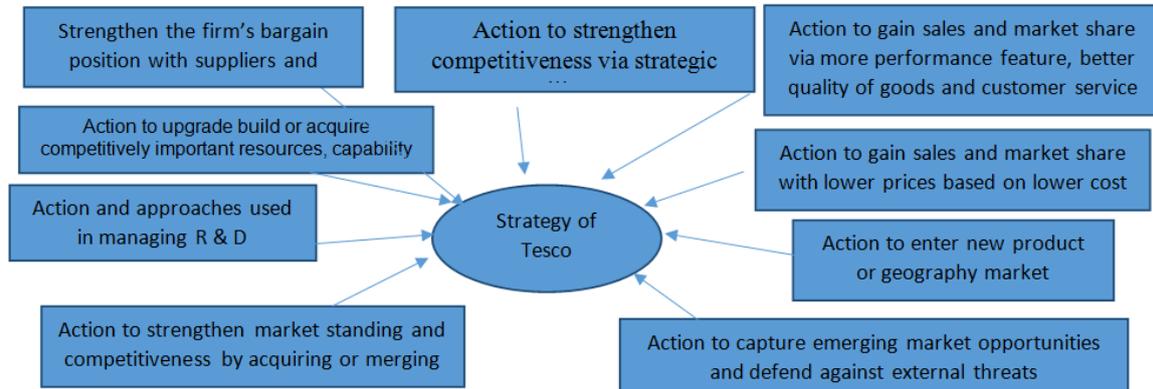


Figure 5: Strategies of Tesco (Performance Management in Tesco, 2014)

Tesco's International Sourcing (TIS) is responsible for procurement. TPS follows Toyota Production System (TPS) for procurement is shown in "Fig6". TPS gives priority on Just-in-Time (JIT) and Total Quality Management (TQM). Delivery of required quantity of goods with high quality using minimum resources and lead time is the main focus of TPS. Right place and right time are also being considered in TPS. Jidokha is an important part of procurement which detects abnormality and responds to it to make the process smooth. Grocery division places order to TIS. TIS procures food from Greece through testing the quality and colour. It also checks if the food is compatible with health and safety regulation. Suppliers undergo both technical and ethical audits done by TIS and supply chain experts recruited from different organizations (Report on TIS, 2013) [33].

Forward linkage (source to end users) The information of user's view about product

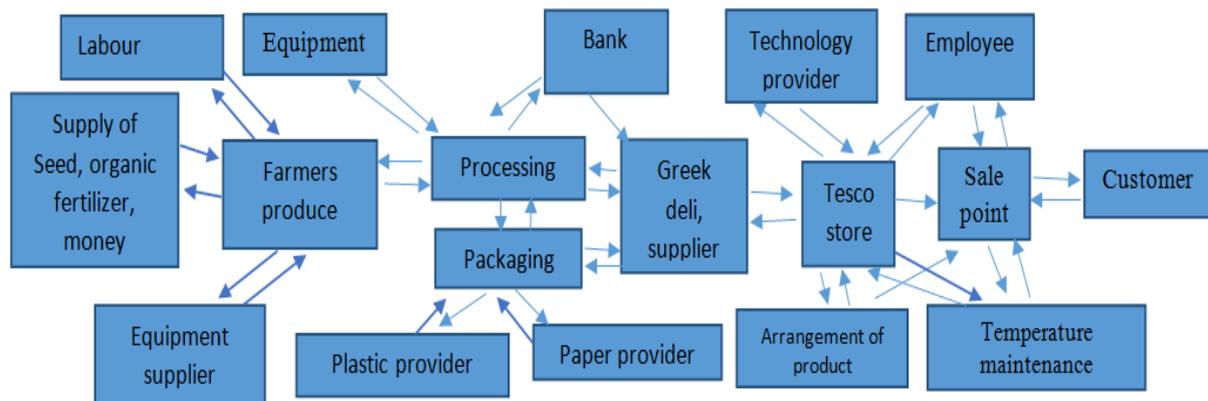


Figure 6: Supply chain network of food supplied from Greece to Tesco, UK (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2007 and Performance Management in Tesco, 2011)

The supply chain network of Greek food to Tesco is shown in "Fig6". It illustrates that farmers deliver products to food processing centre. Processed food and plastic are supplied to packaging centre. The Greek Deli collects food from processing/packaging centre and delivers these to Tesco warehouse. Afterwards, these are delivered to sale point. This complex chain is not fully agile. Specifically, the primary producers are less capable to show flexibility whereas the wholesaler and exporters are more flexible (Photopoulos, Maglaras & Bourlakis, 2012). [34]

4.3 Case study 2

Sainsbury Plc. buys Greek food including olive oil, yoghurt, olives and wine from multiple sources in Greece. Fage Dairy industry and Greek Wine Callers provide yoghurt and wine. Sainsbury takes 30 to 45 days to settle the bill with supplier which dissatisfies the supplier. Every year Sainsbury gives awards to five suppliers for good delivery. Technical and ethical audits of supplier are mandatory and done by the audit team. The supply chain of Greek part is similar to Tesco. The supplier delivers foods at Sainsbury's transhipment centre for marketing.

4.4 Case study 3

Morrison buys many products including fruits, Cheese, green vegetables, wine from The Hellenic Food Industry. The Hellenic Food Industry supplies organic and inorganic food to Morrison. According to The Mail Online (2017) [35], Supermarkets Morrisons has been accused of 'bully boy tactics' by offering their suppliers bank loans instead of swiftly settling their debts. Morrisons has introduced schemes named 'supplier finance' with Lloyds Bank. It delays the payment of invoices to small businesses that supply them with goods. Under arrangements introduced late last year, most of the supermarket's suppliers have been persuaded to wait 90 days for their invoices to be paid, a month longer than previously. Supermarket retailer Morrisons announced new payment terms for smaller suppliers to shorten the time taken to pay an invoice to only 14 days from next month (My Credit Controller, 2017). [36] Morrisons, Asda and Iceland treat their suppliers the worst among the UK's 10 major chains, according to a report by the industry watchdog (2016). Morrisons had been forced to refund money to suppliers after it was found to have sought cash lump sums of £2m or more from them to support its profits in defiance of the groceries code (The Guardian, 2016) [37].

4.5 Involvement of risk

Greece has introduced temporary capital control on 29 June, 2015 which affects the exporters. According to bank policy, only 60 Euro from per account can be withdrawn per day. The farmers of the Greece are interested to get payment in cash. The manufacturers are unable to fulfil their demands due to shortage of money (Greece's Economy, 2015). [38] This causes delay in supply which ultimately effects negatively on exporter's relationship with buyers. On the other hand, late payment and deducting money decrease supplier's profit and affect its internal supply chain network.

It can be summarized that Tesco, Sainsbury Plc. and Morrison adopt global outsourcing from Greece to reduce cost. The primary producers are not flexible enough to cope with the changing demand of the globalized market but agility is prominent in case of exporters. The uneven balance of power and practise of enforcement are being observed in the relationship. Long term presence of this situation may increase supplier's dissatisfaction which may affect negatively at the commitment of suppliers in the long run. To avoid this circumstances, Tesco created the online supplier's network to satisfy the suppliers. It is a step for achieving long term strategic relationship. Ethical audit is mandatory which proofs that both the companies practise sustainable procurement. The both parties have to accept the risk of control policy of bank in Greece in supply chain network.

V. Conclusion

The success of the company depends on the cost-effective and demand driven supply chain management strategy. Supply chain management includes demand, value and supply chain network and sustainability. In the value chain activities, procurement is the key factor to manage the supply chain network. Now-a-days, the companies are adopting strategic procurement and global outsourcing to select the best suppliers and maintain the quality of product with reduced cost.

Suppliers' relationship management and skill of performing with the changing demand have strong impact on company's success. Specifically, agility helps to deliver products according to a set schedule ensuring product reliability and customer satisfaction. Theoretically, it sounds good but in a complex supply chain network agility is difficult to maintain practically. The downstream of chain may not be so flexible and capable enough to respond with the changing demands of end users. It is also difficult for the retailer to monitor the primary producers. If one small part of the network fails to cope with the speed, it affect the whole network as the combine action is based on pipelining the tasks. The report has studied the relationship of Tesco Plc., Sainsbury Plc. and Morrison with Greek suppliers taking into account the involvement of risk in food supply chain. The Greek food chain is complex and not fully agile. The primary producers are not so flexible to cope with changing demand. All the suppliers do not have direct access to market demand.

More research work needs to be conducted on strategic procurement taking into account the sustainability in the food supply chain network in context of UK buyers along with their Greek suppliers. The challenges towards outsourcing and the increasing importance of globalization also necessitates greater attention to logistics and to benefit of collaboration in supply chain management system.

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