

# 1. Provisional Title

Impact of Technological Development in Logistics on  
Retail Food Business in the UK

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Outline of Project Environment

UK is a country that is, in the truest sense of the term, multicultural. It has attracted people from all around the globe and is considered a place of multiple identities (Hardill, Graham & Kofman, 2001). Over the past century, people of various ethnic origins and countries have moved to live in the UK for various reasons, including income, higher education, and business opportunities. The policy-makers in the country have done well in propagating the ideology of multiculturalism. Governments of the UK have appreciated this ideology by giving financial assistance to ethnic minority groups and ethnic schools (Deakin, 2007). Due to this multicultural aspect of the British society, communities have developed in the country with their unique lifestyles vibrantly visible in them including festivals, restaurants and apparel, etc. Especially, in the matter of food, cultural identification has never lost its touch and people in the food business even import special ingredients from home countries. A contrasting cause with the same effect is the importance of having variety in the business (Shaw, Dawson & Blair, 1992).

#### 2.1.i. Retail Food Business in the UK

Food business in the UK has developed to a great extent and consumers have access to cuisines from all over the world (Jones, Comfort & Hillier, 2004). The researcher realises that

- A good proposal begins with a suggestion for the actual study's title. Remember that by the time the proposal becomes the dissertation, the title may change; do not consider it final at this stage.
- The background section develops room for the arguments that you would later use to justify your choice. It may begin right away with a claim you want to make or build up as a story whose climax leads to your research questions, providing a number of arguments on the way.
- The background section contains discussion of the reasons for selecting the proposed topic. You discuss, with the help of scholarly literature, the research gaps the study would fill and develop a clear scope for the topic.
- The section may be divided into a few subsections, each connected with the others by means of contextual discussions.
- For the proposed topic, we begin with establishing how UK has a multicultural environment in the food industry, with entrepreneurs belonging to almost every culture of the world.

the production of food is done on three different scales of production viewpoints in the service sector related to food: fast food, fresh food and industrial cuisine (Rodgers, 2008). As the focus of this research is retail food business, the researcher will not include industrial cuisine in the content. Another way of classification of the food services is done under business/industry, education, health/welfare, national security, on board, retail, travel and leisure sectors (keynote.co.uk, *n.d.*).

Due to various business advantages in this sector, numerous businessmen have invested in the retail food business in the UK in the past two decades. The number of businesses pertaining to retail food category has increased considerably. Akbar (2007) reported that during the period of August 2006 to July 2007, 158 restaurants were opened in London alone. The number has only increased every year since. The availability of a favourable location in one of the public places of the city or a tourist spot brings the idea of a retail food business to an investor. There are plenty of reasons for that, including excellent variety of food available in the market, an established image of the country as a tourist haven with its historical sights and monuments, people of virtually all cultures of the world and stable income of people of the country, which allows them to consider eating out an open option every day.

### 2.1.ii. Food Tourism

England is one of the countries of Europe that enjoy the reputation of most visited tourist sites. It is a centre of cultural monuments, beautiful scenery, several beaches, urban towns, and multicultural people. The retail food industry has also earned its worth due to the ever-present tourists in the country. The tourist industry of the country is estimated to be over a hundred billion Great Britain Pounds (Kühn, 2008). With such a magnanimous size, it is fairly important

- Statistics are provided so that the reader can observe the trend in the retail food sector's development in UK.

- The discussion moves on to how tourism and a multicultural food industry have worked together to provide UK with a unique and very profitable business sector.

to consider that this industry also affects the retail food industry in the country as well. Tourists visiting the sights find an array of countless retail food stores and restaurants, which offer both local food as well as foreign cuisine on fair prices. Tourism industry is one of the reasons why the British governments give considerable significance to the welfare of retail food industry and any other relevant factors that affect it, especially considering the fact that on average during the past five years, the tourism industry has provided more than 8% of the country Gross Domestic Product GDP).

### **2.1.iii. Innovative & Technological Developments in Retail Food Industry**

In this phase of time, manufacturers of cooking equipment are designing and developing equipment with innovation (Rodgers, 2008). The importance is being given to machinery such as large ovens with adequate controlling so that recipes may be completed with the help of pre-determined and small frames of time. Using science as the guide, particularly statistics, mathematics and physics as the guides (Rodgers, 2005), these manufacturers are trying to establish products that may be used by any retail food business with no threat to health and life of the operators with assurance of taste and quality. “Meals are made using naturally reared, grass-fed, free range beef grilled to order and delivered quickly to the table” (Whitehall, Kerkhoven, Freeling & Villarino, 2006). All of these innovations in the industry have resulted in the increase of profitability of the businesses and a healthy return on investment (ROI), another reason why retail food is becoming one of the favourite investment fields for people interested in business.

### **2.1.iv. Technological Developments in Supply Chain Management (SCM)**

“SCM is the management of upstream and downstream relationships in order to deliver superior customer value at less cost to the supply chain as a whole” (Christopher, 1998). Technological developments are vividly visible in the revolution of the modern Supply Chain Management (SCM; Ganeshan & Boone 2002). It would be ignorant of one to think otherwise. In the past it was a difficult task to examine service quality measures as well as of productivity of the demand and supply chain. However, the age of technology has turned the tables and owing to the two main tools of Enterprise Resource Planning and the development of the Internet, the exchange of information between the supplier and the customer has become very easy (Holmstrom, Hoover, Louhiluoto & Vasara, 2000). Talking about business managers, Giménez & Laurenço (2008) state that it is obvious they have understood the importance of the Internet in provision of cheap information between “the trading partners”. The most important factors that give Internet such significance in the domain of SCM is its ability to provide information in real-time and the very low cost of this crucial facility. It is due to these factors that Internet has been adopted in SCM in virtually all known industries including manufacturing as well as service industries and chemical, automotive, and food and beverages industries (Smart, 2005). Dawson (2001) also believes that the technological developments in logistics, SCM and information technology have greatly and positively affected the retail industries around the world.

#### 2.1.v. Technological Developments in Food Sector Logistics

Logistics play a fundamental role in the provision of food when it comes to cooking in restaurants. David, Aquilino & Chase (2002) argue that in retail food production, logistics is more important to operators of the kitchen than recipe development believing that fresh food

- Development and utilisation of technology in supply chains and logistics of the food industry are discussed in detail. This discussion brings the research problem in line with the selected business sector and RQs seem to be on the horizon.

bases on ideals of lean manufacturing. Experts argue that more research is required in the field of excessive technological development in logistics in retail food industry. Future research on the matter should focus on gastronomy of molecules and the combination of factors that win the recipes their success (Klosse, Riga, Cramwinckel & Saris, 2004). Of course, the development adaptation depends on the ideals of the place where the food is cooked. If a restaurant, though small, believes in the provision of good quality and healthy food to its customers, it will adapt the technological developments that will improve these very factors in the kitchen.

But logistics is not limited to the kitchen of a restaurant. The effects of logistics also imply to the arrival of imported food material from around the world. Many retail food providers, especially international chain of restaurants are very apt at delivering ingredients from places where it would be cost-effective for them to purchase them to several of their outlets around the region, which may even mean to a number of countries.

## 2.2. Research Statement

The technological developments in logistics and SCM have fundamentally affected the prospects of service quality in the retail food industry of the UK.

### **2.2.i. Research Questions**

- 1) What are the major technological changes that have occurred in Logistics and SCM, and how have they been adopted in the retail food industry?
- 2) How have these changes affected the service quality of the suppliers of retail food businesses in the UK?

## 2.3. Literature Review Plan

- The Research Statement is a short paragraph that highlights the key problem studied (to-be). Ideally, it is a healthy paragraph (around 100 words) and includes a point or two about what makes the study in question unique from the rest and the special aspects of its methodology. Here, however, the student wanted a brief one-sentence statement, which is not unheard of.
- Research Questions are merely questions that the proposed study would aim to answer. In other words, they are research objectives posed as questions.
- Some keywords are provided to show the reader what kind of searches would be made on the Internet to gather literature on the proposed topic.

The researcher will require giving thorough consideration to various sub-topics of this research and study using the keywords like

- Multiculturalism
- Cultures in the UK
- Retail Food Business in the UK
- Famous Fast Food Chains
- Food Tourism
- Logistical Developments
- Supply Chain Management
- Supplier-Customer Relationship
- Logistical Innovations

Similarly, other scholarly works like the following will immensely help the researcher:

- Cannon, T. (1992). Patterns of Innovation and Development in the Food Chain. *British Food Journal*. 94 (6).
- Closs, D.J. Goldsby, T.J. & Clinton, S.R. (1997). Information Technology Influences on World Class Logistics Capability. *International Journal of Physics Distribution & Logistics Management*. 27 (1), pp. 4-17.
- Hammant, J. (1995). Information Technology Trends in Logistics. *Logistics Information Management*. 8 (6), pp. 32-37.
- Harrison, D. (2003) Encyclopedia of Food and Culture. *Reference Reviews*. 17 (7), pp. 18+.

- A bibliography is established to demonstrate preparation of reading for the study. This list is to include major scholarly works published on the topic, working as a reading list for the proposed study.

- Knight, J.G. Holdsworth, D.K. & Mather, D.W. (2007). Country-of-Origin and Choice of Food Imports: An In-Depth Study of European Distribution Channel Gatekeepers. *Journal of International Business Studies*. 38 (1),pp. 107+.
- Quayle, M. (2003). A Study of Supply Chain Management Practice in UK Industrial SMEs. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*. 8 (1), pp. 79-86.
- Sheikh, N. & Thomas, J. (1994). Factors Influencing Food Choice among Ethnic Minority Adolescents. *Nutrition & Food Science*. 94 (5), pp. 29-35.
- Valsamakis, V. & Groves, G. (1996). Supplier-Customer Relationships: Do Partnerships Perform Better? *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*. 1 (1), pp. 9-25.
- Zaichkowsky, J.L. (1999). Food Shopping Profiles of Career-Oriented, Income-Oriented and At-Home Wives. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*. 33 (1), p. 110.

#### 2.4. Research Methodology

The research involves acquisition of information about the quality effectinnovative technology in logistics and supply chains has brought to retail food business in the UK. The research will remain limited to retail food enterprises and will acquire firsthand information from suppliers of the industry. It is virtually impossible to collect information from all over the country. Thus, the focus of this research will remain on London for the purpose of acquisition of primary data. A considerable sample of 50 suppliers will be selected randomly. These suppliers will then be contacted through email or phone and permission to take part in the study will be taken during this initial stage of correspondence. Necessary explanation about the purpose of the study as well as of the procedure involved will be given as well. The incentive of a copy of the resulting report will also be offered to the suppliers to increase the amount of persuasion and

- Methodology for the proposed study is discussed in considerable detail here. From details of the sample to the design of the data collection instrument, the important choices are explained for the reader's benefit. This kind of explanation shows you understand your options before you make a choice. Course Supervisors approve of this state-and-justify approach in methodology sections.

decrease the chances of their refusal from taking part in the research. Permission will also be sought for approaching their customers to acquire primary data about the service quality from them as well. Upon acceptance of the invitation, survey questionnaires will be delivered to the suppliers. Their customer organisations will then be contacted with sufficient explanation regarding the research and with the same incentive of a copy of the research report. Upon their acceptance, the survey questionnaire prepared for them will be delivered.

The researcher will prepare two questionnaires, one each for the customers and the suppliers. The survey questionnaire served to the customers will contain questions about:

- Credentials of the person filling the form,
- Nature of the business organisation,
- Organisation's relationship with their suppliers and
- Perceived impact of technological development on their service quality

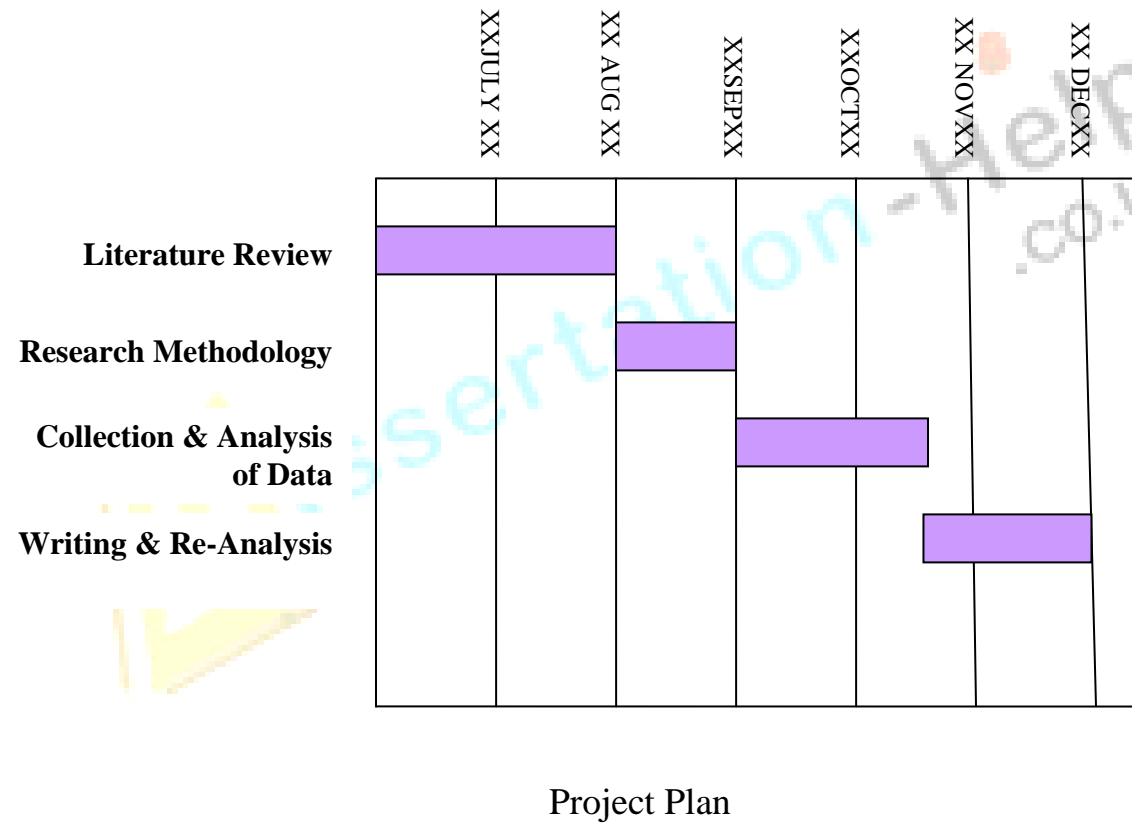
The questionnaire provided to the suppliers will contain questions similar in nature to the other questionnaire with more emphasis on the impact of technological developments in logistics and SCM on the retail food market of the country. All the participating organisations will be selected randomly with the help of easily available lists of related businesses in the city.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

The analysis approach adapted for this research will be of quantitative nature. The nature of questions in the survey questionnaires provided to customer organisations and their suppliers will require answers of quantitative nature, as the researcher will use the 5-point Likert scale, which will help in the acquisition of well-categorised quantitative primary data. Factor analysis will be used for the quantitative data acquired from the survey questionnaires served.

- A comprehensive statement of the proposed study's techniques for analysis of data is given here.

### 3.Project Plan



- A Gantt chart summaries a project plan very aptly, which is why it is liked by many research supervisors as part of the research proposal.

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