

The Influence of Supply Chain Actors on Planning of Exports: A Case Study of a Tea Export Company in Sri Lanka

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The purpose of this study is two-fold. Firstly, to identify the supply chain actors involved in export planning. Secondly, to explore how supply chain actors influence the export planning process. This study is based on a single case study of a large Tea exporting company in Sri Lanka and is grounded on actor-network theory. In-depth interviews were conducted with top and middle level managers in the company responsible for export planning. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected interviews. The findings of this study reveals that human actors: personnel in the Tea Department and Shipping Department, new product development team and accounts manager influence the planning process through knowledge, skill and experience. Further, this study reveals that non-human actors: auction system, multiple supplier base, supplier evaluation process, ERP system, shipment scheduling process, government entities and transactional process influence the export planning through providing information, facilitating communication and ensuring transparency. The ANT enabled to identify human and non-human actors involved in shaping the planning of tea exports and help us to understand how these actors influenced the tea export planning process.

Keywords: *Actor Network Theory, Export Planning, Supply Chain Actors, Thematic Analysis*

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