
EXAMPLE 1: Exert from an International Business Environment MSc Report

“AN ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR S-SUPERMARKET, A UK-BASED COMPANY, IN CHINA”

Problems concerning business ethics and corporate social responsibilities (CSR) in China

There are a number of potential effects on CSR issue that a supermarket retailer would bring to China. China faces considerable challenges from NGOs on labour issues, trading issues, human rights issues and physical environment concerns (REFERENCE). S-Supermarket has the target of:

- ✓ Meet the food industry quality standards
- ✓ Meet the workplace safety standards and retail technology improvements
- ✓ Contribute to Chinese local charities and fundraising
- ✓ Use local agricultural and manufacturing product as the prior source of raw materials
- ✓ Job creation and provide equal opportunities at managerial position
- ✓ Being ‘environmentally friendly’, bring positive improvement in the environmental performance

(REFERENCE)

Training and educational development of employees

To sustain the business development and minimize the culture conflict, education for employees is always necessary for S-Supermarket before/after they switched from UK market to Chinese market (REFERENCE). Education and training provided on cultural adaptability, cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural awareness would allow employees from two countries to have a mutual understanding and a willingness to respect and accommodate diverse cultural values, also increase their willingness to work for and stay with S-Supermarket (REFERENCE).

Food safety issue

One of the main obstacles facing food retail market is the food safety concern. This traces back to the time social public lost confidence in domestic food and producers due to the

Comment [a1]: Who determined that China faces pressure from NGOs and on what issues? Also, how was the extent of this pressure analyzed to determine that it was “considerable”? If the readers had a reference, they could out for themselves. It is also unlikely that the author of the report analyzed the interaction between China and NGO himself/herself (this is not indicated in the report), so credit has to be given to the person who did.

Comment [a2]: How did the author arrive at this list of Corporate Social Responsibility-related tasks? Why these tasks and not some others? Such lists should be based on a review of studies of what CSR issues are important in China or on research-based definitions of CSR. And the references must be provided.

Comment [a3]: What studies show a link between “education of employees” and “business development” and minimization of cultural conflict in the workplace? These are not necessarily common-sense or straightforward relationships and assumptions about them need to be supported by research.

Comment [a4]: Same as above. What studies show that employee training has a beneficial effect on cultural adaptability and cross-cultural communication? Different studies may come to different conclusions on this topic. Whose point of view is given here? In addition, the author of this report does not say that he/she has done research to come up with these conclusions himself/herself, so whoever did it must be given credit.

continuously scandals on food safety and immoral business behaviour including vegetables containing pesticide residue, fish contaminated with suspected carcinogens and eggs tainted with the industrial dye Sudan Red (REFERENCE). S-Supermarket have to monitor its supply chain and make sure the standard of goods complies with China's Food Hygiene Law and meet the code of conduct with inspection of the food imports and exports. It suggests S-Supermarket should also introduce a product recall system to fit into the Chinese National Product Quality Campaign (REFERENCE).

Comment [a5]: Who came up with these conclusions? Whoever did it must be given credit. A reference would also give the readers the opportunity to find out how it was determined what the main obstacles in the food retail industry are and whether the methods used were appropriate.

Employee rights and salaries

China is famous of its low labour cost as an advantage (REFERENCE). However, within host countries, foreign-owned firms have a well reputation of meeting the Chinese Labour Standard and always pay higher wages than domestically-owned firms (REFERENCE). The Chinese Employment and Labour Standard have covered following areas:

Comment [a6]: Where can the readers read the full text of the China's Food Hygiene Law and the Chinese National Product Quality Campaign?

- ✓ Minimum wage
- ✓ Working hours
- ✓ Vacations and national bank holidays
- ✓ Termination and complaints
- ✓ Health and safety issues

Comment [a7]: This is a relatively common-sense statement. It is a well-known fact within the International Business field and thus claims about it do not necessarily need to be based on the review of literature or own research. However, things change and some authors right now may argue that China, as it is developing, is losing its labour cost advantage (this happened in such countries as Taiwan and South Korea as labour wages there rose with the degree of development). Thus it may be useful to provide some very recent references to prove that China indeed still possesses the low labour cost advantage.

It believes that S-Supermarket will do the same to comply with the agreement and motivate its employees by protecting the legal rights of them.

Comment [a8]: Who researched the reputation of foreign firms in China or the wages they pay? The information in this sentence may be common knowledge within China, but here in the UK it is not and thus such claims need some support from the literature. Also, "reputation" does not always equal reality. It may be just rumours. References to solid research that show that such reputation is based on facts would be useful here. . . . Finally, where can the readers look up the Chinese Labour Standards and see how it covers the areas discussed below?

Seeming persistence of corruption within the government is still a problem in China (REFERENCE). S-Supermarket need to avoid such problem and conduct to ethical business behaviours as what they have done in the UK.

Comment [a9]: Who shows that corruption is still a problem in China. This may be common knowledge, but things change, Chinese government may have taken serious and successful steps to fight corruption. Recent references that show that corruption is a persistent problem in China are needed to support this assertion.