



# Sustaining Competitive Advantage in the Tea Industry: A Case Study on Innovation, Quality Management, and Operational Efficiency in XYZ Tea Company

H.R.D.A. Priyantha

Department of Operations Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya,  
Peradeniya, Sri Lanka  
dilkaanjani22@gmail.com

**Abstract.** The global tea industry is a significant contributor to economic growth, with Sri Lanka being one of the largest exporters of tea worldwide. In this context, maintaining a competitive advantage is crucial for Sri Lankan tea companies, especially as they face evolving consumer demands, market competition, and environmental sustainability challenges. This research explored how innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency contribute to sustaining a competitive edge in the Sri Lankan tea industry, focusing on XYZ Company, a prominent tea manufacturer.

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach, with data collected through semi-structured interviews from 12 authorities in XYZ Company, covering areas such as factory, field, and office. Thematic analysis revealed key themes: Product Innovation and holistic innovation management strategies, Standardization for Global Consistency, Sustainability through Efficiency, and Integrating Technology in Production. Further, the themes identified were: Adapting to Market Dynamics, Cultural and Organizational Resistance to Change, Balancing Tradition and Modernity, and Regulatory Compliance vs. Innovation Flexibility. These themes together illustrate the company's integrated approach to innovation, quality management, operational efficiency, and the challenges and opportunities it faces in sustaining a competitive advantage. The findings suggested that XYZ Company has made significant progress in innovation and operational efficiency, but further potential exists through expanding product innovations, adopting holistic innovation management strategies, and increasing technological integration. These findings offered valuable insights for improving the competitive position of Sri Lankan tea companies in the global market.

**Keywords:** Tea Industry, Sri Lanka, Innovation, Quality Management, Operational Efficiency.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The tea industry holds immense significance in Sri Lanka, contributing substantially to the country's economy through foreign exchange earnings, employment generation,

and rural development (Herath & De Silva, 2021). The sector accounts for approximately 1.2% of Sri Lanka's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generates over USD 1.2 billion in annual export revenue (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2023). Globally recognized as "Ceylon Tea," Sri Lankan tea has earned a reputation for its distinctive flavor and premium quality, positioning the country among the world's top tea exporters. Furthermore, the industry provides direct and indirect employment to over two million people while supporting smallholder farmers and uplifting rural communities (Perera & Weerakoon, 2020). Locally, tea remains an integral part of the cultural and social fabric of the nation.

Despite its prominence, the Sri Lankan tea industry faces several pressing challenges. Rising production costs, labor shortages, climate change impacts, productivity stagnation, and fluctuations in global demand have put considerable pressure on industry competitiveness (Herath & De Silva, 2021). Additionally, the slow pace of modernization, operational inefficiencies, and difficulties in maintaining consistent product quality pose threats to the sector's long-term sustainability and global standing (Jayasinghe et al., 2021).

In response, tea companies are increasingly turning to product innovation as a strategy to meet evolving market demands. Value-added products such as organic teas, flavored blends, and health-focused variants have gained attention for their potential to open new market segments (Fernando et al., 2022). Yet, while innovation can create market differentiation, it must be integrated with robust quality management systems and operational efficiency to sustain competitive advantage. Overemphasis on innovation at the expense of quality and efficiency or vice versa can undermine organizational performance and competitiveness (Perera & Weerakoon, 2020).

Quality management plays a critical role in maintaining Sri Lanka's global reputation for premium tea. Adherence to international quality standards and certifications fosters consumer trust and market sustainability (Herath & De Silva, 2021). However, balancing cost control, quality assurance, and timely delivery remains an ongoing challenge for many firms. Similarly, operational efficiency encompassing process improvements, waste minimization, and technology adoption—has become essential for competing in global markets. Yet, many Sri Lankan tea producers struggle with outdated machinery, labor shortages, and systemic inefficiencies that limit productivity (Jayasinghe et al., 2021; Fernando et al., 2022).

## 1.2 Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation

Existing international literature has extensively examined the key drivers of competitive advantage, including innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency (Porter, 1985; Barney, 1991). According to Porter's (1985) Generic Competitive Strategies, firms achieve sustained advantage through cost leadership, differentiation (including innovation), or focus strategies. In the tea industry, differentiation through

product innovation and quality management has emerged as a central competitive approach.

From the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991), firms gain advantage by leveraging valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources such as unique product innovations, superior quality control processes, and efficient operations. In the context of Sri Lankan tea, these resources include established brand reputation, traditional know-how, and access to high-quality raw materials. However, the RBV also suggests that such resources must be effectively organized to realize their full potential highlighting the importance of integrating innovation, quality, and operational efficiency.

In addition, Total Quality Management (TQM) frameworks emphasize the significance of organization-wide quality culture, process standardization, and continuous improvement as pathways to sustainable competitive advantage (Flynn et al., 1995). Studies by Prajogo and Sohal (2006) further support the view that both innovation and quality management can simultaneously enhance firm performance when aligned strategically.

Despite this established knowledge, a gap exists in understanding how these three elements innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency, are interrelated and applied holistically in the Sri Lankan tea industry context. Prior studies have largely examined these factors in isolation, lacking an integrated perspective (Jayasinghe et al., 2021). Moreover, few qualitative case studies have explored these dynamics from an inductive, ground-level perspective, leaving an empirical and theoretical gap in the literature.

Therefore, this study adopts an inductive qualitative case study approach to uncover how XYZ Tea Company navigates and integrates these three dimensions in practice. The aim is not to test pre-defined variables or relationships but to derive insights grounded in the lived experiences and practices of organizational actors, potentially contributing to the development or refinement of theory.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

In line with the inductive and exploratory nature of this study, the research objectives are deliberately framed broadly to allow for the emergence of rich, context-specific insights:

- i. To explore how XYZ Tea Company approaches product innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency in sustaining its competitive advantage.
- ii. To understand the challenges and opportunities faced by XYZ Tea Company in integrating these dimensions within its strategic and operational activities.

## 2 Materials and Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology designed to gain in-depth insights into how innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency contribute to sustaining competitive advantage within the Sri Lankan tea industry. The research process was guided by the layers of Saunders' Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2019), ensuring a structured, rigorous, and transparent methodological framework. The philosophical stance of the study was interpretivism, as the research aimed to understand and interpret the experiences, perceptions, and practices of organizational actors involved in tea manufacturing rather than testing pre-formulated hypotheses. An inductive approach was followed to allow theories and patterns to emerge naturally from the collected data, ensuring that findings are grounded in the realities of the case rather than imposed by prior theoretical assumptions.

A single-case study strategy was employed to facilitate a holistic and detailed examination of innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency in a real-life organizational setting. The case selected for this purpose was XYZ Tea Company, a leading player in Sri Lanka's tea industry. This choice was not arbitrary; XYZ Company is recognized among the top ten tea exporters in the country and has consistently demonstrated operational excellence and competitiveness in the international market for over two decades. The company processes over 15 million kilograms of premium-grade black tea annually, exporting to diverse markets including Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Its product portfolio includes not only conventional black teas but also organic variants, flavored infusions, and functional teas enriched with herbal and medicinal extracts. These product innovations cater to emerging consumer demands for health-oriented and value-added tea products.

Furthermore, XYZ Company maintains extensive field and factory operations, controlling a plantation area exceeding 5,000 hectares across multiple agro-climatic zones in Sri Lanka. This vertical integration allows the company to ensure raw material traceability and consistent quality from plucking to packaging. The company's manufacturing facilities are equipped with advanced processing technologies and are certified under globally recognized standards such as ISO 22000:2018 (Food Safety Management System), HACCP, GMP, ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management), ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management), ISO 45001:2018 (Occupational Health and Safety), SLS 1324:2018 (Sri Lanka Tea Standard), etc. The company has also made strides in environmental innovation by introducing renewable energy utilization and sustainable packaging materials, positioning itself as a model for integrated innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency.

In this study, a mono-method qualitative data collection technique was employed, consisting primarily of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 12 purposively selected participants from XYZ Tea Company. These individuals included senior managers, operational

heads, quality assurance officers, production supervisors, and R&D personnel informants deemed knowledgeable about the company's innovation, quality, and operational practices. To ensure accuracy and comfort for participants, interviews were conducted in either English or Sinhala, depending on their preference. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and supplemented with notes for context. To ensure data triangulation and increase the validity of the findings, relevant internal documents such as quality manuals, certification records, and operational reports were reviewed alongside the interview data.

For data analysis, thematic analysis was utilized, following the six-phase framework introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing these themes, defining and naming them, and finally, producing the report. Thematic analysis was facilitated using the NVivo software, which supported systematic coding, organization, and retrieval of qualitative data, thereby enhancing analytical rigor and transparency. The use of NVivo also enabled the identification of patterns and relationships across the diverse data sources collected.

The population frame for this study comprised all 682 registered tea manufacturing companies listed by the Sri Lanka Tea Board (2024). However, XYZ Tea Company was purposively selected as the single case because it epitomizes sustained competitive advantage through the integrated application of innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency. Its established reputation, wide product range, certifications, and operational scope made it an exemplary case to explore the research objectives in depth. The cross-sectional time horizon of this study ensured that all data were collected within a clearly defined period in early 2025, allowing for a focused and timely examination of the company's practices.

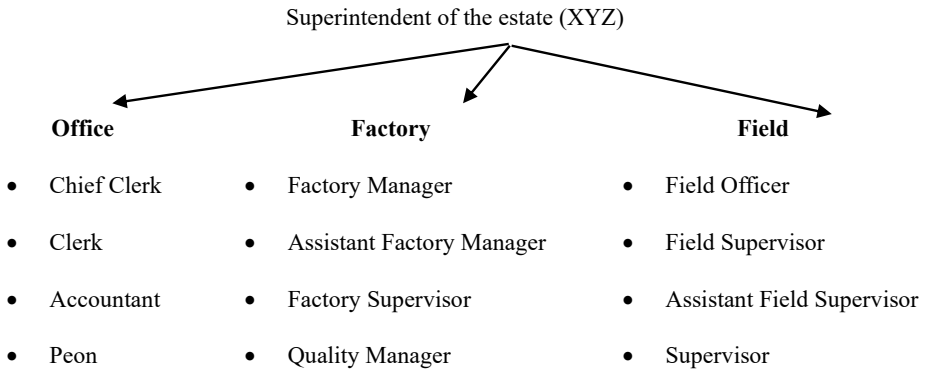
## **3 Results**

### **3.1 Sample Profile**

The study sample consisted of 12 authorities from XYZ Company, selected from departments related to innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency. Respondents were chosen based on their roles and expertise in these areas, focusing on individuals with substantial knowledge and experience in product innovation, quality assurance, and operational processes.

The hierarchy of the sample starts with the highest authority, the Superintendent of the estate, followed by three key divisions of the company: Factory, Field, and Office. Within each division, individuals holding responsible positions were selected to ensure a well-rounded and comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced and practices adopted to maintain competitive advantage in the tea industry.

The detailed hierarchy of respondents and their profiles are presented in the fig.1 and table 1 below.



**Fig. 1.** Hierarchy of respondents in this study

**Table 1.** Profile of the respondent in this study

	<b>Respondent’s Name</b>	<b>Ethnic and Religious Group</b>	<b>Experience in the industry (Years)</b>
1	Superintendent of the estate	Tamil	15
2	Factory Manager	Sinhala	8
3	Assistant Factory Manager	Tamil	7
4	Factory Supervisor	Sinhala	5
5	Chief Clerk	Sinhala	8
6	Clerk	Tamil	8
7	Accountant	Sinhala	4
8	Peon	Tamil	5
9	Field Officer	Tamil	5
10	Field Supervisor	Sinhala	6
11	Assistant Field Supervisor	Sinhala	3
12	Quality Manager	Sinhala	4

**3.2 Data Presentation**

**Research Objective 01: To explore how product innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency are integrated to sustain competitive advantage in XYZ Company**

*Holistic Innovation Management*

This theme explored the integration of product innovation throughout XYZ Company's operations, ensuring that every department is aligned toward introducing new tea products that meet changing consumer preferences. According to Jayasinghe et al. (2021), product innovation is critical for tea companies to differentiate themselves in global markets. This involves not just developing new products but aligning them with global consumer demands for health-conscious and sustainable products. As noted by the Superintendent of the estate, "*Continuous product innovation is essential for us to stay competitive, we must create teas that are not only unique in flavor but also meet international trends in wellness and sustainability.*"

Additionally, the Factory Manager suggested, "*We should explore introducing green tea-based skincare products, instant tea powders, and cold-brew tea bottles, these products are gaining popularity globally, and incorporating such innovations could open new market opportunities for us.*" In this context, XYZ Company can consider product innovations such as organic tea varieties, herbal blends, flavored teas, ready-to-drink tea, instant tea powders, and tea-infused wellness products to strengthen its global market presence.

The Field Supervisor also highlighted the need to diversify product offerings, stating, "*We can consider launching functional teas infused with vitamins and minerals, detox teas, and specialty teas targeting specific health concerns such as immunity boosting or stress relief. These product lines are growing globally and could enhance our market presence.*"

Further More, Holistic innovation management refers to the integrated approach of fostering creativity and improvement across all areas of a tea company including product development, production processes, quality assurance, marketing, and customer engagement. Rather than focusing on isolated innovations, this approach ensures that every department works collaboratively to enhance value, respond to market demands, and stay competitive. In the tea industry, it involves continuous improvement in tea cultivation, processing techniques, packaging, branding, and distribution to meet evolving consumer preferences and global standards.

The Assistant Factory Manager mentioned that, "*we ensure that product innovation is not just the job of R&D. Our marketing, production, and even quality teams are involved from the very beginning. It's a cross-functional effort to ensure that every product aligns with consumer needs and maintains our brand reputation.*"

#### *Standardization for Global Consistency*

In order to maintain high product standards and ensure consumer trust globally, XYZ Company follows multiple international certifications like ISO 22000:2018 and ISO 9001:2015. As noted by Perera & Weerakoon (2020), quality management systems (QMS) ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality products, which is crucial for maintaining a competitive advantage in the tea industry.

Quality Manager, XYZ Company stated that, *"our certifications are not just a requirement; they are the foundation of everything we do. From production to packaging, each department is aligned with international standards to ensure every batch meets the highest quality"*.

#### *Sustainability through Efficiency*

This theme examined how operational efficiency supports both innovation and sustainability in XYZ Company. With growing concerns about environmental sustainability, tea companies are increasingly focusing on reducing waste and energy consumption. According to Fernando et al. (2022), operational efficiency can lead to sustainable business practices, ensuring that the company can maintain profitability while minimizing its environmental impact.

This theme was justified by the Factory Supervisor, XYZ Company as following way. *"Efficiency isn't just about cutting costs; it's about ensuring our operations align with environmental goals. We're always looking for ways to reduce waste and energy use, which also helps us lower production costs in the long run"*.

#### *Integrating Technology in Production*

This theme focused on the role of technology in enhancing both innovation and operational efficiency. XYZ Company integrates automation, data analytics, and advanced control systems to improve production quality and speed. As suggested by Jayasinghe et al. (2021), technology plays a key role in improving both product quality and operational processes in the tea industry.

Assistant Factory Manager, XYZ Company confirmed this as *"we've invested heavily in automation and technology to streamline production. This allows us to maintain high-quality standards at scale and respond faster to changing consumer demands"*.

**Research Objective 2: To understand the challenges and opportunities encountered by XYZ Company in implementing innovative practices while maintaining high-quality standards and operational efficiency**

#### *Adapting to Market Dynamics*

This theme explored how XYZ Company identifies and responds to market trends, such as the increasing demand for health-focused and organic products. As noted by Herath & De Silva (2021), understanding consumer shifts and adapting products accordingly is vital for maintaining a competitive advantage in global markets.

Factory Manager, XYZ Company mentioned that, *"consumer preferences are always evolving, and we're constantly researching trends in the market. Health-focused teas are becoming more popular, and we have to innovate quickly to meet those demands while ensuring quality"*.

### *Cultural and Organizational Resistance to Change*

This theme focused on the internal barriers to innovation, particularly the resistance to change that can arise within organizations. According to Fernando et al. (2022), even when new technologies or processes are introduced, overcoming resistance from employees and management is crucial for successful innovation.

Field Supervisor and Factory Manager explained that., *"when we first introduced new automated processes, there was a lot of pushback from employees who were used to traditional methods. Majority of workers are Tamil people and they have less literacy on automation. It took time and constant communication to show them the long-term benefits"*.

### *Balancing Tradition and Modernity*

This theme explored how XYZ Company manages the balance between maintaining traditional tea production techniques and integrating modern methods for innovation and operational efficiency. Jayasinghe et al. (2021) emphasize that tea companies must respect tradition while also embracing innovation to stay competitive.

Chief Clerk confirmed this as, *"tradition is something we hold dear, but at the same time, we need to modernize to stay competitive. It's about finding a middle ground where we can keep our classic products but introduce new ones that appeal to modern tastes"*.

### *Regulatory Compliance vs. Innovation Flexibility*

This theme investigated how regulatory requirements, such as HACCP and ISO certifications, impact XYZ Company's ability to innovate. As noted by Perera & Weerakoon (2020), while regulatory standards ensure safety and quality, they can also restrict flexibility in product development. This theme observed from the interview as following way.

*"While we must adhere to strict certifications, we've learned how to innovate within these boundaries. It requires creativity and constant collaboration with certifying bodies to ensure we don't sacrifice flexibility for compliance"* – Assistant Factory Manager

## **4 Discussion**

The findings of this study revealed how XYZ Company navigates the complex dynamics of sustaining a competitive advantage within the Sri Lankan tea industry, through its focus on innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency. These three elements work in tandem to address the challenges faced by the industry, ensuring that the company remains competitive both locally and internationally.

One of the central strategies employed by XYZ Company is innovation, which is vital in maintaining competitiveness in an ever-evolving global market. As noted by Perera and Weerakoon (2020), the global tea industry has experienced substantial shifts in consumer demand, particularly in favor of health-conscious and sustainable products. XYZ Company's introduction of flavored, organic, and functional teas aligns with global trends and offers potential growth opportunities in the international market (Herath & De Silva, 2021). By offering products such as herbal blends, green tea, and fortified varieties with health benefits, XYZ Company can attract a more diverse consumer base, positioning itself alongside international competitors like Lipton and Twinings, who have capitalized on these trends (Euromonitor, 2022). This highlights the company's ability to adapt and innovate within a rapidly changing market environment.

The company's commitment to product innovation is further evidenced by exploring green tea-based skincare products, instant tea powders, and cold-brew tea bottles, which are gaining popularity globally. These innovative products could open new market opportunities and diversify XYZ's offerings, tapping into the wellness and convenience sectors. Moreover, functional teas such as those infused with vitamins, minerals, and detoxifying ingredients represent a growing global market segment. This innovative approach can position XYZ Company to cater to increasingly health-conscious consumers and capitalize on emerging trends in functional foods and beverages.

Furthermore, quality management remains a cornerstone of XYZ Company's competitive advantage. The company's adherence to internationally recognized standards such as ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22000:2018, and HACCP ensures that its products consistently meet the expectations of global consumers (Jayasinghe et al., 2021). According to Jayasinghe et al. (2021), certification to these standards is not only a demonstration of quality but also a strategic tool that enhances a company's market credibility. The implementation of such quality control systems at XYZ Company not only facilitates the production of superior products but also ensures compliance with stringent global market requirements. This commitment to quality is particularly important in markets that demand consistency and reliability, underscoring XYZ's capability to compete with leading global brands.

Operational efficiency plays a significant role in the company's strategy. The findings show that XYZ Company has made substantial efforts to integrate sustainability initiatives into its operations, such as energy-efficient production practices and waste reduction programs. This aligns with global trends where sustainability is a driving force behind consumer decisions, as consumers increasingly prefer brands with a commitment to reducing their environmental footprint (Fernando et al., 2022). By achieving certifications like ISO 50001:2018, XYZ is able to manage energy use more effectively, thus reducing costs and promoting sustainability—both of which contribute to its competitive advantage in the global market.

Despite these positive strategies, the study also identified key challenges faced by XYZ Company, particularly in adapting to market dynamics and overcoming organizational resistance to change. According to Fernando et al. (2022), the adoption of new technologies can often face resistance from employees, especially in industries like tea production where traditional methods are highly valued. XYZ Company's experience with resistance to automated systems reflects this broader trend. However, the company has managed to address this challenge by investing in training and fostering a culture of innovation, which is critical for long-term success (Herath & De Silva, 2021).

Furthermore, the study found that regulatory compliance, while essential, sometimes limits the company's ability to introduce new and innovative products. As noted by Perera and Weerakoon (2020), the Sri Lankan tea industry operates under a strict regulatory framework, which ensures quality but can hinder flexibility in innovation. XYZ Company has mitigated this challenge by working within these constraints to introduce new products that still meet the necessary standards. However, this tension between regulatory compliance and the need for innovation remains a critical issue for the company and others in the industry.

## 5 Conclusion

This qualitative case study on XYZ Company provides valuable insights into how innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency are essential for sustaining a competitive advantage in the Sri Lankan tea industry. The study demonstrates that, while XYZ Company has effectively integrated product innovation and quality management practices, there remain significant opportunities for improvement and growth. The company's focus on product innovation, standardization, sustainability, and technology integration has positioned it as a leading player in the industry, but challenges such as market dynamics, resistance to change, and regulatory constraints still persist.

From my perspective, one key area for improvement would be the introduction of more diverse tea products that cater to niche consumer segments. XYZ Company could consider expanding its product line to include health-focused, organic, and functional teas, which are increasingly sought after by global consumers (Herath & De Silva, 2021). This could include innovations like teas infused with adaptogenic herbs, or functional blends targeting wellness and immunity, which align with global consumer trends for health-conscious products. Furthermore, incorporating value-added products such as ready-to-drink teas or tea-based wellness beverages could provide additional market differentiation.

In addition to product innovations, XYZ Company, along with other tea producers in Sri Lanka, could benefit from adopting a holistic approach to innovation management. This would involve integrating product, process, and organizational innovation across all layers of the business, including R&D, marketing, and operations. By embracing Holistic Innovation Management (HIM), tea companies could ensure that their

innovation efforts are consistent, comprehensive, and aligned with long-term business goals.

Moreover, standardization for global consistency remains a crucial factor in maintaining product quality and reputation in international markets. XYZ Company's adherence to certifications like ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 22000:2018 demonstrates a commitment to maintaining high standards, and this should be a model for the broader industry. Other tea companies could also benefit from investing in these certifications to strengthen their global competitiveness.

Sustainability through operational efficiency is another area where significant improvements can be made. As consumer demand for sustainable practices increases, integrating energy-efficient production processes and reducing waste can enhance a company's environmental credibility. XYZ Company's ongoing efforts to reduce energy consumption and waste could serve as a blueprint for the industry, helping to lower operational costs and attract environmentally conscious consumers (Fernando et al., 2022).

Finally, the integration of technology in production processes, such as automation and data analytics, should be prioritized. These technological advancements not only improve operational efficiency but also enable greater flexibility and responsiveness to changing consumer preferences (Jayasinghe et al., 2021). Smaller companies in the tea industry, including XYZ, can take steps towards adopting these technologies to improve productivity and quality, which would lead to enhanced global competitiveness.

In conclusion, while XYZ Company has already made strides in innovation, quality management, and operational efficiency, there are still many untapped opportunities to improve and expand its product offerings. A holistic approach to innovation, combined with a commitment to sustainability and technological integration, would not only benefit XYZ Company but could also drive the entire Sri Lankan tea industry toward greater success on the global stage.

**Disclosure of Interests:** The author has no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

## References

- i. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- ii. Central Bank of Sri Lanka. (2023). Annual report 2022. <https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/publications/economic-and-financial-reports/annual-reports>
- iii. Euromonitor. (2022). Global tea market analysis and trends. <https://www.euromonitor.com/tea-market-analysis>

- iv. Fernando, T. J., Weerasinghe, S. K., & Rajapakse, K. S. (2022). Sustainability practices in Sri Lankan tea companies: A review of the adoption of green technologies. *Journal of Sustainability in Business*, 23(4), 201–220.
- v. Fernando, Y., Jabbour, C. J. C., & Wah, W. X. (2022). Strategic innovation and environmental performance in the food and beverage industry: An integrated model. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 331, 129963. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.129963>
- vi. Herath, H. M. G., & De Silva, S. S. (2021). Challenges faced by the Sri Lankan tea industry: A study based on selected tea plantations. *Journal of Agricultural Sciences – Sri Lanka*, 16(1), 113–123.
- vii. Herath, H. M., & De Silva, K. S. (2021). Evolving trends in product innovation in the Sri Lankan tea industry. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 18(2), 120–134.
- viii. Jayasinghe, G., De Alwis, A., & Fernando, W. (2021). Product innovation and competitiveness in Sri Lankan tea exports. *Asian Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development*, 11(2), 168–177.
- ix. Jayasinghe, S. B., Perera, N., & Wijesinghe, S. M. (2021). Strategies for sustaining competitive advantage: A study on Sri Lankan tea exporters. *International Journal of Strategic Management*, 19(3), 95–110.
- x. Perera, H., & Weerakoon, D. (2020). Operational efficiency and sustainability in the Sri Lankan tea industry. *Colombo Business Journal*, 11(2), 91–110. <https://doi.org/10.4038/cbj.v11i2.66>
- xi. Perera, L. S., & Weerakoon, D. (2020). Quality management practices and their impact on business performance in the Sri Lankan tea industry. *Sri Lankan Journal of Management*, 12(1), 67–81.
- xii. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
- xiii. Sri Lanka Tea Board. (2024). *Tea manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka*. <https://www.srilankateaboard.lk>
- xiv. Homepage, <http://www.springer.com/lncs>, last accessed 2023/10/25

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

