



Institute of Inner-City Learning

London Campus

Master of Business Administration

LCMB7035 - Dissertation

Dissertation Proposal Structure

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Title:

**Commercial Feasibility of Importing Organic
Afghan Food Products into the UK Market: A
Business Plan and Strategic Evaluation**

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Afghanistan is known for producing high-quality agricultural and food products, especially saffron, dried fruits, nuts, and pine nuts. Afghan saffron has a strong reputation because of its quality, colour, aroma, and purity. In the same way, Afghan almonds, pistachios, raisins, figs, apricots, and pine nuts are also seen as valuable premium products.

At the same time, the UK market has seen growing demand for high-quality, natural, and premium food products in recent years. Many consumers are now more interested in products that are not only good quality, but also authentic, healthy, and different from standard mass-market goods. Because of this, Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and other premium dried fruits and nuts may have good potential in the UK, especially in niche and speciality food markets.

This topic is also personally relevant to me. As someone from Afghanistan, I already understand the value and reputation of these products. Living in the UK has also given me a better understanding of the market here, including customer preferences and the growing interest in ethnic and speciality foods. As an MBA student, I want to research a topic that is both academic and practical, and one that connects to a real business opportunity.

However, importing these products into the UK is not straightforward. There are a number of important issues to consider, including market demand, competition, legal requirements, food standards, packaging, labelling, supply chain issues, costs, and risks. For that reason, this study will look at whether importing these Afghan products into the UK is commercially feasible.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

There are several reasons why this topic is worth studying.

First, Afghanistan has the ability to produce high-quality food products, but these products still face difficulties in reaching international markets in a strong and organised way.

Second, the UK is an attractive market for premium and speciality food products. Many consumers are willing to buy products with a clear origin, good quality, and strong health value.

Third, as an Afghan living in the UK, I can see the connection between the quality of Afghan products and the opportunity available in the British market. This gives the study both personal meaning and practical value.

Finally, this topic links clearly to key MBA areas such as market analysis, business strategy, supply chain management, finance, and risk management. Because of that, it is a suitable and relevant dissertation topic.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the commercial feasibility of importing Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts into the UK market by analysing demand, competition, regulations, supply chain issues, financial viability, and business risks.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To assess demand in the UK market for Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts
- To analyse the level of competition for these products in the UK market
- To examine import requirements, food safety rules, packaging, labelling, and certification requirements
- To evaluate a suitable supply chain model for bringing these products from Afghanistan to the UK
- To analyse costs, pricing, revenue potential, profitability, and break-even point
- To identify key risks, including logistical, political, commercial, and regulatory risks
- To make practical recommendations for market entry

1.5 Main Research Question

Is it commercially feasible to import Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts into the UK market?

1.6 Sub-Questions

- What is the level of demand in the UK for Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts?
- How strong is the competition in this market?
- What legal and compliance requirements need to be met for importing these products?
- What would be the most suitable supply chain for importing them from Afghanistan to the UK?
- What are the likely costs, prices, and profit margins?
- What risks could affect the success of this business?
- What would be the most suitable market entry strategy?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Premium Food Market in the UK

The literature shows that the UK market for premium, natural, health-focused, and speciality food products has been growing. Consumers are not only looking for low prices anymore. Many now care more about quality, authenticity, health benefits, and the story behind the product. This creates an opportunity for Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts.

2.2 International Trade and Market Entry

Research on international trade shows that product quality alone is not enough for successful market entry. Businesses also need to understand market demand, competition, pricing, regulations, and barriers to entry. Products from developing countries often face additional challenges such as branding issues, logistics problems, compliance requirements, and lack of trust in the market.

2.3 Supply Chain and Import Logistics

Importing food products from countries with logistical and infrastructure challenges can be difficult. Important factors include quality control, storage, transport, customs procedures, delivery times, and reliability. A strong and consistent supply chain is therefore essential for success in this type of business.

2.4 Regulation, Certification and Food Standards

Food imports are heavily affected by rules relating to food safety, hygiene, traceability, packaging, labelling, allergen information, and import documentation. Any feasibility study in this area must consider whether the products can meet UK standards and legal requirements.

2.5 Feasibility and Financial Analysis

The literature on feasibility studies shows that a business idea should be assessed through market size, cost structure, revenue potential, pricing, break-even point, profitability, and risk exposure. It is not enough for a product to have market demand; it must also be financially sustainable.

2.6 Gap in the Literature

Although there is a lot of general literature on premium food markets, international trade, and supply chain management, there appears to be limited applied research on the specific feasibility of importing Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts into the UK market. This makes the topic relevant and worthwhile for an MBA dissertation.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This dissertation will use both primary and secondary data, but it will mainly rely on primary data. The reason for this is that I want the study to reflect real opinions, market experience, and practical insight. Secondary data will also be used to support the analysis and strengthen the academic side of the research.

3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data will be used to support the primary research. This may include academic journals, market reports, trade statistics, UK import guidance, food regulations, competitor information, and industry reports. These sources will help provide background, context, and supporting evidence for the study.

3.3 Primary Data

Primary data will be the main part of this research. This may include semistructured interviews, questionnaires, or direct responses from retailers, importers, traders, or consumers. The purpose is to collect real and practical information about demand, pricing, market interest, and business challenges.

3.4 Data Analysis Tools

- SWOT Analysis
- PESTLE Analysis
- Porter's Five Forces
- Cost Analysis
- Break-even Analysis
- Cash Flow Forecast
- Risk Matrix
- Sensitivity Analysis

3.5 Ethical Considerations

If interviews are carried out, the study will follow normal academic ethics requirements, including informed consent, confidentiality, respectful use of information, academic honesty, and compliance with university ethics guidance.

4. Personal Relevance to the Research

This is not just a general topic for me. It connects directly with my own background and experience. I already understand the value, quality, and reputation of Afghan products, and living in the UK has helped me understand the market here as well. I can clearly see the possible business link between high-quality Afghan products and the growing UK demand for premium and speciality foods.

As an MBA student, I want my dissertation to be based on a subject that is not only academic but also useful in real business life. That is why this topic is especially suitable for me. It reflects both my personal interest and a practical business opportunity.

5. Expected Findings

It is expected that this study will show that:

- there is a niche market in the UK for Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts
- Afghan saffron and pine nuts may have a competitive advantage because of their quality and unique origin
- compliance, packaging, labelling, and food regulations will be key factors in market entry
- logistics and supply chain reliability will have a major effect on feasibility
- the business may be feasible, but it may need to begin on a small or focused scale
- profitability will depend on sourcing costs, transport costs, pricing strategy, and market positioning

The study may also show that:

- a partnership model may be better than direct importing at the beginning
- speciality retailers and ethnic markets may be a better starting point than mainstream supermarkets
- a limited product range may be the best way to enter the market first

6. Significance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons.

First, it looks at the commercial potential of valuable Afghan export products in a practical way.

Second, it explores whether there is a realistic opportunity for these products in the UK market.

Third, it brings together key MBA topics such as market analysis, strategy, finance, supply chain, and risk management.

Finally, it may also provide a useful base for a future real business plan.

7. Limitations

This study may face several limitations, including:

- limited access to accurate information from Afghan suppliers
- limited primary market data
- time constraints

- changes in logistics or political conditions
- currency fluctuations
- possible changes in regulations or import requirements

To reduce the effect of these limitations, the study will use careful assumptions, available secondary evidence, and sensitivity analysis.

8. Timeframe

The final dissertation submission date is 8 June 2026, but I aim to complete the research by 18 May 2026, which gives around three extra weeks for final checking and preparation. For that reason, the study is based on an 8-week working plan.

Stage	Time
Final confirmation of topic and planning	Week 1
Literature review and collection of sources	Weeks 1–2
Methodology and research design	Weeks 2–3
Market research and secondary data collection	Weeks 3–4
Financial analysis and feasibility assessment	Week 5
SWOT, PESTLE, Porter's Five Forces and risk analysis	Week 6
Draft writing	Week 7
Revision, referencing, formatting and final version	Week 8

Weekly Dates

Week	Dates
Week 1	24 March – 30 March 2026
Week 2	31 March – 6 April 2026
Week 3	7 April – 13 April 2026
Week 4	14 April – 20 April 2026
Week 5	21 April – 27 April 2026
Week 6	28 April – 4 May 2026
Week 7	5 May – 11 May 2026
Week 8	12 May – 18 May 2026

9. Conclusion

This dissertation proposal presents a practical feasibility study at MBA level on the possibility of importing Afghan saffron, pine nuts, and premium dried fruits and nuts into the UK market.

The topic links directly to my own background, my understanding of Afghan products, my experience of living in the UK, and my academic and business interests. Because of that, it has personal relevance, academic value, and practical business importance.

10. Indicative References

- Porter, M. E. (2008) Competitive Strategy
- Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. Marketing Management
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. Research Methods for Business Students
- UK food market reports
- UK import and food standards guidance
- trade statistics and competitor data
- journal articles on supply chain and feasibility analysis