Chapter 14
Investigating the Effect of E–Learning Technologies on Supply Chain Activities: The Evidence of ELT Book Market

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ABSTRACT
This chapter’s concern is the impact of new technologies in the supply chain of the English Language Teaching (ELT) book market. The chapter’s research starts with a literature review that presents the modern technological solutions for an educational system that can alter the book market’s supply chain. The electronic teaching and reading facilities can reduce costs of production and distribution, but they can also become an ecologically friendly solution to the environmental problems that the world faces today. The statistical analysis of questionnaires has resulted in the Greek ELT market not being willing to change the existing supply chain operations of the ELT sector. Even though the market does not believe that the use of new technologies can result in the replacement of printed books, there is a trend of using them because they provide marketing benefits to their users. This trend can become the reason of a new era within the ELT book market’s supply chain operations.

INTRODUCTION
According to Greek tradition, education is reflected to their sociopolitical and cultural profile. Education is regarded as the means of achieving social and personal progress and sustaining national cultural identity. According to the Greek constitution, every citizen has a right to equal educational opportunities. The first foreign language of Greece is English and is considered as the key to communication with the European Union and the world. Good English skills are considered by
parents and employers to be an essential ability so the demand for it is very high and many thousands of Greeks take English language examinations every year.

The aggregate sector of English Language Teaching education industry in Greece has been very profitable since its existence making the ELT book market one of the most profitable publishing sectors in Greece. The market has been in operation since the Second World War and in a more advanced form since the 1950’s. Initially there were few book publishing companies and Greek customers imported their books straight from England. In the following years and especially during the decade of the seventies, the need for learning English had increased and that resulted in an expansion of teaching resources. From then on the ELT book market boomed until the millennium. Student numbers were increasing and book publishing companies likewise. Books were published in Greece for the needs of the Greek market and Greek publishing companies became a major player of the Greek market. Companies from the USA, UK, Cyprus, and Greece were actively profiting from the Greek ELT market.

The decrease in the numbers of population as also the Greek phenomenon of private lessons and photocopies is responsible according to Esplen (2002) and (2008) for the decline of revenue and operational mode of the Greek ELT book market. The status of the ELT market has changed during the last decade because of technological innovations and new teaching methods. According to Weissberg (2008) and Buzzetto et al. (2007), the digital direction of teaching is the primary aim of the Greek and foreign publishers but the book continues to be the basic teaching material. The replacement of printed books by other electronic sources of teaching such as electronic books, interactive white boards, and internet is upon the progress of the book market internationally. Electronic learning holds only a very small percentage of the aggregate global publishing market but is a worldwide rising market.

This paper focuses its interest on the effect of the new teaching and reading technologies to the supply chain of the Greek ELT publishing sector. Subsequently the paper presents how these technological changes can possibly cope to improve the financial condition of publishing companies and reduce the environmental harmful production and distribution activities of the aggregate supply chain. Moreover, it provides a picture of the ELT’s book market future and a path for other publishing markets to possibly grow in Greece. The adoption of new technologies into the existing educational system is expected to provide costless but very profitable solutions to book publishers by reducing the supply chain activities and the overall cost of production. Those changes are expected to reduce the harmful environmental distribution and production activities by introducing the concept of green logistics.

THE COST OF THE ELT PUBLISHING SUPPLY CHAIN IN GREECE

The Developments in the Publishing Sector

The issues of the Greek publishing sector is according to Banou (2006), Banou and Kostagiolas (2007) as also Banou et al (2008), a major subject of analysis and research for the last decade. According to Esplen’s (2002) and (2008), the Greek ELT publishing sector is presented as mature. The sales unit decline of the Greek ELT publishing market during the last decade which was upon demographic reasons, guided publishers to increase their products’ prices in order to maintain shareholders’ profitability.

Laband and Hudson (2003) stated that book prices are highly correlated to the cost of operations such as writing, editing, printing, transporting, warehousing, distributing and final purchasing in book stores. The amazing finding though is that according to the aforementioned researchers, the