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ISO 20121 APPLIED TO TAOMODA®WEEK FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TERRITORIAL RESOURCES TOWARDS THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY*

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Abstract

The fashion industry is one of the most polluting in the world, as it affects climate change, the exploitation and pollution of water resources, pollution from pesticides, the land use and loss of biodiversity; moreover, in some parts of the world it produces exploitation of female and child labor. The aim of this paper is to find new business management tools suitable for reducing the environmental and social impacts of the fashion industry. To this end, the use of the ISO 20121 standard is proposed, which certifies the management systems for sustainable events. Experimentally, we try to implement this standard at one of the international events in the fashion and design sector, the Taomoda@Week, an already plastic free event that enhances the tourist and entrepreneurial peculiarities of the area, without neglecting the importance of healthy nutrition.

Keywords: circular economy, fashion industry, ISO 20121, Taomoda@Week, sustainable events

1. Introduction

The fast fashion industry owes its special features and structure to its requirements for shortened lead-times, faster inventory turnovers and high order fulfillment rates for customer demand at its peak points (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). The industry has a highly competitive structure that not only puts pressure on costs, but also the ability to offer the “newest” possible trend to the customers (Christopher et al., 2004). Therefore, it requires a

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high degree of responsiveness combined with a certain level of efficiency. This responsiveness to demand is satisfied through the adoption of supply chain strategies like just-in-time sourcing (Bruce et al., 2004), quick response systems (Fernie and Azuma, 2004) and agile SCM (Bruce et al., 2004). However, in order to become and stay responsive, various ethical (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006), employment (De Brito et al., 2008) and environmental issues (Saicheua et al., 2012) are being disregarded, which is creating an unsustainable sectoral structure. Some previous studies have focused on sustainability in fashion or clothing supply chains. The clothing industry is in need of new innovative models of practice to reduce its environmental footprint, which is severe in every phase of the product's life cycle, from raw material extraction to production processes, care and maintenance as well as disposal (BSR, 2009). Carbon impact, water usage, and waste are three of the primary environmental challenges facing the industry (BSR, 2009; Fisher et al., 2008; WRAP, 2012). The fashion industry is global and it is one of the most polluting and socially challenged industries in the world (Armstrong et al., 2015). Specifically, the textile sector is responsible for significant environmental problems associated with the production process due to the use of toxic chemicals, which adversely impact the natural environment and human health (Khan and Malik, 2013). The greenhouse effect and environmental pollution issue have received a great deal of attention. Textile and apparel manufacturers have more corporate social responsibility to protect the environment from pollution. Green products have spread to the textile and apparel industry. Consequently, customers want to buy clothing that is made of organic cotton and green fibers.

Industries currently face pressure on environmental initiatives from both government regulations and global competition in addition to customer pressure. Hence, organizations are forced to implement sustainable practices to improve their environmental performance over economic performance. The Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) system is a concept which ensures environmentally friendly practices in traditional supply chains; in this paper the ISO 20121 standard is proposed, which certifies the management systems for sustainable events. Experimentally, we try to implement this standard at one of the international events in the fashion and design sector, the Taomoda@Week.

2. Case study

Taomoda@Week is international exhibition, which has been held with continuity for 21 years in Sicily, first in Catania and then in Taormina, combines fashion, culture, art, television, science and design; it concludes with the Gala Taomoda Awards, assigned to those who stood out in the various sectors, for the achievement of environmental and ethical sustainability objectives. The possible certification of this event would undoubtedly bring advantages for the reduction in the use of natural resources, and in water, air and soil pollution, for greater protection of biodiversity, but also with respect to social benefits of remuneration and economic equity, such as the enhancement of the human capital of the territory. In addition, this certified sustainable event would serve as a stimulus for the proactive and sustainable behaviors of all participants, to encourage the reuse of waste as a second raw material in the production processes of the fashion and design sector, with a view on the circular economy.

3. Materials and methods

The phrase “fast fashion” refers to low-cost clothing collections that mimic current luxury fashion trends. Fast fashion helps sate deeply held desires among young consumers in the industrialized world for luxury fashion, even as it embodies unsustainability. Current

organizational changes in the fashion industry started approximately 30 years ago when the traditional luxury fashion industry's long-established stable structure was challenged by several environmental changes, particularly globalization, changes in its customer base, and the entrance of competitors into previously protected markets (Djelic and Ainamo, 1999). Until then, the fashion industry had followed a fixed calendar of trade fairs and shows presenting the forthcoming season's trends (Birtwistle et al., 2003). This made it possible to forecast demand as long as a year before the time of consumption based on previous sales data (Guercini, 2001). Fast fashion is characterized by the transformation of trendy design into articles that can be bought by the masses (Sull and Turconi, 2008). This industry aims to attract customers into stores as frequently as possible in order to increase the frequency that they purchase fashionable styles (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). This is achieved through low cost and low price apparel that remains on the shelves for a shorter period of time than the traditional clothing industry (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006; Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010; Tyler et al., 2006). Such structural changes were achieved through the utilization of just-in-time strategies, agile supply chain structures (Bruce et al., 2004) and information driven strategies, such as quick-response systems monitoring real-time data at sales points, and responding quickly to current market information (Christopher et al., 2004). Bruce and Daly (2006) argue that even established supplier-buyer relations in the fast fashion industry should have a short-response nature in order to apply both lean and agile supply chain strategies, while their internal functions should be integrated in order to expedite a smooth buying process. However, these changing circumstances and new ways of doing business in the fast fashion industry have had negative impacts on both environment and society. In order to respond to these increasing environmental and social problems, fast fashion companies have started to adopt sustainable strategies and practices (De Brito et al., 2008; Tokatli et al., 2008).

Apart from the impact of globalization, the nature of the industry itself imposes further environmental and social burdens. Production processes in the textiles industry use chemicals and non-renewable natural resources that harm the environment (De Brito et al., 2008). Increased time pressures, on the order cycles of the fast fashion industry, result in employee abuse and other unethical working practices at manufacturing sites (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Most of the fashion industry labor is located in offshore countries and composed of young, poorly educated people, since the manufacturing process in this sector does not require high skills. Women and children make up most of the workforce in developing countries, since these disadvantaged people accept work at lower wages. In addition, there is a significant amount of forced labor in certain countries, such as Bangladesh (Viederman, 2013). Within this employment structure, the workforce is highly vulnerable to discrimination, bad treatment, low wages and long working hours (Ichimura, 2011). De Brito et al. (2008) divide fast fashion companies into two main groups. The first group is composed of those companies that resist sustainability practices and simply try to survive in a highly demanding environment. The second group is composed of companies trying to adopt and improve sustainability through their supply chains by the utilization of tools such as eco-labeling, management systems, environmental and social audits, communities of practice, fair trade and clean transportation modes.

Sustainability of necessity a primary issue of the twenty-first century- is often paired with corporate social responsibility (Aguilera et al., 2007), informed purchasing decisions, and an emerging green orientation at some companies (Bansal and Roth, 2000; Fletcher, 2008).

Fast fashion-low-cost clothing collections based on current, high-cost luxury fashion trends-is, by its very nature, a fast-response system that encourages disposability (Fletcher, 2008; Tokatli, 2008; Skov, 2002). Firms in the fashion apparel industry have increasingly

embraced the philosophy of “fast fashion” retailing (Passariello, 2008; Rohwedder and Johnson, 2008). Generally speaking, a fast fashion system combines at least two components:

1. short production and distribution lead times, enabling a close matching of supply with uncertain demand (which we refer to as quick response techniques);
2. highly fashionable (“trendy”) product design (Cachon and Swinney, 2011).

4. Results and discussion

Zhu et al. (2005) investigated China’s textile, automobile, power generating, chemical/petroleum, electrical and electronic industries and proposed four ways to implement GSCM practices:

- (1) internal environmental management: managers support for environmental management and environmental system installment;
- (2) external GSCM: companies ask their suppliers to enhance the environmental performance and collaborate with their customers;
- (3) eco-design: companies should redesign their products in order to reduce raw material/energy usage and let these products be able to recycle and remanufacture; and
- (4) investment recovery: companies should sell excess inventory/material, scrap and used materials in order to return the capital.

5. Concluding remarks

As a long-term strategy for all companies in the sector, changing consumer preferences and creating positive attitudes towards sustainability can ultimately increase the overall sustainability performance of sector. Particularly those companies producing luxury fashion products can take a leading role in initiating such a change in the sector.

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