

Corporate Social Responsibility through Collaboration in the Supply Chain: Insights into a More Sustainable Economy

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a helpful tool in solving significant societal concerns in countries where there is a greater desire for social and economic growth, such as Pakistan.

Methodology

In order to examine the current issues on supply chain collaboration for sustainability, this paper used a triangulation research method. In order to determine indicators in a CSR-intensive environment, data, and literature, the energy sector publications on EUR-Lex, international and European official papers, and the online site of the European Commission data sources were analyzed in this study. The indicators were divided into groups based on their sources (sets of standards and guidelines, council frameworks, document series, tools, and comprehensive legislation), as well as their intended uses (financial, social, and environmental).

Findings

The findings state that supply chain collaboration completely fulfills CSR for a viable economy. It focuses on three leading fashion brands and assesses their impact using open-source data, past research, and their official websites. It also highlights how, in comparison to global corporations, Pakistani business satisfies their corporate social responsibility.

Conclusion

It is concluded that a supply chain can help companies minimize the environmental impact of their supply chain processes. Further, CSR is a part of the supply chain that helps businesses determine their social and economic responsibilities by focusing on environmental aspects to add to a more sustainable economy.

1. Introduction

Partnerships between organizations are critical in this difficult environment. This is especially true in large social networks, when each partner is crucial in establishing incentives for everyone. Organizations are realizing that to be genuine to their community, they must be respected by their colleagues, clients, and the community (Chen, Wang, and Li 2022). Supply chain networks (SCN) include a variety of interconnected processes that transform raw materials into final goods, as well as accompanying data streams. Both material flow and data flow are bidirectional in SCN (Rauf et al. 2022). Everyone in this SCM process is still worried about environmentally friendly products, which are more important than ever. Customers and their purchasing decisions are influenced by normal execution (Ahmed et al. 2022). Several experts studied the link between the implementation of green supply chain management (GSCM) and the company's product (Tahir et al. 2018). In their research of the Spanish car market, found two types of internal and external barriers to the planned operational implementation of natural arrangements.

SCN Supervisors are important to collectors and their inventory network partners. Manufacturers have traditionally had a negative influence on many common environments by generating trash (Mackie and Campbell 2023), disturbing the ecological framework, and depleting natural resources (Zeb Khaskhelly et al. 2022). Companies have been reported to be hesitant or ineffective when it comes to incorporating GSC components into their production networks (Rafiq, Aamir, and Nadeem 2021).

As a result, Pakistan's National Solid Waste Management (NPSWM) policy requires all firms to accept significant responsibility for the environmental impact of their activities. Green upgrades reduce contemporary waste, reduce employment expenses, promote efficiency, and raise a company's monetary worth. As a result, the Organization pledges to track any natural or human assets that improve the lifestyles of its members, for whom prosperity is a key indicator of long-term growth. Table 1 and Figure 1 show the extent to which well-known corporations like Nike, H&M, and LV adhere to CSR. In this area, Nike consistently surpasses Louis Vuitton. Similarly, H&M has always been decent to average.

Table 1: Measurement of The Commitment on Social Responsibility

Social Engagement	H&M	Nike	LV
Work Practices	13	15	3
HR	8	12	1
Society	3	4	2
Product Accountability	2	0	0
Total	26	31	6

Source: Boddy, Ladyshevsky, and Galvin 2010

As a result, the CSC network can help to reduce resource waste and, to a lesser extent, resource depletion. CSC is a technique in which cultures work together in iterative circles to achieve a shared goal. Over time, the cooperation has grown to encompass a wide range of external organizations, including preparatory agencies, government departments, and non-legislative organizations (Towill 1997). Internal joint efforts, external vertical coordination efforts, and exterior hierarchical cooperation are the three forms of supply chain collaboration (HOU et al. 2021). External sectors and even cooperation processes are intended to develop contacts with the players in the production network in the upstream and downstream phases, such as (suppliers, consumers, service providers) and committee parties, respectively (e.g., government, competitors, NGOs).

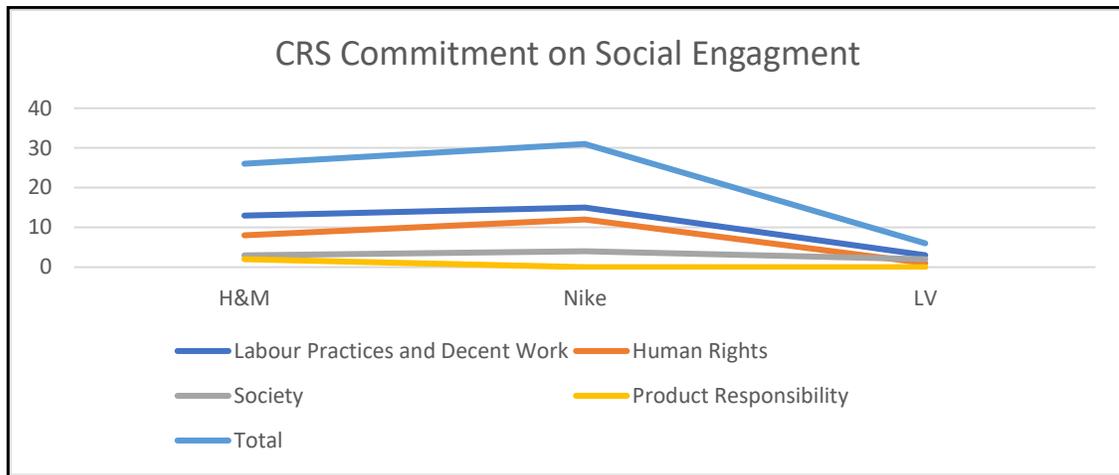


Figure 1: Demographic presentation of CRS and CSR
Source: Begum Siddiqui et al. 2023

Despite its critical role in a sustainable economy, little research has been done on fostering green innovation through collaboration in supply chain settings, and companies have struggled to understand how to characterize problems for effective coordination efforts, even in the eyes of practitioners (Khokhar et al. n.d.). We conducted this extensive literature analysis to analyze the current state of the area to fill this enormous research gap, which would have severe consequences for SCN and economics. Furthermore, our evaluation considers companion screening:

1. How does CSR for a sustainable economy aid in the development of collaborative practices in the fashion industry's supply chain?
2. How can CSR in the supply chain contribute to the fashion industry's objective of sustainable consumption and production?
3. What are the essential steps or activities that the fashion industry can do to improve its supply chain's capacity to achieve sustainable consumption and production goals?

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyzing corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a helpful tool in solving significant societal concerns in countries where there is a greater desire for social and economic growth, such as Pakistan. The rest of the study is organized as follows. The section 1 is introduction, section 2 followed by literature review, section 3 material, and methods, while the section 4 briefly described the results and discussion which discusses the observations previously made in the study, and finally in section 5 a conclusion of the entire study along followed by limitations of the study and future direction for further research on the topic.

Economic, social entrepreneurship, and corporate social responsibility activities are progressively driving social inclusion and societal well-being in today's world (Sultan, Shaikh, and Imtiaz 2021). As a result, we believe that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a useful instrument for addressing major societal issues in nations where there is a larger desire for social and economic prosperity (Jung, Kim, and Rhee 2001). Pakistan's fashion sector is one of the most important contributors to the country's economy. Nonetheless, the sector has been chastised for its environmental and social implications, which include

unsustainable manufacturing processes, poor working conditions, and waste creation (Le 2022). As a result, several businesses have begun to implement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, such as engagement with their supply chain partners.

Nevertheless, the impact of such cooperation in improving sustainability in Pakistan's fashion sector is yet unknown (Carter and Jennings 2002). As a result, the challenge addressed by this study is: How might cooperation in the supply chain help to Corporate Social Responsibility and a more sustainable economy in Pakistan's fashion industry?

2. Literature Review

The literature review highlights Pakistani industries, particularly garment manufacturers, in seeking for long-term expansion. Several studies show that when a firm grows in terms of innovation, it accepts environmental ideals and incorporates them into its social activities (Pedersen, An, and 2006 2006). Furthermore, with 92% of the population affected by air pollution as a result of WHO rule violations (Cezarino et al. 2022), (Yumei Hou 2020), the Asia Pacific region has more environmental difficulties than other areas (Javeed et al. 2021). We picked Pakistan for our inspection because the country's political volatility, poor regulatory enforcement, social and ecological difficulties, and higher levels of pollution (Dal Mas et al. 2022). Data for contextual analysis comes from publicly accessible sources such as regulatory websites, online articles, and dissertations (Sultan et al. 1AD). Table 2 and Figure 2 summarize the survey findings depending on the amount of social commitment demonstrated by H&M, Nike, and LV.

Table 2: Score of CSR On Environmental Commitment

Engagement	Issues	H&M	Nike	LV
Environmental	Materials	5	5	0
	Energy	3	3	2
	Water	3	3	0
	Emissions	3	2	2
	Effluents and Waste	3	3	5
	Products and Services	0	2	2
	Compliance	3	3	3
	Transport	2	0	3
	Supplier environmental assessment	4	3	2

Source: Mohamud, 2018

Pakistan is linked to more apparent concerns such as poor air quality, severe sea drainage, unfiltered chemicals in industry, and so on, which are rarely recognized (Irshad et al. 2019). The literature on SSCM emphasizes the need of balancing environmental, social, and monetary concerns (Fahad et al. 2022). Suppliers are crucial in this case since they manufacture products while also ensuring the environmental and social environment (Gao et al. 2021).

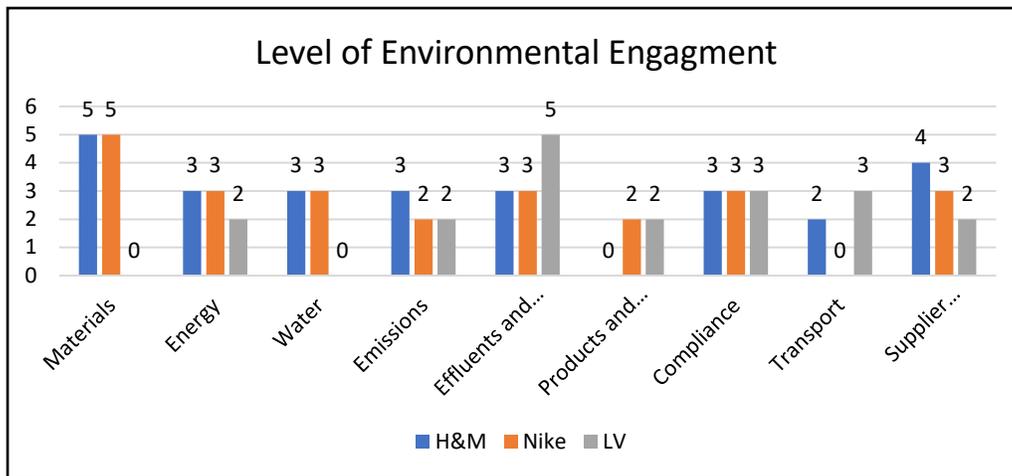


Figure 2: Level of Environmental Commitment
Source: Dal Mas et al. 2022

2.1. Green Innovation (GI)

Partners of organizations are more worried with societal and environmental challenges in today's unique world (Sudusinghe and Seuring 2022). Concerns about nature, such as environmental change, pollution, emission of harmful substances into the ozone layer and so on, are widely circulated these days, prompting people to pay attention to the state of the environment. GI was established, with an emphasis on both fresh clean progress and via foundation and natural evolution, especially in emerging economies (Vazquez-Brust, Smith, and Sarkis 2014). GI encompass advancements that reduce negative climate impacts, allowing businesses to continue operations while also benefitting their partners and society. Product, process, and technological innovations such as pollution avoidance, energy savings, and waste reuse may help organizations enhance their reputation and competitiveness while distinguishing themselves in the marketplace (Chan et al. 2020). Organizations increasingly expect that more enticements will quickly bring new incentives to market. To that end, green development provides an excellent opportunity to boost the cost of green products while surpassing competitors (Ludwig, Management, 2022).

GI is an important indicator for business exhibitions in today's unique climate. The geographical indicator includes the evolution of dangers of processes and commodities that are not harmful to the environment and are safe for customers. GI is concerned with the commercialization of processes and products that promote efficiency through increased material output and waste reduction, hence increasing customer satisfaction and enhancing environmental performance (Khokhar et al. 2020).

2.2. Green Strategy (GS)

GS is reasonably described as a relevant technology for business systems, activities, and resources. GS helps companies amplify the beneficial outcomes of the natural environment in their dynamic cycles. GS is concerned with incorporating environmental concerns and risks into decisions about nature's support capabilities. It should be noted that this action is carried out on purpose (Hou et al. 2021), as part of a recognized business responsibility to society and the environment, as well as to provide economic benefits for the partners. For this to happen, the company's regulations must keep up with the company's operations in a proper and ethical manner and satisfy the partners' anticipated commitments. GS stands for business procedures, activity systems, and resource processes that are employed to achieve company goals.

This impact on corporate operations may be seen across a wide range of items, management, customers, partners, markets, and landscapes (Olson 2008). The increased knowledge of natural catastrophes among partners has encouraged firms to respond and adapt quickly to partner demands in support of environmental concerns. Following that, public services were often seen as a supplement to businesses (whether private or public, commercial, or non-commercial) as a reference for effective natural disaster response.

2.3. Sustainable Firm Performance (SFP)

SFP stands for Physical, Social, and Monetary Performance Indicators for a Business. So, whereas social performance implies social growth, environmental performance implies improving the climate by decreasing emissions and pollutants in order to battle environmental corruption. (Chojnacka, Business, 2016).

2.4 The Correlation Between Corporate Social Responsibility and Supply Chain Revenue

SCM builds a global nested SCN organization to study the impacts of CSR on value, coordination factors, and SCN efficiency, demonstrating that CSR can effectively enhance inventory network productivity: the higher the CSR, the lower the cost of things and the higher the market demand. (Chan et al. 2020). Numerous studies have shown a positive association between the production network, social responsibility, and monetary execution (Sultan et al. 2021). CSR via SCM has recently attracted greater interest in the domain of operations management research due to its real-world environmental and economic benefits and has showed how CSR interests may assist ventures in acquiring likely earnings in favorable performance and compensating for a venture's prospective unfavorable standing (Omoloso et al. 2020).

3. Methodology

Owing to the analytical character of this research, we choose a triangulation study technique to address the research. The analysis of the case follows the technique of examining, classifying the indicators which were divided into groups based on their sources (sets of standards and guidelines, council frameworks, document series, tools, and comprehensive legislation), as well as their intended uses (financial, social, and environmental) as shown in Figure 3.

Researchers have supported case studies as a qualitative search tool to explore a focused phenomenon to construct and expand theories and better understand corporate social responsibility for sustainable economy. Although multiple-case study may give greater generalization, single-case research delivers a rich and deep tale with a strong.

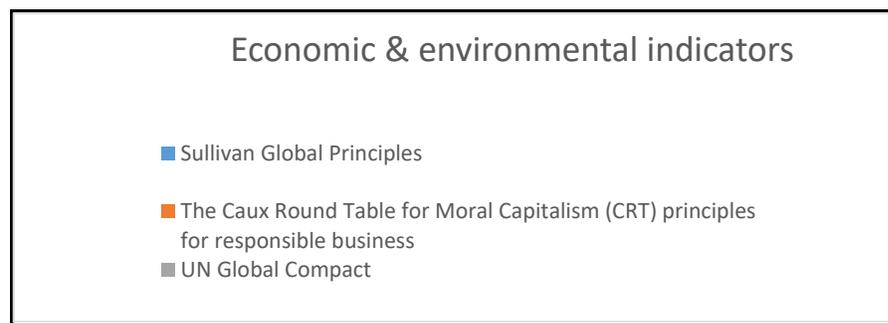


Figure.3. Economic and Environmental Indicators
Source: Martos-Pedrero et al. 2023

Table 3: Selected Indicators in Economic and Environmental Groups

CSR analyzing tools	Indicators				References
	Economic	Social	Environmental	All	
Guidelines					
Sullivan Global Principles	2	7	2	9	Seth and Williams (2000)
CRT Guidelines for business	2	6	2	8	CRT (2021)
UN Global Compact	2	7	4	11	UN, Global Compact (2021)
Compliance Initiative	2	10	2	12	BSCI (2021)
Initiative for Sustainability	9	35	35	77	ICS (2018)
OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	10	23	9	40	OECD (2011)
Managing systems					
SA 8000	4	15	–	12	SAI (2021)
ISO 14001	–	5	38	42	ISO (2021)
ISO 14031	–	5	38	42	
ISO 26000	2	32	5	38	
Index series					
Respect Index (Polska)	18	21	15	52	Warsaw Stock Exchange (2021)
FTSE4GOOD series	2	–	–	2	FTSE Russell (2021)
DJSI	2	–	–	2	S&P Global (2021)
Conservation Association for E&I petroleum	2	22	16	44	IPIECA et al. (2020)
Tools & reporting guidelines					
GRI standards for Sustainability Reporting Guidelines	10	49	35	92	Global Reporting Initiative (2013)
Total	69	243	203	491	

Source: Lyon and Maxwell, 2007

4. Results and Discussions

This section provides and ties our findings into a comprehensive strategy for handling the SCM in light of the CSR notion. The challenges brought on by the changing economy, society, and climate are addressed by the long-term, essential methodology known as corporate social responsibility. SC is a crucial area that contributes to ecological conflict and affects the welfare of people and the global economy. Long-term changes have been

made to the CSR concept to make it more contemporary, balance its importance with workable improvement goals, and increase the consideration of partners and organizations. Emanation and contamination reduction are seen as crucial parts of the management process in the modern, powerful world. CSR is thought to work best with GS in this particular situation to advance.

The adoption of a green supply chain (GS) has a favorable impact on both social and financial performance (SFP) and corporate social responsibility (CSR). According to existing literature (Hou et al. 2023), the collaborative integration of top environmental management practices among supply chain partners is anticipated to facilitate innovation and advance sustainable solutions. When environmental concerns are acknowledged by all supply chain partners, the importance of green innovation becomes crucial in developing solutions that enhance environmental performance through the promotion of eco-friendly product and process innovation. By leveraging the value creation theory, companies can attain higher performance by tapping into synergies generated from meaningful integration based on sustainability value and collective efforts towards discovering innovative solutions for greener campaigns in a more cost-effective manner. This finding was applicable to both groups, including the low-stress and high-stress groups.

The correlation was more pronounced among firms with high levels of corporate social responsibility, implying that heightened pressure from consumers leads to increased innovation investment, thereby capitalizing on enhanced supply chain integration. With society's increasing consciousness regarding sustainable development challenges and the need for optimal resource utilization, the market is moving towards eco-friendly solutions to fulfill human needs, prompting well-informed customers and NGOs to scrutinize companies, which can foster green innovation (Dal Mas et al. 2022). As a result, businesses need to react proactively to such pressure, prioritize competitiveness, and reinvent themselves to keep their customers effectively engaged.

The resource-based viewpoint emphasizes the significance of a firm's resources and capabilities in fostering innovation, and sheds light on the interplay between innovation and the firm's overall performance [19]. With customers facing more scrutiny, businesses are now expected to meet the demands of a more educated society by promoting civility. Amidst a complex, uncertain, and ambiguous world, companies that position themselves as agents of positive change by offering sustainable options for society are better poised to capture new markets. A successful organizational strategy with positive outcomes for all will undoubtedly hinge on the ability to consistently pursue meaningful change and remain adaptable to meet the evolving needs and expectations of customers. Nevertheless, solely investing in innovation is insufficient. Companies, particularly in the fashion industry, that possess robust organizational capabilities are more inclined to embrace a proactive environmental strategy, take the necessary steps to implement innovative measures, build a cleaner and more sustainable world, and offer products and services that contribute to environmental conservation for sustainable living. Thus, the effect on performance may be indirect, specifically through the development of new environmentally friendly products.

5. Conclusion

In order to look into the present body of literature on supply chain collaboration for sustainability, this work used a triangulation research method. In this specialized sector, we discovered that the majority of publications were published in the twenty-first century. We used content analysis to group the extant literature on the various approaches, subjects, and shifting research goals across time in this field of study. Organizations in developing

nations like Pakistan encounter several challenges especially in their fashion industries, that their counterparts in developed countries with more stable institutional environments do not. It is sometimes believed that, given the challenges they face, it is absurd to expect them to act in a socially responsible manner when they are already struggling to survive. However, research and developments in education have revealed that organizations that aim for an ethical culture can still make a profit while doing good and making a positive social impact. Even in the face of formidable obstacles, fashion related organizations in developing nations can benefit from incorporating responsible practices into their culture, as these practices help build trust between employees and customers, which leads to better customer loyalty, higher performance for the company, and an improved reputation in the local community. Additionally, these practices can lead to greater transparency and accountability, which can help prevent corruption and have a long-term benefit for the organization and the environment. Despite the obstacles, organizations in developing nations especially Pakistan, should strive to incorporate responsible practices into their culture to reap the long-term rewards .

5.1. Limitations and Future Directions

Our study has some limitations. From the perspective of contingency, we first examine the particularity of the Pakistani fashion business satisfies its corporate social responsibility, especially the conflict between the logic of the state and the logic of the market. Future research may consider potential contextual differences between countries and possibly even other moderators of the relationships revealed (e.g., buyer-supplier relationship strength). Second, we sampled a variety of industries; follow-up research should look at individual sectors and compare findings across them. For example, such studies should determine whether specific industries show different relationships between consistency and firm performance. Third, although some accounting-based metrics are found to be marginally predictable by CSR alignment, we only find a direct positive relationship between CSR alignment and firm sales growth.

Author Contributions:

Farhan Zeb Khaskhelly and Ali Raza: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Response to reviewers' comments. Hemal Azhar and Nida Zehra: Results estimation, Theoretical foundation, Review, Hypothesis Testing. Muhammad Hassan Safdar and Maryam Khokhar: Data curation, writing original draft, Tabulation of Data, Investigation, Rewriting, Formal analysis, reviewing and editing.

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