



Hybrid value chains as catalyst for sustainable innovation in “fast fashion” model

Iván Bazán

ISEM Fashion Business School

ivan.bazan@isem.es

Abstract

The “fast fashion” is a business model characterized by optimize its supply chain producing high volumes of garments latest trends mainly in developing countries and making it available to the customer in a short period of time at highly affordable price. But the model has generated much controversy over the working conditions of its suppliers, the high amount of resources consumed and waste generated both in its production chain as discarded garments by their customers because of the low prices and high turnover. Even though fast fashion companies are making efforts to launch innovative initiatives as circular economy and upcycled but they seem to be not enough. The model itself and the speed necessary to maintain the market share makes it difficult to innovate sustainably within organizations and impossible the implementation of projects. Can the Hybrid Supply Chain model along with social entrepreneurs innovate the “fast fashion” model to transform it in more sustainable? Trying to answer that question we have analyzed in this paper the case of the winning projects of Fabric for Change award launched by Ashoka Changemaker and C&A Foundation, and the winning projects of Global Change Award H&M Conscious Foundation. In these cases, we analyze how the collaboration with social entrepreneurs creating Hybrid Value Chains (HVC) is generating sustainable innovation within their own value chains. We use that methodology because it tries to explain how and why these companies act as well. The results determine which system-changing concept with a global scalability are crucial to speak of a successful sustainable innovation and to create a hybrid value chain involves an unstoppable group of indefatigable people who are ready to accept liabilities and challenges because they really trust that what they are doing is not only about benefits but also about sustainable development in apparel industry and society. This theoretical contribution has huge applicability in the fashion industry.

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Keywords

Sustainable innovation, fast fashion, circular economy, Hybrid Supply Chain, social entrepreneurship