

Are Regulatory Requirements Antecedent of Internal GSCM Practices in the Textile Industry? The Case of Spain

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Abstract

Background scientific research: Climate change, ecological concerns, and environmental regulation pressures force companies to manage their daily activities from a more ecological perspective (Mutingi et al., 2014). These pressures are becoming more relevant for companies and providers (Dou et al., 2018), shifting from controlling pollution in their value chain to preventing it.

The textile industry is one of the seven key value chains identified by the EU in the Circular Economy Action Plan (European Commission, 2020) that requires urgent measures and actions to move towards a more sustainable production and consumption. Therefore, only in 2022 the European Commission has launched or is going to launch an extensive set of measures, including the EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles published on the 30th of March 2022, the Sustainable Products Initiative, and a legislative proposal for substantiating green claims made by companies (European Commission, 2022).

The academic literature has extensively addressed the main issues of sustainability in the fashion and textile industry (Luján-Ornelas et al. 2020; Henninger et al., 2016; ILO, 2014). The recent literature on Green Supply Chain Management drivers and practices is also prominent (Osoasanmi, Ojo, Ogundimu & Oke, 2022; Hebaz & Oulfarsei, 2021; Huang & Huang, 2021), although there is no agreement on which are the prevailing practices in GSCM.

The drivers are critical factors to achieve GSCM practices (Dhull & Narwal, 2016). They allow GSCM practices to generate a positive impact on environmental performance (Sarkis et al. 2010).

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According to different authors (Maditati et al., 2018; Dubey et al., 2014; Agan et al., 2013; Caniato et al. (2012) four drivers have been selected (environmental awareness, regulatory requirements, internal motivators and external pressure), to identify their influence over the internal practices of GSCM (both in processes and in products), and their correlation with the economic and the environmental performance of the companies.

This theoretical model has been applied to the fashion and textile industry in Spain.

Research issue to be addressed: This study aimed to investigate whether the regulations acted as drivers for implementing internal practices in Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) in the fashion and textile industry in Spain. It was a part of a broader study in which drivers and barriers of both internal and external practices were identified.

Methodology used: There was an analysis of 166 Spanish companies with more than ten employees, whose NACE (statistical classification of economic activities) were related to the manufacture of textiles, apparel, leather and related products, or wholesale of textile products, garments and shoes. 98% of the companies interviewed were SMEs, which is congruent with the textile sector in Europe.

The methodology was based on questionnaires addressed to the main responsible for implementing sustainability in the companies: sustainability manager, supply chain manager, CEO, etc. The questions used validated scales in previous research. All of them were measured on a Likert scale, from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). There were 20 items for drivers, 21 for internal practices and 12 for economic and environmental performance. The fieldwork was done between September and October 2021, sending the questionnaires to 2,805 companies.

Results achieved: The results showed that the regulatory requirements do not influence the implementation of practices GSCM in the textile and fashion companies in Spain.

Indeed, there were until now, few regulations mainly related to waste, and many recommendations focused on the circular economy, but there were not mandatory.

The new regulations coming from the European Union may change the trend and act as drivers, but companies should prepare to adapt to this shift.

Keywords: GSCM, drivers GSCM, regulatory requirements, sustainability, fashion-textile industry.

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