
IMPLEMENTATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE FAST FASHION INDUSTRY

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Course code: YSS-81812
Date: July 6, 2020
BSc Thesis BBC, major Business Studies
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Abstract

Sustainability and fast fashion seem to be opposites. The fast fashion in its very definition is unsustainable, influencing consumers to buy clothes whenever a trend appears and dispose them as soon as the trend is over. However, over the past decade, fast fashion retailers have increasingly engaged in attempts to improve sustainability within their practices. Fast fashion retailers are implementing strategies of corporate social responsibility to achieve higher levels of sustainability in their businesses. This means that they are not only looking at financial performance anymore, but they are also reporting on their social and environmental performance. This thesis looks at the corporate social responsibility strategies that are implemented by fast fashion retailers, and at why this corporate social responsibility is of importance to fast fashion retailers. This thesis puts the emphasis on the supply chain focus of the fast fashion industry, fast fashion retailers' motives for implementing strategies of corporate social responsibility and the representation of social and environmental sustainability in the strategies of corporate social responsibility of fast fashion retailers. By looking at these three aspects respectively, the aim of this thesis is to find out how corporate social responsibility is actually implemented in the fast fashion industry.

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Introduction

Corporate social responsibility has been a much-discussed topic within literature over the last decades. This is reflected by the fact that there are many different definitions given for the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The World Business Council for Sustainable Development defined CSR as:

“Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.” (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 1998, p.3)

According to that same report of the WBCSD (1998), companies have seven core values, and this is also what CSR should be about. These core values are human rights, employee rights, environmental protection, community involvement, supplier relations, monitoring, and stakeholder rights (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 1998). The two main features distinguishing CSR from other activities are that they make a positive contribution to society and that they are not obliged by law (Arvidsson, 2010).

The great amount of literature on the topic of CSR is explained by the result of a survey conducted by Price Water House Cooper’s International in 2002, saying that more than 70% of the international executives consider CSR essential for companies’ survival and growth (Simms, 2002).

The Development of CSR

The idea of CSR was already developed in 1953 by economist Howard Bowen, in his book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*. In this book, Bowen acknowledged that the actions of the businessman affect the lives of us all. He stated that the decisions of the businessman have their consequences way beyond himself, his stockholders and his customers (Bowen, 1953). From that article in the 1950s on, CSR is said to be developed in five stages: phase 1: Corporate Social Stewardship (1950s – 1960s); phase 2: Corporate Social Responsiveness (1960s – 1970s); phase 3 Corporate-Business Ethics (1980s – 1990s); phase 4: Corporate Global Citizenship (1990s – 2000s); and phase 5: Toward a Millennial Future (2000s – 3000s) (Weber & Wasieleski, 2018). These phases are an extension to the two phases described by William Frederick in 1994. The two phases he distinguished were, as he called it, CSR1 and CSR2. CSR1, the earlier stage of CSR, was a more philosophical-ethical concept that believed corporations were obliged to work for social improvements (Frederick, 1994). This shifted towards a CSR2, in which CSR was more used as an action-oriented managerial concept based on the capacity of a company to respond to social pressures (Frederick, 1994). CSR3 is the phase in which CSR is becoming concerned with corporate culture, putting emphasis on issues like respect for human rights, achievement of social justice, promotion of community welfare and environmental protection (Weber & Wasieleski, 2018). CSR4 is extending on planetary sustainability. CSR5 is a view on the future, with its unpredictability and challenges to human culture and existence (Weber & Wasieleski, 2018).

With globalization, the importance and magnitude of CSR is growing (Vogel, 2007). With the process of globalization corporations have become more influential, and are now the most powerful institutions on the international stage (Vogel, 2007). Next to this, the increasing pressure coming from consumers and activists together with NGOs responding to this trend is causing a need for CSR in companies (Vogel, 2007). This pressure of consumers is due to the current society in which the media can spread news fast and far, making consumers more aware of the actions of multinational corporations (Harrington, 2011). The influence of globalization on the rise of CSR is also described in the earlier mentioned phase 4 of CSR, also named CSR4 (Weber & Wasieleski, 2018). CSR4 is built around the idea of achieving sustainability, both corporate and planetary. This urge to achieve planetary sustainability can be seen as a consequence of globalization, because big companies are doing business all over the world, causing ecological damage as they do so (Weber & Wasieleski, 2018). Next to the increasing ecological damage by big companies, globalization also offers multinationals opportunities for more outsourcing to countries with lower labor wages, enlarging chances for a potential downfall of labor rights (Harrington, 2011). Corporate social responsibility strategies could therefore serve as a way to avoid public anger towards these multinationals and their practices (Harrington, 2011).

During CSR4, that is said to be covering the time from the 1990s until the 2000s, another important development had taken place on the area of CSR. This development is the introduction of the “Triple Bottom Line” (TBL), a concept that makes corporate ideas about sustainability more explicit (Elkington, 1999). The idea behind the TBL is that corporations should measure their success or health not only in terms of the traditional financial bottom line, but also in terms of their social and environmental performance (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Companies should shift to a value creation in the three different spheres – social, environmental and economic (Elkington, 1999). These three spheres are based on the definition of sustainable development in the Brundtland report, which included addressing three key elements: ecological environment, economy, and social equity (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The concept of TBL became extremely popular, and had consequences for the way businesses were organized (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Accounting firms use measures based on TBL, the investment industry is screening companies based on their social and environmental performance, and governments are also using TBL principles (Norman & MacDonald, 2004).

Fast fashion

One industry that has really developed within the current globalized world is the fashion industry, more specifically, the fast fashion industry (Todeschini et al., 2017). The textile and apparel industry was one of the first industries to seek low-wage labor in developing countries (Garcia-Torres et al., 2017). The globalization of the fast fashion industry is due to a combination of transnational outsourcing and the relocation of business activities (Garcia-Torres et al., 2017). Therefore, the networks of most fast fashion retailers nowadays consist of suppliers distributed all over the world, making them very complex (Todeschini et al., 2017). Next to globalization, there is also a change in consumer demand that pressured the fast fashion industry to change towards fast fashion systems (Lueg et al., 2015). Consumers

demand lower prices, and to be able to offer lower prices, companies had to outsource to countries with lower wages (Lueg et al., 2015).

In general, fast fashion systems are characterized by two main aspects: they have short production and distribution lead times, and they have highly fashionable product design capturing the latest trends (Cachon & Swinney, 2011). Therefore, the fast fashion industry, with its cheap collections based on expensive luxury fashion trends, is by its nature encouraging disposability (Joy et al., 2012). The characteristics of the fast fashion industry – high volumes, low prices and short lead times – bring many sustainability challenges for the sector (Garcia-Torres et al., 2017). The sustainability challenges that fast fashion is coping with are both on the social and environmental level.

However, the fast fashion industry can change. With the increasing awareness about sustainability among consumers, their willingness to pay a higher price for sustainable apparel and textile products also increases (Shen et al., 2017). The higher prices that customers are willing to pay when a product is more sustainable, could be a reason for companies to implement CSR strategies enabling them to produce more sustainable and to communicate this towards (potential) customers.

Problem Statement

From the introduction, it becomes clear that CSR has changed over the past years into a strategy that should fit the companies in the fast fashion industry perfectly. With their globalized character, CSR strategies can almost be called essential for fast fashion corporations. However, within scientific literature, the actual CSR strategies implemented by the companies within the fast fashion industry remain ambiguous. There is not so much written that could clarify the specific CSR strategies that are implemented in the fast fashion industry. Since the fast fashion industry is very different from many other industries, the CSR used in it might be different, too. However, in literature, only a small amount of literature on the distinguishing features of CSR in the fast fashion industry can be found. This is further explained in the limitations part of this thesis.

Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to get an overview of why and how CSR is implemented by retailers within the fast fashion industry. By getting this overview, the typical characteristics of CSR in the fast fashion industry might become visible. By looking at some of the typical characteristics of CSR in the fast fashion industry, it might become clear whether CSR in the fast fashion industry is different from other CSR implementations, and what are these distinguishing aspects of CSR. So, the research is aimed at finding out why fast fashion retailers want to contribute to social and environmental sustainability, and how fast fashion retailers actually do this. This can be done by focusing on different aspects of CSR.

Research Questions

Main question:

How are strategies of corporate social responsibility implemented by fast fashion retailers?

Sub questions:

SQ1: To what extent is corporate social responsibility within the fast fashion industry focused on supply chains?

SQ2: What are different motives for implementing strategies of corporate social responsibility by fast fashion retailers?

SQ3: How are the social and environmental bottom lines accounted for within the corporate social responsibility implementations of fast fashion retailers?

Methods

This study is a literature review combined with an analysis of the CSR implementations of a small selection of fast fashion retailers. The three sub-questions support the main research question. The main research question can be answered by looking at different aspects of CSR within the fast fashion industry, which could eventually lead to an overall view on how strategies of CSR are implemented in the fast fashion industry. In this study, this means focusing on how CSR is implemented in the fast fashion industry (focusing on supply chains or not), on why CSR is implemented within the fast fashion industry (motivation), and on the social or environmental domains of CSR that exist within the fast fashion industry.

The first sub-question will be answered in the first chapter. This chapter will include additional information about the structure of the fast fashion industry, it explains why this industry is different from other industries, and what the role of supply chains is in the fast fashion industry. The first sub-question will investigate to what extent CSR in the fast fashion industry is focused on supply chains. By investigating this, the importance of supply chains within the fast fashion industry will be clarified.

The second sub-question will be answered in the second chapter. This chapter will be about the motives for implementing CSR in the fast fashion industry. This chapter will explain why CSR is implemented by retailers in the fast fashion industry. The reasons for implementing CSR are important when defining the main CSR strategies that are used within the fast fashion industry.

The third chapter will include an analysis of real-life implementations of CSR by fast fashion retailers. However, the chapter will also include literature review on the different bottom lines and how they can be represented within CSR strategies. In this chapter, CSR is translated into the triple bottom line model of Elkington, because the triple bottom line gives a more practical idea of how CSR works for a company.

The scientific literature that is used for the literature review will be gathered from both Scopus and Google Scholar. Google Scholar is used next to Scopus, because Google Scholar could provide additional literature, in addition to the literature available on Scopus. However, it is only the scientific literature that is available for students of the Wageningen University that is used in this research.

For the analysis of the companies that is done in the third chapter, the websites of these companies will be used. Only the fast fashion retailers that elaborately speak about sustainability on their websites will be included. The eight fast fashion retailers that are used

for the analysis are extracted from the list of fashion retailers participating in the Fashion Transparency Index 2020. This list is used, because only the 250 largest fast fashion retailers are analysed in that index, so when one is selecting from that list, it is certain that the selected retailers are all large companies. The eight fast fashion retailers that are included are selected from this list on the basis that they all have stores in the Netherlands.

Chapter 1: CSR and Fast Fashion Supply Chains

This chapter aims to answer the first sub-question: To what extent is corporate social responsibility within fast fashion industry focused on supply chains?

As Krause et al. (2009) argue, a company is only as sustainable as its supply chain. This entails that companies, in this case the fast fashion retailers, should include their suppliers' activities in their CSR strategies. So, for a company to be fully sustainable, it is argued that the supply chain management is essential. Tate et al. (2010) state that supply chain management is the most effective and suitable organizational function in a company for addressing social and environmental issues. The supply chain managers are the ones selecting the suppliers, so they get to choose with whom the company wants to collaborate and on what terms (Tate et al., 2010). Therefore, CSR practices are often closely related to sustainable supply chain management (SSCM). Sustainable supply chain management is defined as *"the management of material, information and capital flows as well as cooperation among companies along the supply chain while taking goals from all three dimensions of sustainable development, i.e., economic, environmental and social, into account which are derived from customer and stakeholder requirements"* (Seuring & Müller, 2008, p. 1700). The SSCM implications vary strongly depending on the structure of the supply chain that the SSCM is meant for, which makes it hard to talk about supply chains and SSCM in general (Turker & Altuntas, 2014). Turker and Altuntas (2014) argue that implementation of SSCM differs highly per sector since characteristics of sectors determine the structures of the supply chains competing within the industry.

1.1 Fast Fashion Supply Chains

It is argued that the fast fashion industry and its supply chains are more complex than existing models of supply chain management (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006; Masson et al., 2007). To give an indication of the complexity of the fast fashion industry and supply chains: for a fast fashion retailer, launching a few hundred different products a year is regular business, which could eventually lead to 60,000 stock keeping units (Masson et al., 2007). Fast fashion customers are visiting stores 35 times a year in stores that contain 15 per cent new garments every week, of which some only have a product life cycle of less than three weeks (Masson et al., 2007).

The complexity of the supply chains in the fashion industry is high, especially since the shift towards a fast fashion industry has completely changed the industry (Köksal et al., 2017). This shift has also caused the fast fashion industry to be one of the most global industries in the world, with supply chains crossing geographical boundaries all over the world (Laudal, 2010). The current fast fashion industry is characterized by short life-cycles, high volatility, low predictability and high impulse purchasing (Christopher et al., 2004). These four characteristics need some more explanation. As a first characteristic, the fast fashion industry delivers products that are assumed to have a short life-cycle, since the clothes are designed according to trends that often only last for months or even weeks (Joy et al., 2012). The characteristic of high volatility of the fast fashion industry describes the requirement of fast fashion retailers to be able to respond fast to emerging trends. It is the high volatility of demand that makes it extremely difficult for companies to forecast demand for a next

period, and this results in a low predictability of demand, which is the third characteristic. The last characteristic, high impulse purchasing, increases the need of fast fashion retailers of availability (Christopher et al., 2004). The fast fashion industry wants to get customers into their stores as much as possible, in order to get them to buy new clothing very frequently (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). With the goal of customers buying new clothes very frequently, new clothes should be on the shelves frequently, too. The profitability of current fast fashion retailers therefore depends on the speed with which these retailers are able to bring new clothes into their stores (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). The retailers are all aiming to be faster than their competitors. 'Being faster than the competition' is not only indicating that the clothes should be in the stores fast, but also, as Christopher et al. (2004) mention, the speed with which a retailer is able to translate consumer preferences and emerging trends to suppliers.

According to Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) these characteristics imply the shift from a production-driven to a market-driven approach in the fashion industry. This means that retailers are realizing that flexibility and rapid responsiveness to the market are the most important areas of today's market, and thus areas in which one retailer could differentiate from its competitors (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Flexibility and rapid responsiveness are not goals a retailer can achieve on its own, but both flexibility and rapid responsiveness are processes performed throughout supply chains (Birtwistle et al., 2003). Therefore, it is argued that in modern retailing, supply chains are competing rather than companies competing on their own (Hines, 2004). This has led to a growing need for management of supply chains for fashion retailers (Masson et al., 2007).

Both the increased flexibility and rapid responsiveness within supply chains are often achieved through adopting a strategy of "quick response" by the fashion retailer (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). According to Birtwistle et al. (2013), the implementation of a quick response system has three goals: reduce excess stock holding in the supply chain, reduce the risk of forecasting by making retailer purchasing decisions closer to the time of consumer purchase and greater efficiencies leading to lower prices for the consumers. They also argue that strategies of quick response are demand driven, responding to very recent sales data instead of forecasts.

The change in the industry has also brought a shift in supply chain approaches. The fast fashion supply chains are now characterized by their retailer-driven nature (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). According to Haque and Azmat (2015), fast fashion retailers are trying to keep their prices to customers low by operating in countries that offer the lowest operating costs and highest regulatory freedom. They also state that the emerging economies these fast fashion retailers are operating in have to choose between badly compensated and protected employees or not operating at all. For example, the ready made garment industry in India is driven by multinational buying companies and their requirements, making the Indian suppliers more focused on these multinational buyers than on their own employees (Islam & Deegan, 2008). The retailer-driven fashion supply chains are therefore characterized by a power imbalance between retailers and suppliers, giving the suppliers only little bargaining power (Perry & Towers, 2013). Poor labor standards in the supply chain

are the result of continual pressure from retailers on suppliers to achieve lower costs and shorter lead times (Köksal et al., 2017). The time pressures that have increased on the cycles of the fast fashion industry result in unethical working practices at manufacturing companies (Turker & Altuntas, 2014). More specifically, these poor labor standards within the supply chain are present due to three retail practices: demand for shorter lead times, demand for flexibility in meeting customer demands, and ongoing search for lower prices (Perry & Towers, 2013). Thus, the downside of the change towards fast fashion are the consequences its characteristics have on the social standards within the fast fashion supply chains.

However, it is not only social circumstances that are deteriorated by the shift of the fashion industry towards a globalized fast fashion industry. The environmental issues that this has brought should not be ignored. Saicheua et al. (2012) state that the increased transportation because of the growth of outsourcing Western fast fashion retailers towards, amongst others, Asian suppliers is resulting in higher air pollution caused by increased transportation by air. According to them, it is also the pressure on lead times that drives suppliers to send products by air shipment. Next to the pollution caused by transportation, the disposing character of the fast fashion industry is disastrous for the environment (Saicheua et al., 2012).

To give an overview of the development of the fast fashion supply chains, a summary of the previous paragraphs is given in figure 1.1.

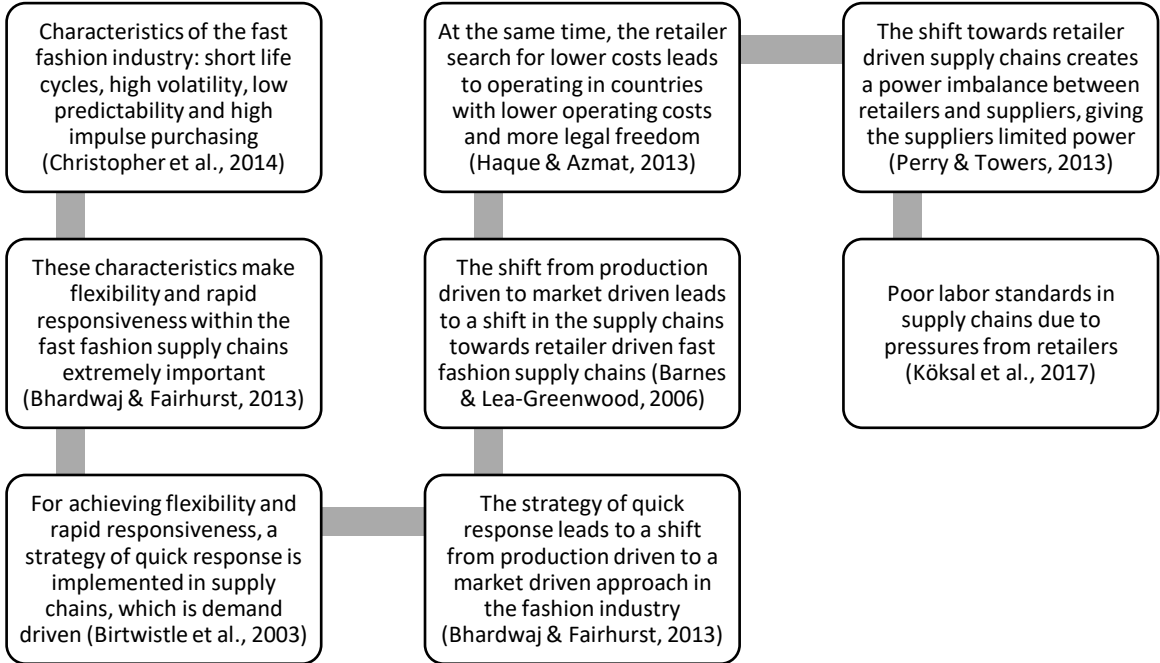


Figure 1.1 Fast fashion supply chain development

1.2 Fast Fashion and SSCM

While the power imbalance resulting from these operations could thus be seen as a root cause of the decreasing social standards and increasing environmental issues in the supply chain, it does leave a chance for the retailer (and only for the retailer) to improve circumstances in some stages of the supply chain. Mares (2010) argues that a company

holding the dominant position in the value chain can influence other actors in the chain, irrespective of these actors being legally dependent or independent companies. This means that fast fashion retailers, assuming they have a dominant position in the value chain, can not only select with whom they are working within their supply chain, but they can also exert influence on the companies in their supply chain (Perry & Towers, 2013). According to Shi et al. (2017), when the fashion retailer has more power over its supply chain partners, the economic benefits that this retailer gains from SSCM are also higher, so the retailer has more incentive to implement SSCM. This explains how the power imbalance that exists in the fast fashion supply chains can influence suppliers towards engaging in more sustainable practices.

The retailer could try to improve the unsustainable situations within its supply chain by introducing sustainable supply chain management. Adams (2002) even argues that the “social contract” between retailers and society has changed, and that this means that retailers should take greater responsibility for human welfare throughout the supply chain. It is thus not only a possibility for retailers to improve social and environmental sustainability within its supply chain, but it is also expected from them.

Sustainable supply chain management could be seen as a form of risk management (Köksal et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2017). The social risks in the fashion supply chains are, for example, child labor, or extensive working hours. These social risks can be mitigated by applying sustainable supply chain management that includes practices as social audits, codes of conduct, or offering incentives to suppliers (Freise and Seuring, 2015). The social and environmental issues within the global supply chains of fast fashion could be seen as social and environmental risks, because these problems and supply chains are often targeted by NGOs and media campaigns (Freise and Seuring, 2015). These campaigns and NGOs do not only hold the fast fashion retailers responsible for environmental and social problems caused directly by themselves, but also for the problems caused by their suppliers (Koplin, 2005). Seuring et al. (2008) state that pressures towards adopting more sustainable practices are strongest for those companies in the supply chain that are closest to the public consciousness, which in this case this would be the fashion retailer. As a fashion retailing company, making sure that your sustainable management is also enhanced throughout the supply chain can provide safeguards to the organization’s image (Krause et al., 2009).

Turker and Altuntas (2014) found that the objective of SSCM implemented by fast fashion retailers is to guarantee manufacturing conditions throughout the fashion value chain in order to reduce environmental and social impacts coming from its business operations. One of their research findings was also that all companies they observed gave an explanation of SSCM within their sustainability reports. In their research, this was seen as an indicator of the importance of SSCM as a form of CSR within the fast fashion industry. Within these different sustainability reports, varying explanations and implementations of SSCM were found. SSCM could be supported by high rates of standardization along the supply chain enhanced by compliance and certification, by the creation of a long-term relationship between retailer and suppliers, or by adoption of a long-term strategic perspective (Turker & Altuntas, 2014). In addition, Edgeman et al. (2015) saw that most CSR indicators in the

sustainability reports of fast fashion retailers are about SSCM. They found 87 indicators of CSR in fashion sustainability reports, and 45 of them were about SSCM. Furthermore, Shen et al. (2017) argue that more and more fast fashion retailers are implementing forms of SSCM to enhance higher levels of sustainability in their supply chains with the goal of attracting customers that are willing to pay higher prices for sustainable textile and apparel products. Shi et al. (2017) suggest that the main incentives for fast fashion retailers to implement SSCM are savings on environmental taxes and gains in incremental demands. Thus, fast fashion retailers are incentivized to implement SSCM, not only because this could save money, but also because implementing SSCM could attract new customers (Shen et al., 2017; Shi et al., 2017).

All of this information is summarized into figure 1.2, explaining the relationship between SSCM and the fast fashion industry.

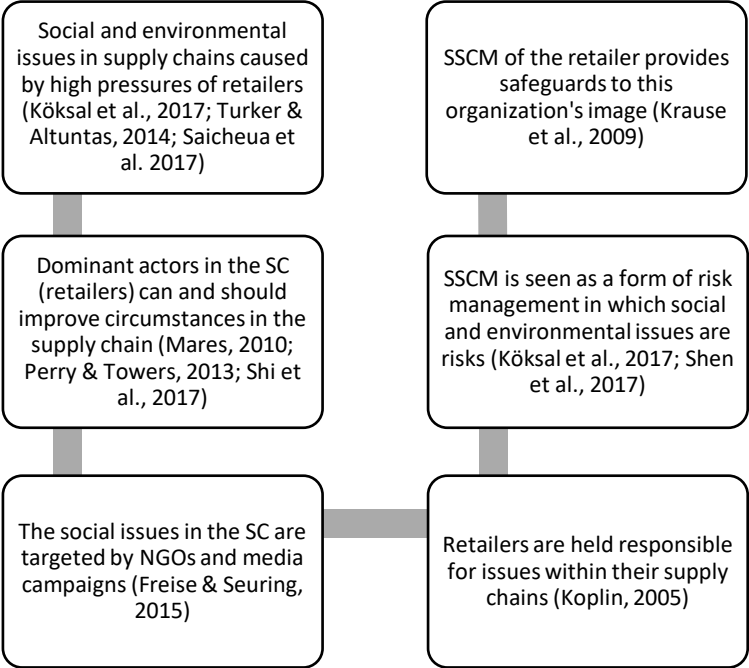


Figure 1.2 SSCM in the fast fashion industry

1.3 Summary and Sub-conclusion Chapter 1

The fast fashion industry is characterized by its supply chains. The origin of fast fashion lies in the globalization of the traditional fashion industries, resulting in supply chains crossing boundaries all over the world. The fast fashion industry is demanding more of its supply chain by increasing time pressures from retailers on the suppliers. It is actually the sole existence of the fast fashion industry that has caused the social and environmental issues that it is now trying to solve through implementation of CSR. So, this states that the CSR within the fast fashion industry should be about supply chains, because the suppliers is where the damage is done. Increasing pressures from NGOs and media campaigns are enlarging the risks that come with unsustainable supply chain practices (Köksal et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2017; Freise & Seuring, 2015). In the research of Turker and Altuntas (2014), they found that SSCM is becoming an essential issue for almost all companies in the fashion sector. All companies they included in their research mentioned supply chain management

within their sustainability reports. This indicates that SSCM is a form of CSR that is used widely by fast fashion retailers.

What can be concluded from all of these information is that CSR implementations in the fast fashion industry is to a large extent focused on supply chains. The advice that follows from this is that fast fashion retailers should focus on activities in their supply chains when they build their CSR strategy, because the supply chain is where the issues are caused. The supply chain is thus where CSR activities would be needed and valued the most.

Chapter 2: Motives for Implementing CSR in the Fast Fashion Industry

This chapter aims to answer the second sub-question: What are different motives for implementing strategies of corporate social responsibility in the fast fashion industry?

Since part of the main idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is that companies are obliged to meet the needs of their stakeholders, the motives for implementing CSR are assumed to be mostly concerning stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995).

2.1 Background literature about motives for CSR

Different companies have different motives for implementing CSR within their business. Back in 1973, Davis brought up multiple arguments firms could have for addressing their social responsibility. He stated that the main argument favouring social responsibility is the long-run self-interest of business. Bettering a community means, for example, that labour recruiting will be easier, labour will be of higher quality and absenteeism among employees will be reduced (Davis, 1973). According to Davis, closely related to the argument of long-run self-interest is public image. He states that an improved public image will appeal more customers and attract better employees. A third argument he mentioned is one about sociocultural norms. These norms can influence behaviour, because change in society's norms means a change in the businessman's behaviour (Davis, 1973). Davis suggested that if the norms of society would change over the next years, the norms of businesses would also change, leading companies towards more socially responsible activities.

Going a few decades further in time, the literature written about arguments favouring social responsibility of firms has extensively grown. In particular, the positive relationship between CSR and profitability has been proven in many studies (Graafland & Mazereeuw-Van der Duijn Schouten, 2012). However, this relationship is indirect, since CSR does not directly influence a company's financial performance, but CSR affects the financial performance through its influence on stakeholder relations (Barnet, 2007). Even though the concept of CSR has a lot of different definitions, the overall idea is that the organizations should operate according to the interest of all current and future stakeholders (Baron, 2001). This eventually guarantees the long-term health and survival of the organization (Jamali, 2006). So, the main goal of CSR is keeping a company's stakeholders satisfied. However, this is not the only possible view on stakeholder satisfaction. Keeping the stakeholders satisfied could be seen as a means to an end, but it could also be seen as the end in itself (Burchell et al., 2010). This is also the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motives for implementing CSR (Graafland, J., & Mazereeuw-Van der Duijn Schouten, 2012). To clarify this distinction, extrinsic motives will be explained first. Extrinsic motives include implementing CSR with the eventual purpose of increasing the firm's profitability by improving the reputation of the company, and this is also called strategic CSR (Graafland & Van de Ven, 2006). The strategic social investor makes a social investment when he expects to obtain an additional benefit as well, such as good reputation, differentiated products (for a premium price), or better qualified employees (Husted & de Jesus Salazar, 2006).

Strategic motives for CSR

Within their research, Hahn and Scheermesser (2006) distinguish the strategic motives for

implementing CSR even further. They label the strategic motives as either instrumental motives or institutional motives. Instrumental motives are about the managerial belief in the relation between engaging in CSR and higher profitability (Hahn & Scheermesser, 2006). Other studies have supported this by showing that companies often develop CSR activities because managers believe it can contribute to their competitive advantage or that it could provide new business opportunities (Brønn & Vivader-Cohen, 2009). Instrumental motives are driven by self-interest, companies that are implementing CSR because of instrumental motives will only invest in socially responsible activities when they mean higher profits (Aguilera et al., 2007). Institutional motives for implementing CSR suggest that companies implement CSR due to institutional pressures (Hahn & Scheermesser, 2006). Examples of institutional pressures are growing customer dissatisfaction about socially and environmentally harmful corporate practices and local movements demanding companies to invest in improving community infrastructure (Brønn & Vivader-Cohen, 2009).

So, institutional motives for implementing CSR are concerned with responding to stakeholder needs. It is argued a lot that CSR is related to stakeholder management (Carrol, 1991). Baron (2001) claims that CSR is called strategic when activities are implemented to keep stakeholders satisfied, with the intention to increase demand or to reduce costs. Barnett (2007) even argues that only business activities that affect financial performance by influencing stakeholder relations can be called CSR activities. Stakeholders are thus often considered when deciding upon the implementation of CSR. This could also be deduced from the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholder theory states that managers should satisfy the actors who can influence the outcomes of the company, like employees, customers, suppliers etc. (McWilliams et al., 2006). Seeing this in the context of CSR, this means that firms should also engage in certain CSR activities that are important to non-financial stakeholders to keep them supporting the firm (McWilliams et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, it is not only the companies that try to influence stakeholder relations, but it is also stakeholder groups that are trying to influence the behaviour of the company (Aguilera et al., 2007). Different stakeholder groups could influence a company towards undertaking CSR activities by reminding the company of its social or societal responsibilities (Carrol, 1991). Firms seek social legitimization among their stakeholders, they are concerned about how their actions are perceived by others (Aguilera et al., 2007).

However, CSR engagement of companies is not only driven by strategic motives. Motives for implementing CSR could be extrinsic, which is covered in the strategic form of CSR, but the motives could also be intrinsic (Graafland & Mazereeuw-Van der Duijn Schouten, 2012). Some argue that the instrumental approach of CSR forgets about the imperative moral explanation for socially responsible business behaviours. The instrumental approach of CSR emphasizes only the means of achieving CSR reputation, but is not focusing on the end of social welfare (Burchell et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to also mention the intrinsic motives of engaging in CSR.

Intrinsic Motives

Graafland and Mazereeuw-Van der Duijn Schouten (2012) give two intrinsic motives for CSR: ethical and altruistic. Ethical motives are about feeling a sense of moral duty, while altruistic

motives are about feeling the need to help others (de Jong & van der Meer, 2017). McWilliams et al. (2006) argue that where the strategic motive can be related to stakeholder theory, the intrinsic motives are related to stewardship theory, arguing that managers have a social imperative that makes them want to do the right thing. They state that managers are not focusing at how these socially responsible decisions affect the financial performance of the firm. This is determining for the whole corporation, because organizational actors within firms make decisions that are affected by cognitive biases and personal values, which makes the overall business ethics built up out of the values of the organizational actors (Aguilera et al., 2007). Aguilera et al. (2017) state that when the intrinsic values of the organizational actors are in favor of socially responsible actions, the whole business will become socially responsible in the end. So, in short, socially responsible corporations can only exist when there are socially responsible managers willing to put socially responsible actions before corporate objectives and needs (Godoz-Díez et al., 2011). Within stewardship theory the stakeholders are still of high importance, since one of its fundamental statements is that the stewards (managers) will take care of the welfare of all stakeholders and make decisions that they perceive are beneficial for the whole group (Godoz-Díez et al., 2011). The stewards obtain higher utility from achieving organizational goals than from achieving individual goals, they rather act cooperatively than opportunistically (Chrisman et al., 2007).

The difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motives is a difference between the so-called “business case” and the opposing “normative case” of CSR (Smith, 2003). The business case of CSR represents implementation of CSR driven by enlightened self-interest, and the normative case of CSR comes from a desire to do good. Even though there is a big difference between the two, a combination between the two cases is often found in reality (Smith, 2003). For individuals, intrinsic sources of motivation are more effective than extrinsic motivation sources. So, when looking at a company, employees will be more committed, creative and productive if they are intrinsically motivated, when they feel like they are working on something bigger than themselves (Burchell et al., 2010).

Graafland and Van der Ven (2006) found that intrinsic motivation is more correlated to CSR performance than extrinsic motivation. This means that CSR engagement more driven by intrinsic motivation than by extrinsic motivation (Graafland & Mazereeuw-Van der Duijn Schouten, 2012; Graafland & Van de Ven, 2006). Besides, Krisnawati et al. (2014) argue that intrinsic values are also reported less than extrinsic values, because stewardship theory is developed out of the basics of stakeholder theory. Stewardship theory has a shorter history than stakeholder theory (Krisnawati et al., 2014).

In the previous paragraphs, different researchers and their findings on both strategic and intrinsic motives are mentioned. To clarify all of these different findings, a summary is provided below in the form of a table (table 2.1).

Why CSR	Strategic motives	Why CSR	Intrinsic motives
Davis (1973)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor recruiting is easier • Labor is of high quality 	Smith (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic motivation is the normative case, and strategic is the business case. Often

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absenteeism among employees reduced • Appeal more customers • Attract better employees 		the two are combined.
Baron (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase demand and reduce costs by keeping stakeholders satisfied 	Chrisman et al. (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers obtain higher utility from achievement of organizational goals than individual goals
Graafland & Van der Ven (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher profitability by improving reputation 	Burchell et al. (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social welfare is an end in itself • Employees will be more committed, creative and productive if intrinsically motivated
Husted & de Jesus Salazar (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good reputation • Differentiated products • Better qualified employees 	Godoz-Díez et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially responsible corporations only exist when the managers are socially responsible
Jamali (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee long-term survival 	Graafland & Van der Ven (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic motives are more correlated to CSR performance than extrinsic motives
Brønn & Vivader-Cohen (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to competitive advantage • New business opportunities 		

Table 2.1 Summary of motives for CSR

2.2 Motives in the Fast Fashion Industry

The target group of fast fashion retailers is most of the time people between the ages of 15 and 24, because they have a higher need for material goods and are more concerned about fashion trends than other age groups (Martin & Bush, 2000). However, this generation of consumers is also the most socially concerned and aware of global issues (Choi et al., 2015). CSR activities improving social and environmental circumstances could thus be used to appeal to customers within the fast fashion industry.

Communicating CSR activities towards the potential customer is an issue of brand knowledge. In the fast fashion industry, as in more industries, brand knowledge is essential (Choi et al., 2015). Brand knowledge consists of two components: brand awareness and brand image (Faircloth et al., 2001). Brand awareness is about how easily a customer thinks of a certain brand, how deeply it is rooted in one's memory (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). According to Keller (1993), brand image is defined as *"the perception about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory"*. Just as how unsustainable

behavior of fast fashion retailers might cause a negative brand image, implementing CSR (which is showing sustainable behavior) could improve the brand image of these companies (Choi et al., 2015).

Literature concerning the CSR in fast fashion industry is especially focusing on the strategic motives of companies to implement CSR activities (Smith, 2003). According to Smith (2003), companies doing business in industries with high market-sensitivity should see CSR as a strategic tool to distinguish themselves from competitors. Since the fast fashion industry is an industry of high market-sensitivity, companies should thus see CSR as a strategic tool (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2014).

Next to the two basic types of motives that are supported throughout the years, de Jong and van der Meer (2017) argue that there is a third basic type of motive. This concerns meeting societal expectations and stakeholder pressure, and is thus purely stakeholder driven. This stakeholder-driven motive is argued to be a driver of the CSR engagement within fast fashion retailers (Achabou, 2020). Especially since the growing pressure that is put on the fast fashion industry by customers and media is often mentioned as a reason for fast fashion retailers to engage in CSR (Caniato et al., 2012).

Resulting from these growing pressures, companies in the fast fashion industry have become increasingly aware of the need for sustainable development within the industry, making them more willing to contribute to social and environmental sustainability (Li et al., 2014). These growing pressures also leads to more public and media attention to certain issues (Islam & Deegan, 2008). Adams (2002) argues that with increased public and media attention, the simple profit calculation of using unsustainable practices, like the use of sweatshops, are now changing for retailers. In the example of sweatshops, the cost advantage of cheap labor must now be balanced against the price of negative publicity. This is another explanation of how pressure from stakeholders leads implementation of CSR strategies among fast fashion retailers.

Even though the retailers in the fast fashion industry are now implementing CSR, it is argued that this is only done by the fast fashion retailers as a reaction to pressures put on them (Achabou, 2020). Achabou (2020) argues that the clothing sector is predominantly following the so-called "reactive CSR". Reactive CSR, as opposed to proactive CSR, is not doing anything more than just following the rules and responding to the needs of stakeholders (Achabou, 2020). To concretize this, for example, a company following the strategy of reactive CSR would comply with environmental regulations, adapts to stakeholder needs, react upon the changing environmental and would respond to competitors' challenges (Chang, 2015). That the CSR of fast companies is reactive, also indicates that the CSR activities that are undertaken can be seen as responses to pressure from stakeholders (Achabou, 2020). As an example, Islam and Deegan (2008) argue that social information about the textile industry in Bangladesh would have never been spread if the stakeholders had not put companies under pressure. Another example is Greenpeace's Detox campaign, which called upon companies like H&M, Nike and Adidas, challenging them to stop using toxic chemicals and completely ban them in 2020 (Kozłowski et al., 2012). Boycotts and NGO-actions like these seem to have a significant effect, because they often lead to the

concerning companies altering their strategies and engage in restorative behavior (Kozlowski et al., 2012).

Seuring and Müller (2008) identified six pressures and incentives for implementing sustainable supply chain management (a form of CSR used by fast fashion retailers) by focal companies: legal demands/regulations, customer demands, response to stakeholders, competitive advantage, environmental and social pressure groups, and reputation loss. These six pressures and incentives were mentioned the most in scientific research papers (Seuring & Müller, 2008).

The research done by Shen et al. (2017) supports the statement that consumers are willing to pay a higher price for more sustainable apparel products. Therefore, one reason for fast fashion retailers to implement CSR could also be that they could offer clothes for higher prices, because consumer are then willing to pay a higher price.

The findings on motives for implementing in the fast fashion industry specifically are discussed in the previous paragraphs. These findings are summarized in the table 2.2 below.

<i>References</i>	<i>Findings on motives for CSR in fast fashion</i>
Adams (2002)	The simple economics of unsustainable practices has become more complex. Profitability of unsustainable practices is reduced by resulting negative publicity.
Smith (2003)	CSR in industries with high market sensitivity like the fast fashion industry is (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2014), CSR is used by companies distinguish from competitors.
Seuring & Müller (2008)	Legal demands/regulations Customer demands Response to stakeholders Competitive advantage Environmental and social pressure groups Reputation loss
Caniato et al. (2012)	CSR is implemented in fast fashion due to growing pressure coming from customers and media.
Kozlowski et al. (2012)	Fast fashion retailers are altering their strategies and use restorative behavior when they are attacked by NGO-actions and boycotts.
Li et al. (2014)	Because of growing pressure from stakeholders, fast fashion retailers are getting more aware of the need for sustainability, which leads to higher willingness to engage in CSR activities.
Choi et al. (2015)	The generation of fast fashion customers is also the generation that is most concerned about sustainability. Communicating CSR activities towards the potential customer could improve brand image.
Jong & van der Meer (2017)	Stakeholder pressure is driving fast fashion retailers to implement CSR.
Shen et al. (2017)	Consumer are willing to pay higher prices for more sustainable clothing.
Achabou (2020)	'Reactive CSR' in fast fashion retailers, because CSR activities are responses to pressure from stakeholders.

Table 2.2 Summary of motives for CSR within fast fashion industry

2.3 Summary and Sub-conclusion Chapter 2

The motives for CSR in general can be divided as intrinsic or extrinsic motives. The intrinsic motives come from within and are usually driven by moral or ethical feelings. Extrinsic motives are more strategic, and could also be focused on cost reduction due to changes in the social or environmental approach of a company. However, the implementation of CSR is always focused on stakeholders. These could be internal stakeholders, like the own employees, or external stakeholders, like workers at the manufacturing companies. In the fast fashion industry, a third motive for implementing CSR has been developed. This is a motive that is stakeholder driven, in the sense that the companies are pressured by stakeholders to implement CSR. Therefore, it can be stated that the CSR in the fast fashion industry is implemented with a great focus on stakeholders, which is already argued in earlier literature. A second conclusion is that the reasons for fast fashion retailers to implement CSR should be ascribed to a newer, third motive for implementing CSR which is undertaken because of pressure posed on the company by its stakeholders. This third motive can be seen as a category, into which different reasons and different kinds of pressures from varying stakeholders are categorized together.

To conclude, there are two motives for fast fashion retailers to implement CSR, and both are about stakeholders. Fast fashion retailers are motivated by pressures from stakeholders and other movements in society to engage in CSR activities, in order to avoid a worsened public image. In addition, fast fashion retailers are using CSR as a means to keep their stakeholders satisfied. This means that their CSR strategies should therefore be adapted to the needs and demands of these groups. Fast fashion retailers should listen to all of their stakeholders when they design their CSR strategy, in order to avoid being pressured by other groups again. Since these fast fashion retailers are also motivated to implement CSR because this could attract more customers, they should also find out what is important to customers looking at sustainability before they design any CSR strategies.

Chapter 3: CSR Practices according to the Three Bottom Lines

This chapter aims to answer the third sub-question: How are the social and environmental bottom lines accounted for within the corporate social responsibility implementations of fast fashion retailers?

Before diving into how different fast fashion retailers deal with sustainability based on the three bottom lines, a description of the Triple Bottom Line model would be valuable.

3.1 Triple Bottom Line

The concept of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) was first used by John Elkington in 1997. The concepts of CSR and the TBL are related because they are both promoting economic efficiency, environmental management and social justice (Nikolaou et al., 2013). However, even though the concept of TBL was based on the principles that are also supported by the already existing broader concept of CSR, the development of the TBL was still innovative. What made the TBL innovative was that it emphasized the importance of measuring, calculating, auditing and reporting all obligations a corporation has towards its stakeholders, and do this just as thoroughly as with financial performance (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Another fundamental idea of TBL is that a company should measure and report its performance not only to its direct stakeholders (like employees and customers), but also to indirect stakeholders, such as local communities and governments (Hubbard, 2009). According to Savitz (2006) TBL "*captures the essence of sustainability by both measuring the impact of an organization's activities on the world ... including both its shareholder values and its social, human and environmental capital.*" So, TBL means that the social and environmental bottom lines should be used next to the financial bottom line (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Gimenez et al. (2012) state that the social and environmental bottom lines should not only be used next to the financial bottom lines, but they are actually interrelated. According to them, interrelationship between the three is that corporations engaging in socially and environmentally responsible behavior can also boost their financial performance with that behavior.

To be able to know how companies are acting upon the social and environmental bottom lines, one should first know what the different bottom lines represent more specifically.

The Economic Bottom Line

From the three bottom lines, the economic one might be the most straightforward (Høgevold et al., 2015). This could be resulting from the fact that the economic measures are actually the traditional performance indicators, so they have been used the longest (Elkington, 1997). Presley et al. (2010) give a clear explanation of the economic bottom line by dividing the financial indicators into four categories: strategic factors (e.g. cost reduction), maintenance of superior financial performance, tactical elements (e.g. expenditures) and operational aspects (e.g. customer returns or energy consumption).

One should keep in mind that when looking at a company through "TBL glasses", the three bottom lines are seen as interrelated with each other. The financial bottom line is thus connected to the environmental and social bottom line, and it is more about how focusing

on the social and environmental bottom line could eventually have positive effects on the financial bottom line (Gimenez et al., 2012).

The Environmental Bottom Line

Environmental performance is about the amount of resources (e.g. water or energy) used by a firm and the by-products of a firm's activities (Hubbard, 2009). The environmental bottom line is also described as referring to the "*internal environment aspects and external natural resources conversation issues*" (Nikolaou et al., 2013). Changing the aspects within a company, so for example start recycling, has an impact on the external natural environment.

According to Slaper and Hall (2011), environmental variables should therefore be able to measure the natural resources and possible impacts. The variables could be air and water quality, energy consumption, natural resources, solid and toxic waste, and land use/land cover (Slaper & Hall, 2011). More specifically, these measures could be concentration of nitrogen oxides (to measure air quality), fossil fuel consumption (as a form of energy consumption), and hazardous waste management (Slaper & Hall, 2011).

The Social Bottom Line

Høgevoid et al., 2015 argue that in contrast to the environmental and economic variables, social variables are not so easily determined. They state that measuring the social bottom line is difficult and that many companies are struggling with determining their social impacts and responsibilities. Consequently, varying indicators have been suggested by different researchers to measure the social performance of companies.

Carter and Jennings (2002) found five aspects of the social bottom line: diversity, ethics, human rights/quality of life, philanthropy/community, and safety.

Norman and MacDonald (2004) have distinguished five categories of social performance measures that they extracted from three different sources with reporting guidelines. The five categories are diversity, unions/industrial relations, health and safety, child labour, and community. Measures that are included are the percentage of senior executives who are women (diversity); percentage of employees covered by collective bargaining agreements (unions); number of workplace deaths per year (health and safety); number of children working (child labour); and percentage of pre-tax earnings donated to the community (community).

Slaper and Hall (2011) suggest that social variables can be divided into measurements of education, equity and access to social resources, health and well-being, quality of life, and social capital. The corresponding variables could be, for example, unemployment rate, female labor participation rate, median household income, and relative poverty (Slaper & Hall, 2011).

Nikolaou et al. (2013) argue that the social bottom line is concerned with quality and ethical issues about risk management issues, health and safety, and employment issues.

This is only a selection of what different researchers propose as social measures. It shows the difficulty of finding the right social standards, since social performance can apparently be measured at various different levels and aspects.

Below, table 3.1 is provided that gives a summary of the social and environmental bottom line indicators that different researchers propose.

Environmental		Social	
Hubbard (2009)	Amount of resources used by a firm and by-products of a firm’s activities	Carter & Jennings (2002)	Aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Ethics • Human rights/quality of life • Philanthropy/community • Safety
Slaper & Hall (2011)	Variables are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Air & water quality - Energy consumption - Natural resources - Solid and toxic waste - Land use/land cover 	Norman & MacDonald (2004)	Five categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Unions/industrial relations • Health and safety • Child labour • Community
Nikolaou et al. (2013)	Internal environmental aspects and external natural resources	Slaper & Hall (2011)	Social variables can be divided into these measurements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Equity and access to social resources • Health and well-being • Quality of life • Social capital
		Nikolaou et al. (2013)	Quality and ethical issues about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management issues • Health and safety • Employment issues

Table 3.1: General indicators of the social and environmental bottom lines

3.2 Triple Bottom Line Considerations in Fast Fashion

Global Reporting Initiative standards

Since the indicators of the three bottom lines are widely discussed, and this offers a long list of different indicators, looking at official standards might be a clarifying addition. Especially for the social standards, because it seems there is still a lot of disagreement on the selection of social standards. According to their own website *“The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) has pioneered sustainability reporting since the late 1990s, transforming it from a niche practice into one now adopted by a growing majority of organizations. The GRI reporting framework is the most trusted and widely used in the world.”* (Global Reporting Initiative, n.d.). The

guidelines set by the GRI are widely used by companies when reporting their (sustainability) performance.

The Global Reporting Initiative proposes 59 topics on social and environmental sustainability specifically for the apparel and footwear sectors. These topics are identified as relevant by varying stakeholder groups. For environmental sustainability, the topics are materials sourcing, materials use, energy consumption (garment life cycle), water use efficiency (textiles life cycle), wastewater treatment, emissions to air, chemicals use and discharges, textile waste management, cotton sourcing strategy and policies, packaging (plastics use and management), Life Cycle Assessment of products, and industrial process innovation. For social sustainability, the topics include labor conditions, labor management systems, migrant workers, capacity building, occupational health and safety risks, collective bargaining agreements, hazardous dyes and nano-materials, Design for Environment (DfE) or Ecodesign, and product design and development (Global Reporting Initiative, 2013).

It is argued that the social standards are still a bit too inclusive as they are all put onto one pile within the categorization of the GRI. Nikolaou et al. (2013) suggest that the economic and environmental measures are quite straightforward, and do not need further classification. The social measures, however, should be further distinguished into four categories: labour practices and decent work, human rights, society and product responsibility (Nikolaou et al., 2013). This categorization used proposed by Nikolaou et al. (2013) is used in the table 3.4 to answer sub-question 3.

Fashion Transparency Index

All of these categories of CSR and its domains clarify which “forms” of CSR exist. Examining the Fashion Transparency Index¹ could provide a view on what fast fashion retailers can do and are doing to enhance sustainability. Even though it does not provide information on the actual practices, it does give a classification of five key areas and corresponding issues on each of the key areas. The five key areas and corresponding issues respectively are:

- *Policy and commitments* – including issues as animal welfare, anti-bribery, corruption and presentation of false information, child labour, community engagement, discrimination, diversity and inclusion, foreign and migrant labour, health and safety, and waste and recycling.
- *Governance* – deals with how easily one can contact a brand, the board level accountability of a brand and whether they provide incentives to social and environmental progress.
- *Supply chain traceability* – looks at disclosing first tier manufacturer details, processing facilities and raw material suppliers.
- *Supplier assessment and remediation* – they use the so-called know-show-fix approach. ‘Know’ stands for the indicators on human rights and environmental risks, impacts and violations. ‘Show’ is about whether the brands are disclosing the results of their supplier assessments, and how detailed. ‘Fix’ is concerned with what brands

¹ The Fashion Transparency Index reviews 250 of the world’s largest fashion brands and retailers, and the index ranks the brands according to how much they report about their social and environmental policies, practices and impacts (Fashion Revolution, 2020)

are publishing about how they remediate human rights and environmental violations occurring within their supply chain.

- New '*spotlight issues*' covering gender equality, decent work, climate action and responsible consumption and production. Within this category, they developed the 4 C's: conditions, consumption, composition and climate.
 - Conditions: how are the brand and retailers trying to improve the conditions for workers in their company and supply chains?
 - Consumption: how are brands and retailers addressing overproduction, minimize waste and move towards circularity?
 - Composition: what are brands and retailers doing to increase the use of sustainable materials and reduce the use of virgin plastics and hazardous chemicals?
 - Climate: are brands and retailers taking urgent actions to combat climate breakdown and move towards sustainable management of natural resources? (Fashion Revolution, 2020)

The Fashion Transparency Index puts emphasis on the information provision of companies about their businesses.

In the fast fashion industry, a common idea is that the responsibility of the company stops when the product is in the consumer's possession (Gwilt & Rissanen, 2012). Therefore, companies in the fast fashion industry are not expected to focus on, for example, recycling of the clothing after selling them to the customers (Kozlowski et al., 2012). This statement is supported by the fact that the Fashion Transparency Index also says little about the recycling behavior of customers of the different brands. It is only since this year, 2020, that the Fashion Transparency Index uses the 4 C's, which includes the consumption issues concerning circularity, and thus looks at how companies enhance the disposal of clothing. This indicates that focusing on the disposal of clothing is a novelty in the CSR strategies of fast fashion retailers.

Caniato et al. (2012) selected five main practices throughout fashion supply chains that companies engage in to improve environmental sustainability within these supply chains. These five main practices are: the use of organic fibers, reuse and recycling of materials, vintage practices and second hand, clean technologies and information technologies, and green certification (e.g. Ecolabel). In their analysis, Edgeman et al. (2015) found that environmental indicators mainly address issues like the use of environmentally preferred materials, reduction of waste, and reduction of different types of resources used (e.g. water and energy). Social indicators that were mainly used were the use of codes of conducts and participation in external programs (Edgeman et al., 2015). They found, however, that within SSCM of the fast fashion industry the focus is more on environmental issues.

Below in table 3.2, a summary is given for the different indicators of social and environmental bottom lines within the CSR of fast fashion retailers that are discussed in the previous paragraphs.

References	Findings on social and environmental bottom lines in CSR of fast fashion retailers
Gwilt & Rissanen (2012)	A common idea in fast fashion industry: responsibility of the company stops when the product is in the consumer's possession.
Global Reporting Initiative (2013)	<p>Proposes topics on social and environmental sustainability.</p> <p><u>Environment</u>: materials sourcing, materials use, energy consumption, water use efficiency, wastewater treatment, emission to air, chemicals use and discharges, textile waste management, cotton sourcing strategy and policies, packaging, LCA of products and industrial process innovation.</p> <p><u>Social</u>: labor conditions, labor management systems, migrant workers, capacity building, occupational health and safety risks, collective bargaining agreements, hazardous dyes and nano-materials, Design for Environment or Ecodesign, and product design and development.</p>
Nikolaou et al. (2013)	<p>Economic and environmental measure are straightforward, no need for further classification.</p> <p>Social measures should be distinguished further into four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labor practices and decent work; - Human rights; - Society; - Product responsibility.
Caniato et al. (2015)	<p>Five main practices to improve environmental sustainability is fast fashion supply chains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of organic fibers; - Reuse and recycling of materials; - Vintage practices and second hand; - Clean technologies and information technologies; - Green certification.
Edgeman (2015)	<p>Environmental indicators mainly address issues like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of environmentally preferred materials; - Reduction of waste; - Reduction of different types of resources used. <p>Social indicators mainly used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Codes of conduct; - Participation in external programs. <p>SSCM in fast fashion industry is more focused on environmental issues.</p>
Fashion Revolution (2020)	<p>Five key areas of Fashion Transparency Index 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy and commitments; - Governance; - Supply chain traceability; - Supplier assessment and remediation; - New spotlight issues → 4 C's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions; • Consumption; • Composition; • Climate.

Table 3.2 Indicators of social and environmental bottom lines in fast fashion industry

Practices within the Fast Fashion Industry

The bigger companies in the industry, like Zara, UNIQLO and H&M, mainly focus on green marketing. With green marketing, they are trying to influence the selections of their customers to eventually force their suppliers into strategic alliances (Li et al., 2014). Kozlowski et al. (2012) state that companies like H&M, Nike, Levi’s and Zara use environmentally friendly materials like organic cotton or recycled polyester in some of their products.

Not all information can be found within the scientific literature concerning CSR in fast fashion retailers. The actual practices can better be extracted from the information on the websites of fast fashion retailers. Therefore, in order to get a complete picture of what CSR practices in fast fashion entail, one should look at the actual CSR practices fast fashion retailers are engaged in. This could be realized by taking a look at the websites of the fast fashion retailers. The results of looking at eight different fast fashion retailers are displayed in table 3.3, which is the table displayed below. These eight different fast fashion retailers are selected from the list of companies that are analyzed in the Fashion Transparency Index 2020. They are selected from this list on the basis that they are all European, operating in the Netherlands and that they explicitly mention their CSR engagement on their websites. All of these eight fast fashion retailers have different mother companies, so none of these are related to each other in that sense.

Company	Environmental	Social
H&M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycling & Upcycling: collecting clothes in stores - Climate positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficiency • Renewable energy • Circularity – moving towards a fully circular business • Climate resilience - Using less harmful materials - Improve animal welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting human rights - Fair living wages for textile workers - Safe and healthy working conditions for textile workers and employees
Zara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Join-life collection using organic materials - Protection of forests: no fibers from old forests or forests at risk of disappearing - Zero discharge of hazardous chemicals - Aim to collect clothing in stores - In 2023 no single use plastics - Eco-efficient stores using less water and energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects for vulnerable groups concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-being – vocational integration; improving access to drinking water; providing health care for pregnant women in Bangladesh and US • Education – technical and vocational training, building schools in China • Humanitarian help – working together with MSF and Red Cross etc.

UNIQLO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing use of chemical and toxic substances - Monitoring and reducing green house gas emissions - Controlling water consumption and discharge - Promote recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote wellbeing of every worker by supporting safe and healthy working environment - Stakeholder engagement: deepen understanding of global social issues - Respect for diversity: engaging in diversity initiatives - Refugee support - Next generation leadership: empowering youth - Social business: support poor and socially vulnerable people in Bangladesh
Topshop (Arcadia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy reduction also within retail stores and carbon emissions reduction at suppliers' business operations - Water management by detecting and preventing leaks in facilities and reducing waste and recycling within head offices, DC's and stores - Reducing use of virgin raw materials: all online orders in 75% recycled plastic bags - Logistics: reducing CO₂ emissions from distribution vehicles and improve efficiency of operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee engagement • Employee wellbeing (flexible working hours and stress mitigation) • Workplace diversity • Learning & Development - Retail engagement: introducing behavior change initiatives to reduce environmental footprints of stores - Health and safety of customers, employees and contractors - Charity partnerships
Forever 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recyclable and reusable plastic and paper bags and for each customer using own bag Forever 21 donates \$0.05 to American Forests Association - Transport products as much via sea as possible to reduce carbon emissions - New Forever 21 stores have energy efficient lighting - Recycling shipment boxes at DC's and stores - Forever 21 is developing collections using environmentally friendly materials - In-Store recycling program: customers can drop off unwanted apparel and get a coupon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vendor agreement: by agreeing to terms of this agreement, suppliers confirm that they will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not discriminate • No forced, slave, child or prison labor • Comply with all local wage and work hour laws • Provide a safe workplace and working environment • Maintain adequate insurance - Ethical sourcing: fur-free policy, ban on Angora, no Mohair, and committed to the Cotton Pledge (no Uzbek cotton) - Participation in charity programs

Primark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zero discharge of hazardous chemicals - Sustainable apparel coalition program to improve supply chain sustainability - Improving traceability of raw materials used within the supply chain - Use of sustainable cotton - Reduction of water use in factories (during production) - Introduce efficiency in stores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficiency – e.g. devices that control air conditioning • Waste management – limit packaging and waste at any stage of the process - Recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newlife partnership: giving unsold garments to this children charity • Plastic, boxes and coat racks are recycled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member of Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) - Act according to a behavioral code that is adjusted whenever the ETI asks that - Strict supplier selection - Clear and open dialogue with factory managers about the expected norms - Workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better-work program: to connect groups of the fast fashion industry to improve working conditions in factories • Programs for factory workers to be able to stand up if owners act against the norms • Project in Bangladesh to teach about fire safety in factories • Projects for women in the factories to make them more engaged
Only (Bestseller)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferring fibers and materials that have lower environmental impact • Innovative design philosophy and approach - Production: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rethink the way we consume resources within the value chain → reduce energy, water, chemicals and waste - Consumption: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2020 garment collection channel • By 2025 no use of single use virgin plastic anymore • By 2025 post-consumer waste and circular infrastructure solutions • By 2025 all consumer packaging will be 100% reusable, recyclable and compostable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working better: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed human rights in the fast fashion industry – women empowerment and fair living wages • In 2025 all suppliers have invested in fire, electrical and building safety • In 2025 global management of diversity and inclusiveness policy
Mango	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable collection: Mango Committed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair working conditions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual memory gathers achievements and future challenges - Control impact generated by use of chemical products in manufacturing process or production/distribution process itself - Minimize consumption of resources and greenhouse gas emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy and safe working environment - Equal treatment in all areas of application, non-discrimination - Continuous professional development for all employees - Fair and honest competition - Respect for intellectual property
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Table 3.3: Eight different fast fashion retailers and their CSR strategies

3.3 Summary and Sub-conclusion Chapter 3

The third sub-question could be answered by looking at table 3.4. Resulting from the findings from the websites of the different fast fashion retailers and following the categorization of social standards Nikolaou et al. (2013) proposed for standards of CSR implementation, table 3.4 explains the practices of the eight fast fashion retailers that are used mostly by these retailers. The classification of social sustainability practices is widely developed, in many variations. This makes it difficult to grasp the most efficient and most supported categorization method. Therefore, it is decided here to follow the GRI standards and their categorization of social and environmental standards, altered by Nikolaou et al. (2013). These standards were also discussed in this chapter.

The practices in table 3.4 could be seen as the most efficient CSR practices of fast fashion retailers, because many the bigger fast fashion retailers are using them. It could be argued that the bigger fast fashion retailers have special teams looking at their CSR strategies, and that they are therefore assumed to be most effective and most efficient. However, these practices could also be the ones that ask the least effort from the fast fashion retailers, but that these practices are not valued highly by customers. So, for a new fast fashion retailer, it might be profitable to do something else than these six practices that are used most. In that way, the new fast fashion retailers can distinguish themselves from the mainstream fast fashion retailers.

Bottom line	Environmental			Social		
Category	Production	Retail	Post-Consumption	Labor practices	Human rights	Society
Practice	Use of sustainable materials in clothes	Eco-efficiency at stores	Garment collection program	Working conditions	Enhancing diversity	Projects and supporting charities for vulnerable groups

Table 3.4: CSR practices that are mostly used by the eight fast fashion retailers

Conclusion

This chapter will provide a conclusion to the main research question. The main research question was:

‘How are strategies of corporate social responsibility implemented by fast fashion retailers?’. This question should be answered by combining the answers to the sub-questions.

The three sub-questions are looking at respectively the combination of CSR and the fast fashion supply chains, the motives that fast fashion retailers have for implementing CSR and the focus on both the social and environmental bottom line within CSR implementations of fast fashion retailers. The sub-questions that are discussed in three different chapters together should give some answer to the main question. For answering the main research question, in this research it is assumed that CSR in the fast fashion industry is by all means characterized on three areas: its focus on supply chains, its motives and the way social and environmental domains of CSR are present.

The focus on supply chains of CSR in the fast fashion industry is very high. Since fast fashion is for a large part characterized by its complex and widespread supply chains, its CSR is too. The great focus on supply chains could be seen as a distinguishing characteristic of CSR in the fast fashion industry. The worsened social and environmental conditions within the fast fashion industry are actually caused by the fast fashion retailers, but the companies and workers down the supply chain have to deal with them, and therefore the CSR of fast fashion retailers should be and is often directed towards the supply chains. Hence, fast fashion retailers that want to invest in CSR strategies should focus on improving social and environmental sustainability in their supply chains. Literature written about, and thus information provided in this research, about the issues in the fast fashion supply chain are mostly concerning social problems. Following from the information provided in chapter 2, it also seems that the social issues in supply chains are mostly targeted in campaigns from NGOs and the media. In order to prevent these targets and the bad public image resulting from that, fast fashion retailers should solve these issues in their supply chains. Fast fashion retailers should therefore focus on improving the social issues occurring in their supply chains.

The motives for implementing CSR in the fast fashion industry somewhat differ from the traditional categorization of motives. In literature, it is said that motives for implementing CSR in the fast fashion industry are purely stakeholder-driven. The stakeholder driven motive for implementing CSR is a characterizing aspect of CSR in the fast fashion industry. It shows how the fast fashion industry is pressured into taking up CSR activities, and that without these pressures, nothing would have changed. This also indicates that CSR implementations in the fast fashion industry are only focused on how they can show the public and stakeholders they do good. CSR seems to be used more as a tool for fast fashion retailers to prevent themselves from getting a bad image and to attract customers, and this might cause the fast fashion retailers to make certain choices in their CSR that benefit themselves most, not the people they should help.

This could be turned around. Since the implementation of CSR in the fast fashion industry is usually reactive, fast fashion retailers should realize this and look at what their stakeholders

would want them to change in order to improve sustainability. They should really try to listen to their stakeholders and change the things that their stakeholders care about.

The fast fashion focus on social and environmental bottom lines of sustainability as depicted in tables 3.2 and 3.3 give a clarification on what CSR in the fast fashion industry actually means in practice, because these tables are based on the actual CSR strategies of fast fashion retailers. CSR activities concerning environmental sustainability are use of sustainable materials in clothes, eco-efficiency at stores and garment collection programs. CSR activities concerning environmental sustainability are focused on working conditions, enhancing diversity and project and supporting charities for vulnerable groups. It is difficult to determine what one should do with this information. On the one hand, a fast fashion retailer that wants to start implement CSR activities could do these exact things, because large successful fast fashion retailers do the same and they seem to be making profit. On the other hand, new fast fashion retailers could also choose to diversify on the basis of their CSR strategies. They could try to listen to their stakeholders better and put more emphasis on problems that stakeholders are concerned with. This could bring them into a position with competitive advantage.

Limitations

A limitation of the research that should be considered is the fact that the three sub-questions would be giving information on the distinguishing characteristics of CSR in the fast fashion industry, but these sub-questions are built by the thesis author. It could thus be that CSR in the fast fashion industry is distinctive from CSR in other industry for many other reasons, but only these three points of focus are considered within this research. However, a recommendation for future research could be that a more complete overview of the characteristics of CSR within the fast fashion industry is provided by focusing on more than only three attributes.

In addition, another limitation of this research is that some of the literature used could be seen as outdated. Most of the literature about the characteristics of fast fashion is written in the early 2000s, because the topic of fast fashion might have been a new topic back then. Within this research, the scientific articles dating back to the early 2000s are still used, because information in them still seems relevant. Another reason why they are still used is because this is when the fast fashion industry already existed, so information in these articles is relevant when looking at the origin and principles of fast fashion. However, this could also be a recommendation for future research, to do more research into the current status of the fast fashion industry.

A last limitation of this research is due to time limits. For an overall overview of the CSR in fast fashion industry, it would have been valuable to elaborate more on CSR implementations in other industries. This would have given a better understanding of how the CSR in the fast fashion industry might differ from CSR in other industries.

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