

Chapter 1

Type of Relationships and Their Management Towards Quality and Performance in the Textile and Apparel Industry: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Relations within the textile and apparel industry have varied considerably in recent years. New modes of relationship management and the emergence of new international actors have altered traditional concepts. In the chapter, the authors study the reflection of these variations in inter-organizational and intra-organizational relations, especially by reviewing 42 articles reported in journals and conference proceedings from the ISI Web of Knowledge database, finding 28 articles on the subject mentioned. A classification of the 28 articles has been made based on their context, their sources of results, the stakeholders that appear, and their final results. The contributions are shown in each of the two areas mentioned and which is the most studied. Later on, an account is made of the main theoretical bodies mentioned in the articles, and finally, it is observed that while marketing and supply chain management, belonging to inter-organizational relations are widely mentioned, intra-organizational relations have less value, especially in the question of human resources.

INTRODUCTION

Trade liberalization for the textile and apparel industry, that has taken place between 1995 and 2005, has led to the increase of competition, as low-labor countries (such as, China, Turkey, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vietnam) have become important industrial players (Gereffi & Frederick, 2010). The expansion of production and sourcing networks to different global regions has also increased the complex-

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ity of the textile-apparel chain, which currently includes several manufacturing processes, intermediate processing steps, auxiliary material production, retailing and service providers (Cao, Zhang, To & Ng, 2008). Textile-apparel value chain is larger than in the past, because not only traditional suppliers must be considered, but also advanced technology suppliers and logistics providers (Fornasiero, Tescaro, Scarso & Gottardi, 2009). Apart from the changes occurred on the supply side, the trade liberalization has determined the replacement of brand manufacturers by store brands sourced by retailers, on the demand side (Gereffi & Frederick, 2010).

The changes occurred in the textile and apparel industry led to the need of new forms of management of the relationships with their suppliers. Additionally, the fashion apparel sector is characterized by high volatility of product demand and low predictability (Cao et al., 2008), which increases the importance of managing the relationship with other actors, such as customers. Mckinsey's (2018) report 'The State of Fashion 2019' underlines that the increase of consumers' concerns on transparency and sustainability have determined companies to be more involved with social issues. As a consequence companies may increase the management of relationship with social groups and communities. Therefore, companies from the textile and apparel industry must manage carefully both inter- and intra- organizational relationships in order to remain competitive.

The development and management of relationships has attracted the attention of researches in the last years. But, the following question arise: There has been performed research on the management of relationships in the textile and apparel industry? And if it has been performed, what types of relationships have been analyzed, which stakeholders have been taken into account and which theories have been applied?

The problem is that the management of inter- and intra- organizational relationships may be different as the stakeholders involved are not the same. The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on relationships in the textile and apparel industry and make suggestions for further research on the field. In particular, the goal is to identify the fields of study, the analyzed stakeholders, the methodology and theories applied in the literature.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, a literature review about the management of relationships is performed; then the methodology is explained; thirdly the results are presented; fourthly we presents the conclusions and finally suggestions for further research are offered.

THE MANAGEMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS TOWARDS QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

Two major types of relationships can be identified in the literature: inter and intra- organizational relationships. Inter-organizational relationships refer to "two or more organizations coming together to achieve a goal, perform a task and/or provide a service" (Carr, Muthusamy & Lee, 2008: 87), while intra-organizational relationships are the kind of relationships maintained internally between departments or divisions of an organization (Mena, Humphries & Wilding, 2009).

In the case of both types of relationships, organization theory underlines the resource allocation issues. Organizations establish inter-organizational relationships in order to ensure the flow of resources controlled by other organizations (Mizruchi & Galaskiewski, 1993). On the other hand, Oliver C. (1990) proposes six determinants of inter-organizational relationships:

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