

Qualitative Research

ETHICAL PRACTICES AND THE SUBSEQUENT CHALLENGES IN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ASOS RETAILING UK

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INTRODUCTION

- ▶ This research has been conducted to essentially understand the challenges of ethical supply chain management in a garment company of the United Kingdom.
- ▶ ASOS is a fashion retail brand that provides clothing and accessories to the customers.
- ▶ Considering the wide range of demand, the ability to perform under pressure and to cater to the reputation of the company is the area of research (Rottig, Koufteros, & Umphress, 2011).

ABOUT ASOS

- ▶ ASOS is a British online fashion and beauty retailer. Primarily aimed at young adults, ASOS sells over 850 brands as well as its own range of clothing and accessories.
- ▶ ASOS.com is a global online fashion and beauty retailer, offering womenswear, menswear, footwear, accessories, jewelry and beauty products.
- ▶ As of August 2017, ASOS PLC has net assets of £200.4 million (a decrease of 16% from 2016).
- ▶ It sells over 80,000 branded and own-brand products online and through mobile experiences. ASOS has websites targeting the UK, Australia, USA, France, Germany, Spain, Russia and Italy markets. It also ships to over 140 countries from fulfilment centers in the UK, US and Europe.



RESEARCH AIMS & OBJECTIVES & QUESTIONS

Research Objectives

- ▶ An overall understanding of the ethical supply chain practices of ASOS.
- ▶ The facets that drive ethical supply chain practices in garment industry.

Research Aims

- ▶ To analyze the major facets that drive supply chain management towards ethical practices in ASOS.
- ▶ The primary practices that influence the supply chain in ASOS.

Research Questions

- ▶ What are the major drivers of ethical supply chain practices in ASOS?
- ▶ What are the primary ethical practices within a supply chain management practices in ASOS?

LITERATURE REVIEW

- ▶ Due to the growing pressure of the stakeholders, it has been noted that the ability to act responsibly through the supply chain process may have become of pressure. As a result, the organization are trying to ensure that they are able to act responsibly. There has been a wide uptake of ethical trading initiatives, involving the establishment of minimum standards for social and environmental responsibility within business (Hughes, 2001).
- ▶ The ethical supply chain practices have been identified to have a high social and environmental impact of the organizational situation and to the overall industry (Hall and Matos, 2010).
- ▶ Prior research has focused on the multi branches ethical supply chain practices that range from corporate social responsibility (e.g., Andersen and Skjoett-Larsen, 2009, to ethical sourcing (e.g., Pretious and Love, 2006) , fair trade (e.g., Auroi, 2003) and also low carbon intiitiaves (e.g., Halldórsson and Kovács, 2010).



RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY & METHODS

- ▶ The Interpretivist research methodology will be used in conducting this research paper in order to qualitative description of the ethical supply chain in ASOS. An Interpretivist approach to social research would be much more qualitative, using methods such as unstructured interviews.
- ▶ Open ended questionnaire.
- ▶ Telephonic Interview with three responsible supply chain representatives of ASOS.
- ▶ The process of Triangulation will be adhered to while data analysis.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- ▶ The findings have shown that a large emphasis of the ASOS supply chain revolves around ensuring ethical sourcing of their products.
- ▶ The responses showed that they try to ensure that the supply chain process is as transparent as possible and the sourcing to the delivery is free flowing ensuring flexibility both the manufacturers and the customers.
- ▶ Their emphasis also revolves around the ability to enhance the supply chain process constantly, with upgrading their logistics as ASOS is an online shopping platform.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS & LIMITATIONS

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

- ▶ The research analysis depicted a clear need of transparency of the ethical practices to ensure a smooth and ongoing ethical supply chain process. ASOS has the idea of ensure the functionalities are well documented and the agreements are ensured towards a balanced ethical sourcing

LIMITATIONS

- ▶ Limited time to conduct the interviews.
- ▶ Limited time to analyze the results in reference to more secondary data.
- ▶ Level of confidentiality



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

- ▶ The qualitative highlights the various drivers and barriers to ethical supply chain management.
- ▶ The nature of the research methodology is to ensure an open conversation towards the business practices in ASOS.
- ▶ The qualitative data analysis has been through the process of triangulation, that would help get an extensive idea of what impacts the business process.
- ▶ Ethical code of conduct has been maintained to ensure discretion of information and personal information.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

- ▶ This Qualitative research focuses on exploring, examining and describing business practices and their natural environments.
- ▶ Embedded in this particular research the emphasis is on the relationships and power between researcher and participants.
- ▶ Qualitative research often generates questions about the ability to protect confidentiality. The following aspects have been respected:
 1. Respect for persons
 2. Confidentiality
 3. Beneficence/non-maleficence

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Thank
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