MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION RETAIL BASED ON REUSE – A STRUGGLE WITH MULTIPLE LOGICS

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Key Words: Management of fashion reuse, Sustainable fashion retail, Institutional logics, Circular fashion

1. INTRODUCTION
Reuse is a strategy to render fashion retail sustainable [1] and an example is the take-back schemes established by international retailers [2]. Managerial aspects are important in a reuse system [3], but management issues have seldom been studied [4]. Accordingly, empirical investigations of the management of reuse systems are needed [4]. Hence, the purpose of this study is to show the complexity in the management of fashion-retail based on reuse by identifying and explaining obstacles in the process. This is achieved by an analyze of ReTuna, a shopping mall based on reuse, from the perspective of institutional logics. ReTuna opened in 2015 and consists of approximately fourteen stores. The shops at ReTuna sell reused products, but this unconventional sourcing of goods aside, ReTuna aims to be a traditional mall. Most shops are staffed by the owner(s) and in some cases an employee. Garments and textiles that are sold origins from donations that are collected by the mall. The case illustrates the complexity, as it failed in establishing reuse-based fashion retail, despite its success in achieving enough donations and creating publicity. The analysis shows that the goal of re-circulating fashion is hindered by actors not being able to equally integrate the divergent sustainability dimensions in the mall owner's goals. The obstacles are a result of the actors prioritizing the logics differently at the same time as not being able to fulfill the demands of the logics due to a lack of knowledge, experience and skills, and coordination.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Institutional logics draw on there being no general prevailing distinction between rational and irrational, but distinctions between different orders of rationality, i.e., logics [5]. Later research on institutional logics draws on a performative perspective and argues that institutional logics do not exist per se, but are performed into being [6]. Following this, we see institutional logics as something enacted and see ReTuna as a case where actors enact at least three logics (retail, reuse, and work integration) through talk and activities. The talk and the activities work both in favor and in conflict with the rationalities that these logics represent. However, in addition to the actors' talk and actions, we argue that the material aspects are equally important and contribute to how the logics are enacted. Thus, the actors' ability to speak the languages and balance logics is shaped by material aspects in the context.

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD
The study is based on interviews and observations, focusing on actions and practices at ReTuna. Thirty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted between 2015 and 2018 with representatives from each store, the mall management, and the collection and sorting center. Additionally, 21 short interviews were conducted with people donating fashion to the mall to understand their reasons for donations. Observations has been done in each store and the col-

lection and sorting center on five occasions between 2015 and 2018. The process of analyzing transcribed interviews, research notes and photos has been characterized by deductive and inductive analyses in two steps. First, analyzed using literature on shopping mall and fashion reuse as a framework. Second, analyzed again with institutional logics as the framework.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that the actors' actions create an interplay between the logics that both enables and constrains the ambition of reuse. It also shows that the actors do not manage the logics equally due to variances in prioritization, knowledge, experience, and material preconditions. The difficulties hinder the ambition to create sustainable fashion retail. The ambition is also hindered as there are few attempts to coordinate prioritizations and practices. Variances in prioritization can be seen in the mall's *basis of attention* and *basis of strategy*. The goals of the mall focus on all logics, but it is the shopping mall logic that has been prioritized by the owner and the mall management, while some tenants have prioritized differently. The mall management has also emphasized the shopping mall logic in the organization model. A traditional and decentralized shopping mall organization gives each tenant the full responsibility to shape the reuse process. Hence, the sorting and reprocessing are organized at an individual level with everyone having their own sorting criteria, using their own equipment, and finding their own facilities.

Individuals at ReTuna play simultaneously many of the *primary roles*, at the same time as each actor's knowledge, experiences, and skills tie him/her tighter to one of the logics and the combination complicates the work. Further, the *focus of practices* at the mall creates a complexity as the practices seldom are in line with all logics. Instead, a practice might favor one logic and disfavor another. However, it is not only the actions of humans that result in a complexity. The impact of the material context at practices is likewise an important source.

From the perspective of sustainable fashion retail, these results extend previous research by highlighting the importance of a conscious management that balances inconsistent demands. From the perspective of research on institutional logics, the result shows that differences in attention, knowledge, skills, and the material context influence how actors enact different logics. To see intuitional logics as performative offers an explanation of how the co-existence of logics in organizations can result in different practices [7] and how individual actors can combine logics in a bricolage [8]. Also, the complexity is a result of the actors not being able to manage the logics equally. Despite a common goal, differences emerge as the actors enact the logics differently. The logic prioritized by the actors is the one they have the most experience with and knowledge of and the one that has the best material preconditions. Thus, the embeddedness [9] are crucial in which logic is prioritized.

The absence of coordination and the decentralized organization strategy has given individual actors the possibility to influence the development of the mall and how the logics are managed. The result is that the reuse process is decidedly non-standardized and dependent on the individual's judgment and decisions, a situation similar to those described by others [10-12]. However, the lack of key actors with knowledge, experience, and skills creates an unbalance in how the logics are managed. Earlier research has shown that sufficient knowledge is crucial to develop businesses regardless of whether it is from a retail [13], reuse [10], or work integration perspective [14] and when this is absent, it is difficult to balance and negotiate the logics, e.g. to speak the different languages.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to show the complexity in the management of fashion-retail based on reuse by identifying and explaining obstacles in the process. The complexity is a result of the need to manage and balance different logics, which are enacted by the actors' actions. Thus, the goal of re-circulating as much fashion products as possible is hindered by actors not being able to handle different logics equally due to a lack of knowledge, experience and skills, coordination, and material conditions. A managerial implication of this is the importance of considering that even if there is a common overarching goal, there might be other goals, based on other rationalities, which might contradict the overarching ambition. Also, in the management of retail based on reuse, it is important to consciously balance inconsistent demands and avoid an unconscious emphasis on either of the logics. Given the conclusions and that changes of logics often are incremental, a limitation of the study is that it is not possible to elaborate on the long-term development. Therefore, future long-term studies of the development of similar initiatives could be a suitable tool.

7. REFERENCES

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