

Sustainable Consumption in Supermarket Retail: A Case of Walmart Brazil

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Abstract: *On the context of new market relations, this aims to analyze how Walmart Brazil relates itself with its suppliers under the sustainable consumption perspective. For that, with an exploratory research and qualitative approach, the brand Hiper Bompreço, in Recife (Brazil) was analyzed under sustainability background. The dissemination throughout the supply chain of sustainability demonstrates an evolution in the placement of a company in the market, thus, it was identified a slight orientation of the company to a change in its interactions with its stakeholders, in its strategic positioning and in its daily actions according with the developed partnerships, which facilitates the construction of new societal responsibilities.*

Keywords: *Sustainable Consumption; Supply Chain; Responsibility.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Among social dynamics that are observed worldwide in different dimensions, specially economic and environmental ones, discussions rise over the need of a new collective thinking towards the continuity of human actions on the planet, the so called sustainable development (SD). There are debates on how to implement it, and one of the recurrent topics is the search to balance fundamental dimensions (social, economical and environmental) to fulfill the needs of current generations without compromising the capacity of the future generations to fulfill theirs (Elkington, 2001; Sachs, 2007; World Commission on Environment and Development [WCDE], 1987).

This search involves social interactions that rise from a collective involvement of different actors, and companies are part of that. Therefore, discussing the aspects of more responsible production and consumption practices becomes necessary. Here it is where the discussions about sustainable consumption (SC) begin. SC is understood as a consumption pattern that results from the interrelation among different stakeholders (Jackson, 2007; Michaelis, 2003; Silva, 2012). To become effective as a collective practice, SC requires changes in different contexts of (inter)actions.

According to Michaelis (2003), these interactions happen in a network of influences, in which every existing actor may develop roles and take responsibilities for this new consumption pattern. The academic discussions about SC are still incipient (Jackson; Michaelis, 2003; Jackson, 2007). However there is one suggesting that companies, when incorporating new behaviors to its activities, may direct themselves towards a more responsible practice in the market (Michaelis, 2003). These may involve both individual actions, such as the search for eco-efficiency on internal processes, and interactive ones, where there is, for example, direct interaction with other companies of its supply chain (Michaelis, 2003; World Business Council for Sustainable Development [WCBSD], 2008).

This understanding points out that organizations must be continuously interacting with different actors to function in a responsible way, therefore making sustainable consumption possible. One of the most impactful actions to take is to engage with the supply chain. Elkington (2001) says that companies must take their responsibility and work in alignment with the Triple Bottom Line

concept to really contribute to sustainability, sharing responsible practices with the whole supply chain.

The supply chain, as stated by Pires (2007), Reid and Sanders (2005), encompasses all organizations and individuals working to allow one organization to accomplish its main activity, including the procurement of raw material, and the production and the delivery of products or services to clients. Therefore, it is continuously subjected to the management processes that guide the activities of the focal organization of the chain. This becomes more complex as there is more integration in the supply chain, and economical, social and environmental performances are taken into consideration (Linton; Klassen; Jayaraman, 2007). Considering all that, there is an understanding that new programs of the focal organization and the incorporation of new practices by each player in the supply chain will lead to changes on the SD performance of the whole chain.

The possibility of changes within the organizations indicates the possibility of restructuring the global patterns of production and consumption (Tukker et al., 2008). Schumacher (2001) indicates that there is a correlation between the decrease on the production of goods that generate major environmental impact and the decrease on consumption. In other words, a change on the market behavior of a company, by incorporating practices that improve its performance (González-Benito; González-Benito, 2005).

Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze how Walmart Brazil interacts with its suppliers under the perspective of sustainable consumption. The supermarkets industry is the field of study, and the practices of Walmart Brazil in Recife (Brazil) are the basis for understanding these relations. The choice of Walmart for the study is justified due to its new market positioning strategy, changing its behavior around sustainability concepts and practices (Gunther, 2006; Silva; Santos, 2011). The analysis of the selected dyad provides an overview of the company's actions, which facilitates the discussions about sustainable consumption.

For a better understanding, the paper is divided in five sections, the first one being introduction. The second presents the theoretical aspects guiding the research in the understanding of the phenomenon. On the third the methodological procedures are presented. On the fourth the results are presented and discussed, including a characterization of the company, the indication of the interactions related to sustainable consumption, as well as the relationships of company with its supply chain. Finally, the final considerations are presented on the fifth.

2. THEORETICAL OUTLINE

2.1. Sustainable Consumption

On the current context, changing global patterns of production and consumption is an important need, reinforced by the increasing consumerism all around different cultures on the planet (Assadourian, 2010). The maintenance of global consumption depends on changing consumption paradigm, and a more collective and conscious debate about SC is one of the needed steps towards that.

On the social context, the change in consumption practices “reflects the cultural moment of a society and the way it deals with the required dynamics and demands, where a collective guidance is necessary for the effectiveness of an emerging development, the sustainable one” (Silva, 2011, p.29). Understanding the need and the viability of a change of paradigm, consumers start having new concerns, changing from an individualistic focus to a wider collective consciousness (Michaelis, 2000). A movement for a more responsible consumption is emerging.

In order to work with a sustainable pattern of consumption, not only the actions of consumers must be observed, but a whole set of social interactions that happen in such manner that it is possible to work the political perspective developed amid the consumptions relations in a determinate economical sector. According to Jackson (2004; 2007), for sustainable consumption (SC) to be put in practice, a change of consumption patterns to a new social reality is needed, which begins by reducing the consumption of a good portion of materials and by changing consolidated practices.

According to Portilho (2005), the SC emerges as a new perspective for public strategies on the consumption sphere, for new forms of production, and for behavioral changes on consumers. The

same can be achieved by the sharing responsibilities among government, companies and other actors, ultimately, by each citizen that has autonomy and understanding to act differently within economical, social and political spheres (Cortez; Ortigoza, 2007; Michaelis, 2000; 2003). Jackson (2004) indicates that a sustainable consumption practice involves not only to consume less, but also to consume differently and more efficiently.

Therefore, for a more sustainable consumption it is necessary to consider the relation of influence that several stakeholders have over consumption. Each must take its individual role, within the idea of collectivity that is used to study the theme. Understanding that this process is cultural, complex and capable to assist the effectiveness of a new consumption paradigm regarding the emerging perspective of development, different authors discussing sustainable consumption focus their studies on the stakeholders involved, to understand the commitment and responsibilities they have on that direction.

Facing sustainable consumption, each actor needs to take responsibilities that are distinctive, yet convergent to the main objective that involves changing the current consumption paradigm. Whole supply chains are part of this process: focal companies, suppliers, competitors, third sector organizations, funding institutions, universities, media, government and community individuals (Michaelis, 2003; Silva, 2012). For the present discussion it was decided to analyze the responsible practices and interaction with suppliers throughout a selected supply chain.

2.2. Supply Chain and Sustainability: The Ethics of Responsibility

To be on the market, both on production and consumption levels, organizations must interact with other actors. If their market behavior is aligned to sustainability, these interactions may contribute to a sustainable consumption, depending on managerial processes where the decision makers choosing likewise.

According to Jonas (2006), when the ethics of responsibility is incorporated to the behavior of different individuals concerned with the consequences of their actions for the current and future generations, a virtuous cycle is created, where one's actions contribute positively with another's. If those are disseminated along the whole supply chain, a new set of practices is developed under a new perspective, and the results can lead organizations new levels of sustainable performance.

A supply chain can be seen as the partnership of different actors to support the the needs of a focal company. The configuration of that chain, according to Roldan and Hansen (2012), happens according to decisions of the focal company relative to the partners it interacts with. It depends on a process to manage the network of relations between actors that perform in different businesses that converge in the same direction (Leite; Primo, 2011; Roldan; Hansen, 2012). In a new market context, that vision has converged to adequate entire supply chains to sustainable practices.

The idea of sustainability in a supply chain brings along the perspective of more responsibility from different stakeholders towards the chain. This means new practices and actions will result from interactions of stakeholders concerned with current and future generations needs. Sustainability, on this context, influences the whole relationship among chain actors, especially when the focal company is pursuing performance according to the Triple Bottom Line concept (Matos; Hall, 2007; Zucatto; Pedrozo, 2011).

A management process becomes necessary to deal with and to better visualize the changes in the current paradigms. According to Crater and Rogers (2008), sustainability management in the supply chain means the integration between strategic and transparent actions, and the achievement of social, economical and environmental goals on the main organizational processes is a systemic manner, so that there is a significant long term improvement on the performance of both the focal organization and its supply chain participants. According to Linton, Klassen and Jayaraman (2007), this must be observed in all stages, from production to the final consumer.

The debate over the involvement of companies responsibilities with the necessary interactions with its supply chain is touched upon by Ramalho (2001). The author discusses the process of incorporation and consciousness of an individual as a decision maker according to the ethics of responsibility. This can facilitate social responsibility in a corporation, and by consequence, more responsible actions from that organization towards all it relates with. All these considerations point for the existence of a set of relations that may be developed in such manner that the ethical

behavior of a manager and his social interaction with other stakeholders facilitates the achievement of sustainability along the supply chain, and may contribute to sustainable consumption on the analyzed industry.

2.3. Bringing the Supply Chain closer to Sustainable Consumption

According to this vision, the focus is on the companies and on how they may contribute to sustainable consumption on their interaction with other stakeholders. In general, the corporate community understands SC as merely procuring sustainable or eco-friendly products and services. However, there is more complexity around sustainable consumption practices, making it necessary to discuss the idea of social interaction (Michaelis, 2003). Three dimensions are considered to analyze company's actions: (1) the development of new Technologies and practices; (2) the changes on economical incentives, since according to the model social interactions are modified around the company, and (3) the cultural change resulting from the influence of the focal company.

Málovics, Csigené and Kraus (2008) indicate the possibility of a corporation corporate acting towards a more (or less) sustainable consumption, taking into consideration its behavior. Based on, Silva (2011) researched the needed variables to identify and to evaluate corporate actions on that direction: Eco-efficiency, Procurement Practices, Government Incentives, Supply Chain Links, Choice Edition, Corporate Citizenship, Responsible Marketing and Dialogue with Stakeholders. Each variable is broken down into in different analysis criteria.

This study focus on the Supply Chain Links and Choice Edition variables. To analyze them the idea of economical incentives of sustainable consumption for companies (Michaelis; 2003) must be brought in. According to the author, government and other stakeholders must be encouraged to a more responsible perspective. Crafting the chain that way may be the instrument to promote sustainable consumption, by the creation of new social and environmental patterns (Michaelis, 2003; Muster, 2010; WBCDS, 2008). Each company's programs will support the incorporation of new practices by each and every supply chain participant, leading to a relevant change..

That relates directly to another issue regarding SC and the changes in the economical incentives: the editions of choice. Focused on changing the management of the decisions made throughout the supply chain, the editions of choice indicate the position of each actor within the set of interactions of that chain (Tukker et al., 2008; WBCSD, 2008). They have specific characteristics in their edition of choice. For companies, the choice can relate to its suppliers, to products to sell, to the transparency towards consumers or to an educational practice for a more sustainable life style.

For each of these choices, there must be at least a change on a corporate practice. It could be on the economical incentives (company-government interaction), on other incentives throughout the supply chain, from producer to consumer, or on the editions of choice performed by some of the actors. However, these aspects can only be observed if there are changes on the organization's business model, which will lead to real changes on the existing market relations (Michaelis, 2003). The need to discuss the selected perspective remains.

3. METHODOLOGY

To analyze the way Walmart Brazil interacts with its suppliers under the perspective of sustainable consumption, the approach was qualitative, to understand the effectiveness of a relationship (Oliveira, 2005). The research can be considered as exploratory, as it is seeking the recognition of the theoretical-argumentative context and the characteristics pertinent to the sector and the company, to explain the phenomenon (Creswell, 2010). To achieve that, the strategy chosen was of a case study, since it provides a macro visualization of the context of the company, as well as its singular characteristics (Goldenberg, 2009).

Since the Northeast region headquarters in Pernambuco were chosen, narrowing the research to Hiper Bompreço happened because of its importance for the company sustainability strategy, and its representativeness within the regional market. It is worth mentioning that the paper is result of a major research that analyzes all dimensions, categories and criteria elaborated according to Michaelis (2003) model, which will be touched upon during the analysis, but not explored in depth due to the focus of this specific study.

Bibliography and documents were gathered as verification methods, as well as the execution of semi structured interviews, complemented by the observation in different stores that have the brand. Participated in the data gathering process the National Directory of Communication and the Regional Manager, that respond directly about all practices from the company towards sustainability. For the execution of the analysis were used as variables discussed in the approximation between the thematic previously held: Dissemination of responsible practices, Capacity of influence, Responsible decision process, Analysis of origin of products to be sold.

It was defined as data analysis procedure the analysis of content in the Bardin (2009) perspective for the interviews executed, the information contained in the website and in the documents used, as well as in the analysis of observation that was held in the moment of execution of interviews and in the different stores visited. For the analysis of the categories were used the parameters of analysis defined by Silva (2011) in order to facilitate the applicability and operationalization of the research. With the responses from the verification methods, it became possible the accomplishment of a triangulation of data to actualize the validation of the results found (Creswell, 2010).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Walmart Businesses began in the state of Arkansas (USA) in 1962 and are currently being held in 15 different countries under the focus of multibrand. In Brazil their activities began to be developed in the country side of São Paulo in 1995, with the Walmart Supercenter brand, and throughout an expansion process, the company entered the northeastern market in 2004, with the acquisition of the Bompreço supermarket network, adding to the group another 118 stores and 03 distribution centers in the region. After almost two decades of operation in the Brazilian market, the company indicates that it is seeking to attend different consumers profiles (Walmart Brasil, 2010).

Although it is known in a global context, Walmart has an emphasis and an image questionable by many – one of socially and environmentally responsible. According to testimony from Walmart’s National Communication Directory, the concern with global warming issue and the pursuit for attendance of corporate mission – to sell for less for people to live better – were stimuli for the inception of responsible practices by understanding that for better quality of life of its consumers the company must direct its activities towards a sustainable development, transforming that vision in one of the strategic pillars of the company (Table 01).

2008	2009	2010
To be the best option of purchase experience to the consumer	To be the best purchase experience, with unbeatable prices	Accelerated growth
Focus in low cost and low price	Focus in cost reduction and increase of productivity	Improvement of profitability
To grow in profitable and continuous manner	To grow in profitable and continuous manner	To be leader in sustainability and corporate social responsibility
To engage and motivate the employees	Engage and develop employees	
To lead in sustainability	To be leader in sustainability and social responsibility	
To be the best channel between supplier and consumer	To be the best channel between supplier and consumer	

Source: Walmart Brazil (2008, p.22; 2009, p.17; 2010b, p.13; 2011, p.13)

As it can be previously observed, over the years the company has been involved with the concern with the sustainability by incorporating the idea to its strategies. That can be considered, even if that concern has assumed an aspect of market differential, a continuous pursuit of leadership. To lead does not mean that there is responsible acting, and for that it is necessary to observe which other actions are developed by the company to identify if the same is in fact acting positively in

the field. Therefore, considering the Michaelis (2003) model presented in the theoretical referential, we seek to identify the main contributions from the company to the sustainable consumption in the sector, as well as to discuss how is given the relationship on its supply chain.

4.1. Sustainable Consumption in the Supermarkets Retail

In order to focus on the relation proposed between the supply chain and the sustainable consumption it is necessary a global visualization of how are presented the practices conducted on the selected company in the search for the attendance of its strategies towards its pursuit of leadership in sustainability. Therefore, in Chart 1 is presented the mapping executed for each one of the variables elaborated in the research process at Walmart Brazil. As it can be observed, the variables are distributed in different levels, but there is a direction towards a positive contribution from the company in that way.

Dimension	Theoretical Category	Criteria	Contributory Situation
Development of new Technologies and practices	Eco-efficiency	Recycling	Unfavorable
		Reuse	Unfavorable
		Physical structure of the store	Unfavorable
		Certification	Unfavorable
	Own Consumer Practices	Water	Under development
		Energy	Under development
		Waste management	Under development
		Transportation	Unfavorable
Changes in the economical incentives	Government Incentives	Reactive behavior	Under development
		Negotiation	Under development
	Supply Chain Links	Dissemination of responsible practices	Favorable
		Capacity of influence	Favorable
	Choice Edition	Responsible decision-making process	Under development
		Analysis of origin of product to be sold	Under development
Cultural change in the network of influences	Corporate citizenship	Good corporate citizenship	Favorable
		Dissemination of conscious consumption along with employees	Favorable
	Responsible marketing	Responsible marketing compound	Under development
		Social report	Favorable
	Dialogue with stakeholders	Relation with the media	Favorable
		Relation with the	Favorable

		community	
		Relation with nongovernmental organization	Favorable

Chart 1: Summary chart of the company’s contribution to sustainable consumption

Source: Field Research (2011)

That macro visualization presented demonstrates a favorable practice from the company in what refers to Links of its supply chain, apart from practices under development in the Edition of choice variable. Such panorama indicates the possibility of a convergence as for the variables that are focused in this article. It must be understood that, for the development of a research under the context of sustainable consumption, despite working only with few variables these other relations identified along with the organization suggest the existence or not of homogeneity in its practices. Thereby, what draws more attention is that the main contributions from the company are in the cultural context of its network of influences, an interesting aspect for the relations which the same assumes in all of the supermarket retail.

4.2. Supply chain and Sustainable Consumption

From that macro vision, we now focus in the interaction with the supply chain. That occurs more specifically regarding the dyad company-supplier, which can facilitate more positively in the pursuit for a sustainable consumption, if there are products with sustainable concern and consumers available to buy them. We emphasize that the analysis seek relations and interactions that may contribute to the sustainable consumption, in that case using only one of the dimensions of the Michaelis (2003) model, with focus in the practice of Walmart Brazil in the national context and in its influence in contribution of responsible practices at Hiper Bompreço. Therefore, it will be presented next the findings of the research.

4.2.1. Supply Chain Links

In a perspective of effective responsibility and interaction from the company towards all members of its chain, it is understood that in the analysis of this category it must be considered the dissemination of sustainable practices with the supply chain links in such manner that the actions of each intermediate become responsible (Michaelis, 2003; Muster, 2010; WBCSD, 2008). For the same to be analyzed it must be observed the dissemination of responsible practices, as well as the capacity of influence over the chain (Silva, 2011). Such variables facilitate the understanding of how the links are acting and interacting in the market. That idea presents itself as complementary to the discussion under the change in economical incentives as indicated in the theoretical referential.

With the purpose to identify how the process of change in the incentives of the studied sector is being developed, it becomes necessary to analyze the variable dissemination of responsible practices. For that, it is considered that from the dissemination of information and responsible practices over the supply chain it becomes more facilitated the change in collective behavior to sustainable consumption. That variable becomes necessary in the sense to understand how are being developed the actions by the company’s suppliers. That fact can be observed from the implementation of partnerships or the imposition of changes in its behaviors, which depends on the way Walmart Brazil behaves and positions itself in the market.

According to the company “in its relationship with the suppliers, the same adopts a model of mutual stimulus and integrated growth, aiming to consolidate a network of sustainable businesses on the economical, social and environmental points of view” (Walmart Brasil, 2009, p.53). That can be visualized in its commercial relations, since the same has an ethical policy in the supply chain, applied to all suppliers. Besides that, the company has what is called Suppliers Agreement that includes standards to stimulate good practices regarding the social and environmental laws in the productive unities (Walmart Brazil, 2011). As result of those actions it is identified that:

Driven by the partnership with Walmart Brazil, great companies holders of traditional brands with important participation in the marker in which they act have accepted the challenge to evaluate

their own business, pursuing opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of the life cycle of one of their products, from its fabrication to its discard (Walmart Brasil, 2010b, p. 28).

Those actions from the suppliers were stimulated by the company, by means of the program Sustainability from Edge to Edge, in which the same managed to accomplish a partnership with ten great companies in a manner that some products began to be visualized under a new perspective. The companies that participated in that Project were: 3M from Brazil, Cargill, Coca-cola, CP Colgate-Palmolive, Johnson & Johnson, Nestlé, Pepsico from Brazil, Procter & Gamble, Unilever Brazil e Walmart Brazil (brand) (Walmart Brasil, 2010b, p.29). Its participation generated the development of different products (Figure 1) that are aligned with a new corporate perspective, contributing positively to the change in the pattern of consumption of the final consumers.



Figure 1. Products that integrate the program Sustainability from Edge to Edge

Source: Walmart Brazil (2010c)

Those products began to present new contributions to the social responsibility defined as strategic pillar of the company. The results were so positive that in august 2011 it was launched the advertisement of ‘Second Wave of Sustainability from Edge to Edge’, to the Regional Manager (NE) of communication of the company:

Another 12 companies are participating. A Phillips TV that uses broken, recycled lamps, crushed to make the screen... The Guaraná Antarctica came, recycled cap and label. Sara Lee came, with a special coffee, without ink in the package, all white. That is very risky for a supplier that already has a brand in his package, to change the package.

As it can be observed, new companies began to pursuit contribution with something planned for Walmart Brazil, contributing also to the whole society. Since this form of acting is more to a national scope, it is understood that the products resulting from the change in the productive process of each supplier will be integrated to the company mix. That way, as for that variable there is a corporate alignment, in which the decisions made in Walmart Brazil will be disseminated with all the partner suppliers and in all the brands that integrate the company, within which is Hiper Bompreço, located in Recife/PE.

That aspect can be visualized still from the program Club of Producers that aims to integrate small suppliers, in the case of agricultural products, to the responsible company perspective, since incentives are given to the same, so that their products will be presented in the sales saloon. They assume a prominent place in the company, that fact occurs clearly in the southeast region by observation of the researcher, however, from the observation made in Recife only at the Hiper Bompreço Boa Viagem store it was identified the existence of a prominent place for those products, being those presented normally among other products in offer at the sales saloon.

Besides the study of dissemination over the supply chain, it is necessary to identify how is presented the capacity of influence that the company has towards its suppliers. It is understood that by assuming its capacity of influence over its supply chain, the company develops a new form of acting in the market and manages to contribute more directly to the effectiveness of sustainable consumption (SILVA, 2011). In order for that to be identified, we sought to understand how the interactions between those actors occur. At the moment the suppliers begin to

assume the challenges offered by Walmart Brazil as for the change in its products impact, it is perceived as clear the influence that the company has over the members of its chain.

According to a speech from the company, “Walmart’s commitments with sustainability are part of commercial contracts, and the company seeks to engage partners in a continuous process of alignment of principles and practices” (Walmart Brasil, 2009, p.54). With that it is clear that there is a direction so that during the commercial relations those aspects manage to have emphasis and be developed over the interactions between company and its suppliers. Besides that, it is perceived that that capacity of influence also exerts Power over the consumers that present themselves as more easily influenced by the information transmitted by Walmart Brazil. (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Flyer of sustainability

Source: Field Research (2011)

As a company starts to use its store environment to present new products or emphasize the already existing products, in what refers to the sustainability aspects, by means of responsible marketing, the company uses its capacity of influence and modification, many times, in the practice of consumption of its consumers, stimulating them to become green consumers, or conscious consumers, that means, stimulating that new consumption relations can be observed and that from the consumers decisions the same can be contributing, just as the company, to the perspective of sustainable consumption.

Despite those considerations, it is understood that a group of interactions are necessary, in which every actor must develop its part in a responsible manner and aligned with the paradigm of sustainable development (Jackson, 2004; 2007; Michaelis, 2000b; 2003). According to a speech from the company, it continuously seeks to perform an active part to ensure the responsibility in the whole chain of value (Walmart Brasil, 2010b). That suggests a change in its organizational behavior when its values, culture and actions start to be developed under a perspective not yet visualized. (Silva; Santos, 2011).

The whole process of influence involves initially the interaction mentioned between company and its suppliers. Amid the many initiatives, it is identified, in 2009, the launch of the Walmart Brazil Sustainability Pact, that comes with goals and deadlines for the development of more sustainable products, reduction of packages and attention to their origin (Walmart Brasil, 2011). That project seals “a commitment, coordinated by the company, to preserve the balance between production, environmental care and respect for human rights” (Walmart Brasil, 2010b, p. 23). With that, involving a greater number of participants oriented to sustainability.

With the discussions held so far, it is identified that the company, in the category Links of the supply chain, takes over its contributory part to sustainable consumption, having in sight the group of interactions that were developed, as well as the behavioral changes that were stimulated in the supermarket retail. That presents itself more clearly, according to the company, for example, when the products of “Sustainability from Edge to Edge” demonstrate that industrial activity and consumption are not incompatible to the environment (Walmart Brasil, 2010b). With

that, a positive orientation is perceived, that must be aligned directly with the edition of choice in retail.

4.2.2. *Choice Edition*

In understanding the reach of desired changes, whether in organizational behavior or in economical incentives developed in the analyzed sector, to be put to practice there is the necessity of analysis of the category choice edition, that refers to decisions that control directly the impacts of consumption (Tukker et al., 2008; WBCSD, 2008). In order for that category to be analyzed, the responsible decision-making process developed by the company must too be analyzed, as well as the analysis of the origin of the products to be sold in the stores. That way, it is understood that the variables indicate clearly how is defined the part of edition of choice, contributing to the SC and facilitating the identification of the relations proposed by the analyzed model.

In what regards the variable responsible decision-making process, it is understood that all decisions made interfere in the company's dynamics, however, when they present themselves to be responsible or oriented to a social and environmental perspective, corporate contribution presents itself as positive (Silva, 2011). For the analysis of this variable, it is considered that the making of more responsible decisions in the company regarding the practices to be developed, better for the control of its consumption impacts (Fuchs; Lorek, 2005). As noticed, once responsible decisions are made, smaller impacts are visualized, and more facilitated will be the positive acting of the company (Tukker et al., 2008; WBCSD, 2008).

One of the aspects that demonstrate that responsible decision-making process to the company refers to a process of ensuring the acceptance and quality of their own brands, considering that they represent products concerned with the environmental impact. Throughout its activities, Walmart Brazil evaluates its suppliers – which includes annual audits – and performs researches to identify segments in which there are demands and opportunities (Walmart Brasil, 2011, p. 32). An entire planning is perceived, which contributes favorably to the perspective of discussed decision, however, it is understood that for that variable, the gathered data cannot be considered as conclusive. That way, by involving national actions, the process is considered as gradual.

In what refers to the analysis of origin of product to be sold, the company's edition of choice impacts directly in the products offered at the store and facilitates the stimulus to conscious consumption, for example (WBCSD, 2008). To analyze that variable, it is considered that the execution of the analysis of origin of products to be sold improves the products offered to the consumers and incentivizes a better acting from the suppliers, indicating a more responsible corporate practice. We perceive that such variable is related to the Walmart Brazil Sustainability Pact discussed in the previous section that indicates, among other actions, the concern with the origin of products.

According to speech, the company “assumed the commitment of not purchasing products that come from deforestation or from exploration of slave labor, seeking to mobilize the responsibilities and commitments in the sector” (Walmart Brasil, 2010b, p.24). That decision and differentiated form of acting are intimately connected with the category Links of the supply chain, in view of the agreements between company and supplier that have been defined. With that, it is perceived that Walmart Brazil has an orientation towards that analysis, since it's been seeking to modify its relations with their suppliers. We emphasize that, as in the previous variable, for involving more national decisions and actions, it is considered that they have been practiced gradually in Recife.

From all considerations made, it is identified that Walmart Brazil's form of acting in the market has been facilitating the direction of its activities with a positive contribution to the sustainable consumption. Since those actions interfere directly in the national acting, in what refers to Hiper Bompreço in Recife, we consider that all variables are indeed observed. Thereby, we understand that the changes in the economical incentives as for the partners of the supply chain are occurring, which facilitates the achievement of SC. This whole idea influences the company's network of influences, which interferes and suffers pressure and incentives from different stakeholders.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The dissemination of sustainability throughout the supply chain demonstrates an evolution in the placement of a company in the market; since it understands the responsible part it has in a spontaneous or imposed by external pressure manner. That is visualized mainly in what refers to the behavior of a decision-making individual that assumes a more ethical collectivist vision, even if not concerned with the pursuit of a sustainable development or reduction of consumerist thought used until then. That way, these practices must increasingly be stimulated in different corporate contexts and in market partnerships.

Amid the discussions held, it is identified the attendance of the proposed object of research, since it indicates a pursuit for Hiper Bompreço's relationship with its suppliers in the quest for a new pattern of consumption, the sustainable one. That way, by visualizing the panorama of company practices and focusing the relation with the supply chain, we managed to facilitate the comprehension on how a company may be contributing positively in that direction. It is known that the cultural and local aspect interfere in the realization of different considerations, therefore, were sought neutrality and critique vision of all analyzed data.

With that vision, it was identified by performing the analysis that not all criteria could be identified in its fullness at the studied company, specifically the Edition of choice, considering that it would be necessary a greater deepening in the process of elaboration and application of the market strategies, seeking a more responsible placement. However, whereas the articulation made aims to work with a group of categories applicable to any company integrating the supermarket sector, it is understood as positive its performance and the stimulus to new researches in that direction. Besides that, the discussion held did not focus effectively the process of decision-making.

It is taken as research limitation the amount of interviews made in the study, even if the ones held are representative as for the company's speech. That can also be verified as the utilization of only the company vision, not analyzing then the vision of members of the chain as a whole. Therefore, that is the main recommendation to new researches, apart from the application of that perspective in other sectors. In an academic perspective, the studies may be continued, however, it is also perceived the possibility of management implications, since when identifying the gaps existent in its developed actions, companies may assume their responsibility parts and modify its form of acting and its behavior in the market.

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