How Can Reverse Logistics Be Optimized to Support a Circular Supply Chain for Consumer Apparel in Pakistan: A case study of outfitters.

Final Year Project

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BBA-SCM 33

BY

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Department of Business Bahria University

Islamabad

Final Project Approval Sheet

The topic of Research:

How Can Reverse Logistics Be Optimized to Support a Circular Supply Chain for Consumer Apparel in Pakistan- A case study of outfitters.

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We accept the work How Can Reverse Logistics Be Optimized to Support a Circular Supply Chain for Consumer Apparel in Pakistan: A case study of outfitters, contained in the report titled written by Aqsa Tariq a confirmation to the required standard for the partial fulfilment of the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration.

Naimah Khan

Bahria University, Islamabad

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Abstract:

This research examines the use of reverse logistics to effectively facilitate circular supply chain in consumer apparel Industries Pakistan with Outfitters Pakistan as a case study. The study takes cognizance of the inefficiencies in operations surrounding returns management, notably those due to tardiness, lack of standardization and a paucity of efforts towards reuse, resale, or recycling of returned goods. In this study mixed method approach has been implemented combining the use of an online consumer survey (quantitative approach, n = 180, aged 18-27) and qualitative interviews with the management of Outfitters. The results tell us that there are several disjointed current practices in reverse logistics, which is the core cause of monetary losses, the increased waste of textiles, as well as a decline in sustainability performance in the company. The research explains further the restructuring of the return process, customer incentives, and circular supply chain concepts used as a planned means to improve both the operational performance and environment. The study provides an abundance of practical interventions to facilitate the shift towards sustainability, acquire value from the products, and increase the consumers' trust in the fast fashion retail sector of Pakistan.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study background:

Now the emphasis of supply chain management does not only focus on reducing costs and efficiency. The current supply chain focuses on sustainability, resilience, and value creation. Reverse logistics involve moving products to their manufacturers to reuse, recycle or dispose of them properly (Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 2001).

The fashion industry illustrates the importance of reverse logistics. Enter the circular economy, where cotton garments are gathered at the end of their life cycle where they are shredded and "reborn" into the next phase of the process (as with the garment you're wearing at this moment). Annually, this generates millions of tons of textile waste, however, less than one per cent of it is recycled (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Reverse logistics has therefore been incorporated into the basic supply chain process to minimize waste and recover value (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017).

The nature of clothing industry is extensive in Pakistan's economy, but it is still oriented primarily towards efficiency and exports with a few exceptions of using sustainable practices (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). As organized retail grows as well as ecomm, so does the area of product returns, which present retail with both a challenge and an opportunity.

Outfitters Pakistan, a mid-to-premium apparel retailer, has a very few numbers of returns because of size mismatch, quality issues and changing customer preferences. At present, the

company deals with the returns in a primitive way by mainly restocking or disposing of them. Integrating circular supply chain practices and increasing reverse logistics could help Outfitters Pakistan to minimize the losses, recover value from returned merchandise, and improve efficiency of the supply chain.

1.2. Problem Statement:

Despite the rapid expansion of Pakistan's apparel retail industry, reverse logistics practices are weak. At Outfitters Pakistan, return management is approached from a cost-centric standpoint instead of a strategic process and hence there is limited standardization, data integration is poor and decisions on reselling, recycling or disposing are ambiguous. Existing research focuses largely on forward supply chains with little attention to the reverse side of return behavior in consumers and value recovery in fast fashion retail. This gap results in financial losses, more textile waste, and lost sustainability opportunities. In this study, optimization does not refer to mathematical or statistical optimization. Instead, it refers to increasing the efficiency, speed, consistency, sustainability, and value recovery of return processing operations within an apparel retail setting.

Research Gap:

Existing empirical research on reverse logistics and circular supply chains has largely concentrated on developed economies, multinational manufacturers, and logistics-intensive industries such as electronics and automotive sectors (Guide & Van Wassenhove, 2009; Govindan et al., 2015). Empirical studies in the apparel sector primarily examine sustainability at

the manufacturing or sourcing stage, with limited attention to retail-level return management and post-consumption value recovery (Sandvik & Stubbs, 2019).

Within the fashion industry, empirical evidence shows that reverse logistics can significantly reduce waste and improve value recovery when supported by standardized return processes, product grading systems, and customer participation mechanisms (Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 2001; Stock & Mulki, 2009). However, most of these studies are based on structured reverse logistics systems in Western retail contexts, where advanced information systems, regulatory pressure, and consumer awareness are relatively high. As a result, their findings cannot be directly generalized to developing economies.

In Pakistan, empirical research on the reverse logistics in retail market was difficult to find out. Mainly local studies focuses on export oriented textile manufacturing with little empirical investigation toward consumer return behavior in the store return handling practices. Also, circular recovery mechanisms at the retail level (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Therefore our study will cover below mention aspects:

- • A major gap by providing empirical evidence from Pakistan apparel retail sector which was largely ignored in prior research.
- • An empirical gap by examining actual return handling practices and consumer attitudes and sustainability outcomes which was derive from a case study of Outfitters Pakistan.
- • A methodologicals gap by adopting a qualitative applied case study approach that emphasize operational realities over abstract optimization models.

1.3. Study Objectives:

- • Consider effective reverse logistics practices as currently used at Outfitters Pakistan such as processing procedures, grading, and options for disposal.
- • Understand the attitudes and preferences of young buyers (18 - 27 years old) in Islamabad about apparel returns and circular programs.
- • Identify the factors that cause consumers to participate in reverse logistics such as incentives, convenience, and environment.
- • Formulate feasible recommendations for reverse-logistics optimization which are consistent with circular supply chain principles.

1.4. Project Significance:

This study is important as it can benefit Outfitters Pakistan improve its performance by fine-tuning reverse logistics, converting returns into value, reducing waste, and making the customers happier. Socially, it could involve generating employment in the collection, sorting and recycling, and donating clothes to those in need. Environmentally, by keeping returned and end-of-life apparel out of landfills, it reduces the fashion industry's environmental impact by saving water, cutting emissions and pollution. Focusing on young consumers also encourages long-term sustainable habits, which increases the practical, social, and environmental upside. In the context of Pakistan's apparel sector this study also contributes theoretically by extending reverse logistics and circular supply chain literature to a developing country's retail context and methodologically by applying an industry oriented mixed method approach for practical decision making.

1.5. Project Rationale and Justification:

The project fits with increasing stability in the global and local fashion retailer pressure to be sustainable, since customers and stakeholders are interested in environmental responsibility. Outfitters Pakistan faces competition were going green can be its differentiator and increase efficiency. The brand's strength and customer hood forms a good foundation to start circular initiatives from, but we need a systematic understanding of the current practices and the acceptability of the consumers. The project draws on primary data collected from 180 young consumers in Islamabad ensuring sufficient coverage of target market segments. From an academic perspective, the project addresses gaps in circular supply chain research in the developing country context, providing context-specific knowledge for practice and future research.

1.6. Time Schedule and Project Cost:

Effective project management is not complete without planning how time will be distributed among the tasks and how the financial resources will be used. To make sure that the project is done within the time limit of the academic semester and that the quality is kept at the level appropriate for undergraduate research, the following project timeline and budget are a fair reflection of the needs that arise from the project scope.

Table 1: Timeline

Phase	**Key Activities**	**Timeline**
1	Literature review and	Weeks 1-3

	conceptual framework development	
2	Survey instrument design and validation process	Weeks 4-5
3	Survey distribution and organizational contact initiation	Weeks 6-7
4	Data collection completion and response monitoring	Weeks 8-9
5	Data analysis and findings interpretation	Weeks 10-12
6	Report writing and recommendations development	Weeks 13-15
7	Final review, revision, and submission	Week 16

Project Budget:

Table 2: Budget

Budget Item	**Description**	**Amount (PKR)**
Survey distribution	Platform fees and respondent incentives	4,000
Transportation	Travel for organizational visits	3,000
Printing and binding	Report drafts and final copies	3,500
Communication	Internet and mobile expenses	2,000
Total Budget		**15,000**

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVEIW

This section covers scholarly work through four connected topics: defining reverse logistics as a strategic strength; exploring circular economy ideas within closed-loop supply systems; using the TBL model to assess environmental balance instead of just profit, while also reviewing existing findings on clothing industry sustainability in emerging regions like Pakistan especially looking at companies including Outfitters Pakistan.

2.1. Reverse Logistics as Strategic Capability:

Reverse logistics has evolved to increase and provide competitive advantage while creating value; it is no longer limited to the management of returns (Rogers & Tibbenlebke, 2001). Organisations gain from more effective use of resources, improved customer satisfaction, and increased ecological efficacy rather than merely reducing losses, particularly when intelligent inspection methods, repair processes, or even resale channels are used (Guide & Van Wassenhove, 2009).Recurring flows that are impacted by size mismatches, product conditions, or shifting consumer preferences present Outfitters Pakistan with a chance to turn return flows into mechanisms that generate profits.

The external pressures include legislation, public image, economies in terms of cost and reputation drivers, but challenges remain including a sudden burst in returns, heterogeneity in product quality, poor tracking technology and reluctance among employees, Nevertheless,

through strong leadership and skilled coordination organizations like Outfitters can move from a reactive processing mindset to a proactive strategic approach.

2.2. Circular Economy with Closed-Loop Supply Chains:

Reverse logistics is no longer just for managing returns; it has developed to boost and offer competitive advantage while creating value (Rogers & Tibben-lebke, 2001). Instead of just cutting losses, organisations benefit from more efficient use of resources, better customer satisfaction, and increased ecological efficacy, especially when smart inspection techniques, repair procedures, or even resale channels are employed (Guide & Van Wassenhove, 2009).Recurring flows that are affected by product conditions, size mismatches, or changing customer preferences offer Outfitters Pakistan an opportunity to transform return flows into profitable mechanisms.

2.3. Triple Bottom Line Framework:

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework evaluates a company's performance in terms of its social, environmental, and economic aspects. This model emphasises the need to strike a balance between profit, human welfare, and planet stewardship (Elkington 1997). Conventional metrics typically prioritise financial results over social and ecological impacts. The TBL, on the other hand, promotes the use of reverse logistics in supply chains to reduce emissions, resource consumption, disposal costs, and material recovery. From a societal perspective, it encourages employment, building strong communities, and provoking meaningful engagement among

customers (Carter & Rogers, 2008). Previous literature point out that by integrating Triple Bottom Line (TBL) principles in reverse logistics process, might generate financial benefits, from lowered operational costs, environmental benefits from reduced output of waste, to social benefits through job creation (Elkington, 1997; Carter and Rogers, 2008; Guide and Van Wassenhove, 2009). Nevertheless, whether these benefits materialize in the context of Pakistani apparel retail is an empirical issue that is addressed in this study.

Triple Bottom Line Sustainability Performance:

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework is a framework that evaluates the performance of an organization in three interrelated dimensions: economic, environmental, and social performance (Elkington, 1997). Within the context of reverse logistics, TBL does not assume there will always be benign outcomes but provides a systematic view to consider how improvements in return handling practices might affect sustainability outcomes.

From an economic point of view, existing research efforts have shown that successful reverse logistics practices such as standardized processing of were returns, grading of products, resale or refurbishment of products may allow companies to lower their operational costs, reduce write offs and have a way of recovering residual value from returned products (Guide & Van Wassenhove, 2009; Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 2001). The extent to which such economic benefits are realized, however, depends on the efficiency of implementation and the extent of customer participation.

From an environmental perspective, the literature shows that reverse logistics can help to reduce waste, and that the diversion of returned or end-of-life products from landfills to reuse, recycling or donation channels can contribute to waste reduction (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017; Ellen

MacArthur Foundation, 2017). In the apparel supply chains, such practices are especially relevant because of the huge amount of textile waste produced by fast fashion.

From a social perspective, reverse logistics systems may support employment generation, community engagement, and consumer empowerment by encouraging responsible consumption behaviors and fostering partnerships with charitable or recycling organizations (Carter and Rogers, 2008). These social outcomes are growing in importance in emerging markets where the awareness of sustainability is growing, but where formal systems are yet to develop.

All in all, there is a potential for reverse logistics to make a positive contribution to all three TBL dimensions from the existing literature. This study empirically examines the applicability of such possible outcomes to Outfitters Pakistan's apparel retail operations.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual structure outlines general concepts and demonstrates how those ideas are connected, in turn, which is the way to form the methodology for your research. In this study, the model is based on existing literature to identify the advantages of reverse logistics improvement through the circular supply chain point of view in the context of clothing retail specifically Outfitters Pakistan. The principal elements and element interaction are designed to provide information for the inquiry process and to inform the gathering process. The framework focuses on competencies such as seamless handling of returns, sorting techniques, decisions on product outcome, and value recovery pathways. Multiple components affect customer involvement in return systems and eco-friendly results such as awareness, accessibility, rewards, dependability, environmental security, and influence from peers. At Outfitters Pakistan, Triple Bottom Line benefits are realized as the take back processes relate to the active customers. Integrating these

dimensions results in money being saved, nature being preserved, and society at large being improved. Savings in operating costs, material reuse, decreased landfill utilization, resource preservation, employment generation, local development and enhanced buyer control are the collective drivers behind driving the impacts. This comprehensive model guides information collection while understanding how improvement of returns can improve closed-loop processes within clothing stores. The conceptual framework is designed to explain how reverse logistics optimization can support circular supply chain outcomes in apparel retail. Organizational antecedents such as management commitment, information systems, staff training, and partner networks collectively influence the development of reverse logistics capability. These capabilities determine how efficiently returns are processed, inspected, categorized, and directed toward appropriate recovery channels.

Reverse logistics capability directly affects sustainability outcomes. Efficient return processing and disposition management can enhance economic outcomes through cost reduction and value recovery, environmental outcomes through waste diversion and resource conservation, and social outcomes through employment creation and community engagement. However, the realization of these outcomes depends on the extent to which consumers actively participate in return and circular initiatives.

Conceptual Framework for Reverse Logistics Optimization:

organisational Aantecedents Management Commitment | Resource Allocation |

Information Systems | Staff Training | Partner Networks

REVERSE LOGISTICS CAPABILITY

Returns Processing Efficiency | Product Grading Systems | Disposition Management |

Recovery Channels

^

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION (Moderating Variable)

Awareness | Convenience | Incentives | Trust | Environmental Concern |

Social Influence

|

ECONOMIC OUTCOMES **ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES** **SOCIAL OUTCOMES**

Cost Savings | Value Recovery | Waste Diversion | Resource Conservation Employment | Community Benefit

Revenue

Consumer participation is said to be a moderating variable in that it affects the strength of the relationship between reverse logistics capability and sustainability outcomes. Even when an

organization has efficient return handling systems in place, if customers are not inclined or able to participate, the benefits of intended economic, environmental and social results may not be achieved.

Factors like awareness, convenience, incentives, trust, and environmental concern may reinforce or limit the influence of reverse logistics capability. For example, incentive-programs and convenient return options may help increase customer participation, thereby magnify value recovery and waste reduction. On the flip side, if there is low participation, otherwise well-designed reverse logistics systems can be limited in effectiveness.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the theoretical perspective, the way of constructing knowledge, the ways of collecting data, and the ways used to analyze these data. It suggests the systematic process that answers research questions while achieving predetermined goals. A soundly explicated methodology provides a level of transparency so that readers can assess the appropriateness of the techniques used for the study's purpose or vice versa. The approach combines both scholarly integrity with practical applicability such that substantive results are achieved even with time or resources as limits. The structure is based on the Research Onion model of Saunders et al. (2019): the design decisions are grouped into six levels: underlying philosophy, overall approach, strategy, selected methodology, timeframe, and data gathering tools. This chapter explains the qualitative research design adopted for this project. As this study is an applied project aimed at solving an organizational problem, a qualitative case study approach was used to gain in-depth insights into reverse logistics practices at Outfitters Pakistan. The methodology focuses on understanding processes, managerial perspectives, and customer experiences rather than statistical generalization.

3.1. Research Philosophy & Approach:

This study adopts a pragmatic and interpretivist research philosophy has been adopted, which is considered appropriate for applied research in organizations. A qualitative methodology has been

adopted to understand the prevailing return processing practices, the deficiencies in operations, and recommend practical improvements. Consequently, instead of the quantities of variables the investigation is more focused on analyzing insights and customer experience to fed into decision making within Outfitters Pakistan.

3.2. Research Strategy:

The study follows the Saunders Research Onion and provides a guide from planning to data collection. Primarily, it builds knowledge of circular supply chains that relate the concepts to sustainable consumption. In addition, it integrates knowledge about reverse logistics. This body of knowledge assists in the formulation of the study framework and the development of research questions. A qualitative approach to case study methodology was adopted focusing on Outfitters Pakistan as a single entity. Case study research is appropriate for project-focused research which seeks to explore real practices in their respective contexts. This approach allowed the researcher to analyze reverse logistics operations holistically and to come up with recommendations that are both feasible and relevant to the organization.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques:

3.3.1 Management Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key personnel involved in store operations and supply chain coordination at Outfitters Pakistan. These interviews provided detailed insights into existing return handling procedures, operational challenges, and organizational readiness for

circular initiatives. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow flexibility while ensuring coverage of key topics relevant to the project objectives.

Table 3: Data Collection Techniques:

Aspect	Description
Interview Type	Semi-structured
Participants	Store Operations Manager, Supply Chain Coordinator
Duration	25-30 minutes per interview
Mode	In-person
Focus Areas	Returns handling, challenges, sustainability views
Recording	Manual noteta
Purpose	Understand organizational practices

3.4. Data Analysis Technique:

The qualitative analysis of the data was carried out using the thematic analysis, following the approach of (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Interview responses and open-ended consumer feedback were analyzed and coded and grouped into themes relevant to issues of return handling efficiency, operational issues, customer experience, and sustainability practices. This methodology enabled the pattern and insights which are pertinent directly to the improvement of reverse-logistics process, Outfitters Pakistan.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

During the research process, no deception of any kind was employed. Confidentiality was maintained for organizational participants who provided feedback, and survey participants were not required to divulge personally identifiable information. All information was used only for academic purposes and was safely kept on password protected devices. Any question that participants did not want to answer could be skipped. Because it concentrates on customer preferences and organizational practices rather than delicate or upsetting subjects, the research design is low risk and complies with institutional ethical requirements.

Table 4: Ethical Considerations:

Ethical Aspect	**Implementation**
Informed Consent	Purpose explained before interviews
Voluntary Participation	No obligation or pressure
Anonymity	Roles reported without names
Right to Withdraw	Participants free to stop
Data Protection	Password-protected storage

3.6. Researcher Reflexivity:

As a researcher, my involvement in the supply chain management and familiar with the Pakistani apparel retail context might affect the interpretation of qualitative data. To reduce the

chance of bias, interview questions have been neutral and open ended, and results interpreted using thematic analysis instead of personal judgment. Data from interviews/survey results were triangulated to increase objectivity and credibility. By using a reflexive approach, the conclusions were not made based on assumptions, but on evidence.

3.7. Tools used for Analysis:

The study utilized Google Forms to collect interview notes and consumer feedback efficiently. Manual coding and thematic organization were used to analyze qualitative data. These tools supported systematic data handling while maintaining the interpretive nature of qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

In this project the qualitative results, which were derived from management interviews and preliminary customer feedback, are presented in this chapter. Rather than providing statistical analysis, the goal of this chapter is to interpret recurrent themes pertaining to customer experiences, return handling procedures, and sustainability perceptions. In order to support the creation of useful suggestions for Outfitters Pakistan, the findings are presented in a descriptive and interpretive manner.

4.1. Consumer Feedback Insights:

The survey was carried out digitally within the two-week period, relying on social media and university networks to attract the respondents. The findings indicate that customer involvement and improvements in reverse logistics procedures can have a favorable impact on circular supply chain outcomes and sustainability performance, which supports the suggested conceptual framework.

4.2. Demographic Profile:

Table 5: Age Distribution - Frequency and Percentage Table

AGE GROUP	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	CUMULATIVE
UNDER 18	1	1.6%	1.6%
18-22 YEARS	36	58.1%	59.7%
23-27 YEARS	25	40.3%	100%
TOTAL	**62**	**100%**	**-**

Consumer feedback was obtained from young shoppers aged between 18 and 27 years residing in Islamabad. Participants included both university students and young professionals, reflecting the core target market of Outfitters Pakistan. Gender representation was balanced, allowing for diverse perspectives on return experiences and attitudes toward sustainability.

4.3. Return Behavior Analysis:

The results show that most customers do not return the products they buy. The returns for the rest were as follows:Most customers said that they returned items once a year; A very few customers returned items frequently or very frequently. This implies that, although returns are not a daily practice, they still occur in a manner that requires the retailer to have competent and dependable processes in place for their management.

4.3.1 Major Reason Of Return:

Size mismatch was the most frequently cited reason for returning clothing, and it was a recurrent theme in customer feedback. Selecting the right size was often a challenge for participants, especially when making purchases online. Incorrect colour, product flaws, and shifting consumer preferences were additional causes. These findings imply that more precise size guidelines and quality assurance could drastically lower return rates.

4.3.2. Customer Feedback and Suggestions:

Customers expressed different opinions about what the company had to offer. While some of the feedback was complimentary, it also raised specific concerns to identify the areas of the work that worked well, and those that did not. Several responses included pragmatic suggestions seeking to improve quality and service delivery. Customer feedback is crucial, since happy buyers often repeat their purchases with the brand.

4.4. Management Interview Findings (Qualitative Analysis):

Semi-structured interviews with Outfitters Pakistan management staff provided insight into the company's readiness for circular initiatives and current return handling procedures. Several frequent issues with operational inefficiencies, a lack of standardisation, inadequate data tracking, and cautious optimism towards sustainability-oriented changes were identified through thematic analysis.

4.4.1 Thematic Analysis:

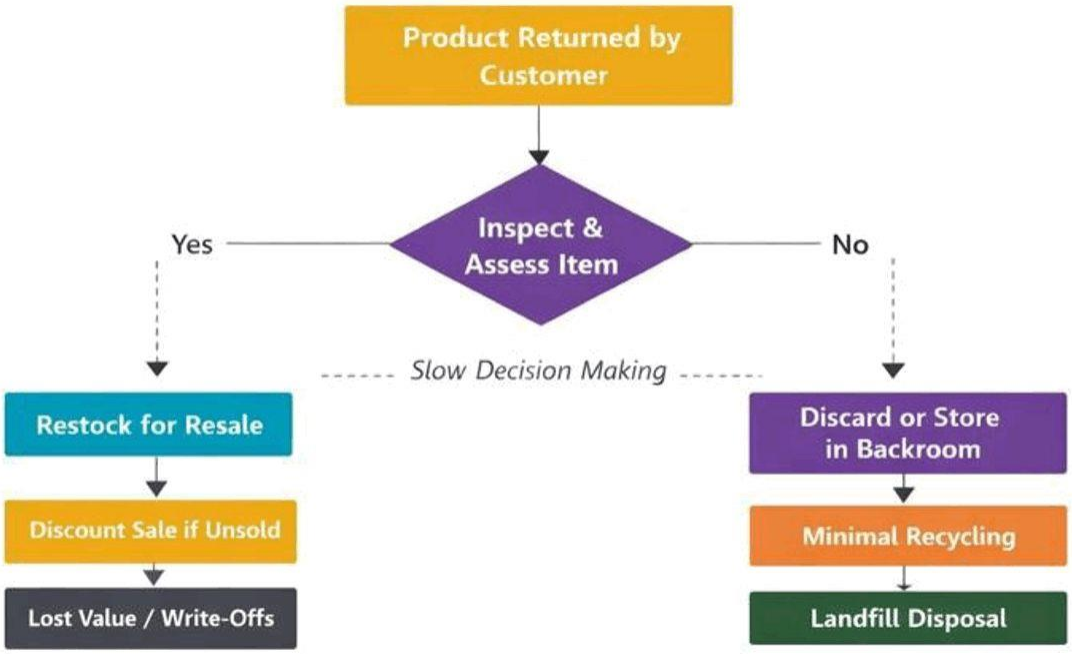
Customer experiences and operational challenges were found to be strongly aligned when management insights were integrated with customer feedback. Management's worries about traffic and inefficiency were reflected in customer discontent with return convenience.

Table 6: Thematic Analysis of Management Interviews

Theme	Meaning	Implication

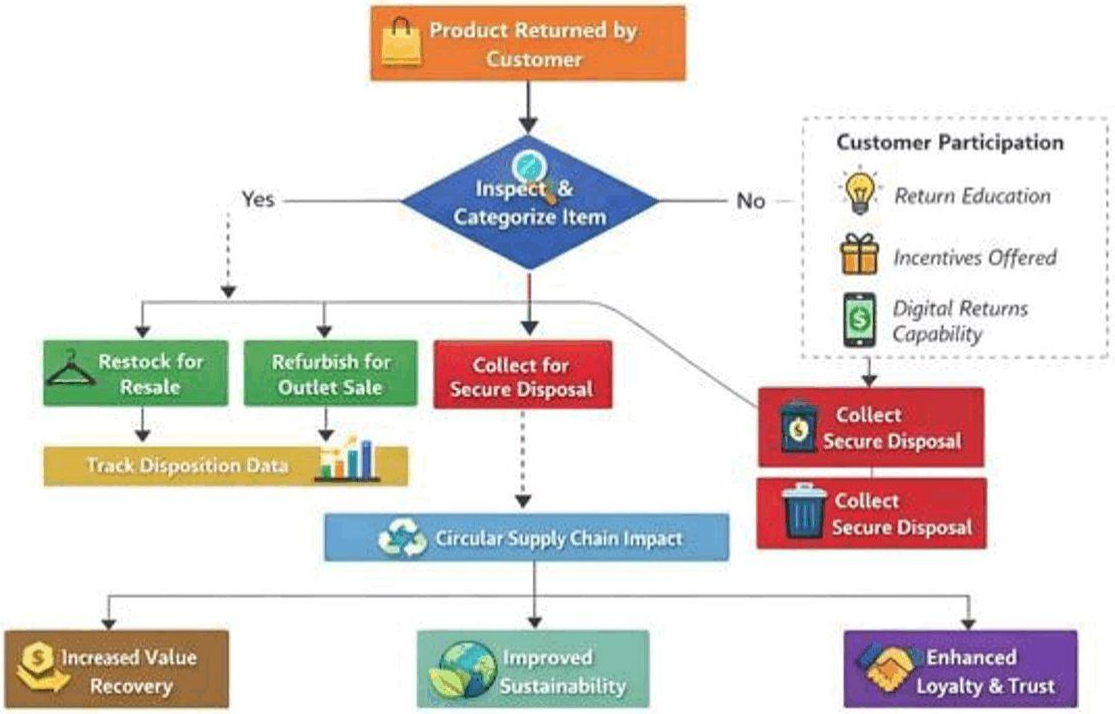
Operational inefficiencies	Delays and congestion	Poor customer experience
System limitations	No return data tracked	No evidence-based decisions
Lack of standards	Different practices across stores	Inconsistent outcomes
Waste management gaps	No recycling channels	Environmental harm
Readiness for circularity	Positive but cautious attitude	Pilot programmes feasible
Incentive dependency	Participation needs rewards	Incentive design required

4.4.2 Current Return Handling Procedures:



The Store Operations Manager at Outfitters Pakistan stated that customers may return purchased items within 15 days of the purchase date, provided the original receipt is presented. Staff members inspect returned items to determine their condition.

4.4.3. Proposed Return Handling Procedure:



4.5. Key Summary of Findings:

The results show that a significant contributor to clothing returns and preventable operational stress is size mismatch. Customers expressed frustration with the way returns are currently handled, especially regarding convenience and processing time. Although incentives, operational readiness, and standardized procedures are necessary for successful implementation, both customers and management expressed positive attitudes towards circular initiatives. Overall, Outfitters Pakistan's value recovery and sustainability performance is hindered by the lack of organised reverse logistics procedures.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTION OF RESULTS

5.1. Benefits from Study:

The following are the benefits:

Cost savings:

The qualitative findings indicate that Outfitters Pakistan's unnecessary operating expenses are a result of ineffective return handling procedures. Repeated handling of returned goods, traffic at service counters, and inconsistent disposition choices were identified as sources of inefficiency in management interviews. The business can cut down on needless returns and the amount of internal work needed to process them, which could result in cost savings, by standardising return procedures and enhancing size guidance.

Many returned items still have resale value, according to management and customer feedback insights. Through controlled resale, outlet channels, or refurbishing of lightly used products, Outfitters Pakistan can recover revenue, according to the project. Sellable goods can be diverted to the proper channels instead of being thrown away by establishing clear grading standards for returned goods.

Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction:

Customers expressed dissatisfaction with the current return policies, especially regarding conveniencee and processing time. The results of the project indicate that

improving customer satisfaction and trust can be achieved by streamlining return procedures and communicating policies in an understandable manner. Long-term customer relationships with the brand may be strengthened and repeat purchases may be encouraged by better return experiences.

Brand Image and Differentiating Markets:

The management acknowledged that consumer perceptions in the apparel market are being impacted by sustainability initiatives. According to this project, Outfitters Pakistan can establish itself as a conscientious and progressive brand by implementing circular practices. Sustainability-based differentiation can improve a brand's reputation and attract eco-aware customers, especially younger ones.

Environmental Impact:

According to the project's findings, returned clothing is needlessly disposed of when there are no official recycling or donation channels. Reducing textile waste and promoting environmental responsibility can be achieved by putting circular recovery options like donation or recycling partnerships into practice. These steps address operational inefficiencies found in the project and are in line with more general sustainability objectives.

Operational Efficiency:

Inconsistent return handling procedures across store locations were brought into focus during management interviews. According to the project, staff training and standardised processes can increase operational efficiency by lowering misunderstandings, delays, and mistakes. Workflows can be streamlined and departmental coordination enhanced with clear guidelines for return inspection, grading, and disposal.

Data-Driven Insights:

Despite the lack of numerical analysis in this project, qualitative insights

highlighted the significance of methodically documenting reasons for returns. Outfitters Pakistan can find recurrent problems with sizing, quality, or customer expectations by gathering such data. Future choices about product design, inventory control, and customer relations can be influenced by these insights.

5.2. Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:

SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production:

This study backs up SDG 12 by looking into ways used goods can be repurposed, sold again, or processed for reuse rather than thrown away.

SDG 13 - Climate Action:

Fixing how clothes are made cuts pollution. Instead of tossing stuff, we reuse it so fewer new items must be produced. This means less CO2 from factories.

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth:

Circular economy initiatives in Pakistan can create employment opportunities by shifting from waste management to resource recovery.

5.3. Research And Managerial Implications

Outfitters Pakistan receives useful insights from the project to enhance reverse logistics procedures. Standardising return policies, improving size guidelines, creating incentive-based customer participation programs, and investigating partnerships for

recycling or donation are some of the major ramifications. Rather than theoretical generalisation, these implications are meant to support well-informed managerial decision-making and are directly based on qualitative findings.

Implications for Policy:

The strong consumer support (96.8%) indicates that the public would welcome circular fashion policies. Policymakers might consider offering incentives to encourage retailers to adopt circular practices.

Implications for Future Research:

Research with a larger number of participants from more retailers would allow findings to apply to a wider population. A long-term study following actual participation could be used to check whether people who say they will take part in the activity actually do so. A financial study of circular program ROI would be a powerful tool to convince the business case.

CHAPTER 6

STUDY LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSION

6.1 Limitations:

This study has some limitations that should be noted because it is an applied qualitative project. These restrictions do not diminish the project's worth; rather, they draw attention to practical and contextual limitations that affected the findings' breadth, depth, and interpretation. Acknowledging these constraints identifies areas for future improvement and helps frame the project outcomes realistically.

Sample and Data Limitations:

To gain depth rather than broadness of insight, the project focused on a small number of management interviews and exploratory consumer feedback. Although these inputs were adequate to pinpoint important operational problems and recurrent themes, it's possible that they didn't include all viewpoints from both the company and its larger clientele. The results of this qualitative case study are contextspecific and are meant to guide Outfitters Pakistan's decision-making rather than to be representative of the larger clothing industry.

Data Collection Constraints:

The number of interviews that could be done with organisational staff was restricted by time and access issues. Interviews were documented through detailed notes rather than audio recordings, which may have reduced the capture of nuancedexpressions. Additionally, access to internal financial or operational data was restricted, limiting the ability to assess the financial impact of proposed improvements in detail.

Limits for Scope and Context of Application:

The project did not look at upstream manufacturing or supplier-related reverse logistics procedures; instead, it concentrated on Outfitters Pakistan's retail return handling procedures. Furthermore, the study was conducted within the Islamabad region, and operational practices or customer expectations may differ in other cities. When interpreting the results, these contextual boundaries should be taken into account.

Methodological Limitations:

As a qualitative project, the study relied on self-reported insights from management and consumers, which may be influenced by personal perceptions or recall bias. The absence of direct observation of return handling processes and the lack of longitudinal follow-up limited the ability to assess changes over time. However, the qualitative approach was appropriate for exploring practices and generating actionable recommendations.

External Factors:

External factors such as seasonal sales periods, promotional campaigns, and short-term operational changes may have influenced return behavior and management practices during the project period. Additionally, broader market conditions and evolving sustainability trends could affect the applicability of findings over time.

Table 7: Limitations of study:

Limitation	Impact
Sample size (62 vs 180 target)	Reduced statistical power and generalisability
Small number of interviews (2)	Limited organisational perspective coverage
Single organisation focus	Context-specific findings
Geographic scope (Islamabad only)	Views in other cities may differ
No audio recording of interviews	Reliance on manual notes
Time constraints (one semester)	Limited depth of data collection
Lack of financial data access	Cannot quantify business case

6.2. Recommendations:

Several useful suggestions are made for Outfitters Pakistan based on the qualitative findings. To test viability and improve workflows, the company should first implement standardised return handling procedures in a few high-traffic stores. Second, reducing avoidable returns due to size mismatch can be achieved by enhancing size guidance and investigating digital fitting tools. Third, collaborations with nonprofits or recycling groups can offer appropriate disposal options for unsold goods. Fourth, to guarantee uniformity in return handling across locations, regular staff training should be put into place. Lastly, to promote involvement in circular initiatives, incentive-based customer participation programs ought to be taken into consideration.

6.3 Conclusion:

In order to find operational gaps and suggest workable solutions to support circular supply chain goals, this project looked at Outfitters Pakistan's reverse logistics procedures. The project used a qualitative case study methodology to identify inconsistent return handling, inadequate data collection, and lost value recovery opportunities. Although management insights and customer feedback indicated discontent with current procedures, they also showed receptivity to circular initiatives.

Reverse logistics optimization at Outfitters Pakistan is both a strategic opportunity and a practical necessity, according to the project's conclusion. Although the conclusions are context-specific, the suggestions provide a practical way to enhance customer satisfaction, operational effectiveness, and sustainability performance. Instead of making theoretical generalisations, this project contributes by converting scholarly ideas into practical organizational insights.

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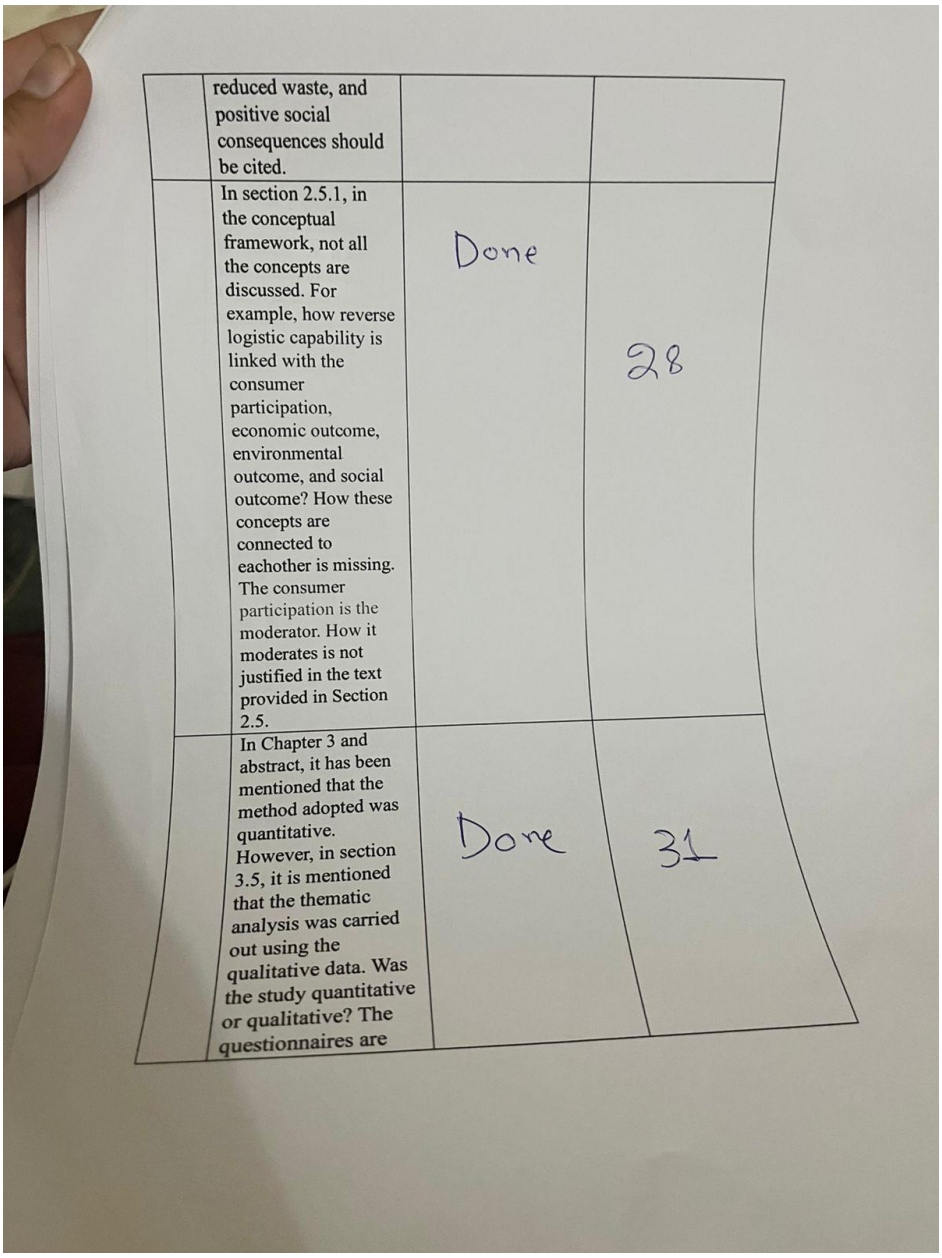
Examiner's Instructions: Please fill in the following details.

No.	Corrections required (Suggested by Examiners)	Amendments made	Located on Page
Chapter 1			
1.	Some heading have numbering and others don't.		
2.	It is important to give abbreviations, I.S.		
3.	~~[illegible]~~		
Chapter 2			
1.	Conclusive statements should be avoided Sec 2.4 last line.		
2.			
	Please see attached sheets for corrections / comments.		
Chapter 3			
Chapter 4			



	reduced waste, and positive social consequences should be cited.		
	In section 2.5.1, in the conceptual framework, not all the concepts are discussed. For example, how reverse logistic capability is linked with the consumer participation, economic outcome, environmental outcome, and social outcome? How these concepts are connected to eachother is missing. The consumer participation is the moderator. How it moderates is not justified in the text provided in Section 2.5.	Done	28
	In Chapter 3 and abstract, it has been mentioned that the method adopted was quantitative. However, in section 3.5, it is mentioned that the thematic analysis was carried out using the qualitative data. Was the study quantitative or qualitative? The questionnaires are	Done	31

No.	Corrections Required (Suggested by Examiner)	Amendments Made	Located Page
1	The headings do not have numbering appropriately done. There is no 1.1. After 1.2, the Research Gap should be 1.3.	Done	
2	The abbreviations should be given. What does IS abbreviate to in Section 1.3?	Done	17
3	Conclusive 2.4, statements should be avoided. Without study being conducted, how can it be said that integrating TBL principles in return processes could yield financial benefits? If it is suggested through literature, then it is still a hypothesis and should be supported with the relevant literature. Relevant literature which suggests that TBL provides financial benefits through reduced cost, environmental benefits through	Done	24

	also not given in the report. The questionnaire should be made part of the report to make it more understandable.		
	In section 3.9, it has been mentioned that 43,294 citation were organized. However, the report has only 12 citations at the end. The organization of references and citations in Mendeley or any other tool is not part of the methodology unless they are being used in the qualitative survey of the past literature like meta-analysis. In this case, this para may please be removed.	Done	32
	On Section 4.2.2, it is written that 42% returned items once a year, while	Done Told verbally to incorporate	33
	Update the Abstract according to the changes in the thesis.	Done	