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Introduction

The notions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability have developed into common features of the public, political, and business discourses. To assist in the achievement of sustainable business practices, an important part of research is to learn more about what enables and triggers companies to work accordingly; that is, to embrace the notion of corporate social responsibility. General questions of importance include what companies do in terms of CSR and, following that, why they do what they do. In this paper we pay attention to CSR practices in the retail sector. Although retail represents a significant part of business life, research specifically focused on CSR in this sector is still limited. Additional knowledge about CSR among retailers, including answers to what they do and what organizational factors can explain their behavior, can facilitate development of awareness, processes and incentives in the industry to maintain and advance a focus on sustainability.

The retail sector consists of different types of stores. One major difference between stores is if they belong to a chain or are independent – a recurring distinction in retail research (e.g. Brun and Castelli, 2008; Castelli and Brun, 2011; Ko and Cincade, 1997; Lee, Johnson, and Gahring, 2008; Wenzel, 2011). Independent stores primarily function as resellers of manufacturer, national, and international brands. They are by definition small on the market and have limited power in the distribution chain. In contrast, stores belonging to a chain are affiliated with a larger organization. As a result of purchasing large quantities, retail chains often have more command in the supply chain, for example influencing practices and contract policies (cf. Andersen and Skjoett-Larsen, 2009). Also, many retail chains work with private labels, which can infer additional control on manufacturing and supply chain (e.g. H&M, IKEA, Wal-Mart) (cf. Jenkins, 2001). Some retail chains even own the plants where the products are manufactured (e.g. Spanish apparel chain Zara). In this paper we are inspired by the resource based view, which explains how varying performance and the ability to create competitive advantage depends on differences in available resource (Penrose, 2009; Wernerfelt, 1984). Our point of departure is that resource analyses can shed light on how companies perform CSR (cf. Bansal, 2005). In addition, we suggest that the differences between individual and chain stores imply that store managers face different situations concerning resources and competencies. In view of this, this paper aims to investigate if and in that case how independent stores and stores belonging to a chain differ in their CSR practices¹.

Our research shows that there are differences in CSR practice between independent stores and stores belonging to a chain. Our interpretation is that the variations derive from resource discrepancies, in regards to financial, administrative and human capital, which influence the motivation and perceived ability to perform CSR and influence sustainable

¹ The research project was made possible by financial support from The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Development Council, a foundation consisting of employers associations and national labor unions.

development. The findings are interesting as they point out major variation among companies that are within the same industry and, thus, support previous requests to explore further how internal organizational features affect CSR approaches and opportunities.

We begin the paper by discussing the meaning of CSR in general and in the retail sector. We refer to previous research on CSR and retailing. Thereafter we introduce the resource-based view and elaborate on why it should contribute to increased understanding of CSR in retail. We then report on a research project investigating CSR in Swedish retail. The study in focus is an exploratory, quantitative telephone survey with 200 store managers. The paper ends with a discussion, in which we also present possible future research questions.

CSR

In management research, studies on CSR and sustainability have become common practice (Locket, Moon and Visser, 2006). As a result of high-profiled corporate scandals, increasing globalization and information flows, the phenomenon has gained foothold among consumers and in the public debate (Buhr and Grafström, 2004; Lewis, 2003, Morsing and Langer, 2007). In parallel, a recent UN study shows that the focus on responsible behavior towards society and the environment is increasing among companies; despite times of financial and environmental crises (Lacy, Cooper, Hayward, Neuberger, 2010). The general discourse, however, is still restricted in terms of how well the topic is applied to various types of business organizations and sectors.

There is no universal definition of CSR. The academic, public and political debates, however, all revolve around a similar core. Briefly told, CSR has to do with the inevitable overlap of business and society, how this overlap requires companies to consider their operations' influence on various stakeholders and how they can minimize negative impact on and help improve matters of environmental, social and financial sustainability (c.f. Carroll, 1999; Steurer, Langer, Konrad, and Martinuzzi, 2005; van Marrewijk, 2003). The European

Commission describes CSR as “...a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. Being socially responsible means not only fulfilling legal expectations, but also going beyond compliance and investing “more” into human capital, the environment and the relations with stakeholders” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). This is the definition that guides this paper.

Previous research on CSR in retail

Representing countless firms and a large part of western economy, it is not surprising that the debate on CSR and sustainability has reached the retailing sector. A burgeoning research interest with focus on the intersection of CSR and retailing is noticeable, with several commendable efforts (e.g. Jones et al., 2007; Shaw, 2006).

One stream of research takes the consumer in focus and explores: the influence of socially responsible factors on consumers’ store image (Gupta and Pirsch, 2008); selection of products and stores (Williams et al., 2010); brands (Anselmsson and Johansson, 2007); and shopping centers (Oppenwal et al., 2006). Research also specifically investigates consumer responses to cause-related marketing (Barone et al., 2007; Ellen et al., 2000) and reveal the influence of retail chain brands on consumer attitudes and purchasing of fair-trade products sold in the store (Castaldo et al., 2009).

A second stream of research takes the retailer in focus. Part of this stream offer studies that describe what types of CSR activities retailers perform (Marques et al., 2010), how and what they communicate in regards to these efforts (Jones et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2007; Shaw, 2006). Other studies reveal possible motives behind CSR engagement (Piacentini et al., 2000; Sands and Ferraro, 2010), identify attitudes to ethical sourcing practices (e.g. Pretious and Love, 2006), and investigate the business case for CSR in retail

(Moore, 2001), that is, the relationship between corporate social and financial performance.

The extant literature indicates that research on CSR in the retail sector is indeed embraced by management scholars. Yet, the nature and results of available studies encourage more research with alternative approaches and questions. For example, the scope of retailers included in the research is rather limited. A lot of focus is put on grocery retail (i.e. primarily convenience goods). Less attention has been paid to explore a wider set of retailers (including shopping goods and capital goods). While there is a tendency to distinguish stores according to what they sell; like clothes (Pretious and Love, 2006) or food (Piacentini et al., 2000), alternative approaches to analyze patterns and behavior related to CSR or sustainability reside in size of stores or firms, level of vertical integration, store manager characteristics, and stores' geographical position.

Previous research relates to a range of theoretical viewpoints, like stakeholder theory (Moore, 2001), consumer behavior (Oppenwal et al., 2006) and brand management (Barone et al., 2007). Nevertheless, many studies are predominantly of descriptive or basic exploratory character. To improve our understanding of why retailers perform CSR we implore continued research related to basic questions such as how retailers define and relate to the concept CSR but also what factors can explain or determine retailers CSR practices. Drawing on the resource-based view, we set out to improve our understanding of CSR performance in retail while at the same time facilitating an addition to the general CSR discourse.

A resource-based view on CSR

The resource based view has its origin in Penrose's (2009) introduction of the theory of the growth of the firm, which clarifies how a firm's diversification and behavior relates to the collection of resources available. While introduced in the late 1950s this is to date one of the

most influential theories in management research. Penrose (2009) highlights the concept of *productive resources*. That is, rather than focusing on measures such as sales or employees, to understand a company's potential and performance it is necessary to recognize its current capacity to well manage, utilize and administer available resources. This reasoning specifically emphasizes managerial competence and outlook within an organization as a source for performance (Ginsberg, 1990; Mahoney and Pandian, 1992).

Penrose (2009) originally explained resources according to the classification of *land* and equipment, *labor*, and *capital*. Following this, however, she concluded that "the subdivision of resources may proceed as far as is useful for the problem at hand (Penrose, 1959: 74; cited in Mahoney and Pandian, 1992). Along the same lines, Wernerfelt (1984, p. 172) defines resources as "...anything which could be thought of as a strength or weakness of a given firm."

A comprehensive idea of how the resource profile of a firm can be identified is obtained by compiling the works of Hofer and Schendel (1978), Grant, (1991) (both cited in Mahoney and Pandian, 1992, p. 364), Penrose (2009), and Wernerfelt (1984). In summary, their presentation of resources divides into six categories: (1) *Financial resources*: e.g. capital, cash flow, debt capacity, new equity availability; (2) *Physical resources*: e.g. land, plant & equipment, raw materials, machinery, inventories, waste products, by-products; (3) *Human resources*: e.g. skilled personnel in varying disciplines, scientists, production supervisors, sales personnel; (4) *Organizational resources*: e.g. quality control systems, corporate culture, relationships; trade contacts, efficient procedures; (5) *Technological capabilities*: e.g. high quality production, low cost plants; in-house knowledge of technology; (6) *Intangible resources*: e.g. brand names, reputation, brand recognition, goodwill.

While the resource based view is regularly applied to explain financial performance and growth, in this paper we elaborate on what influence the availability of resources has on

CSR practices. Inspired by the resource-based view's approach to explain firm performance and growth, we assume that a company's portfolio of productive resources should also influence its approach to and accomplishments in CSR.

Previous research that ties CSR to a resource-based view primarily looks at how CSR in itself can be a resource and result in competitive advantage. For example, it has been argued that ethical leadership should be seen as strategic resources (Litz, 1996), that CSR strengthens business culture and corporate reputation (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006, McWilliams, Siegel and Wright, 2005; Reinhardt, 1998), and that CSR can render financial returns (Russo and Fouts, 1997). In this line of research, authors tend to view CSR as something that companies primarily engage in for the sake of others; to build corporate brand and reputation. Our point of departure is somewhat different.

We start with the basic tenet of the resource based view – that varying performance and the ability to create competitive advantage depends on differences in available resources – and propose that resource analyses can shed light on how companies perform CSR. Previous research has pursued similar logics, identifying various intangible and organizational resources. For example, studies show that international experience positively influences sustainable development among Canadian oil, mining and forestry firms (Bansal, 2005), that intangible resources mediate corporate responsibility performance as well as financial performance (Surroca, Tribó, and Waddock, 2010), and the positive influence of environmental technology investments on environmental as well as manufacturing performance (Klassen and Whybark, 1999). Similarly, Udayasankar (2008) suggests that a company's motivation for and participation in CSR depends on a combination of resource access, firm visibility, and scale of operations. In all, however, empirical research that takes this approach in explaining the occurrence of CSR through a resource based view is still very limited.

Chain store vs. independent store

As we apply the resource-based view to the retail context the division of independent stores and stores belonging to a chain is useful. Stores belonging to a chain are influenced by a larger entity, and are likely to hold more resources than individual stores. We foresee that this connection, to a more encompassing organization, has consequences for the resource base available and therefore also the strategy and management of CSR on a store level. Our assumption builds on the notion that chains are likely to hold more resources than individual stores, and that this facilitates CSR practices in the form of motivation (reasons for performing) as well as capacity (ability to perform) (c.f. Udayasankar, 2008). Access to a larger organization indicates access to cash-flow and debt capacity, contacts with and leverage to influence other actors in the distribution chain, and a wider spread of competencies. All in all, these aspects can be assumed to influence both CSR motivation and the capacity to induce activities to foster or create change in society. Below, we elaborate on which resources are likely to vary between individual stores and stores belonging to a chain, and how these might influence retailers' CSR involvement.

Larger organizations, like retail chains, have a different set of organizational and administrative resources. Size promotes economies of scale in administration and demands order for maintained internal control. In terms of CSR, we assume that access to resources can influence the formalization of practices, like information and reporting systems, to assure that the services are performed similarly in all stores, independently of geographical location.

Due to their compiled size, geographic spread and brand recognition, stores that belong to a chain are also likely to differ from individual stores in regards to legitimacy. Being more visible and having a vested interest in maintaining goodwill indicates both pressure and incentive to practice a high degree of CSR. That is, we interpret goodwill as one intangible resource that can influence CSR strategy.

Generally speaking, stores belonging to chains also have access to a wider range of human capital in terms of skilled staff, including special competencies for CSR, which we assume will influence the outlook on and practices of CSR.

As retail chains often have private labels they have both an increased incentive and the organizational procedures available to influence current states in the value chain through CSR practices. Private labels are less common for independent stores; indicating a difference in how they might relate to CSR motivation and capacity.

In view of the above, we use the type of store – being independent or related to a chain - as a proxy for the resources each store has accessible. *Our key proposition for research is that independent stores perform less CSR than chain stores.*

Empirical Material and Method Applied

For the purpose presented above, this paper makes use of quantitative method. More precisely, we employ a structured telephone survey for data collection and SPSS for analyses. The study, conducted in Sweden, focuses on individual stores as the unit of analysis, relying on the store managers to signify each store.

CSR practice was defined according to activities actually performed related to five stakeholders. CSR practices were measured through store managers' self-reporting of doing or not doing a certain activity (e.g. active search for certified suppliers), and having or not having codes of conduct (e.g. for child labor).

Sample

Swedish stores were randomly sampled based on a categorization of city size according to inhabitants (large >200 001, medium 100 000 - 200 000, and small 25 000 – 99 999). According to this categorization Sweden has three large cities and these were automatically included. In addition to these we randomly selected three middle-sized cities,

and six small cities. We sought a weighted sample and to fulfill 67 interviews in each category. 988 retail stores were contacted and in total, 200 store managers were interviewed.

From the results we find that 68.5% of the sample are stores belonging to a chain (n=137). The rest are categorized as individual stores (n=63).

Our study covers the retail of shopping goods in the consumer market. Generally speaking, shopping goods are such goods where consumers make an effort to compare suitability, price, style, and quality at the time of purchase (Murphy and Enis, 1986). We excluded convenience goods, such as groceries and newspapers, but also vehicles, fuel, medical and optical articles, art, antiques and second-hand goods.² An overview of stores included in the study is presented in table 1.

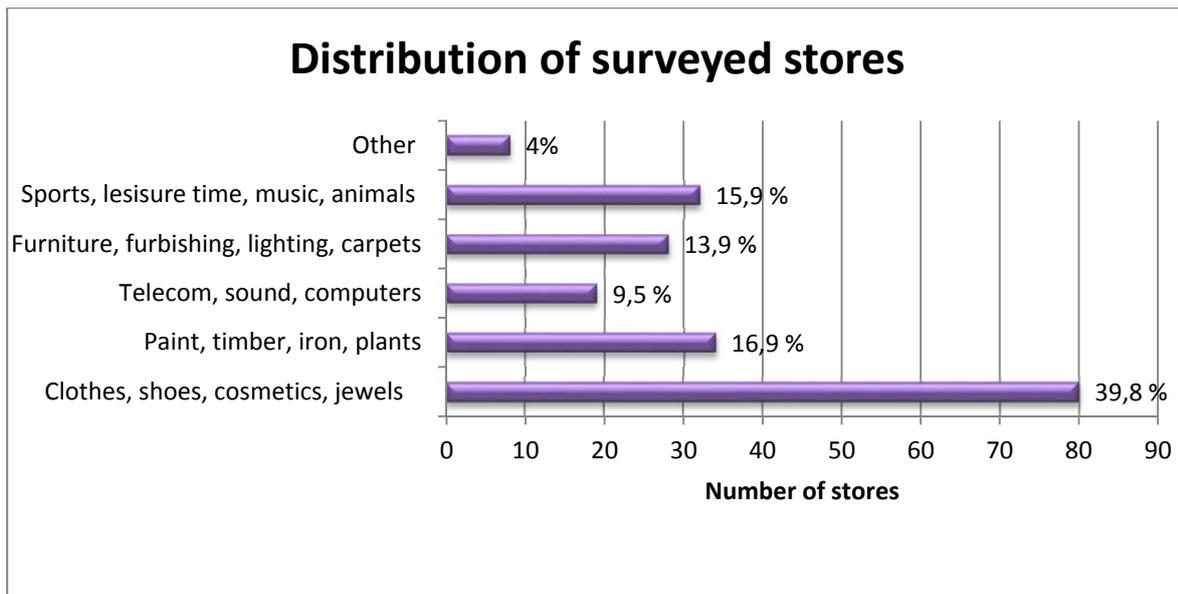


Table 1: Distribution of surveyed stores (number of stores per category and percentage of sample)

Variables

The first part of the survey comprised a set of control variables about the store (including its being part of a chain or not) and the store manager. Related to CSR practice, two types of questions were then asked. First: questions identifying acts by the store, i.e. indications of CSR (e.g. if they have actively searched for fair trade products). Respondents

² ISIC-codes: 4711; 472; 473; 4773; 4774; 47781; 47783, 4779.

could answer: a) Yes, we have done that during 2009 or earlier, b) No we have never done that, or c) Don't know. Second: questions that tracked the existence of written guidelines (e.g. for environmental or equality issues); simply demanding respondents to answer: a) Yes, b) No, or c) Don't know.

The elusiveness of CSR, and concurrent difficulty of measuring CSR practices and performance, is recognized in research (Gjølberg, 2009). There is no universal construct for comparing CSR practices in individual firms (Clarksson, 1995; Gjølberg, 2009). Since research on CSR in retail is still limited, there is certainly no given framework how to measure CSR practices in this context. One solution is to use official CSR ratings (e.g. Dow Jones sustainability index), membership in initiatives (e.g. the UN Global Compact), or certifications (e.g. ISO 14000) as a proxy for CSR practices (e.g. Gjølberg, 2009). These indicators were not considered viable for the current study as they primarily involve large firms. Instead, to indicate retail stores' CSR practices, we selected a number of activities to represent CSR practice, related to each stakeholder as implied by the research questions. These overlap with activities identified in previous research as key to CSR in retail (e.g. Williams et al., 2010; Wagner, Bicen and Hall, 2008).

In view of the recurring application of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) to frame the topic and the practice of CSR (Argandoña, 1998; Clarkson, 1995; Garriga and Melé, 2004; Locket, Moon and Visser, 2006; Marrewijk, 2003), we chose to define CSR practices connected to a set of stakeholders. Retail stores occupy a function and position in the value chain, which leaves them closely tied to the processes of goods manufacturing, sales and consumption. A number of actors existing in the upstream, in-store, and downstream events can be considered as stakeholders. We chose here to focus on the following:

- To trace CSR practice related to the *environment* we investigated store activity in regards to product assortment, existence of formal guidelines, and recycling within

the store. These items were selected to indicate a wide scope of CSR practices related to environment (i.e. product focus, formalization, and in-store activity).

- To trace CSR practice related to the *employees in manufacturing* we investigated issues related to condition in manufacturing of the products sold, if the store search for products labeled with a social standard like “fair trade”, and existence of formal guidelines. These items were selected to indicate a wide scope of CSR practices related to employees in manufacturing (i.e. conditions in manufacturing, product focus, and formalization).
- To trace CSR practice related to the *employees in the store* we investigated issues related to working conditions for the employees in the store, i.e. if employees are offered further education, medical examination, money for health and wellness training, or flexible working hours; and, further, if the store take diversity of ethnicity, sex and age into account when employing. These items were selected to indicate a wide scope of CSR practices related to employees in the store (i.e. employment conditions, and diversity among employees).
- To trace CSR practice related to the *customers in the store* we investigated issues related to if the store had excluded products having a negative influence on children and youths, or on equality; and further, if the store had informed customers about products good for the environment. Finally, we asked if the store handle customers’ wrappings. These items were selected to indicate a wide scope of practices related to customers in the store (i.e. product focus, user effects, and recycling).
- To trace CSR practice related to the *local community* we investigated issues related to sponsorship of local sport associations, donations to non-sports related organizations, and contribution to municipality lead projects or events. These items were selected to indicate a wide scope of practices related to local community (i.e.

philanthropic activities).

Data analysis

We use statistical analyses (SPSS) to investigate if independent stores and stores belonging to a chain differ in their CSR practices. Descriptive statistics are computed for each question. To compare the groups, we present cross-tabulations indicating frequencies and corresponding Chi-square tests. For a few items it was necessary to categorize the data into fewer categories to obtain valid results (too low counts in cells). For these items, the number of respondents answering “Don’t know” was very low, why we chose to exclude that category to obtain valid P-values.

We present our results in five tables that show the result for each measure of CSR practice. In the interpretation of results we focus on the above-discussed resources to consider how the results support or contradict our key proposition.

Results

Related to the natural environment

For all eight questions, a larger share of stores belonging to a chain answered that they have carried out the activity (see table 2). A considerable majority of the independent stores answer that they have never actively searched for suppliers offering environmental certified goods (N2). Likewise, a majority of these stores have never changed their assortment due to environmental aspects; neither by removing “bad” nor by adding “good” alternatives (N1; N5).

Considerable differences between the chain and independent stores also appear related to the existence of guidelines and manuals (N3; N4). For all these items the difference in responses between the two groups of stores is significant. In regards to in-store recycling the difference between the groups is much smaller and there is no significant difference in

responses between them.

	Response	Store type		All stores	Pearson Chi-Square
		Chain (n=137)	Not chain (n=63)		
N1: Removed products from assortment because of their influence on the environment?	Yes	40,1%	25,4%	35,5%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	45,3%	73,0%	54,0%	
	Don't know	14,6%	1,6%	10,5%	
N2: Actively searched for suppliers that offer goods that are certified according to one or more environmental standards?	Yes	49,6%	28,6%	43,0%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	31,4%	69,8%	45,3%	
	Don't know	19,0%	1,6%	13,5%	
N3: Have written guidelines for purchasing regarding environmental issues?	Yes	61,3%	15,9%	47,0%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	23,4%	81,0%	41,5%	
	Don't know	15,3%	3,2%	11,5%	
N4: Have a handbook for employees regarding how to handle environmental issues?	Yes	56,2%	17,5%	44,0%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	38,0%	81,0%	51,5%	
	Don't know	5,8%	1,6%	4,5%	
Adjusted					
N5: Have you changed your assortment to offer more environmental friendly products?	Yes	71,2%	37,7%	60,6 %	P-value: 0,000*
	No	28,8%	62,3%	39,4%	
N6: Recycle glass in the store?	Yes	63,4%	59,7%	62,2%	P-value: 0,622
	No	36,6%	40,3%	37,8%	
N7: Recycle paper in the store?	Yes	92,6%	84,1%	89,9%	P-value: 0,066
	No	7,4%	15,9%	10,1%	
N8: Recycle plastic in the store?	Yes	84,1%	73,0%	80,5%	P-value: 0,068
	No	15,9%	27,0%	19,5%	

*=significant at $P < ,005$

Table 2: CSR practice related to the environment

One interpretation of the differences for the first questions is that they relate to a discrepancy in competence and motivation. Another is that stores belonging to a chain receive information and support from headquarter and take action based on this information. The chain has disposable resources for following up products, actors and action taken in the distribution chain, while the independent stores more likely have limited resources, human as well as financial capital wise, to do the same. They are rather in a position that encourages and/or forces them to trust in their suppliers to act in a responsible way. In terms of the lack of major differences between the groups on recycling (N6; N7; N8), our interpretation is that these activities are quick to carry out and do not require specific competencies or complex

routines. That is, the resource base underlying that activity is not necessarily different between stores if they are independent or belong to a chain.

Related to employees in manufacturing

In terms of having written guidelines for purchasing there is a major difference between the groups (As referred to in table 3: EM1; EM2). While half of the stores belonging to a chain answer positive to these items, less than ten percent of the independent stores do. In terms of activities carried out there are some, but no tremendous, differences between the groups (“yes” on items EM3, EM4, EM5). Of particular interest is the high percentage of stores belonging to a chain that answer “Don’t know” on all the five items. This could partly explain the statistically significant differences we also here find between the groups.

	Response	Store type		All stores	Chi-square, P-values
		Chain (n=137)	Not chain (n=63)		
EM1: Have written guidelines for child labor?	Yes	49,6%	7,9%	36,5%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	29,9%	84,1%	47,0%	
	Don't know	20,4%	7,9%	16,5%	
EM2: Have written guidelines for human rights (incl. working conditions and employee rights)?	Yes	51,1%	9,5%	38,0%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	29,2%	84,1%	46,5%	
	Don't know	19,7%	6,3%	15,5%	
EM3: Actively searched for products labeled with “fair trade”, or other social standard?	Yes	35,8%	28,6%	33,5%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	36,5%	66,7%	46,0%	
	Don't know	27,7%	4,8%	20,5%	
EM4: Removed products from assortment due to child labor in manufacturing?	Yes	7,3%	12,7%	9%	P-value: 0,029**
	No	70,1%	79,4%	73,0%	
	Don't know	22,6%	7,9%	18,0%	
EM5. Removed products from assortment due to unfair working conditions in manufacturing?	Yes	11,7%	7,9%	10,5%	P-value: 0,015**
	No	67,2%	85,7%	73,0%	
	Don't know	21,2%	6,3%	16,5%	

*=significant at $P < ,005$

**=significant at $P < ,05$

Table 3: CSR practice related to employees in manufacturing

The recurring difference between the groups in regards to written guidelines is interesting. Guidelines can be a matter of governance and management control systems and, thus, reflect that retail chains have another set of administrative resources and economies of scale that can lead to higher CSR formalization. In retail chains the headquarters commonly

take chief responsibility for sourcing. In this situation, stores could end up being somewhat of an “island”; distanced from the discourse on corporate responsibility related to the upstream value chain. In effect, this could also explain the high proportion of “Don’t knows” among stores belonging to a chain.

Related to employees in the store

The seven items (see table 4) reflect two categories: (1) diversity in employment processes (E2; E3; E6); and (2) employee benefits (E1; E4; E5; E7). Related to the first category, chain stores to a much higher degree take diversity of ethnicity, age, and sex into account when employing new people. This can be related to organizational resources, like procedures for administration and governance.

For the second category, we find significant differences related to education and financial contributions for health and wellness training (E1; E5) whereas there are no significant differences related to flexible working hours and medical examination (E4; E7). The first two items can be directly related to the existence of financial capital and the existence of an education network; both more likely to appear in a chain than in an individual store. The individual chain store might be supported or, likewise, restricted in employee matters due to regulations on headquarter level, as stores belonging to the same chain cannot treat employees differently. Still, a majority of the independent store offer further education to their employees.

While it is foreseeable that medical examinations can relate to the existence of administrative routines and financial resources, we find virtually no difference between the groups on this item. Our interpretation is that this matter is rather determined by industry traditions than a reflection on organizational resources.

Response	Store type		All stores	Pearson Chi-
	Chain	Not		

		(n=137)	chain (n=63)		Square
E1: Have you offered employees further education?	Yes	84,7%	61,9%	77,5%	P-value: 0,001*
	No	13,1%	30,2%	18,5%	
	Don't know	2,2%	7,9%	4,0%	
E2: Have you taken diversity of ethnicity into account when employing new people?	Yes	45,3%	20,6%	37,5%	P-value: 0,001*
	No	51,1%	68,3%	56,5%	
	Don't know	3,6%	11,1%	6,0%	
E3: Have you taken diversity of sex into account when employing new people?	Yes	53,3%	23,8%	44,0%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	42,3%	66,7%	50,0%	
	Don't know	4,4%	9,5%	6,0%	
E4: Have you offered employees medical examination?	Yes	35,8%	33,3%	35,5%	P-value: 0,941
	No	56,9%	58,7%	57,5%	
	Don't know	7,3%	7,9%	7,5%	
Adjusted					
E5: Have you offered employees money for health and wellness training?	Yes	70,9%	49,2%	64,2%	P-value: 0,004*
	No	29,1%	50,8%	35,8%	
E6: Have you taken diversity of age into account when employing new people?	Yes	64,2%	39,0%	56,5%	P-value: 0,001*
	No	35,8%	61,0%	43,5%	
E7: Have you offered flexible working hours, taking their family situation into account?	Yes	62,5%	63,8%	62,9%	P-value: 0,864
	No	37,5%	36,2%	37,1%	

*=significant at $P < ,005$

Table 4: CSR practice related to employees in the store

Related to customers in the store

One major difference here relates to the assortment and the number of stores answering “Don’t know” (as referred to in table 5: C1; C2). As in the above, our interpretation is that the concentration of purchasing administration in retail chains influences the knowledge on store level. Another big difference relates to stores informing consumers about “good” products (C3). While a majority of all stores do it, chain stores perform this to higher extent. Our interpretation is that this reflects how retail chains have taken a formalized grip on environmental issues, perhaps in the form of sending general guidelines for information, or even ready placards to place in the stores.

In terms of offering customers to handle their wrapping there is no difference between the groups (C4). Similar to our above interpretation of recycling, we think that this indicates that resources are not the primary explanation for this activity. More likely, it is a

sign of recycling becoming institutionalized.

	Response	Store type		All stores	Pearson Chi-Square
		Chain (n=137)	Not chain (n=63)		
C1: Have you excluded products because they had a negative impact on equality?	Yes	7,3%	3,2%	6,0%	P-value: 0,003*
	No	73,0%	93,7%	79,5%	
	Don't know	19,7%	3,2%	14,5%	
C2: Have you excluded products because they had a negative influence on children or youth?	Yes	25,5%	17,5%	23,0%	P-value: 0,002*
	No	56,2%	79,4%	63,5%	
	Don't know	18,2%	3,2%	13,5%	
Adjusted					
C3: Have you informed your customers about goods that are good choices for the environment?	Yes	71,5%	52,4%	65,5%	P-value: 0,019**
	No	27,7%	47,6%	34,0%	
C4: Have you offered the customers to handle their wrapping?	Yes	47,4%	49,2%	48,0%	P-value: 0,308
	No	48,9%	50,8%	49,5%	

*=significant at $P < ,005$

**=significant at $P < ,05$

Table 5: CSR practice related to customers in the store

Related to local community

Related to the local community we asked about several kinds of sponsoring (see table 6). Our findings indicate that the independent stores to a much larger degree are involved in sponsoring and donations local organizations (L1; L2). One explanation might be that the decisions regarding sponsorship and donations are taken by headquarter in a chain and that it is easier for an individual store to decide about sponsorship and donations on short notice. Another explanation could be that the individual store is continuously investing in its local brand since it cannot depend on national campaign being arranged by a central function, which is often the case in larger retail chains.

Response	Store type		All stores	Pearson Chi-
	Chain	Not		

		(n=137)	chain (n=63)		Square
L1: Do you sponsored one or several local sports associations?	Yes	39,4%	61,9%	46,5%	P-value: 0,001*
	No	48,9%	38,1%	45,5%	
	Don't know	11,7%	0,0%	8,0%	
L2: Do you give donate money to one or several local, non-sports related, organizations?	Yes	27,7%	57,1%	37,0%	P-value: 0,000*
	No	62,8%	39,7%	55,5%	
	Don't know	9,5%	3,2%	7,5%	
L3: Do you contribute with time or money to one or more municipality lead projects or events?	Yes	20,4%	22,2%	21,0%	P-value: 0,584
	No	68,6%	71,4%	69,5%	
	Don't know	10,9%	6,3%	9,5%	

*=significant at $P < ,005$

Table 6: CSR practice related to the local community

Conclusions, limitations and further research

We outlined that resources are different in independent stores and stores belonging to a chain, and that this will lead to differences in CSR practices. Our study supports our basic assumption that there are difference between the two groups. On most of our questions, the results also support our proposition that stores belonging to a chain perform more CSR than independents stores. Related to a majority of the items measured, chain stores answer that to a larger extent answer that they *have* performed the activities asked for. Likewise, the independent stores to much higher degree answer that they have never practiced the activities we ask about. However, our results also show that the difference between the groups is not always in the direction that we assume (that the influence of more resources on chain level leads to more CSR).

A recurring and interesting finding is the high levels of “Don’t know” answers among the stores belonging to a chain related to assortment and responsibility up-stream the supply chain. While these stores as a group still seem to do more than the independent store group, it appears that the greater resources which reside on headquarter level can also function as a limitation in terms of the presence of CSR on store level. This finding stresses that control and independence might be important resources to explain CSR behavior, resources that are

more likely to reside in the independent stores. That is, it is possible that our study also shows that the bundle of resources, which stores are related to via the chain, are not always working to increase all CSR practices. The price of having complex and formalized administrative resources might be rigidity and reduced flexibility on a local level.

In view of the above, this study gives reason for further studies on the antecedents of CSR in retail organizations, which is in line with Basu and Palazzo's (2008) call to focus on internal organizational characters and sense-making to further understand CSR. The exploratory nature of this study also leaves to future research to explore whether the results are related to differences in perceived motivation and capacity related to CSR. One way forward is to look closer at specific resources and store features, like store manager characteristics, store position (urban retail center or high-street), primary products for sale, store size, and value chain position.

The paper can also facilitate discussions about the boundaries of CSR in retail. Is it reasonable to have generic expectations on all retailers? If not, how can we enable different types of retailers and stores to engage in a manner that is suitable for their situation? Moreover, the study leads us to questions such as: What is the responsibility of individual store managers? Is it necessary for one actor to accept responsibility for sustainable behavior throughout the value chain? If not, what structures for collaboration are in place or needed to assure the best possible outcome?

The contemporary discourse on CSR reveals an exhaustive framework for what comprises CSR activity. In view of this, a limited number of questions had to be selected for indicating CSR practices towards a selected range of stakeholders. In effect, while our results are in many cases significant, this limits our conclusions concerning differences between stores to the items and stakeholders measured. Further research can validate the findings, including wider set of researched variables or indicators for CSR. One way to achieve this is

to focus on a particular stakeholder. Another way of proceeding the current findings is to target CSR performance, outcomes, and excellence (c.f. Blowfield and Murray, 2008; Gjølborg, 2009). While single practices are at the core of all, research should aim to also explore outcomes and whether the context for practices affect them, for example the bundle of resources available. The study's limitation to a Swedish context implies that research in different countries would also be of interest; enabling insights from differences in culture as well as industry development

Previous research on retail and CSR has focused primarily on the most obvious stakeholders; stores and consumers. The current study seeks to explore and interpret CSR in retail from a wider stakeholder perspective. Also, in contrast to most previous studies, it focuses on shopping goods rather than convenience goods and includes small and medium-sized firms. We believe that a development in this direction – adding a more complex stakeholder orientation and reviewing a wider set of retailers – is necessary to understand CSR in the sector as well as advance the debate and practices.

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