

## Shopping Experience of Indonesian Diaspora in Europe Related to Primark's Reputation and Customer Attitude towards Unethical and Unsustainable Business Practice Brands

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### ABSTRACT

When Primark is alleged to be an unethical and unsustainable fashion brand after the accident in Bangladesh in 2013, we would like to know further about the public's response as well as their attitude toward fast fashion brands selling cheap clothes, including Primark. With such a reputation, we also want to get a deeper yet broader range of understanding by conducting interview with our respondents who are Indonesian diaspora (who have been to Europe) and some European citizens. We asked them about their point of view and their experience in purchasing items both in fast fashion and sustainable fashion brands. The research method used is qualitative, with interviews as a data collection technique. The result showed that the reputation of Primark as a fast fashion brand as well as its accusation of unethical and unsustainable business practices, affect consumer behavior in purchasing fashion products. Brand reputation also has a strong connection between consumer attitude and buying decisions. Despite buying decisions with sustainable brands not yet done hugely by now, consumers have started to rethink shopping with fashion brands that practice business against the law and norms regarding society and the environment.

**Keyword:** Primark, Fashion Brand Reputation, Consumer Behavior, Customer Attitude, Fast Fashion, Sustainable Fashion.

## **INTRODUCTION**

These days, global warming and climate change have become more severe and enormous issues for the last decade. As global citizens, we mitigate such issues to save our planet. One way which may help slow down the effect of climate change and global warming is our decision to purchase fashion items. Because what we wear can cause numerous environmental problems, along with fast fashion clothing. Fast fashion is a business model defined as an objective of getting fashionable that counts on economical quality garments with low price, mass, and rapid manufacturing, frequent consumption, made by machine. Moreover, it is short-lived use (Heuer & Becker-Leifhold, 2018; Riesgo, Lavanga & Codina, 2020; Aishwariya, 2019).

The living style of fast fashion is found everywhere due to the efficiency that resulted in its production, which is added to the rising consumption and significantly lowered the clothing price. Then, the price rose slowly compared to other consumer goods. Hence it caused the price to become more affordable (Riesgo et al., 2020). Although “Handmade Clothing” has become a new fashion style nowadays, the “Fast-Fashion” concept is still found and attractive, especially in emerging countries but no exception with developed countries like Europe. Therefore, the “Green Economy” theme has awakened us to deepen a topic related to environmental issues, particularly with ethical and sustainable business fashion. We have tremendous motivation and are willing to bring about this topic due to our awareness of what is happening in our surroundings. The objective of this research is to generate perception and new understanding, furthermore with each respondent's diverse experience, cultural backgrounds, and fashion literacy.

## **FAST FASHION VS SUSTAINABLE FASHION**

In simple terms, fashion means appearance, which includes accessories, bags, shoes, make-up, hairstyles, and most importantly: clothes. Meanwhile, sustainable fashion must be the responsibility of all of us, not just environmentalists, fashion designers, rich or poor, but all of humanity. Fashion connoisseurs or not, it is time for the concept of sustainable fashion to be implemented in every level of life (Zahra, 2019).

According to a report from Global Business Indonesia, the development of the fashion industry, which is nowadays one of the revenue sources for Indonesia worth 58.5 trillion per year as an export value as of 2016. With this value that has turned real, the fashion business will continue to develop both in positive and negative terms simultaneously (Rahmawaty, Nadiroh, Husen, Purwanto, & Astra, 2021).

The attention that becomes a “need” for the fashion industry companies is a practice that can reduce negative impacts and later map what cannot be tolerated, particularly values contrary to the 17 SDGs principles. By this point, the practice of sustainable fashion is expected to fulfill several points in sustainable development, including alleviating poverty (number 1), improving health quality (number 3), gender equality (number 5), availability of clean water (number 6), decent work and economic development (number 8), increasing equity (number 10), sustainable cities and communities (number 11), responsible consumption (number 12), reducing the impact of change climate (number 13), ensuring the life of aquatic and terrestrial biota (number 14 & 15), and cooperation to achieve goals (number 17) (Rahmawaty et al., 2021).

The development of the fashion industry worldwide, in particular, Indonesia, should be able to improve humankind's welfare as stated in the 17 pillars of the SDGs. Apart from the benefit for humans, another thing that must be considered is that it can still provide in paying

attention to environmental welfare, along with the fashion industry that can pay attention to the environmental moral code. Therefore, sustainable fashion is expected to be able to stay in tune with the changing fashion trends now and again. Moreover, fashion as a significant industry also contributes to the increase in economic growth percentage in Indonesia. In the meantime, with sustainability as main concern, the fashion industry performers also need to ensure the workers continually take care of the production quality, both mass and limited (Rahmawaty et al., 2021).

In addition, more and more people are choosing this product compared to fast fashion products, as Nielsen IQ reported. From there, many small and large brands began to provide a portion for sustainable and ethical fashion (Shafa, 2021). According to Zahra (2019), sustainable fashion is a practice in a fashion that puts forward the values of various parties involved in it, especially the environment and humanity. Whatever its form, from personal lifestyle to business sphere, should prosper and minimize losses. Meanwhile, the goal of sustainable fashion is to unite various groups within the fashion industry: designers, producers, distributors, to consumers (users) to work together to change the way a fashion item is sourced, produced, and consumed for the better (Zahra, 2019).

In the meantime, fast fashion is divided into two perspectives in describing its concept. From the consumer's perspective, fast fashion is where cheap yet trendy clothes are produced but it is disposable and can be updated repeatedly with the newest design or the current favorite style. Meanwhile, from the point of view of business, fast fashion is defined as producing enormous amounts of clothes in a short period of time. The quantity is over the quality due to the low cost of production that is prioritized to maximize the profit (Tran, 2021). The existing fast fashion industry causes several problems for instance, the unfair labor practices and the wage of the human resources is underpaid. Sometimes, fast fashion company also involves labor from under-aged children. Moreover, their mass production results in large amounts of waste that may endanger our environment. Nevertheless, day by day, consumers are becoming aware of such issues and started to concern and demand a real change of responsibility from the business person of the fashion industry (Tran, 2021).

Because according to McNeill and Moore (2015), fashion clothes produced sustainably can reduce the negative effects on the environment and provide ethical shopping choices to fashion consumers in fulfilling their desire for fashion. Furthermore, Kozlowski and Mackiewicz-Talarczyk (2020) stated that a few sub-sectors can help improvise the sustainability of fashion products by using fibers that are easy to decompose and do not pollute the environment. In today's world, many people are conscious and aware of environmental pollution and the urge to practice sustainable practices in their fashion (Shim, Kim, & Na, 2018). For instance, consumers in Turkey addressed that they favor the sustainability aspect of fashion, such as using organic materials and production (Lundblad & Davies, 2016).

### **FAST FASHION AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION IN INDONESIA**

Multinational or international brand retailers dominate the world's fast fashion players, namely ZARA, H&M, UNIQLO, Primark, and GAP (Verma & Beri, 2021). However, those big players are within the Indonesian market, except Primark, which only covers Europe's regional scope. Meanwhile, GAP has said goodbye to Indonesian consumers since 2018 (Dwijayanto, 2017). Besides those four big brand retailers, Pull&Bear, Bershka, Cotton On, Love Bonito, Mango, Forever21, and many more are doing business penetration in Indonesia.

Regarding consumer behavior of fast fashion in Indonesia, according to Rostiani and Kuron (2019), Indonesian consumers, particularly the young generation, tend to prefer fast fashion products. This is due to the internal and external factors influencing their interest and buying decision. For external factor, those young people are influenced by subjective norms and behavioral control. Meanwhile, the internal factor lies in things that incite their self-motivation to become more confident and eager to look attractive.

In our opinion, the internal influence is fascinating and unique, considering that young people are in the middle of finding their true identity, including their style as their personal branding. On the one hand, this kind of factor is an excellent way to push them to purchase clothing products due to their willingness to be nice-looking. However, on the other hand, Rostiani and Kuron (2019) also mentioned that there is an inclination of physical vanity which affects shopping behavior of Indonesian young people in the fast fashion category.

This may become a unique phenomenon because the young generation, especially those who are still in school age or not yet earning some money from working full time like the adults, the “good-looking ambition” drives them to go to fast fashion retail shops and buy its product items, and doing it over and over again. Hence, we found an upheaval between Indonesian consumers who have started being responsive to the benefit of slow fashion and those (specifically the young people) still depending on the existence of fast fashion products as the ‘tool’ of looking good and stylish.

In the meantime, speaking of slow fashion or, in this term, sustainable fashion, the level of knowledge and awareness of sustainable fashion in Indonesia is still relatively low. Sustainable fashion is commonly associated with organic cotton, natural dyes, and recycled and recyclable materials, whereas the concept is much broader than the materials. Nonetheless, the concept of sustainable fashion in Indonesia is growing due to its trends in the global fashion industry (Villagers Post, 2015; Tanzil, 2017).

Greenpeace Indonesia Spokesperson’s campaigner (Birry in Villagers Post, 2015; Tanzil, 2017) argues that many international fashion brands manufacture their products in Indonesia and contribute more negative to positive environmental and social impacts. Birry in Villagers Post (2015) also states the government’s lack of support, which performs an important role as the regulator of production, chemical, and waste management in the industries towards a more sustainable the future of fashion in Indonesia (Villagers Post, 2015; Tanzil, 2017).

According to Felicia Budi (Tanzil, 2017), the most prominent challenge is that the Indonesian fashion system is not yet integrated or systematic, and most fashion business information is not openly accessible to the public. Meanwhile, regarding local fashion companies with sustainable values and initiatives, only independent fashion brands are accounted as small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Sustainable and slow fashion movements are predominantly initiated by independent fashion designers and labels such as Felicia Budi, Lenny Agustin, and Sejauh Mata Memandang. Indonesian large enterprises that operate within the fashion and textile industry, such as PT Sri Rejeki Isman Tbk (Sritex), PT Matahari Department Store Tbk, and PT Mitra Adiperkasa Tbk (MAP), have neither yet demonstrated nor prioritized substantial, sustainable values in their businesses, whereas these companies account for more environmental and social impacts.

#### **AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION IN INDONESIA**

In Indonesia, at the moment, 90% of consumers are hugely attentive to the concept of sustainable fashion. However, 50% of these consumers are willing to pay more for

sustainable and ethical products (Shafa, 2021). The actual action and willingness from those 50% of consumers indicate an awareness. Such awareness, by some means points toward a change in consumer behavior. The change itself has numerous factors that are namely personal, psychological, social, and even cultural factor (Tran, 2021). These factors later can lead and influence people to be aware that this planet Earth is urged to get help from humankind so that humans and other creatures can live in sustainability for longevity, and one way is to start buying items from fast fashion to slow fashion.

### **UNETHICAL AND UNSUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES**

In the meantime, the term “Unethical Practice” in organization or enterprise sphere encompasses all business practices that become harmful to the relevant company stakeholders. An unethical practice has later detrimental significance for those negatively affected (Remišová, Lašáková, & Bohinská, 2019). The study of Remišová et al. (2019) also specifically mentioned that some employees from a number of companies that are their respondents are found to carry out unethical practices; some of them have done something illegal (against law and policies). Meanwhile, some are in line with the law but still violate the legitimate essentials of stakeholders of the company. In this study, they concluded with the term that “unethical” is equivalent to “illegal” which the analysis underwent in three main categories of reasons for carrying out unethical business practices: macro-, mezzo- and micro-level.

From this study, we understand that unethical business practice is not always about the giant frame of enterprise image from the top place of the organization level, however, it could come from the very bottom of organization level within the company, such as employee. One person performs an illegal thing, another follows, and it later gradually reaches the highest management level, like the Board of Directors and Commissioners. The unethical practice with small action could also snowball into a serious issue that may affect the company's image towards the stakeholders, investors, and shareholders.

Apart from the unethical practice within the company, any business and industry may also play a part in the practice of unsustainability for the environment through waste, pollution, climate change, and, what is more, biodiversity loss. Meanwhile, unsustainability for society is by way of supporting inequalities, exploitation, and undermining health, safety, and wellbeing. If a business continues to perform unsustainable practices for the environment and society for extended periods, it will progressively become more unsustainable economically (Bocken & Short, 2021).

### **Get To Know “Primark”**

Primark is a fast fashion retail company from Ireland, formerly named “Penneys” that has become a major retail group and has hired nearly 68,000 workers across 11 countries (Rohim, 2017). Based on Associate British Food (ABF) (2016) which was quoted in Rohim (2017), Primark offers quality, up-to-date style, yet low-cost fashion items. Primark became the leader in the value market due to the cheapness of prices compared to other competitors (Rohim, 2017).

### **The Tragedy And The Aftermath**

According to Hendriksz (2017) in Fashion United and Tran (2021), it is begun with the tragedy of Rana Plaza in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which collapsed on April 24, 2013. The tragic accident claimed total fatalities of approximately 1,000 people and nearly 2,000 individuals injured. People started questioning how a 2 Euros t-shirt was responsibly manufactured after this accident. Later on, the international fashion industry immediately called for Primark to evaluate its ethics and social responsibility to improve.

From that moment on, Primark is alleged to perform unethical, unsustainable, and irresponsible business practices. Also, people started to mistrust the reputation of Primark ever since. In the meantime, Primark tried to change its brand reputation, reconsider its business ethics, and change public perception of its price and ethics (Xydia, 2019). Unfortunately, the more Primark try to fix its brand image, the more they receive criticism from the public about the violation of the code of conduct that did not take account of workers' living wage (Xydia, 2019), over and above the suspicion of child labor which involves teenagers under 18 years of age who are hired within their supply chain (Xydia, 2019).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Utami, Kendaga, Diantoro, and Kusmantini (2021), there are a number of factors that could impact consumer behavior in fashion, are Fashion Interests, Impulsive Buying, Hedonistic Motives, Positive Emotions, and Sales Promotion.

Fashion interests happen from the level of consumer engagement with fashionable clothing or refer to a person's interest in fashion products such as clothes, and then it becomes "fashion involvement." Fashion involvement strongly correlates with personal characteristics as well as fashion knowledge which impacts consumer confidence in making decisions to buy products. A positive correlation between engagement levels and clothes purchasing methods also led customers with high fashion involvement to favor impulsive buying of fashion items. Concerning impulsive buying, this next factor also impacts the fashion and lifestyle industry. Impulsive buying is a bit different from unplanned purchases in quick decision-making. It is more like a form where there are no plans to shop or spontaneously buy when a consumer is interested in a product while shopping. While an unplanned purchase refers to all spending decisions made without prior planning, a planned buy involves a time-consuming information search and reasoned decision-making.

The hedonist trait gauges consumers' level of enjoyment and pleasure from purchasing. Therefore, they are more prone to buy impulsively when driven by hedonistic needs or reasons unrelated to economics. In addition, new fashion trends that fuel the consumer's hedonistic shopping experience can stimulate clothing-focused impulsive buying behavior. Afterward, emotional (irrational) attraction may influence high impulsive buying. Impulsive buying occurs because consumers rely on emotional responses from their purchases and the favorable feelings of other customers, which favorably influence their drive to make a purchase. The understanding of impulsive buying seems also to be obtained by manufacturers or marketers, seen by more and more stores or shopping centers and other manufacturers and marketers who provide many promotional programs for (prospective) consumers. This factor also reinforces consumers' interest in buying fashion items. Retailers' development of marketing tactics to draw customers must therefore be more creative. Understanding customer buying behavior as the target market in modern retail businesses becomes something that marketers need to pay attention to. The influence of hedonistic motives, fashion interest, positive emotions on impulsive buying, and whether sales promotion can increase or strengthen the behavior of consumers to have impulsive buying behaviors.

One of the marketing strategies that must be deemed is to analyze consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is the primary key in marketing because consumers will consider, then decide to buy a product or not. According to Kotler and Keller (2008:166) stated by Rambli (2015), consumer behavior is the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations

choose, purchase, utilize, and how goods, services, thoughts, or involvements satisfy their needs and desires.

Consumer behavior is also described as activities of individuals directly involved in obtaining and utilizing goods and services, including the decision-making process on preparation and activities (Widiyanti, 2019). According to Engel and Miniard (2013) in Widiyanti (2019), three factors influence consumer purchasing decisions. The first is individual differences factors: consumer resources, motivation, interaction, knowledge, attitudes, personality, lifestyle, and demographics. The second is environmental factors consisting of culture, social class, personal influence, family, and situation; the Psychological process has three parts: information processing, learning, and attitude change.

One of the factors that influence consumer behavior is consumer attitude, where attitude is a behavior that shows what consumers like and what they do not like (Widiyanti, 2019). According to the Tri-Component Attitude Model by Schiffman & Wisenblit (2015), attitudes consist of cognitive, affective, and conative components. To elaborate more about the terms, the three components are explained as:

***Cognitive Component (Cognitive)***

It describes and perceptions of an attitude object. This knowledge and perception is obtained through direct experience of the attitude object and information from various other sources. This knowledge and perception is usually in the form of belief, meaning that consumers believe an attitude object has various attributes and behaviors that will lead to specific results.

***Affective Component (Affective)***

Affective defines a person's feelings and emotions towards a product or brand. These feelings and emotions constitute a thorough evaluation of the attitude object (product or brand). Affective expresses the consumer's assessment of a product, whether good or bad, "liked" or "disliked".

***Conative Component (Conative)***

Conative is the third component of attitude which refers to the tendency of a person to take specific actions related to the object of attitude (certain products or brands). Conative can also include behavior that occurs. The conative component in consumer research usually expresses the intention to buy from a consumer (intention to buy).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Qualitative methodology was preferred for this study by conducting interviews and questionnaires to collect the data to provide more detail on how people undergo their shopping experience as well as their attitude towards sustainable fashion. To support the arguments and statements within this study, the researchers take several sources from textbooks, journal articles, and online news.

In the meantime, this research is expected to give details on the viewpoint of the Indonesian diaspora and European citizens who currently reside in European countries and have experience living in Europe, as it is the continent where Primark is from. Besides the Indonesian diaspora and European natives, the respondents are also Indonesian and have not been to Europe before; hence the researchers may get another perspective regarding this study's main topic and related issues.

The respondents are seven people in total; 5 of them are Indonesian citizens (with one person who resides in Germany and one who currently stays in France), and another 2 are European citizens (French and German). Besides the interview, the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents who were finding the perfect time to interview the researchers, mainly due to the packed schedule and the time zone. However, all obtained data has been well recorded, analyzed, and prudently interpreted. These helped the researchers to recognize the perspective of all respondents' understanding of the term fast fashion and sustainable fashion, along with what they know about Primark.

## **RESULTS**

The respondents are Fajar (26, Indonesian), Nisa (21, Indonesian), Alita (24, Indonesian), Astara (29, Indonesian), Anisa (30, Indonesian), Christie (23, Indonesian), Ezra (21, French), and Marie-Nicole (23, German). Early statement, Fajar, Nisa, and Alita are Indonesian diaspora who have experienced living in Europe; of which Fajar has been to Germany in 2017, and Alita has been to the Czech Republic (also traveled around Europe area) several years ago, while Nisa currently resides in France.

With varied educational backgrounds and work experience or expertise, as well as a level of knowledge about the fashion industry, we asked them about fashion (in general), fast fashion, sustainable fashion, impact on fast fashion and sustainable fashion (respectively), imagery of decision-making process on shopping both fast and sustainable fashion, as well as about Primark and its issue accused concerning unethical and unsustainable business practice. For respondents who have not been to Europe, we also asked them about Primark because we would like to know how huge the impact is for the customers on a global scale after the case is alleged to the brand itself.

Firstly, we asked respondents about the meaning of fast fashion. All of them agree that the term of fast fashion is identical to the characteristics of "cheap", "bad quality of products", "quantity over quality", "ironically easy to find and convenient", "dangerous to environment", "underpaid workers", and "unwise regulations".

For consumers, fast fashion is a concept they are running around to keep being in the current trend. As basic human needs, people do not want to live alone, hence not only because of convenience or time, but fast fashion also comes from the demand of the trending fashion happening in society. The trend in fashion is also influenced by what Hollywood celebrities or international models wear (clothes, dresses, shoes, cosmetics, etc.), which makes fashion trends constantly looping and changing very fast. Besides, fast fashion is also generated by those who are being FOMO (*fear of missing out*). Being FOMO in this situation is not merely coming from models or superstars on television but also based on figures who have gone viral. They can be athletes, content creators, or even civil citizens who uplift outfit ideas that surprisingly be liked by users on social media.

By such a phenomenon, many fashion companies utilize this opportunity and play consumers' psychology to grab profit as much as possible by offering products just like what



the celebrities wear, either at an affordable price or with big-budget ones. What comes as an unfortunate condition is that those stuff are produced in mass production to meet the market's high demand but without being care of the resulting impact in the future.

What is interesting from one of the respondent's answers is that the fast fashion industry in Indonesia is not as big as in Western countries. But we surely can see those big retail brands in many shopping malls in Indonesia, including the factory, along with the suppliers who are also from Indonesia, as well as employing labor from Indonesia. Moreover, the waste disposed of is unfortunately thrown away in Indonesia too. Our respondents also shared their understanding of the impact of fashion, which contributes waste that is very dangerous to the quality of water and land, as and harms

The 'unwanted' clothes from fast fashion are also wasteful. This means, for instance, when consumers buy one piece of fast fashion product, but because the quality is terrible, they then have to throw it away, and when they throw it away means that the clothing will pollute the land and water that from the polyester material which cannot unravel organically along with the textile color which can also harm the environment. Another aspect is the resulting loss from the consumers because they must spend more money to repurchase fast fashion clothing once the first purchase is broken due to its lack of quality. Meanwhile, the social issue is also seen in the fast fashion industry, which is the human rights violation, from labor exploitation which asks the workers to work overtime. This pay is under minimum regional wage until occupational health and safety are habitually neglected.

Moving forward to our curiosity about our respondents' awareness of sustainability in fashion, we later asked them to share their knowledge, opinion, or perspective about sustainable fashion. Many agree that sustainable fashion products are way better than fast fashion based on the quality, eco-friendly material, and safe and healthy work environment for the laborers. However, due to its higher price than fast fashion, they still buy clothes from retailers or fast fashion brands, even though they know they are not so proud of it. Also, one of our respondents told us that they still go to fast fashion outlets because they are running out of time to find a sustainable fashion brand due to its small amount. Hence, they need to scroll up and down on the social media platform to decide what they want to wear. Therefore, fast fashion is still preferred to be an option because of its number of outlets at malls that are huge, as well as its easiness and convenience.

Nevertheless, despite of high price, some of our respondents are willing to buy pieces from sustainable fashion because they are not merely about the product, which is indeed for long-term wear. However, they also realized that as a global citizen, we all have a responsibility to mother earth to keep it safe and clean by initiating a sustainable lifestyle, including daily clothes. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the development of the sustainable fashion industry has been growing for the last couple of years. The existence of many local brands with high-quality, sustainable products proves it. Moreover, those local brands now have intense bravery to speak up about the urgency of carrying out sustainability in business.

Meanwhile, international retailer brands currently develop sustainable products, yet it is only 50% of its entire collection. This is a good movement because at least offering eco-friendlier material in its few collections shows brand awareness whilst showing the consumers that they participate in the action on the sustainability drive. Thus, consumers will notice that this brand offers sustainable products in the future. Later, many retail brands are expected to do the same and produce more sustainable items. Also, later on, the community will consider gradually purchasing and wearing sustainable fashion clothing.

In the meantime, one respondent told us that the sustainable concept in the fashion industry is not 100% yet. Because as far as they are concerned, it takes a long period of time to get a “real sustainable” product in the fashion industry due to the concept of sustainability itself that is circular, and everything is returned to the determined system. Meanwhile, in the reality of the fashion industry, it currently tends to be linear, called “take-make-waste” so this system does not maximize the product's function.

Their concern is also to the Indonesian local brands, which claim they already use eco-friendly and natural materials. But they wonder, does the self-claim itself define real sustainability? How about the transparency of the process behind the product making? Is it already in accordance with the concept of sustainability, such as design, production, and post-production?

In the meantime, another respondent provided information that one of the big multinational fashion retailers turned to indicate an ugly truth about the self-claim of sustainability on their products. This means that the products labeled “eco-friendly” items are not 100% sustainable and environmentally friendly. They could not recall how many percentages of the sustainable material used in the eco-friendly-labeled product, but they only remembered that it contains under 50% for each item. It is very ironic when consumers start to trust the company but turns out a public falsehood. To sum up, the sustainability drive brought by fashion brands is not only needed to be reviewed or the companies itself are expected to be “aware”, but also optimize the opportunity to realize the true sustainable fashion industry.

Next, we also asked them whether they recognized some fast and slow fashion brands. Most fast fashion brands they have mentioned are: (international) Mango, Bershka, ZARA, H&M, UNIQLO, Forever21, Topshop, Pull&Bear, as well as (local from Indonesia) Klamby, Erigo, Thenblank, Little Things She Needs, This is April, and Haidee & Orlin. For sustainable fashion brands from Indonesia, they mentioned: Pijak Bumi, Sejauh Mata Memandang, and Imaji Studio, meanwhile, the international sustainable fashion brands are Patagonia, Lucy&Yak, and Toms.

Meanwhile, Primark is not mentioned by our respondents from Indonesia. We understand that Primark does not open in Indonesia or Asian markets but only in Europe region. However, those respondents who are Indonesian but living/has been in/to Europe, they know well about the brand moreover, they have been bought some items for several times in Primark. Therefore, those Indonesian diasporas (3) and our other European respondents (2) could share their experience shopping in Primark and their point of view toward Primark's reputation.

Some of them have heard the issue accused to Primark regarding unethical and unsustainable business practices, but some did not know the news until we told them so. Subsequently, it is fascinating yet surprising that they started to build a more vigorous attitude toward buying decisions with Primark's products after we heard this news. Also, after knowing that Primark receives a bad image concerning such issues, they feel bad about having clothes or any fashion items from fast fashion brands, especially those who have been shopped in Primark. Although, several of them admit to being attracted to shopping at Primark and any other fast fashion retailers which offer easy-to-get and cheap products when it is affordable for students' pocket.

Following that, Primark's issue, many of them somewhat at the beginning are shocked even though some of them already heard the rumor about Primark's reputation beforehand. In the aftermath, in addition to their awareness of the disadvantages of buying things from fast

fashion shops, they start to utterly unsupported companies who run haphazard policies and work ethics as well as having the business model of which the ecosystem is harmful to the environment moreover damaging our future only for gaining a galore profit.

We later asked them who was supposed to be in charge and authorized to deal with the case of Primark. Many of them said that the government of each country that granted permission to the fashion brands which open stores within the countries should emphasize the application of the policy stipulated as well as have obligatory in evaluating every detail of the business running of the company.

They also agree to ask for help from the environmental organization and community to take action and legitimize the explicit regulation and policy about sustainability for all kinds of businesspeople, including fashion entrepreneurs. But one of them reminds us to put consumers as the primary stakeholders with authority regarding this issue. If customers still purchase the product, then the demand will remain high. The more products are wanted, the more fast-fashion retailers (including Primark) produce supply items. This goes to be bad looping that will be done all over again infinitely and never stop. Thus, consumers need to minimize their shopping cravings with fast fashion retailers, especially Primark, so that people will not shop too much at Primark and will gradually not be shopping there anymore.

Another response mentions that the one who should be responsible for the issue is the company (Primark) because they sell cheap and convenient stuffs to people, but they have no value enough to keep making them a high-value brand. Hence, it is impacting their brand reputation to its customers. They added some points where the harsh truth on the fast fashion business lies in the situation described as: "You (consumers) need us (company) for the clothes. If you do not need us, just go buy something expensive, and you are messing especially if you are students" to represent that how cruel are the companies who never give much care about the environment and social aspect, they are only seeking for money.

However, we found an interesting answer from one of our Indonesian respondents that is based in Indonesia. They said that we should try not to be a side of anyone or any parties so that we do not focus too much on the core issue like unethical and unsustainable business practices like Primark, but indeed another perspective we can see differently as another point of view. We also added some information that Primark 2021 announced a new sustainability drive to counter claims of the unethical business practice accused towards them and asked our respondents if they still trust Primark after all rumors or issues. What a surprise that all of them refused to shop in Primark. Furthermore, they begin to not trust any fast-fashion brands anymore despite whatever sustainability promise they made because as long as Primark and any other fast-fashion brands produce and sell products with unsurpassed price but with mass quantity manufacture with bad quality of it, and it is only the same mistake will not change any single thing for the environment. However, our respondents, who are mainly university students, admit that they might go back to Primark or other fast fashion brands only when they need something quick and just for short-term wear because when they repurchase stuff from Primark and easily broken, they will not feel guilty at all due to their perception towards the bad quality of the product over the low price.

They still appreciate how Primark encounters the allegation by convincing the public of its new sustainability drive within its business activity and ecosystem. But unfortunately, our respondents agree more that small action matters; hence, not supporting unethical and unsustainable entrepreneurs is one initial step to save our planet and avoid damaging our future.

In the aftermath of hearing a serious phenomenon like Primark, as we have mentioned a bit earlier, it is amazingly affects buying decisions of our respondents, particularly on the fast fashion items, including Primark. The reason to no more shop at Primark is because they can tell that the quality of the product item is not, and the low price also tells them that those products are not worth enough to make as a long-term investment. In addition, they agree that they do not want to give their money to those who practice bad business, especially unsustainable and unethical ones. Therefore, even if they keep coming back to fast fashion stores, they will choose other brands which at least offer higher price than Primark which usually have better product quality.

Speaking of small action, some of them realized and already switched to buy second-hand or pre-loved clothes that are still good and proper so that at least they can minimize the waste contribution by consuming fast fashion products. Also, one of them mentioned that even though they still buy fast-fashion clothes, they try to keep them for a long period of time for the same reason. Thus, in this research, we have not found respondents who already buy products from slow fashion in repeat purchases. Many of them have bought sustainable clothing only once or twice due to its price, which is still not easy on the pocket.

Back to the topic of a sustainable lifestyle, our respondents from Indonesia and domiciled in Indonesia may not have yet experienced shopping at Primark. However, we genuinely appreciate that three of them have decent knowledge about sustainable fashion development in Indonesia and their big awareness of supporting the sustainable fashion industry in Indonesia. However, three of them still reconsider buying sustainable fashion products due to its price, like other Indonesian diasporas and European citizen respondents. They have an enormous willingness to gradually set themselves free from fast fashion consumption and initiate good habits by buying slow fashion or handmade products whilst only several times purchasing in local, sustainable fashion brands.

They also contributed their thought concerning how the sustainable fashion industry could make our living planet stay healthy and clean by giving the opinion that the central government needs to provide clear rules and assertive boundaries for fashion producers. Therefore, the government must be careful with the fashion industry for instance, the fashion trends that result from disposal after another new trend come up, as well as the manufacture waste whether it is feasible or not harmful to the environment (to water, air, and land). As a result, to provide education concerning sustainable fashion clothing to society, they will be able to understand more about little environmental changes. Later on, society, especially in Indonesia, is also willing to support local brands with eco-friendly products, despite the high price. However, education and product awareness can make people pay more attention and concern to the current climate on earth.

Additionally, according to 17 Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nation specifically number 13 (Climate Action), not merely to the society we shall approach but also a reminder to all fashion brands, especially in Indonesia to implement sustainable and ethical business practices in their business ecosystem so that the issue of waste pollution as it has happened in Indonesia can gradually reduce nicely. From the interviews above, we can understand the connection between brand reputation, consumer behavior, and purchase decision. What happened with Primark, even if it was only an allegation, however, when it involves social and environmental norms, consumers will start to rethink on buying a product with that brand.

Also, as Primark already has an unfortunate reputation regarding the environment and social aspect, they will not be able to hardly boost their sales number in the future unless they

change something for example, the price will not be too low anymore. Because of with those kinds of business practices, particularly those that oppose societal interest or environmental aim, will result in mortification, loss of consumers, decreased profits, and diminished consumer confidence (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015, p.381). Consumer's perception and behavior also come from the process of selection, interpretation stimulus, and organization, as well as the way of thinking, feeling, or acting and reacting that are later based on each person's needs, desires, values, and expectations, and not to mention also their personal experiences (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015; Dewanto & Belgiawan, 2020).

Furthermore, Primark is a global brand –even though they are established in Ireland and spread as yet throughout Europe countries– they are broader selling scale; hence the consumers view it differently than local brands and worldwide consumers (moreover, Asian people may be familiar with Primark because of their experience visiting European countries) connect the global brands with social responsibility where the global companies have wide-range of CSR (corporate social responsibility) level than the local brands. Consumers also expect that global companies could respond well to the social problems related to what they sell (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).

## **DISCUSSION**

From this research, we have found that consumer perceptions and behavior stem derive from the process of selection, interpretation, and organizing stimuli, as well as ways of thinking, feeling, or acting and reacting based on their individual needs, wants, values, and expectations, and also their personal experiences. Therefore, consumer attitudes or behavior are significant factors that must be considered in determining marketing strategies.

In the meantime, the use of appropriate consumer behavior towards ethical and sustainable fashion products in Europe is one way to attract consumer attitudes in choosing a product. We can see that consumers agree to pay more attention to protect the environment (sustainability) and only received “Fast-Fashion” as their point of view on the average perception from the public at large, as follows: “poor quality for workers”, “unsustainable”, and “quantity above quality”.

However, plenty of people still like to shop at Primark because the prices are low, especially for students and foreigners from emerging countries (in this context is Asian people) who are living or visiting Europe. Meanwhile, European citizens have started not to shop at Primark anymore because they know that Primark comes under an unsustainable category. Although Primark had a bad reputation in the past, it strategically caused the consumers to re-influence their brand. Conversely, the average consumers said that even though Primark declared their new impetus in sustainability commitment, it does not change consumers' minds and the decision to return to shopping there.

Furthermore, the social aspect has also influenced consumer purchasing decisions, meaning that social factors originating from reference groups, family, friends, role, and status strongly influence consumer purchasing decisions because they have direct interactions with consumers that come from experience and motivating information. Also, to address this case to reduce unethical and sustainable business practices, it should be the government, environmental organizations, and society need to take a real step and formulate precise regulations for all types of industries, including the fashion business.

## CONCLUSION

The reputation of Primark as a fast fashion brand, which is accused as a fashion retailer who practices unethical and unsustainable business, somehow affects consumer behavior and their “call to action” in purchasing fashion products. Thus, this research emerges a new perspective to let consumers change their attitude toward buying decisions.

Besides, brand reputation is also strongly connected to consumer behavior and buying decision. Despite many consumers who are still purchasing items in Primark due to its super cheap price, some consumers disagree to comeback to shopping there, while others who even have no experience in shopping in Primark are followed to disagree that purchasing a product from a fast fashion brand is such a good habit.

Through this research, we realize that even the buying decision for sustainable clothing brands has not yet been managed due to its typical unaffordable price. However, our respondents’ voices let us know that it would be nice to initiate a little step by becoming more respectful and responsible consumers, for instance, not supporting unethical and unsustainable brands, especially in fashion.

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