



eduresourceza.com

SECTION A SHORT QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

Source 1:

Shein: The Ethics of Fast Fashion, and the Unrealistic Expectations For Every Consumer to Shop Consciously

1. As conscious consumerism continues to come to the forefront, the ethics of fast fashion has been called into question.
2. Fast fashion gives people the opportunity to wear trendy clothes; clothes that were once unaffordable to the general public can now be in our hands rather quickly. But the rise of fast fashion hasn't come without some backlash.
3. Recently, British media published an exposé detailing the harsh working conditions at mega-retailer SHEIN and claimed that the company's workers are paid about just over a dollar per garment working 18-hour shifts.
4. For those who are new to the brand, SHEIN is a popular fashion and home goods site that's particularly beloved by Millennials and Gen Z for their on-trend, affordable, and accessible clothing.
5. When we say SHEIN is affordable, we mean *very* affordable. But with some of their clothes selling for incredibly low prices, that affordability comes with a price.
6. Prior to this, the BBC published a piece that revealed that SHEIN workers were working 75-hour work weeks, three shifts back-to-back, and only got one day off a month.
7. Given all these revelations, there's been mounting pressure to ditch brands like SHEIN and shop ethically instead.
8. Ethical fashion focuses on harming as few people as possible. The goal is to ensure that all workers involved in the production process are treated with fairness and quality.
9. This, of course, is in direct opposition to SHEIN, which has been accused numerous times of underpaying its employees and enforcing slave-like labor. Earlier this year, allegations that "help me" tags had been sewn onto its clothing even began to circulate.
10. To combat fast fashion and the effects that it has on the world, many people are opting for "ethical slow fashion."
11. But many "ethical" brands come with high price points that most people simply cannot afford.
12. So, if you want to avoid shopping at SHEIN but can't afford ethical brands, what are your alternatives?

13. You can always shop at thrift stores. But let's face it, the biggest demographic that shops at SHEIN are low-income individuals who cannot afford much. And when you live in a low-income neighborhood, your thrift stores often aren't filled to the brim with quality clothing or even clothing that looks even the slightest bit stylish.

14. People who need affordable trendy clothes are often villainized. Many places that boast being ethical also have a way of looking down on those who shop fast fashion. Not to mention that there are tons of influencers online essentially claiming that you're a bad person if you shop at SHEIN.

15. Too often, we expect individuals to come up with solutions to our societal problems. We live in a society where the burden to fix an issue created by capitalism often falls down to the individual, making it seem like the issue can be fixed by a simple habit change, rather than an overhaul of the whole system.

16. The CEOs and investors of SHEIN, as well as the influencers and the celebrities who collaborate with these fast fashion brands, are the main problems. They create the demand and feed into the idea that if we get what they are buying we could achieve some of their fame and wealth. The issue lies within those at the top. By letting those at the top know we do not want to play their games is a way we can contribute to an effective change.

17. Holding ourselves to a higher standard of where and how we spend our money is admirable. But the best way to fight fast fashion is to demand that those in power take responsibility for their actions.

18. And just as importantly, we need to show a little kindness to those who can't afford to ditch fast fashion. Because nothing is more ethical than understanding that people with different income backgrounds do ethical consumption differently.

[Suber, R, October 2022, FemmeStella, <'Shein: the Ethics of Fast Fashion, and the Unrealistic Expectations For Every Consumer to Shop Consciously.'> [Electronic], Available: <https://bit.ly/SheinFastFashion> ,12 April 2023]

GLOSSARY

* exposé - an exposé is a film or piece of writing which reveals the truth about a situation or person, especially something involving shocking facts.

* villainized - to play the role of the villain

1.1 Explain the term 'fast fashion' in your own words.

(1)

1.2. Explain the 'backlash' (in paragraph 2) in response to the rise of this fast fashion trend.

(2)

1.3. Elaborate on why you think SHEIN's target market is predominantly Millennials and Gen Z.

(2)

1.4 What was suggested in the article as a way to combat fast fashion?

(1)

1.4.1 What is your understanding of this suggestion for combatting fast fashion, and do you think this is a feasible solution? Explain your answer.

(3)

1.5. In paragraph 15, the writer states that, "We live in a society where the burden to fix an issue created by capitalism often falls down to the individual...". What do you understand by this statement?

(3)

- 1.6. If you were being interviewed on the concept of fast fashion versus ethical slow fashion and the interviewer asked your opinion on the best way forward for the fashion industry, what would your response be?

(3)

[15]

SECTION B

DISCURSIVE ESSAY QUESTION

Consider the following sources before responding to this question.

Source 2

Conscious consumerism – why does it matter?

The consumer model is constantly shifting, with many customers today focusing on what is known as “conscious consumerism”—the buying practices driven by a commitment to making purchasing decisions that have a positive social, economic, and environmental impact. In layman’s terms, this means consumers are buying into businesses—both big and small—that lead with their moral compasses, not compromising the well-being of workers, animals, or the environment for financial profits. This practice is consistently on the uptrend, and businesses are taking notice, with many changing their models to appeal to the “conscious consumer” market.

This trend matters and is imperative for our society’s future because it’s better for everyone. Why? For starters, it drastically helps humankind inch closer to achieving sustainability goals. With the climate crisis looming and growing steadily day by day, conscious consumerism can curb the effects of human waste and pollution. It cuts back the need for mass consumption and production, which is one of the main culprits behind the degradation of the environment.

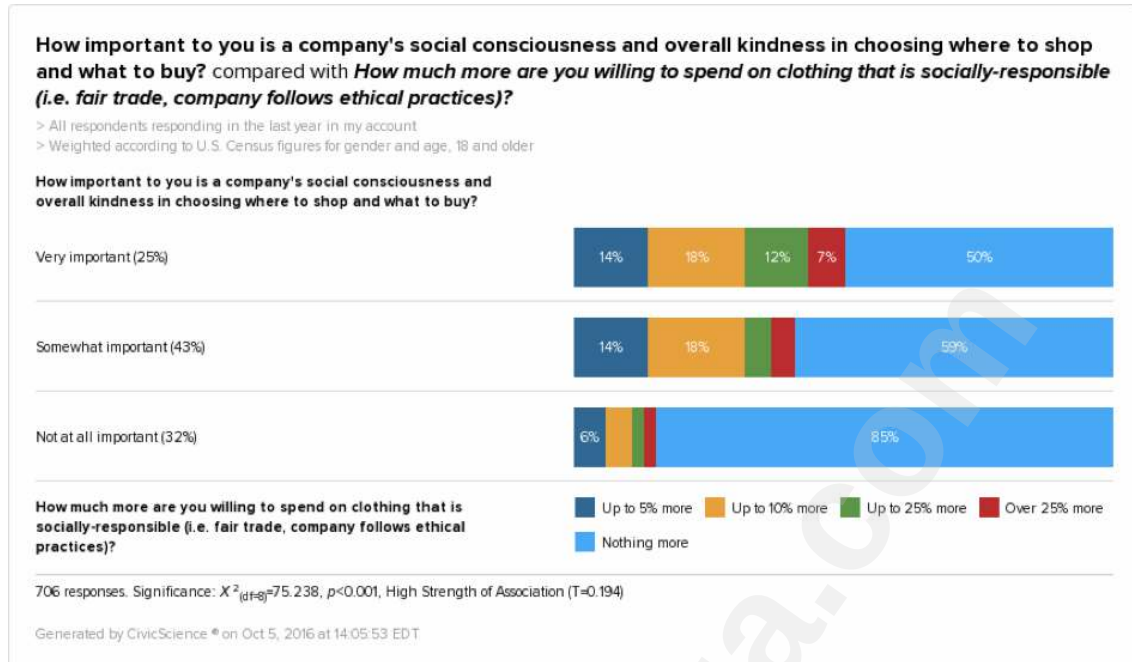
Furthermore, it is imperative from an ethical point of view as a significant emphasis of conscious consumerism revolves around the idea of having a positive social and economic impact.

Unfortunately, very many companies have done—and still do—unethical business practices. Some of the most deplorable actions center around human labor and the inhumane treatment of animals.

It then begs the question, why is this okay? And how do we stop it?

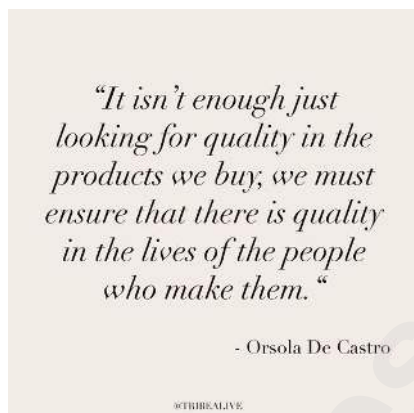
[Pepperdine University. Conscious Consumerism: Why does it matter? Sam Mesquita, [Online], Available: <https://bit.ly/ConsciousConsumerism1>. [13 March 2023]]

Source 3



[Source: Civic Science Research. 2016. [Online] Available: <https://bit.ly/CivicScienceResearch> (18 April 2023)]

Source 4



[Source: Loved Clothes Last, Orsola De Castro, February 2021. [Online], Available: <https://bit.ly/QuoteConsciousConsumerism> (18 April 2023)]

QUESTION 2 [40]

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement below in the form of a discursive essay.

For the sake of long-term sustainability, conscious consumerism is vital. It is therefore the role of corporate enterprise, and not the individual, to make an actual and measurable impact.

Your response should consider the relevant perspectives reflected in the texts in Section A and Section B of this CAT, as well as your own perspective.