Fast Fashion And The Obsession Of Young People: Opinion Essay

Like a lot of millennials I am somewhat guilty to the fact fast fashion is an almost dependable part of my life. To put it bluntly, I am obsessed with the idea of image and “looking good”, heavily influenced from the ever growing pressure of social media to put body image so important in young people’s lives. I have found myself slipping into a world of fast fashion buying, that I believed to be so harmless. However, pointed out by eco business.com-“In 2014 the average consumer bought 60% more clothes in 2014 than in 2000 but only kept these garments for half as long”, although this does not surprise me as a serial offender for keeping clothing items for an embarrassingly short shelf life. I ask the question-am I what is causing such devastating effects on this planet, and why like me are young people so obsessed to consistently buy fast fashion clothing?

As most people have come to terms with the fact our beautiful, everyday life on the planet Earth is evidently deteriorating; with the melting of the ice and ever growing climate change, I began to think about the choices I have made within this heavily frowned upon fast fashion world I so heavily adore. The thought that fast fashion buying has almost doubled in the last fifteen years, leaves me asking the question-What about the next fifteen years? And arguably what impact or state will our planet be in?

To understand fast fashion and the root of the problem I began by looking at the definition and production of it. The good trade.com made a clear distinction for me, that fast fashion is a means of getting fashion trends, or looks quickly and cheaply onto the retailers shop floors for consumers. Fast fashion has about “52 micro seasons” this marks down to roughly one a week, meaning the shift of trends are within a seven day period. Influencers, brands and media are able to direct this change to produce the new bright shiny items every week sucking in the gullible consumer. Particularly targeting this young influential market of individuals- with 18-24 year old woman taking up a large quantity of the fast fashion buyers its no wonder they are the main targets from big fast fashion companies. It is fair to say that the well known and thriving fast fashion companies have clocked onto the importance of social media and the increase of sales using these sites can produce.

“Instagram introduced in beta to 20 retailers in March 2019-allowing users to complete product purchases without leaving the app”-econsultancy.com

As nice as this sounds as a consumer you have to question the gain for both parties involved in this scenario. Fashion brands are receiving a rise in sales and increased positive response as making shopping easier for the consumer and therefore receiving a gross in consumer returns, while instagram is able to store data and commissioned pay when products are bought through the app. Sounds positive. So what’s the downfall behind the scenes?

As mentioned fast fashion is a cheap and quick fix to a need for new clothes on trend. We are an ever growing market of consumers who crave newness, what I mean by this is that big brand names, are encouraging this need for speedy fashion to be in trend alongside the luxury brand names. This means the disposability of the fashion then increases, so it is not surprising that the

clothes are just not built to last. With the thought process behind it that it is almost cheaper to chuck away and repurchase than to fix the item. This idea of quick, cheap disposable clothes makes you wonder, there has to be shortcut somewhere to keep up with the consumer need- nicely summed up by the documentary= The true cost:

“fast fashion isn’t free. Someone somewhere is paying”

So who is paying?... Other than the consumer it is only fair for me to raise the point about the fast fashion workers. And no, I am not referring to the Instagram promoters, or the marketing team and stylists taking the glamorous pictures for their websites, but the workers who physically make the clothing we put on our bodies. Seamstresses who’s skills turn around hundreds of pieces an hour to earn as little as “28 taka or 33 cents”-fastcompany.com

Upon reading an article at krugstore.com this direct link between fast fashion and capitalism is really where I began to reflect on my purchasing. The push to create profit within the capital system is what some people argue to be this manic driving force behind the fast fashion industry. The reoccurring word within many research and articles, is the idea of exploitation. The point being made, that fast fashion companies use of cheap materials, pollution and ever long list of problems does not disregard that the items has still been made by a human. Someone who deserves a fair wage, living condition and environment often living in a third world country very different to the chic contemporary marketing adverts you see these items being shown in. This lack of acknowledgement for the primary source of the clothing is where the criticism of fast fashion starts for me and many others.

With all this being said although a large section of the fast fashion customers are younger audience, this does not necessarily mean they are unaware of the original source of their products but actually its well relayed by Voltmagazine word press.com called “the bystander effect”. Individuals, myself included, taking a backseat at not only the environmental effect but this idea of economic indifference just so we can receive this quickly made cheap fashion. The gain for the consumer outweighs these less positive aspects of fast fashion industry, and quite interestingly is to do with our brains psychology.Tom Meyvis is a professor of marketing at NYU’s stern school of business and is also an expert in consumer psychology:

“You see this a lot with clothing, part of the joy you get from shopping is not just that you bought something that you really like and you’re going to use but also that you got a good deal”-The Atlantic.com

Fast fashion is the perfect answer to this, not only does your brain positively react to the thought of looking at new and desirable items it also has a reaction to the price. Fast fashions low cost and constant new item is the simple breakdown of up-keeping your brains “nucleus ambens” or in other worlds its pleasure centre.