The Silk Road: As The Most Impactful Trade Route

A man named Ron Pompei once said, “I wouldn't call it a retail store. It's a place where culture and commerce intersect. It's more like the Silk Road-a sense of exploration mixed with the exchange of things and ideas.” He noted that the Silk Road was a place where there was a lot of cultural diffusion and exchangement of ideas and commerce. The Silk Road was an ancient trade route that was used between 200 B.C. to 260 C.E. It was used by many merchants who were widely spread across the world. The Silk Road was originally located in China but over time developed into a very large trade route. It connected regions in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The Silk Road gained its name because of its most commonly traded product which was silk. Eventually, silk reached a substantial amount of popularity and importance. It became so important to the economy of China that they kept the process of how to make silk a secret. The Silk Road had the greatest impact because it connected the world, it had a huge economic impact, and it created the concept of globalization.

The Silk Road had the greatest impact because it connected the world. It connected Central Asia, the Mediterranean, China, and Japan. This connection allowed for the exchange of ideas and values. Cultural diffusion erupted and nations created relationships with each other. Colin Thubron, the author of “Shadow of the Silk Road, once stated, “To follow the Silk Road is to follow a ghost. It flows through the heart of Asia, but it has officially vanished leaving behind the pattern of its restlessness: counterfeit borders, unmapped people. The road forks and wanders wherever you are. It is not a single way, but many: a web of choices.” (Thubron) Thubron notes that the Silk Road is like a web of choices because of its widespread relationships throughout the world. The web of choices was endless with goods and ideas coming from all around the world. Through the exchanging of ideas, nomadic people gained immunities for diseases around the world. People developed an immunity to these diseases and found new ways to treat these diseases. People also spread their ideas and traded amongst each other. History.com described the Silk Road’s well-connected routes by saying, “The Silk Road routes included a large network of strategically located trading posts, markets and thoroughfares designed to streamline the transport, exchange, distribution and storage of goods.” They provided this description to show the vast amount of trading and exchanging that was being done due to the connection between several countries. The Silk Road was able to do something that no other trade route could do. It successfully connected the world to produce many benefits. These benefits were not just ideas and values. Many cultures, religions, and languages were spread throughout the connections. The Silk Road had many beneficial impacts that came from connecting the world.

The Silk Road had the greatest impact because it had a great economic influence. With the connection of the Silk Road and the popularity that it gained, there were many economic influences. With increasing popularity, more job opportunities were created. Merchants around the world began making money. As products became more popular among the trading network, more industries provided job opportunities. Nomadic people could take these jobs and increase their economic state. This created better lives. A blogger named Omar Mouselhy wrote, “As Chinese silk became more popular around the world, more Chinese people started working in the silk industry. In fact, the popularity of silk started creating jobs for most Chinese. People that didn’t have jobs could now work in the silk industry.” (Mouselhy) Mouselhy gives this example

to show the massive influence that the Silk Road had on the economy. These people's lives thrived in a great time but at one point came to a dilemma. The black plague arose through the spreading of diseases. Although many people viewed this plague as a problem and a negative factor, it actually influenced social and economic change. Peter Frankopan, the author of "The Silk Roads: A New History of the World", stated, "And yet, despite the horror it caused, the plague turned out to be a catalyst for social and economic change that was so profound that far from marking the death of Europe, it served as its making." (Frankopan) The author remarks that the plague was rather an economic change than destruction. It caused a catalyst to begin a new social and economic period in time. After the prosperous years of the Silk Road, people looked back on the trade route as one of the greatest economic influences of the time.

The Silk Road had the greatest impact because it was responsible for creating globalization. Globalization is described as the way countries and people of the world interact and integrate. The Silk Road is responsible for starting his. By connecting the world and creating such a large economic change in society, the trade route allowed for many countries and people to interact and integrate. A quote from Peter Frankopan lists, "We think of globalization as a uniquely modern phenomenon; yet 2,000 years ago too, it was a fact of life, one that presented opportunities, created problems and prompted technological advance." (Frankopan) By saying so, Frankopan attempts to shows how nowadays we take globalization for granted because back then it was a way of life, created by the Silk Road. The nomadic people back then used globalization every day, with the often interactions between countries and people, many ideas and ways of life spread throughout the world. These ways of life consisted of many diverse cultures and religions. An article in Khan Academy says, "Buddhism came to China through trade with India. The Sogdians of Central Asia often acted as traders between India and China. Sogdians also translated Sanskrit sutras into Chinese and spread the Buddhist faith as they traded. Other faiths, like Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Christianity also travelled along the sea and land routes." The passage indicates the effectiveness of globalization. It displays how through trading and exchanging ideas, important religions like Buddhism were brought to different countries. In exchange, nomads also exchanged the languages and technologies that they used in their everyday life. Of course, though, the most commonly traded item was silk. Silk is responsible for the majority of the major opportunities created by the Silk Road. Dr. Mousumi Ghosh from the University of Iowa, wrote, "The study of silk and the Silk Road is thus a model of globalization. It symbolizes global economic and cultural networking based on mutual interaction and cooperation. Moreover, it is an instance of sustainable development where a commodity like silk has transformed itself from status symbol controlled by the government to a free commodity, through the interaction of different civilizations." (Ghosh) She describes how the silk and the trade route is a model of globalization itself. When China first started to produce silk, it was viewed as a status symbol that was controlled by the government. If you obtained silk, you were either special or a very lucky person. After the Silk Road gained popularity and usage, silk turned into a free commodity that was very common amongst different civilizations. This was because of the widespread sheet of interactions and trading. All this exchangement of ideas and thoughts were brought upon by globalization. Just think where the world would be without globalization.

Although the Silk Road has a few cons, it connected the world, had a great economic influence and is responsible for creating globalization, which is why it was the most impactful trade route. Between connecting the world, influencing the economy, and creating globalization, the Silk Road lies responsible for a great part of history. It allowed for the exchange of religions, cultures, languages, ideas, thoughts, and technologies. Through the great integration it created,

countries were able to engage with each other and create a new and improved society in the world. Ultimately, the Silk Road proves to be the most impactful and life-changing trade route of history.