

## Consumer's Practices on Fast Fashion In the Context of Indonesian Muslim Women

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**Abstract:** The objective of this research is to investigate consumer's practices on fast fashion in the context of Indonesian Muslim women community. Fast fashion industries is purposed to provide affordable products, shorten lead time, quick response, as responses to a dynamic environment. This research is aimed to gain insight factors influencing buying decision process of Indonesian Muslim women, and looking for suggestions for the industries on fast fashion. Please be noticed that this is not purposed to evaluate why some Muslim women wear *Hijab* (a type of Muslim women's fashion style, that almost covers all the part of body except the face and hands) while the others do not. This research is a qualitative study. Data is collected by conducting personal face-to-face interviews, and delivering a semi structured questions through Facebook or email to the respondents.. Coding, grouping, clustering or contrasting methods are applied in the data analysis by using MS-Excel. Indonesian Muslim women community's practices on fast fashion are mainly affected by their beliefs. They put beliefs as the highest priority instead of aesthetics. These findings would be beneficial for fashion industries stakeholders (producers, suppliers, fashion designers, fashion retailers, etc.), and also for the researchers in the topic. **Originality.** This study reveals consumer's practices on fast fashion in such a Muslim society.

**Keywords:** Fast fashion, Indonesian women, Muslim society, consumer's practices, brand avoidances.

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### 1. Introduction

Fast fashion industry has dramatically popular in many recent years. Zara, Benetton, New Look, Uniqlo, H&M, etc., are the examples of the most well-known brands of fast fashion in the world. The products are constantly renewed in term of products variety to attract consumer especially for young female customers by maintaining its affordability for anyone who wish to follow the most current trends. In the case of Indonesia, there are some famous local brands on fast fashion such as Triset, Corniche, Simplicity, etc. This phenomenon reveals that fast fashion is a big industry since it can be run as international business. Overall, fast fashion industry is purposed to offer affordable products, shorten lead time, quick response due to the trends by providing broad of products varieties as a response to a dynamic environment.

A lot of research in fast fashion had been done by previous researchers and had not only focused on industry sides such as supply chain, lead time, financial, etc., but also on consumer sides such as motivational driver, consumer's attitudes, decision process, buying behavior, etc., but still hardly to find research or publication on fast fashion exploring consumer's practices based on religious society instead of social status, nation, style of fashion, enjoyment group, etc. This is the reason why investigating the topic on consumer practices in a Muslim women society becomes challenging and interesting, because actually Muslim society have a huge number of population and they live across nations, across social status, education, etc. For illustrating purpose, more than eighty percent (80%) of Indonesian are Muslim, and mostly dominated by women. This is big number as potential consumers in the industry of fast fashion. Nowadays, the brand of Zara, Benetton, M&N are popular in Indonesia especially in the society of working Muslim women.

This aim of this research to investigate consumer's practices on fast fashion in the context of Indonesian Muslim women society to gain insight their buying decision process, and to elaborate more to what extent their beliefs (culture, ethics, norms, etc.) influence consumer's decision process when purchasing fast fashion. The finding of this research will be beneficial especially not only for the producers or manufacturers but also for fashion designers, fashion retailers, and academician in the area of interest. The respondents of this research are limited only to Indonesian Muslim women whom wearing Hijab in daily activities. Hijab is a type of Muslim women's fashion style, almost covers all the part of body except the face and hands.

## 2. Literature Review

“Fast fashion” concept has become popular nowadays and being the success factor for modern fashion retailers. Fast fashion has burst into the apparel market in recent decade. The literatures define fast fashion in different ways based on the focus of attention. Barnes (2006) used term of fast fashion as a business strategy in order to reduce buying cycle and lead time to deliver fashion products into the stores. Moreover, Sheridan (2006) noted fast fashion to denote among other things, including the strategy of the retailers to reflect current trends which emerge very fast and effectively. In addition, Cachon (2011) claimed that “fast fashion is a system combines quick response production capabilities with enhanced product design capabilities to both design “hot” products that capture the latest consumer trends and exploit minimal production lead times to match supply with uncertain demand”.

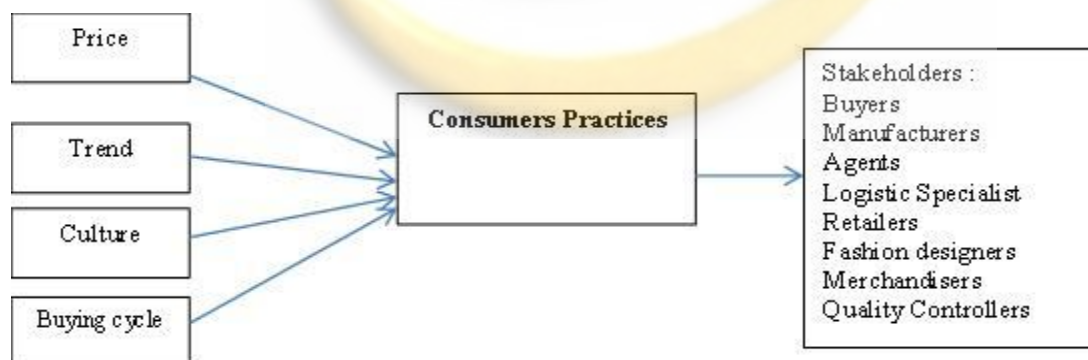
Some of the literatures focus on industry side, such as on supply chain (Tyler, 2006), fashion marketing (Sheridan, 2006), fashion designers and retailers (Bruce & Daly, 2006), financial snapshot (Hayes and Jones, 2006), and manufacturing aspects (Sull and Turconi, 2008). On the other hand, some focus on customers side such as consumers behavior (Bruce and Daly, 2006), motivational drivers (Kim, 2013), customer response style (Miller, 2013), and buying decision process (Watson and Yan, 2013). Overall, the whole concept of fast fashion focus on the response to changing styles, trends, demand, and market (Doeringer and Crean, 2004). The key ingredients of fast fashion are the ability to track the trends quickly and to identify potentially popular new designs through daily closeness the industries fashion markets.

## 3. Conceptual Framework

Barnes (2006) in the context of United Kingdom, mentioned that the consumer preferences on fast fashion are mainly dealing with price, fashion trend, culture, and buying cycle. In details, the stakeholders in fashion industries are buyer, manufacturers, agents, logistics specialist, retailers, fashion consultants, designers, merchandisers and quality controllers. Meanwhile, Gabrielli (2012) found that in general, industrial aspect are as main reason when customers dealing with fast fashion, but nowadays the trend are likely to move affected by: socio-cultural (culture), lifestyle, and dynamic manner.

As the concept of this research, the two previous research as mentioned are adopted and are applied in the context of Indonesian Muslim women community. There are four factors to be investigated in this research in relation with consumer’s practices: price, fashion trend, beliefs (culture), and buying cycle.

**Figure.1: Conceptual Research**



**Price:** Christopher et al., (2004) claimed that contemporary fashion industry remains highly competitive, as price as the main reason, with additional pressure for fashion companies to compete. Moreover, Bruce and Daly (2006) also mentioned that price still becomes the uppermost consideration in the purchase decision of the consumers (Bruce & Daly, 2006).

**Trends:** Gabrielli (2013) issued that fashion industry shifts its competitiveness “toward the ability to respond quickly and to altering the fashion trends that determine consumer’s demands”.

**Ethics:** According to Kim (2013), ethical or environment consideration usually is as the least considered that affect consumers buying behavior, but even further Kim (2013) mentioned that certain changes have been observed in recent years, suggesting that fashion consumers have begun to value ethical factors in their purchase decision.

**Buying Cycle:** The traditional fashion buying cycle is based on long term forecast from historical sales, and occurs one year before a season. This cycle does affect buying behavior of the consumers. Consumers have their pattern in purchasing goods. It could be daily, weekly, quarterly, annually, based on their needs (Birtwistle et al., 2003).

### **3. Methodology**

This research is a qualitative study. The method is undertaken to gain more insight on how and why respondents integrate factors on their buying decision. The data is collected by conducting individual face-to-face interviews, and also delivering a set of semi structured questions by using Facebook account to the respondents. The responses are also delivered by using Facebook, and or also emails. The method of sampling is convenience sampling methods. Indonesian Muslim women live in several countries are contacted as respondents. Bahasa Indonesia is used for communicating purpose to let the respondents feel free and convenient to share more information in details. The interview sessions are being recorded, and transcribed. The researcher is the one who takes responsibility to translate into English afterward.

In preliminary research, there are nine respondents interviewed, but one of them is excluded, in order to avoid biased, because she is not the one who purchase her own fashion but her mother. There are other 53 (fifty three) sets of a semi structured questions delivered by using Facebook account with the response rate is about 70% (seventy percent). At the end of the sessions and questionnaires, each respondent is being asked to make a list of suggestions for the producers.

### **4. Analysis**

Microsoft Excel is used during the process of analysis. Each of transcripts is compiled and the excerpt is highlighted based on the node or theme to be investigated over the respondents. Coding, grouping, clustering, and or contrasting analysis are undertaken and are tabulated following each nodes as mentioned in the research framework.

### **5. Discussion**

**Price:** The respondents are sensitive with the price. This finding is consistent with Bruce and Daly (2006) that price is still as main reason in the customers purchase decision. But surprisingly, they are not fast fashion avoidance but brand avoidance.

**Beliefs:** They put beliefs as the highest priority (main consideration) when decided to purchase fast fashion. In their views, fast fashion is considered to be connected as their identity as Muslim women. This result argues Kim (2013) research that ethical or environmental consideration is the least considered that influence consumers' purchase decision. But interestingly as further Kim stated that certain changes have been observed in recent years, suggesting that fashion consumers have begun to value ethical factors in their buying behavior.

**Fashion Trend:** The respondents are not fully affected by the trend of fashion. Some of them copy the style of Muslim Indonesian actress whom performed on Television drama as the model. They most likely to follow the trends as long as they feel they do not against their beliefs. The finding is partly in line with Gabrielli (2013) that the customers are affected by the trends.

**Buying Cycle (Timing):** Majority of respondents would have new fast fashion for "Hari Raya" purpose. Hari Raya is a religious event after completing a-thirty-day fasting (ramadan). It means that buying cycle of the respondents is at least once per year during Hari Raya. This phenomenon is very unique in Muslim Society. In general, their buying cycle depends on their needs, habits, and the availability of money. This finding is

consistent with Birtwistle et al (2003) that fast fashion industries should benefitting timing as a factor to create its competitiveness in the industries.

**Management Implications:** This research suggests two major criteria for the producers when producing fast fashion for Muslim women. Firstly is a *must* requirement and secondly is a *need* requirement. Firstly, as a *must* requirement, fast fashion products have to cover *the aurot* (all parts of women body except the face and hand), even by benefitting a mixing and matching style of two, three or more pieces of fashion. It is suggested to avoid wearing any fashion that makes women show their *curve of the body*. Secondly, as a need requirement, it is recommended to avoid making products from heavy and thick material, but suitable for sweaty situation. A broad range of textures, colors, motives are acceptable as well.

## 6. Limitation of the Research and Suggestion for Future Research

This research is limited to participants only in the context of Indonesian Muslim women not for men because in Muslim society, there is a different definition of *the aurot* between women and men. Further, as a consequence, the drawback of this case study research is the lack-ness in generalization of the findings, but since this research is an explanatory research and the purpose of research is to gain insight about “how and why”, the method is fit under the context. Conducting another following research on Muslim society worldwide is suggested to fulfill the gaps in the knowledge, and to elaborate more to what extent the religion of Islam influence Muslim purchasing behavior.

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