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The Effect of the Perception of Fast Fashion Issues on H&M's Brand Image on H&M Social Media Followers

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Abstract

The growth of the fast fashion industry has accelerated clothing production and consumption, while also generating environmental concerns such as increasing textile waste, intensive resource use, pollution, and overconsumption. These issues are increasingly discussed on social media and may influence public perceptions of brands associated with fast fashion, including H&M. This study aims to examine the influence of perceptions of fast fashion issues on H&M brand image among H&M social media followers. The study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. The respondents consisted of 110 individuals who met the research criteria: they knew H&M, had purchased and/or used H&M products, and had received information about fast fashion. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive analysis, validity testing, reliability testing, simple linear regression, and a t-test. The results indicate that the research instruments demonstrated very high reliability. The regression analysis produced a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.518, indicating that perceptions of fast fashion issues explained 51.8% of the variance in H&M brand image. The hypothesis test yielded a significance value of < 0.001, indicating a significant influence between perceptions of fast fashion issues and H&M brand image. These findings suggest that environmental issues associated with fast fashion are among the factors that should be considered in shaping brand image in the digital public sphere.

Keywords Fast Fashion; Eenvironmental Issues; Perception; Brand Image; H&M; Social Media

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INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry is experiencing very rapid development in line with changing trends, technological developments, and increasing use of digital media. One of the business models that is developing in the industry is fast fashion, which is a business model that offers clothes at relatively affordable prices and follows rapid changes in trends. Bick et al. (2018) define fast fashion as clothing that is widely available and cheap and produced to follow the latest trends. The business model drives increased clothing consumption, while various environmental impacts arise

throughout the product lifecycle, from resource use and production processes to clothing disposal.

Fast fashion is not only related to consumption choices and fashion trends, but also to environmental issues. The production of large quantities of clothing and the rapid cycle of trends can encourage repeated consumption as well as increase the generation of textile waste. The issue is also related to water use, pollution from the production process, emissions, and the use of natural resources. The garment industry is the second largest natural environmental polluter in the world and is also responsible for 10% of total carbon emissions worldwide, even nearly 70 to 150 liters of fresh water are consumed to dye 1 kg of fabric alone during the manufacturing process. The increasing demand for clothes around the world shows that more than 80 billion clothes are made in various factories around the world even though the world's population is only 7.6 billion people (Albab et al., 2024).

Thus, the understanding of fast fashion needs to be expanded from just buying and using clothes to understanding the social and environmental consequences that come with it. The development of social media has made the issue of fast fashion easier to circulate and talk about by the public. Information about environmental impacts, consumption patterns, product quality, and production practices can shape the perception of social media users. This perception can ultimately affect the public's assessment of brands associated with fast fashion. H&M is one of the Scandinavian fashion brands that has managed to dominate the retail world, often associated with the fast fashion business model. As a brand with a strong social media presence, H&M deals with a wide range of public perceptions of products, communications, and environmental issues related to the fashion industry (Fitinline, 2025). For followers who have bought or used H&M products, information about fast fashion issues can be one of the factors that affect how they assess the brand's image.

This research departs from the importance of understanding how the public, especially young people and social media users, interpret environmental issues in fast fashion. Not all consumers who follow fashion trends understand the environmental impact that arises from the rapid production and consumption of clothing. Therefore, this study focuses attention on the perception of followers on the issue of fast fashion and its relation to the image of the H&M brand. Jalaluddin Rakhmat defines perception, namely the observation of objects, events or relationships obtained by inferring information and interpreting messages (Rakhmat, 2007).

Based on this background, the formulation of this research problem is: does the

perception of the fast fashion issue affect H&M's brand image among H&M social media followers? This study aims to determine the influence of the perception of fast fashion issues on H&M's brand image on H&M's social media followers. Practically, the results of the research can be an input for brands in understanding how environmental issues that develop in the digital public space can be related to brand image.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method (Arikunto, 2006). Quantitative research methods according to Sugiono (2019:4) are research methods based on the philosophy of positivism, used to research certain populations or samples, sampling techniques are carried out randomly, data collection using research instruments, quantitative or statistical with the aim of testing hypotheses that have been determined (Scott, 2019). The quantitative approach was chosen because the research aims to test the influence between perception variables *isu fast fashion* as an independent variable (X) and *Brand Image* H&M as a dependent variable (Y). Data collection was carried out using an online questionnaire through Google Form with a five-level Likert scale, namely strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1) (Scott, 2019).

The study population is *followers* H&M social media knows *fire* H&M and issues *fast fashion*. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling (Scott, 2019). The respondents' criteria include: (1) knowing the H&M brand; (2) have purchased and/or used H&M products; (3) follow or have accessed information about H&M through social media; and (4) have received information about fast fashion issues. Determination of the minimum sample count using the Slovin formula (Arikunto, 2006) with an error rate of 10% and resulting in a minimum requirement of 100 respondents. In the implementation of the research, 110 respondents were obtained who met the criteria and provided answers that could be used. Therefore, all 110 respondents were used as an actual sample of the study. The research instrument consisted of 15 items for the perception variable of the fast fashion issue and 15 items for the variable of the H&M brand image. The validity test is used to assess the ability of an item to measure the research construct, while the reliability test is used to assess the consistency of the instrument (Scott, 2019). Hypothesis testing was carried out at a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instrument Test Results

The results of the validity test showed that all 15 items in the perception variable of *the fast fashion* issue and 15 items in the H&M brand image variable were declared valid based on the test criteria used. Thus, the entire item is worth using in the research analysis.

Variabel	Number of Items	Remarks
Perception of Fast Fashion Issues (X)	15	Valid
H&M Brand Image (Y)	15	Valid

The results of the reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.965 for the perception variable of fast fashion issues and 0.947 for the H&M brand image variable.

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Perception of Fast Fashion Issues (X)	0,965	Highly reliable
H&M Brand Image (Y)	0,947	Highly reliable

Results of Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Test

Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the influence of the perception of fast fashion issues on H&M's brand image. This means that the perception variable of the fast fashion issue explains 51.8% of the variation in H&M's brand image, while the other 48.2% is explained by factors other than the research model.

Indicator	Value
R^2	0,518
F	116
Sig.	< 0.001
Regression equations	Y = 0.803 + 0.698X

The regression coefficient of 0.698 indicates the direction of a positive relationship in the study model. The results of the hypothesis test produced a t-value of 10.78 with a significance of < 0.001. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. Thus, there is a significant influence between the perception of the fast fashion issue and the image of the H&M brand on H&M's social media followers.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the perception of *fast fashion* issues has a significant effect on H&M's brand image. Fast fashion basically offers clothes at relatively affordable prices and follows trends quickly. However, the model is also concerned with increased consumption and various environmental impacts throughout the production and consumption cycle of clothing. Bick et al. (2018) position fast fashion as a business model that encourages the consumption of large amounts of clothing, while environmental risks can arise from resource use, pollution, and textile disposal. This perspective is important because it shows that fast fashion is not only a matter of trends and consumption, but also environmental issues that can be of public concern.

In the context of this study, H&M followers are the public who have had direct experience with the brand because they have bought and/or used its products (Nisa et al., 2023). This experience became an important context when respondents received information about fast fashion issues. Information about environmental impact can be interpreted and then linked to the assessment of the brand, including reputation, trust, quality, and appeal. The findings of the study also show the importance of social media in shaping public perception. Information about environmental issues can be spread quickly and become the subject of public discussion. Thus, brand image is not only shaped by marketing communication and product experience, but also by social and environmental issues that develop in the digital public space.

The R^2 value of 0.518 shows that the perception of fast fashion issues has a considerable contribution in explaining the variation in H&M's brand image, although there are still 48.2% of other factors that are not studied. These factors can be in the form of product quality, customer satisfaction, consumer experience, loyalty, brand awareness, communication strategy, public relations activities, and other factors. Thus, this study confirms that attention to environmental issues is important in managing the image of a fashion brand. Brands operating in industries with environmental impacts that are of public concern need to understand how such information and perceptions develop in society. Open, consistent, and informed communication can be an important part of building better relationships with the public.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the perception of *fast fashion* issues has a significant effect on H&M's brand image among H&M social media followers. The results of the analysis showed that the research instrument was valid and reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.965 for the perception variable of fast fashion issues and 0.947 for the H&M brand image variable. The determination coefficient value of 0.518 showed that the perception of fast fashion issues explained 51.8% of the variation in H&M's brand image, while 48.2% was influenced by other factors outside the study. The hypothesis test yielded a significance value of < 0.001 so that the alternative hypothesis was accepted. These findings show that public perception of fast fashion issues, especially environmental issues related to clothing production and consumption, is one of the factors related to the formation of H&M's brand image. The research can then develop a research model by adding other variables, expanding the characteristics of respondents, or comparing several *fashion brands*. Advanced research can also use a qualitative approach or *mixed methods* to dig deeper into how consumers understand environmental issues and relate them to brand assessments.

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