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Responsibility and ethics in the clothing industry

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ABSTRACT

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# Introduction

According to Adetunji, J. & Ognonna, G 2013, (2) responsibility refers to the various ways that organizations take to achieve their commercial goals or success by using methods that have ethical values such as respect, communities, and the natural business environment.

Businesses and organizations paid less attention to the social and environmental challenges that the world has been facing in recent years. They focus more on market sustainability and production rather than social responsibility and environmental sustainability that the world is currently facing (Esben, Gwozdz & Hvass 2016, 6). Environmental responsibility in the fashion industry over the past has been widely acknowledged in the fashion industry. This movement was criticized by animal rights activists for the use of fur or animal skin in fashion clothing productions (Neumann H, Martinez, L, & Luis F, 2020, 4). Though some of these materials are still used in the fashion industry today, like leather, fur, and wool, there are many ways there are several ways to ensure the welfare of animals which goes a long way to reduce the rate of unethical products and thus increase the loyalty level of customers.

The ethical values of every organization are dictated by the responsibility that the company feels toward society. To build a good reputation, the company or business needs to be in line with each other. In this case, the different aspect of ethical responsibility needs to be recognized especially in a company’s core business (Maarit, M. & Karolina, M 2011, 12). For instance, if a company has proof of its product origin, it should be prepared to answer the negative message that arises from different groups. In every business, customers are king and thus play a vital role in the company’s profitability which is the most important part of every company. In every organization, cultural background is very important to human resource managers which are based on continuous learning. The consequences of moving towards fast fashion have raised several ethical issues related to industrial participants. Constant pressure, such as competition and the need for efficiency, creates a working environment that often violates several human rights.

Sustainable Materials in the clothing industry

Great emphasis was placed on the new economy now our days with the possibility of generating wealth through intangible, information, knowledge, and technology. These have led to the introduction of new software and organizational tool to modify traditional ones by adding high-intensity intelligence from the old ones (Cepolina, S.2012, 3). There are a lot of opportunities that encourage consumers to take thoughtful decisions when purchasing accessories such as bags, shoes, make-up, hairstyles, and most importantly clothing. Clothing is a primary human need whether fashionable or not, clothing will always be the main requirement. Sustainable fashion emphasizes the value of the various parties involved when it comes to its environment and humanity. The purpose of sustainable material is to unite the various fashion industries such as the designers, producers, and distributors, for consumers to work together in other to change the way materials are been produced by consuming in a better direction (Kulsum 2020, 4).

In addition, the amount of garbage found on planet earth is caused by the clothing industry. Being a fashion lover or not sustainable material is been implemented in every layer of life. Sustainable fashion was created to protect the environment from the dangers of waste that do not decompose through occupational protection to protect human health. According to Kulsum, 2020 (5), sustainable materials are aimed at making the fashion industry more ethical towards the environment from the amount of waste generated by the clothing industry on earth. This waste is formed through the use of cheap cloth dyes that contain chemicals that are harmful to the environment, to the use of polyester or nylon which is made from materials that are difficult to decompose. Sustainable materials in the clothing industry aim at keeping the earth alive longer since they still have so many challenges to overcome for them to have an impact. Sustainable material is the concept of clothing as a whole by not only prioritizing the fabric or textile material. Sustainable fashion also increases the sustainability and welfare of its workers for the industry to continue to survive by producing good quality. For fashion, sustainable fashion starts from the use of raw materials for fabrics, knick-knacks, tailors, the production of product rooms, marketing and distribution, and the buying of materials as needed so they not to be wasted. For instance, if natural dyes are used without any cultivation, it could lead to scarcity in the future which makes them unsustainable.

In order words, sustainable growth in today’s preferences and buying decisions of consumers should be more focused. Consumers have a fair amount of knowledge on the environmental impact of new industrial products and the effect of the correct consumption behavior since they are aware of the ethical behavior of the companies (Matsapola Evelyn). Companies figure out the purchasing impact of consumers and steer them towards sustainable patterns for consumption by looking at the factors that influence the consumer's desire to participate in sustainable consumption behavior and paying more attention to purchasing factors such as price, fitness, and style. According to Maia, L. Alves, A. Leao, C 2013 6, Sustainable development and climate due to global warming caused as a result of climate change and the disappearance of well-defined seasons, companies had to change business strategies in other to satisfy the market since some winter days are warm as well as others during the summer are cold. With this system, the demand for certain items such as finer knitwear was highly demanded and top companies had to rethink their management strategies. Also, the traditional season requires companies to be flexible to respond quickly to customers by producing only what is needed in the right quantity and at the right time. By doing this, a lot of overproduction will be avoided.

Working ethics in the clothing industry

Business ethics has become an increasingly fashionable field. Many organizations face remarkable pressure from consumers who need firms to be seen and acted ethically both at home and at the shop. Business ethics comprises the principal and standard that guides behavior in the world of business. Should a company hide its poor product quality from its customers in other to get the product sold? Or is it ok to have your clothes done using child labor? Dispute their legality, these actions will be judged as right or wrong by shareholders such as investors, customers, employees, and the legal system. For such reasons, specific actions must be considered when applying ethics to business since all companies must make a profit for them to survive. It is advisable for companies to always include ethical policies in their business core to avoid

Risk since a good reputation is difficult to create but easy to destroy as mentioned by (Maarit, M. & Karolina, R 2011, 10).

In addition, a company has to take social responsibility for its employee’s well-being and fulfillment of human rights by employing minorities and also improving the employee’s know-how. All these relationships benefit not only companies but also other work communities and stakeholders since it increases mutual trust, and increase the clothing industry's image and well-being. Moreover, in contrast to the shareholder, the corporation should also benefit from stakeholders and not only the owners. These stockholders include any person or group of people who can be affected by the corporation that is the employees. Ethics is an essential part of every organization without ethics, individuals will be acting only toward their good, rather than the good of the company which will lead to employees stealing from the company. And thus, will also go a long way to benefit companies and promote ethical behavior among employees (Rosenquist, R. 2017

Thrift shopping

Thrift shopping takes place in second–hand stores such as garage sales and thrift shops as defined by Mitchell & Montgomery (101). These shops sell goods which is been donated and the profit is used for charity purposes. The introduction of social media and other order forms of communication through technology has led to an increase in thrift shopping. Many influences today tend to promote thrifting because of its environmental and economic benefits. This industry operates because people who have limited financial resources tend to buy from this shop. Thrifting, allow people to lie down their budget while promoting a frugal living mindset (Wiwi, W. Setyanto, R. Laksana, D 2021, 2&3).

In addition, thrift shops offer incredible prices from that of their retail counterparts. Through this method, a customer can save a lot of money with thrifting since they have big sales and a great chance to score great pieces at lower prices as compared to buying brand–new clothes at a retail store. Aside from being cheaper, thrift shop sells good quality clothes that are usable for a longer time and new brand of clothes can as well be found with their tag there.

In order words, thrift shopping has a lot of benefits that go a long way to support the less privileged in society. Such organizations are charitable institutions. When customers purchase from a thrift shop, the sales mode from it goes back to charity, and also donating old items is also a great way to give support. One thing about fashion is something out of style will come back after some years after accessories have been added to make them stylish once more.

More so, thrifting boosts community development when a person purchases from the shop. With this buying method, buyers will help local enterprises develop the community instead of big corporations and thus give jobs to people in the community thereby reducing the rate of unemployment. Aside from fashion items and clothing, different items can also be found in thrift shops such as furniture, pieces of jewelry, and home décor.

Online shopping via brick & mortar shopping

Today, when a customer needs to purchase a product or take up service, they go down to a brick-and-mortar store to make the purchase. Likewise, the coming of the internet as a new channel of advertisement has progressively played a big role on brick and mortar shopping, especially in western countries (Madah, A. & Sukati, I, 2014, 6). Online shopping is something new and the coming up of the young generation, it offers an emerging opportunity for online retailers.

Moreover, predicting an actual behavior is important because it enables brick and motor shopping to develop communication strategies that will directly affect the behavior of the people. This strategy could be promoted as it focuses on both physical shops and e-commerce as it facilitates growth and expansion. Most often, they use the traditional form of advertisements such as newspapers, flyers, broachers, banners, and billboards.

As indicated by Madah, A. & Sukati, (2014, 8), a man’s behavior toward traditional and online shopping is similar whereas the females like to touch and feel the product since they enjoy traditional shopping more than online shopping.

Conclusion

To conclude, responsibility has been described over the years in different ways and with different meanings depending on to whom it is related. Going through the institutional structure of the business through history, a shift in the way it works has given an understanding reason why CSR has increased production to meet the demand of overconsumption. In addition to brick-and-mortar shops, one cannot compare importance since they both serve the same purpose preferred by a different variety of people. However, they are both out to increase efficiency and profit.

SOURCE

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