

VIETNAMESE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD H&M  
BRAND, VISUAL MERCHANDISING AND THEIR  
PURCHASING BEHAVIOR



An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Communication Arts) in Strategic  
Communication Management  
Common Course  
Faculty of Communication Arts  
Chulalongkorn University  
Academic Year 2019  
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ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคชาวเวียดนามที่มีต่อตราสินค้า การจัดวางสินค้า H&M  
และพฤติกรรมการซื้อ



สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาโทศึกษาศาสตร์มหาบัณฑิต  
สาขาวิชาการจัดการการสื่อสารเชิงกลยุทธ์ ไม่สังกัดภาควิชา/เทียบเท่า  
คณะนิเทศศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
ปีการศึกษา 2562  
ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Independent Study Title      VIETNAMESE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE  
TOWARD H&M BRAND, VISUAL  
MERCHANDISING AND THEIR PURCHASING  
BEHAVIOR  
By                                      Miss Ha My Phan Thi  
Field of Study                      Strategic Communication Management  
Thesis Advisor                      Associate Professor SARAVUDH ANANTACHART,  
Ph.D.

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Accepted by the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts (Communication  
Arts)

INDEPENDENT STUDY COMMITTEE

..... Chairman  
(Associate Professor WORAWAN ONGKRUTRAKSA,  
D. Arts)

..... Advisor  
(Associate Professor SARAVUDH ANANTACHART,  
Ph.D.)

..... Examiner  
(Assistant Professor TEERADA  
CHONGKOLRATTANAPORN, Ph.D.)



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

ฮา มี ปาน ชี : ทศนคติของผู้บริโภคชาวเวียดนามที่มีต่อตราสินค้า การจัดวางสินค้า H&M และพฤติกรรมการซื้อ. (VIETNAMESE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD H&M BRAND, VISUAL MERCHANDISING AND THEIR PURCHASING BEHAVIOR)  
 อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : รศ. ดร.สราวุธ อนันตชาติ

งานวิจัยนี้ต้องการศึกษาทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคชาวเวียดนามที่มีต่อตราสินค้า การจัดวางสินค้า H&M และพฤติกรรมการซื้อ ทั้งนี้ เนื่องจากการจัดวางสินค้าถือว่าเป็นหนึ่งในเครื่องมือทางการตลาดเชิงกลยุทธ์ที่ดีที่สุดเครื่องมือหนึ่งสำหรับแฟชั่นแฟชั่น โดยใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ ด้วยการใช้แบบสอบถามเป็นเครื่องมือในการเก็บข้อมูลเชิงสำรวจออนไลน์ จากผู้บริโภคชาวเวียดนามที่อาศัยอยู่ในนครโฮจิมินห์ เคยเข้าไปที่ร้านของ H&M ภายในเวลา 6 เดือนที่ผ่านมา และเคยซื้อสินค้าของ H&M ภายในเวลา 12 เดือนที่ผ่านมา อายุ 18 ปีขึ้นไป จำนวน 202 คน

ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าทัศนคติที่มีต่อการจัดวางตราสินค้าของ H&M มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกกับทัศนคติที่มีต่อตราสินค้า ( $r = 0.58$ ) และยังมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกกับพฤติกรรมการซื้อ ( $r = 0.53$ ) อย่างไรก็ตาม พฤติกรรมการซื้อที่ได้รับแรงกระตุ้น ณ จุดซื้อของผู้บริโภคชาวเวียดนามยังมีข้อจำกัด ( $M = 2.88$ ) เนื่องมาจากการรับรู้เกี่ยวกับผลิตภัณฑ์ H&M ว่ามีราคาแพง โดยในการซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ของ H&M นั้น ผู้บริโภคชาวเวียดนามจะใช้กระบวนการตัดสินใจที่มีความเกี่ยวพันสูง รวมถึงมีการค้นหาข้อมูล การประเมินทางเลือก และการใช้เหตุผลมาก ดังนั้น เพื่อปรับปรุงภาพลักษณ์และเพิ่มยอดขายของตราสินค้า H&M จึงควรลงทุนเพิ่มเติมในเนื้อหาเว็บไซต์ให้มีความสมบูรณ์ยิ่งขึ้น เพิ่มความร่วมมือกับผู้มีอิทธิพลทางความคิดกลุ่มต่างๆ รวมถึงการนำสัญลักษณ์ของประเทศเวียดนามมาใช้ในการจัดวางสินค้า

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 ปีการศึกษา 2562

ลายมือชื่อนิติกร .....  
 ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก .....

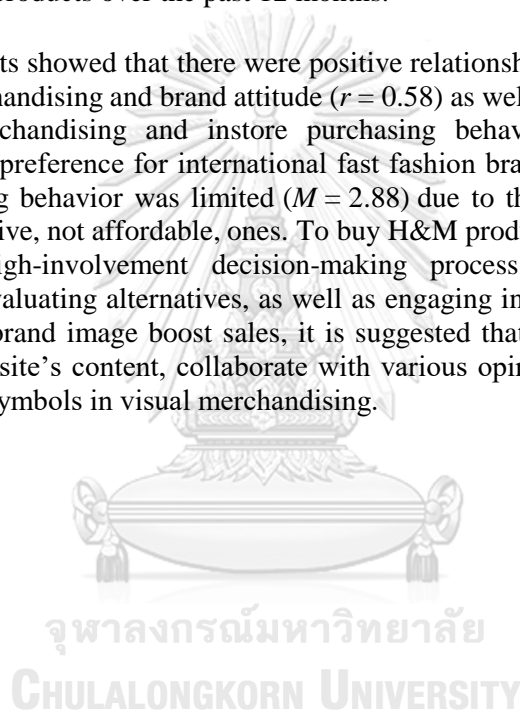
## 6185010028 : MAJOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

KEYWORD: Visual Merchandising, H&M, Fast Fashion, Consumer Attitude,  
Purchasing Behavior

Ha My Phan Thi : VIETNAMESE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD  
H&M BRAND, VISUAL MERCHANDISING AND THEIR PURCHASING  
BEHAVIOR. Advisor: Assoc. Prof. SARAVUDH ANANTACHART, Ph.D.

This research wants to investigate Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M brand, visual merchandising and their purchasing behavior since visual merchandising in fast fashion has been considered to be one of the most strategic marketing tools among others. Quantitative research method was employed by distributing online questionnaire to collect data from Vietnamese consumers living in Ho Chi Minh city. Two hundred and two survey participants were 18 years old or older, visited H&M stores in the past 6 months, and bought H&M products over the past 12 months.

The results showed that there were positive relationships between attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude ( $r = 0.58$ ) as well as between attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and instore purchasing behavior ( $r = 0.57$ ). Nevertheless, although having a preference for international fast fashion brand, Vietnamese consumers' impulse purchasing behavior was limited ( $M = 2.88$ ) due to their perception about H&M products as expensive, not affordable, ones. To buy H&M products, Vietnamese consumers would take a high-involvement decision-making process, including searching for information and evaluating alternatives, as well as engaging in high level of rationality. In order to improve brand image boost sales, it is suggested that H&M brand should invest and enrich its website's content, collaborate with various opinion influencers, and utilize Vietnam's iconic symbols in visual merchandising.



Field of Study: Strategic Communication  
Management

Academic Year: 2019

Student's Signature .....

Advisor's Signature .....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to express my gratefulness and love to my parents, who supported me economically and emotionally from the beginning so that I could join this master course at Chulalongkorn University.

Moreover, I feel so lucky to have my sister, my good friends are all around to cheer me up whenever I feel down. I am so thankful to meet my seniors and have this chance to study with my lovely classmates, you guys are so nice to me. No matter where we come from, I'm so blessed that we became good friends, were happy victims together, encouraged each other and created so many unforgettable memories. We learn a lot from each other and I am so proud of us.

I sincerely appreciated the endless support, precious inspiration and knowledgeable instruction from Dr. Suthiluck Vungsuntitum and Dr. Saravudh Anantachart. Thank you for being patient, humble and thoughtful in guiding me for this project. Also with the valuable feedback and advice from Dr. Worawan Ongkrutraksa and Dr. Teerada Chongkolrattanaporn, I could better my work and finished the project in time.

Last but not least, thank you Thailand for treating me so well in my master's degree journey.

Ha My Phan Thi

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
ABSTRACT (THAI) .....	iii
ABSTRACT (ENGLISH).....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Significance of The Topic.....	1
1.2 Research Objectives.....	6
1.3 Research Questions.....	6
1.4 Research Hypotheses .....	7
1.5 Scope of The Study.....	7
1.6 Operational Definition of Variables.....	7
1.7 Expected Benefits from The Study.....	9
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
2.1 Fast Fashion Brand .....	10
2.1.1 Definition of Brand .....	11
2.1.2 Fast Fashion Brand.....	12
2.2 Visual Merchandising in Fast Fashion.....	15
2.2.1 Visual Merchandising .....	16
2.2.2 Window Display in Visual merchandising .....	19
2.2.3 Signage in Visual Merchandising .....	21

2.2.4 Store Layout and Product Display in Visual Merchandising.....	22
2.3 Consumer Behavior .....	24
2.3.1 Consumer Motivation and Needs.....	24
2.3.2 Consumer Attitude .....	26
2.3.3 Consumer Involvement in Fashion .....	35
2.3.4 Consumer Purchasing Behavior .....	39
2.4 Conceptual Framework.....	47
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....	48
3.1 Research Sample and Sampling Method .....	48
3.2 Questionnaire Format .....	49
3.3 Measurement of the Variables .....	50
3.4 Validity and Reliability.....	51
3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis.....	52
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	53
4.1 Findings from Descriptive Analysis .....	53
4.1.1 Demographic profile of samples .....	53
4.1.2 Attitude toward Visual Merchandising of H&M stores in Ho Chi Minh city.....	55
4.1.3 Attitude toward H&M brand.....	58
4.1.4 Impulse Purchasing Behavior .....	59
4.2 Findings from Inferential Analysis .....	60
4.2.1 Hypothesis 1 .....	60
4.2.2 Hypothesis 2.....	61
CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION .....	63
5.1 Summary.....	63
5.1.1 Summary of Descriptive Analysis .....	64



5.1.2 Summary of Inferential Analysis .....	65
5.2 Discussion .....	67
5.2.1 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Brand Attitude .....	67
5.2.2 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Impulse Purchasing Behavior .....	69
5.2.3 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising is Positively Related to Brand Attitude.....	71
5.2.4 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising is Positively Related to instore Purchasing Behavior. ....	72
5.3 Limitation.....	73
5.4 Suggestions .....	74
5.4.1 Suggestion for Future Research .....	74
5.4.2 Suggestions for Practical Implication .....	74
REFERENCES .....	82
APPENDIX.....	87
VITA.....	5

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Demographic Information .....	55
Table 4.2: Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising in Ho Chi Minh city.....	56
Table 4.4: Attitude toward H&M Brand.....	58
Table 4.5: Impulse Purchasing Behavior inside H&M stores in Ho Chi Minh city ....	59
Table 4.6: Relationship between Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Brand Attitude .....	60
Table 4.7: Relationship between Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Instore Purchasing Behavior.....	61

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: The ABC Model of Attitude.....	28
Figure 2.2: Hierarchies of Effects.....	29
Figure 2.3: The MODE Model.....	32
Figure 2.4: The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion .....	36
Figure 2.5: FCB Grid .....	37
Figure 2.6: Four Types of Buying Behavior.....	40
Figure 2.7: Buyer Decision Process.....	44
Figure 2.8: Conceptual Framework.....	47

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Significance of The Topic

Among many international retailing sectors, fashion is believed to be one of the fastest growing sectors (McCormick et al., 2014). Retailers are trying hard to offer new and unique experience in store to gain traffic (Sachdeva & Goel, 2015) and encourage purchase. Visual merchandising is a special marketing technique that help brands attract customers to get into the stores and may start browsing products. In order to persuade customers, interior, exterior designs and other factors of the store are responsible for creating favorable shopping atmosphere as well as showing positive image on customer's mind (Soomro, Kaimkhani, & Iqbal, 2017). Therefore, visual merchandising in fashion retail not only plays as a physical attraction for business, but also acts as a promotional tool (Lea-Greenwood, 2009).

In fashion, visual merchandising is such an effective marketing instrument that can be seen in various forms, such as window display, signage, store layout and merchandise display. Visual merchandising has been used to refer to a communication channel can influence consumer behavior in multiple ways: forming favorable, positive or unfavorable, negative attitude towards brand, product or service (Park, Jeon, & Sullivan, 2015); enhancing and enabling the purchase intention (Ballantine, Parsons, & Comeskey, 2015), providing information in order to create perception (Cant & Hefer, 2012) and even results in impulsive buying (Cook & Yurchisin, 2017). Consumers have tendency to purchase a brand when they form favorable attitude toward that brand, which also means consumers' brand evaluation has a positive relationship with predicting purchase intention (Park et al., 2015). As clothing is an

experiential product, being able to create a strong interactive and hedonic atmosphere for consumers are important to enabling purchase intention (Porat & Tractinsky, 2012). The longer shoppers could stay at retail outlet, the more money they would spend (Donovan, Rossiter, Marcolyn, & Nesdale, 1994). Female consumers admitted that store displays play an important role in giving information about fashion that help they decide what to buy (Solomon, 2017). Visual merchandising became a compulsory tool for fashion outlet to communicate and promote their product. Will all the visual marketing elements at store possibly affect the shopping experience that may lead to consumer behaviors? How can visual merchandising upgrade itself to be more effective as a strategic marketing tool?

As previously stated, there are many aspects of visual merchandising can be investigated to gain a better understanding. Past researchers studied many factors of visual merchandising that can influence consumer behavior, such as window displays (Edwards & Shackley, 1992; Lea-Greenwood, 1998; Oh & Petrie, 2012), signage (Lea-Greenwood, 2009; Turley & Milliman, 2000), store and product layout (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010; McGoldrick, 2002; Varley, 2006), color and lighting (Aspfors, 2010; Olson, 2005;) and interior design (Davies & Tilley, 2004; Hoch & Purk, 2000; Soomro et al., 2017; Yun & Good, 2007). This study will focus on window displays, signages as well as layout and merchandise display since the moment the customers expose to window displays, this would influence “to enter or not to enter” the point of purchase (Oh & Petrie, 2012). Additionally, Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2010) described the ease of understanding and seeing signages in store enable surpass communication while customer browsing for apparel. Besides, store

layout and display can increase the time customer stay in the store and better the accessibility for them when move around the shop (Soomro et al., 2017).

On the question of fast fashion, it is the concept focusing on reducing production time as well as supply chain management to deliver the latest collection and product to customer, through their retail outlet (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). Fast fashion quickly updates the trend and renews the merchandise so that fashion brands can trigger customers to visit store more often and buy at affordable price. It is claimed that within two weeks, fast fashion products can be made and transferred to retail outlet to start selling out. Therefore, the visual merchandising also need to be taken care to adapt the new season or collection, align with the updates. Different from grocery shopping, for fashion products in most cases, consumers don't usually apply the shopping list. Therefore, all the in-store marketing elements are responsible for keeping consumers stay longer and boost their expenses fashion products. The traditional marketing mix has been shifting from Ps to Cs as it also apply to fashion marketing (Posner & Harriet, 2015), which mainly focus on Customer/Consumer instead of purely product, price, place or promotion. This can explain for the latest visual merchandising of fast fashion that aim to better in-store experience for customers. Big fast fashion names such as Zara or H&M would provide big size flagship stores with several floors to impress their customers. Within the store, those brands show off the plentiful range of garments from latest trends, with attractive offers. Moreover, the store will be layout purposively to guide and surprise consumers from one style to another as well as suggest the outfit mix match. After having a good experience at a physical store, fast fashion consumer may result in purchasing behavior inside that store. Some previous research studied impulse purchase was the

most frequent behavior that includes the spontaneous urge to buy with excitement, stimulation and hedonic needs (Uygur, 2018).

H&M (Hennes and Mauritz) is the most successful Sweden fashion group, was founded by Erling Persson in 1946. First he opened a female clothing store “Hennes” then merged with hunting apparel and fishing store called “Mauritz Widforss”. Then the company started selling both women’s and men’s clothing under the name Hennes and Mauritz or H&M. Until 2019, H&M group owns nine individual brands: H&M, COS, Weekday, Monki, & Other stories, Cheap Monday, ARKET, Afound and H&M Home. H&M brand itself expanded the massive business to forty-eight countries, with over four thousands stores. In some certain markets, H&M has their franchise stores such as in Thailand, Vietnam, India, etc. (Hennes & Mauritz AB Report - Q2 Six-months 2019). Furthermore, H&M is one of the fast fashion pioneers to collaborate with big designers and luxury brands such as Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, Versace, Balmain and Moschino (McCoy, 2018) to remark brand’s impression on customers and engage more potential consumers.

Vietnam is a South East Asian member that its apparel and footwear has grown double-digit in 2018 due to the raise of living standard, average income as well as strong usage of social networks. Ho Chi Minh city of Vietnam owns the highest average wage for many years continually. With the shift in fashion market to Asia (The State of Fashion, 2018) and being a member of many international organizations, Vietnam is the target of numerous international fashion brands. For example, Zara entered Vietnam in 2016 and it was such a big success for Zara with the revenue for the first year was around \$12 million. The number was six times higher in 2017 was around \$73 million (Zara Posts Dramatic Growth in Vietnam, 2019). Although

Vietnamese consumers knew H&M brand but the brand itself just H&M decided to join this dynamic market officially in 2017 and earned \$15 million in revenue for the first year of business in Vietnam with four stores. In 2018, their revenue was double up to \$33 million. This warm welcome can be explained by the preference for imported fashion product, hot trend follower, higher living standard and the right target market for fast fashion garments. Until now, there are seven stores of H&M in two main cities. This study will focus on H&M stores in Ho Chi Minh city, where the first H&M store was opened in 2017.

Within two years, H&M left some impressive milestones in Vietnam market to become one of the biggest international fast fashion brand. Furthermore, H&M stores in Vietnam are located in big shopping malls with large space and giant windows to let the brand invest in impressive visual merchandising under various themes. With the advantages of big space, H&M also differentiated itself from others by colorful decoration consistently attached with signature red color of brand logo. Even the sale signages are designed in red to draw consumers attention. Especially when it comes to collaboration with big luxury brands, H&M would prioritize special decoration and arrangement for that unique collection to emphasize the high-end environment into their physical stores. By displaying signature posters, signages, adjusted store layout and product display, the brand successfully showed off the collection with distinctive merchandise in aesthetic atmosphere.

Since H&M is one of the big name in fast fashion and its visual merchandising has not been investigated much in Vietnam market, it is worth to examine certain elements of visual merchandising, such as window display, signage, store layout and product display, which possibly influence the attitude at retail store. Furthermore,



their impacts on Vietnamese consumers impulse purchase behavior could be important to the brand, especially Asian region in which consumers' fashion expenditures is growing (The State of Fashion, 2018). Above all, this research wants to investigate the relationship between consumer attitude, visual merchandising and instore purchasing behavior.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To explore Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M brand and its visual merchandising.
2. To explore Vietnamese consumers' purchasing behavior at H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city.
3. To examine the relationship between Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude
4. To examine the relationship between Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and their purchasing behavior at stores in Ho Chi Minh city.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

RQ1: What is Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M brand and its visual merchandising?

RQ2: What is Vietnamese consumers' purchasing behavior at H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city?

RQ3: What is the relationship between Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude?

RQ4: What is the relationship between Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and purchasing behavior at store in Ho Chi Minh city?

#### **1.4 Research Hypotheses**

H1: Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to brand attitude.

H2: Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to their purchasing behavior.

#### **1.5 Scope of The Study**

This project studied Vietnamese consumers, who was born from 2001 onward (older than 18 years old). These people were living, working or studying in Ho Chi Minh city, visited H&M stores in the past 6 months and bought H&M product there over the past 12 months. By using quantitative research, the project collected data by online survey through Google Form, from middle October to middle of November 2019. Data collection was conducted in Ho Chi Minh city that aim to get 202 samples.

#### **1.6 Operational Definition of Variables**

Consumer attitude: Attitudes are learned predisposition from people to respond to objects, in consistent favorable or unfavorable manner. Attitudes toward H&M are also viewed as the positive or negative predisposition that consumers hold

toward H&M brand. The consumer attitudes in this study are comprised of attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude.

*Visual merchandising:* Visual merchandising is integration of display function as well as part of whole design to enhance the image of stores and products, provide enjoyable atmosphere for shopper and improve sales effectiveness. H&M visual merchandising in this study includes H&M window display, H&M signage, H&M store layout and H&M product display. These attitudes was measured by using the item was developed and applied by Park et al. (2015); Dale (2018); Mohan, Sivakumaran, and Sharma (2013); Sen, Block, and Chandran (2002).

*Brand attitude:* Brand attitude is defined as an individual's evaluation to a brand. Therefore, attitude toward H&M brand can be defined as an overall judgment from an individual that generally depends on his own perception about H&M brand. This concept suggested to treat attitude as an enduring state, unidimensional and as summary evaluation. The brand attitude was measured by using the items was developed and applied by Park et al. (2015), adopted from Fornell and Larcker (1981).

**Purchasing Behavior:** Consumers purchasing behavior is the process involves selection, purchase and disposal product, service, idea or experience in order to meet consumer's demand. This project studied purchasing behavior process inside H&M store, which can be completed with plan or without plan. Hence, there are two types of buying behavior: planned purchase or impulse purchase can happen at H&M store. Since the visual merchandising in retail is recognized to be one of the influences on

impulse purchase behavior, this study will measure the impulse purchase at H&M store by synthesizing the scale from Mehta and Chugan (2013), Chang, Yan, and Eckman (2014), as well as Park, Kim, and Forney (2006) adapted version from the Han, Morgan, Kotsiopulo, and Kang-Park (1991) scale.

### **1.7 Expected Benefits from The Study**

From an academic perspective, this project and its result gave supplementary ideas and contributed to a greater understanding of fashion-oriented consumer behavior in general and specific in fashion-oriented planned or impulse purchase while being influenced by visual merchandising at a brick-and-mortar business.

From a practitioner perspective, the findings of this study helped H&M brand in Vietnam, specifically for the stores in Ho Chi Minh city, maximize and improve in-store marketing materials that enable impulse purchase when visiting H&M store. In addition, this could give some valuable feedbacks to any people who is in charge of visual merchandising in order to get rid of component that annoy customer or trigger unfavorable attitude toward the store and the brand.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review intends to introduce the primary evidences about fast fashion retailer, visual merchandising and the importance of visual merchandising in fashion retailers towards Vietnamese consumers' attitude, in order to make an impact on fashion shopping behavior. Also, in order to influence consumers, visual merchandising may go through various stages of their behaviors: fashion needs and wants, fashion involvement, attitudes toward visual merchandising as well as toward H&M brand. Visual merchandising will be responsible for the shopping experience in-store that may result in purchasing behavior. Although impulsive purchase is believed to be the most frequent behavior for fashion consumption, brands should take care of both buying behaviors: planned purchase and impulse purchase to maximize the sales and profit. In this literature part, this study will review:

1. Definition of a brand, fast fashion brand its importance to the global industry.
2. Visual merchandising, its significance and each element within fast fashion context.
3. Customer behavior with consumer attitude toward visual merchandising, brand attitude, fashion involvement and purchasing behavior inside physical store.

#### 2.1 Fast Fashion Brand

Brand is an extraordinary asset of a company to which both marketers and academic researchers pay attention for many years. Although the brand is considered intangible, but having a good brand can benefit and contribute brand's owners in term

of attracting customers and investors. In this section, the study would like to define what brand is in general, describe in detail about fast fashion brand and its influences to the world.

### **2.1.1 Definition of Brand**

The term “brand” can be traced back to the definition in The Oxford American Dictionary (1980), a brand was defined as “a trade mark, goods of a particular make: a mark of identification made with a hot iron, the iron used for this: a piece of burning or charred wood, (verb): to mark with a hot iron, or to label with a trade mark.” (as cited in Blackett, 2003) concluded that for at least 50 years, the primary meaning of “brand” has been using with commercial intention. Moreover, he suggested that two main components of brand are intrinsically striking and indelible impression. On the other hand, there were many other approaches in defining a brand, from consumer’s perspective, company’s perspective or even sometimes brand is defined purposively (Wood, 2000). Dibb, Simkin, William, and Ferrell (1997) adopted the definition from The American Marketing Association (1960) to transform the idea into “a brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers”. By combining various items: name, letter, numbers, a symbol, a signature, a shape, a slogan, a color, a particular typeface, the uniqueness of brand is visualized clearer. The name is considered as the most crucial factor, however, other elements’ function shouldn’t be underestimate due to the importance of harmonious and coherent association.

With regards to leave more impression in customer’s perception, many specific majors of different brand’s aspects have been studied and investigated in

order to employ creatively in marketing campaigns, such as brand personality, brand identity, brand equity or brand image. The foremost goal in branding is building a life-long relationship with customers that can benefit both sides. Within fashion industry, being a fast fashion brand owns some advantages along with different challenges that need to be taken care in order to survive in the dynamic global market. More details will be discussed further below.

In summary, it has been shown from this review that the brand is a valuable asset but intangible. Where it lives in customer's mind and how consumer perceives it, are so important to the company. Especially to Vietnam market, whose consumers have a preference for imported products, is one of the advantages of international brands.

### **2.1.2 Fast Fashion Brand**

Fast fashion is a phenomenon, a well-established industry that impacts not only the fashion, textile industry but also challenges the supply chain management. Fast fashion is believed to trigger more buying power among young people, especially young women shoppers, who are craving for affordable clothes continuously (Zakaria, 2006).

#### Definition

Having defined what is meant by a brand, the research will move on to discuss “fast fashion brand” in details. In term of defining “fashion”, Christopher, Lawson, and Peck (2004) explained it as “broad term that typically encompasses any product or market where there is an element of style that is likely to be short-lived”. Garments, accessories, clothing or apparel were used to be occasional that took time

to design, create, produce and sell to customer. But since the appearance of brand like H&M in 1946, one of the oldest fast fashion brands, the fashion industry has shifted to the era of affordable, trendy, quick delivery to mass customer in two weeks instead of waiting for months (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). Fast fashion's key philosophies are supply chain management, copy the catwalk or luxury brand collection, and distribute to mainstream consumers for the whole year (Cook & Yurchisin, 2017). Additionally, they stated that customers fall for fast fashion brand due to the low-price product and abundant designs, which also make customers likely to purchase the merchandise impulsively.

Since fast fashion retail is able to provide the latest trend with limited quantity, the fashion retail section can earn more than non-retail section seasonally (Sull & Turconi, 2008). Key reasons behind this concept are shortening lead-times and refreshing the stock more frequent, which help to minimize the mark-down products and lower the inventory cost (Anson, 2002; Richardson, 1996). Those fast fashion conglomerates like Zara, H&M or Mango have been reducing the lead-times down to three weeks or less (Carruthers, 2003; White, 2004). By becoming a global business and growing more rapidly than the industry as a whole (Sull & Turconi, 2008), its internationalization and globalization are highly developed and transformed (McCormick et al., 2014). As such, fashion retails can be under various forms and structures, without a single definition of formats (McGoldrick, 2002). In this case, H&M stores in department stores are going to be studied.

Although having extraordinary effects on the fashion industry and retail industry as a whole, fast fashion is still facing some major problems, such as environmental insufficiency, lack of sustainability due to its limited quality and short



product life cycle (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) as well as being criticized for mainly getting inspiration from luxury brands (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010) and unethical outsource labor (Christopher et al., 2004). Nevertheless, in the opinion of Gabrielli, Baghi, and Codeluppi (2013), fast fashion is still a phenomenon with admirable experience, by which it is embraced by many customer generations, due to its impressive big-size stores, hot location in city centers and distinctive visual merchandising. The next section would give some ideas about fast fashion's noteworthiness and impacts on the fashion industry.

#### Significance of Fast Fashion Brand

According to Fast Fashion Retail Market Report (2019), from 2019 to 2025, fast fashion is projected to continue driving the industry's tremendous growth in the next decade. One of the reasons behind is because mass consumers can afford the trendy clothes, at reasonable price and with short time waiting to compare to the traditional fashion (Sull & Turconi, 2008). Moreover, the more cutthroat of fast fashion competition between many brands, the more advantageous offers mass customers can get. For example, quick reaction to the market by creating lookalike pieces of fashion from luxury brands, the high availability of up-to-date style or the convenience to access the brand's retail chain (Hayes & Jones, 2006; Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010).

Another vital rationale is the extension of more seasons and refreshment the variety of product ranges (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010; Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) so that consumers can update their closet more frequent. This factor is important for the disruptiveness in fashion retail industry, which requires better

service for fashion consumption (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). Additionally, in order to satisfy customers and dominate revenue, fast fashion retail keeps generating more fashion-forward pace, innovative products and service-oriented business (Loeb, 2015).

In addition, consuming fast fashion can bring various benefits to serve different customers (Gabielli et al., 2013). According to them, fast fashion's key advantages such as affordable price, acceptable quality, broad assortment and more frequent in collection renewal, are providing pleasure experience that can change consumer shopping habit. They can buy unusual items to try out or add on their wardrobe because it is cheap. Also, they feel good to be free in browsing garment and trying on product without pressure from salesperson. Besides, it becomes normal for them to purchase spontaneously and select rapidly with the awareness of having temporary fashionable pieces. Supporting by the help of peers and friends, shopping in fast fashion is also a way for customers to socialize, share and interact among buyers.



## **2.2 Visual Merchandising in Fast Fashion**

Visual merchandising is a part of visual communication that has been employing in many industries and business sectors. This visual merchandising section would conceptualize:

1. Visual merchandising definition and its meaning toward fast fashion retail.
2. Three important elements of visual merchandising and their functions will be discussed individually.

### **2.2.1 Visual Merchandising**

Being said as one of important visual communication tool, visual merchandising has been studied in many fields that involve presentation and arrangement. Fast fashion wants to utilize and employ visual merchandising function by exploring numerous aspects of this concept.

#### Definition

Fashion has always been an industry that prioritizes the visual presentation, not only focuses on product designs, but also concentrates on decorating the place brands eager to introduce their final outcomes. What brands invest and transform their stores can help shape customers' perception and attitude towards brands, some may result in good responses, others may lead to negative reactions. Thus, it is important to understand thoughtfully visual merchandising and fast fashion retailing recently, in order to figure out how these two components associates with each other.

According to Lea-Greenwood (2009) as well as Mehta and Chugan (2013), visual merchandising involves every corner, every space, every atmosphere that can be visualized to show the characteristics of brand to customers, differentiate from competitors and influence the apparel purchase behavior. This activity coordinates all the advertising, window display, sign boards, store layout, lighting, merchandise and mannequins display, light and color, even the music, the smell and sale assistant in the right place, at the right time (Mehta & Chugan, 2013).

Visual merchandising can be started with the outside window installation activity, should be attractive enough to entice target customers to walk in the physic store. Then other decoration factors such as product display, sign board position and seasonal store layout, would set certain mood and tone to the point of purchase, help

introduce the product, provide information of brand (Kerfoot, Davies, & Ward, 2003), provoke the browsing (Ballantine et al., 2015) and trying on product stage of fashion consumers. All artistic and aesthetic stimuli would be presented visually, appealing (Ebster & Garaus, 2011) to keep customers stay longer and spend more (Donovan et al., 1994). Furthermore, allowing consumers to interact with all marketing components can possibly let them form positive attitude towards the design (Fiore, Yah, & Yoh, 2000; Park et al., 2015) and make impact on purchase behavior (Theodoridis & Chatzipanagiotou, 2009). Furthermore, according to Pegler (2012), he suggested “the best presentation of merchandise and concepts to convince the viewer of the value of the object... or the organization behind the concept with an end purpose of making sales” can be another definition of visual merchandising.

#### The Importance of Visual merchandising in Fast Fashion Industry

Visual merchandising is under brand’s visual communication, a vital part of retail marketing by applying a non-verbal method that effectively support brand’s advertising and communication (Chongkolrattanaporn & Thai-Eiad, 2019). The important role of visual merchandising has been emphasized by the number of studies publishing in various field: fashion and apparel (Park et al., 2015; Oh & Petrie, 2012; Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010), retail and department store (Soomro et al., 2017; Yoo, Park, & MacInnis, 1998), restaurant (Abarajithan, 2013; Areni & Kim, 1993; Kleinová, Paluchová, Berpíka, & Horská, 2015), luxury (Lee, Hur, & Watkins, 2018; Nobbs, Foong, & Baker, 2015), and even online store (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2003; Lee, Podlaseck, Schonberg, Hoch, & Gomory, 2001). However, fashion has captured most of the attention due to its nature: seasonal, can be tried on

(Ballantine et al., 2015), self-expression, image and cultural reflection, can be consumed and purchased several times monthly in average, while also being an functional product beside a hedonic source of happiness. Additionally, fashion can be presented in physic store in many different ways, in various theme, by diverse brands, no matter luxury, high street or fast fashion. Especially in fast fashion retail, in which the merchandise life cycle is shorter than other kinds, the importance of fast consumption is higher and also be a trigger for consumer purchase behavior when they see the outfit presentation through window display. Therefore, visual merchandising in fast fashion is such a competitive playground and industry that worth to investigate and explore its potential for the future practice.

Digital era has been changing the game for visual merchandising where it can be shown and display on computer and mobile screen. This makes brand's physical store to compete with itself online platform. Online consumer behaviors are challenging the offline in-store behaviors due to its convenience, wide range products and promotion offers (Parmelee, 2019). Therefore, to enhance a good and proper visual merchandising at physical store, brand should keep putting more effort to understand target customers and trends. Following the market shift to Asia, H&M is expanding their store numbers in China, Indian despite of closing some locations, could be in United States and Norway. The future plan of H&M will be advance the shopping experience by improving the integration online shopping with physical store with "click and collect" program, as well as "scan and buy" option.

Fashion retail has been practicing and applying visual merchandising to their physical store for a long time and the display trend recently is increasing in more creative, innovative and experiential way (Gudonaviciene & Alijosiene, 2015). To a

brand, visual merchandising in retail is an effective means to achieve multiple goals in communication and sales. Notably, this technique can create and better the brand identity (Bell & Ternus, 2012; Pegler, 2012), by performing as a marketing medium to represent the whole brand strongly and positively (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001; Mattila & Wirtz, 2008), likewise creating attractive sales environment (Gudonaviciene & Alijosiene, 2015). In addition, visual merchandising differentiates the brand from competitors and itself online platforms, by being more stimulating to impress and appeal customer to put their feet into the store (Nobbs et al., 2015). More important, visual merchandising needs to show the correlation between product's distinctiveness and brand image (Miranda, 2009). By the same token, visual merchandising enhances consistent message, tone, theme, image in terms of transferring (Kerfoot et al., 2003) together with providing information visually (Lea-Greenwood, 2009). Hence, brand treats visual merchandising as strategic movement to attract customer attention (Mehta & Chugan, 2013; Soomro et al., 2017). For example, to influence buying behavior, trigger unplanned purchase (Chandon, Hutchinson, Bradlow, & Young, 2009; Homer & Kahle, 1988), influence consumer emotion, brand love, positive attitude (Park et al., 2015) and increase the sales for both short-term and long-term (Damminga, Wu, & Johnson, 2012). In this research, the key elements of visual merchandising chosen to be discussed in following sections are window display, signage, store layout and product display.

### **2.2.2 Window Display in Visual merchandising**

Mehta and Chugan (2013) discussed that visual merchandising contains both store exterior and interior designs, with window display is the first medium that

generates customer's impression to enter the store and attracts customer who walks by the store. Window displays is believed as a first contact point between store window and customer, a fine art to exhibit the product, merchandise and concept of that brand. Sebastiano (2018) stated that window display can also be the aesthetic merchandise arrangement and presentation that convince customers to buy the product by letting consumers visualizing how they would look like in these items. Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2010) highlighted window display as "an important communication tool which can attract the target consumer by creating a display that is pertinent to their needs" in terms of indicating the major role more than traditional advertising method. There are several types of window displays, such as open back window display, closed window display, partially window display, island window display, arcade window display, showcase and elevated window display, corner window display and shadow box window display.

In fashion retail, a unique, trendy and appealing window display is an effective marketing movement. In term of getting to know about the brand and latest trend information, window display helps customers get certain ideas about the brand's style by exposing to the most fashionable collection showing in windows (Sen et al., 2002). Besides, Edwards and Shackley (1992) studied that the sales and positive image of brand would increase when brand presented new products in their window dressing. The merchandises showing in front window can communicate to the target customers before persuading them to enter the shop (Oh & Petrie, 2012). In the same way to convey promotion message, using window display can be a strategic solution to increase footfall in store in sales season (Soomro et al., 2017). Among fast fashion garments, there are so many strong competitors offer quite similar products, but

consumers can differentiate one from another by the way brand exhibit its product in window display section (Razzouk, Seitz, & Chaudhuri, 2001). Getting customers' attention and leaving positive impression are always the priorities of any brand as the result of having a chance for product or service performance later on. Hence, fast fashion brand invested in distinctive window display seriously to draw customers' notice and concentration (Mehta & Chugan, 2013). In similar way, Nobbs et al. (2015) suggested that window displays surprisingly introduces customer fashionable ways to mix and match a good outfit that can take from brand's garment. They endorsed the opinion that good presentation of window decoration acts as aesthetic manner to provoke the desire among customers out there.

Nevertheless, the consistence of window display and other visual merchandising components is so important that brand need to be careful in creating a good association for store's environment. The next section will go further into signage system that help fast fashion instruct customers while shopping inside the store.

### **2.2.3 Signage in Visual Merchandising**

Any visual presentation that can provide information to customer about the store, brand, product, promotion campaign and so on, is called a signage. As stated by Kim (2013), signage in visual merchandising is one of the core factors that matter to brand's physical store. Although being a part of brand's visual communication, Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2010) mentioned that this element has not been studied thoroughly and there is a literature gap that need to be explore in the future (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Few researchers found that signage can play multiple roles in marketing communication, including advertising, identification, branding, and way-



finding (Calori, 2007; Kellaris & Machleit, 2016; Taylor, Claus, & Claus, 2005) that can end up with various outcomes. In retail management, signage system includes exterior signs and interior signs. Within interior signs, there are two sub-categories. The first one is the fixed signage, which is influential and guiding with the permanency of the signs, in order to signify the area and indicate the facilities for fitting room, menswear or womenswear, cashier, etc (Lusch, Dunne, & Carver, 2011). The second one is the flexible type which provides information immediately and temporary such as promotion news, collection graphics or brand's slogan (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). Major element of exterior signage is the brand's name or logo sign, which is important for customer to identify the brand along with drive traffic to the physical store. While indoor signs serve different but purposive goals such as influence customer attitude, feelings and enhance purchase behavior (Kellaris & Machleit, 2016).

Inside physical store, signage should coordinate well with store layout and product display as a promise from brand to customers and deliver the precise garments that align with the message. As explained earlier, this project will move on to discuss the final visual merchandising element chosen to be studied, which are store layout and product display.

#### **2.2.4 Store Layout and Product Display in Visual Merchandising**

Store layout is described as an effective design of floor's plan, strategic use of space as well as product placement within the store (Underhill, 2008). As claimed by Mohan et al. (2013), store layout refers to the way brand arranges and sorts out garments, mannequins, fitting room, cashier, shopping carts and aisles; with the

proper size and shape, to advance the spatial relationships among them. The core features of store layout are regulation the flow that shopper may take inside the store while introducing to them the latest merchandises and trends (Lusch et al., 2011), establishment brand image (Kim Kim, 2013), extension the time customer stay inside the shop and enjoyment in shopping experience (Sachdeva & Goel, 2015). Furthermore, in fast fashion retail, McGoldrick (2002) and Aghazadeh (2005) found out that the layout for high demand or most wanted items is extremely important due to their stand-out nature, ability to express key message as well as customers captivation, which encourages impulse purchase instantly (Grewal, Baker, Levy, & Voss, 2003).

Meanwhile, the merchandise display is another aspect of visual merchandising driving impressive communication and purchasing behavior of fashion consumers (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). How products are being arranged inside store and presented on shelves or dressed by mannequins, could differentiate the brand from others. Above all, to response the pace of fast fashion, product display plays an important role in stimulating and encourage customer to purchase spontaneously and instantly after exposing to the garments inside the store. Besides, according to two authors, this technique could be the reinforcement for the brand image towards fashion shoppers by communicating visually with real product, at the right time, in the right place.

In summary, each element carries out certain role to influence consumers in different ways. While as a whole visual merchandising with harmonious combination, the impact can be greater. Either way, subsequently this visual communication

method would be used to shape consumer behavior in alternative manners that can benefit the brand.

## **2.3 Consumer Behavior**

In order to understand consumers, marketers and researchers have been working hard on numerous aspects relating to human factors that can explain and achieve the best practice (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). One of them is consumer attitude, the core element can impact consumer behavior, especially the purchase behavior.

Within this section, the research will explain:

1. Consumer motivation and needs
2. Consumer attitude in fast fashion context
3. Consumer involvements and fashion involvement.
4. In-store purchasing behavior, including impulse purchase and planned purchase.

### **2.3.1 Consumer Motivation and Needs**

Motivation is one of the reasons behind consumers' action. For those who wish to be satisfied the aroused need, no matter it is utilitarian or hedonic need, motivation can lead people to behave as they do (Solomon, 2017). For any purchase behavior, consumers actually buy benefits, which could be intangible or tangible. Consumer fashion buying behavior is triggered by emotional and psychological motivations (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). These shopping motivations trigger a consumer's response to particular products that seem to have the attributes required to satisfy needs (Workman, 2010, p.127). Previous research showed that motivation for

shopping can also come from utilitarian need and hedonic need, which are directly related with fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership (Koparal & Çalik, 2015).

Utilitarian need is categorized as a desire to achieve practical product attributes, functional benefits, task-related and rational (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2009 as cited in Solomon, 2017). Utilitarian shoppers will finish their purchasing activities once they get the objective particular product, which can serve for functional tasks. Also, this kind of shoppers may only visit the area that have products they want to purchase, so there is a high chance that utilitarian consumers will ignore the decoration of the store, the window displays, because these visual merchandising are not relevant to consumers' motives and objectives (Falode, Amubode, Adegunwa, & Ogunduyile, 2016). Utilitarian shoppers will be satisfied only if they can get or purchase what they planned. Within fashion context, there might be consumers that only go to retail store and focus on particular apparel item that they planned ahead. Although visual cues for other item are available in store but it could be hard to attract and get attention from this kind of customers.

By contrast, hedonic need is defined as an experiential need or emotional involved to response a need, such as self-confident, self-image or fantasy (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2009 as cited in Solomon, 2017). Hedonic shoppers tend to enjoy shopping activities with emotional and treat the process as exciting experiential, whether they can make a purchase or not. The task that hedonic consumers want to complete is not getting the right product, it becomes a concern to fulfill shopping experience with enjoyment and amusement (Barbin et al., 1994 as cited in Falode et al., 2016). To be specific, the satisfaction for hedonic customers can be derived from ambience, entertainment, browsing, and a social experience outside the home.

Essentially in fashion, brands invest many hints under lighting, music, images, videos, displays, mannequins and even smell to stimulate and create soothing shopping environment for customers.

Kim and Hong (2011) emphasized that because of interpersonal influence essential in the consumption process of fashion, fashion leadership, which becomes a crucial consumer characteristic. Additionally, the higher level of fashion innovativeness of an individual or fashion opinion leadership, the more they may involve in fashion and more willing to take cognitive information processing when shopping for apparels and garments (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010).

### **2.3.2 Consumer Attitude**

Consumer can form attitude toward an object or a behavior. This study will only focus on the attitude that react to objects: visual merchandising and fast fashion brand. The following section will introduce the definition of consumer attitude, how attitude is formed, what could be consumer attitude toward visual merchandising and attitude formation toward the fast fashion brand after exposing to visual merchandising.

#### Definition

An attitude is a disposition to respond in an unfavorable or favorable manner towards a behavior, an object, a person, an institution or an even (Ajzen, 2005). In the opinion of Ajzen and Fishbein (2000), any attitude would aim to react to at least one object, which could be anything more than a person, a thing or could be the mixture of different categories. Therefore, attitudes vary at different stage for alternative objects, including general level and specific level. Two authors proposed “to use the term

“attitude” to refer to the evaluation of an object, concept, or behavior along a dimension of favor or disfavor, good or bad, like or dislike”, to express with semantic scale including two opposite traits. For example: approval or disapproval to a policy; liking or disliking of a person; enjoyable or unenjoyable, pleasant or unpleasant judgment to a concept. Ajzen (2005) also emphasize there were plenty of formal definitions about “attitude” was formed, but the key characteristic of it is evaluative nature. To put it differently, Kotler and Amstrong (2011) described attitudes can frame people’s mind in favorable or unfavorable to things and hard to change.

To enhance more accurate understandings, there were two fundamental approaches has been using and developing in many studies: multidimensional (Ostrom, 1969; Shaver Shaver, 1987) and unidimensional (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). While multidimensional examined the attitude with three types: affect, cognition and conation, unidimensional concept only focusses on the evaluation step, the feelings without attention toward the purchase intention or any trigger before evaluating.

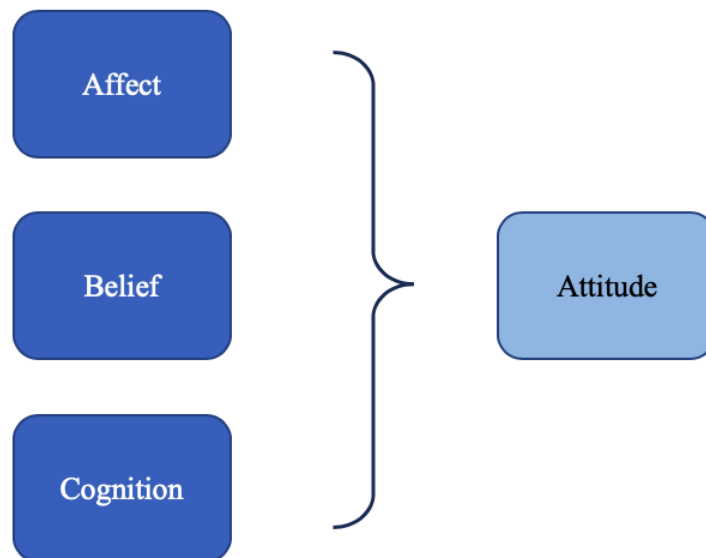
Attitude investigators expected to use attitude in prediction and explanation of consumer behavior, as well as other responses disposition (Campbell, 1963; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). As cited in Solomon (2017), the functional theory of attitudes was started and advanced by psychologist Daniel Katz (1960) to clarify how attitudes assist the process of social behavior: utilitarian function, value-express function, ego-defensive function or knowledge function. Theoretically, there are two dimensions of attitudes that can be measured: valence and intensity. Valence is the directions of feeling, describes the stages when consumers feel attracted, positive or repulsed, negative. Intensity is used to show the magnitude of feelings whether it is strong or weak. In the following section of this research, the discussion will be about attitude

formation and clarification of attitude toward visual merchandising and attitude toward brand. Consequently, the relationship between them will be reviewed.

### Attitude Formation

Attitudes are formed by different kind of sources, which can belong to two different bases: belief-based and cognitive-based (Fishbein & Middlestadt, 1995; Brown & Stayman, 1992 as cited in Homer, 2006). Another approach to study attitude formation is looking at ABC model of attitude, which investigated the correlation between affect, belief and cognition. This model demonstrated that it is not necessary for a person to form an attitude toward an object even he knows some information about that object.

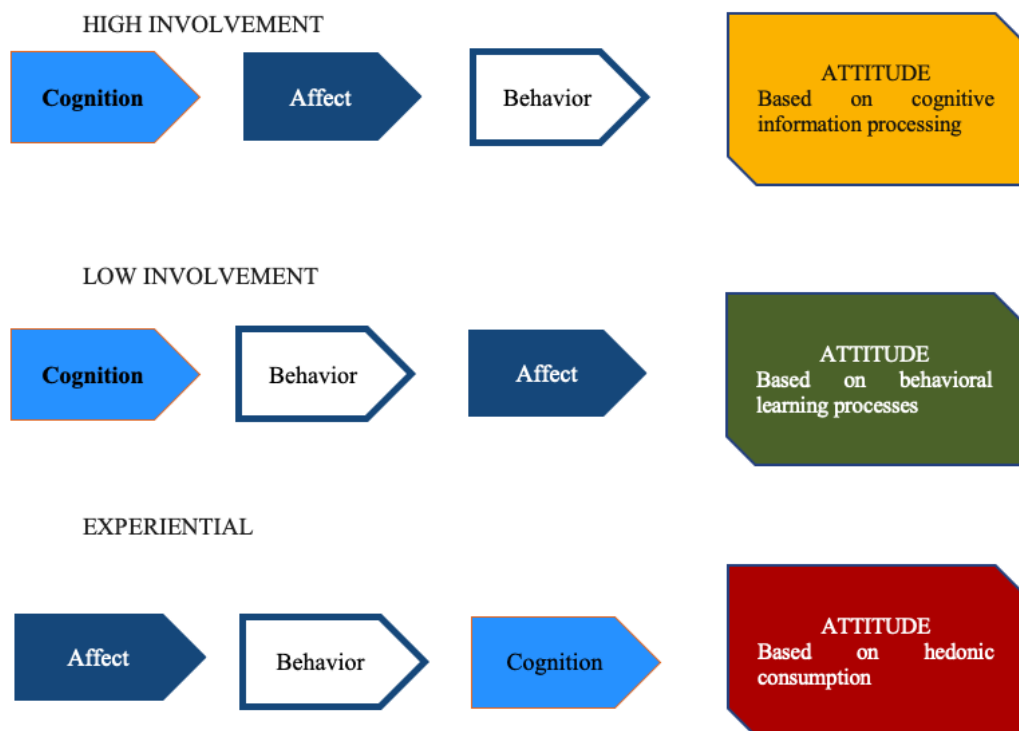
*Figure 2.1: The ABC Model of Attitude*



Source: Adapted from Solomon, M. (2017). *Consumer Behavior: Buying, having and being* (12th ed). Boston: Pearson, p. 323.

Another worth mentioning proposition in researching attitude is Hierarchies of Effects (Solomon, 2017), which explained attitudes can be the results from classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning and complex cognitive process. Also, the Hierarchies of Effects continues developing the interrelationships among affect, belief and cognition to explore which component comes first, depending on various route and their relative influences on human. This concept represents different directions of learning and decision making process for various type of consumers after exposing to brand's advertisement

Figure 2.2: Hierarchies of Effects



Source: Adapted from Solomon, M. (2017). *Consumer Behavior: Buying, having and being* (12th ed). Boston: Pearson, p. 287.



*The High involvement Hierarchy: Think – Feel – Do.* This hierarchy explains the situation whereby the customer purchase decision is interpreted as a problem solving process. Also, this hierarchy determined that there is a high involvement from customer in order to make any decision, starting with gaining some knowledge about the product or service to form a belief, then evaluation the attributes along with forming feelings and attitude towards product. After that, customer engages in an appropriate reaction or behavior, which is a result from a thoughtful decision process with carefully evaluate alternatives. The whole procedure can be simply put as Think – Feel – Do.

*The Low involvement Hierarchy: Think – Do – Feel.* This hierarchy refers to the extent to which a person carries out a purchase decision based on his basic limited knowledge and form a feeling or attitude only after he bought the product. It assumes that the customers do not care about alternative options and the attitude is formed by behavioral learning process when customer do not put much thought to decide which brand to choose. The customer is lowly involved when he makes a purchase decision and does not find any motivation to form the feelings or process any complexity. This can explain for the process Think – Do – Feel.

*The Experiential Hierarchy: Feel – Do – Think.* Refers to a scenario whereby a customer's action is basically base on his emotional response. This hierarchy emphasizes that hedonic motivation is an important element to trigger the feelings, the mood towards brand or product. Moreover, the mood or the state of customer's mind influences the reaction towards the marketing message as well as the behavior toward product. Besides, the cognition step only happens the purchase was carried on so that this process is labeled as Feel – Do – Think.

### Attitude and Behavior

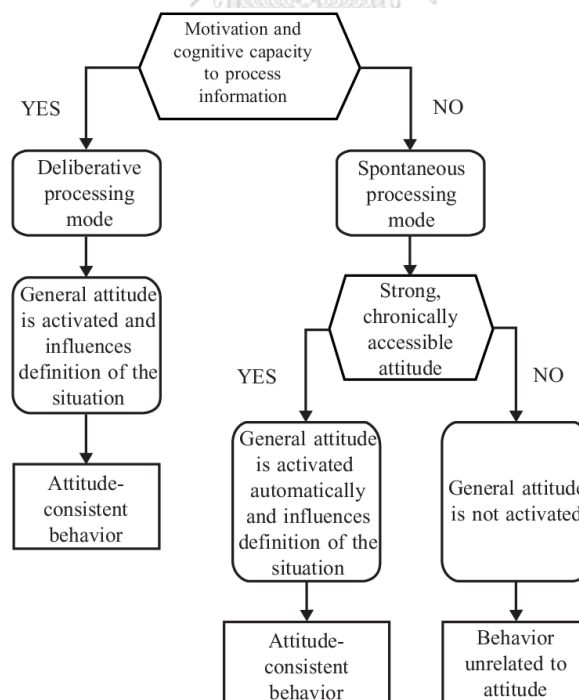
In order to support the attitude – behavior relation, there were some attempts in investigating the complexity of general attitudes, which possibly were activated in an automatic or deliberate way, to influence consumer behavior (Ajzen, 2005; Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989), by the MODE model. This MODE model was first introduced by Fazio (1990) to describe numerous processes that can affect evaluation and behavior. The model hypothesized that there were two activation manner for attitudes (attitude activation) to guide consumer behavior: controlled or deliberate and automatic or spontaneous, considering motivation and opportunity served as the major determinants (Fazio, 1990 as cited in Fazio & Olson, 2014). Also, the model refers to the degree of cognition, motivation enable customer to retrieve or form attitudes effortfully toward an object.

The deliberate mode was assumed to happen under high level of motivation and cognitive capacity to guide behavior in a controllable manner. There were some assumptions to indicate that deliberate model was used to portray the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior, nevertheless, Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) argued that these theories actually adopted the spontaneous process model to guide the behavioral intention and actual action. The subsequent behavior of controlled mode would be consistent with the attitude. In contrast, when a person has no motivation or low capacity of cognition, the controlled process could not be employed, the spontaneous mode would take place instead. Fazio and Olson (2014) noted that the automatic activation only served strong attitude with the strong link created between evaluation and its object, in which memory was greatly accessible.

Furthermore, by biasing perception, these strong attitudes would likely become hard to change than the weak attitude.

After forming attitudes, according to Unidimensional Theoretical Orientation of Attitude, people tend to create intention to buy. “One of the fundamental premises of the value – attitude – behavior hierarchy is that a positive attitude leads to a corresponding behavioral intention” (Homer & Kahle, 1988; Milfont, Duckitt, & Wagner, 2010 as cited in Ryu, 2011). Pan and Zinkhan (2006) also studied that consumers who hold positive attitudes toward a store or store type would increase more chance to purchase at that store or store type. Furthermore, shoppers who go shopping for hedonic purpose may purchase more frequently and more likely to make unplanned purchases than customers go shopping for utilitarian needs (Scarpi, 2006).

Figure 2.3: The MODE Model



Source: Adapted from Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (2005). *The Handbook of Attitudes*. NJ: Lawrence, p. 185.

Meanwhile, Guiry, Magi, and Lutz (2006) found that the more consumer can enjoyed the fun nature of shopping, the more amount of time they can spend and significantly expend more money than those who do not not have positive attitude to shopping activity. These possibly can create a link between positive attitude towards a fashion brand due to effective visual merchandising and intention to buy brand's product. Hence, as indicated previously, the following section will move on to review the attitude towards visual merchandising in fast fashion retail as well as the course of brand attitude, specifically fast fashion.

#### Attitude toward Visual Merchandising

As claimed by Park et al. (2015), attitude toward visual merchandising is meant the evaluation or affective responses triggered by exposing to visual merchandising elements. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) found that environmental – behavior relation could be advocated by the human mood state that lead to the influence of in-store stimuli as well as store atmospheric toward consumer behavior (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). In the same way, Oh and Petrie (2012) supported this idea by assuming that people have the need to understand the environment and the need to explore the environment. The more coherent of environment stimuli (i.e, the consistence of store display, window display, signage), the more understanding would be facilitated while the more complex of environment stimuli (i.e, large amount of information need to be absorbed), the more exploration would be encouraged. Subsequently, consumer may vary the response to these in-store stimuli, in particular ways. Park et al. (2015) suggested that fashion brand need to provide the desired experiential value to customers within the store environment. People's visit store

decision is highly based on window display's evaluation. Meanwhile, the store layout will impact customer dwell time in store in term of judging the ease of movement and fashion inspiration from product display. Along with that, people expected to find the right clothing area, promotional fashion piece as well as fitting room, from proper signage system. Besides, interior, exterior designs and other visual factors of store possibly stimulate five senses of human, about which were discussed in art, environmental psychology and marketing (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). These attempts tried to demonstrate the visual factors that matter in provoking the attitude inside fast fashion store, which can lead to brand attitude and impulse purchasing behavior afterwards.

### Brand Attitude

As believed by Park et al. (2015), the correlation between consumer attitude toward visual merchandising and brand attitude was limited in term of investigation and examination. Especially, while shopping at retail store, the tendency in forming attitude toward brand after exposing and evaluating in-store marketing or advertising elements is possibly getting higher. Historically, the term "brand attitude" was defined as an evaluation from individual toward a brand overall, can be positive or negative (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Brand attitude includes personal perception about brand as well as summary judgment. As mentioned before, according to Spears and Singh (2004), brand attitude tends to be used to refer as an enduring process within unidimensional model. Park et al. (2015) hold a belief that when consumers had a favorable attitude toward brand, they would likely to have purchase intention to that brand and this may contribute to the predisposition in having actual purchase

behavior. Therefore, brand attitude is regarded to have significant influences on purchase behavior's prediction, which is mainly end up with unplanned purchase behavior. This normally happens after forming favorable attitude towards visual merchandising elements (Mehta & Chugan, 2013).

### **2.3.3 Consumer Involvement in Fashion**

The involvement of consumer for any shopping behavior is important to marketing field. Within fashion context, the impulse purchase behavior is highly influenced by the emotions that comes from fashion involvement of the consumers (Park et al., 2006).

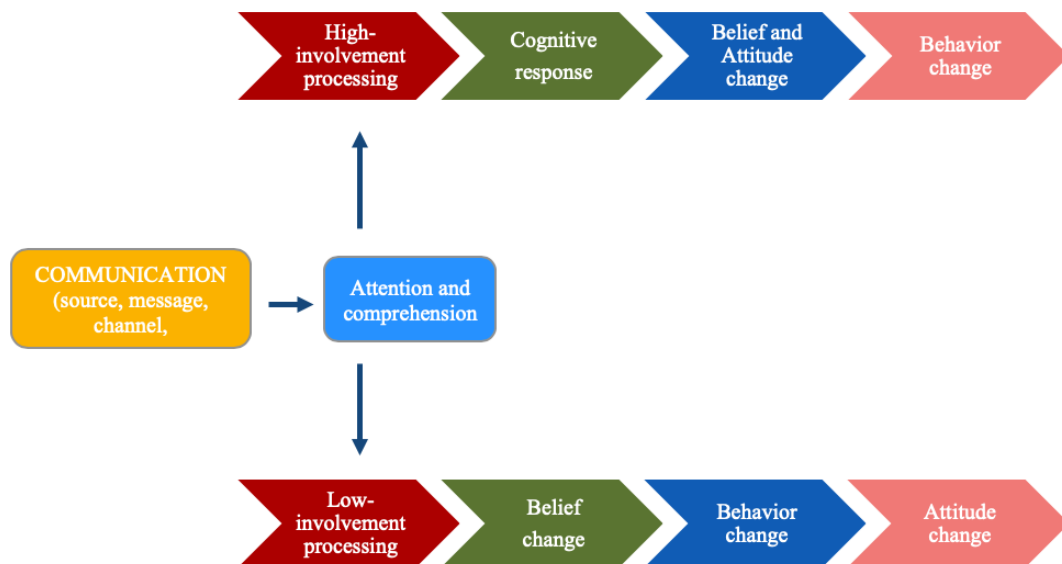
#### Definition

Consumer involvement is the way consumer judge the product by themselves, for themselves. This process is evoked by stimulus within a specific situation and can be defined "as a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, as cited in Boisvert & Ashill, 2011). The level of consumer involvement, whether is high or low, is crucial to determine which route consumer will be persuaded when exposing to the external marketing elements. This can be explained in Elaboration Likelihood Model by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) they demonstrated the degree of involvement have to have an effect on consumer information processing, either he or she is persuaded by central route or peripheral route.

The ELM model clearly distinguishes different type of decision making between consumers who is highly involved or lowly involved. When consumers have

ability and motivation to process and analyze key message from advertisers, they are taking central route.

Figure 2.4: The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion



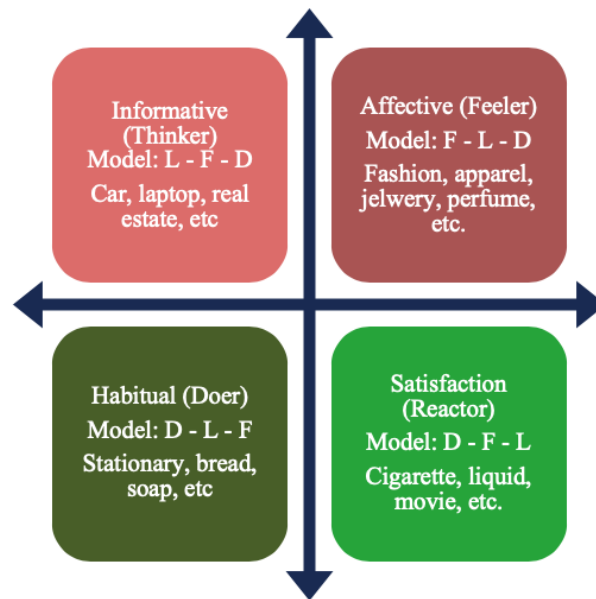
Source: Adapted from Solomon, M. (2017). *Consumer Behavior: Buying, having and being* (12th ed). Boston: Pearson, p. 323.

By contrast, when consumers are attracted to celebrity, visual components, music, smell and other cues that are not key message, they are persuaded by peripheral route. Talking to fashion retailers, all the elements that brand are using at the stores to catch shoppers' attentions could be both central and peripheral routes.

Additionally, in order to response to the demand of strategic advertising planning, Vaughn (1979) together with his colleagues, combined the tradition response theories, consumer behavior models and the consumer involvement hierarchy mentioned in previous parts, developed and come up with Foote, Cone and Belding (FCB Grid). This model explained different level of involvement as well as thinking or feeling base, can influence customer's decision-making process, which has 4

quadrants representing for different advertising strategies: informative, affective, habitual and satisfaction.

Figure 2.5: FCB Grid



Source: Adapted from Vaughn, R. (1986). How Advertising Works: A Planning Model Revisited, *Journal of Advertising Research*, p. 58.

### Fashion Involvement

In reality, fashion plays a significant role to customer living in the society. Moreover, fashion means different things to different people. Therefore, the involvement in fashion is identified quite important (O’Cass, 2004). According to Solomon (1996), materialism is important when people attach to worldly possessions. In addition, fashion product is treated as possessions that consumers can wear and show in public place, which is potentially affected by materialism-consumption. The abilities to be utility, appearance, financial worth, can convey status, success and prestige of possessions are clearly shown, so it is reasonable for O’Cass (2004) to



emphasize materialism is a key contributor of fashion clothing involvement beside gender and age.

In the end of fashion involvement, consumers may result with interpreting product knowledge and certain interactions with fashion products (O'Casey, 2004). Johnson and Russo (1984) viewed product knowledge as information of brands in product class or product-use context, with product attributes, frequency of use and experience with fashion. Many sources for consumers to gain and retrieve fashion knowledge: previous consumption, usage experience, advertising exposure, communicating with friend and salespeople. The more fashion affects consumers' life, the greater the contribution of fashion product in their lives. People who acknowledge much about his or her fashion clothing may result in having more confidence when making decision about apparel products.

Shopping for fashion products is one of the most popular pastimes all over the world (*A Global Perspective on Apparel Shoppers*, 2001). Seo, Hathcote, and Sweaney (2001), believed that shoppers who are comprehensively familiar with fashion and being an active consumers of fashion products, are truly high fashion-involved consumer. Kinley, Josiam, and Lockett (2010) found that shoppers who is highly involved enjoy shopping activity, enjoy being in the stores, and paying more attention to the visual merchandising and displays. In addition, high involvement shoppers tend to shop more often, spend more money on clothing each month than those who are low involvement. On the contrary, low involvement shoppers implied that they are not type of people who seek for alternative opinions from others very often, but they can be inspired for garment choices by observing other people. That is how consumer involvement matters to fashion consumption.

Fashion involvement is also claimed to make an impact on consumers' decision about fashion store patronage. Take as example, specialist apparel stores and department stores are likely chosen by consumers who are highly involved in fashion to shop at rather than at discount stores (McKinney, Legette-Traylor, Kincade, & Holloman, 2004 as cited in Ryu, 2011). And they are more likely to be aware of name brands and fashion trends (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992 as cited in Kinley et al., 2010) than people who are low involved.

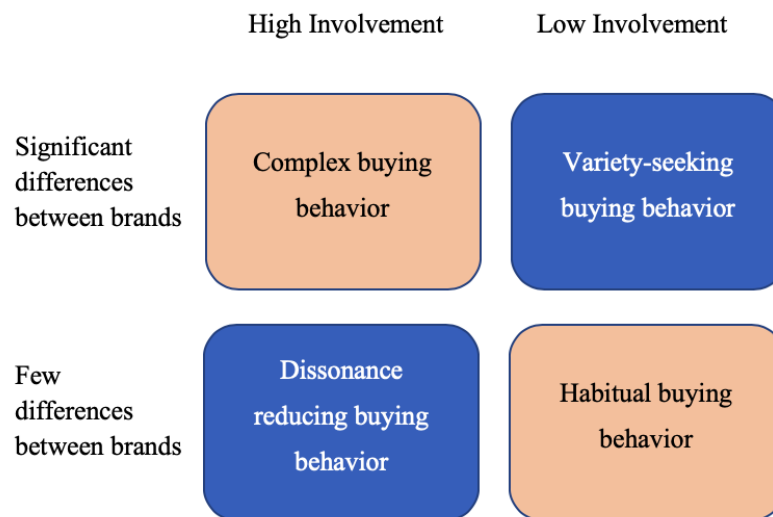
#### **2.3.4 Consumer Purchasing Behavior**

As claimed by Kotler (1997), consumer purchasing behavior is the process involves selection, purchase and disposal product, service, idea or experience in order to meet consumer's demand. Likewise, Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) added "performance in the search for, purchase, use and evaluate the behavior of products and service to meet the demand" to describe consumer buying behavior. Also, demographic factors is playing a significant role in modifying purchasing action due to age, gender, income, professional, education, nationality and so on (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001; Flynn & Giráldez, 1995). These items have been using widely in social science research because of the ease to measure.

As mentioned above, based on FCB Grid, the buying action can happen after learning, feeling or before them or between them. Which means that for different brands, products, services or experience, consumers decide to vary the buying behaviors. Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong (1999) adapted from Henry Assael (1987) to come up with the 4 types of buying behavior: Complex, variety-seeking, dissonance-reducing and habitual. These 4 types were categorized basing on the level

of involvement and differences perceptions among brands which can be listed as planned purchase and unplanned purchase. However, in fast fashion retail, many researchers believed that impulse purchase, a type of unplanned purchase, tends to take place more often than other types (Mehta & Chugan, 2013; Park et al., 2015; Gudonaviciene & Alijosiene, 2015; Cook & Yurchisin, 2017). This impulse purchase phenomenon has been investigated in fast fashion industry because its in-store environmental stimuli are believed can trigger buying action spontaneously in order to satisfy alternative needs.

Figure 2.6: Four Types of Buying Behavior



Source: Adapted from Kotler, P., Wong, V., Saunders, J., & Armstrong, G. (1999). *Principle of Marketing* (2nd European ed). London: Prentice Hall, p. 251.

The purchase environment inside the shop is crucial for both customers and marketers. To marketers, the matter is to understand how customer experience in-store environment and interact with various stimuli (Solomon, 2017). To customers, especially hedonic customers, shopping environment enable them to better the mood, feel pleasure and fun in purchasing journey. At the physical store, marketers hope to

affect consumer's purchase decision by using various communications vehicles, including displays, packaging, sales promotions, in-store advertising, and salespeople (Quelch & Cannon-Bonventre, 1983). Visual stimuli at a point of purchase will influence consumers' intention to buy (Clement, 2007). Furthermore, Mehta and Chugan (2013) explained that visual merchandising is a procedure that arranges merchandise in a way customers want and needs in the right place, at the right time, aim to influence consumers' fashion purchases. They also explored that display tactics, including activity such as promotional signage, mannequins and products display or door and windows decorations, would affect shoppers' impulse buying behavior.

#### Impulse Purchase

Understanding consumers is never be easy because their behavior is complex and relatively unpredictable. They do not always purchase and get what they want, at the same time, they also buy something that do not actually need. Furthermore, their behavior is not always similar to their words (Graves, 2010). Thus, when fast fashion brands have a chance to advance the purchase intention into actual purchase inside their physical store, they would invest in visual merchandising to take advantage of impulse purchasing behavior.

While some consumers decision is usually viewed as rational and cognitive, there are some decisions are seen as irrational and irresistible. Unplanned purchase is defined as a purchasing behavior that has not been planned to happen in advance. There are five types of unplanned purchasing behavior, but impulse purchase is considered as the most frequent action in fast fashion retail (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst,

2010; Mehta & Chugan, 2013; Ryu, 2011). Those spontaneous, intense and irresistible purchasing behaviors are considered as impulse behavior. Moreover, Rook (1987) clarified “impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately”. Lee and Kacen (2008) described impulse purchase behavior as “less deliberate, more arousing, more irresistible buying behavior compared to planned purchases” as well. By the same token, this belief can be found in Mehta and Chugan (2013) research, which emphasized that consumers are careless about the purchase behavior as well as its consequences. The outcome may cause by the hedonic or emotional component from consumer’s internal factors.

In line with previous review, the real number of impulsive spenders among global consumers in 2019 is triple comparing to 2017 and 2018 (Shridhar, 2019). Moreover, their global distribution in consumption is make up to 15% of the total global expenditure. 80% people choose to shop impulsively because they want to enjoy life and do not worry about planning in future while more than 60% of them are willing to spend more money to save time. Therefore, the author suggested in order to make the most out of spontaneous expenditure in store, brand and retailer need to ensure the in-store service is quick and easy to use. The degree of impulsiveness is not the same from person to person (Rook & Fisher, 1995), not certain types of product have more possibility to be purchased spontaneously than others (Narasimhan, Neslin, & Sen, 1996). According to Youn and Faber (2000), there are different sources to trigger the impulse buying behavior in term of internal factors as well as environmental cues. The feelings and the state of mind are seen as internal elements while the atmospheric of retail environment, the displays, the in-store marketing

elements and other marketers' controlled hints are categorized as environmental stimuli.

Park et al. (2006) claimed that many scholars in the past tried to dig into impulse buying behavior, which concentrated on the typology of impulse buying, to understand the role of fashion involvement in projecting fashion-oriented impulse buying. Base on Han et al. (1991) study, fashion impulse buying was classified as four types: planned impulse buying; reminded impulse buying; fashion-oriented impulse buying; and pure impulse buying. In keeping with above study, Yu and Bastin (2010) tried to identify characteristics of impulse buyers and found that impulsive shoppers like to buy new products new and to buy things on the spot. In conjunction with, Cook and Yurchisin (2017) stated that there is a significant link between attitude toward fast fashion brand and purchasing apparel impulsively. The main sources for consumers to access and collect information are available inside the store at that moment that can determine the impact of store elements on impulse purchase (Kollat & Willet, 1967). Due to the limited information and decision making time, consumers may end up in unthoughtful and unconsidered decisions.

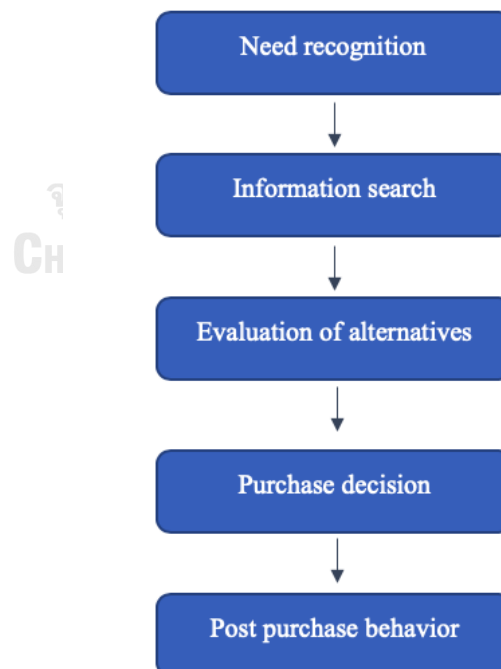
#### Planned Purchase

In contrast with impulse purchase, planned purchase is an activity that occur when consumers think cognitively and made a rational purchase. Consumer behaviors are strongly affected by many factors. Specifically, consumer purchasing behaviors are also thoroughly influenced by different factors categorized in 4 types: cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). Alternative factors own different level of influence on consumers that marketers must

consider them seriously. Overall, consumers will be persuaded or motivated to purchase, to shop by the complex mixing forces from 4 factors mentioned above.

Buying process is complex and varies extremely for different types of products: kitchen wear will be different from technology products, or clothing. Also, more complicated products will involve more deliberation and consideration from buyer. To take a closer look at how consumers can process their thoughts and behavior, Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong (1999) examined those stages that consumers had passed through, by buyer decision process model including 5 steps: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior. In accordance with this, Solomon (2017) called this process as cognitive decision making process which happens in similar stages.

*Figure 2.7: Buyer Decision Process*



Source: Adapted from Kotler, P., Wong, V., Saunders, J., & Armstrong, G. (1999). *Principle of Marketing* (2nd European ed). London: Prentice Hall, p. 254.

Although in some cases, consumers may skip or reverse these steps, but on the whole, buyer decision process can show all considerations or concerns may come up when consumers expose to new or complex product. This process starts long before consumer actually make a purchase and keeps going after that.

#### *Need Recognition*

This step is the very first step in this process for consumer to realize and acknowledge their trouble and necessity. By different internal and external triggers or stimuli, consumer can picture their current state and desired state and come up with the objects to satisfy and fulfill that need themselves (Solomon, 2017).

#### *Information Search*

Next in the process, consumer starts undertaking information search related to their need from many sources: personal, commercial, public or experiential. For buyers, while commercial sources can provide the most information, the most effective one tends to be personal sources, which can legitimize and value options (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011).

#### *Evaluation of Alternatives*

In order to finalize the brand choices, consumers need to take alternative evaluation step including many different evaluation works. This can also vary from individuals and particular purchasing situation, from careful calculation, logical thinking to little evaluation, spontaneous behavior (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011).

#### *Purchase Decision*

After ranking alternative brands and options, consumers take the next step in making a purchase their most preferred products, brands. Moreover, Kotler and Armstrong (2011) stated that there are 2 factors can pop up in this step between



intention and decision, which are attitudes of other people and unexpected situational factors.

#### *Post Purchase Behavior*

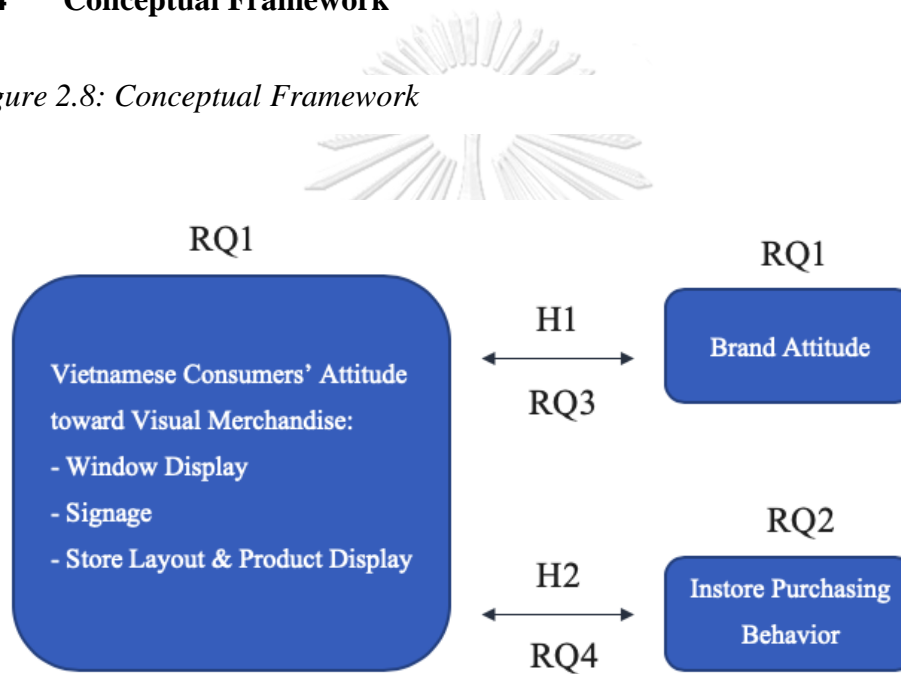
Buying the product is not the end of this process. Marketers and brands also pay attention to post purchase behavior to check whether consumer like or dislike, satisfy or not with their purchase. Kotler and Armstrong (2011) emphasized the importance of correlation between consumer's expectation and product's perceived performance because this will lead to different behaviors: re-purchase, introduce to others, pay less attention to brand's competitors, or spread word of mouth if they find the products did not meet their high hopes.

To summary chapter 2, visual merchandising can be the fiercest marketing element for fashion retailers, but in most cases, it may only work with hedonic shoppers and high fashion-involvement consumers. Offline store in fashion retailing is still a key touch point for brand to communicates with shoppers despite of technology disruption and the fall of some fast fashion retails such as Forever21, Topshop and Topman. Nevertheless, fashion consumption is complex and unpredictable due to its globalization, internalization and complicated human behavior. To Vietnamese consumers, with the appearance of international brands, people there have more choices in many product categories. Within fast fashion context, those brands like Zara or H&M are gaining great attention from consumers due to big reputation as well as glamorous giant branches in main cities. The market is getting more and more competitive with the participation of Uniqlo in December 2019 and the growth of many Vietnamese private designers. They all trying to stay in

consumers heart and mind as long as possible. Hence, beside having trendy and catchy garments, fast fashion brand should invest in the right elements and be more cautious about visual merchandising in brick-and-mortar store. Since it already attracts a great deal of visiting per day, there are chances to encourage consumers to make unplanned and impulsive purchase.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.8: Conceptual Framework



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research used Quantitative method to study Vietnamese consumers attitude and their impulse purchasing behavior on fast fashion over the past 12 months. An online survey was conducted to collect primary data from female respondents. While Vietnamese consumers' attitude was examined through attitude toward visual merchandising and brand attitude, the purchase behavior was measured through in-store impulse purchase. The questionnaire included eight sections to cover screening, demographic, consumer attitude and impulse purchasing behavior. This chapter goes into details of sample and sampling method, data collection and data analysis, questionnaire format and measurement of variables.

#### **3.1 Research Sample and Sampling Method**

Total 220 respondents were asked to do the survey. They must be over 18 years old in 2019, living and working or study in Ho Chi Minh city of Vietnam. In order to reach the target participants, this study distributed the questionnaire through an online survey and posted on personal Facebook account, as well as contacts H&M Facebook page admin. Also, the online questionnaire link was shared in groups with friends and introduce to friends' networks. The online questionnaire was designed via Google Form. All the respondents must be existing customers of H&M, which means they visited H&M store over the past 6 months and bought H&M product in the past 12 months at H&M stores. Furthermore, the respondents essentially must be exposed to certain visual merchandising elements inside the store that can stimulate their

attitudes towards window displays, signages, store layout, product display and H&M itself.

The sampling and sample stage were non-probability sampling techniques to pick the online group can answer the questionnaires. By sending survey link to groups of friends and acquaintances (convenience sampling), fashion lovers groups (purposive sampling), then the respondents introduced to their networks later on (snowball sampling), this project collected qualified 202 respondents.

### **3.2 Questionnaire Format**

The questionnaire was developed in Vietnamese including four parts, combined yes or no questions and multiple-choice format. The survey introduction was put at the beginning of the survey to briefly explain the objectives and provide the overview of the study to the respondents. After that, 2 screening questions were asked in order to filter the qualified respondents and who are not for this research. People who did not meet both two criteria would end this survey immediately.

Generally, the descriptions for each section of questionnaire are listed respectively as below:

Part one included 19 question about respondents' attitude toward visual merchandising of H&M store using 5-point Likert scale questions, this part aims to get customers' evaluation on the physical store in general and through window display, signage, store layout and product display.

Part two includes 3 questions using 5-point Likert scale questions, measure on Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M brand.

Part three with 3 questions on respondents' impulse purchasing behavior in-store measure on 5-point Likert scale.

Part four with 4 demographics questions will be asked to understand the characteristics of this segment by their background information, using a nominal scale.

### **3.3 Measurement of the Variables**

This study included three variables, which were Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward visual merchandising, brand attitude and instore purchasing behavior. When studying consumer behavior inside the store with quantitative methodology, previous researchers investigated numerous stages of attitudes of human being, including attitude triggering by visual merchandising, brand attitude and consequently result in spontaneous buying behavior (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Mehta & Chugan, 2013; Ryu, 2011).

Consumer attitude toward visual merchandising consists of 19 items adapted from Park et al. (2015); Mohan et al. (2013); Dale (2018) and Sen et al. (2002), using 5-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement on attitude toward each element individually. Consumer attitude toward fast fashion brand, 4 items are adopted from Park et al. (2015); Dale (2018); and Sen et al. (2002). These 23 items all use 5-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement on attitude toward fast fashion brand, the scale ranges as below.

5 – Point Likert Scale		Scoring Scale with Interval for Inferential	
Level of Agreement	Score	Definition	Scoring Range
Strongly Disagree	1	Strongly Disagree	1.00 – 1.81
Disagree	2	Disagree	1.81 – 2.60
Neutral	3	Neutral	2.61 – 3.40
Agree	4	Agree	3.41 – 4.20
Strongly Agree	5	Strongly Agree	4.21 – 5.00

Consumers purchasing behavior with 4 items adapted from Mehta and Chugan (2013); Chang et al. (2014); Mohan et al. (2013). Using a 5-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement of the concepts, the scale ranges as below:

5 – Point Likert Scale		Scoring Scale with Interval for Inferential	
Level of Agreement	Score	Definition	Scoring Range
Very Unlikely	1	Very Unlikely	1.00 – 1.81
Unlikely	2	Unlikely	1.81 – 2.60
Neutral	3	Neutral	2.61 – 3.40
Likely	4	Likely	3.41 – 4.20
Very Likely	5	Very Likely	4.21 – 5.00

### 3.4 Validity and Reliability

In order to distribute the questionnaire, this study needed to ensure the validity and reliability. In term of validity check, this study applied content validity checking with the revision from advisor for the questionnaire, to guarantee all the necessary information could be provided through questionnaire, as well as minimize the errors could happen. Besides, there had been a pilot study to get response from 30 qualified respondents, who are Vietnamese people, have visited H&M store within the last 6

months and purchased products there over the past 12 months. The questionnaire was modified based on the result from the pilot study, in order to improve the validity.

In term of reliability check, the purpose was to ensure the clearness and simplicity of questionnaire toward respondents to generate a smooth collection data process. After collecting the data from pilot study with 30 responses, the data were computed coefficient alpha to ensure the internal consistency. The pre-test Cronbach's Alpha results were greater 0.7 to strengthen the validity as well as reliability of this study:

1. Attitude toward visual merchandising: 0.83
2. Brand attitude: 0.86
3. Impulse purchasing behavior: 0.72

### **3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis**

The data of this project was collected via online Google Form platform and the online survey was distributed from Middle of October to Middle of November 2019. The data was processed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). All the findings of this research were described by descriptive statistic in the data analysis part, with the result of means and standard deviation.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter will discuss the findings resulted from the survey. This online survey was conducted to collect the data through fashion shopping groups and H&M Facebook Page. The sample size is 202 qualified respondents while there are totally 220 participants when the survey was finished. Thus, the obtained data were used from 202 respondents to study and report in descriptive analysis as well as inferential analysis.

#### 4.1 Findings from Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis of this research is separated into 3 different parts:

1. The demographic profile of respondents including age, gender, educational level and shopping frequency.
2. Attitude toward H&M brand and visual merchandising
3. In-store purchasing behavior

##### 4.1.1 Demographic profile of samples

This demographic section in this study provides the information about the respondents' age, educational level and their shopping frequency at H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city. This part presented 202 Vietnamese consumers who visited H&M stores in Ho Chi Minh city within last 6 months and bought the product over the past 12 months.

Among the respondents, 107 people are aged between 25 to 30 that makes up to 53% of participants as the majority. Following is people who are from 18 to 24



years old and comprises of 33.7% (68 participants) of Vietnamese respondents. Meanwhile, the percentage of people who are from 31 to 35 years old is 7.9% (16 participants). The elder groups consisted of 36 to 40 years old make up to 2.5%, 41 to 45 years old comprises of 1.5%, which is equal to the proportion of people who are over 50 years old. Moreover, female makes up around 74.3% of the sample (150 participants) to become the majority while male respondents are 25.7% (52 participants).

For educational level, people who got bachelor's degree is the majority with 55.4% (112 participants), following is the respondent who owns less than bachelor's degree or equivalent with 30.2%. While there is a small fraction of people with master's degree at 14.4% and no one owns a higher degree than Master.

Besides, for the shopping frequency at H&M stores in Ho Chi Minh city, 124 participants reported to shop there several times a year, comprises of 61.4% as the majority. Respectively, 41 respondents make up to 20.3% shopped once a month, other answers (occasionally, for specific events) make up to 10.9% with 22 respondents. Only 9 people shop at H&M store twice a month, comprises of 4.5% and 6 people shop there several times a month at 3%. These results are described in Table

4.1

Table 4.1: Demographic Information

<b>Demographic Information</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 24	68	33.7
25 – 30	107	53.0
31 – 35	16	7.9
36 – 40	5	2.5
41 – 45	3	1.5
46 – 50	0	0
> 50	3	1.5
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	25.7
Female	150	74.3
<b>Educational level</b>		
Less than Bachelor's degree or equivalent	61	30.2
Bachelor's degree	112	55.4
Master's degree	29	14.4
Higher than master's degree	0	0
<b>Shopping Frequency at H&amp;M</b>		
Several times a month	6	3.0
Twice a month	9	4.5
Once a month	41	20.3
Several times a year	124	61.4
Others (Occasional, Special events, etc)	22	10.9

#### **4.1.2 Attitude toward Visual Merchandising of H&M stores in Ho Chi**

##### **Minh city**

In this part, the data of Vietnamese consumers' attitude will be presented and described in different categories: general, window display, signage, store layout and product display.

Table 4.2: Attitude toward H&amp;M Visual Merchandising in Ho Chi Minh city

Statement	%					M	SD
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Up-to-date fashion at H&M store is nicely presented through an effective color scheme and presentation skill	0.50	6.40	34.20	42.60	16.30	3.68 (Agree)	0.84
The interior design in the H&M store is attractively arranged	0.00	10.90	30.70	40.60	17.80	3.65 (Agree)	0.89
The exterior design in the H&M store is attractively arranged	0.50	5.40	36.10	41.10	16.80	3.68 (Agree)	0.83
H&M stores' visual merchandising is appealing to me	2.50	5.40	34.20	40.60	17.30	3.65 (Agree)	0.91
H&M stores' visual merchandising may influence my purchase decision	2.50	7.40	24.80	35.10	30.2	3.83 (Agree)	1.02
Looking at window displays of H&M stores make it easier for me to visualize whether I would look good or not with those merchandise	2.00	5.90	21.80	38.60	31.70	3.92 (Agree)	0.97
Window displays of H&M stores show me the latest trends and fashions for the new seasons	1.00	4.50	21.80	39.10	33.70	4.00 (Agree)	0.90
My decision to enter H&M stores often depends on their window displays	5.00	11.40	20.30	33.20	30.20	3.72 (Agree)	1.15
Window displays of H&M stores often play an important role in my purchase decisions at the store	4.00	11.90	26.70	32.20	25.20	3.63 (Agree)	1.10
What I see in window displays of H&M stores often end up being what I buy in the store	9.40	18.80	45.50	18.30	7.90	2.97 (Neutral)	1.03

Statement	%					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
H&M logo sign is an important factor in my decision to enter the store	0.50	6.40	34.20	42.60	16.30	3.56 (Agree)	1.15
The signages inside H&M stores display nicely and deliver information effectively about the new merchandises	0.00	10.90	30.70	40.60	17.80	3.70 (Agree)	0.89
Direction signs inside H&M stores are necessary for customers to easily locate their desired products in the store	0.50	5.40	36.10	41.10	16.80	4.07 (Agree)	0.89
What I buy at H&M store often depend on the promotion signages	2.50	5.40	34.20	40.60	17.30	3.70 (Agree)	1.10
It was easy to move around inside H&M stores	1.00	8.40	18.30	43.10	29.20	3.91 (Agree)	0.94
It was easy to locate the product/merchandise inside H&M stores	2.00	15.80	32.70	30.70	18.80	3.49 (Agree)	1.03
The product display, mannequins, theme-related properties in H&M store are appealing to me	2.00	5.40	26.20	44.60	21.80	3.79 (Agree)	0.91
Up-to-date fashion was nicely presented through H&M store layout and product display	1.50	3.00	24.30	44.60	26.70	3.92 (Agree)	0.87
What I buy at H&M store often depend on the store layout and product display	3.50	12.90	39.10	27.20	17.30	3.42 (Agree)	1.03
Total						3.70 (Agree)	0.52

From Table 4.2, overall, the attitude of Vietnamese consumers toward H&M's visual merchandising is in the high level ( $M = 3.70$ ). Specifically, the statement "H&M stores' visual merchandising may influence my purchase decision" has the highest strongly agree proportion ( $M = 3.83$ ). Also, the respondents agree with "Window displays of H&M stores show me the latest trends and fashions for the new

seasons” ( $M = 4.00$ ). In the same way, the attitude toward H&M’s store signage is also at a high level with the most agreed statement is “Direction signs inside H&M stores are necessary for customers to easily locate their desired products in the store” ( $M = 4.07$ ). Following, for the store layout and product display of H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city, “Up-to-date fashion was nicely presented through H&M store layout and product display” is agreed most by the respondent ( $M = 3.92$ ). Whereas, the respondents agreed at lower level for the statement “What I see in window displays of H&M stores often end up being what I buy in the store” ( $M = 2.97$ ).

#### 4.1.3 Attitude toward H&M brand

This part presents the thought and attitude of 202 Vietnamese consumers about H&M as a fashion brand, with the high level of agreement ( $M = 3.84$ ). In particular, the statement “I think H&M brand is good” is agreed the most with mean of 3.98 while “I am pleased about H&M brand” is moderately agree with mean of 3.75. The results are described in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.3: Attitude toward H&M Brand

Statement	%					$M$	$SD$
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
I think H&M brand is good	0.00	3.50	20.80	50.00	25.70	3.98 (Agree)	0.77
I like H&M brand	1.50	3.50	30.20	41.60	23.30	3.82 (Agree)	0.88
I am pleased about H&M brand	1.00	6.90	30.20	40.10	21.80	3.75 (Agree)	0.90
Total						3.84 (Agree)	0.76

#### 4.1.4 Impulse Purchasing Behavior

However, in reality, the real impulse purchase from Vietnamese consumers at H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city could be different from their attitudes. This part will describe the impulsive purchasing behavior at H&M stores from 202 respondents over the past 12 months.

From the obtained data, over the past 12 months, the majority of respondents was unlikely or neutral in purchasing impulsively at H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city ( $M = 2.88$ ). Among 202 Vietnamese consumers, 43.6% of them show somehow unlikely or likely to buy new clothes or new style product in H&M stores, 25.2% of them could be likely to buy with mean of 3.27. The findings are shown in Table 4.5.

*Table 4.4: Impulse Purchasing Behavior inside H&M stores in Ho Chi Minh city*

Statement	%					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely		
I buy clothing with a new style if I see it in H&M store	2.00	17.30	43.60	25.20	10.90	3.27 (Neutral)	0.94
I buy H&M fashion product with to catch up with new trend	10.40	22.30	42.60	18.80	5.90	2.88 (Neutral)	1.02
I often buy H&M fashion product without thinking in its store	21.30	29.20	32.20	11.40	5.90	2.51 (Disagree)	1.12
Total						2.88 (Neutral)	0.87

Besides, for the statement “I buy H&M fashion product with to catch up with new trend”, 42.6% was neutrally in this behavior while 22.3% of them was unlikely to behave as this statement ( $M = 2.88$ ). Additionally, only 32.2% of respondents were neutral in often buying H&M product without thinking or spontaneously while 29.2% was unlikely and 21.3% was very unlikely to behave in that manner. This scale was tested with Cronbach’s Alpha at 0.89 in order to be valid and reliable to measure.

## 4.2 Findings from Inferential Analysis

For this inferential analysis part, from results of 202 Vietnamese consumers, the findings can be discussed into 2 parts:

H1: Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to brand attitude.

H2: Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to their purchasing behavior.

### 4.2.1 Hypothesis 1

**Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to brand attitude.**

*Table 4.5: Relationship between Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Brand Attitude*

Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising	Brand Attitude	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>
General H&M Visual Merchandising	0.60**	0.00
Window Display	0.29**	0.00
Signage	0.42**	0.00
Store Layout and Product Display	0.46**	0.00
Overall	0.58**	0.00

The Pearson Correlation was used to find the relationship between Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Brand Attitude and the results are described in Table 4.6. From there, attitude toward general H&M visual merchandising ( $r = 0.60$ ) has positive relationship with brand attitude (attitude toward H&M brand) at 0.05 significant level. Likewise, attitude toward different elements of visual merchandising such as window display ( $r = 0.29$ ), signage ( $r = 0.42$ ) or store

layout and product display ( $r = 0.46$ ) all have positive relationship with brand attitude. Overall, Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude is significantly positive ( $r = 0.58$ ) at 0.05 significant level. In other words, there is an extremely positive relationship between attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude.

#### 4.2.2 Hypothesis 2

**Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to their purchasing behavior**

*Table 4.6: Relationship between Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Instore Purchasing Behavior*

Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising	Instore Purchasing Behavior	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>
General H&M Visual Merchandising	0.46**	0.00
Window Display	0.38**	0.00
Signage	0.36**	0.00
Store Layout and Product Display	0.57**	0.00
Overall	0.57**	0.00

In order to find the relationship between Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Brand Attitude, Pearson Correlation was employed. From Table 4.7, attitude toward general H&M visual merchandising ( $r = 0.46$ ) has positive relationship with instore purchasing behavior at 0.05 significant level. In the same manner, attitude toward different elements of visual merchandising such as window display ( $r = 0.38$ ), signage ( $r = 0.36$ ) or store layout and product display ( $r = 0.57$ ) all have positive relationship with instore purchasing behavior.



Overall, Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and their instore purchasing behavior is significantly positive at 0.05 significant level. In other words, there is an extremely positive relationship between attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and instore purchasing behavior.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will use the findings from the study of the topic “Vietnamese Consumers’ Attitude toward H&M Brand, Visual Merchandising and Their Purchasing Behavior” to reach these research objectives as following:

1. To explore Vietnamese consumers’ attitude toward H&M brand and its visual merchandising.
2. To explore Vietnamese consumers’ purchasing behavior at H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city.
3. To examine the relationship between Vietnamese consumers’ attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude
4. To examine the relationship between Vietnamese consumers’ attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and their purchasing behavior at Ho Chi Minh city’s store.

#### 5.1 Summary

This part of the research will describe the data gathered by quantitative approach. By using the online survey from Mid October to Mid November, 2019, this study collected 202 qualified responses over the past 12 months. The summary will be divided into two parts: descriptive and inferential analysis.

##### Descriptive Analysis

This part consists of the findings from demographic profile of the participants, their attitude toward H&M visual merchandising, brand attitude and their instore purchasing behavior.

### Inferential Analysis

This part includes the findings regarding to 2 research hypotheses, which are:

H1: Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to brand attitude.

H2: Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to their purchasing behavior.

### **5.1.1 Summary of Descriptive Analysis**

#### Demographic Information

Among 202 respondents, while 74.3% of respondents are female (150 people), male is made up to 25.7% (52 people). Also the majority of them are aged between 24 to 30 years old at 53%, meanwhile the small number of them are over 40 years old (3%). The proportion of respondents got Bachelor's degree is the highest with 55.4%, In contrast, none of them own a higher degree than master's degree (0%). 61.4% of respondents shopped at H&M store several times a year over past 12 months while only 3% of them shopped several times a month.

#### Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising

In general, the level of agreement on attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is high ( $M = 3.59$ ).

In details, from the respondents, they agreed that H&M visual merchandising may influence their purchasing decision with the mean of 3.83). Likewise, they strongly agreed that window display of H&M stores showed them latest trend and fashion for the new season ( $M = 4.00$ ). For signage, respondents extremely agree that

direction signs inside H&M store were necessary for them to easily locate their desired products with the mean of 4.07. They also agree that up-to-date fashion was nicely presented through H&M store layout and display ( $M = 3.92$ ).

#### Attitude toward H&M brand

Overall, from 202 Vietnamese consumers, the agreement on attitude toward H&M is fairly high with the mean of 3.84. Specifically, the statement that described H&M as a good brand was extremely agreed ( $M = 3.98$ ) while agreement on getting pleasure from H&M brand is at a lower level with the mean of 3.75.

#### Instore Purchasing Behavior

In contrast with those statements above, the findings for this part are mostly described as unlikely or neutral to made impulsive purchases over the past 12 months in H&M store in Ho Chi Minh city ( $M = 2.88$ ). Particularly, more than 50% of respondents unlikely to very unlikely to purchase without thinking inside H&M stores.

### **5.1.2 Summary of Inferential Analysis**

#### Hypothesis 1

**Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to brand attitude.**

The result shows that overall, there is a significantly positive relationship between H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude ( $r = 0.58$ ).

Moreover, the findings show that there is a significantly positive relationship between H&M visual merchandising in general and brand attitude ( $r = 0.60$ ). In another word, respondents' attitude who like H&M visual merchandising would have positive attitude toward H&M brand at 0.05 significant level. Specifically, attitude toward window display and brand attitude ( $r = 0.29$ ). Vietnamese consumers who adore window display of H&M store would have positive feeling and attitude toward H&M brand. Likewise, there is also a significantly positive relationship between signage and brand attitude ( $r = 0.42$ ). Vietnamese consumers who adore signage in H&M store would have positive feeling and attitude toward H&M brand. In the same manner, there is a significantly positive relationship between store layout, product display and brand attitude ( $r = 0.46$ ). Vietnamese consumers who adore signage in H&M store would have positive feeling and attitude toward H&M brand.

### Hypothesis 2

**Vietnamese consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising is positively related to instore purchasing behavior.**

The result shows that, overall, there is a significantly positive relationship between H&M visual merchandising and instore purchasing behavior ( $r = 0.57$ ).

Moreover, there is a significantly positive relationship between general H&M visual merchandising and instore purchasing behavior ( $r = 0.46$ ). Vietnamese consumers who adore general H&M visual merchandising would have a higher level of purchasing behavior inside H&M store at 0.05 significant level. Specifically, the result shows that there is a significantly positive relationship between window display and instore purchasing behavior ( $r = 0.38$ ). Vietnamese consumers who adore window

displays at H&M store would have a higher level of purchasing behavior inside H&M store. Also, there is a significantly positive relationship between signage in H&M store and instore purchasing behavior ( $r = 0.36$ ). Vietnamese consumers who adore signages in H&M store would have a higher level of purchasing behavior inside H&M store. Lastly, there is a significantly positive relationship between store layout, product display in H&M store and instore purchasing behavior ( $r = 0.57$ ). Vietnamese consumers who adore store layout, product display of H&M store would have a higher level of purchasing behavior inside H&M store.

## 5.2 Discussion

This section will discuss, analyze the findings and interpret them into valuable and meaningful insights, which can be relevant to literature review part. There are four parts that need to be addressed in discussion section: consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and brand attitude, consumers' attitude toward H&M visual merchandising and impulse purchasing behavior and two hypotheses.

### 5.2.1 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Brand Attitude

In agreement with past research, in general, the respondents from this study admitted H&M visual merchandising may impact their purchase with the mean of 3.83. In the meantime, they also found that those latest fashion items were nicely presented through effective colorful scheme and presentation skill ( $M = 3.68$ ). Visual merchandising in fast fashion has been emphasized to be one of the most important marketing tools that affect consumers behavior inside brand's store (Mehta &

Chugan, 2013, Kerfoot, Davies, & Ward, 2003). Due to its functions, when consumers evaluate brand's visual merchandising, this will result in forming attitude toward different instore stimulus and activities from the brand (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010), such as window display, signage, store layout and product display.

In details, the respondents strongly agreed that window display of H&M store showed them the latest trend and fashion items ( $M = 4.00$ ) as well as it helped them easier in visualizing themselves to look good or not in those merchandises ( $M = 3.92$ ). Past research stated that window display is perceived as the very first impression can be made to attract customers. By the same token, there is a big chance for H&M to convince customer to buy the merchandise presenting on their windows (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). In the same way, signage also plays a significant role in visual merchandising due to its function in providing precise information and promotion (Kim, 2013). The respondents extremely agreed that direction signs in H&M stores were necessary to locate their desired fashion items ( $M = 4.07$ ). Besides, they also agreed that what they bought might depend on promotion signs ( $M = 3.70$ ) and those signages were displayed nicely and effectively delivered information inside store ( $M = 3.70$ ). To store layout and product display, a strategic floor plan and usage of space can generate valuable and convincing flow for consumers wandering inside physical store (Lusch et al., 2011), even extend the time they may spend on fashion shopping (Sachdeva & Goel, 2015). In accordance with this opinion, the respondents strongly agreed that latest fashion items were displayed nicely through store layout, product display ( $M = 3.92$ ). They also admitted that it was easy to move inside the store with the mean of 3.91.

As shown above, the attitude toward the brand could be formed right after consumers evaluating the visual merchandising inside the store, which includes personal perception and judgment (Mietchell & Olson, 1981). The actual purchase could be made as a result of having favorable attitude toward brand (Mehta & Chugan, 2013). The respondents extremely agreed that H&M brand is good ( $M = 3.98$ ), as well as they like H&M brand ( $M = 3.82$ ).

### **5.2.2 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising and Impulse Purchasing Behavior**

In accordance with previous studies, the result shows that Vietnamese people who are aged from 18 to 35 years old bought H&M fashion product several times a year made up to 58% of respondents. These proportions strengthen Nhan and Le (2019) belief that millennial has a strong buying power and certain influences on fashion retail market. As mentioned before, Vietnamese consumers are familiar with international fast fashion brands even before brands' official market entrance (Fast Fashion set to transform market, 2018) and have preference for Western brands. Nevertheless, international brands are still facing difficulties in order to adapt and satisfy Vietnamese market (Carrasco, 2017; Le & Nhan, 2019). To H&M, although the store visit number is high, but most of consumers did not buy fashion product many times per month. They prefer to spend money occasionally than regularly monthly as the result shows 61.4% of respondents shopped in H&M store several times a year. Moreover, the younger generation is keen on H&M fashion products than the elder generation, as they are inspired by fashionistas, affected by influencer marketing and being described as fashion-oriented people (Nguyen, 2018).



Moreover, despite the fact that consumers have positive feelings and attitude toward visual merchandising and its elements, their impulse purchase tendencies at H&M store are limited. Vietnamese people are still cautious and make less spontaneous buying behavior on this brand. According to the findings above, respondents have neutral tendency in purchasing new style items in H&M store often ( $M = 3.27$ ) while respondents are unlikely to buy H&M items without thinking often ( $M = 2.51$ ). Spending on H&M fashion products impulsively is not the majority behavior of Vietnamese consumers although they like H&M brand and H&M store. In Vietnamese consumers' mind, H&M products are perceived as *expensive* rather than *affordable* for purchasing behavior (Nhan & Le, 2019). Although H&M brand positions themselves as fast fashion globally, in Vietnam market, H&M price's range is still higher than other local brands that offer same items (Fast Fashion set to transform market, 2018).

Therefore, despite of favoring visual merchandising of H&M, Vietnamese consumers prefer affordable fashion items that can fit their budget. H&M products here are perceived as expensive that require high involvement from customer to search information and evaluate alternatives before the real purchase, according to planned purchase process. In order to search information, consumers may engage both internal (memory) and external search (social media, influencers, peers and brand's channel). Brand should pay more attention in providing significant and unique information to impress consumers. Moreover, comparing H&M to other fast fashion brand is inevitable among customers, H&M should take this chance to emphasize their advantages in having latest trendy products, refresh fashion items quicker than

other brands and professional customer service, when in customers mind they are receiving higher risk in buying expensive products.

### **5.2.3 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising is Positively Related to Brand Attitude.**

All attributes of consumers attitude toward H&M visual merchandising have positive relationship with brand attitude, with extremely positive about general H&M visual merchandising ( $r = 0.58$ ). As H&M is considered as a Western fashion brand, Vietnamese consumers form a favorable attitude due to its reputation and trendy store presentation. In agreement with this, Nhan and Le (2019) also stated that consumers here also think that giant store with wide range of product are attractive. H&M stores in Ho Chi Minh city are located in golden area of famous shopping mall, having big windows, nice color presentation, store layout is neat along with attractive product display, being consistent with H&M stores in other countries. These factors can elevate consumers feeling and create a good perception about H&M brand.

To support this hypothesis, some previous scholars studied on effective response, which has transformational effect in advertising (Aaker & Stayman, 1992; Puto & Wells, 1984) can transform positive attitude toward the advertising to positive attitude toward brand itself. This study would apply and adjust this transformational advertising concept to explain the relation of attitude toward visual merchandising and brand attitude. As in H&M store, Vietnamese consumers have chance to experience the fashion product themselves by touching and trying on, in order to persuade consumers to like the product and buy it later. This concept emphasizes the

experience in exposing to fashion product though visual presentation at store can be richer, more delightful and more pleasurable than just exposing to product information purely.

#### **5.2.4 Vietnamese Consumers' Attitude toward H&M Visual Merchandising is Positively Related to instore Purchasing Behavior.**

All attributes of consumers attitude toward H&M visual merchandising have positive relationship with instore purchasing behavior ( $r = 0.57$ ). Visual merchandising elements also become the main information source under different forms that trigger consumers to touch, feel and smell. Inside the store, consumers can feel the hype of shopping fast, queuing to try on the product as well as out of stock situation that can pressure them to make a spontaneous purchase. Consumers who go shopping as a hedonic activity may enjoy the shopping environment more than utilitarian shopper. Hedonic shopper will pay more attention to store decoration, mannequin display as they are experience the atmosphere (Falode et al., 2016). In addition, Park et al. (2006), explored a positive relationship between fashion involvement and emotion, hedonic consumption, and fashion-oriented impulse buying. In the end, consumers with high involvement are expected to be more excited, satisfied, curious, and impulsive with fashion shopping. The authors also demonstrated that students studying fashion, high involvement in a category, would express a strong impulse-buying tendency toward garment and apparel products. High fashion-involved shoppers are also self-confident in their fashion shopping decision (O'Cass, 2004), and this confidence may arouse them to make quick and impulsive purchase decisions.

Nevertheless, the real instore purchasing behavior from Vietnamese consumers was not the impulse purchasing behavior. Therefore, purchasing H&M fashion product can be considered as a high involvement behavior that Vietnamese consumers would take Think – Feel – Do decision making process. As mentioned before, customers want to gather information and knowledge about those fashion items before evaluating all the choices. The next step is forming a particular attitude toward the H&M and end up at the last step with an appropriate behavior, which results from a high level of rationality process. This process takes place when Vietnamese customers need to think carefully as well as engage highly before paying high price for H&M fashion items. However, H&M brand' strategy satisfies this process by providing bunch of fitting rooms at their stores, offering return and exchange policy to ensure that customers can take their time to consider thoroughly. In summary, instore purchasing behavior from Vietnamese consumers to H&M brand must involve a higher thoughtful process than spontaneous reaction.

### 5.3 Limitation

Due to limited resource and time, this study narrowed down the location to test only in Ho Chi Minh city, not nationwide. Also, by conducting only through online questionnaire without psychographic questions, the study may not have enough in-depth understanding and results to generate better customer insights.

## **5.4 Suggestions**

### **5.4.1 Suggestion for Future Research**

- Conducting a mixed method between quantitative and qualitative by offline questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group to gain more valuable findings in visual merchandising and consumer behavior in fashion.
- Developing the questionnaire with psychographics questions relating to fashion consumption to connect the final findings together.

### **5.4.2 Suggestions for Practical Implication**

Visual merchandising shows certain effects on consumer behavior that brand marketer needs to watch out every day, for every element, from the main entrance to the fitting room. The result shows a very significantly positive correlation between H&M visual merchandising as a whole and brand attitude, can be interpreted that overall, H&M did a great job in visual communication for window display, signage store layout and product display.

Nevertheless, the actual instore purchase and tendencies in impulse purchase are not in a positive status. Therefore, this issue could cause by other reasons than visual merchandising, such as price, sale assistant or even product itself. Although Vietnamese consumers welcome international brands, but the actual gap between classes is still major, which affects general consumers viewpoint. They consider H&M products as luxury and expensive fashion items due to the price differences from local suppliers, whereas H&M products are perceived as cheap and affordable in developed countries (Nhan & Le, 2019).

Hence, from the early stage of finding information about products, H&M should invest more in website for Vietnam market instead of only showing briefly about collections and store location. Website must have information about all products and their availabilities to satisfy the curiosity of consumers (Roesler, 2017). Furthermore, in order to target mass customer in different generations, alongside having young influencers covering all social media channels to attract millennials, H&M can collaborate with celebrities' children or mid-age people to draw more attention.

On the other hand, aside having sales promotion in accordance with global schedule, H&M brand should have more promotion programs on Vietnamese traditional holidays such as Lunar New Year, Independence Day, as consumers are ready to spend more on those occasions (Le & Hosford, 2016). Additionally, to compete local fashion brands, H&M can provide membership program to increase the loyalty among existing customers and encourage potential customers to shop.

In terms of visual merchandising, localization the language on signage, poster inside store and promotion sign is important to inform Vietnamese consumers when Vietnam is not an English speaking country. In the same manner, decorating the store with iconic items of Vietnam can impress shoppers without losing the global standard visual merchandising.



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**APPENDIX**

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**CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY**

**APPENDIX A**

**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

**“Vietnamese Consumers’ Attitude Toward H&M Brand, Visual Merchandising and Their Purchasing Behavior”**

This research is conducted as require element for Professional Project, enrolled by a student of M.A Strategic Communication Management from Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University. The purpose of this questionnaire is to study respondents’ attitude toward visual merchandising and the fast fashion brand H&M which could determines impulse purchase inside the store. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Participants are requested to complete all the following questions to reflect his/her attitude as accurate as possible. The questionnaire is voluntary, and the data will be collected confidential. Respondents are NOT going to be identified. The data will be used for educational purpose only and will be implemented properly.

Lastly, I would also like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for your time and effort in completing this survey.

Thank you, My Phan.

Email: [hamyphan0201@gmail.com](mailto:hamyphan0201@gmail.com)

### Screening questions

1. Are you over 18 years old (Born from 2001 onward)?

Yes       No

If the answer is No, please end the survey here

2. Have you ever visited H&M store over the past 6 months and shopped at H&M stores within 12 months?

Yes       No

If the answer is No, please end the survey here

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Questions	5	4	3	2	1
	<i>Attitude toward visual merchandise of H&amp;M stores in HCMC</i>					
1	Up-to-date fashion at H&M store is nicely presented through an effective color scheme and presentation skill					
2	The interior design in the H&M store is attractively arranged					
3	The exterior design in the H&M store is attractively arranged					
4	H&M stores' visual merchandise is appealing to me					
5	H&M stores' visual merchandise is interesting to me					
6	Looking at window displays of H&M stores make it easier for me to visualize whether I would look good or not with those merchandise					
7	Window displays of H&M stores show me the latest trends and fashions for the new seasons.					
8	My decision to enter H&M stores often depends on their window displays					
9	Window displays of H&M stores often play an important role in my purchase decisions at the store.					

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	<i>Attitude toward visual merchandise of H&amp;M stores in HCMC</i>	5	4	3	2	1
10	What I see in window displays of H&M stores often end up being what I buy in the store.					
11	H&M logo sign is an important factor in my decision to enter the store.					
12	The signages inside H&M stores display nicely and deliver information effectively about the new merchandises					
13	Direction signs inside H&M stores are necessary for customers to easily locate their desired products in the store.					
14	What I buy at H&M store often depend on the promotion signages					
15	It was easy to move around inside H&M stores					
16	It was easy to locate the product/merchandise inside H&M stores					
17	The product/merchandise display, mannequins, theme-related properties in H&M store are appealing to me					
18	Up-to-date fashion was nicely presented through H&M store layout and product display					
19	What I buy at H&M store often depend on the store layout and product display					
	<i>Attitude toward H&amp;M brand</i>					
20	I think H&M brand is good					
21	I like H&M brand					
22	I am pleased about H&M brand					
	<i>In-store Purchasing Behavior</i>					
23	I buy clothing with a new style if I see it in H&M store					
24	I buy H&M fashion product with to catch up with new trend					
25	I often buying H&M clothing without thinking in its store					

**Demographics questions:**

1. What is your age range?

- 18 – 24
- 24 – 30
- 30 – 35
- 35 – 40
- 40 – 45
- 45 – 50
- > 50

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your education level (highest level of education completed)?

- Less than Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Higher than Master's degree

4. How often do you go shopping at H&M?

- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Several times a month
- Several times a year
- Other (Please specify):



## APPENDIX B

### VIETNAMESE CONSUMERS

Notwithstanding being surrounded by internet services as well as smartphones popularity, Vietnam market has been evaluated as a potential environment with strong economic growth and fastest growing middle class in Southeast Asia (Deloitte, 2019). Despite of the rise of digital channels in business and commerce, physical channels keep their dominant role in Vietnam retail scenario. Also as being an appealing destination for foreigner investors in garment and textile industry, Vietnam also attracts many international fashion brands to establish their flagship stores in main cities such as Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh city or Da Nang city, ranging from affordable to high-end products. Nevertheless, international brands are still struggling to really understand Vietnamese consumers, their attitudes and behaviors whilst the competition environment continues changing steadily.

It is believed that generation traits can impact on consumers' behaviors in dissimilar ways (Posner & Harriet, 2015). Hence, the way our grandparents spend their money could be totally different from the way our parents do, and might be alternative from us too. To fashion products, the distinctiveness in purchasing behavior is likely predictable for different generations. Regardless of different generations, the elderly wants brands to treat them as brands treat younger people, by focusing more on their unique needs and wants instead of labeling the age into the products only (Vietnamnews, 2019).

According to We Are Social, Vietnamese young generation, who are from 18 to 44 years old, use social media the most, make up to 80% of total national usage.

From here, this generation mostly has exposed to information, news, brand advertising and communicated with peers via Facebook, Instagram and Facebook Messenger. Moreover, Vietnamese consumers favor and value imported products in different kinds: technology, kitchen wear, cosmetic and fashion. Consequently, even before the international brands left their footprints in local market, Vietnamese people still acknowledged the brands, discussed about them not less than in other countries. These can explain to the attempts to own and buy those international brands which were not available in Vietnam in the past. However, consumers here had few ways to purchase those brands directly or indirectly. They can travel to other countries that have brands' flagship stores to browse the items and try on themselves. Or they can order from the middle man, which mean consumers cannot try on the products before purchasing them. Hence, it was inconvenient technically and economically for Vietnamese consumers to purchase and own those products. Moreover, the price would be treated differently according to different middle man. Therefore, the entries of those fast fashion brands can fulfill the needs of Vietnamese consumers lately.

In the opinion of Thuy (2017), local consumers were looking for fashion product that can catch up with the trend despite of short term use. On the other hand, among many countries, Vietnamese consumers are segmented into different consumer types: impulsive spenders, minimalist seekers, secure traditionalist and undaunted strivers (Shridhar, 2019). With the diversity and confliction in needs of consumers, brands have to put a lot of effort to understand and satisfy wide range of their Vietnamese customers.

The expansions of fast fashion brands like Mango, Zara, H&M or Pull & Bear contribute to the vibrant fashion industry in Vietnam and provide more options for

consumers (Deloitte, 2019). Vietnamese consumers were reported to prefer fashion shopping in commercial shopping center, which is up to 53% while online shopping is rising up to 39% of Deloitte's survey respondents. Thus, fast fashion brands are located in big shopping malls with giant eye-catching spot, golden area of the mall. Consumers can easily see and recognize the brand logo of H&M or Zara before entering the stores. For example, in Vincom A shopping mall in the center of Ho Chi Minh city, H&M planned for a big launch in September 2017 by using big signages said "Opening 09-09" to cover the whole store and let consumers can see from outside as well as inside the mall. Also, there was a huge shopping bag in black with red H&M logo installed in front of the store on the opening day as well as hashtag #HMVietnam was printed on all marketing elements on that day. This helped consumers conveniently locate the store of H&M and be ready for their shopping journey.

Nevertheless, according to Nhan and Le (2019), part of Vietnamese consumers is seeing H&M brand and its product as expensive or luxury due to the price. Comparing to the local suppliers, those products from H&M or Zara is higher than affordable standard in mass consumers mind. Although these fast fashion brands are perceived as cheap and affordable in developed countries, and Vietnam economy has developed for recent 20 years, the average income range is low here. Therefore, international fast fashion brand should consider price strategy carefully to be able to compete in this market.



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**CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY**

## VITA

<b>NAME</b>	Phan Thi Ha My
<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	02 Jan 1993
<b>PLACE OF BIRTH</b>	Vietnam
<b>INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED</b>	Ho Chi Minh city University of Law
<b>HOME ADDRESS</b>	Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam



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