

# Factors of Preference for International Fast Fashion Brands: A Study on Generation Z

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## Factors of Preference for International Fast Fashion Brands: A Study on Generation Z

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### ABSTRACT

Big population, rising middle class, increasing individual revenue, and strong economic growth of Indonesia have attracted both local and foreign fashion brands to do their businesses in Indonesia. Foreign fashion retailers who want to expand their businesses in Indonesia have to collaborate with local partners. In a short time, the spreading of foreign fashion retailers can be seen at many shopping centers in the major cities in Indonesia. As a result, Indonesian customers are dominated by foreign fashion brands. This is proved by a view of Indonesian customers who tend to see fashion trends are oriented to foreign markets so that they create a strong demand for foreign fast fashion brands. This also happens to Generation Z people who still prefer foreign fast fashion brands compared with local fashion brands. Therefore, there must be several factors that have significant effects on brand preference. This research wants to examine the factors that have significant effects on brand preference. Using quantitative research method by distributing electronic questionnaire to 222 young people who are the customers of foreign fast fashion brands, and quantitative methods include descriptive statistics, measurement, and (structural model. From the data analysis process, the result of the factors that have significant effects on brand preference are taken due to the self-image of customers is congruent with the image of the brand (the more greater preference of customers for that brand). Furthermore, the brand image also create the perception of trust customer and quality of product.

**Keywords** : fast fashion, brand, brand preference, brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, self-image congruence

### INTRODUCTION

As the fourth most populated country in the world after China, India, and the United States, Indonesia has a total population as much as 261,115 thousand people up until 2016 (The World Bank, 2016). The population are categorized into 7 social classes: poor class, aspirant class, emerging middle class, middle class, upper middle class, affluent class, and elite class (Rastogi, Tamboto, Tong, & Sinburimsit, 2013). Moreover, they can be seen in Figure 1 along with a prediction about the increasing population of those social classes.

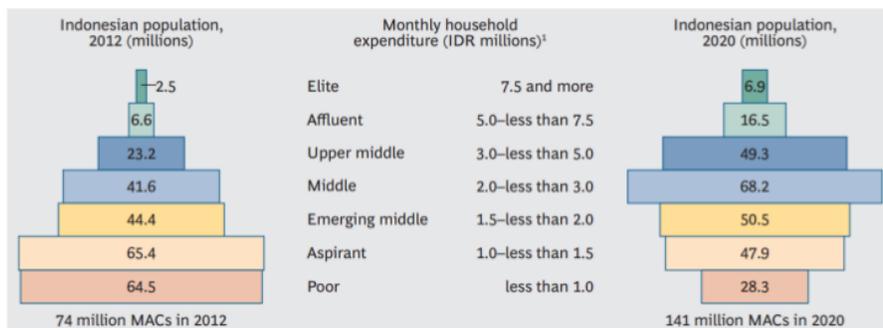


Figure 1. The Number of Social Classes in Indonesia in 2012 and 2020

Source: Rastogi et al. (2013)

Based on Figure 1 the *poor class* who spends less than IDR 1,000,000 will be 28.3 million people in 2020 from 64.5 million people in 2012. *Aspirant class* who spends between IDR 1,000,000 to IDR 1,500,000 will be 47.9 million people in 2020 from 65.4 million people in 2012.

*Emerging middle class* who spends between IDR 1,500,000 to IDR 2,000,000 will be 50.5 million people in 2020 from 44.4 million people in 2012. *Middle class* who spends between IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 3,000,000 will be 68.2 million people in 2020 from 41.6 million people in 2012. *Upper middle class* who spends between IDR 3,000,000 to IDR 5,000,000 will be 49.3 million people in 2020 from 23.2 million people in 2012.

*Affluent class* who spends between IDR 5,000,000 to IDR 7,500,000 will be 16.5 million people in 2020 from 6.6 million people in 2012. *Elite class* who spends more than IDR 7,500,000 will be 6.9 million people in 2020 from 2.5 million people in 2012. So, it can be concluded that the population of middle class will be the most populous in 2020.

Besides, the value of Indonesia's GDP which is used as one of the fundamental indicators to measure the economic health of the country (Solomon, Marshall, & Stuart, 2012), also increased from 29.18 thousand USD in 2016 to 31.3 thousand USD in 2017 (International Monetary Fund, 2017). The increasing of Indonesia's GDP causes the rising of customers' purchasing power (Kewal, 2012) that can be defined as the currency value of quantity of goods or services that can be bought by one unit of money (Estola, 2017).

Then, the rising customers' purchasing power can be explained through customers' moving to modern retailers from traditional outlets (HKTDC Research, 2014) that boosts the demands for company's products (Kewal, 2012). Therefore, both local and foreign fashion companies are attracted to do businesses in Indonesia due to its big population, rising middle class, increasing individual revenue, gaining purchasing power, and strong economic growth (Global Business Guide Indonesia, 2014).

In addition, the rising clothing market demand value from 14,144 million USD in 2016 to 16,061 million USD in 2017 (PwC, 2015) and Indonesia's 8th rank achievement in Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) 2017 that is issued by A.T. Kearney are also seen as the advantages that captivate the companies to run their businesses in Indonesia (A.T. Kearney, 2017). Yasuhiro Hayashi, the COO of PT Fast Retailing Indonesia who manages Uniqlo Indonesia says that Indonesia is an enticing market with its biggest population in Southeast Asia (Darmawan, 2013).

Similar to Yasuhiro Hayashi, Roy Nicholas Mandey, the Chairman of Association of Indonesian Retail Entrepreneurs (Asosiasi Pengusaha Ritel Indonesia/Aprindo) also agrees that the retail sector in Indonesia is very promising and prospective (Margrit, 2017). Foreign fashion retailers who want to expand their businesses in Indonesia, have to collaborate with local partners due to the limitations of foreign investment in retail business that are regulated by Indonesian Government (HKTDC Research, 2014). One of the biggest local partner in Indonesia is PT Mitra Adiperkasa Tbk (MAP) that was established in 1995 and listed in Indonesian Stock Exchange since 2004 (Sugih & Soekarno, 2015).

Table 1. Number of Stores of Foreign Fast Fashion Brands

Foreign Fast Fashion Brand	Number of Stores in Jakarta	No. of Stores in Indonesia
Zara <sup>a</sup>	10	16
Pull&Bear <sup>b</sup>	9	15
Mango <sup>c</sup>	7	14
Cotton On <sup>d</sup>	7	14
Miss Selfridge <sup>e</sup>	2	2
New Look <sup>f</sup>	3	6
Bershka <sup>g</sup>	5	7
Topshop <sup>h</sup>	2	4
Stradivarius <sup>i</sup>	9	14
Topman <sup>j</sup>	4	6
Forever New <sup>k</sup>	3	3
Dorothy Perkins <sup>l</sup>	5	11
Penshoppe <sup>m</sup>	4	13
Camàieu <sup>n</sup>	4	11
H&M <sup>o</sup>	10	23
Forever 21 <sup>p</sup>	4	4
Total	88	136

Source: <sup>a</sup>Zara (n.d.). <sup>b</sup>Pull&Bear (n.d.). <sup>c</sup>Mango (n.d.). <sup>d</sup>Cotton On (n.d.). <sup>e</sup>Miss Selfridge (n.d.). <sup>f</sup>New Look (n.d.). <sup>g</sup>Bershka (n.d.). <sup>h</sup>Topshop (n.d.). <sup>i</sup>Stradivarius(n.d.). <sup>j</sup>Topman (n.d.). <sup>k</sup>Forever New (n.d.). <sup>l</sup>Dorothy Perkins (n.d.). <sup>m</sup>MAP Indonesia (n.d.). <sup>n</sup>MAP Indonesia (n.d.). <sup>o</sup>H&M (n.d.). <sup>p</sup>Forever 21 (n.d.).

In a short time, the spreading of foreign fashion retailers, especially in clothing line sector,

seduce Indonesian customers to purchase their offered products at shopping centers in Indonesia (Wahyuni, 2015). Most of shopping centers are located in Jakarta as much as 173 buildings that make itself as the highest number of shopping centers in the world (Trianita, 2013). Furthermore, the foreign fast fashion brands like Zara, Pull&Bear, Mango, Cotton On, Miss Selfridge, New Look, Bershka, Topshop, Stradivarius, Topman, Forever New, Dorothy Perkins, Penshoppe, Camaïeu, H&M, and Forever 21 have opened their branches in Indonesia, including in Jakarta. There are 88 stores in Jakarta, whereas there are 163 stores in Indonesia overall. The detail of their total stores can be shown clearly in Table 1.

As the result, Indonesian societies are still dominated by international fashion brands (Sutriyanto, 2016). This is proved by a view of Indonesian customers that tend to see fashion trends are oriented to foreign markets so that they create a strong demand for foreign fast fashion brands instead of local fashion brands (Australian Trade and Investment Commission, n.d.).

Marchetti (2012) also agrees with the statements above by saying Indonesian customers put their concern in western high street chains and do not hesitate to spend their money to own them (Wahyuni, 2015). Hence, Mr. Joko Widodo, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, views that Indonesian people prefer products from foreign brands than local brands (Sunaryo, 2017).

Similar with the information above, Kirandita (2017) reports that Team Research Tirta conducted a survey in several major cities in Java and Bali about consuming behavior of fashion products among Generation Z people. She reports that the team finds that 5 of 6 favorite fashion brands are foreign fashion brands which 2 of them are Zara and H&M that are preferred by Generation Z people who were born between 1995-2010.

This is in line with Andrea, Gabriella, and Tímea (2016) who say that Generation Z people were born between 1995-2010. Meanwhile, Singh (2014) notes that Generation Z people were born between 1995-2012. Contrarily, Ivanova, and Smrikarov (2009) argue that Generation Z people were born between 1994-2004. On the other hand, Rickes (2016) points out that there is no specific shifting time between Generation Z and Millennial.

In addition, Generation Z people in Indonesia have reached 68.02 million people or equal to 28.86% of total population of Indonesia up until 2010 (Zuhra, 2017). They are also known as Post Millennials (Bejtkovský, 2016) and the digital natives because they are very connected with technology, especially social media and internet to collect information before they purchase a product at a store (Hidvégi & Kelemen-Erdős, 2016).

So, it can be concluded that Generation Z people adore foreign fashion brands (Kirandita, 2017). This statement is also reinforced by Boomee.co's observation that reports all foreign fashion brands, including Zara and H&M, are listed as the top 10 fashion brands that are most frequently called on Twitter timeline in Indonesia (Ratih, 2017).

Thus, in this research, there are 5 variables that are used to be the factors of preference for international fast fashion brands among Generation Z people. All of the 5 variables that are used to be the factors of brand preference are brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, and self-image congruence. All of them are derived from the previous studies, such as Afsar (2014), Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani, and Fan (2016), Halim, Dharmayanti, and Brahmana (2014), and Kiong, Ghalergi, and Fah (2013).

From the explanation above, some problems occurs, whereas Indonesian customers who especially Generation Z people still prefer foreign fast fashion brands which can be seen at many shopping centers in major cities in Indonesia compared with local fashion brands. Therefore, the objectives of research will prove the the effect of brand image, quality, price, style, and self image congruence to the preference. Due to the limitation of time, cost, and large population of Generation Z in Indonesia, this research is done by taking Universitas Pelita Harapan students who are at the age of 17-23 years old to determine the most important factor of preference for international fast fashion brands.

## LITERATURE

International business is the commercial transactions that are done between two or more countries (Daniels, Radebaugh, & Sullivan, 2015). Similarly, international business is also the business activities that are done between one country to another (Sattar, 2017). Hence, international business can be defined as the transactions of business that are done across countries.

Many companies conduct international business to gain profits from the transactions abroad (Daniels et al., 2015). Several of them like Coca-Cola, Apple, Rolex, L'Oreal, and Mercedes-Benz who succeed in earning profits from doing international business, also inspire other companies to market their brands overseas (Saxena, 2012).

However, Kotler and Armstrong (2014) warn that before doing international business, companies have to ask themselves first whether they are able to face foreign markets and sell their products overseas. Therefore, they suggest the companies who operate their businesses in other countries have to

decide which global marketing program that suits with the local situations.

This is supported by Burnett (2011) who says that the big problem nowadays is not going global, but how to make the concept of global marketing is suitable for each business. If the products and marketing plans do not suit with the overseas market conditions, their global marketing efforts will be useless (Peter & Olson, 2010). Thus, understanding global marketing is so crucial for companies in order to survive and maintain their brands worldwide (Keegan & Green, 2015).

Meanwhile, brand is regarded as the most important asset of companies (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Maurya and Mishra (2012) note that brand has existed since the old civilization era of Greeks and Mesopotamians and now it can be seen anywhere in every aspect of life. They also explain that the original word of brand is brandr that comes from Old Norse language and it means 'to burn' or labeling the owner's live stocks with a heated iron.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) discusses a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2009).

Maurya and Mishra (2012) also classify the brand from the perspectives of firm and customers. From the firm's perspective there are brand as a logo, brand as a legal instrument, brand as a company, brand as an identity system, brand as an image in consumer's mind, brand as value system, brand as a personality, brand as relationship, brand as adding value, and brand as an evolving entity.

From the customers' perspective there are brand as a shorthand, brand as a risk reducer, brand as an image in consumer's mind, brand as a personality, brand as relationship, and brand as an evolving entity. From the information above, it can be inferred that brand as an image in consumer's mind, brand as a personality, brand as relationship, and brand as an evolving entity can be found from the perspectives of firm and customers.

To conclude, brand is the company's name, logo, and identity that make customers recognize, trust, and feel connected with the company and its offered products which are different and superior to other competitors. Besides, David Haigh notes that brand has 3 primary functions, such as navigation, reassurance, and engagement (Wheeler, 2009). First, navigation helps customers to choose from confusing brand choices. Second, reassurance informs the product or service's intrinsic quality and convince the customers that they have made a right decision. Third, engagement uses different symbol, language, and correlations to boost customers recognize the brand.

Similar to David Haigh, Keegan and Green (2015) also add that brand has 2 functions. The first function is a brand provides a guarantee in form of product quality certification and the second function is brand helps customers to differentiate the company's products to others. Furthermore, Kotler and Armstrong (2014) explain that brand can be seen as the essential element of a product and branding increases customers' buying value.

They also say that branding also gives advantages to sellers and buyers. For sellers, the legal protection on different features is provided by company's brand name and trademark to avoid any imitations from competitor. Branding also helps the sellers divide the markets. For buyers, branding helps them to recognize the beneficial products and tells the quality and consistency of the products. Therefore, in order to maintain a long-term relationship between the customers and companies, the companies have to successfully manage their brands that are considered as the main role to connect both of them that results in customers' loyalty, behavior, and preference (Balaji, 2011).

When we discuss about branding, the preference should be taken into account. Brand preference is a measure of consumer choice, which falls towards the end of the consumer decision-making process (Vogel & Watchravesringkan, 2017). It is the subjective, conscious and behavioral tendencies which influence consumer's predisposition toward a brand (Mohanraj & Ananth, 2016). It also represents customers' tendency to favor a specific brand over the others when they face several options (Sultana, 2015).

Although brand preference exists in all textbooks and has been mentioned before by Aaker, Keller, and de Chernatony, it is still not settled at their main analysis of brand strategy compared to brand equity, brand image, brand knowledge, brand awareness, brand association, and service branding (Alamro & Rowley, 2011). Over the years, some studies label brand preference as the model of consumer behavior and the model of Howard and Sheth that explains the behavior of brand choice is the example of that (Duarte & Raposo, 2010).

However, the fact is brand preference is still hard to find in various research because customers do not always act consistently so that there is no formal model for preference, particularly how and based on what factors do the customers prefer for a brand (Duarte & Raposo, 2010). So, in the early 1970s, many researchers were attracted to do research about brand preference by investigating its antecedents on diverse product categories (Kiong et al., 2013).

Most studies only present one or two antecedents of brand preference which is a clear research

limitation that is faced by researchers (Alamro & Rowley, 2011; Duarte & Raposo, 2010). Duarte and Raposo (2010) say that the model of brand preference is a complicated process where the factors cannot be regarded independently because there is an interaction that acts as the determinant role. Therefore, they follow the past indications of Woodside and Trappey and Belk that state the behavior of customers is situated by the customers' characteristics, situation, and object. They also categorize the brand preference into three groups: consumer-oriented factors, brand-related factors, and situational factors that can be seen in Figure 1.

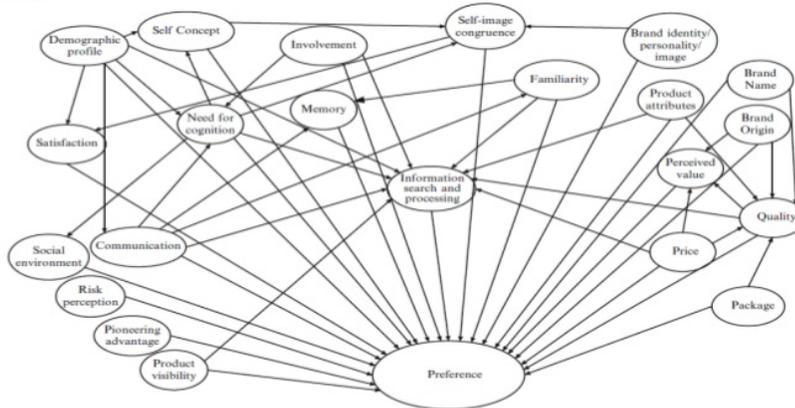


Figure 1. Model of Brand Preference (1) Source: Duarte and Raposo (2010)

Based on Figure 1, the *consumer-oriented factors* that are related to brand preference are demographic profile, self-concept, satisfaction, need for cognition, memory, involvement, and self-image congruence. The *brand-related factors* that are related to brand preference are brand identity/personality/image, brand name, brand origin, perceived value, quality, price, product attributes, familiarity, and package. The *situational factors* that are related to brand preference are communication, social environment, risk, visibility, and information search.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2, Alamro and Rowley (2011) also develop a model of brand preference that based on previous findings from Berry, Keller, de Chernatony and Segal-Horn, and Grace and O'Cass. It consists of 11 antecedents or factors that are considered as the main antecedents of customer brand preference and they have been clustered into brand awareness, brand image, and consumer attributes.

From Figure 2, the antecedents of *brand awareness* are advertising, word of mouth, and publicity. The antecedents of *brand image* are service value attributes (comprise of price and quality) and provider attributes (comprise of brand personality, location, employee, country of origin, corporate image, and corporate status). The antecedents of *consumer attributes* are satisfaction, perceived risk, and reference group.

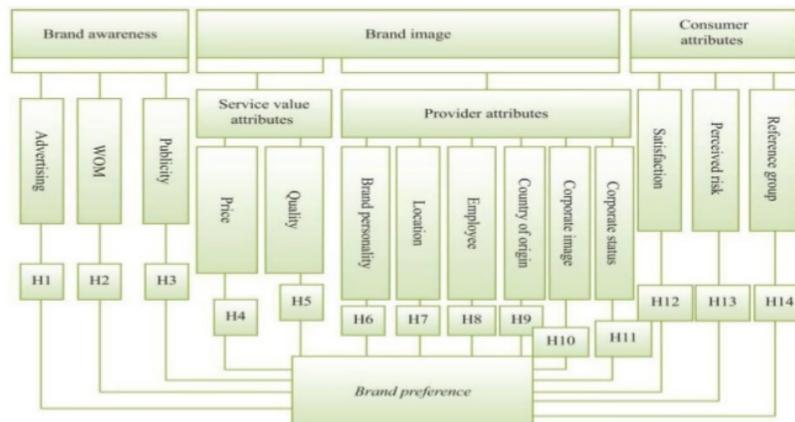


Figure 2 . Model of Brand Preference (2)

Source: Alamro and Rowley (2011)

Sultana (2015) also claims brand preference which offers important features for customers, combines the perception of customers and desired attributes. Kotler and Armstrong (2014) say that perception is the process by which people select, organize, and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world.

They also say that people build distinctive perceptions from the same stimulus due to 3 perceptual processes: selective attention (they filter all received information), selective distortion (they hold information that supports their view), and selective retention (remember the goodness of their favorite brand and forget the goodness of other brands).

On the other hand, attribute is a parameter or dimension of the model (Piziali, 2004). Attributes can be correlated to textures, materials, amount, elements, moods, or other aspects of human perspective (Kovashka & Grauman, 2015). Akpoyomare, Adeosun, and Ganiyu (2012) say that besides the attributes of a product are used by marketers to differentiate their brands from competitors, the product attributes will also be considered by customers to determine the brands.

They also inform that there will be a comparison between brands when most attributes of the products offer benefits to customers. Therefore, they believe that in order to decide which brand customers choose, customers' energy and attention focus on the most essential and appropriate attributes of the product. As can be seen in Table 2, there are 25 previous studies that have been gathered from 1955-2017 along with the list of product attributes. All of the researchers from the previous studies try to find the related attributes of apparel product that suit customers' preference.

Eckman et al. (1990) find that aesthetic criteria is the most important for apparel assessment, in order, consists of style, color/pattern, fit, fabric, appearance, and price were the most mentioned about. Likewise, Lang and Crown (1993) say that customers' preference for apparel items depend on price and attributes of product like quality and style.

Zhang et al. (2002) also find that fit, comfort, style, color, and workmanship are Chinese customers' preference on important product attributes. North et al. (2003) state that style and price are the most important attributes that are preferred by South African females. Swinker and Hines (2006) also agree that style is the most important attributes for American students.

Ko et al. (2011) also find that Koreans prefer aesthetic attributes (colors, style, and trendiness), Americans prefer functional cues and brand image also has influence on them, and French consumers prefer aesthetic attributes and brand image. Rahman (2011) also says that fit, style, quality, comfort, and price are the top five important product attributes that are chosen by Canadian women.

Jegethesan et al. (2012) find that price and brand are the most important attributes for young Australian buyers. Park et al. (2012) identify that variety of selection and price attributes are the most important for Koreans in choosing web browsing and online apparel products. Bennur and Jin (2013) discover that US consumers prefer quality, fitting, and workmanship, whereas Indians prefer workmanship and affordable and reasonable price.

Hopfer and Istook (2016) recognize among young Hispanic female customers that color/pattern, styling, appearance, beauty/attractiveness, fit/sizing, and comfort that are grouped into intrinsic attributes and extrinsic attribute, such as price, are the most important for them. Oladele and Ogundipe (2016) also realize that fit and high fashion style are chosen as the most important attributes by South-West Nigerian customers.

Lee and Nguyen (2017) also note that Vietnamese notice material, quality, and brand image are the benefits of American fashion brands. Pennanen and Luomola say customers prefer brands and products that both own high-quality and brand image (Afsar, 2014). Lall and Sahai (2008) also belief that developing a brand image will lead to brand preference.

It is also supported by Duarte and Raposo (2010) that say customers prefer brands with strong image. Moreover, they also add that beside the brand identity; personality; and image, self-image congruence also has the strongest relations with brand preference. Vogel and Watchravesringkan (2017) also support the statement of Duarte and Raposo by saying that customers prefer brands that same with the sense of themselves. To wrap up their findings, Duarte and Raposo (2010) suggest that identity/personality, self-image congruence, and image of the brand are the main direct effects on brand preference. Thus, based on the most mentioned variables from the findings of past studies above, it can be concluded that brand image, quality, price, style, and self-image congruence as the main factors that affect customers' preference.

However, instead of using quality and price, perceived quality and perceived price will be used in this research. Zeithaml (1988) in her journal entitled "*Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality, and Value: A Means-End Model and Synthesis of Evidence*" says that perceived quality is used as perceptions from the customers about the advantages of a product. Perceived quality is different from objective

quality which is debated by researchers and experts that the real ideal standard of technical advantages of a product may not exist because all quality is perceived by a person subjectively who may be is a customer or manager.

In addition, perceived price is a price that is encoded by customers in methods that are useful to them, whereas objective price is the real product price that customers do not always know or recall the actual product price. Therefore, to reiterate, this research will use brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, and self-image congruence as the factors of preference for international fast fashion brands.

Since the early 1950s, brand image has been an essential theory in consumer behavior research (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Keller defines image as the set of beliefs, ideas, and impression that a person holds regarding an object (Malik, Naeem, & Munawar, 2012). Therefore, brand image is a description of the association and the trust of consumers towards a particular brand (Tjijptono in Foster, 2016).

Shimp & Andrews (2013) also define brand image as the associations that are activated in memory when people think about a particular brand. Meenaghan mentions brand image as a construct that consumer use to simplify their product knowledge about a specific brand" (Afsar, 2014). Brand image is the sum of all tangible and intangible perceptions, inferences and beliefs about a brand that consumers hold (Balaji, 2011).

In addition, Keller (2013) says that brand image is also constructed from a combination of brand associations so that brand association is regarded as a crucial factor in the research of brand image. In addition, he also adds that through company's marketing campaigns, a positive brand image can be built by connecting strong, favorable, and unique associations about brand with the memories of customers.

The strength of brand associations relies on product information in customers' memories that can be recalled anytime and how it is preserved as a part of brand image by showing the saliency of product. The favorability brand associations assures customers that brand owns attributes and benefits that fulfill needs and desires of customers that result in positive brand perceptions. The uniqueness of brand associations explains why customers should purchase the offered product by doing 'unique selling proposition' that compare the superiority of company's product with others .

Kotler and Armstrong (2014) say that the effective image will influence 3 things. First, it reinforces character and value of a product. Second, it differs its character from other rivals. Third, rather than mental image, it supports emotional strength. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2014) note that a brand image also helps a company to design better strategic marketing decisions for targeted market segments and a position of a product. So, they suggest managers should investigate, choose, maintain, and support a positive and unique brand image to differ itself from others.

Afsar (2014) says that quality is the combination of expected result and actual results. Feigenbaum adds that quality is the degree to which the product in use will meet the expectations of the customer (Hossain, Tasnim, & Hasan, 2017). Bergman and Klefsjö claim quality as the ability to satisfy, or preferably exceed, the needs and expectations of the customers (Hossain et al., 2017).

However, Halis et al. (2007) say that manufacturers see the quality not based on the demands from customers, but based on their beliefs that the quality has to fit with customers' expectation, whereas customers view the quality as the product reliability. Their statement is emphasized by an argumentation that discusses the difference between objective and perceived quality.

Zeithaml (1988) who describes the objective quality as measurable and verifiable superiority on some predetermined ideal standard or standards, whereas perceived quality is "the consumer's judgment about the superiority or excellence of a product.

While, perceived quality generally can summarized as the overall customer's subjective judgment about the superiority and reliability of a product or service that meets customer's needs compared with others. Since product quality is judged subjectively by customers, what is considered to be a high-quality product between one customer to another is different (Agyekum, Haifeng, & Agyeiwaa, 2015).

Many studies have attempted to know how customers create their notions about the quality which can be varied from one category to others (Keller, 2013). Perceived quality happens according to the way customers convert and portray the information or stimuli that reach on human senses (Agyekum et al., 2015). Perceived quality also happens because it depends on the time period when customers buy or use the product and the place where it is purchased or consumed (Asshidin, Abidin, & Borhan, 2016).

In addition, Aaker (1991) also suggests that perceived quality can produce value in 5 ways. First, reason to buy. Perceived quality gives a reason for customers who do not obtain objective information of product quality or where the information is not available, to think and purchase a brand that has a good quality to be chosen and the rest are disqualified. Second, differentiate/position. The main location of a brand characteristic is in the dimension of perceived quality. Third, a price premium. Higher quality perception leads a company to charge at a premium price which can boost profits and support resources

(e.g., improving brand awareness or associations and R&D projects) to reinvest the brand. Fourth, channel member interest. Retailers, distributors, and other channel members are interested to sell perceived high-quality product at an appealing price to customers who want it. Fifth, brand extensions. By using a powerful brand which has a good perceived quality, the brand can be extended further and will be predicted to be successful. Besides, Halis et al. (2007) claim that perceived quality which can be accomplished when a product or service fulfills the expectations of customers, is seen as the main determinant of customers' choices (Severi & Ling, 2013) and competitive advantage by companies (Jing et al., 2014).

Therefore, in order to learn and assess how the quality is perceived by customers, not only Main but also Garvin suggest that the company has to stress on the quality based on a view of market or customers (Shintaputri & Wuisan, 2017). Marketing managers also have to apply marketing projects in order to improve the understanding of customers about the high product quality because there is a positive interaction between quality and success level of a product (Piri & Lotfizadeh, 2015).

In a limited view, price is defined as the total charge for a product or service, whereas in a broad view, price can be seen as the total values that customers have to sacrifice in order to use the product or service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Cahyono, Hamid, and Kusumawati (2015) also explain that price is the number of exchangeable value customers benefit from having or using a product or service whose value is set by buyers and sellers exceed bargain, or specified by the seller for the same price to all buyers.

Classical economics explains price as the main exchange element of value and assumes that all consumers makes rational decisions and prefer the cheaper products to maximize their benefits (Kucuk, 2017). Price is the only component of marketing mix that generates a revenue for a company (Keller, 2013; Kotler & Armstrong, 2014).

Price is also known as the major effect of customers' choice (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). This is reinforced by Keller who says that price is the key reason for a brand is chosen by customers who arrange their understandings about prices of diverse products (Afsar, 2014). Price has also become a major component in international marketing strategies for a company to penetrate itself in developing countries (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014).

As been mentioned before, Zeithaml (1988) points out that objective price is different with perceived price. She says that objective price is the real price of a product, whereas perceived price is the price that is encrypted by customers. She also reports that the actual price of a product is not always remembered by customers so that price which seems to be important to customers, is encrypted by them as a cheap or expensive product. For example, a charged meal by a fast-food outlet is perceived as a low price compared with a charged meal by a restaurant that is perceived as a high price by customers (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).

Perceived price can be wrapped up as customer's subjective evaluation about the price of a product or a service that has to be given up. Shintaputri and Wuisan (2017) also comment that the classic economic concept of price which is restricted only to the monetary units, is too simple because overall customers' judgments about what is given up are affected by many factors that have to be investigated in further study.

In other words, perceived price includes not only monetary price but also non- monetary price (Zeithaml, 1988). Shintaputri and Wuisan (2017) explain that non- monetary price which is given up by customers during acquisition and consumption of the product, includes cost of search time, cost of learning, and energy or physical effort.

Additionally, they believe that non-monetary sacrifice is more significant than monetary sacrifice in order to boost the subjective judgment about price perception. This is admitted by Kotler and Armstrong (2014) that write the factors of non-price factors are regarded beneficial in recent years. However, Munnukka (2008) finds that pricing a product or service is hard despite the fact that price is essential for a product or service.

This problem is also observed by Kotler and Armstrong (2014) by stating that pricing is faced by many marketing executives and firms who cannot manage it well. They also add that due to the fast changing of price, many managers choose to focus on other components of marketing mix. Therefore, they infer that smart managers have to treat pricing as an essential competitive asset and strategic weapon to catch the value of customer.

A company also has to have a complete understanding of perceptions and personalities from customers in order to decide the correct pricing for a product or a service (Munnukka, 2008). This is also approved by Chen et al. by saying that perceived price does not remove the objective price, but adds subjectivity in order to accomplish a better format of price (Ryu & Han, 2010).

The term of style is derived from two original words, such as stylos and stilus (Warkander, 2014). Stylos is derived from Greek which relates to columnar forms and architecture, whereas stilus is derived

from Latin which relates to writing. In a simple definition, style is a product look (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Style is also the product appearance and buyers' feeling (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Some literature define the style as something that can be viewed as a product look that reflects the self-expression of humans in wearing clothes. Style consists of specific items like clothes, accessories, and jewelries (Warkander, 2014). In term of clothes, there are several types of style, such as casual, formal, conservative, and trendy (Jones & George, 2018).

Furthermore, Yee and Sidek (2008) find that many loyal customers who are really captivated with stylish clothes that are offered by brands, are regarded as fashion conscious people. They are highly aware about their look, clothing wear, and their owned clothes which reflect their personalities (Iyer & Eastman, 2010). They also often visit fashion stores, try new clothes, and shop more than others (Michaela & Orna, 2015). So, style can be inferred as the important aspect for a product (Peter & Olson, 2010). In addition, their style can change based on the influence of media exposure (e.g., magazine) (Cateora, Gilly, & Graham, 2011). Therefore, Stone and Desmond (2007) recommend the managers to improve the product style in order to boost the product appeal and draw new customers.

The research of self-concept has been studied since 1960s (Hosany & Martin, 2012). Self image or self concept is defined as people's possession contribute to and reflect their identities – that is, we are what we consume (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Self image is also defined as “the way a person views herself or himself” (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).

When customers purchase products or brands that are seen to be identical to their self-concept, it can be named as self-image product image congruity or simply self-image congruity (Jamal & Goode, 2001). That name can be interchanged with self-congruence, self-image congruence, self-congruity, image congruence, (Hosany & Martin, 2012), and product-image congruity (Sirgy et al., 1997).

Self-image congruence can be explained as customers' acquisition of products and brands that have same symbolic image with the image of customers (Goh, Jiang, & Tee, 2016; Stone & Desmond, 2007). The statements above are reinforced by Sirgy, Lee, Johar, and Tidwell (2008) who explain about the theory of self-image congruence.

In generally, self-image congruence can be deduced as a theory of customer behavior that explains the similarity or congruence between the image of brand and image of the customers. An example of this theory is when customers who see themselves as careless ones tend to purchase clothes that suit with their careless looking (Sirgy et al., 2008).

Moreover, Sirgy, Grewal, and Mangleburg (2000) divide self-image congruence into 4 types, such as actual self-congruence, ideal self-congruence, social self-congruence, and ideal social self-congruence that can be explained below.

Furthermore, self-image congruence also tends to be more powerful for products that are used in public (e.g., vehicle and jeans) than those that are used personally (e.g., soap and underwear) (Jamal & Al-Marri, 2007). There is a high possibility as well for customers to turn to a new brand if their self-images or lifestyles alter (for example, marriage, moving, giving birth, and etc.) (Géza, László, Zsolt, & Márton, 2006).

Besides, Jamal and Al-Marri (2007) find that someone can also feel self- image congruence at different various levels, whether at a higher or lower level. Thus, they suggest brand managers have to control the relation between brand image and customers' self-image by promoting their brands to customers who have higher and lower levels of self-image congruence.

For customers who have a higher level of self-image congruence with a brand, managers can promote their brands with value-expressive (image) commercial that relating to customers' self-image. Meanwhile, for them who have a lower level of self-image congruence with a brand, managers can promote their brands with functional advertising that show the performance, advantages, and features of the brands.

## METHODOLOGY

The type of research is quantitative and qualitative, whereas qualitative measurement is based on a circumstance that relating to a quality (Kothari, 2004). Therefore, the type of this research is quantitative research.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) also divide the purpose of study into 3 parts: exploratory, descriptive, and causal study. Exploratory study is taken when there is no availability of information and this study often depends on secondary sources (e.g., literature review). Descriptive study is done to gather a data that describes the characteristics of people or circumstances. Causal study is applied to assess whether or not one variable affects another variable to alter. The researcher wants to show that variable X affects variable Y. Thus, the purpose of this research is causal study.

Beside that, there are 5 independent variables and 1 dependent variable in this research, whereas the 5 independent variables are brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, and self-

image congruence. Meanwhile, the 1 dependent variable is brand preference. The 30 indicators used in this research, where Brand image consists of 6 indicators. Perceived quality consists of 5 indicators. Perceived price consists of 5 indicators as well. Style consists of 4 indicators. Self-image congruence consists of 5 indicators. Brand preference consists of 5 indicators.

The population of this research is all Universitas Pelita Harapan students who are the customers of international fast fashion brands and are also parts of Generation Z. Most of the university students still earn money from their parents to fulfill their needs (e.g, buying clothes). They buy clothes that match with their self-images in order to express their identities to other people. Besides, up until 2010, Generation Z is accounted for 28.86% of total population of Indonesia or equal to 68.02 million people (Zuhra, 2017). So, it can be inferred that university students are the crucial targeted market for clothing fashion industry, especially international fast fashion brands which are preferred by youths nowadays, to enter Indonesian market.

In this research, the sample is the subpopulation of Universitas Pelita Harapan students, where the sample is representative of groups of people to whom results will be generalized or transferred (Jonker et al., 2011). Sample can be defined as a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population (Creswell, 2012). Sample can also be explained as "a subgroup or subset of the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

However, Wolf, Harrington, Clark, and Miller (2013) find that many researchers are often in difficult situation when deciding the requirements of sample size. Cohen et al. (2007) state there is no definite answer to determine the sample size. Because this research will use PLS-SEM method (this will be discussed later), there are several suggestions to determine the number of samples for PLS-SEM method. Cohen et al. (2007) say that the common minimum sample size that can be used by researchers is 30. Hair et al. (2014) suggest that based on rule of thumb, the minimum sample size should be 10 times the highest number of arrowheads pointing at the latent variable in PLS path model. Meanwhile, Boomsma and Hoogland (2001) say that the minimum sample size is 200, Bentler and Chou (1987) remark that the minimum sample size is 5 or 10 observations per estimated parameter, and Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) point out that the minimum sample size is 10 cases per variable.

Chin (2010) reports that the minimum sample size is 100-200. Essentially, the more samples, the more greater reliability (Cohen et al., 2007) and the more similarity between sample and population (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, following the suggestions from Boomsma and Hoogland (2001), Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), Chin (2010), Cohen et al. (2007), and Creswell (2012) that have been discussed before, the minimum samples in this research are 200 respondents who are Universitas Pelita Harapan students at the age of 17-23 years old.

The research used Structural Equation Model to explain the phenomenon of causal relationship among brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, and self-image congruence to brand preference. SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) is a statistical technique to test and estimate the causal relationship by integrating the factor and path analysis in quantitative studies (Abdillah & Hartono, 2015). This is agreed by Sudaryono (2017) who explains that SEM which has been used in many fields of study, enables the researchers to test and estimate simultaneously the relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables with many indicators.

## DISCUSSION

The total of respondents who have been gathered for 5 days (November 29th, 2017 until December 3rd, 2017) are 222 students of Universitas Pelita Harapan. The result concluded that the top 5 brands are *H&M* (33.8%), *Zara* (28.8%), *Pull&Bear* (9.5%), *Forever 21* (8.1%), and *Stradivarius* (5.9%) that are chosen among the students of Universitas Pelita Harapan as much as 75, 64, 21, 18, and 13 people, respectively. *Cotton On* (3.2%) and *Topman* (3.2%), respectively, are chosen by 7 respondents. *Bershka* (2.7%) is chosen by 6 students. *Mango* (1.8%) and *New Look* (1.8%), respectively, are chosen by 4 persons. *Topshop* (0.9%) is chosen by 2 people. *Dorothy Perkins* (0.5%) is only chosen by 1 person. Surprisingly, other brands like *Camaïeu*, *Forever New*, *Miss Selfridge*, and *Penshoppe* are not chosen at all by the respondents, where the majority of respondents are *female* students (65.8%) as much as 146 people, whereas the *male* respondents (34.2%) who fill in the questionnaire as much as 76 people which the most of the respondents are at the age of 21 as much as 90 students or 40.5% of total respondents. They are followed by the other respondents who are at the age of 20 (18.5%), 22 (12.6%), 23 (10.8%), 19 (9.9%), 18 (4.5%), and 17 (3.2%) as much as 41, 28, 24, 22, 10, and 7 students, respectively.

The result also showed that most of the students buy 1-3 pieces of clothes per 3 months as much as 151 students or 68% of total respondents. They are followed by other students who buy 4-6 pieces of clothes per 3 months as much as 46 students or equal to 20.7% of total respondents. In addition, every 3 months, the respondents who purchase 7-9 (6.8%) and 10-12 (2.3%) pieces of clothes as much as 15 and 5 people,

respectively. However, students who buy *more than 15* (1.8%) and *13-15* (0.5%) pieces of clothes per 3 months as much as 4 and 1 respondents, respectively.

Beside that, the majority of respondents of Universitas Pelita Harapan set their budget at *IDR 100,000 – 400,000* for 3 months as much as 99 students or 44.6% of total respondents. Then, followed by other respondents who set their budget at *IDR 500,000 – 1,000,000* (40.5%) and more than *IDR 1,000,000* (14.9%) every 3 months as much as 90 and 33 students, respectively. The research also conduct the acual study, where the analysis method using 222 respondent datas was done to examine and evaluate the descriptive and inferential statistics. So the result will show the descriptive statistics as table 2.

Based on table 2, *brand image* has 2 indicators that consist of *image\_3* and *image\_4*. The mean values of those indicators which are 4.203 and 3.910, respectively, show that the respondents agree with the given statements. The median values of those indicators are 4.000. The min values of those indicators are 1.000. The max values of those indicators are 5.000. The standard deviation values of those indicators are 0.741 and 0.800, respectively.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	Indicators	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Standard Deviation
Brand Image	image_3	4.203	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.741
	image_6	3.910	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.800
Perceived Quality	quality_2	4.243	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.738
	quality_4	4.324	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.712
	quality_5	4.252	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.771
Perceived Price	price_1	3.806	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.932
	price_2	3.680	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.950
	price_3	4.014	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.762
	price_4	4.005	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.768
	price_5	4.018	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.811
Style	style_2	4.207	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.705
	style_4	4.225	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.756
Self-Image Congruence	self_1	3.689	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.934
	self_2	3.671	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.893
	self_3	3.532	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.998
	self_4	3.432	4.000	1.000	5.000	1.096
	self_5	3.640	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.957
Brand Preference	prefer_2	3.896	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.861
	prefer_3	3.775	4.000	1.000	5.000	1.006
	prefer_4	3.887	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.886
	prefer_5	3.842	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.904

Source: Author (2017)

Based on table 2, *brand image* has 2 indicators that consist of *image\_3* and *image\_4*. The mean values of those indicators which are 4.203 and 3.910, respectively, show that the respondents agree with the given statements. The median values of those indicators are 4.000. The min values of those indicators are 1.000. The max values of those indicators are 5.000. The standard deviation values of those indicators are 0.741 and 0.800, respectively.

*Perceived quality* has 3 indicators that consist of *quality\_2*, *quality\_4*, and *quality\_5*. The mean values of those indicators which are 4.243, 4.324, and 4.252, respectively, show that the respondents agree with the given statements. The median values of those indicators are 4.000. The min values of those indicators are 1.000. The max values of those indicators are 5.000. The standard deviation values of those indicators are 0.738, 0.712, and 0.771, respectively.

*Perceived price* has 5 indicators that consist of *price\_1*, *price\_2*, *price\_3*, *price\_4*, and *price\_5*. The mean values of those indicators which are 3.806, 3.680, 4.014, 4.005, and 4.018, respectively, show that the respondents agree with the given statements. The median values of those indicators are 4.000. The min values of those indicators are 1.000. The max values of those indicators are 5.000. The standard deviation values of those indicators are 0.932, 0.950, 0.762, 0.768, and 0.811, respectively.

*Style* has 2 indicators that consist of *style\_2* and *style\_4*. The mean values of those indicators which both of them are 4.207 and 4.225, show that the respondents agree with the given statements. The median

values of those indicators are 4.000. The min values of those indicators are 1.000. The max values of those indicators are 5.000. The standard deviation values of those indicators are 0.705 and 0.756, respectively.

*Self-image congruence* has 5 indicators that consist of self\_1, self\_2, self\_3, self\_4, and self\_5. The mean values of those indicators which are 3.689, 3.671, 3.532, 3.432, and 3.640, respectively, show that the respondents agree, they are neutral, and they agree with the given statements. The median values of those indicators are 4.000. The min values of those indicators are 1.000. The max values of those indicators are 5.000. The standard deviation values of those indicators are 0.934, 0.893, 0.998, 1.096, and 0.957, respectively.

*Brand preference* has 4 indicators that consist of prefer\_2, prefer\_3, prefer\_4, and prefer\_5. The mean values of those indicators which are 3.896, 3.775, 3.887, and 3.842, respectively, show that all of the respondents agree with the given statements. The median values of those indicators are 4.000. The min values of those indicators are 1.000. The max values of those indicators are 5.000. The standard deviation values of those indicators are 0.861, 1.006, 0.886, and 0.904, respectively.

Multicollinearity test between independent variables can be examined via inner VIF values (Garson, 2016). If the VIF values of the independent variables are above 5, they should be removed or merged into one (Hair et al., 2014).

Based on the result, the inner VIF values of *brand image* (2.116), *perceived quality* (2.028), *perceived price* (1.795), *style* (2.285), and *self-image congruence* (1.463) are below than 5. Therefore, there is no multicollinearity problem between them. In other words, they can predict themselves separately without being removed or merged into one variable.

The coefficient of determination represents the result of a combination between exogenous and endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2014). The result, the  $R^2$  value is 0.588. Therefore, it can be concluded that brand preference can be explained by those independent variables which are brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, and self-image congruence as much as 58.8%, whereas 41.2% can be explained by other variables outside this research.

Furthermore, Chin and Hair et al. set criterias of  $R^2$  value based on the rule of thumb (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Chin notes if the  $R^2$  values are 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19, they can be regarded as strong, moderate, and weak, respectively. Meanwhile, Hair et al. also report if the  $R^2$  values are 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, they can be seen as strong, moderate, and weak. Thus, the  $R^2$  value of this research is concluded as moderate.

Based on the result, the t statistics values of *hypothesis 1* (2.853), *hypothesis 2* (2.143), *hypothesis 3* (2.003), and *hypothesis 5* (6.461) are above 1.96. Meanwhile, the t statistics value of *hypothesis 4* (0.914) is below 1.96. Therefore, it can be concluded that brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, and self-image congruence have significant effects on brand preference, except style that does not have a significant effect on brand preference.

Besides, there is also a brief explanation about the result of 5 hypotheses (the effects of brand image, perceived price, perceived quality, style, and self-image congruence on brand preference) that have been calculated before. Therefore, the results can conclude as follow:

- *Hypothesis 1: Brand image has a significant effect on brand preference*  
From result shows that the t statistics value of hypothesis 1 (2.853) is above 1.96. Thus, the result of hypothesis 1 is significant and it can be inferred that brand image has a significant effect on brand preference.
- *Hypothesis 2: Perceived quality has a significant effect on brand preference*  
It can be seen that the t statistics value of hypothesis 2 (2.143) is above 1.96. Therefore, the result of hypothesis 2 is significant and it can be concluded that perceived quality has a significant effect on brand preference.
- *Hypothesis 3: Perceived price has a significant effect on brand preference*  
It is clear that the t statistics value of hypothesis 3 (2.003) is above 1.96. Hence, the result of hypothesis 3 is significant and it can be said that perceived price has a significant effect on brand preference.
- *Hypothesis 4: Style has a significant effect on brand preference*  
It is obvious that the t statistics value of hypothesis 4 (0.914) is below 1.96. So, the result of hypothesis 4 is not significant and it can be wrapped up that style does not have a significant effect on brand preference.
- *Hypothesis 5: Self-image congruence has a significant effect on brand preference*  
It is noticeable that the t statistics of hypothesis 5 (6.461) is above 1.96. Therefore, the result of hypothesis 5 is significant and it can be assumed that self-image congruence has a significant effect on brand preference.

This part will discuss briefly about the profile of respondents, pre-test study, and actual study. From the profile of respondents, there are 60 respondents that are used in the pre-test study, whereas there

are 222 respondents that are used in the actual study. By distributing the questionnaire for 5 days, there is a bunch of information that has been gathered relating to the profile of respondents. First, H&M, Zara, Pull&Bear, Forever 21, and Stradivarius are the top 5 brands that have been chosen by respondents. This is similar with the finding of Team Research Tirto who state that Zara and H&M are the top brands among Generation Z (Kirmandita, 2017). Second, from the total of 222 respondents, there are 76 males and 146 females. Third, most of them (90 respondents) are 21 years old. Fourth, there are 151 respondents who always purchase 1-3 pieces of clothes per 3 months. Fifth, there are also 99 respondents who set their budget to purchase clothes at IDR 100,000 – 400,000 per 3 months.

Moreover, pre-test study is done by evaluating convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. In pre-test study, there are 21 valid indicators and 9 invalid indicators. All of the variables are also valid and reliable. On the other hand, the actual study is done by evaluating convergent validity, discriminant validity, reliability, multicollinearity test on inner VIF, coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), and hypotheses test. The results of actual study can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Figure 1 shows the PLS result model before bootstrapping and Figure 2 shows the PLS result model after bootstrapping.



Figure 4.1 PLS Result Model Before Bootstrapping

Source: Author (2017)

From Figure 1, before the data is bootstrapped, all the values of outer loading are valid (above 0.7). Meanwhile, the  $R^2$  value is 0.588. It means brand preference can be explained as much as 58.8% by 5 independent variables (brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, and self-image congruence), whereas 41.2% can be explained by other variables outside this research.

From Figure 2, after the data is bootstrapped, there are only 4 hypotheses that are significant, whereas there is only 1 hypothesis that is not significant. The t statistics values of *hypothesis 1* (2.853), *hypothesis 2* (2.143), *hypothesis 3* (2.003), and *hypothesis 5* (6.461) are above 1.96. Meanwhile, the t statistics value of *hypothesis 4* (0.914) is below 1.96. Therefore, it can be concluded that brand image,

perceived quality, perceived price, and self-image congruence have significant effects on brand preference, except style that does not have a significant effect on brand preference. What is more, there is also a deep discussion about the result of hypotheses test which can be seen below.

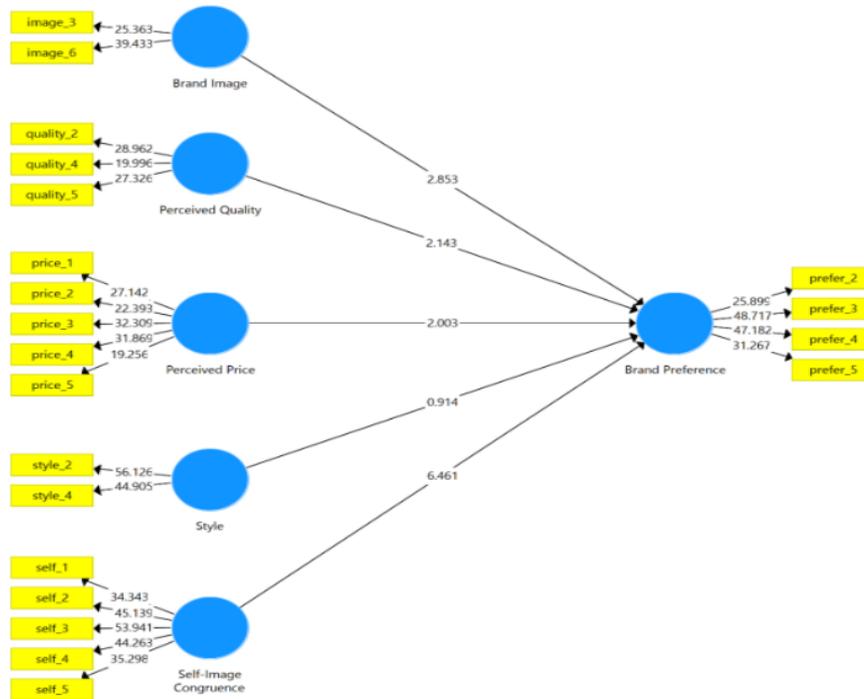


Figure 4.2 PLS Result Model After Bootstrapping  
 Source: Author (2017)

The first hypothesis is *brand image has a significant effect on brand preference*. It means brand image contributes in increasing brand preference. The t statistics value of brand image (2.853) is higher than 1.96 which can be concluded that the first hypothesis result is significant. This is supported by the previous researchers that have been discussed before like Duarte and Raposo (2010), Halim et al. (2014), Kiong et al. (2013), Mudiantono et al. (2015), and Ronald and Sugiharto (2017) who say that brand image has a significant effect on brand preference. Halim et al. (2014) note that customers' perception of a brand will form their preference towards that brand and will increase their trust on that brand as well. Similarly, Mudiantono et al. (2015) say that brand image on a product will enhance customers' trust to prefer the product and make a purchase. Therefore, in this research, it can be concluded that brand image has a significant effect on brand preference.

The second hypothesis is *perceived quality has a significant effect on brand preference*. It means perceived quality contributes in increasing brand preference. The t statistics value of perceived quality (2.143) is above 1.96 which can be inferred that the second hypothesis result is significant. This is aligned with the previous researchers that have been discusses before, such as Afsar (2014), Alamro and Rowley (2011), Fallahi and Hashemi (2014), Kaur and Malik (2015), Kiong et al. (2013), and Nilforushan and Haeri (2015) who say that perceived quality has a significant effect on brand preference. Perceived quality is so crucial to increase customers' preference for a brand (Gill & Dawra, 2010). The high quality which is perceived by customers, makes them prefer that brand to other brands (Nilforushan & Haeri, 2015). It is agreed by Afsar (2014) who reports that if the product quality fits with customers' perception, the trust that customers put on that brand will increase and the preference for that brand will increase as well. Kiong et al. (2013) also conclude that perceived quality has the strongest effect on customers' preference for that brand because quality which is perceived by customers, reflects the reliability of a

product that will provide more satisfaction for the customers. Thus, in this research, it can be inferred that perceived quality has a significant effect on brand preference.

The third hypothesis is *perceived price has a significant effect on brand preference*. It means perceived price contributes in increasing brand preference. The t statistics value of perceived price (2.003) is higher than 1.96 which can be concluded that the third hypothesis result is significant. This is supported by the previous researchers that have been discussed before like Alamro and Rowley (2011) and Ebrahim et al. (2016) who say that perceived price has a significant effect on brand preference. The preference of customers on a brand that provides advantages to them, makes a company courageously charges them a higher price (Hasan, 2015). However, if a higher price is not offered with a high quality, perceived price will have a negative effect on customers' brand preference (Alamro & Rowley, 2011). Ebrahim et al. (2016) find that they prefer a brand that gives acceptable price. Therefore, in this research, it can be concluded that perceived price has a significant effect on brand preference.

The fourth hypothesis is *style has a significant effect on brand preference*. It means style contributes in increasing brand preference. However, the t statistics value of style (0.914) is lower than 1.96 which can be inferred that the fourth hypothesis result is not significant. This is aligned with the previous researcher that have been discussed before, such as Kaur and Malik (2015) who say that style has a less significant effect on brand preference. It may happen because customers tend to switch their brand preference when they are attracted to another new clothing style (Hassan, Hurrah, & Lanja, 2014). However, not everyone is attracted to the latest fashion style (Solomon et al., 2006). This is proved by the fact that 68% of total respondents in this research are regarded as the not fashion conscious customers because they only purchase 1-3 clothes per 3 months and 44.6% of total respondents also set their budget at IDR 100,000 – 400,000 per 3 months. In other words, as the students whose incomes are still limited, they do not always do a purchase every time the latest stylish clothes come out, but they only purchase clothes if they need the clothes and the price matches with their budgets. This happens because compared with style, lower-fashion conscious people prefer comfort as the most important apparel attribute (Nam et al., 2007). In a similar vein, there are also some authors that reinforce the statements above. Jegethesan et al. (2012) add that when customers want to decide which clothes that they have to choose, they prefer comfort as the most important attribute compared with style. Rahman (2011) say that fit is the first important of product attributes. Hopfer and Istook (2016) state that fit/sizing is the most important apparel attribute as well. Similarly, Oladele and Ogundipe (2016) comment that fit is the most important fashion clothing attribute. Zhang et al. (2002) find that fit and comfort are the first and second important casual wear attributes, followed by style on the third rank. Thus, in this research, it can be inferred that style does not have a significant effect on brand preference.

The fifth hypothesis is *self-image congruence has a significant effect on brand preference*. It means self-image congruence contributes in increasing brand preference. The t statistics value of self-image congruence (6.461) is higher than 1.96 which can be concluded that the fifth hypothesis result is significant. This is supported by the previous researchers that have been discussed before like Alamro and Rowley (2011), Duarte and Raposo (2010), Ebrahim et al. (2016), Ilaw (2014), Jamal and Goode (2001), Sohail and Awal (2017), and Tsai et al. (2015) who say that self-image congruence has a significant effect on brand preference. Customers' relationship with a brand will become symbiotic when their self-image is congruent with brand's image (Duarte & Raposo, 2010). The more higher congruence of customers' self-image, the more greater customers' preference for a brand (Ebrahim et al., 2016; Ilaw, 2014). This is asserted by Graeff who says, "the more similar a consumer's self-image is to the brand's image, the more favourable their evaluations of that brand should be" (Jamal & Goode, 2001, p. 483). The congruence between their self-image with the brand's image may also influence their purchase decision later (Sohail & Awal, 2017) because their purchase reflects their self-expression (Ilaw, 2014). Therefore, in this research, it can be concluded that self-image congruence has a significant effect on brand preference.

Based on the t statistics value and deep discussion above, it can be concluded that self-image congruence (6.461) has the strongest significant effect on brand preference. It is followed by brand image (2.853), perceived quality (2.143), perceived price (2.003), and style (0.914), respectively. However, because the t statistics value of style does not have a significant effect on brand preference, there are only 4 acceptable variables that are significant on brand preference, such as brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, and self-image congruence.

Additionally, based on the descriptive statistics table, all of the respondents agree with the 2 statements of *brand image*. The first statement is "This brand satisfies my needs." and the second statement is "This brand has more appealing characteristics than other brands.". It can be concluded that customers prefer a brand image that satisfies their needs and has more appealing characteristics. Therefore, a manager has to design a successful marketing program that brings a brand image has so many attributes and benefits to fulfill customers' needs. Moreover, a manager has to create a brand image that

has more appealing characteristics. A brand image has to be authentic, different, and clear in order to be recognized and remembered easily by customers. So, the brand can have a higher chance to be preferred by customers.

*Perceived quality* has 3 statements that all of the respondents agree about. The first statement is this brand offers clothes that have good stitches. The second statement is this brand offers clothes that are fit with my body size. The third statement is this brand offers clothes that have more than one year durability. It can be inferred that customers prefer clothes that have good stitches, suit their body sizes, and have more than one year durability. Thus, a manager has to create a standardized policy for product quality, especially the material and stitches. A manager also has to train the employees to produce the high quality products that meet customers' desires. By analyzing customers' feedbacks, a manager can obtain new insights to enhance the product quality. So, customers will finally prefer a brand that offers high quality clothes than any other brands.

*Perceived price* has 5 statements that all of the respondents agree about. The first statement is this brand offers clothes at a reasonable price. The second statement is this brand offers clothes at an affordable price. The third statement is "This brand offers clothes at a price that is worth the quality.". The fourth statement is "This brand offers clothes at a price that suits with the benefits that I receive.". The fifth statement is "This brand offers clothes at a competitive price compared to other brands.". It can be concluded that customers prefer clothes that offer a reasonable, affordable, and competitive price along with the quality and benefits that they receive. Therefore, a manager has to understand that every customer has a different perception of price. A manager can analyze the production cost of one product, profit, and competitors' prices to determine the right price for customers. The right price that is perceived by customers along with the quality and benefits that are offered by a brand, will increase the preference of customers on that brand compared with other brands. This strategy can be applied for respondents who are, in this case, the university students. Most of them (44.6% of the total respondents) set their budget at IDR 100,000 – 400,000. It means with their restricted budget to purchase clothes, a manager can promote the high quality and beneficial product by giving coupons, discounts, or any additional promotions for university students. This happens to H&M who gives 10% discount for students by showing their student cards. As the result, most of the respondents of this research (33.8% of the total respondents) prefer H&M as their favorite brand.

*Style* has 2 statements that all of the respondents agree about. The first statement is "This brand offers suitable clothing styles for me.", whereas the second statement is "This brand offers trendy and fashionable clothing styles.". It can be inferred that customers prefer trendy, fashionable, and suitable clothing style for them. Thus, a manager has to know the basic knowledge about fabrics, clothing styles, and clothing sizes. By attending fashion events and searching on social media about the latest fashion style, a manager can offer the new clothes at the store immediately along with the current fashion style among young customers. However, a manager also have to remind him- or herself that customers prefer fit and comfort as the most important attributes compared with style. A manager can combine those things by offering clothing style that is not only trendy, fashionable, and suitable but also fit and comfortable for customers. So, customers will prefer a brand that provides clothes which are stylish, fit, and comfortable at the same time.

*Self-image congruence* has 5 statements in this research. There are 3 statements that customers agree about. They are "This brand reflects who I am.", "This brand is consistent with how I see myself.", and "Through this brand, I can express myself.". Meanwhile, there are 2 statements in this research that customers are neutral about. The first statement is "I can completely identify myself with this brand." and the second statement is "If I were a brand, I would be this brand.". It can be concluded that customers prefer clothes that is similar and consistent with themselves so that they can express themselves through a brand. Therefore, a manager should design an advertising contents that build and position the brand image that is similar with customers' self-image. However, as been mentioned before by Jamal and Al-Marri (2007), a manager has to remember that not all of customers have the same level of self-image congruence. For customers who have a higher level of self-image congruence with a brand, a manager can advertise a brand with image commercial that relating to customers' self-image. Meanwhile, for customers who own a lower level of self-image congruence with a brand, a manager can advertise a brand with functional advertising that demonstrate the performance, benefits, and features of the brands. By doing these strategies, customers' self-image congruence with a brand will increase. They can be completely identified and linked to the brand image as well. Since Generation Z people use social media as their part of everyday life, a manager can advertise their brands by applying digital advertising (advertise via social media) that seems more effective and efficient because it advertises the brand directly towards the young target markets and does not cost too much compared with traditional advertising (advertise via newspaper, magazine, radio, TV, and billboard).

## CONCLUSION

Nowadays, most of young Indonesian customers who especially Generation Z people still prefer foreign fast fashion brands compared with local fashion brands. This is similar with this research that finds H&M, Zara, Pull&Bear, Forever 21, and Stradivarius are the top brands among 222 respondents. Moreover, this research also analyzes the effect of 5 independent variables on 1 dependent variable. The 5 independent variables are brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, style, and self-image congruence. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is brand preference.

Based on the result, brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, and self- image congruence have significant effects on brand preference. Among of them, self-image congruence has the most significant effect on brand preference with t statistics value as much as 6.461. It is followed by the other independent variables along with their t statistics values: brand image (2.853), perceived quality (2.143), and perceived price (2.003).

In the meantime, style does not have a significant effect on brand preference. The t statistics value of style (0.914) is lower than t table value (1.96). It may happen because not every person is a fashion conscious customer. This is proved by the fact that 68% of total respondents in this research only purchase 1-3 clothes per 3 months and 44.6% of them also set their budget only at IDR 100,000 – 400,000 per 3 months. In other words, as the students whose earnings are still limited, they do not always spend their money every time the latest stylish clothes come out. They only buy clothes when the price is suitable with their limited budgets and the clothes are comfortable and fit with their bodies.

Based on the conclusion above, a manager has to know that most of the students prefer international fast fashion brands based on the congruence between the images of the brands and their self-images. However, a manager does not have to forget that brand image, perceived quality, and perceived price are also the important factors for customers to prefer international fast fashion brands.

First, customers prefer clothes that have a congruence between their self images and brand images. Since Generation Z people always use social media every day, a manager can advertise a brand via digital advertising that is more efficient in cost. However, a manager has to note that everyone has a different level of self- image congruence.

For customers who have a lower level of self-image congruence, a manager can advertise a brand along with the features and benefits of the clothes. Meanwhile, for customers who have a higher level of self-image congruence, a manager can promote a brand with image commercial that suits customers' self-images.

Second, customers prefer a brand that fulfills their desires and has more attractive characteristics. Therefore, a manager has to create a marketing campaign that offer attributes and advantages for customers. Moreover, the originality and uniqueness of a brand that is created by a manager, make the image of a clothing brand will be identified and kept in customers' minds easily.

Third, customers prefer a high quality product that has good stitches, suit their body size, and more than one year durability. Thus, a manager has to set a standardized policy to ensure the quality of clothes meet customers' expectation. A manager can also receive feedbacks from customers to get new ideas in order to enhance the quality of clothes.

Fourth, customers prefer benefits and high product quality at a price that seems reasonable, affordable, and competitive as well. A manager has to give the appropriate price that is equal to the advantages and quality that are offered by a brand for customers. A manager can also give additional promotions, such as coupons, discounts, and etc. to attract customers who on a limited budget like university students.

Fifth, even though style does not have a significant effect on brand preference, a manager has to know that customers still like clothes that are popular, stylish, and of course, the clothes suits them so well. However, compared with style, customers still prefer fit and comfort as the most crucial attributes of clothes. Therefore, a manager can offer clothes that are stylish, comfortable, and fit at once.

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## APPENDIX A COEFFICIENT OF DETERMINATION (R<sup>2</sup>)

### R Square

Matrix	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Preference	0.588	0.579

## APPENDIX B HYPOTHESES TEST

### Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Brand Image -> Brand Preference	0.195	0.195	0.068	2.853	0.004
Perceived Price -> Brand Preference	0.129	0.134	0.064	2.003	0.045
Perceived Quality -> Brand Preference	0.146	0.150	0.068	2.143	0.032
Self-Image Congruence -> Brand Preference	0.424	0.422	0.066	6.461	0.000
Style -> Brand Preference	0.065	0.063	0.071	0.914	0.361

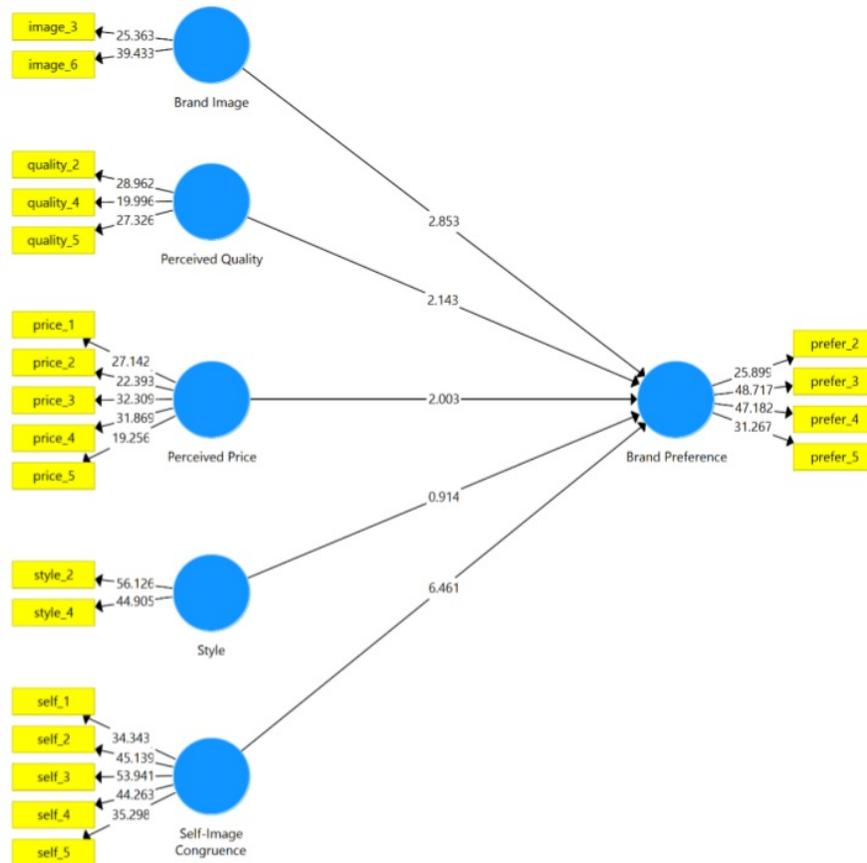
### APPENDIX C

#### PLS RESULT MODEL BEFORE BOOTSTRAPPING



## APPENDIX D

### PLS RESULT MODEL AFTER BOOTSTRAPPING



# Factors of Preference for International Fast Fashion Brands: A Study on Generation Z

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GENERAL COMMENTS

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