

Kaynait Zafar

BUF 4700- OL85

Dr. Nazanin Munroe

September 14, 2020

Right Or Wrong?: Pros and Cons of Global Outsourcing
and Sweatshops.

Life is about making a choice debating on if we made a wrong or right decision. Many people debate on the positivity or negativity effects on sweatshops that have on the apparel industry. Sweatshop is a workplace that is mostly known for lousy jobs. They hire unskilled and uneducated employees to work long hours, earn really low wages, child labor, sexual harassment, abusive discipline, and a lack of benefits for workers. They are working in unhealthy and unsafe conditions that could cause harmful consequences. The workers are treated unfairly and they don't really get the chance to take days off because they already get low wages for working all day. The sweatshop is clarified by the U.S. Department of Labor as a factory enforcing 2 or more labor laws. The companies can get lower production costs but how will companies manage to have control over what happens overseas. In this report, we will debate the pros and cons of who is accountable for harming the apparel industry, global outsourcing, or sweatshops.

The word “sweatshop” was first used in the late 19th century to describe aspects of tailoring trade, but conditions for the sweatshop still exist in other industries. The sweatshop was first related to apparel in the United Kingdom. People had higher demands for apparel because of having high living standards. There are shops that don't care about their workers who take advantage, are greedy, racial, business practices, gender discrimination, government regulations, or are in a global competition. The workers were pressurized by completing the work fast before the due date. The concept of fair trade happened in the mid-twentieth century, the idea of fair trade originated as a way of offering job opportunities to farmers and farm workers around the world comparable to those found in developed nations. In a textbook, Good Corporation, Bad Corporation: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Global Economy it states “traced back to the personal initiatives of a few dedicated reformers with a social conscience.” Edna Ruth Byler an

American businesswoman who does an importing of needlecrafts from Puerto Rico poor communities and pays them a fair wage. The fair trade only works for qualified producers who follow certain environmental and labor standards and are known as the certification system. Fairtrade is also known as coffee, it has expanded in agricultural and manufactured products such as bananas, tea, honey, sugar, rice, cacao, organic cotton, textiles, and handicrafts. Global outsourcing is a practice that is used in a business when a party is hired outside of a company to present services that are done by their own staff. A company works with services to save a lot of money to earn goods. It is also a downfall for companies who do these practices because they lose track of their control of their workers overseas.

The position of a retailer plays a negative role in the sweatshop by choosing countries that have lower wages so they do not have to pay their workers a lot nor do they want to spend a lot of money on building the sweatshop. Also, they could hire workers who are struggling with poverty issues and lack of social security. Their biggest problem is that they do not let their consumers know they use sweatshops. There are many popular brands that use a sweatshop to make a profit such as Nike, Addis, Michael Kors, Old Navy, Converse, Forever 21, and etc. A sweatshop manufacturing has to provide the workers being in unsafe working conditions, child labor, abusive discipline, sexual harassment, mandatory overtime, labor abuse, and a violation of labor laws and regulations. They don't treat their workers with fairness nor safety. "Reports have come from multiple factories listing human rights violations, such as payment below minimum wage, unpaid or incorrectly paid overtime, living spaces infested with bedbugs, limited bathroom, and food breaks, sexual assault by supervisors and death" (thecollegian, 2013). The position of the consumers in a sweatshop is that they get to make a decision of deciding whether

they are shopping from the right brand or store. It is in consumers' hands that get to make a company succeed or fail. We consumers can do our research and not spend money on brands that use sweatshops so we could stop the workers from being treated badly and unfairly.

Two unforgettable and deadliest tragedies that took place are the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire and the Rana Plaza Disaster. The first tragedy that occurred is the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (Figure 1) that took place on March 25th of 1911 because of not having good working conditions and no safety. The disaster was caused by a discarded cigarette that caused the fire from a fabric scrap bin on the eighth floor. They had water buckets on every floor but they were empty. The working conditions were really bad because women didn't have access to the bathroom and the building doors were locked so they did not want to slow down the production and leave. They had 500 people working in that building, some of them were in their twenties or teens trying to work 12 hours a day to earn money for their families. Many of them died at a young age and couldn't survive the tragic incident. This tragedy could have been prevented if they had good safety, working conditions, and didn't have the doors locked. After this tragedy, factory workers got together and fought for their safety, low wages, overworking, and unsafe working conditions. "There were over 20 laws passed which changed fire safety, building safety, charged the state with worker safety" (history, 2019). The second tragedy that occurred is the Rana Plaza disaster (Figure 2) that took place on April 24th of 2013 in Dhaka, Bangladesh because of the fatal industrial building collapsing and leaving 2,500 workers injured and more than 1,100 killed. Still today, people don't want to end sweatshops and the brands that are still using sweatshops for their garments. After this incident, the retailers and manufacturers should be held responsible for

the tragedy and should be punished. They shouldn't let this happen again and be more cautious and careful.

In conclusion, a sweatshop is a workplace for poor and uneducated people who get the chance to work and earn money for their families. Who knew that they were going to work in a place that had no good working conditions, had low wages for working up to 12 hours a day, abuse, and mistreatment. The workplace could cause workers injuries, disease, pain, death, and any health-related issues. The companies only think about their benefits and advantages, but they should also think about the poor hard-working workers who take their time to make the garments for their brands. The companies should be fair to their workers and should provide them with good working conditions, good wages, and safety.

Images



Figure 1: Fire hoses spray water on the upper floors of the Asch Building, housing the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, on Washington and Greene Streets in New York City, during the fire on March 25, 1911.

Keystone/Getty Images



Figure 2: A photo from 2013 shows rescue workers at the site of the eight-story building Rana Plaza which collapsed at Savar, outside Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Credit...Abir Abdullah/European Pressphoto Agency

Reference List

Jimenez, G., & Pulos, E. (n.d.). 9. CSR and Sweatshops. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from

<https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/good-corporation-bad-corporation/chapter/9-csr-and-sweatshops/>

8. Fair trade – Good Corporation, bad Corporation: Corporate social responsibility in the global economy. (n.d.). Milne Publishing – Publishing at Milne Library SUNY Geneseo.

<https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/good-corporation-bad-corporation/chapter/8-fair-trade/>

9. CSR and sweatshops – Good Corporation, bad Corporation: Corporate social responsibility in the global economy. (n.d.). Milne Publishing – Publishing at Milne Library SUNY Geneseo.

<https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/good-corporation-bad-corporation/chapter/9-csr-and-sweatshops/>

Falletti, L. (2013, May 3). Consumers responsible for societal acceptance of sweatshops. The Collegian.

<https://www.kstatecollegian.com/2013/05/03/consumers-responsible-for-societal-acceptance-of-sweatshops/>

History of sweatshops. (2019, May 29). National Museum of American History.

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/history>

Kiger, P. J. (2019, March 25). How the horrific tragedy of the triangle shirtwaist fire led to workplace safety laws. HISTORY.

<https://www.history.com/news/triangle-shirtwaist-factory-fire-labor-safety-laws>

Why won't we learn from the survivors of the rana Plaza disaster? (2018, April 24). The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/24/style/survivors-of-rana-plaza-disaster.html>