

## Elite Strategic Partners

### Team Members

Business Identify: Gen Z Research Team

Lyvia Chambers-Assistant Manager (2025)  
Social Responsibility

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Audience: SHEIN's Committee for Corporate

### Title

The SHEIN Imperative:  
Ethics in Fast Fashion

Our team of Gen Z Researchers was hired by SHEIN's Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility to find a solution using legal, ethical, and environmental data to reduce the waste of SHEIN's fast-fashion clothing production.

Fast fashion refers to rapidly producing inexpensive clothing designed to meet the latest trends. While it offers the benefit of affordable and stylish clothing to consumers, it comes with significant downsides. The ethical and environmental impacts are the primary concerns of SHEIN as a fast fashion company. Fast fashion has been connected to issues with worker exploitation, where workers endure poor conditions and low wages. The industry contributes massively to waste production, as garments are quickly discarded after being worn only a few times. This creates overconsumption and environmental problems, with millions of tons of clothing ending in landfills yearly. In addition, the use of toxic chemicals in production and unsustainable manufacturing practices harm the environment. SHEIN faces backlash for these manufacturing practices, especially on social media platforms and news sites, raising more questions about exploiting workers and resources for profit. While SHEIN provides quick, low-cost, accessible, trendy clothes, it also brings significant ethical, environmental, and legal challenges.

Fast fashion significantly affects global economies by depending on cheap production in countries with varying labor laws, often harming workers and exacerbating economic issues. Mass production and low prices lead to overconsumption, creating a mindset where clothes are seen as disposable and not long-lasting. Overconsumption has a huge environmental impact, with things like excessive water usage and carbon emissions.

Three solutions were considered to solve this ethical issue. The first focused on making production more eco-friendly by using more sustainable materials. The second idea is to change how consumers think about clothes, encouraging them to see them as long-term items instead of temporary affordable trends. The third and chosen solution was to update SHEIN's return policy. SHEIN could encourage customers to return unwanted or damaged items, which would be recycled for reuse. This significantly reduces waste, making SHEIN a more ethically conscious fashion company. And encourage more Gen Z consumers to shop from SHEIN and not feel guilty about wearing clothing from our brand.