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THE INTENDED AESTHETIC FACTORS ON BUYING DECISIONS OF INTIMATES: THE STUDY ON FEMALE CONSUMER'S IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Women's intimates play a major role in the fashion industry with the increasing demand for fashionable undergarments. Accordingly, identifying the factors influence for the buying decisions for intimate wear is vital. Thus, this research focuses to identify the intended aesthetic factors influenced on the buying decisions of intimates. The questionnaire survey was adopted for this study and distributed to sample of 120 women within Sri Lanka in each age category; 18 - 30 years and 31 - 35 years. The questionnaire was mainly based on three dimensions: color, base material, design of the material and embellishments of the intimates. The descriptive analysis was done with the use of SPSS software (version 16) to identify the factors. The results highlighted that, the color of the intimate and base material are considerable factors influenced on buying decisions. However, it was noted that the demand for the design of the material and embellishments of the intimates is considerably less. Accordingly, it was revealed that, out of 93.8% of women who prefer colored intimates, 50% of women prefer to buy dark colored intimates. As reported, 96% of women prefer intimates made of cotton materials. Thus, it can be concluded that this research findings can be useful for the intimate apparel companies to identify the

female consumers' real and secret needs on the intimate wear which should be focused when manufacturing

Key words: Intimates, Women's intimate, Aesthetic factors, buying decisions,

INTRODUCTION

Intimate apparel is reflected as human's second skin which keep outer garments from being soiled by bodily discharges providing comfort and security. Among intimates, women's intimates play a major role in the apparel industry with the increasing demand for fashionable undergarments (Consumer Market Research, 2016). Women's intimate is considered as 13 billion industry with the growing rate of 3.3% each year (Robertson, 2016). This includes three equivalent business segments; corsetry, lingerie and hosiery (Robertson, 2016). During the past years, intimate markets has gone evergreen and strong changes. That is due to the innovative products with new fabrics, embellishments and creative patterns (Consumer Market Research, 2016). In addition, variable trends on eco-friendly intimates and shape wear are driving the growth of the intimate industry (Orsal, 2015). At present, the international women's intimate market is directed by

some big brands. Calvin Klein, Legaby Rosy, Lise Carmer and Victoria's Secrets. Naja, Fortnight lingerie, kiss me deadly, Harlow and Fox and Lucy B are some popular women's intimate brands around the world (Robertson, 2016). Brands introduced to the market in the recent past in the Asian region are Cosabella, La Perla and Andres Sarda (Consumer Market Research, 2016). In the global intimate market, North America and Europe have more than two-third share (Global intimate apparel market, 2007). Moreover, Asian countries like Singapore, Japan, China, Korea and Hong Kong are also becoming the world's luxury intimate brand capacity of the market (Global intimate apparel market, 2007). As revealed, Sri Lanka is developing interesting intimates for top international brands including Victoria's secret, Marks and Spencer and Triumph which provides an opportunity to Sri Lanka to be a global hot spot for intimate wear. Private sector in Sri Lanka is investing heavily in the intimate market. So, it remains competitive with China, India and Vietnam (Dias, 2007). However, within Sri Lankan, only limited brands are available as shown in table 1.

Table 1 Intimate brands in Sri Lankan market

Brand	Description
Velona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Sri Lanka local brand is important substitution during the period of the 'Velona' economy. Almost had an exclusive possession on cotton panties and later 'Senorita' bras were standout for their dominance when consumers searched only value. (Kulamannage, 2012)
Amante	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Amante' intimate brand is rising of apparel, design, manufacturing and distribution powered by inspiration from around the world. As a premium collection of international standard intimates for woman launched in Sri Lanka as a presentation of MAS holdings. 'Amante' intimate brand is rising of apparel, design, manufacturing and distribution powered by inspiration from around the world. As a premium collection of international standard intimates for woman launched in Sri Lanka as a presentation of MAS holdings. This brand is developed peculiarly for the woman in South Asia to set their body structure, anticipation and needs. (Kulamannage, 2012)

Triumph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triumph in Sri Lanka is touched as the 'aspiration brand' in the intimate market and it known as a company that makes innovative and fashionable intimate wear. Triumph came to Sri Lanka when the term intimate was not even generally used. This brand invented new dimensions in the functional value placed by women on lingerie and attached an emotional value for intimate wear. (Wickramasinghe & Liyanage, 2007)
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1.1 Intended aesthetic factors influence on buying decisions

There may be several factors which can influence the purchasing decisions of intimates: aesthetic, functional, physical, religious, etc. Out of these, the aesthetic factors play an important role during the process of purchasing intimate (Tsaousi, 2011). The aesthetic aspects involve the color, style, shape, material, texture, line, form, fitting and finishing of the intimate which denotes the appearance or the attractiveness.

Color is considered as a key issue and obvious noticeable fact at glance in a product (Solomon & Rabolt, 2006) and has affected consumer product choice (Clarke & Honeycutt, 2000). To maintain and enhance attractiveness, the material and constructions of the garment act together. Fabric or the material aesthetics include color, pattern, color consistency, luster, opacity and hand (Tsaousi, 2011). It is acknowledged that the aesthetic decision of color and pattern is influenced by fashion trends, personal choice and awareness of design elements and principles (Ela, 2015).

1.2 Objective of the study

Even though Sri Lankan customers do not have powerful brand selections for intimates within Sri Lanka, intimates are essential items for women. The purchasing behaviour can be changed according to each consumer's needs and expectations. This research focuses to identify the intended aesthetic factors influenced on the buying decisions of intimates on Sri Lankan female consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As the major data gathering technique, questionnaire survey was adapted for this

research. The questionnaire was mainly based on three dimensions: color, base material, design of the material and embellishments. The questionnaire was distributed via internet (g mail) and directly among women in each age category; 18 -30 years and 31 – 35 years, with the focus of analyzing factors by age group. The sample size for the research is calculated using the following formula (Morse, 1994).

$$= 2 (1 -) 2$$

Where: z = z value at a specific significance level, p = percentage picking a choice / proportion, d = marginal error, n =Sample size

The considered significance level for the research is 0.05 and the corresponding z-value is 1.96. Since the population size is unknown the proportion is considered as 0.5. The desired margin error is 0.1. According the calculate sample size for the research is 96. Therefore, the distribution of the sample is;

Table 2 Selection of sample size

Age group	Sample size
18 - 30	48
31 - 45	48
Total	96

Though sample size was 96, questionnaires were distributed among 120 by considering the non-respondent rate. The descriptive analysis was done with the use of SPSS software (version 16).

DATA ANALYSIS

96 filled questionnaires were received for the data analysis. Within that

composition, it was revealed that 41.7% are single and 58.3% are married.

3.1 Consideration of Color

The results highlighted that, the color of the intimate is a considerable factor under aesthetic factors where 93.8% of women prefer colored intimates. It was realized that, only a little percentage is not considering the color when purchasing intimates. The consideration of color when buying intimates were further analyzed with respect to the preference for hues of colors: dark colors, light colors and shades of colors. Out of those who have mentioned that they prefer to wear colored intimates, it was revealed that more preferences are for the dark color intimates compared to light colors and shades of colors (table 3).

Table 3. Percentage of preference for dark colors, light colors and shades of color intimates

	Frequency	%
Dark colours	45	50
Light colours	33	36.6
Shades of colours	12	13.3
Total	90	100

Since the sample consists of basically two age group categories, the data was analyzed against the age groups to identify whether the color preferences changed with the age group. It was noted that the age between 18-30 preferred colored intimates than the age between 31-45. Further analysis of the color preference with the marital status

highlights that married women prefer colored intimates than unmarried.

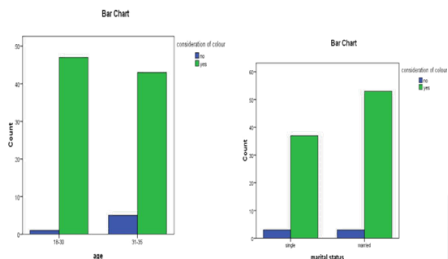


Figure 1. color consideration by age group and color consideration by marital status

Further, the results show that private sector consumers prefer the colored intimates than the other sectors. The results indicate that most of the women consider about the color of their intimates regardless the income level and irrespective of education level or occupation.

3.2 Consideration of base material

As revealed, the consideration of base material of an intimate during purchasing of intimates is considerably high.

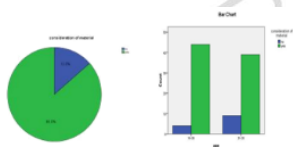


Figure 2. Consideration of material of intimates

In addition, it was noted that the age between 18-30 considered the base material of the intimates than the age between 31-45.

Figure 3 Consideration of material by age group

It indicates that high percentage of women prefer cotton material for the intimates as presented in table 4. This may be due to the climate condition of Sri Lanka, the unawareness about the other materials, unavailability of high range of varieties for intimates and no choices of intimates within the available few categories.

Table 4 Preference for types of materials

Material		No	Yes	Total
cotton	Frequency	26	70	96
	Percent	27.1	72.9	100.0
chiffon	Frequency	91	05	96
	Percent	94.8	5.2	100.0
satin	Frequency	89	07	96
	Percent	92.7	7.3	100.0
velvet	Frequency	91	05	96
	Percent	94.8	5.2	100.0
other materials	Frequency	90	06	96
	Percent	93.8	6.2	100.0

In addition, education level and occupation don't effect on preferences on material because every category of education and occupation show that most of the women consider about the material when buying intimates.

3.3 Consideration of design of material

The results indicate that most of the women prefer plain intimates than other patterns and no one prefer animal skin pattern intimates when they are purchasing (table 5). This percentage is around 72%. This may be because less availability of products or unawareness about the patterns.

In addition, as shown in figure 4, it is evident that there is an effect from age group for buying decisions on pattern of intimates. When considering the marital status both groups married or single consider about the pattern.

Further, most of the women who educated up to O/L do not consider about the pattern when buying intimates while others care about the pattern. Moreover, it came to light that most of women who are in private sector do not consider about pattern. But there is a considerable percentage in private sector who consider pattern too. However, the conclusion that can be made from this result is educational level and occupation do effect on pattern of intimates. It was noted that there is a considerable percentage of those who don't consider about the pattern in every income level. However, the women who earn more than Rupees 100000 show a high tendency of considering pattern of intimates.

3.4 Consideration of embellishments

It was revealed that, around 56% of women are considering embellishments in the intimate wear and rest of them are not considering this factor. Further analyzing their preferences for different types of embellishments, it was noticed that lace is the most preferred embellishment technique.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on identifying the intended aesthetic factors on the buying behavior of intimates of Sri Lankan women. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that color, material, are the key main influencing factors for the purchasing decision of intimate wear. Under these factors dark colors, cotton material and plain textured fabrics are most key factors. However, as revealed pattern of material impact for the buying decisions of 18

– 30 age group women. Therefore, by targeting 18 – 30 age groups the manufactures can come up with new patterns to attract new customers and keep existing customer. Further, there is an opportunity for manufactures to design and produce various print patterns for intimate wear like floral, stripes, checked, dots and animal skin patterns.

Further, it should be noted that this research findings can be useful for the intimate apparel companies to identify the female consumers' real and secret needs on the intimate wear which should be focused when manufacturing.

4.1 Limitations and further research

The research had restricted to the sample size to 96 within Colombo district and female consumers under two age groups. But further studies can be recommended for other districts as well as different age groups. Further, the research limits to the bra and panties. However, this study can be extended for the other intimates.

The researcher had limited this research for the aesthetic factors such as colour, material, pattern and embellishments but it will be beneficial to expand the research into functional, physical, religious and cultural factors to identify the most influential factors on buying decisions of intimates of Sri Lankan women.

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