

A Review Study on “Fitting Issues in Women’s Wear Garments in India and Impact on Customer Satisfaction”

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ABSTRACT

Apparel fit is the main attribute consider by women consumers when they purchase ready to wear apparel. “Clothing fit is defined as garment that have the proper size & shape” that means garment fit have two basic elements of size & shape (Aklamati, Twum, & Deikumah, 2016). Indian apparel industry uses western countries size system due to non-availability of standard size and modify according to ideal figure. As women population consist of various body shapes therefore, customer whose body shape attributes differ from the ideal figure may experience fitting issues. Fitting is the most challenging factor in women’s apparel manufacturing for ready to wear industry. As per review of literature, it is apparent that women customers are not satisfied with the fitting of ready to wear apparels. Dissatisfaction with apparel fit is most repeated problem with customers (Alexander, M., Jo Connell, L. and Beth Presley, A. 2005). This systematic review examines the evidence based on literature review to identify common causes of fitting issues in women’s wear garments and impact on their satisfaction level. The study gives a detailed description of the methodological characteristics of the literature, identifies key related factors, and the findings are compared within an international context.

Keywords: apparel fit, size, body shape, customer satisfaction, ready to wear

Introduction

Fitting issues in women’s apparel in India is one of the challenging criteria for ready to wear industry which is directly related to the body comfort and customer satisfaction.

Size and fit problems are common issues among women customers, Apparel retailers are using different sizing systems due to unavailability of standard size in India,

which creates difficulties for consumers for selecting their perfect size and fit between various brands and thus, creating customer dissatisfaction (Alexander et al. 2005). The same size can be different from brand to brand. Each brand is using their own developed size system which is common reason of size & fitting issues in apparels. Fitting issues have created frustration and confusion among consumers.



Figure 1. Fitting Issues in Woman's Wear Upper Torso (Front & Back)

Apparel manufacturers must understand and consider their customers fitting preferences, fitting issues and variation in body shape & sizes. Fit is defined how a garment shapes conforms to the body contours and how well it appears on the human body (Kasambala et al. 2014).

If a manufacturer can enhance their standard sizes in respect of providing accurate fit for different body sizes of target population, they can hit the sale of products with maximum customer satisfaction. Also reduce the returns (Laurie M. Apple, Ph.D., Kathleen R. Smith, Ed.D. & Nicole Coury, M.S. 2016)

The main concern of woman consumers is fitting when they purchase ready to wear apparels, teenagers & women have their first preference to buy a costume that have perfect fit and also appears fashionable. Garments silhouette and style is important aspect when consumer buy a garment but the most dominant factor is fit of the garment which impacts on buying

decision of consumers. (Fibre2fashion.com 2006).

Methods

A systematic review looking at national & international literature the area of study is to identify the main factors that impact women's garment fitting issues and relation with customer satisfaction. databases from Scopus, Google scholar, Research gate, Springer, fibre2fashion.com, Emerald Insight and ScienceDirect, Google Book, Approx. more than 30 related research papers and articles studies were identified, reviewed and included in this study.

Sources

The major sources of databases used in this study are: ScienceDirect, Google Book Research Gate, Scopus, Google scholar. Also, the paper considers significant works published in several authorized journals like SAGE, International Journal of consumer Studies, Clothing and Textiles Research

Journal, International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education.

Search Strategy

Keywords and Fitting Issues Headings were used for each of the three concepts of interest. Fitting Issues: 'fitting issues' OR 'fit issue' OR 'fitting problem' OR 'apparel fit' OR 'garment fitting' Women's Wear Garment: 'women's apparel' OR 'female garments' OR 'ladies wear garment' OR 'women's wear apparel' Customer Satisfaction: 'satisfaction level' OR 'customer satisfaction' OR 'consumer satisfaction OR 'satisfaction'.

Outcome

The outcome of interest in this review is the various factors affecting women's wear garment fit.

Literature Review

In this study researcher has done comparative study on women body shapes, measurements, ratios and fit problems. As per the study female body shape and body proportion has change over a period of time as there are various reasons like lifestyle, ethnicity, and nutritional changes. These changes impact on apparel fit. Worldwide, apparel industries are manufacturing women apparel based on standard sizes but people having difference in body measurements from standard size therefore they experience fitting issues and dissatisfaction of ready to wear apparel (Bukisile P. Makhanya1, Helena M. de Klerk1, Karien Adamski2, Anne Mastamet Mason3, 2014).

This study focused on the importance of consumer knowledge. A garment must provide detailed information of size and fit and how to take care of the end product. Convey the information of size and fit to consumer through size label, which actually require the measurements and body type mentioned on size labels that communicate the correct information to target population. Descriptions mentioned on a garment's label must be adequate and understandable for consumers to select perfect size and fit of apparel (Anne Mastamet Mason1, Helena M.

De Klerk1, Jaqui Sommerville2 and Susan P. Ashdown3, 2008).

In this research women were asked about the fitting issues they faced. In the result author found various problems which women have referred such as unavailability of size and style, wrinkling at some area, too tight and too loose at bust, gapping etc. This indicated that apparel manufacturing industries do not consider different body size and body shape (Prof. Monika Gupta1, Prof. Dr. Noopur Anand2, 2016).

Author has emphasised on skill set and this can be mitigating through training, this would result on achieving perfect fit of the garment. As per literature, a shortage of skillset in apparel industry they struggle to provide good fit (Paula Wren and Simeon Gill, 2010). Training should have standard frame work (Erwin and Kinchen, 1969) study stated that the various elements of ease, balance and grain need to be matched with body dimension to achieve good fit of garments.

Majority of research have focused on relationship between women body cathexis and fit satisfaction with the garment (Eonyou Shin and Mary Lynn Damhorst, 2017).

Results and Interpretation

Systematic review of literature provides insight on various major factors that affecting women's clothing fit.

Size System

As per review of literature the problems related to apparel fit impacted from various factors, like outdated anthropometric data, which is foundation for sizing system, non-standard communication of sizing and fit, lack of classified body forms. Sizing systems is the important key element focus around which all factors concerning sizing & fit progress.

Unavailability of standard size systems in the apparel industry adds significant difficulty of getting a good fit. Women consumers have repeatedly experienced fit problems due to a contrast relationship between the garment and their own body, which often causes them to return apparel

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they have purchased (Mehrotra, 2012; Laurie M. Apple, 2016; Saeed, 2018; Bukisile P. Makhanya1, 2014; Josephine Kasambala, 2014).

Indian apparel industries are using western countries standard size system the

below table is showing women British standard size system. There is a variation between Standard sizes and women consumer population which is main cause of fitting issues.

Table 1. Standard Women Body Measurement Chart (Source of Diagram: Metric Pattern Cutting for Women's Wear)

SIZE SYMBOL	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30
HORIZONTAL MEASUREMENTS												
BUST	80	84	88	92	97	102	107	112	117	122	127	132
WAIST	58	62	66	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	105	110
HIPS	85	89	93	97	102	107	112	117	122	127	132	137
BACK WIDTH	32.4	33.4	34.4	35.4	36.6	37.8	39	40.2	41.4	42.6	43.8	45
CHEST	29.8	31.2	32.6	34	35.8	37.6	39.4	41.2	43	44.8	46.6	48.4
SHOULDER	11.75	12	12.25	12.5	12.8	13.1	13.4	13.7	14	14.3	14.6	14.9
NECK WIDTH	6.75	7	7.25	7.5	7.8	8.1	8.4	8.7	9	9.3	9.6	9.9
DART	1.8	6.4	7	7.6	8.2	8.8	9.4	10	10.6	11.2	11.8	12.4
ARMHOLE	37.5	39	40.5	42	43.5	45	46.5	48	49.5	51	52.5	54
VERTICAL MEASUREMENTS												
NAPE TO WAIST	38.5	39	39.5	40	40.5	41	41.5	42	42.5	43	43.5	44
SHOULDER TO WAIST	38.1	38.8	39.5	40.2	40.9	41.6	42.3	43	43.7	44.4	45.1	45.8
ARMHOLE DEPTH	20	20.5	21	21.5	22	22.5	23	23.5	24	24.5	25	25.5
WAIST TO KNEE	56	57	58	59	59.5	60	60.5	61	61.5	62	62.5	63
WAIST TO HIP	21	21.25	21.5	21.75	22	22.25	22.5	22.75	23	23.25	23.5	23.75
SLEEVE MEASUREMENT												
LENGTH TO WRIST	55.75	56.5	57.25	58	58.5	59	59.5	60	60.5	61	61.5	62
TOP ARM	24.8	26.2	27.6	29	30.5	32	33.5	35	36.5	38	39.5	41
WRIST	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5	18	18.5	19	19.5	20	20.5
MEASUREMENTS FOR PANTS												

BODY RISE	26.5	27	27.5	28		28.5	29	29.5	360	30.5	31	31.5	32
SIDE SEAM	101	102	103	104		104.5	105	105.5	106	106.5	107	107.5	108
FINAL KNEE WIDTH	25.8	26.4	27	27.6		28.4	29.2	30	30.8	31.6	32.4	33.2	34
FINAL HEM WIDTH	25.8	26.4	27	27.6		28.4	29.2	30	30.8	31.6	32.4	33.2	34

Body Shape

Indian apparel manufacturers use western centuries sizing systems and modify as per their need. However, the sizes represent to standard figure. Women population consist of various body shape but the majority of apparel manufacture dose not cater for various body shapes. Therefore, customers whose body attributes vary from the standard figure would experience fitting issues. In versatile cultural market the apparel manufacturers must considered the attributes of all prevalent body shapes from the population to minimize fitting issues. Customers have different body types are to have different apparel fit preferences.

Women’s body consists of a few curves, fullness and depth which require adjustment in patterns in three dimensions – length, girth and depth. Body contours and body proportion affect the fit of women’s apparel. Patterns are drafted as per an average body shape but few individuals have the same size and proportion of standard size.

Size Label

There are various factors which creates problems for women consumers for selecting right size and fit as well as their dissatisfaction with the apparel fit. Communication of sizing and fit is important factor among all. The communication of sizing and fit issues indicates that information is communicated from the apparel industry to the consumer.

As per review of literature lot of female customers are not familiar with numbered size labels which also represent body types. However, consumers are lacking of knowledge about description mentioned on

size labels in ready to wear apparels and also less knowledge of their own body characteristics.

A size label can only communicate to consumer about garment size & fit, it provides assistance to purchase correct size and fit of garment. If the information on size label is easy to understand and give clear instruction to consumer, then it will reduce the confusion and increase the customer satisfaction. (Glock and Kunz, 1995 and Chun-Yoon and Jasper, 1996) stated that “a size label is a tool that should not only indicate the dimensions it was sized for, but also should describe the body type the garment was designed for”.

Size label must be easy to read and communicate garment information regarding Size & Fit to consumer.

Skill Set

As per literature skill set of industry practitioners need to update and geared up with new technology at their work place. Skill set level has differed between person to person it’s depend on the individual practitioner even though they perform similar job. Variation of skill set resulted bad fit and this process is directly impacting on garment fit. Lot many research has focused on utilizing technology for improvement of garment fit but industry practitioners are not familiar to new technology at their work place.

Some other factors such as ease, fabric, brand name, construction techniques also impact on women’s apparel fit.

Conclusion

Addressing the various factors which are the main causes of fitting issues in women's apparel such as unavailability of standard size system, less information on size label, body shapes, out dated skill set in industry practitioner. Size & fitting issue is most challenging problem for ready to wear industry as well as for the women consumers, also a critical factor that badly impact on their satisfaction level. Researcher has found that limited studies done in India on women's wear garment fitting issues.

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