

Study on the Utilizations of Fashion Trends Information to Korean Apparel Brands

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I. Introduction

Information on fashion trends is one of the most important elements considered in the textile and fashion industry's product planning for each season. All textile and fashion companies analyze and utilize the information on trends from reliable fashion analysts when they plan the products. The fashion information companies analyze the preferences of consumers as they change according to the sociocultural environment, and suggest a variety of trend information revolving around product factors such as colors, yarns, materials, styles, and overall fashion trends from two years to six months in advance.

As the importance of fashion trend information is recently highlighted, the number of fashion trend information providers has substantially increased. However, fashion companies are confused as to what kinds of information they need to accept in the flood of information. Thus, it is of utmost importance for fashion companies to select reliable and useful information and utilize them to be suitable for the product characteristics of their brands.

This study aims to analyze and suggest how such information on fashion trends are utilized, which means how the information received from fashion trends information providers is utilized in the product planning of the leading apparel brands in Korea. The goals of this study are to enable the apparel brands to secure dominant market positions in terms of product competitiveness against other brands by planning the products in consideration of the trend information, and to help trends analysts to supply useful information that considers the characteristics of information required by the apparel brands.

II . Method of Study

The scope of analysis of this study is limited to the analysis on the characteristics in using the trend information for the 2005 S/S products.

1. Fashion trend information analysis: This study analyzed the general trends that indicate overall trends.

Because the timeliness of the trend information supplied is very important, the information provided by the agencies Promostyl and Inter Fashion Planning (I.F. Network) on general fashion trends is sought most frequently by Korean apparel brands.

Promostyl, the French information provider, makes its forecast on general trends a year and a half in advance, and Inter Fashion Planning, the Korean information provider, presents general trends information one year and three months beforehand. Thus, Promostyl supplied the 2005 S/S general trends in November 2003 and the 2006 S/S general trends information in November 2004. Inter Fashion Planning supplied the 2005 S/S general trends in February 2004 and the 2006 S/S general trends in February 2005.

Accordingly, this study considered that 2006 trends will also be reflected in the product planning for the 2005 S/S. Then, the general trends information for the 2005 S/S and 2006 S/S from Promostyl and Inter Fashion Planning were analyzed.

2. Analysis on how apparel brands use the trend information:

This study analyzed the characteristics in reflecting the trend information from the trend information providers by analyzing the designs on each brand's product advertisements published in fashion magazines.

The leading apparel brands in Korea were selected as the target brands in consideration of brand recognition and sales ranks in the department stores. Fashion magazines issued in February, March, April, and May in 2005 that published the product lineup for spring and summer were analyzed based on the advertisement data found in fashion magazines and women's magazines with the highest consumer contact among other advertisement media. The advertisement data was analyzed as it was deemed that the brands published the products reflecting the latest trends and brand concepts.

3. Empirical study on the fashion information application around fashion specialists:

The reflection of trend information was checked by conducting interviews and providing questionnaires to merchandisers and designers who play leading roles in product planning in the prominent apparel brands in Korea.

III. General Trend Information from Information Providers

The general trends from Promostyl and Inter Fashion Planning suggest four to five themes regarding image, color, material, and style trend by theme.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

1. It was analyzed that the trend information was utilized earlier than the suggested seasons. The information suggested by Promostyl and Inter Fashion Planning for the 2006 S/S trends was already utilized in planning the products for the 2005 S/S.

2. The apparel brands tended to modify and utilize the trend information according to brand concept.

3. Two or three themes among four to five suggested themes were mixed and utilized.

In other words, elements such as color, pattern, texture, trimming, and style were culled from two or three different themes and mixed to express new looks or styles.

4. The themes that could be easily used depending on the purposes of clothing were selected.

In other words, the main trend themes, namely unisex casual, young casual, and career casual showed the differences.

5. Young casual and unisex casual brands were designed to reflect the trends more, rather than to stick to the unique brand concept.

6. The themes that were difficult to be applied for daily wear utilized in parts the patterns or colors suggested for the relevant themes.

7. All four to five themes were utilized, but two to three themes formed the main trends.

According to the results, more attention should be devoted to how the apparel companies actively utilized the information suggested for the 2006 S/S when they planned the products for the 2005 S/S. In other words, Korea's apparel companies were very sensitive to the trends and so progressively accepted advanced trends. Thus, the trend information providers need to make efforts to supply the trend information at the right time as compared to other information providers.

For the apparel companies, the best way to secure a competitive advantage over other brands is to plan the products by actively utilizing the trend elements in parts such as patterns, trimming, or colors if the trend themes are not suitable for their own brand image or purposes.

Reference

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