An Investigation On Awareness of Smart Textile in Sri Lankan Apparel Industry

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Smart textiles are revolutionizing the scopes of Sri Lankan apparel manufacturers, professional designers, and textile and electronic engineers. Even though Sri Lanka is a country which exports textiles and apparel in large scale, the contribution to the Smart textile sector and its development is insignificant. This research aims to investigate the awareness of smart textiles in the Sri Lankan apparel industry, explore ongoing smart textiles projects of the industry, and also to study the consumer behavior and attitude towards those products. To explore the industry, according to the EDB data, seven uppermost apparel industries who directly involve with apparel innovations were interviewed. An apparel industry related survey were carried out using 100 randomly selected people who are directly involved with the Smart Textile subject. A consumer survey was carried using 100 randomly selected people in the general public in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Data were analyzed using Google forms and Excel charts. Further SWOT and PEST analysis were used to get to a conclusion about macro and micro environment of Smart Textile market in Sri Lanka. Analysis indicate that there is a considerable diversification and development on smart textiles in Sri Lankan apparel industry. While, Sri Lankan consumer awareness of smart textiles is limited to wearable technologies which comes under ultra-smart textile, Sri Lankan apparel industry has already started working towards capturing the manufacturing technologies of Smart Textile and its developments globally. If the Sri Lankan apparel industry focuses on producing or developing smart textiles for local consumers, the potential market segment is between age 18 and 38. Although there are number of leading smart textile brands all over the world, NIKE and Adidas are the suitable brands to introduce smart textile to the local market considering the familiarity of these brands in Sri Lanka. This study informs the Sri Lankan apparel sector in two ways; shows an emerging profitable niche market in the country and informs the apparel manufacturing boundaries to capture the global smart textile trends before it's too late.

Keywords: Smart textiles, wearable technology, consumer attitudes, consumer behaviors, awareness

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