

## The Research on Strategy of Clothing Product for the Women of 20s in Peking of China

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### Abstract

This study is intended to figure out marketing strategies of women clothing brands which are remarkably preferred and recognized among Chinese women in their twenties by analyzing and comparing the features of products between Chinese fashion brands and Korean brands.

This study result is follow as:

1. As the result of women fashion brands in China, it became certain that the differentiation policy of each brand and the strategy of development design reflected the needs of Chinese consumers in 20s were preferred in Chinese fashion market.

2. As the result of comparing and analysing the strategy of Korean brands' clothing product entered China market, some of them reflected well Chinese women' inclination who are in their twenties. Therefore with the proper positioning and the strategy of actual place, those Korean brands are prominently preferred. However others can not be the leading brands because of supplying inharmonious basic-style product with the preference of Chinese women in 20s.

**Key words:** preference of fashion brand, recognition of fashion brand, strategy of clothing product

### I. Introduction

Since China started to open a distribution channel policy in early 90s, it has been the target for not only Korean companies, but also huge multinational ones and is regarded as a big market leading the economy of the world. Moreover, after joining WTO(World Trade Organization) in November, 2001, the policy of domestic protective trade is changing into that of international one, and a prosperous condition of domestic business is expected as the private property rights are legalized. Besides, Peking

2008 Olympic Games is expected to boost China's economy. For these reasons, many international companies including Korean's are accelerating to push into China's market.

These changes are predicted to influence on clothing markets. To correspond with this situation, domestic clothing companies in Korea are trying to start their business in China. As interests about establishing business in China are increasing, a Chinese fashion trend is being studied actively. After China took the policy of "Reform and Opening to the outside the world" in 1978, the Chinese fashion industry has been

growing continuously, averaging 14.4% every year, showing as 14.9times as its development for the last 20 years. Since 1994, China has been considered as the biggest clothes exporting country in the world. In addition, the consuming market in China is 417.9 billion yuan (元 : approximately 5,600 trillion 660 billion won), so it become 4 times greater than the Korean clothing market.<sup>1)</sup>

After China's joining WTO on Nov.2001, owing to a tariff reduction and various kinds of investment benefits to foreigners, China's clothes market becomes more contested among advanced nations such as Italy, France, Japan and USA etc. By removing restrictions 100% of fiber quota, Chinese market share in America will be prospected to increase about 65~75% more than 20% at present. Especially, order amount passing into China's hands from Korea will be 1620 million dollars which account for 56.2% of export amount -2880 million dollars, to America from Korea and we should take a countermeasure without a moment's delay about this. According to reports analyzed by ATAMI, Chinese products are concluded to make inroads into American market and it will lead to collapse of American fiber industries as liberalizing quota starts on coming Jan. 1st, 2005.<sup>2)</sup> Now Korean clothes companies are faced with serious conditions of needing more aggressive and systematic development for expansion of domestic demands in China and high-quality clothes products should be developed in order to reinforce the international competitive edge. But Korean companies' arrangement of effective confrontation is still insufficient. Though the academic circles are also done researches related to China's fashion partly<sup>3)-11)</sup>, researches activities are very week because the necessity of

researches is not even realized mostly yet.

Judging from preference degree findings of nations' fashion products which tested from Jul. to Aug. in 2002, Chinese women from twenties to forties prefer fashion products in order of Italian, French, Chinese, Korean, American, British and Japanese. Among age groups, women in twenties liked French fashion products best and in thirties including forties liked Chinese fashion products best. Moreover, findings represented quality and design of fashion products with service-satisfaction and brand-recognition to be in order of Italian, Korean, and Chinese. On the whole, Chinese relatively positive evaluation on Korean fashion products shows that research and development of products should be carried on continuously in order to improve it.

Therefore, studying preference of women in twenties in Peking between Chinese inside clothes brands with high recognition and Korean brands which went into China through comparing and analyzing their specific character, we want to understand products strategy of woman's clothes brands inside China. Peking is an administrative capital city and city of fashion whose women in twenties have strong mentality of imitation as a leading group of fashion and have the high propensity to consume. Because of that point, carrying on related study for women in twenties who live in Peking provide meaningful basic data to Korean clothes companies that try to go into China market.

## **II. Research Method (Survey Method)**

### **1. Research Target**

The subject of this investigation is several

fashion brands acquired from a research carried out last summer. It was about women's, who were in their twenties, preference and recognition of fashion trend in Peking, China. As a result of the research, it was turned out that four brands were remarkably preferred among Chinese women. In addition, considering the rate of customer's visiting to stores, there were three other distinguished brands. Those seven fashion brands were selected as a subject of this investigation and some Korean fashion brands which already entered to the Chinese fashion market were added to. After having a market research about the recognition of Korean brands to Chinese women, based on the result, four popular brands and one newly entered brand with a high price strategy were included. Research of preference and recognition measurement for selection of this studied brand was made through a questionnaire investigation with intentional collecting method by eighty four women in twenties who were judged to have predominant fashion senses from Jul. 25th to Aug. 12th at fashion street in Peking, China. The questionnaire was composed of three items about preference and recognition measurement of female clothes brands inside China as well as Korean clothes brands and made by free orthography with allowance for plural answers.

## **2. Research Instrument and Method**

The research on the actual condition was carried out by researchers themselves in some departments and shopping malls in Peking between July 25 through August 12th, 2002. It was conducted in fashion brand stores where Chinese women in 20s most preferred to and recognized and where several Korean fashion

brands were launched. The contents are each brands' Concept, Target, Item, Color, Fabric, Detail, and so on. To grasp the display style, and the atmosphere of stores, many pictures of them were taken. The research was operated in department stores in DongFangXinTianDi located in the central of Peking, SaiTe, ShiDao, and XinDongAn and in fashion brand stores in Hwatang, or Shidan.

## **3. The Method of Data Analysis**

Making those remarked twelve brands chosen by visiting the fashion brand stores into a table, researchers analyzed and compared the strategies of each brand with others'. With this table, there were more relevant pictures and material attached.

## **III. Research result**

### **1. Researching on the Result of the Women Fashion Brands in China**

After deciding four female clothes brands (O.N.L.Y, ESPRIT, Etam, azona) which showed high preference, as was based on results of a questionnaire investigation, with three brands (VERO MODA, JNBY, SISLEY) which had high recognition measurement and frequency numbers of people as was checked by researchers our own, and as based on collected data which we directly made shop-to-shop investigations totally at seven shops, we analyzed products' specific character of clothes brands as follows<Table 1-1> <Table 1-2><Fig.1>.

Preferable clothes brands- O.N.L.Y , ESPRIT, Etam, azona, VERO MODA, JNBY, SISLEY, for

<Table 1-1> Strategy of Woman Fashion Brand in China

Brand	O · N · L · Y	ESPRIT	Etam	azona
Entries				
Concept	pursued characteristics of feminine and rebellious hippie style	pursued young character casual combined with feminine mood	suggested possibly reasonable price by free-pleasant coordination	feminine hippie style
Age target	20s~30s	teens~20s	late teens~30s	early 20s
Image	provocative sexy	vibrant active sports image	sweet lovely girl image	feminine hippie style with freedom
Item	pants, skirt, knit, jacket, top etc.	pants, skirt, shirts, jacket, T-shirts etc.	pants, skirt, shirts, top, T-shirts etc.	pants, skirt, knit, top, jacket etc.
Color	natural color, dark color (brown, khaki, beige)	red, black, yellow, cherry pink, blue etc. primary colors	pastel tone, white, black, red	greenish, purplish, pinkish (luminosity, saturation low)
Material	cotton, rayon, denim, polyester	cotton, polyurethane, rayon, denim	cotton, spandex, polyester, small light flower pattern	cotton, polyester, rayon, chiffon
Style	tightly fitted style, pants(gauchos, pedal) skirt(slit, denim), blouse(neck and waist frill), tank top	cotton shirts, collar T-shirts, denim pants etc. casual style	pants(gauchos, pedal), skirt(mini, A line, frill), one piece dress(lace), top, blouse(sleeveless, lace material, frill)	skirt(A line feminine style, frill, oblique, symmetrical), camisole top, sleeveless top
Detail	frill around neck, pleats, beads, lace, crochet, fringe patch of denim patchwork	colorful printed decoration	frill, lace, print(small flowers, soccer ball, stripe, paisley), pleats, unmatched color combination	big and small flowers pattern, geometry print, frill, spangle, beads
Price Consolation (yuan)	blouse 100~200 pants 150~300 skirt 150~200	shirts 150~200 jacket 500~600 pants 400~450	blouse 150~250 pants 200~300 skirt 200~300 one piece dress 300~350	blouse 350~400 pants 350~450 skirt 300~400 one piece dress 400~450
Display	similar to the VERO MODA, depends on manikin	enormous poster in front of entrance	manikin and big poster, image of poster, item displayed did not match	centerable added the display, both sides entrance shown the item from outside
Sales & customer	lot of young student(17~22 years old)	ratio of customer almost even, family wise customer	big range of customer	lots of foreigner
Miscellaneous	high frequent visit of the 15~20 customers in the shop and 4~5 employees	affiliated cosmetic brand 'red earth' the image of brand is elevated	too many on the stock wrinkled/ 5 employees, 10~12 customers in the shop	many tried on fashionable clerk's clothing

&lt;Table 1-2&gt; Strategy of Woman Fashion Brand in China

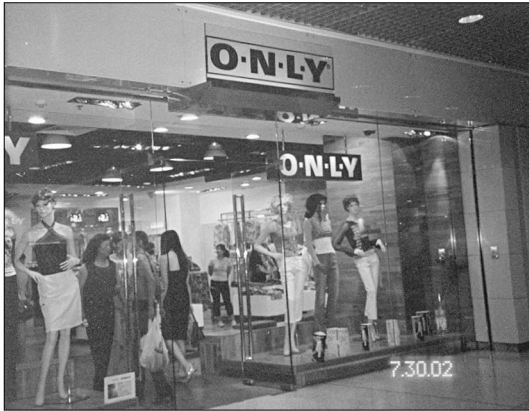
Entries \ Brand	VERO MODA	JNBY	SISLEY
Concept	pursual strong feminine liberal characteristics style	comfortable natural	luxurious, elegant, smart, modern women casual
Age target	20s~30s	middle late 20s~40s	20s~30s
Image	feminine hippie style	simple natural image	simple, refined foreign image
Item	pants, skirt, top, one piece dress, knit etc.	pants, skirt, one piece dress, top, belt, hair band hood, vest etc.	pants, skirt, one piece dress, top, jacket etc.
Color	naturalized(luminosity, saturation low), green(khaki), beige(brown)	natural color dye(extracted from the nature), khaki, brown, beige, white etc.	red, white, black, brown, purple, blue, navy blue etc.
Material	cotton, chiffon, linen, polyester, spandex	cotton, linen etc. nature material	cotton, silk, polyester
Style	pants(gaucha, pedal, bell-bottom), skirt(H line, A line), top, see-through	H line basic style pants, pleats skirt, sleeveless one piece dress, top etc.	pants(gaucha, H line), dressy skirt, fitted silhouette
Detail	frill, beads, lace, wide yoke, ethenic embroidery	natural embroidery or cross stitch, print of colored flower	stripe, corsage, letter or number print, oblique neckline
Price Consolation (yuan)	blouse 150~250 pants 250~350 skirt 200~300	top 100~150 pants 150~250 skirt 150~250	top 300~500 knit 600~700 pants 500~550 skirt 400~500
Display	manikin & dimensional decoration, too crowded	enormous poster, natural feeling interior greenish, brownish atmosphere with flower pot	well used spaces escalator nearby
Sales & customer	30s, career majority	all age level	young student and career woman various customer
Miscellaneous	4~5 employees including male-clerks/ 7~8 customers in the shop	all levels of age/ natural elements different from other brands/ feminine natural fabric/ four customers in the shop	well used the shop the space displayed/ very pleasant atmosphere/ employees are three but the usual customers are 8~10

women in twenties inside China was given much weight in the research of preference and recognition measurement and they occupy a large-sized department store at Wangfujing-commercial center in Peking.

These brands are high and medium-price and

their main customers belong to a well off, leading group of fashion.

O.N.L.Y attempted characteristic charm of the rebellious Hippie. It also appealed spontaneous sexy details with brown&khaki's natural color, tight design, fringe, frill and



O · N · L · Y booth in DongFangXinTianDi 30/JUL/2002



ESPRIT booth DongFangXinTianDi 30/JUL/2002



Etam booth in DongFangXinTianDi 30/JUL/2002



azona booth in DongFangXinTianDi 30/JUL/2002



JNBY booth in DongFangXinTianDi 30/JUL/2002



SISLEY booth in DongFangXinTianDi 30/JUL/2002

<Fig.1> Pictures taken the Woman Fashion Brand in China

patchwork. These items were attractive enough to the Chinese women in 20s. Consequently, it was the top considering customers' reference to the brands and the sales were high; very popular compare to other brands.

ESPRIT emerged vibrant active sports image with the young casuals which is designed by the bright colors with the taste of feminine mood. The enormous poster in front of the entrance enhanced the active image. It was well combined with the characteristics of feminine and the vibrant point. They were very popular in spite of high price. Due to the compartment of the casual for men, there were many female customers came with their boyfriends or their families.

ETAM collected customers with the average or reasonable price with simple designs which appealed to fresh lovely girls decorated with ruffles, laces and frills.

This is also a preference of 20s among the Chinese women. Another attraction to the customers was reasonable price compared to other stores. However the image of the posters and the product did not match with each other ; the display was poor, lacking the management.

AZONA showed smart image with the concept of feminine Hippie in low pastel tone of brightness and color decorated various pattern, frills, sprangle, beads. Not only the salesmen's fashionable attire but also tasty interior decoration enhanced the image of the brand like a fashion show.

VERO MODA emerged the image of strong liberal feminine style of Hippie with the design including the details. The price was in the middle. Seems that it was popular for the women who had more income than the students.

JNBY used all natural material and dye from the extracted natural material. The display was

also simple and natural unlike other brands' atmosphere. Its' simple and common style appealed the customers' recognition highly.

SISLEY has smart looking and western image characterized women casual which displays in a relatively larger scale and gives the luxurious impression. Simple design made it alive with the bright color of red, white, black, and blue. In spite of high price, many frontier Chinese in 20s prefer to the liberal feminine style; well suited to their preference.

As the result of the research on these 7 brands' products according to the preference of the Chinese women in 20s preferred to liberal and characteristic style; feminine, liberal design is popular. Thus each brand recognized the tastes of the Chinese women in 20s and gained lots of profits.

## **2. Researching on the Result of the Korean Women Fashion Brands Launched in China**

Following table shows the special qualities in some categories acquired from the comparison and the analysis among five Korean fashion brands launched in China<Table 2-1><Table 2-2><Fig. 2>.

Five Korean fashion brands which launched into China expand their lines with each unique concept. Their characteristics of items and the strategies of marketing are as follows;

### **1) Specific character of products according to brands**

In case of D brand, it in pursuing the image of urban women with modern bet basic concept of careerer women. Formal style of basic H-line is main item, which tends to establish an high quality and high sense product with minimal but controlled silhouette. Price was also highly

<Table 2-1> Characteristics of Korean women fashion entered in China

Entries	Brand	D	O	K
Concept		Modern Basic career woman style atmosphere	sweet teenage	modern basic
Age target		Mid 20s-late 30s	early 20s	mid 20s-early 30s
Image		city women style	vivacious lively	simple elegant
Item		Jacket, skirt, slacks, skirts, blouse etc. suit style	skirts, dress, jacket, slacks, knit	blouse, jacket, skirt, slacks, knit
Color		black, navy, brown darkish	pastel, middle tone	Mostly black, brown, navy, white, point color
Material		wool, rayon, cotton, silk	wool, cotton, rayon	wool, cotton, silk, polyester
Style		H-line basic suit style	school girl look, A-line skirt, frill blouses, knit vest combination	simple skirt, jacket various attempt changable
Detail		rather than splendid detail, contrast style leather belt	cute feeling ruffle, frill, shirts gather	No attractive details but match point with scarf
Price Consolation (yuan)		Blouse 500~100 jacket 1000~1300 skirt 800~900	Blouse 500~100 jacket 1000~1200 skirt 700~800	Blouse 700~900 jacket 1300~1500 skirt 1000~1200
Display		small space stock-pile discount store impression	small space	displayed along the walls, bigger space obtained
Sales & customer		late 20s-30s customer career	numerous family customer	well dressed rich women
Miscellaneous		-	shoes, bags, little items displayed together	not big place but 4 employees/gifts to customers/ postcard, catalogue provided

marked targeting the women of rich level.

O brand sells those item that are matchable to school look with the base image of cute and freshly. A line style of skirt, frill blouse, knit vest, etc that can be combinable. each item expressed bright and cute concept with the added design from ruffle, frill, shirring and gathers.

K brand launched on the summer of 2002 to China; its target was for rich women with hight quality strategy. Items are mostly in black and simple design, and their spacious display connoted K's success in the strategy.

E brand, unlike three marked brands, pursued practical and changable casual brand. The

interior of the shop was decorated with American Campus insignias, its color was dominant red color to symbolize the youth. Items were mostly big sizes shirts and basic colored box T-shirts. Displaying dolls and bags along the clothes, it seemed a strategy to intrigue the late teen's (students) and early 20s to buy.

T brand was the strongest individuality showing sexy young character casual image among five Korean fashion brands. Although these tightly fitted silhouette pants, ruffle blouse, tube tops were rather expensive, the fashionable women in early & mid 20s didn't hesitate to buy.



&lt;Table 2-2&gt; Characteristics of Korean women fashion entered in China.

Entries \ Brand	E	T
Concept	practical: American campus causal style	Sexy young character casual
Age target	Late teens- late 20s	early 20s
Image	Youth & simple style	fashionable, sexy appeal
Item	T-shirts, shirts, vest, slacks	shirts, blouse, sleeveless T-shirts, slacks
Color	white, blue, red dominant, bright colors	variously dyed blue, white, black-basic color, purple, red-stimulant color
Material	cotton, denim, knit	dominant denim, chiffon, polyester, cotton
Style	T-shirts of basic colors, big sizes shirts	tight pants, fitted silhouette
Detail	E-land bear, stripes design, check design	wave ruffles, spangles, beads decoration
Price Consolation(yuan)	T-shirts 100~150, shirts 130~200 pants 250~300	blouse 700~1000, denim pants 800~1100
Display	spacious interior poster in the center item displayed	itemized display present many coordinations
Sales & customer	teens-early 20s students customers	early & mid 20s fashionable
Miscellaneous	dolls, bags are on the shelves	bags & belts are on the shelves

## 2) Marketing strategy for brands

These were the characteristics of the 5 Korean fashion brands in China; the following comparison is about their launching strategy.

D brand and O brand got the higher class in the fashion located in the WangFuJing and Xindan department stores. This means that their customers are above the middle class. These customers have enough money to show interests in the fashion compared to other levels and their tastes on the fashion are excellent. Consequently, the fashion industry should produce according to the likings of the customers. However, it was interesting to notice D brand and O brand were out of season. Despite the research time was in the summer, displayed items were mostly knit made of wool as well as the jackets were out of season. At first glance, its purpose seemed to went ahead of the season, but they were left over stock from the previous years. At a close look, the design, material and patterns were popular a few

years ago in Korea. This indicates that the early launching method has not changed; regarded as Chinese market as the left over stock market. Wish to recommend highly to have proper seasonal items for the better strategy.

Meanwhile, T brand located at the same department store with different inclinations. T brand may be foreign to inland Koreans but the brand was set up for launching in China. Therefore, age target, suitable positioning, concept and styling area are the results to be competitive with other brands in China. The products could be easily seen on fashion streets in China, are tight pants made of denim, soft chiffon, blouses made of laces, tube top, of these displayed in the T brand shops, and so on. The strategy to satisfy the interests of Chinese got high recognition of the Chinese(top 2nd ranked in the survey of Korean Fashion Brand Recognition). The brand could continue to raise high sales record despite the high prices.



E brand's booth in XiDan 05/AUG/2002



T brand's booth in Shidao department store 06/AUG/2002



D brand's booth in SaiTe department store 06/AUG/2002



O brand's booth in SaiTe department store 06/AUG/2002



K brand's booth in SaiTe department store 06/AUG/2002

<Fig. 2> Pictures taken the Korean Woman Fashion Brands entered in China

Depends on the research from Xindan and HuaTang, in the case of E brand, comfortable and flexible pursuit won the highest recognition (survey from the Korean Fashion Brand Recognition ranked top) because the brand produced items according to the preferences of Chinese. Also E brand has both the factory and sales in China, which means the local strategy to

find out Chinese' interests and right age target led the company to success.

Considering all of above points, to launch successfully in China, most of all, Korean Brands need to develop new products to satisfy the Chinese customers' interests and to get fast related information; make effective marketing strategy.

#### IV. Conclusion

In order to find out the preference and recognition in the Fashion Brand's item strategy among 20s in China, analysed and compared each brand items and strategies inducted in China.

1. Women in 20s in China prefer O.N.L.Y., ESPRIT, Etam, azona, VERO MODA, JNBY, SISLEY, the seven Fashion brand's clothing were unique to appeal the customers, that is, the above mentioned brands produced open, strong characteristics of feminine, free style for Chinese 20s women customers, as the result of a survey. These each brand differentiates the policy and production to satisfy the need of Chinese women in 20s and get the most recognition.

2. Analyzing and comparing Korean clothing brands launched in China, some brand's case, the strategies and items presented basic suit style which did not comply the preference of Chinese women in 20s of the liberal and feminine style, thus failed to target the age in 20s. Also they turned away from the 20s women selling out of season items.

On the other hand, like E brand's and T brand's, Korean fashion brands got high recognition from 20s among Chinese women. Especially, E brand became popular; practical and changable style got popularity as designed according to the interests among Chinese students. It might be resulted by the strategy of production and sales in local China. T brand developed designs suitable positioning and interests of Chinese, which called for the recognition highly and attracted the customer constantly despite of the high price.

3. Among these seven preferable clothes brands of women in twenties, and which are an object of specific character of clothes brands'

products and of marketing research inside China, six are overseas brands except JNBY China's own brand. As a result of this research, above six brands that went into China market with high brand reputation from women in twenties show us their successful case by thoroughly reflecting demands and needs of women consumers in twenties with design development strategy. Now, Korean brands can not survive competing, if they think the Chinese market is nothing but sales on stocks. Korean brands should be devilment to learn about the market, needs, ideas and trends of Chinese consumers; effective, distinguishable, marketing strategy needed. Especially, as women in twenties in China are a leading group of fashion and exercise their influence over going into China clothes market, complete analysis of research should be made continuously about them.

This study was done on July and August of 2002 in one part of Peking, and might be too far stretched to be applied outside of Peking. Also, the time has changed since then in these fast moving era. Noticed recently, a particular brand gathered lots of information, and so the products and services have changed significantly. Other brands ,too, had changed a lot in reignition in sales. Therefore, it might be difficult to evaluate a certain brand only depending on this research. Hope that in the future, the survey may be done regularly to stimulate and change in strategy among brands.

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