

Assessment of Consumer's Knowledge about Care Label on Textiles and Apparels

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Abstract: The present investigation was based on examining knowledge of consumers about care labels found on textile products. A qualitative survey was conducted to collect data from the residents of Udaipur urban areas in Rajasthan. The population of the study comprised of both men and women in retail shops and flea markets in city of Udaipur. The sample or participants were drawn by means of convenience and availability of sampling. The study involved retail shops, flea markets and thirty respondents comprising of college going students of Udaipur city. Data was collected through interview schedule, observation method and telephonic survey. It was revealed that some clothing from both the retail shops and flea market did not have any type of care information. It was also found that most of the consumers did not follow information on the care labels due to lack of knowledge as most of them did not know what the symbols stand for and how to use or read them. The study recommends community based teaching programs on care labels and maintenance, and that all textile products should have compulsory care labels to facilitate proper care of textiles.

Keywords: Care Label, Textile Products, Laundering, Knowledge, Consumers

I. INTRODUCTION

According to textiles "a label or care label" means a permanent label or tag containing regular care information and instructions. According to ASTM D 3136-96, a care label is a label or other affixed instructions that report how a product should be refurbished. FTC defines "care label means a permanent label or tag, containing regular care information and instruction that is attached or affixed in some manner that will not become separated from the product and will remain legible during the useful life of the product. (1). While searching for the origin of care label, Textiles Regulation 1988 imposed safety and marking guidelines, applies only to tops containing wool, yarns made wholly of cotton, and fabric containing cotton or wool. Specific information to be included on the label and the type of label is provided for each category of product. Product labels must be in Hindi (Devnagiri script) or in English.

IS 15798 (2007): Textiles - Requirements for labelling and marking of consumer textiles specifies requirements for labelling and marking of consumer textiles, which include woven and knitted fabrics and apparel. The standard pertains to various requirements of textiles such as blend composition, length, width, mass (g/m), color fastness, fire resistance, shrinkage and care labelling instructions for their subsequent use. (2)

As per a Notification issued by the Ministry of Commerce on November 24, 2000, all pre-packaged products (intended for direct retail sale only) imported into India must carry the following declarations on the label:

- name and address of the importer
- generic or common name of the commodity packed
- net quantity in terms of standard unit of weights and measurement (in metric) / size if garment
- month and year of packing in which the commodity is manufactured, packed or imported, and the maximum retail sales price (MRP)
- fibre content

Care labels on textile products act as a guide in the care of textiles. The aim is for textile products to retain their quality during usage. Disregard for the care labels can result in deterioration of textile products making them unattractive. Apparels and textiles are soiled during their normal use. From economic point of view these items must be cleaned and refurbished for reuse without substantially altering their functional and aesthetic properties. There is need to assess the knowledge of consumers regarding care labels and also analyse the information provided on care labels as consumers should be provided the knowledge of various processing conditions for care of the apparels. This is the joint responsibility of the apparel industry and the textile care industry and the consumer. (3)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Care label is a form of pictorial representation of the do's and don'ts while handling a textile material. As we can commonly see symbols like wash tub with a hand represents hand wash and a triangle represents bleaching etc. the care label should not be separated from the product and it should remain affixed to the material during the product use. At present there is no universal symbol system. GINETEX care symbols are the universal system which is been followed in most of the East and Asian countries which is protected under trademark law. The trademarks are owned by the Groupement International d'Etiquetage pour l'Entretien des Textiles (GINETEX – International Association for Textile Care Labelling). The GINETEX symbols are also the origin of the international standards (EN ISO 3758) which helps both consumers and manufacturers to follow certain instructions. Four factors are important in laundering or dry cleaning of textiles and these are; temperature, time, washing medium and mechanical action. These four have to be optimized for effective care of textiles. Particular laundering procedures have to be selected basing on the fiber and its properties for example strength, sensitivity to chemicals and temperature. Additional limitations may be imposed by yarn fabrication processes, fabric construction method and special finishes (4).

The standards for labelling that can be found at the Bureau of Indian Standards - BIS:

- IS 4418:1967 Guide for care-labelling of textiles for laundering and dry cleaning
- IS 14452:2014/ISO 3758:2012 - Textiles - Care labelling code using symbols
- IS 10194:1982 Guide for positioning of labels in garments
- IS 15651:2006 - Textiles - Requirements for environmental labelling – Specification
- IS 14453:1997/ISO 3635:1981 Size designation of clothes - Definition and body measurement procedure [Superseding IS 10015(Part 1):1981]
- IS 14454:1997/ISO 4416:1981 Size designation of clothes - Women's and girls' underwear, nightwear, foundation garments and shirts
- IS 14455:1997/ISO 3638:1977 Size designation of clothes - Infants' outerwear garments
- IS 14484:1997/ISO 4415:1981 Size designation of clothes - Men's and boys' underwear, nightwear and shirts
- IS 14839:2000/ISO 4418:1978 Size designation of clothes: Gloves (Superseding IS 10015(Part 7))
- IS 14840:2000/ISO 4417:1977 Size designation of clothes: Headwear [Superseding IS 10015(Part 8)]
- IS 14853:2000/ISO 3636:1977 Size designation of clothes: Men's and boy's outwear garments
- IS 14854:2000/ISO 3637:1977 Size designation of clothes: Women's and girl's outerwear garments (5).

III. METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this present investigation was to know about current consumer levels of awareness, comprehension and use of care labels. Whether consumers in Udaipur urban responsible for the care of clothes, were aware of care labels and able to interpret information on these labels. The study will provide the information about the way male and female respondents interpret and apply care label information when laundering clothes. Women are the ones who normally do the laundry for their families so there is critical need to provide knowledge to them from the earlier stages of life. Clothing retail shops and flea markets were also part of the population, to check if clothing sold had care labels and how informative these were.

For the present survey daily use apparel products were selected which were, dresses, tops, tees and leggings for women and shirts, t-shirts, jeans and pants for men. Through this one can easily identify how often consumers purchase a product and how well they maintain them with respect to care instructions given as the items selected were of daily wear or ready to wear for college going students.

As a part of survey, responses were obtained from thirty respondents (retail and flea market). All the popular market areas of Udaipur urban were visited to obtain information and thirty college going students comprising of 15 each from both the genders belonging to Udaipur, Rajasthan were randomly selected. An interview schedule was developed as tool of data collection which was personally administered by the respondents to obtain the data as per objectives. The interview schedule consists of questions regarding the factors that are important to them when purchasing clothing and their use of care label information. Respondents were provided with the care label symbols and were asked to identify and reveal what the symbols stand for. Each of the statement was given '0' or '1' mark based on their response as Yes or No.

IV. RESULTS

Demographic profile

Respondents of the present study were 50% female and 50% male college going respondents. Regarding educational status, it was observed that 60% of respondents were university graduates and remaining 40% were post-graduation students. This resulted in a more highly educated sample than average, where as in market survey, 60% respondents were graduates, 28% were of matriculation and 12% were school drop outs. Annual family income revealed that 34% of the students belonged to an income range above 8.5 lakh rupees, 21% reported between 4.32 to 5.0 lakh rupees, 23% reported between 3.0 to 2.4 lakh and 22% reported below 2 lakhs.

Knowledge and use of care label instruction

Table-1. Presents the data about knowledge and use of care label instructions by college going respondents. Most of the respondents were ignorant about care labels and there was lack of knowledge about importance and use of care instructions given on labels while making a new purchase and while laundering the products. In comparison with the data obtained from table-1 females (46.66%) are more aware about care labels than males (33.33%). 80% of female respondents purchase clothing having care label only whereas only 40% males are interested in this. 37.33% of male respondents were aware of care label instructions while purchasing a product, in which only 34.66% respondents follow instructions while laundering. 40% of women respondents were aware of instructions while purchasing product in which 41.33% follow given instructions in laundering.

Table-1 Knowledge and use of care label instruction by college going respondents

Statements	Maximum score obtainable (n=15)	Score obtained n=30			
		Male (n=15)		Female (n=15)	
		f	%	f	%
Knowledge about care labels	15	5	33.33	7	46.66
Recognition of care label symbols (five care label symbols)	75	10	13.33	21	28
Looking at instructions on care labels while purchasing a product (five care label symbols)	75	28	37.33	30	40
Use of care labels while laundering a product (five care label symbols)	75	26	34.66	31	41.33
Purchasing clothes having care labels/tags only	15	9	60	12	80

As 34% students were from higher economic range, they were completely ignorant about the deterioration factors of textile items in-use. As respondents were college going, they were more attracted towards aesthetic features like design, style and fashion trend while purchasing textile and apparels rather than giving emphasis on assessment of care labels for better care and maintenance of clothes, which results in poor care of apparels in terms of fibre damage, colour fading, staining and deterioration of the material being purchased finally ending up in landfills.

An independent two sample t-test was conducted to compare the significance and difference between the attributes of male and female population of college going students with respect to care labels. Table-2 depicts the mean difference between male and female college going respondents. Findings further revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents as shown in the table-2 with conditions; $t (df 25) = 2.05$, $p (T \leq t) \text{ one-tail} = 1.70$ and $p (T \leq t) \text{ two-tail} = 0.11$.

Table-2. Mean difference between respondents of different genders

Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Variance n=30
Males	15	4.93	2.43	0.62	5.92
Females	15	6.73	3.47	0.89	12.06

Use of care labels while handling a textile product

Retail and flea markets play a major role in apparel business. Data in table-3 revealed that retailers (40%) were more aware about care labels than flea market (26.66%). Only 20% of retailers and 5.33% of the flea markets were able to

recognize the symbols which show the poor knowledge of marketing persons. Retailers (53.33%) were concerned about labels while selling and instructing customers about product which is comparatively low for flea market (33.33%).

Table-3 Use of care labels while handling a textile product

Statements	Maximum score obtainable (n=15)	Score obtained n=30			
		Retailer (n=15)		Flea market (n=15)	
		f	%	f	%
Knowledge about care labels	15	6	40	4	26.66
Recognition of care label symbols (five care label symbols)	75	15	20	4	5.33
Importance of care labels while selling product	15	8	53.33	5	33.33
Importance of giving care instructions to consumers	15	8	53.33	5	33.33

Likewise independent t-test was conducted on retailers and flea market personnel's to compare the difference between the attributes of retailers and flea market personnel's and found that there is significant difference between the two as shown in the table-4, $t(26) = 2.05$, $p(T \leq t)$ one-tail = 0.05 and $p(T \leq t)$ two-tail = 0.10.

Table-4 depicts the mean difference between respondents of retail and flea market. From the obtained data it can be said that only part of the retailers had knowledge about care labels and most of the flea marketing personnel were not aware of the importance and use of care labels. Whereas in flea market most of the apparel were without any labels or tags, even in some of the retail outlets there was no specific information about the fibre content and blend ratios. Industrial regulations need to be thoroughly implemented so that every apparel product manufactured comes with a care label, which is in-turn beneficial to consumers, producers and to environment as well.

Table-4 Mean difference between respondents of retail and flea market

Sample	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Variance n=30
Retail personnel	15	2.46	2.32	0.60	5.40
Flea market personnel	15	1.2	1.78	0.45	3.17

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that an effective care of textile products depends on proper care labelling, correct interpretation of care labels by consumers and utilization of care label information when cleaning textiles. Most of the respondents were not aware of the meaning and importance of care labels and instructions given on it. Very few of them were aware of the general care label categories but were not able to interpret the specific details of each category to provide care treatment required. Most of the retailers and flea market members were also not aware about the usage and need of care labels. Most of the textile and apparels products were not having labels/tags to provide requires information. There is need to educate the manufacturers also to develop quality product and attach care labels as an indication of quality parameters. Most of flea market goods does not possess labels and the retailers who were selling these products, had very poor knowledge about care labels. Hence, there is a severe need for educating college going respondents about care labels and their importance.

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