

Activewear for Malaysian Women Focusing on Modesty Style

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Abstract — Modest activewear is one of the alternative outfits to fulfill the needs of modesty looks while doing an activity for the Muslim especially women. There is lack of choices for activewear designs in the market and excessive attention towards Malaysian women which are concerned about modest appearances during their workout. (Ilyashov, 2017). The intention of designing modest activewear was to provide more options of activewear clothing line or leisure outfit for their active lifestyles. The objectives of this study were: 1. To identify the important features to be considered in designing modesty activewear design: 2. To experiment the potential materials and suitable designs for modesty activewear: 3. To contribute a module for designers and manufacturers in getting the suitable designs in relation to style and materials for modesty activewear. In order to achieve the objectives, this research has been conducted by using mixed methods which are observation session at four (4) selected location to study the current trend, styles and materials according to several sports brands, interviews with two (2) local experts in the apparel manufacturing industries and academicians, the questionnaires were distributed to fifty one (51) respondents around Klang Valley in order to gain the information about their acceptance of modesty activewear which were selected based on their involvement in sports. Experimentations were conducted during the preliminary and post-test in order to fulfil activewear designs which focused towards modesty look. As a conclusion, all of the objectives had been achieved in producing the activewear focusing on modesty style for women with the right materials.

Keywords - Activewear, Modesty Style, Attire, Microfiber

1. Introduction

Modest activewear is one of the alternative outfits to fulfill the needs of modesty looks while doing active activities for Malaysian women which majority of them are Muslims especially woman. The aim of designing modest activewear is to provide more options for activewear clothing line of sports or leisure outfit for active lifestyle. According to New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies (2006), modest clothing is typically standard for women which consist of head covering, loose fitting and non-transparent clothing that covers the whole body. In this research, activewear specifically refers to casual apparel even though it is known that they are consumers of exercise related goods. According to Tate (1999), the activewear term is used to designate apparel worn for activewear outfit which function, and easy care are the main concern. In this research, activewear specifically refers to casual apparel even though it is known that they are consumers of exercise related goods. For this research, activewear specifically refers to casual apparel. Activewear can be worn not only for exercising activities but also as casual outfit. It is comfortable yet stylish clothing appropriate for physical fitness or relaxation. According to Celine (2017), activewear refers to garments of clothes that provide style along with comfort, function and made up of sustainable materials. The idea of reinventing activewear design for Malaysian women is to provide more choices of active outfit that suit the needs of local women and encouraging them to continue their active lifestyle without any hesitation. There are little choices of activewear designs in local market that suit Malaysian woman style, which concerned about certain level of modesty in activewear attire. Based on the preliminary survey that researcher has done, about 90% respondents were saying that there is a gap between modest activewear in market. Although many sports hijabs in the market, some Muslim women may find it difficult to find suitable workout attire. According to Al-barwani. A (2016), she stated that most of current activewear is not suitable for women who want to stay active but still modest. She also mentioned most of activewear outfit for women is too tight, shorty, low cut, fit and short sleeves. Moreover, there are only few choices of sports hijabs in the market and it leads to difficulty in finding suitable workout attire for Muslim women. Most of them were far too indecently tight for any hijabi to wear (Maryam, 2012).

Apart from that, the natural phenomenon such as humidity and high temperature in Malaysia (Aman, Basaruddin, 2006) could cause discomfort of outfit for activewear outdoor activities. Activewear clothing that has been found in the market are fitted and not suitable to certain culture. The choices of modesty activewear are too limited especially in current market. This is based on the questionnaires and observation that have been conducted in market place such as One Utama, Nu Sentral, and Taman Tema seksyen 7. The objective of this research is to identify the important features to be considered in designing modest activewear design, to experiment the potential materials and suitable design for modesty activewear and to contribute a module for designers and manufactures in getting the suitable designs relation to style and materials modesty activewear.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Activewear

Activewear is a type of clothing specifically worn for exercise to people who has active and lively lifestyle. It has a combination of athletic purpose with stylish for general purposes. According to Roth-Osten (2017), activewear is 'sport specific clothing worn for most sports and physical exercise, for practical, comfort or safety reasons. Activewear and sportswear have different functions where sportswear is designed for sports with a certain functioning, comfort, specific fabric, accessories to suit for various types of sports. Meanwhile, activewear is clothes which have more style, flexibility and comfort (Celine, 2017). It can be used for exercising and transition into casual wear. According to Mahony & Braddock 2002, sportswear refers to specialist clothes and accessories specifically designs for particular sports which derived from sports in term of style, fabric and cutting. According to Celine (2017), activewear refers to garments of clothes that provide style along with comfort and function and made up of sustainable materials.

2.2 Modesty

Concept of modesty in Islam can be derived from various perspectives. According to El Guindi (1991), modesty from physical term is connected with the awra', an Arabic term meaning 'inviolable vulnerability' or 'what must be covered' and consisting of the private body parts of a human being. Islam's code of modesty extends to all aspects that inclusive attire and hijab. According to Al Qaradawi (1995), awra' for men is from navel to the knee or mid-tight in some rulings. For women, their awra' is more extensive and more complicated matter. In Islamic clothing, the standard requirement must be loose to avoid the figure and the shape of the body being exposed and visible. Apart from that, it must cover the whole body and non-transparent (Boulanouar, 2006). According to Salleh.N (2017), Islam does not restrict anyone to wear clothes. What it restricted is not to wear such clothes that do not cover the body in a decent manner. Islamic code of dress on how to choose the appropriate way to get dress lead women to be protected from being exposed out loud in public and can gain respect (Hedayat, 2014). In Islam, by practicing modesty among women, it proves how Islam concerns and protects the women to avoid attention towards them. Islamic ethics view modesty not as a virtue for women only, but for men as well. From the Islamic view, clothing has two purposes, to cover the body while beautifying the appearance. Islam has made it obligatory on Muslims to cover their private parts; cleanliness is the essence of good appearance and the beauty of every adornment (Boulanouar, 2006).

2.3 Modesty Activewear

The modest activewear is a clothing that comfortably and flexibility in term of fabric (Shaikley, 2016). A good modest activewear consist of light material, stylish and feel more comfortable when wearing it. Apart from that, it is attached with style along with comfort that enable the wearer to easily switch from gym to other activities. The issue by Khaleeli (2012), women who participate in football has been upraised by the sports community a few years ago where a Muslim girl was participating in football game and she wore hijab during competition. The issue has been debated among FIFA and the organization. Modest activewear is an alternative outfit to fulfil the need of modesty appearance especially for Muslim women. The design should encounter of covering the aurah and comply with syarie'. There are certain requirements that need to be considered in designing modest activewear. The material chosen is the most important factor and comfortableness become a fundamental for activewear clothing.

2.4 Features in Activewear Clothing

The idea of sportswear often takes the form of the 'sports luxe' trend it is usually an excuse to use a lot of lamé and create wedge trainers, but it is obvious that the sporting world has an influence on designers (Key, 2014).

According to Brady (2014), a good choice for performance clothing must include features like breathability, flexibility, lightweight, odor prevention, allergy safe, moisture wicking and comfortable. All clothing consists of various components or detailing attached on it. In activewear clothing, there are massive components that frequently use in designing it such as zipper, lining, interfacing, snap buttons, rivets, boning and others. Activewear has several components that usually can be seen in the clothing line like zipper, lining, underlining, pocket and cordlock.

2.5 Importance Features in Modesty Clothing

There are few things to look after in adapting modesty concept in activewear design particularly for women. Especially when it is related to Muslim’s clothing. There are so many things to be considered as it may hint some sensitive issue in bringing modest outfit for activewear design. The most important element in designing activewear is the ergonomic and anthropometry features in the design. There are some differences between designing activewear for sportsman and for common people. It has to come to certain standard to design for professional sportsman while for sports conscious person will have other criteria to be fulfilled. It is importance to consider few elements in athletic apparel especially when it comes to design for certain focus group such as the environmental aspects, physically restriction and not to forget the psychologically detract from the performance due to the concern about their looks (Necf O.K, Tama D., Ondogan Z., 2014). Instead of viewing these Muslim women as inspiration, it seems that they have only caught attention for the wrong reasons. Many have failed to emphasize on the important role that these women play as role models in supporting health and fitness, which also encouraged in the Islamic way of life for both men and women (Irsyad, 2015).

3. Methodology

There are two methods that have been used to obtain the data. The proposed methods comprise both qualitative and quantitative method. These methods are vital to answer the research question. Researcher has done observation, questionnaire and experiment based on design applied throughout the research (see figure 1).

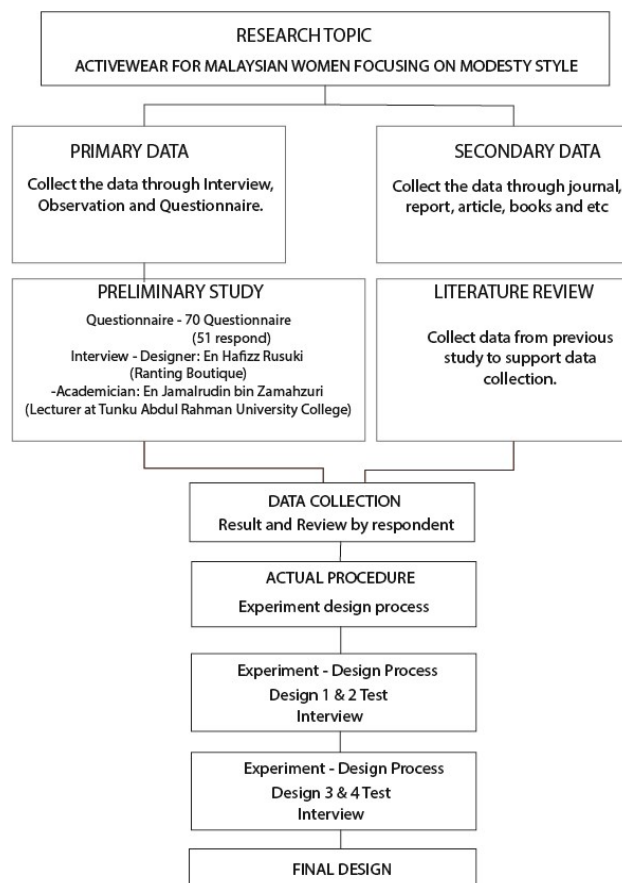


Figure 1: Method that researcher has done

4. Analysis and Finding

Based on the survey at shopping mall, there got four famous brands in Malaysia which are Nike, Adidas, Puma and Reebok. This brand is collected based on questionnaires that have been done as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Brands, aesthetics, usability and techniques.

BRAND	AESTHETIC	USABILITY	TECHNIQUE
Nike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitted Plain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporty chic Sport lux Activewear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top stich Spandex Mesh Unfinish trimming
Adidas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitted Plain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporty chic Sport lux Activewear Sporty look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top stich Spandex Mesh
Puma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitted Plain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporty chic Sport lux Sporty look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top stich Spandex Cotton Nylon
Reebok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitted Plain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activewear Sporty look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top stich Spandex Mesh Antimicrobial fabric

Based on the survey done by researcher, most of the brand listed used plain fabric as their main design and it was found that most of the designs were fitted. As for the detail in the design, top stich, spandex and mesh material are mostly used. The preference of colour can be individual or group basis without having extra structure or object attached to colour. It plays a vital role in attracting people interest because based on the survey, the respondents mostly prefer cool colour which got voted 47.1%. Cool colour consist of green, blue and light colour where it reflects calmness to individual when they look at it. This is the reason why respondents want cool colour since it attached with calm, soothe which indirectly affect their emotions. Meanwhile, 27.5 % of respondents prefer pastel colour, 17.6% bright colour and last is 7.8% for warm colour. The finding for this study is most of the respondent voted yes for modest activewear which is 90.2%. They would like to have modest activewear as extra choices for them to workout. Thus, from the survey, it can be concluded that, modest is one of the elements that can be added in producing activewear.

4.1 Design and Experimentation

Based on the research findings and recommendations, there are some important criteria in designing which should be considered to make activewear design. To create a design, we do require consideration between forecast and preliminary study based on consumer (see table 2 and 3).

Table 2: Based on Forecast Spring Summer 2018

Characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitted Sporty
Colours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After dark Metalized Atlantic deep Metalized dazzling blue

Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverts • Eyelets • Snaps • Metal zip
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spandex • Mesh • Quilted leather • Metallic fabric

Table 3: Based on Observation and Questionnaire Data

Characteristic / Aesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose • Sporty look • Modest
Colours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool colour • Dark grey • Black • Blue • Blue black
Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zip • Eyelet • Pocket • Trimming
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spandex • Jersey • Mesh • Microfiber

4.2 Design Development

Design development is a process of making and producing items through several methods and technical appliances. The intention of this research is to design a modest and practical activewear for youth. Through this research, the researcher has to study the forecast, trend and the current activewear design in the market based on the survey and observation which could be a main concern when designing an activewear design. The researcher started the design with a few sketches as guidelines.

4.3 Preliminary test

For the first trial, the respondents did give some positive feedback from the pilot test and few recommendations of adjustment to be made. Firstly, 67% of respondent do like the design as well as the colour and they feel comfort when wearing this design. Not only that, they did agree that the material used is suitable for jogging or leisure wear or workout. However, another 33% of respondent did mentioned that the material is not suitable to do workout as it make them feel a little bit hot and the netting placed at the sleeves for this design does not relevant when doing exercise. However, 100 % of the respondents do agree that the colour suit to be wore for workout. As for the recommendation, they do suggest black, dark grey, blue and dark blue colour for workout. In terms of design for safety, about 67 % of respondent choose glow in the dark material and another 33% choose striking colour to be used. Apart from that, 100% of the respondent did mentioned that they bring along the hand phone while jogging. Thus, 67% of them prefer jacket and pants and 33% of them do prefer shirt and leggings for workout clothing especially for regular basis. Next, in term of style, 67% of them prefer loose and hanging style while 33% prefer mix and match, one-piece and baggy or oversized style. Besides that, as for the recommendation, the respondent do suggest that some specification features should be included in the activewear where 100% of respondent mentioned that comfort features need to be emphasized in the activewear. Meanwhile, 67% of respondent agree that the fabric criteria should be taken into consideration and 33% of them mentioned that design and price features should also be included in activewear.

4.4 Test one

Experiment was done as respondents did the workout and exercising at outdoor places. The test one for the second trial was done for similar respondent to analyze the design and material consideration. Based on the survey, 100% of the respondents do like the final design outfit. Also, they do give positive feedback for the design in terms of material used for the outfit. The material used for this final design includes mix match combination such as microfiber eyelet, mesh, spandex and 100% stretchable cotton. Not only that, 100% of the respondent do like the colour combination as well as the material used do make them feel comfort due to the fabric is from breathable fabric. Moreover, 100% of the respondents do agree that the silhouette of this design is modest, and it is suit for outdoor workout. Therefore, the researcher has implemented all request and recommendation from the respondent into a new design and the suggested features and material also applied in this design.

4.5 Module to create modest activewear

This module will be a platform for apparel manufactures, designers, academicians and people who got desired in creating the right design or garment for modesty activewear as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Module to create modest activewear

ELEMENTS	DETAIL
<p>DESIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understand the meaning of modesty -Trend (Forecast) -Listening to customer -Understanding the target market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relating to Al-Qran Sunnah -Loose -Cover Aurah -Comfort -Practicality -Knowing the right customers and offering the right pricing
<p>FEATURES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Zippers, Eyelets, Snap button, card lock, velcro, Pockets
<p>FABRICATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Related to the latest innovation technology in fabrication.

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