Study on the communication strategy to increase the awareness of fabric Hanji in Swedish market

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Master thesis of Fashion management

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Abstract

Environmental sustainability is the most important issues in today’s business. They also influenced the fashion industry and elicit demand for eco-friendly clothes. Although the demand for sustainable products is rapidly growing, quite few of sustainable materials are known in fashion industry. Therefore, the thesis investigates one potential sustainable fabric, fabric Hanji and suggests strategies to improve awareness of the fabric in Swedish market which has potential for being a huge market for the sustainable fabrics.

The thesis studies characters of Swedish general market as well as fashion market and also surveys consumer behaviour related to Hanji and Korean fashion’s image. As a result, the thesis figures out that unawareness of Korean fashion and Korean negative image are challenges for Hanji business to be known Swedish consumers although Swedish market has various attractive features. Based on the results, this thesis provides two methods to increase the awareness of the fabric—providing the fabric for student designers and holding workshops for senior consumers.

The two suggestions are definitely an important and meaningful start to introduce fabric Hanji to the market. In addition, they will inspire those who are trying to market the fabric.
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1 Introduction

Since the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, the fashion industry has gone through a lot of changes. Fashion companies have been capable of producing their items in large quantities. Furthermore, the method to produce fashion products was changed from haute couture (tailor-made clothes) to prêt-a-porter (ready-made clothes) in 1950s. With the change, the supply outran the demand and now consumers can get a wide choice of designs and sizes in their clothes. While the changes allow us to experience abundant selection, they cause serious environmental pollution as well. The environmental issue elicits need of sustainable development.

1.1 Background and purpose

The issue of environmental sustainability is a common topic of public discussion in these days. The concept was introduced by Rachel Carson, an American marine biologist in 1962. She pointed out in her book, Silent spring that agricultural pesticides were building environmental problems to a catastrophic level. (Willard, 1999) Her book made people recognise the importance of sustainable growth. After that, all classes, groups, and communities in society held various international conferences on sustainable development, and tried to solve the environmental problem in practical ways.

The movement also influenced the fashion industry. Many people in the industry, from manufacturers to consumers, started to notice eco-friendly fashion products which have less harm to the environment. The growth of concerns immediately raised the demand for eco-friendly clothes. The more environmental issues arise, the more eco-products people demand (www.forumforthefuture.org). With the trend, many companies and people have developed new sustainable materials. Although they have made the materials, consumers
know quite few of sustainable materials, such as bamboo and hemp so far.

For the reason, the thesis will investigate one potential sustainable fabric and suggest strategies to improve awareness of the fabric. This thesis will contribute to environmental protection by making people more aware of ecological fabric.

1.2 Scope

It is definitely true that the demand for eco-friendly fashion products has increased and, therefore, it is necessary to introduce many environmentally sustainable fabrics to the fashion market. However, this paper will focus on only one eco-friendly material which is called Hanji and suggest marketing communication strategies for the material, because it is too vast to deal with all the eco-sustainable fabrics in one thesis for master degree level.

In addition, one specific potential market, Sweden was prudently selected to discuss marketing plans for the chosen material. Since Sweden is the top leading country in European eco-market (www.eco-world.de) and consumers in Northern Europe have more positive attitude toward new and inventive products than their counterpart in other regions (Yang, 2008). Sweden has potential for being a huge market for the new and sustainable fabrics.

1.3 Method

The method used to gather the information and to analyse the market includes researching journals, articles, other published works, web pages on the internet and theoretical references obtained from lectures in the Fashion Management program for master degree students at Högskolan in Borås. By using questionnaire, survey with Swedish consumers was also carried out in order to get more detailed and practical information, which were interpreted and used for suggesting strategies of enhancing the awareness of fabric Hanji, such as how Swedish consumers think of Korean fashion, what their clothing purchasing patterns are, and
how they think of Hanji and fabric Hanji. In addition, personal contacts with fabric Hanji producing company and related marketing agency occurred to get specific and deep information via e-mail and on the phone.
2 Newly developed product

2.1 Environmental sustainability of Hanji

Hanji made from mulberry tree is Korean traditional paper. Since Hanji was developed 1,500 years ago (Choe, 2007), its strengths as a paper, e.g. durability and heat insulation has been emphasised. With the social trend of the environmental protection, however, people now start to reevaluate Hanji as a material of environmental sustainability thanks to its three sustainable aspects (www.kbs.co.kr).

The first aspect comes from the raw material for Hanji. When Hanji is made, it only requires the bark of one-year-old mulberry tree. In other words, it does not allow deforestation to happen which is caused by cutting trees (www.Han-style.com).

Second, the production of Hanji has less impact on the environment compared with that of other papers. Mulberry trees require far less pesticides than other trees during their growth period (This information was acquired from the interview with Kim in Ssangyoung Spinning Co.). In addition, Hanji needs weak alkali to be produced and does require neither heavy amount of water nor much use of bleach which differentiates the paper from others.

Finally, these two previous eco-friendly feathers are connected to the biodegradation at the end of the product’s life cycle without impacting on the environment (Interview with Kim in Ssanyoung Spinning Co.).

2.2 Fibre Hanji

By virtue of nature caring movement in our society and environmentally friendly characteristics of Hanji, some fashion companies and people consider Hanji attractive enough to be produced as a fibre. One of those fashion companies, Ssangyoung Spinning promptly started to invest in fibre Hanji project in 2001. However, the invention of
the process to turn paper into fibre and fabric was not an easy task. After many trials and errors, Ssangyoung Spinning finally developed fibre Hanji in 2005 and, it also co-founded a factory for mass production of Hanji through cooperation with Korea Institute of Knit Industry in 2006 (www.kbs.co.kr, www.lohashanji.com). The developed fibre Hanji shows its own unique merits.

First, fibre Hanji has excellent antibacterial function. It is possible to eliminate 99.5% of bacteria when we use the fibre. As the main raw material of Hanji, mulberry contains elements against atopic diseases which are caused by house dust mites, these garments from fabric Hanji are great for people who are suffering from atopic symptoms or skin irritation problems (www.ytn.co.kr).

Second function is the fibre’s far-infrared ray emitting feature. Far-infrared radiation is widely known for its good effects. It promotes growth and health of living cells and speeds up the metabolism of our body. In addition, the radiation encourages to overcome fatigue through improving blood circulation (Kim, 2007).

Third characteristic is deodorisation. Fibre Hanji has porous structure. The structure makes it possible to get rid of harmful gases or odours which give people unpleasant feelings. Especially, it has an excellent ability to remove ammonia which causes one of the worst odours (Kim, 2007). Therefore, it has big potential as the raw material for various types of clothes which especially need to eliminate odours quickly.

Finally, fibre Hanji evaporates the moisture rapidly. Its drying speed is more than two times of cotton’s. Therefore, garments using fabric Hanji keep human body in pleasant conditions by evaporating sweat and excessive moisture on skin quickly (U, 2010).
2.3 Status of fabric Hanji

Since fibre Hanji was invented, many companies have taken part in development of fabric Hanji. Besides these companies, Ministry of Knowledge Economy of Korea also started to support Hanji business. As a result, now it is possible to produce various complicated fabric by using fibre Hanji. Moreover, fabric Hanji contributes to production of a wide range of clothes, from underwear to sportswear (Choe, 2007). Now some companies are introducing their products to the world market. For examples, Papytex, manufacturer of fabric Hanji, participated in international exhibitions and conferences and received Golden Trophy For Quality-New Millennium Award in 2007 TEX WORLD (U, 2010). These companies’ efforts prove the possibility of Hanji products in the world market. In addition, Jeonju (a local city of Korea) hoping to make Hanji products a regional speciality held Hanji exhibition in Sweden with companies related to Hanji as a first step of globalisation. During preparation period of the exhibition, the city realized that it was difficult to hold the event without knowledge about Sweden. Therefore, Jeonju searched for marketing agency which understood both countries well. The city selected Eliance AB to enter Swedish market easily because the company already experienced lots of trades between Sweden and Korea. After successfully finishing the exhibition, the market agency took charge of the whole marketing business for Hanji in Sweden. Now, the company is implementing many marketing plans for Swedish market.

Market entry strategy for Sweden

The strategy in Swedish market should be different from one in Korea. While Korean market is already familiar with Hanji, Swedish market is not. Therefore, Eliance AB has to inform Hanji itself as well as fabric Hanji in order to let Swedish consumers feel closer to Hanji.
Eliance AB is trying to introduce the excellence of Hanji and kindred products to Swedish consumers. As one way to increase Swedish consumers’ awareness of Hanji products, there was an exhibition of Hanji, 2008 Korean traditional Hanji festival in Stockholm. The festival which was held at the invitation of the city hall of Stockholm lasted two weeks. Many artworks and products made of Hanji were exhibited in Östasiatiska museet and sold in Stockholm gallery. In addition, various workshops related to Hanji products were provided. The festival was broadcasted on TV 4, Swedish national television station (Interview with Eliance AB).

Through the festival, the company could introduce Hanji and related products to Swedish consumer directly and affirmfirm the possibility of fabric Hanji’s success in Sweden.

Figure 1 Brochures of Hanji exhibition

Source: Interview with Lee, Eliance AB

Figure 2 Invitation of Hanji exhibition

Source: Interview with Lee, Eliance AB
Besides, *Eliance AB* also has experienced actual rise in sales of fabric *Hanji*. The company has constantly tried to find Swedish cloth makers who are interested in eco-friendly fabric. For example, the company made a contract with Swedish Jeans brand, Noko Jeans. The company planned to establish retail stores by itself in Sweden as well. However, the methods to promote sales are limited at the moment because of extremely low awareness of fabric *Hanji* in Sweden (Interview with Lee, *Eliance AB*)
3 Market research

3.1 Targeted market

When many companies attempt to globalise their products, deciding which markets to enter is one of the most important factors to consider (Armstrong and Kotler, 2007). Fabric Hanji-related companies also have taken great efforts of choosing countries to enter for their globalisation. With much consideration, they selected Swedish market, a representative market of Northern European, as a foothold in European market to achieve their purpose. There are three reasons why they chose Swedish market for Hanji business.

The first reason is Sweden’s stable economy. GDP per capita in Sweden, which ranked the world’s 12th highest of US $ 43,146 in 2009, is steadily growing (www.weforum.org). Notwithstanding the steady growth, the average inflation rate of Sweden has been also anchored at the lowest level among EU countries since mid-1990s. The remarkable economic performance was largely due to the country’s suitable response to the early 1990s’ deep crisis. Since then, Sweden has prepared itself for demographic challenges in the future much better than most OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries with a budget surplus of around 2% of GDP (www.oecd.org). The stable economy of Sweden indicates great potential for Hanji business.

Second, Swedish consumers accept new product comparatively easily, which is proved by the report, *The international takeoff of new products: the role of economics, culture, and country innovativeness* (Tellis, Stremersch and Yin, 2003). According to the report, Scandinavian countries are inclined to have the shortest length of ‘time-to-takeoff’ among European countries - i.e. duration of a period from a product’s introduction to takeoff is quite short. Sweden has 4.3 years of time-to-takeoff on average. The figure is very remarkable
compared to others such as United Kingdom (8.5 years). The Swedish consumers’ attitude toward new innovative products makes fabric Hanji easier to aim at Swedish market.

Lastly, there reason is environmental sustainability in Swedish market. Sweden recognised seriousness of the environmental issues much earlier than others and the country have made plans for our future and carried out them. One example is green tax system. Taxes on activities related to harmful influences on the environment were increased. Instead, taxes on individual earnings were abated (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2009). As this proves, Swedish market is more sensitive to the environmental issues than other countries. Since fabric Hanji has eco-friendly characteristics, Swedish market could be one of the good places for Hanji business.

3.2 Methodology

As mentioned in chapter 1, this thesis is written for developing strategies to help inform fabric Hanji in Swedish market. In order to suggest proper strategies researches into characteristics of Swedish market in general, possibility of Swedish fashion market, and Swedish consumer attitudes were conducted.

First, general characteristics of Swedish market as a whole were analysed because a company’s marketing strategy cannot achieve success without understanding characteristics of its target even though its product is fascinating. Thus, studies to find distinct characteristics of Swedish market from other markets were done through researching various articles and statistical data.

Second, this paper is describing chances in and potential of Swedish fashion market. The analysis of the fashion market depended on the report of European Commission, ‘Consumers in Europe’ and theses related to Swedish fashion market. In addition, Swedish consumer analysis was done by utilising secondary research method. Through secondary
research, fashion consumer’s general expenditure patterns according to age and gender were investigated.

### 3.3 Characteristics of Swedish market

Swedish market is a suitable place to launch fabric *Hanji* in Europe. In order to enter Swedish market, it is essential to figure out the market’s distinctive characteristics because each market can have different reaction of the same strategy according to its characteristics such as culture, economy, and other factors.

Swedish market shows two distinctive features from other countries; one is multiculturalism and the other is the number of internet users. The two features will help companies hoping to market fabric *Hanji* in Swedish market.

According to American Heritage dictionary, multiculturalism is the belief that a society should respect and promote all kinds of cultures or ethnic groups which it composes. Now, Sweden is one of the representative multicultural countries. The Statistics Sweden announced that a fifth of Swedish population is either foreigners or with two foreign-born parents. To be specific, around 1.6 million foreigners out of 9.3 million Swedish population are living in Sweden and there are people of 186 nationalities in Stockholm, capital city of Sweden. The exception includes just 11 countries among 194 independent states which The United Nations recognises (Simpson 2010 and Demsteader, 2010). Furthermore, the number of immigrants is likely to increase as time goes by. That is because Swedish folks tend to emphasise relationship and the welfare of others (Javidan and House, 2001) and be favourable to their immigrants (TT/The local, 2009). Marketing companies promoting *Hanji* should reflect the multicultural feature in Swedish market when they develop strategies for the market.

Increasing number of internet user is another feature of Swedish market. The Global Information Technology Report 2009-2010 said that Sweden ranks top in the Networked
Readiness Index (NRI). The NRI shows quality of infrastructure for network by considering technology usage in public department or official department and consumer’s accessibility to cutting-edge products, etc. It is the standard to evaluate a country’s network performance over time and vis-à-vis other economies (World Economic Forum). Sweden also ranked number two of internet users per 100 inhabitants in 2008. As table 1 shows, the number of internet users per 100 inhabitants increased sharply between 2007 and 2008 (http://www.itu.int). Moreover, the growth rate was remarkable compared to other countries. These numbers mean that Swedish consumers are more familiar with the internet than those who are from other countries. This will be helpful when companies choose their marketing communication channel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Internet Users 2007</th>
<th>Internet Users 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>279,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7,511,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14,125,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,630,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,267,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,103,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>374,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5,020,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea (Rep.)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37,794,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Internet users per 100 inhabitants

Source: International Telecommunication Union

3.4 Swedish fashion market

Swedish fashion market started to grow rapidly in the mid-1990s owing to low interest rates and increase of real wage. Since then, fashion consumers in Sweden bought fashion products for pleasure as well as basic needs. Now shopping clothes means not mere purchasing
behaviour but one of the social and cultural activities in Sweden. As suggested in figure 3, this new consumer attitudes toward fashion have made Swedish market steadily grow in the last decade except 2008 when global financial meltdown happened (Fagring and Stéphanie, 2010). The market is expected to generate a value of $ 9.7 billion in 2013 and be a leader of retail apparel industry in Scandinavian region (Apparel Retail - Scandinavia Industry Guide, 2009). In addition, figure 4 shows that apparel market accounts for 35.5% of total discretionary market including all retail sales market without staples in Sweden (Fagring and Stéphanie, 2010).

![Swedish clothing retail sales growth](image)

**Figure 3 Yearly growth of clothing sales (discretionary, 1997-2009)**

![Total discretionary markets (2009)](image)

**Figure 4 Total discretionary markets (2009)**

Source: Fagring and Stéphanie, 2009

Growing Swedish fashion market shows its own unique features. Among these features, the most noticeable feature of the market is high price level in it. As figure 5 shows, Sweden has the highest price standard in European apparel market. The price of fashion products in Swedish market is about 20% higher than the average of European price (Consumers in Europe 2009). It means that the less price-sensitive market than other countries will be more favourable condition for Hanji business because cost of producing fabric Hanji is relatively high.
Another feature is Swedish consumers’ expenditure pattern. While Swedish women in twenties spend a lot of money on fashion products like other markets, the market seems to have distinctive expenditure pattern from other markets. The noticeable groups are young consumers both men and women aged between 20 and 29 and female group from 50 to 64. As suggested in table 2, male consumers aged 20-29 spend more money on fashion products than even female consumers in the same age range. The figure is remarkable that women spend much more money on fashion products than men within other ages. In addition, female consumers aged 50-64 spend money on fashion products the most compared to other groups (Statistics Sweden, 2009). Plus, the average expenditure per capita over 60 is higher than other countries, according to European commission report (figure 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65 -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing / Footwear</td>
<td>7,810</td>
<td>6,480</td>
<td>3,620</td>
<td>2,460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Men and women - expenditures per person (SEK, 2008)

Source: statistics Sweden
The distinctive expenditure pattern of Swedish market indicates which age and gender groups are favourable in Swedish market.
4 Empirical study

4.1 Methodology

The survey was done in Borås by 57 respondents during the period of May 5 to 10 to understand characteristics of Swedish consumers. In order to avoid any kinds of bias in it, the survey was carried out in three different areas; an area near to shopping centre, residential area, and school zone.

The questionnaire for the survey was made based on paper, *A Study on Eco-fashion Design through the Application of the Formative Beauty of Korean Traditional Dress to Korean Paper Textile* and websites related to *Hanji*. Pilot survey was conducted by 5 people from April 28 to May 1 and the questionnaire was finally drafted according to the result of the pilot survey.

The questionnaire consists of three parts; image of Korean fashion which Swedish consumers have in mind, Swedish consumer’s behaviour in terms of fashion items, and image of *Hanji* they think.

The first part comprises five questions to investigate not only Swedish consumers’ awareness of Korea and Korean fashion image, but also their interest in Korean fashion. The second part is made up of two questions related to fashion consumption. Since the information related to Swedish fashion consumption pattern was already studied by secondary research, the number of fashion consumption questions are limited to only two. The questions are about fashion information sources and consumption pattern. The final part consists of five questions with the five point of Likert scale to examine consumers’ practical opinion on fabric *Hanji* and to check whether describing fabric Hanji’s features has any effects on consumers’ reactions to the fabric or not. The second and fourth question in the part include a subset of eight questions each and the third and fifth questionnaire designed by
five sub-questions. Fabric *Hanji* was provided as a stimulant to research how consumers felt about the fabric solely based on their sense of touch, when respondents were asked to answer the second and third question in the last part of the survey. While respondents answered the fourth and fifth question, actual *Hanji* and fabric *Hanji* were given together with oral explanation because it was obvious that most Swedish consumers did not have enough knowledge about *Hanji* as well as fabric *Hanji*. Patches of combined fabric, half cotton and half fibre *Hanji*, in five different colours were selected as the stimulant used in the survey to reduce variability in the study. Finally, four questions for basic information such as gender, age, and job were suggested.

In order to analyse the results of the survey, SPSS 17.0 was used. In general, the frequency and mean were used to summarise and describe the results. The cross tabulation method was also used for correlation analysis. Especially, questions for comparison between before and after oral explanation of the fabric were analysed by the paired t-test.

### 4.2 Basic information of respondents

Basic information of people who took part in the survey is tabulated in table 3 according to the result of the survey. A total of 57 people answered the survey and 33.3 % of the total respondents were male. When it comes to age, the twenties occupied the biggest portion, 63.2 % and other age groups were similarly spread. As for occupation, the results showed that 29.8 % of the respondents had fashion-related jobs. The survey asked them to answer only whether their jobs were related to fashion or not in order to investigate the relationship between job and customers’ mind.
### Table 3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 and above</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations Related to fashion</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations Regardless of fashion</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Korea and Korean fashion image in Swedish market

In terms of the question, Swedish consumers’ attitude toward ‘made in Korea’, significant portion of respondents (33.3 %) selected cheapness. No image (24.6%), high technology (24.6%), fashion design (10.5%), and credibility (1.8%) followed as figure 7 shows. The result shows that more than half of those who surveyed had negative image of Korea. Another noteworthy thing is that more than 50% of respondents over age of 40 considered the image of ‘made in Korea’ cheap. This is remarkable in comparison with the fact that only 22 % of twenties answered in the same way.

![Figure 7 Swedish consumers’ attitude toward ‘made in Korea’](image-url)
When it comes to Swedish consumers’ awareness of Korean fashion, almost 90% of respondents answered that they did not know Korean fashion brand and more than half of respondents (57.9%) did not know what Korean fashion style was. Naturally, their interest in Korea fashion brands was low. With regard to the question, ‘if new Korean fashion stores are launched in Sweden, do you want to visit them?’ only 8.8% of respondents answered they were interested in these stores because it was Korean brand. The results indicate that Swedish consumers are generally unfamiliar with Korean fashion or fashion brands and have quite little interest in Korean fashion brands.

4.4 Swedish fashion consumer behaviour

As most people may expect, the results of the survey show that female consumers spend more money on fashion products than male consumers do. 29% of female consumers spend 1000-1499 SEK monthly to buy fashion products. On the contrary, only 16% of male consumers spend the same amount of money on the fashion. However, most respondents (96.5%) spend less than 1500 SEK on fashion products every month and 74.5% of them spend under 1000 SEK, regardless of age, gender, and job.

With regard to shopping information sources, the most respondents answered they got shopping information from mass media (figure 8). It was followed by friends and the internet. The result says that the power of mass media is still stronger than other methods although new methods to get shopping information such as the internet have been developed.
Another outstanding point is that the methods to get shopping information are different according to age and job. First, the way to get shopping information seems to be connected to consumer’s age. Younger group aged 20 to 29 is more influenced by exhibitions and fairs than other age groups. Total of nine respondents selected exhibitions and fairs as
their shopping information source and eight in the nine people (89%) were in their twenties. Compared to other groups who are scarcely ever affected by exhibitions and fairs, these young consumers said that they utilise exhibitions and fairs as their shopping sources. Young consumers also answered that they got lots of shopping information from their friends. This may imply the importance of ‘word of mouth’ effect especially when fabric Hanji promoting companies aim at twenties.

According to the result of the survey, people who have fashion-related job tend to be more affected by the internet than those who do not have occupations related to the fashion when they get shopping information. 64.7 % of respondents who have occupations related to the fashion business answered that the internet was their shopping information sources while only 30% of who have occupations not related to the fashion did the same. It shows how much important to decide accurate channels for fabric Hanji in Swedish market is.

4.5 Changes in consumers’ response before and after explanation

The awareness of Hanji in Sweden is almost zero. The lack of the awareness of Hanji will make it difficult to introduce the fabric in Swedish market. However, it can be also the opportunity for fabric Hanji. It is still much easier for fabric Hanji of which Swedish consumers have no image to enter the market than other fabrics which are considered negative by Swedish consumers because consumers’ attitudes fit into a specific pattern and it may demand a lot of difficulties to change one attitude (Armstrong and Kotler, 2007). If the attitude or the image is negative, it will be quite tougher to change that into a positive one. From that, it makes sense to say that fabric Hanji is fortunate because its image is not damaged as a negative one. The fabric does have a chance.

The survey asked the respondents about physical characteristics of fabric Hanji they perceived (table 4). When they judged the fabric’s characteristics by using their physical
senses without any explanation, they gave high scores to characteristics such as ‘eco-friendly’, ‘good for skin’, and ‘evaporation’. On contrary, the average point assigned to fabric Hanji’s value was quite low (2.53). Respondents did not realise the fabric was made of paper and some of them said that the fabric had similar feeling with fabric made of bamboo or linen. After respondents heard explanation of the fabric, all assigned scores to each question rose. Especially, characteristics of ‘evaporation’, ‘eco-friendly’, ‘good for skin’, and ‘expensive value’ showed remarkable change. The result shows Hanji-related companies can change customer’s feeling and attitude toward the fabric to positively if they make the strategies to emphasise these characteristics and provide enough explanation of the fabric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Before mean</th>
<th>After mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expensive value</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>-.561</td>
<td>-1.780</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-friendly fabric</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>-.561</td>
<td>-4.315</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaporation</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>-.754</td>
<td>-6.697</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for skin</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>-.667</td>
<td>-4.918</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>-.956</td>
<td>-3.718</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity with paper</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>-.246</td>
<td>-1.491</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light and soft</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>-.323</td>
<td>-1.123</td>
<td>.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>-.175</td>
<td>-0.936</td>
<td>.354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Comparison between before and after explanation of fabric Hanji was given

The final question was about perceived possibility of using the fabric for the fashion items. When the respondents did not get the information on fabric Hanji and just touched it, the highest potential fashion items they recommended to produce were casual wear and bedding. On the contrary, underwear got the lowest point, 1.84 and baby clothes was 2.40. After fabric Hanji was explained, they assigned higher scores to all listed items than before they heard explanation. Especially, babywear, underwear, bedding, and functional wear showed considerable change (table 5).
The difference in scores between before and after explanation proves that it is possible to change customers’ attitude toward the fabric through well-made promotion strategy and public relationship activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fashion categories</th>
<th>Before mean</th>
<th>After mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby clothes</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>-1.281</td>
<td>-6.920</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>-1.281</td>
<td>-8.806</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedding</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>-.514</td>
<td>-5.111</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional wear</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>-1.175</td>
<td>-7.413</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual wear</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>-.316</td>
<td>-7.577</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessory</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>-.228</td>
<td>-2.434</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Available fashion categories of fabric *Hanji*
5 Marketing communication strategy

As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, Sweden is an attractive fashion market as a foothold in European market—e.g. steady increase in sales of clothes and high price level of apparel. However, there are two kinds of unawareness in Sweden. They are big challenges for Hanji business to enter Swedish market successfully.

First challenge is Swedish consumers’ unawareness of and indifference to Korean fashion. Second, Swedish consumers are unfamiliar with Hanji, the raw material for fabric Hanji. Unlike Korean consumers who already knew Hanji well, Swedish consumers do not know Hanji. The unawareness issue requires huge investment of time as well as money because companies related to Hanji should let consumers understand what Hanji is before they begin to promote the new fabric.

In order to overcome the challenges, this chapter will suggest several strategies helping promote fabric Hanji. The strategies are developed based on the interactive analysis of Swedish market, product and consumer in previous sections of this thesis (figure 9).
5.1 Cooperation with student designers

Through the analysis of Swedish market and result of the survey, it was found that Swedish consumers are familiar with neither Korea nor fabric Hanji. Even consumers who are aware of Korea tend to regard image of Korea as cheapness or be indifferent to it. However, there is still a bright side. In chapter 3, it was found that Sweden is a multiculturalistic country and the market tends to accept new products more easily than other European countries. In other words, Swedish people are less resistant against newly entering foreign items. This can be a factor lowering the entry barrier in Swedish consumers’ mind when fabric Hanji is launched in Swedish market. Moreover, the fact that Swedish youngsters between 20 to 29 have a distinct pattern of shopping information sources was identified in previous chapters (chapter 3 and 4). Swedish citizens are heavy users of the internet. Especially, Swedish consumers who are in their twenties make use of the internet majorly when finding shopping information. Considering these two aspects, multiculturalism and dependence on the internet, a specific strategy aiming at the young consumers can be suggested—cooperation with student designers.

Supporting design students’ fashion shows can be helpful to overcome the situation where the limited awareness of fabric Hanji exists. Many young and creative students in fashion schools hold fashion shows and exhibitions regularly or irregularly in order to grow and prove their abilities. The activities require various fabrics to make garments. If companies provide them with fabric Hanji, they can get the opportunity to introduce Korean image and fabric Hanji to Swedish youngsters in particular. That is because young students naturally know Korean image as well as features of the fabric by using the fabric as the raw material for their designs.
This strategy will give both companies and students mutual advantages. Students can save cost and have the opportunity to use new and exotic material for their works. Besides the advantages students can get, Hanji companies can also get three benefits.

5.1.1 Promotion effects

The strategy can bring out advertisement and promotion effect. Many people from various backgrounds will visit the students’ exhibitions and fashion shows to celebrate the events. Therefore, visitors naturally see Hanji. It will be a good chance for Hanji companies to inform Swedish consumers of the fabric. Especially, it can be a very good promotion method to consumers in their twenties because they get shopping information from exhibitions and fairs much more than other age groups do according to the survey results.

In addition, supporting the events by utilising many powerful social media websites as a tool of promoting and advertising them will trigger word of mouth effect. Now it becomes kind of trend for ordinary people to show their life via social websites such as facebook and blogs. Many major companies such as General Motors and PepsiCo are recognising this trend and using the social websites aggressively for the marketing (Williamson, 2010). The people who visit or hold fashion shows and exhibitions might also enjoy the websites. If fabric Hanji
companies open special blogs and Facebook pages for supporting the events, exhibitors and visitors of the events may post their review or opinion on the websites and this will create another promotion effect. Sweden is one of the countries which have the most internet users per 100 inhabitants (http://www.itu.int). Thus, it makes sense to infer that the more people use this kind of social network, the more promotion effects can occur. The effect has bigger impact on consumers compared to effects of commercials because consumers think that the posts and articles on individual websites are more reliable than commercials by companies (Grönroos, 2007). People who post reviews of fabric Hanji and Hanji-related events become voluntary marketers of fabric Hanji either consciously or unconsciously. Promotion strategies utilising these voluntary participations will increase the awareness of fabric Hanji.

5.1.2 Creative and various designs

New fabric Hanji needs to be used as the raw material for clothes in innovative and creative designs to build and reinforce its unique image so that it can survive the current saturated fashion market. In the current market situation, just following and mimicking trend cannot satisfy customers who have many choices of the fashion products. Development of unique designs with students through fashion shows and exhibitions will give innovative and attractive ideas to the companies related to Hanji. Many people agree that the most creative period in their whole life is when they are students because they can express their thought of feeling without any pressure. Students feel free to suggest experimental and reformatory ideas and designs. Cooperation with students who have fashion background as well as creative ideas will be a chance to apply these innovative designs and ideas to actual products.
5.1.3 Profit increase

The number one reason why companies are in business is to make a profit. Unless they succeed in being profitable, everything is useless although the quality of their products is very good (Dickerson 2003). It means that companies have to consider ROI (return on investment) of their business activities when they are implementing business strategies. The companies related to Hanji are not exception. They can get efficiency through the strategy of cooperation with students and improve their ROIs. There are a lot of advantages such as effects of word of mouth, public relation, and innovative designs without much cost. (Actually, they can expect even bigger effect with less cost by selecting this strategy.) The advantages will contribute to improving the awareness of fabric Hanji. In the end, the increased awareness can be a catalyst of sales promotion and guarantee much profitability.

5.2 Workshop for senior market

Now senior market which consists of consumers over age 50 is the fastest growing but most neglected market (www.entrepreneur.com). Senior consumers generally have enough money and time for living because they already finished undertaking lots of financial burdens that younger consumers should spend most of their income such as purchasing house and raising kids. Especially, Swedish female consumers between 54 and 64 are inclined to spend more money on the fashion products than other consumer groups as the results of the survey show. Senior consumers have problems to solve as well. Their access to the shopping information is limited to mass media (chapter 4 of this paper) Unlike young consumers, they are less familiar with the internet. Therefore, it requires a different approach to target the most promising consumer group. Strategy of holding workshops will target the big potential senior market. The workshops may consist of courses on various crafts of Hanji. Companies related to Hanji will get three benefits from the workshop strategy.
5.2.1 Accurate introduction of *Hanji*'s characteristics

As mentioned above, Swedish consumers do not have much knowledge about *Hanji* and have bad image of ‘made in Korea’, which is especially true for old group. In addition, they are indifferent to Korean fashion as well. This is a weak point when companies related to fabric *Hanji* try to promote their products in Swedish market. The workshops teaching Swedish consumers to make handcraft products of *Hanji* will help them have good image of *Hanji*. The participants can learn accurate characteristics of *Hanji* through the workshops. They will feel the fabric directly and the lecturer in the workshops will explain its detail characteristics. It can change consumers’ mind from negative to positive as the results of the survey show that consumers changed their way of thinking toward fabric *Hanji* in a positive direction when more detailed description of the fabric and actual fabric were given together. Workshops fulfil these two conditions (actual material and detail explanation) perfectly.

5.2.2 Public relation targeted at senior market

It is definitely true that Swedish senior market has much potential for the success of *Hanji* business. However, there is one challenge for *Hanji* business to be successful in the market. Many senior consumers in Sweden get their shopping information only from mass media—
one-way communication method, according to the survey. In case of depending on commercials of mass media, Hanji-related companies may have difficulty understanding senior consumers’ mind because the companies cannot get feedbacks from them. This will results in serious lack of communication.

The workshop strategy is fairly effective in order to overcome the problem. It can play a role as a bridge in communication between consumers and companies—two-way communication. While the lecturers in the workshops teach Swedish senior consumers, they can get direct feedback on several marketing strategies from the consumers. This two-way communication system helps related companies to make proper strategies targeting the attractive senior market.

5.2.3 Sales promotion

Besides the indirect effects mentioned above, the strategy of providing workshops encourages direct sales promotion. When Swedish consumers participate in the events to learn how to make Hanji handcrafts, they have to see Hanji products whether they hope or not. It allows consumers to see the fashion products made of fabric Hanji more frequently than before. The repetitive visual exposure will be connected to sales promotion in that the repetitive exposure will unconsciously boost consumers’ awareness of the fabric even though nothing seems to happen immediately. People tend to select more familiar products than others when they buy products, even if they do not recognise what they are influenced by (Solomon, 2009).
6 Conclusion

Sweden is regarded as one of the leading sustainable markets. Swedish consumers recognise the importance of sustainability and many industries in Sweden, especially the fashion industry, need more sustainable products. However, the awareness of sustainable fabrics is limited in Swedish fashion market. In order to meet the great demand, this thesis selected one sustainable fabric called fabric *Hanji* and suggested two marketing strategies through many analysis methods to increase the awareness of it—providing the fabric for student designers and holding workshops for senior consumers.

Albeit it may have tiny effect on Swedish fashion market at first, it is definitely an important and meaningful start to introduce fabric *Hanji* to the market. The two strategies suggested in this paper will inspire those who are trying to market the fabric. If continuous endeavours to promote fabric *Hanji* are made, we may see huge repercussions in the near future that no one can expect at the moment.
Although this thesis suggested inspirational strategies for fabric *Hanji*, there are limitations and issues which are worthy of discussion because the analyses related to fabric *Hanji* in Swedish market are performed for the first time. There are four recommendations for the further researches in future to establish and elaborate more delicate strategies.

First, studies should be conducted in more regions of Sweden because geographical range of the survey for this thesis was limited in Borås. Even if general Swedish market and consumers were analysed by secondary investigation, the survey with consumer in various regions is essential to get practical and specific consumer information.

Second, this study found Swedish consumers’ different attitudes according to age. In the future research, specialised surveys for each age group should be done. The result of the research will help construct more specific strategies to promote sales of fabric *Hanji*.

Third, Sweden has features of multicultural country. However, this research did not cover distinguishable consumer behaviour patterns according to consumers’ various cultural backgrounds. To make precise strategies, consumer analysis based on cultural background of consumers should be done.

Finally, the respondents of the survey exhibited different preferences of fashion categories such as—baby clothes, etc. When considering fabric *Hanji* as the raw material for the fashion products. Underlying mechanism of consumers’ attitude toward each fashion category should also be researched in detail. For more detailed researches, various types of fabric *Hanji* are also required.


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Appendix.

The purpose of the survey is to figure out fashion consumer behavior in Sweden and what image about Korea the consumers have. Your responses to these questions will be only used to perform master thesis.

Thank you for participating in the survey. If you have questions regarding the completion of this questionnaire, please contact with me via phone (0706 928016) or e-mail (eunyoung.kyoung@gmail.com).

EUNYOUNG KYOUNG, HÖSKOLAN I BORÅS

Background

1. **Gender**? .................................................................     ☐ Male     ☐ Female

2. **Age** group?

   ☐ 10-19    ☐ 20-29    ☐ 30-39
   ☐ 40-49    ☐ 50 and above

3. What’s your **job**?

   ☐ Occupations related to **fashion**
   (Fashion designer, Fashion merchandisers, Fashion student, and others)

   ☐ Occupations **regardless of fashion**
   (Engineers, teachers except fashion teachers, nurses, and others)

4. Monthly **income without tax**?

   ☐ 0 - 14,999 (SEK)    ☐ 15,000-19,999 (SEK)    ☐ 20,000-24,999 (SEK)
   ☐ 25,000-29,999 (SEK)    ☐ 30,000-34,999 (SEK)    ☐ 35,000 and above (SEK)

Please turn over.
1. What image comes to mind when you see ‘Made in Korea’?  
   - [x] Fashionable Design  
   - [x] High technology  
   - [x] Credibility  
   - [ ] Cheapness  
   - [ ] No image  
   - [ ] Others: ________________

2. What do you think about Korean fashion? (Check √ only one)  
   - [x] Trendy  
   - [ ] Normal  
   - [ ] Unfashionable  
   - [ ] Don’t know  
   - [ ] Others: ________________

3. How many Korean Fashion brands do you know?  
   - [x] Don’t know  
   - [ ] 1 brand  
   - [ ] 2-3 brands  
   - [ ] 4-5 brands  
   - [ ] 6 and above

4. Have you ever bought Korean fashion products?  
   - [x] Yes  
   - [ ] No  
   - [ ] Don’t know

5. If new Korean fashion stores are launched in Sweden, do you want to visit them?  
   (Check √ only one)  
   - [x] Yes, I will visit them, because it’s Korean brand.  
   - [x] Yes, I will visit them, because it’s new.  
   - [ ] No, I will not visit them, because I don’t have interest in Korean store.  
   - [ ] No, I will not visit them, because I don’t have interest in new brand.  
   - [ ] Others: ____________________________________________________________

Please turn over.
Fashion consumer behavior

1. How much do you spend on fashion products monthly?

☐ 0 - 999 (SEK)  ☐ 1000-1499 (SEK)  ☐ 1500-1999 (SEK)
☐ 2000-2499 (SEK)  ☐ 2500-2999 (SEK)  ☐ 3000 and above (SEK)

2. Where do you get shopping information?

☐ Exhibition and fair  ☐ Mass media (TV, Magazine)  ☐ Internet (Blogs)
☐ Friends  ☐ Others: ______________________

Image of Hanji

1. Do you know Hanji, Korean traditional paper? ............................. ☐ Yes  ☐ No

*From the question, the surveyor will show you 5 fabrics. Before you answer below questions, please see and touch the fabrics.*

2. Can you answer about the fabric’s characters? (Please circle one number for each question)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. It is <strong>light and soft.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The feeling seems like <strong>paper.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. It seems to be <strong>expensive.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. It looks like <strong>eco-friendly fabrics.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. There is no differentiation as compared with other fabrics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. It is good for keeping <strong>warm.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The fabric will <strong>dry</strong> quickly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. It looks like good for <strong>skin.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please turn over.
3. If these products as below are made by the fabric, which category is attractive to you? (Please circle one number for each question)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Baby clothes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Underwear (socks &amp; innerwear).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Accessory (scarf &amp; handkerchief).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Functional wear (Sports wear).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Casual wear (t-shirt &amp; pants)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Beddings (blanket &amp; cushion).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From the question, the surveyor will explain about the fabrics. Before you answer below questions, please listen to explanation from surveyor.*

4. Can you answer about the fabric’s characters? (Please circle one number for each question)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. It seems to be expensive.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. It looks like eco-friendly fabrics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. There is no differentiation as compared with other fabrics.</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. It is good for keeping warm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The fabric will dry quickly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. It looks like good for skin.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please turn over.
5. If these products as below are made by the fabric, which category is attractive to you? (Please circle one number for each question)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Baby clothes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Underwear (socks &amp; innerwear).</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Functional wear (Sports wear).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Casual wear (t-shirt &amp; pants)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Beddings (blanket &amp; cushion).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Thank you for your help! -