

**MARKETING FASHION COLOR FOR PRODUCT LINE EXTENSION
IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE CHANNEL**

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ABSTRACT

Consumer demand, advances in manufacturing and retailing technology, and globalization contribute to an increasingly competitive domestic apparel market. In order to compete, retailers and manufacturers adopt aggressive product strategies designed to capture discerning consumers. A popular strategy for product line extension in the apparel industry is the addition of fashion color to core lines. Academics and practitioners alike have suggested that color can stimulate interest and, subsequently, sales of apparel products. The current study examines the impact of visible fashion color on sales of women's core apparel products in the department store context through a quasi-experimental approach. Hypothesis tests suggest that greater depth and magnitude of fashion color does not increase sales of either fashion color or basic color apparel. Managerial implications are offered for product strategy as well as future directions for academic research.

KEYWORDS: Apparel marketing, retailing, fashion marketing, women's apparel, fashion color, product-line extension, retail environment

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, global sourcing, multiple-channel retailing, the proliferation of mass merchandisers, and demanding consumers have contributed to the development of a dynamic and highly competitive U.S. apparel market. In order to compete in today's market, retailers and apparel manufacturers are increasingly adopting new product strategies, including both new innovations as well as product line

extensions to capture sales from discerning consumers. The design, production, and distribution of new products in apparel retailing currently occurs at much faster rates compared to a decade ago. Retailers such as The Limited, Inc. attribute their success to the ability to design, manufacture and deliver goods to the selling floor within a six-week time frame (Biederman, 2000).