

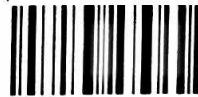
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**An analysis of fashion optical illusion
on hourglass body shapes**
(With special reference on plus size women aged 25-35 in Sri Lanka)

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Abstract

Many women suffer both mentally and physically even without knowing that the root cause is the dissatisfaction on their physical bodies. Woman's body is accepted to be a symbol of her pride, good health, fertility and wellbeing. It plays a dominant role throughout her whole life. Many cultures appreciate the thinness of a woman and modern media also support this idea by promoting slim female body as the ideal body framework. In reality the world obesity and overweight levels are increasing in an alarming rate. Women around the world are following dangerous diet plans and exercise schedules to build up a slender body as advertised in different media. Female body comes in various shapes and the seven categories of female body classify the hourglass body shape as the perfect female body shape which can be divided into hourglass, top hourglass and bottom hourglass. Though the hourglass body shape is considered to be as the most ideal body frame, plus size hourglass women with full breasts and large hips find it is difficult to dress their body. Through this research it is expected to find ways to reduce body dissatisfaction of plus size hourglass women aged 25-35 in Sri Lanka. The particular age category was selected as they are the most fashion conscious segment with good affordability for fashion products. Optical illusions were recognized as a technique in fashioning the body to change the body perception in avoiding body dissatisfaction. A mixed research method has been used in conducting the research as qualitative and quantitative approach. A survey was carried out among Sri Lankan women between 25-35 in Sri Lanka to identify the nature of young Sri Lankan females, their dress preferences and modesty levels. Qualitative approach was taken in the form of visual analysis based on combinations of Gestalt rules and selected types of optical illusion techniques to observe perceptual changes of the plus size hourglass body. It was revealed that there are endless possibilities of creating more abstract illusive designs using combinations of Gestalt rules and optical illusion techniques. Also, it is realized that the impact of optical illusion is not universal as it is very subjective. Findings of this research will support Sri Lankan plus size women to make their fashion purchase decisions and also Sri Lankan designers to design for plus size market which is a booming market in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Female body, Plus size, Hourglass, Optical illusion, Creative pattern making