Research Article

Workwear for Plus-Size Female Professionals in Sri Lanka: Challenges, Style Preferences, and the Influence of Body Image

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Article Info

Abstract

Plus-size working professionals in Sri Lanka often face challenges in finding well-fitting workwear that suits their body shape and preferences in a professional setting. Despite the worldwide demand for inclusive clothing, the Sri Lankan market lacks style diversity and a standard sizing method. This study, adapted from Kumari and Anand's (Kumari & Anand, 2023) research on Indian plus-size women, explores workwear size issues, fit problems, clothing preferences, and body image concerns among 149 Sri Lankan plus-size working professionals. Participants (BMI ≥25, waist ≥34") reported major discomfort in the stomach, bust, and thighs, with many purchasing tops and bottoms in mismatched sizes. Flared and A-line styles were preferred across garments due to their comfort and body-shaping appeal. Size availability and silhouette compatibility were key selection factors. Body image strongly influenced workwear behavior, with many participants dressing conservatively due to societal expectations and self-perception. This study offers localized insight to inform designers, brands, and policymakers on developing inclusive workwear and standardized size charts to better serve plus-size working professionals.

Introduction

Imagine yourself standing in front of your wardrobe, but struggling to find clothes that fit well, complement your physique, or reflect the professional image you aim to project at work. According to a study done in the recent past, this is a common challenge faced by many working professionals in Sri Lanka (Seram & Chathurammi, 2023). Specifically, it is even more difficult for larger bodies (Elizabeth, 2021).

The term plus-size is used to describe a series of sizes in women's garments for full figures, who have a waist dimension of at least 34' or above (Staton J. , 2019). WHO indicates that 1 in 8 people is obese (WHO, 2024). The 2015 STEPS survey (STEPwise approach to NCD risk factor surveillance) carried out in Sri Lanka reported a 23.4% overweight rate and a 5.9% obese rate among 18–69-year-olds (Non Communicable Disease Unit, 2018).

From 2022 to 2030, the plus-size clothing market is about to grow by 4.3% globally (Sachitra & Hapugahapitiya, 2024). Though the plus-size clothing market is a growing market, there are multiple issues in producing and selling these garments, along with prejudiced views about various areas of large bodies (Christino et al., 2023). However, prior studies confirmed that less importance has been given to women's plus-size clothing in Sri Lanka compared to other countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom. (Sachitra & Hapugahapitiya, 2024). Another study conducted by Seram & Kumarasiri has identified the inability to find well-fitting clothes and the unavailability of trendy clothes as two major causes of dissatisfaction among Sri Lankan plus-size women (Seram & Kumarasiri, 2020).

From the economically active women of Sri Lanka, 33.3% work in the urban sector, 34.6% work in the rural sector, and 41.2% work in the estate sector (Department of Census and Statistics , 2022). As of 2023, women occupy about 18.5% of board seats in listed companies, a notable increase from 15.7% in 2013 (Gender Data Portal, 2024). According to recent research by Seram and Chathurammi, Workwear plays a crucial role in enabling women employees to project their personality and boost their confidence level within the workplace (Seram & Chathurammi, 2023). Research done among the US male and female postgraduates also

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indicates that women put more effort into choosing workwear compared to men, especially those who are in management and executive positions (Peluchette et al., 2006).

Even though the issues related to plus-size clothing have been addressed to some level in the global market, Sri Lankan female customer satisfaction levels have not been thoroughly researched (Seram & Kumarrasiri, Are customers satisfied? Study of the problems currently prevailing in the plus size women's wear market in Sri Lanka, 2020). While there have been studies on the workwear preferences of women in Sri Lanka (Seram & Chathurammi, 2023), there is a lack of research on the problems faced by plus-size women in Sri Lanka regarding workwear and their preferences. Though previous research has brought attention to worldwide issues like ill-fitting clothing (Gyi et al., 2019), restricted size options (Money, 2017), and the influence of body image on clothing decisions (Apeagyei, 2009), there has been a lack of specific focus on these issues within the sphere of plus-size women in Sri Lanka.

Inspired by the study of (Kumari & Anand, 2023), the primary aim of the research is to identify specific fit issues encountered by plus-size working professionals in various body areas when selecting work attire, as well as exploring size-related obstacles such as the difficulty in finding fashionable clothes, suitable sizes, affordable options, and understanding size labels. Additionally, the study will delve into the role of body image on workwear choices, confidence levels, and overall satisfaction.

The study is expected to yield valuable insights for Sri Lankan retailers and manufacturers by understanding the specific fit and sizing needs of plus-size female working professionals. Thus, the industry can better cater to this market segment, offering improved size availability and more preferred clothing choices. This focused approach is crucial for maintaining a clear and relevant analysis within the specific cultural and professional context.

Literature Review

Historical Background

The early development of plus-size clothing can be traced back to the 20th century. Lane Bryant, an American designer who designed clothes for pregnant women, created clothes for plus-size models in 1922 (Favero & Vieira, 2020). More tailored and stylish clothing options were available for larger women post-World War two, showing a more inclusive approach to diverse body types. (Binkley, 2006). Followed by the BBW movement, which advocated body positivity, pushing the designers to create stylish, well-fitting options for plus-size women (LeBesco, 2004). Also, influencers and activists used social media platforms such as Instagram to promote body positivity, which led to a more inclusive market (Heggenstaller & Haley, 2019).

Fitting Issues

According to Brown, Customers were mainly attracted by the fit of the apparel, which is also considered to be the most important aspect of a clothing's appearance. Satisfaction, comfort, and appearance are crucial criteria for a consumer to identify an apparel as a good fit. And the good fit increases the confidence level of the wearer and how they are perceived by others (Brown, 2021). In the same study, he indicates that the plus-size women were unsatisfied with the fit of their garments. In another study conducted by Staton, it was found that the main concern among plus-size women is fit issues, and 64% of the plus-size women respondents had selected fit over fashion when two dresses were

given to select from (Staton S. , 2016). In another question of the same study 83% prioritized fit, while the majority were the plus-size women.

The most challenging aspect of women's apparel was considered to be the cloth fittings, as highlighted by Gaur and Purohit (Gaur & Purohit, 2021). In Nkambule's study, the abdomen, buttocks, hips, waist, and upper arms were recorded as the most problematic areas to get a desirable fit (Nkambule, 2010). In Annu Kumari and Noopur Anand's study (Kumari & Anand, 2023) 79% of women "sometimes" needed alteration of the newly purchased clothes, and 18% of the women always altered the clothes to get the desired fit. Niromi Seram and Kithmini Kumarasiri also reported that the inability to find well-fitting clothes is one of the major issues among plus-size women in Sri Lanka (Seram & Kumarasiri, 2020).

Although fit problems are recognized as a major concern in the Sri Lankan plus-size clothing market, limited research has specifically examined the body areas where plus-size women experience these issues, highlighting a clear research gap. Studies by Nkambule, Annu Kumari, and Noopur Anand have adopted a similar approach by analyzing fit for individual body areas to identify specific problems. This method can be applied in the current study, where hypotheses have been developed for each body part to systematically assess fit issues.

Sizing Issues

Size-related issues are considered a key factor for the early disposal of garments (Ikävalko, 2022). Clothing sizing is distinctively linked to our embodied identity. Often, sizing codes such as 10, 12 and 14 are used in social commentaries as if they are standard and have universal meaning (Gill & Brownbridge, 2016).

The plus-size consumer has gained attention from retailers over the past decade as apparel companies continue to publicly contemplate the inclusion or exclusion of plus-size clothing (Christel & Dunn, 2016) . However, the incorrect size labeling and use of different size codes make it generally more difficult for consumers to find clothes that fit (Laitala et al., 2009) .

Based on the study done by (Kumari & Anand, 2023), 60% of women selected more than one size option for their clothing choices, showing the inconsistency of the sizing labels in the market. In a study done in the Sri Lankan context 89% of the plus-size women prefer fitting clothes in the store rather than ordering online due to uncertainty about the suitable design and size. Also, the study reported the unavailability of a standard sizing method as one of the key problems in the Sri Lankan market (Seram & Kumarasiri, 2020). While previous research has identified sizing issues in plus-size clothing, there remains a gap in understanding the specific size ranges available in the Sri Lankan market and the exact size problems faced by consumers.

Clothing Preferences

A working professional always starts their day with a choice of attire, and the way they represent themselves in the office depends on their clothing choices (Seram & Samarasekara, 2022). Freed states that before the 1990s, there was a distinct difference between work and after-work attire, where executive attire was dedicated to the office and casual attire was for home (Freed, 2011). Recently, business casual attire has become the most popular clothing style among working professionals (Karunarathne & Hettiarachchi, 2019).

The consumers select the garments firstly because of their distinctive, fashionable visual appearance before checking the fit (Staton S. , 2016). In the USA, a study carried out in 2016 (Gneg & Christel, 2016) reported that young plus-size women are unable to understand the professional symbolism of a garment. In the current market, the most commonly used office attire categories are *casual attire, business formal attire, and business casual* attire (Karunarathne & Hettiarachchi, 2019). A pant suit or skirt suit with a shirt or formal blouse is considered business formal attire, along with closed-toe or heel (Karunarathne & Hettiarachchi, 2019). Business casual attire is also called corporate casual, and it typically showcases a semi-formal look (Herrity, 2024). Tailored pants, polos, skirts, blouses, sweaters, cardigans, and denim jeans are considered casual attire pieces. However, ripped jeans are not acceptable as casual work attire (Karunarathne & Hettiarachchi, 2019).

According to Seram & Chathurammi, Sri Lankan female bank executives preferred business formal attire (88%), and apparel executives preferred business casual attire (81.7%) when selecting their preferred workwear style (Seram & Chathurammi, 2023). Also, another study done back in 2019 reported business casual attire as the most preferred clothing style (Karunarathne & Hettiarachchi, 2019) . Only a few apparel brands based in Sri Lanka have been able to cater to the plus-size women's market by following the current trends and expectations (Seram & Kumarasiri, 2020).

Annu Kumari and Nupur Anand's research revealed that Indian women tend to select garments that are loose around the stomach and abdomen area, which covers the extra body bulges, making it one of the key factors that they consider when purchasing garments (Kumari & Anand, 2023). Another study done in 2023 revealed that plus-size women check the fit the most when buying jeans, followed by the wash effect, and color (Gupta & Kurien, 2023). Based on the literature, a research gap exists in understanding the types of professional attire preferred by plus-size women and the factors influencing their clothing choices.

The Role of Body Image

Paul Ferdinand Schilder spoke of body image as "the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say the way in which the body appears to ourselves." (Slade, 1994). Body image influences social engagement, consumer behavior, and self-perception since it carries a symbolic value individually and socially (Ajwani, 2020). Ideal body size is a product of the zeitgeist, with iconic celebrities of different eras encapsulating the desired body type of specific eras (Aniulis et al., 2021).

The body image is always influenced by the positive or negative thinking patterns that they have about themselves, and it affects one's satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their appearance (Ajwani, 2020). The negative body image affects dressing behavior and makes them feel uncomfortable in what they wear, resulting in limited choices in the wardrobe (McLean, 2021). Also, stigma surrounding plus-size women's clothing impacts negatively, particularly in a professional environment, by lowering the self-esteem of plus-size women (Patterson & Hogg, 2004).

Stolovy, in his research, highlights that women tend to wear clothes to camouflage themselves when feeling "fat." (Stolovy, 2021).Tiggemann & Lacey's research reported that comfort and creating a fashion statement are the main objectives behind all women when selecting clothes. However, BMI and low self-esteem about their bodies force them to buy clothes that hide their body bulges, resulting in a dissatisfied shopping experience.

Tiggemann stated that body image plays a significant role in managing the appearance of women, and is often overlooked in body image research (Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009).

Although body image has been widely studied, little is known about its influence on plus-size women's preferences for professional attire. This gap highlights the need to explore how self-perception shapes workwear choices.

Conceptualization and Methodology

The conceptual framework, Figure 1 of this study, explains how clothing-related challenges influence the workwear choices of plus-size female working professionals, with body image functioning as a psychological mediator. Although prior research has examined fit problems, sizing inconsistencies, and body image separately, limited studies have integrated these factors to understand how they collectively shape professional clothing behavior, particularly within the Sri Lankan context. To address this gap, fit issues and sizing issues are identified as the independent variables, as earlier studies indicate that problems related to garment fit and inconsistent sizing systems are major barriers for plus-size consumers. These issues directly affect workwear preferences and clothing-related behaviour, including silhouette selection, style avoidance, garment alteration, and overall satisfaction. However, the framework further proposes that these functional clothing problems also shape women's self-perceptions of their bodies. Repeated experiences of ill-fitting or unavailable garments can reinforce body dissatisfaction and self-consciousness, thereby influencing how individuals evaluate their appearance. Body image therefore, mediates the relationship between clothing problems and clothing behaviour, as women with negative body perceptions are more likely to adopt conservative styles, avoid body-hugging garments, and prioritize clothing that conceals perceived body concerns. Thus, the model illustrates both the direct effects of fit and sizing issues on workwear behaviour and their indirect effects through body image, providing a comprehensive explanation of how physical and psychological factors interact in shaping workwear decisions among plus-size professionals.
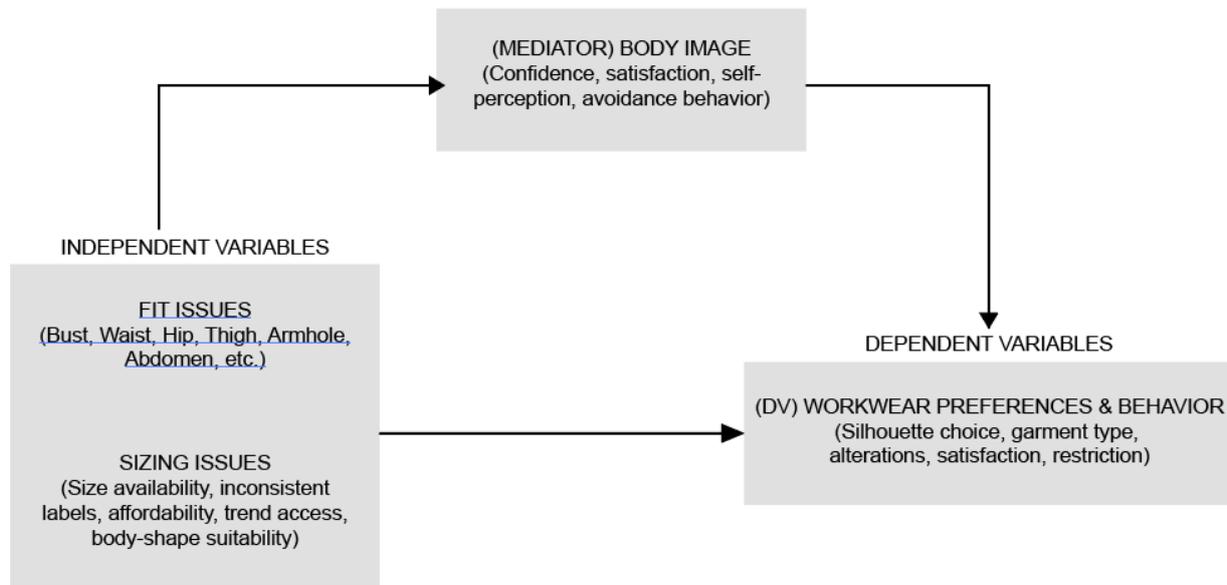
Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram
Source: Own Elaboration

The Sample

Plus-size definition for women differs country-wise (Kumari & Anand, 2023). The ASTM Standard D6960/D6960M-16 (2016) identifies plus-size women as those who fit into sizes 14-40. Many plus-size retailers and industry standards, except a few, begin this size range at a size 14 (Staton J. , 2019). Thus, the study is mainly inspired by the methodology of (Kumari & Anand, 2023) research conducted in India, which has been adapted to be suitable for the Sri Lankan context. The sample was selected by following a convenience sampling method by distributing a closed-end questionnaire where participants were filtered from two objective biological criteria. These biological indicators align with the guidelines of the World Health Organization's standards. According to the WHO, the body mass index is a surrogate marker of fatness, and additional measurements, such as the waist circumference, can help in the diagnosis of obesity. (WHO, 2025). The definitions of obesity and plus-size synonymously point towards a person with a bigger body built than normal, and waist circumference is used as one of the indicators to determine both obesity and plus-size. (Staton J. , 2019). In adults, overweight, or pre-obesity, is defined as a BMI of 25-29.9 kg/m², while a BMI ≥ 30 kg/m² defines obesity. ((WOF), 2025). Also, the most reliable measurement is the waist dimension since it is typically the smallest circumferential measure. (Staton J. , 2019). Hence, this study followed two key biological criteria to filter the respondents.

1. Body Mass Index (BMI)≥25kg/m² ((WOF), 2025).
2. Women who have a waist dimension of at least 34" will be classified as "plus-size" (Staton J. , 2019).

More than two-thirds of the urban population in Sri Lanka is reported to be overweight or obese (Dalpatadu et al., 2024). Hence, this study was conducted in the 5 main urban cities of the country. The five districts are Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Kandy, and Galle, which are considered to be the most urbanized in Sri Lanka (Weeraratne, 2016).

The sample population consisted of professional working women who were between the ages of 20-60, currently employed in academic, banking, apparel, marketing, and management areas, holding lower, middle, upper-level positions, or entrepreneurial positions.

Population, female (% of total population) in Sri Lanka was reported at 51.62 % in 2024, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources (Economics, 2025). The female labor force participation rate in Sri Lanka has exhibited a persistently low range of 30 to 35 percent over the past two decades. (Werawella, 2023). And, 34 percent of Sri Lankan women were overweight and obese in 2015, and by 2021, the number of overweight and obese women reached 48 percent. (huaxia, 2025). The sampling frame was designed by applying Cochran's formula for a 95% confidence level with 5% margin of error; the suitable sample size for the study should be approximately 384 respondents. Because the research is focused on a niche demographic, only 149 valid responses were taken, considering the exploratory nature of the study, based on a ±8% margin of error.

The study was conducted with a paramount commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of all participants, especially given the sensitive nature of the topic. Each individual provided informed consent after receiving a full explanation of the research purpose, procedures, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly enforced; no personally identifiable information was collected, and all research data was stored securely and managed exclusively by the principal researcher.

Questionnaire and Testing

A closed-ended survey was conducted to analyze clothing problems, clothing preferences, and the role of body image among the Sri Lankan plus-size female working professionals. The questionnaire was segregated into three sections. The first section enquired about demographic information such as nationality, occupation, age, marital status, the city they live in, monthly household income, and their educational qualification. Also, the biological indicators were added to the same section to filter the plus-size individuals by checking if the participant's BMI≥25kg/m² and their waist circumference ≥ 34 inches. At the end of the first section, key anthropometric data, such as height, weight, bust circumference, waist circumference, top hip circumference, and hip circumference, were collected for further studies.

The second section focused on identifying workwear clothing problems, mainly fit issues, size issues, and clothing preferences of the individuals. To analyze all three aspects, the study followed the structure of (Kumari & Anand, 2023) Annu Kumari and Nupur Anand's study on Indian plus-size ready-to-wear problems and preferences. Therefore, 12 body landmarks, bust, armhole, stomach, waist, abdomen, upper arm, lower arm, thigh, elbow, shoulder, lower leg, and hip, were chosen among all horizontal measurements/bodily sites used in previous studies (Kumari & Anand, 2023). Two landmarks buttock and neck were not taken further into the study (Kumari & Anand, 2023). To strengthen this section, participants were asked to indicate whether their plus-size workwear fit well or poorly fit in each of these bodily sites: where 'too tight', 'tight', 'loosely fitted' and 'semi-fitted' come under the term poorly fitted.
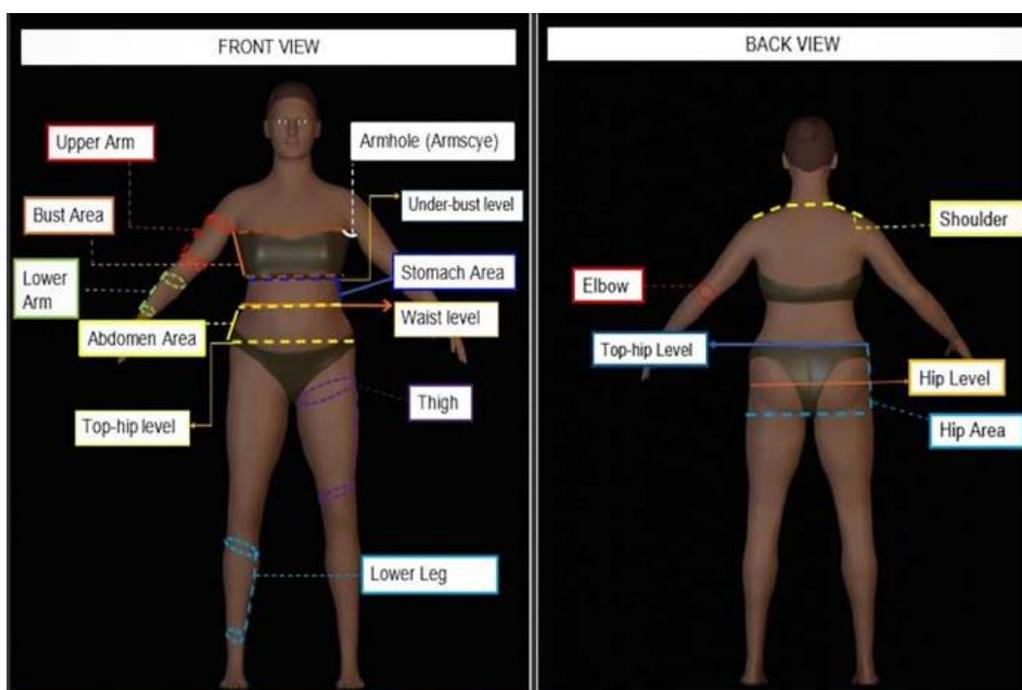

Figure 2: Bodily Areas for Fit Study
Source: (Kumari & Anand, 2023)

Sizing-related problems were enquired through a five-point Likert scale (always to never). The questions mainly focused on the key barriers faced by plus-size professionals when buying workwear. Based on previous literature, it was evident that Sri Lankan female working professionals prefer different types of attire. For both men and women, the office attire categories will be business formal attire, business casual attire, and casual attire. (Karunarathne & Hettiarachchi, 2019). In one study conducted on workwear preferences, frock is most preferred with a sleek, elegant, and sophisticated look. (Perera & Wijerathne, 2025). Many women, especially those in executive roles in the apparel and banking sectors, are embracing Western-style clothing like skirts with blazers, or crop tops and blouses with pants (Seram &

Chathurammi, 2023). Thus, to examine clothing preferences, participants were shown four types of clothing items: dresses, tops, skirts, and pants, covering both top and bottom wear, which are mostly worn in professional settings (Figure 3). The four primary categories were further subdivided into four types each to provide variation and assess participant preferences (Table 1).

Further, taking a clue from the literature, four motivating factors, to hide extra bulges/curves of the body, fit well, size availability, and suit on body shape, which generally encourage a plus-size woman to select a particular garment, were identified (Kumari & Anand, 2023). These motivational factors were then evaluated using a three-point Likert scale (agree, disagree, undecided).

Figure 3: Selected Workwear Style
Source: Own Elaboration

Table 1:Definitions of the Workwear Styles of the Study

Workwear category	Garment type	Definition
Workwear dresses	Bodycon dresses	The bodycon dress is designed to fit tightly against the body (Rajput, 2025).
	Shirt dresses	Follows the pattern of the shirt and has a tailored look with a button panel at the center (Stiegman, 2025).
	A-Line dresses	The dress has the shape of a capital "A", which is form-fitted on the upper body and has a flared skirt at the bottom (MasterClass, 2021).
	Shift dresses	A loose straight silhouette that is held together by the side panels and often has a boat neckline (Kealy-Morris, 2017).
Workwear Tops	Shirt	A woman's shirt has cuffs on sleeves, a collar, a button placket, and a body that has a formal appearance. (Ling & Xiaogang, 2024).
	Peplum top	A blouse with a flared ruffle at the waistline (Masterclass, 2022).
	Short-sleeved blouse	A simple fluid workwear garment made with graceful and comfortable fabrics like *silk*, *satin*, or *chiffon* (Jovells, 2024).
	Long-sleeved Blouse	Loose-fitted flowy silhouette with long sleeves compared to shirts, which are more structured (Jovells, 2024).
Workwear Skirts	Wrap skirt	A skirt that wraps around the waist and is secured with a tie, making it adjustable for different body types (Lee, 2025).
	A-Line skirt	A-Line skirt follows the shape of the letter "A", where it is fitted at the waist and gets flowy at the hem (Peyer, 2025).
	Bodycon skirt	A skirt that fits tightly on the body (Courant, 2022).
	Flared skirt	A flowy, feminine silhouette with a fuller skirt (Peyer, 2025).

Workwear Pants	Regular pant	A slightly loose-fitted pant is mostly worn in formal settings (Custom, n.d.).
	Straight leg pants	A pant with a straight leg from hip to ankle (Fabriclore, 2024).
	Bell-bottom pants	Bell-bottoms are typically fitted at the waist and hips, with a straight or wide leg fit to the knee. (Emberson, n.d.).
	Oversized flared pants	These pants are less structured and loose-fitted and has a casual appearance (Club, 2023).

The concept of body image and clothing is highly interrelated (Shetty & Kotian, 2023). Hence, the third section of the questionnaire focused on body image to understand whether self-perception changes the clothing behavior of a female plus-size working professional. Research has shown that women tend to use clothes to present or disguise their bodies and that clothing practices can be predicted by body image (Stolovy, 2021).

The items for the Body Image construct were newly constructed for this research to specifically address workwear-related fit and appearance concerns among plus-size professionals, as no validated scale existed for this specific context. The items were theoretically grounded and had their content validity verified through expert review. Furthermore, the scale underwent preliminary testing in a pilot study, which confirmed its acceptable internal consistency/reliability, demonstrating that the items reliably measure the intended construct.

To assess the role of body image, the questions were focused on how satisfied the participant was with their body image when selecting workwear, whether they feel confident when selecting well-fitting workwear, to what extent they believe the body image affects workwear preferences, how often they avoid certain workwear styles due to body image concerns, do they feel restricted when choosing workwear due to the self-perception about body image, do they feel restricted be conservative at work due to your body image and whether the societal perception of body image directly influence the plus size workwear market, by using a five point Likert scale (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree).

A pilot test was conducted to assess the structure and reliability of the questionnaire among female working professionals who are 25-plus in size. Few changes were made to the body image section and the clothing preferences, with the feedback from the pilot study. Then the final questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms using social media platforms and e-mail. Only 149 samples met the inclusion criteria out of the 182 samples, making 81.32% valid response rate. The exact number of recipients could not be counted since the questionnaire was distributed mainly by social media channels. However, the high valid response rate supported the reliability of the sample to be carried forward with the quantitative analysis.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used in validating the adapted questionnaire. (Nawi et al., 2020), across three subscales. These are sizing issues ($\alpha = 0.740$), clothing preferences ($\alpha = 0.732$), and body image perception ($\alpha = 0.771$). Based on the literature, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is generally acceptable for basic research, indicating sufficient internal consistency. (Ahmad et al., 2024). Hence, the study showed strong internal reliability for the quantitative study.

Analysis and Discussion

Demographics and Anthropometrics

Key background information of the 149 valid responses was collected through the demographic and anthropometrics section, including their gender, height, weight, bust circumference, waist circumference, hip circumference and age, city, marital status, employment type, household income, and profession. As required by the inclusion criteria (BMI≥25) the final analyzed sample of N=149 participants exhibited body measurements consistent with the target demographic. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, and observed range for all key anthropometric dimensions.

Table 2: Mean/SD/Min-Max of Anthropometric

Anthropometric Measurement	Mean	SD	Min–Max
Height (cm)	162.88	7.20	148.0 – 178.0
Weight (kg)	96.97	16.56	68.0 – 155.0
Bust (in)	47.83	6.93	35.0 – 69.0
Waist (in)	41.32	5.78	29.0 – 59.0
Hip (in)	52.21	6.35	39.0 – 70.0

Source: Survey Data

The age distribution of the sample consisted of women from 19 to 60 years. Approximately 36% were within the age range of 30-40, followed by 31% being in the age range of 19-30 years. Only 21% were at the age of 40-50, and the remaining 12% were above 50 years old Figure *4*.
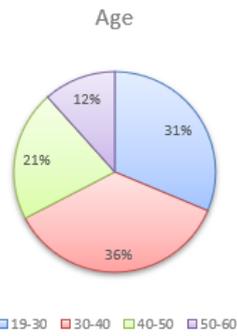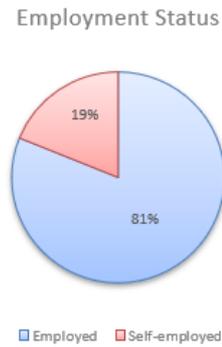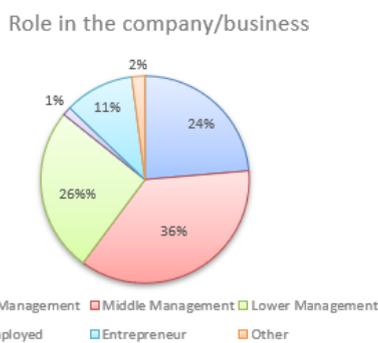
Age

Figure 4

Employment Status

Figure 5

Role in the company/business

Figure 6

Sector

Figure 7

Nationality

Figure 8

Marital Status
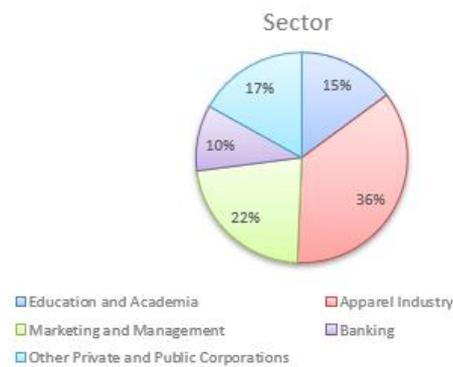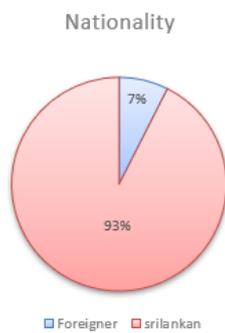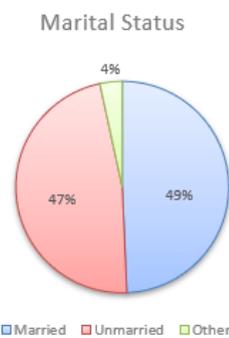
Figure 9

Source: Survey Data

All 149 respondents were identified as female, with the majority being employed working women (81%) and only 19% being self-employed   Figure 5. Among them, 36% of the sample held middle management positions in their workplace, while 26% were in lower management, 24% in upper management, 11% in an entrepreneurial position 2% engaged in other positions, and 1% were employed Figure 6. Among them, 36% belonged to the apparel industry, while 22% worked in marketing and management roles, 16% worked in other private and public corporations. Education and academic-related professions were occupied by 15% and 10% were engaged in banking   Figure 7.

The data also showed that 93% of the participants were Sri Lankan nationals, and the remaining 7% were foreigners Figure 8. The percentage of women who are married is recorded as 49%. Of the rest, 47% were unmarried, and 4% had selected "other" as their marital status   Figure 9. Unsurprisingly, the highest number of respondents were based in Colombo (55%), followed by Kalutara being the second in order (13%), and Kandy being third (13%). Gampaha district only had 11%, and Galle had the least number of respondents, which is 8% Figure 10.

Most of the respondents had a solid educational background, the majority being graduates (46%), followed by postgraduate (34%), Advanced Level Qualifiers (13%), and doctoral degrees (7%) Figure 11. Also, the study reported that 39% had a monthly income of (LKR 100,000–300,000), 28% had (LKR 300,000–500,000) of a monthly income, while 26% earned above LKR 500,000 monthly. The rest of the 7% earned only LKR 100,000 or below per month Figure 12.
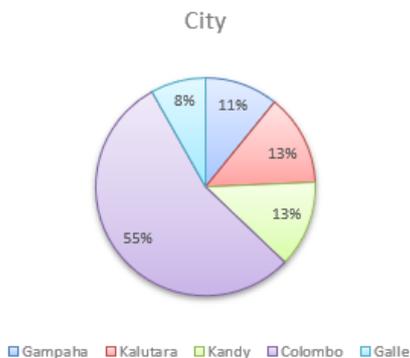
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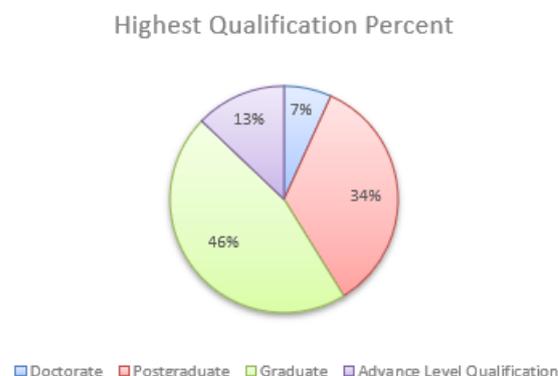
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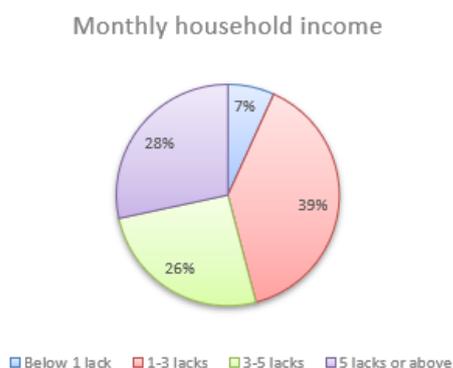
Figure 12
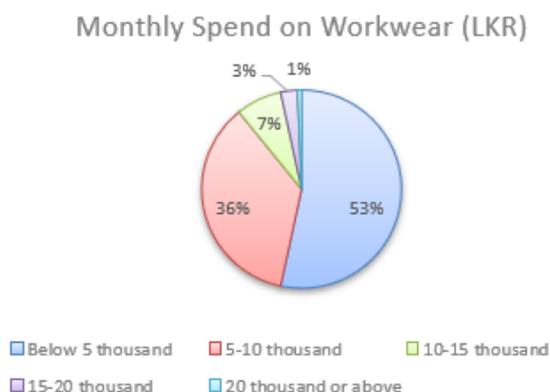
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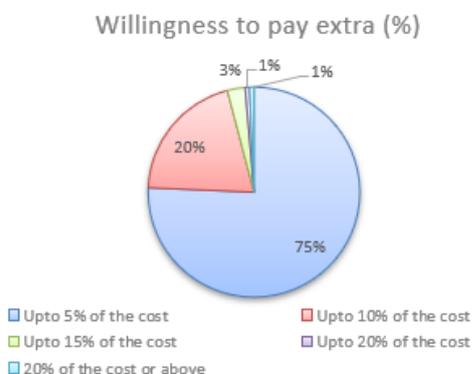
Figure 14

Source: Survey Data

From the respondents, 53% willing to spend LKR 5000 on workwear purchases, 36% spent LKR 5000 to LKR 10000, and 11% spent more than LKR 10000 on workwear Figure 13.Additionally, 75% of them were willing to pay 5% more on alterations from the base price to achieve a better fit. Further, 20% were willing to pay up to 10% and the rest of the 5% were ready to spend even more than 15% of the base price Figure 14.

Fitting Issues

82% respondents reported that "sometimes" they must make alterations to the newly purchased clothes. 12% of the

respondents "always" alter their clothes, while only a minor percentage of 6% never require alteration Figure 15.

Alternation frequency
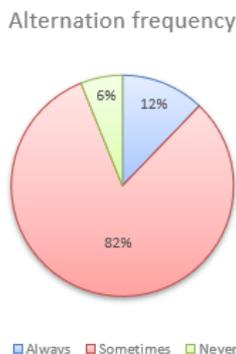
Figure 15
Source: Survey Data

Also, the respondents have encountered difficulty in finding workwear which are affordable and fits their bodies (Figure 17). 50% of the women have "very often" faced this issue, while 23% of them reported that it occurs "always". While 19% agreed on "sometimes," it happens. Only a very small percentage has selected "rarely (7%)" or "never (1%)," showing how much they struggle to get affordable workwear that fits well.

These alterations also affected the consumers' perceptions. As shown in the Figure 16, 81% respondents were "dissatisfied" since they had to alter the newly purchased clothes, but for 12% respondents, "it mattered a little but not too much," and 7% of them took it as an opportunity to achieve the expected look.

By following the study done by (Kumari & Anand, 2023), A binomial test was conducted at a 95% confidence interval to determine whether the clothing generally fit the plus-size consumers at their various body parts based on a hypothesized value of 50 percent. Previous studies also suggest that plus-size women often face fit issues in several bodily areas. The waist, hips, buttocks, abdomen, and upper arms seemed to be the most problematic body areas respondents reported having fit problems (Nkambule, 2010).

Table 3 shows the results of the binomial test, indicating the significance level of each body part along with observed proportions and test proportions. The developed null hypothesis was rejected for all selected bodily sites, indicating 50% or more plus-size working professionals encounter poor fit.

Feeling on alternation
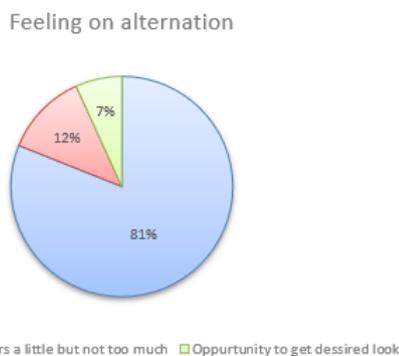
Figure 16
Source: Survey Data

Difficult getting affordable fit
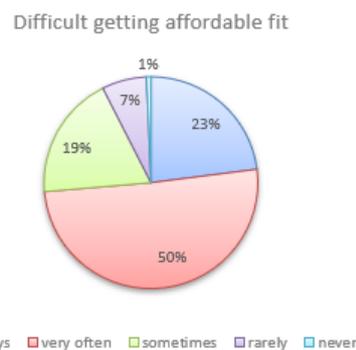
Figure 17

Table 3 : Binomial Distribution of Selected Bodily Sites

Null hypothesis of each bodily site	Well fitted	Poorly fitted	Well-fitted – observed proportion	Poorly fitted – observed proportion	Test Proportion	P value (1-tailed)	Interpretation
H_{01}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the bust.	20	128	0.1	0.86	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the bust (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 14% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction at the bust area.
H_{02}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the armhole	21	127	0.14	0.86	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the armhole (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 14% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction at the armhole area.
H_{03}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the stomach	18	130	0.12	0.88	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the stomach (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 12% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high dissatisfaction with the fit in the stomach area.
H_{04}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the waist	28	120	0.19	0.81	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the waist (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 19% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction at the waist area.
H_{05}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the abdomen	20	128	0.14	0.86	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the abdomen (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 14% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction in the abdomen area.
H_{06}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the upper Arm	17	131	0.11	0.89	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the upper Arm (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 11% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction at the upper Arm area.
H_{07}: 50% or more plus size female working professionals experience a good fit at the lower Arm	21	127	0.14	0.86	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the lower Arm (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 14% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction in the lower Arm area.

Hypothesis						Description
H_{08}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the thigh	26	122	0.18	0.82	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the thigh (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 18% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction in the thigh area.
H_{09}: 50% or more plus size female working professionals experience a good fit at the lower Leg	29	119	0.20	0.80	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the lower Leg (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 20% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction in the lower Leg area.
H_{10}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the shoulder	26	122	0.18	0.82	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the shoulder (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 18% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction at the shoulder area.
H_{11}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the elbow	23	125	0.16	0.84	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the elbow (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 16% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction at the elbow area.
H_{12}: 50% or more plus-size female working professionals experience a good fit at the hip	16	132	0.11	0.89	0.50	<0.0005	A notable difference was reported at the hip (p < 0.0005), Which Rejected the H_{01}. 11% of them only reported a good fit, indicating high fit dissatisfaction at the hip area.

Source: Own Elaboration
Reference: (Kumari & Anand, 2023)

The highest rate of dissatisfaction was observed at the hip area and upper arm (89%), followed by 88% around the stomach area. Also, 86% of the respondents indicated poor fit around the bust, armhole, abdomen, and lower arm. In addition to that, 84% women reported poor fit at the elbow, 82% recorded poor fit at the shoulders and thighs. A bit lower parentage was recorded at the waist (81%) area and the lower leg (80%) compared to the previously mentioned bodily sites. With the results, it is evident that most fit-related issues occur around the mid-body areas and the arms. Even in Kumari Anand's study, it was shown that respondents faced the problem of poor fit in the stomach and abdomen areas (Kumari & Anand, 2023). Another study done with plus-size women in Africa reported dissatisfaction with their mid and lower body parts (Makhanyaa & Mabuza, 2020).

Similarly, a study done in New York recorded that some participants shared negative fit perceptions towards the loose waist, tight bust, or tight hip of the mass-produced garments. (Zong, 2022). Since all the other bodily areas also reported 80%-86% dissatisfaction levels, the concerns about poorly fitted workwear are significantly high among these plus-size working professionals in Sri Lanka. Also, the binomial test indicated p < 0.0005 statistical significance, proving the validity of the variation.

Size-related Problems

Plus sizes typically range from 16-30 in the U.S., although some companies may define their spectrums by starting with a size 14. Some may also book their size range at a 24, 26, 28, 32, or 34 (Bettencourt & Sokolowski, 2020). Unavailability of standardized sizing methods and lack of up-to-date information on the female body were identified as the main issues in the Sri Lankan plus-size women's wear market (Seram & Kumarasiri, 2020). Similarly, the current study reported that a notable portion of plus-size female working professionals experience size-related issues when purchasing workwear, aligning with the previous studies done on this domain.

The size distribution of the study showed a few different variations of sizing across given dress types, skirts, tops, and pants. Similar researchers have also reported different variations of sizing standards. In Dunn's study, the plus-size range in size designations from 12–38W and 0X–6X, with variations up to 11.5" in measurements for the same size designation (Dunn & Christel, 2016). Also, there was an attempt by Baczek to create a universal system of plus-size garment codification by comparing classification systems prevailing in the various countries and found very haphazard dimensional variations among the sizing systems of Spain, the UK, Sweden, and Poland. (Anand & Kumari, 2020). Aligning with previous studies, the current study also showed a selection of multiple sizing systems, including (L, XL, XXL) alphabetic labels and numeric sizes such as (12,14,16). 2XL-4XL were the most commonly worn categories among the respondents across all four clothing types. A considerable portion of women have also selected the UK sizes, such as size 12,14,16, and 18, emphasizing the inconsistency of the clothing size standards in the Sri Lankan market.

Research by Scaraboto and Fischer (2013) indicates that Fashionistas (fashion lovers who wear plus-size clothing) are frustrated with mainstream retailers because they provide too few fashionable clothing options. (Bickle et al., 2015). Plus-size clothing often does not offer the same choice of styles, cuts, and colors, which may turn off shoppers looking for trendy choices. (Insights, 2024). According to the findings of this study, 33% Sri Lankan plus-size female working professionals reported that they "always" faced difficulty when getting the latest clothing trend in their sizes. Followed by 49% of them facing the issue "very often". Only 13% of them "sometimes" have faced this issue, while 5% of the women have only encountered it "rarely". Thus, these findings emphasize that trendy plus-size workwear designs are limited in the Sri Lankan market.

In Sri Lanka, most brands generally ignore the diverse body shapes of plus-size individuals (such as pear, apple, hourglass, and inverted triangle) (ChristinoI et al., 2023). The findings of another study demonstrated that apparel companies should not linearly grade patterns or assume the body continues to be an hourglass shape as it moves through a size range (Bettencourt & Sokolowski, 2020). From the findings of the present study, it is obvious that there is a difficulty in finding workwear that suits the body type. Half of the participants (50%) faced this issue "very often," while 26% participants had "always" struggled to find workwear that fit their body types. 21% of the respondents experienced the issue "sometimes," while 2% experienced it "rarely". And 1% have "never" encountered the issue. It is recommended that designers should always be abreast with how to manipulate patterns or incorporate adaptation techniques when cutting out fabric, so that garments fit the different body types. (Lamptey & Gavor, 2023).

Affordability is also being researched as one of the key problems when buying well-fitted clothes. Despite the market's growth, there remain significant price disparities, with plus-size clothing often being more expensive than its standard-size counterparts. (Kumar & Parmar, 2025). Figure 16 indicates that 50% of plus-size working professionals "very often" struggle to find affordable, well-fitted work wear, while 23% "always" have difficulties in finding the same. Followed up by 19% participants who experienced it "sometimes", 7% experienced it "rarely", and only one percent of the participants hadn't discovered the affordability issue ever.
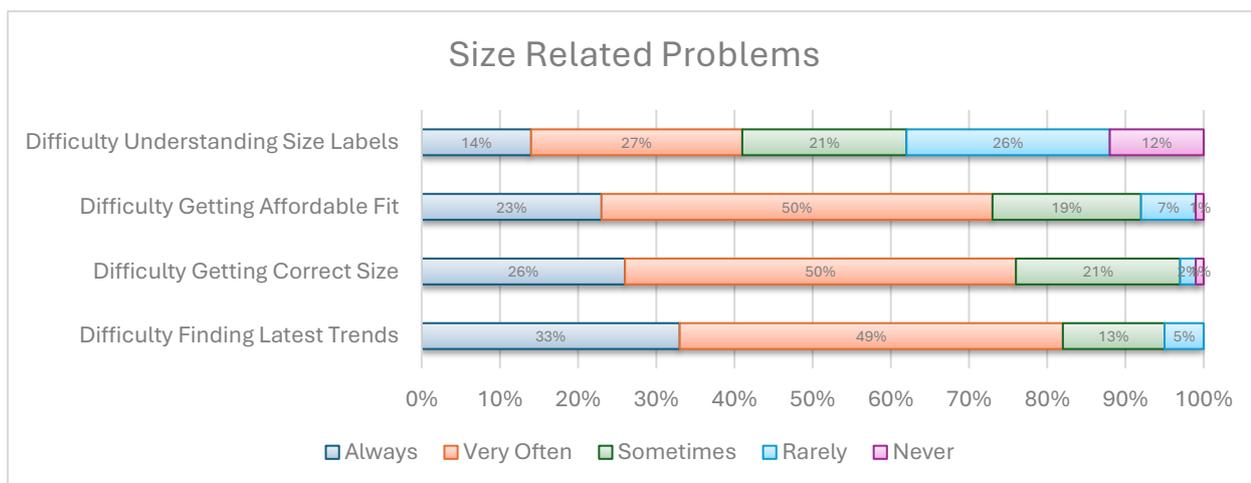
Figure 16: Size-related Problems
Source: Survey Data

It is very difficult for consumers to identify the correct size for themselves. (Kumari & Anand, 2023). Size charts and fit tools were shown to be predominantly negative, giving consumers incorrect sizes, as current sizing charts/tools available on web platforms may be more confusing to the consumer than helpful. (Summers, 2020). In the present study 27% "very often" encountered difficulty in understanding size labels, while 14% had "always" come across the issue. Seventeen percent of the

participants had "sometimes" faced the same problem, while 26% the participants stated that they encountered the issue "rarely". And only 12% had never faced the issue with understanding size labels. In addition to this, another interesting insight was the inconsistency reported in size requirements when purchasing garments. As shown in 19 61% participants responded, they purchased both top and bottom in the same size, while 39% reported requiring different sizes.

Figure 19: Variation in Top and Bottom Sizes
Source: Survey Data

4.4 Clothing Preferences

Workwear Dresses

Figure 20 Clearly indicates 36% of the respondents have selected shirt dresses as their preferred dress type, while 25% prefer shift dresses. Only 23% selected A-Line dresses, and only 16% selected body-con dresses as their preferred choice.

Figure 20: Dress Preferences
Source: Survey Data

In Figure   the analysis of the workwear dress styles indicated that size availability, body shape suitability, fit, and the garment's ability to hide extra body bulges have influenced the wearer's choices of the four presented dress styles: A-line dress, shift dress, bodycon dress, and shirt dress.

Bodycon dress recorded high approval for size availability (96%) and fit (88%). However, only 17% have agreed on its ability to cover body bulges, while 96% had positive feedback on its size availability in the market. This indicates that the bodycon dress is not favored by plus-size working professionals when it comes to covering the body bulges, but it has accurate sizing and a good fit.

93 % of the respondents in the study agreed that the shirt dress helps to hide extra bulges, and 91% selected it as a garment with a good fit. A high percentage of 94% respondents confirmed the size availability of the garment, while 81% felt it was suitable for their body shape. Hence, this suggests the shirt dress is preferred by many for its ability to cover the body bulges and its availability in the market.

The size availability of the A-Line dress and its ability to cover extra bulges were positively responded to by 94%, while 97% chose that it gives a good fit. But only 77% felt it suited their body shape. Overall, the A-Line dress has remained a favorable option among plus-size female working professionals. Out of all the styles, the shift dress emerged as the most preferred style. 97% agreed that it is suitable for their body shape, 95% agreed that it covers the body bulges, and 97% relied on its size availability in the market. Also, 89% have chosen it as a garment with a good fit. The findings of the current study align with global studies as well. A study done among Swazi women indicated that the plus-size Swazi working women preferred functionally comfortable clothes, fitted well, and made in comfortable fabric (Nkambule, 2010).

Only 3.4% recorded that "none of the factors" affected their choice of dress style across all the provided dress categories. Hence, these findings highlight the importance of diverse design options and the shift dress and shirt dress as the most favored dress styles among plus-size working professionals in Sri Lanka.

Figure 21: Factors Affecting the Workwear Dress Choices
Source: Survey Data

Workwear Tops

Figure 17 Focus on the preferred workwear tops by the respondents, and it clearly shows long sleeve blouses

(39%) and peplum tops (30%) are the favorites among the selected sample.
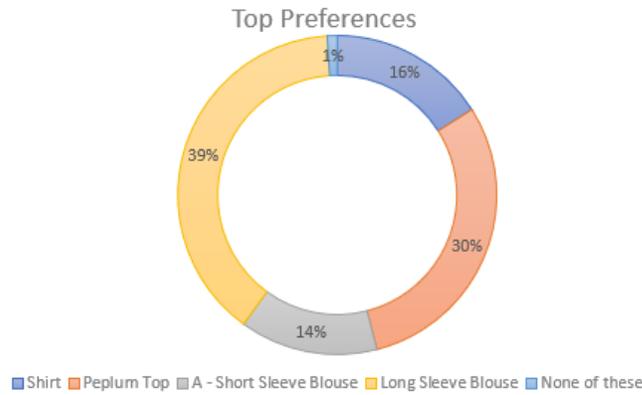
Figure 17: Top Preferences
Source: Survey Data

In the Figure 18 Shirts, peplum top, short-sleeve blouse, and long-sleeve blouse were selected to investigate the preferences of plus-size working professionals and the factors influencing their choices. The long-sleeved blouse was the most preferred choice, recording a 39% response rate. 98% of the respondents believed that it covered the extra bulges and curves, while 93% thought it fit well. 83% agreed with the size availability, and only 3% respondents agreed that none of the factors influenced their choice of garment.

The second widely selected option was the peplum top, which was 30% of the respondents. 96% of the respondents agreed on its size availability in the market, and that fits well. 73% believed that it hides extra bulges and curves, while only 5% had selected "none of these" as the option showing the peplum top had a positive reception from the plus-size working professionals because of its size availability and good fit.

Also, the shirt top was selected by 16% of the respondents and showed less interest in the style among the plus-size female working professionals. 88% of the respondents agreed on its fit, followed by 75% agreeing on its ability to cover extra bulges and curves. Comparatively high present was undecided (17%) about the size availability,

and 21% were undecided about the body shape availability of the garment. Even 8% of the respondents have recorded that none of these issues affect their clothing choices, suggesting that the shirt wasn't much preferred by plus-size working professionals.

Only 14% of the respondents have preferred the short-sleeved blouse, recording the lowest preference rate. 91% agreed on its good fit, and 90% agreed on its size availability in the market. Many believed that it is not capable of hiding extra bulges and curves, recording 33% disagreement. Also 24% were undecided whether it suited their body shape or not. Meanwhile 5% did not agree on any of the provided factors. Hence, the short-sleeved blouse wasn't highly preferred by the working professionals compared to the other given top options.

Overall, only 4.1% respondents selected that none of the options aligned with their preferences, proving that the majority liked at least one of the given styles. The most preferred choices among all four options were the long-sleeved blouse and peplum top, indicating that the plus-size working professionals believed in their fit, size availability, ability to cover extra bulges, and suitability for their body shape the most.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE WORKWEAR TOP CHOICES

■ Agree   ■ Undecided   ■ Disagree
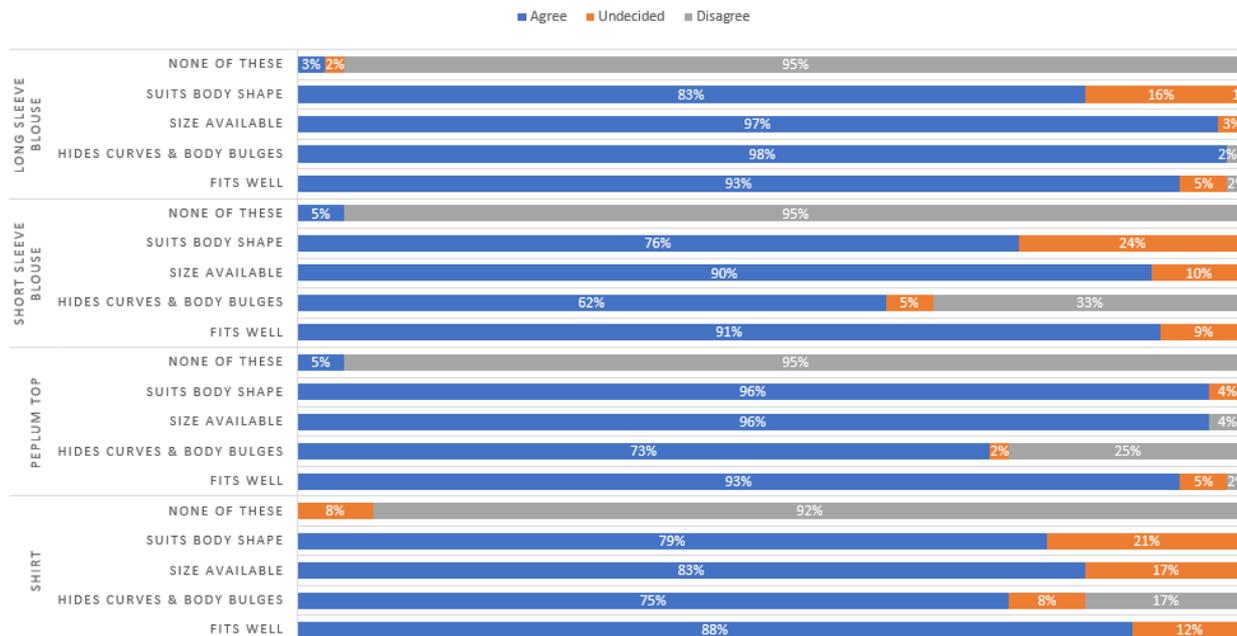
Figure 18: Factors Affecting the Workwear Top Choices
Source: Survey Data

Workwear Skirts

Figure 20 illustrates that among the 4 styles assessed, 38% have selected the flared skirt, receiving an overwhelming positive response across all five factors given. 98% respondents agreed that it hides body bulges and curves effectively. 95% believed that it fit well. Every participant agreed on the size availability in the market, making it a record 100% in the evaluation. Also, 89% felt that the flared skirt suits their body shape, while only 2% said none of the options given are affecting their choice of garment.

The A-line skirt was the second highest selected garment, recording 29%. All the respondents (100%) confirmed that they are satisfied with the availability of the skirt in the market, while 92% agreed that it hides extra bulges and curves. 86% of the respondents confirmed that it fits well, and only 7% of the respondents agreed with none of the factors given, making it a versatile choice among the workwear garments for plus-size working professionals.

The wrap skirt also received relatively positive feedback from 16% of the respondents. 88% were satisfied with the fit of the garment and the size availability of the garment, followed by 75% agreeing that it suits their body shape, and 83% agreeing on its ability to cover body bulges. However, 25% were unable to decide whether it suited their body shape or not. A very few (4%) reported that none of the given factors influenced their buying decisions.

In contrast, 17% of the participants had chosen the bodycon skirt, but very few of them (32%) believed that it could cover extra bulges and curves. 96% of the respondents agreed on its fit, while 92% agreed that it's available in the market in the required sizes. Nevertheless 88% believed that it suited their body shape, while only 4% said none of the factors affected their choice of bodycon skirt, making it the least favorite among the 4 skirt types given.

Overall, 95.5% of the respondents were happy with at least one skirt type from the 4 options given, while showing that consumers mostly prefer A-line skirts and flared skirts in terms of aesthetic appeal and functionality.
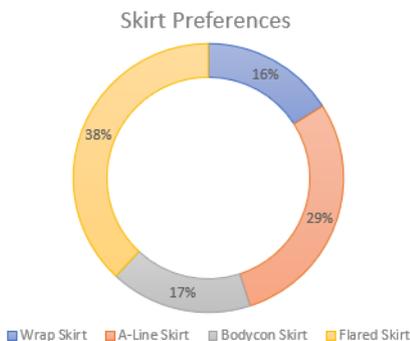
Figure 19: Skirt Preferences

Source: Survey Data

FACTORS AFFECTING THE WORKWEAR SKIRT CHOICES

■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree
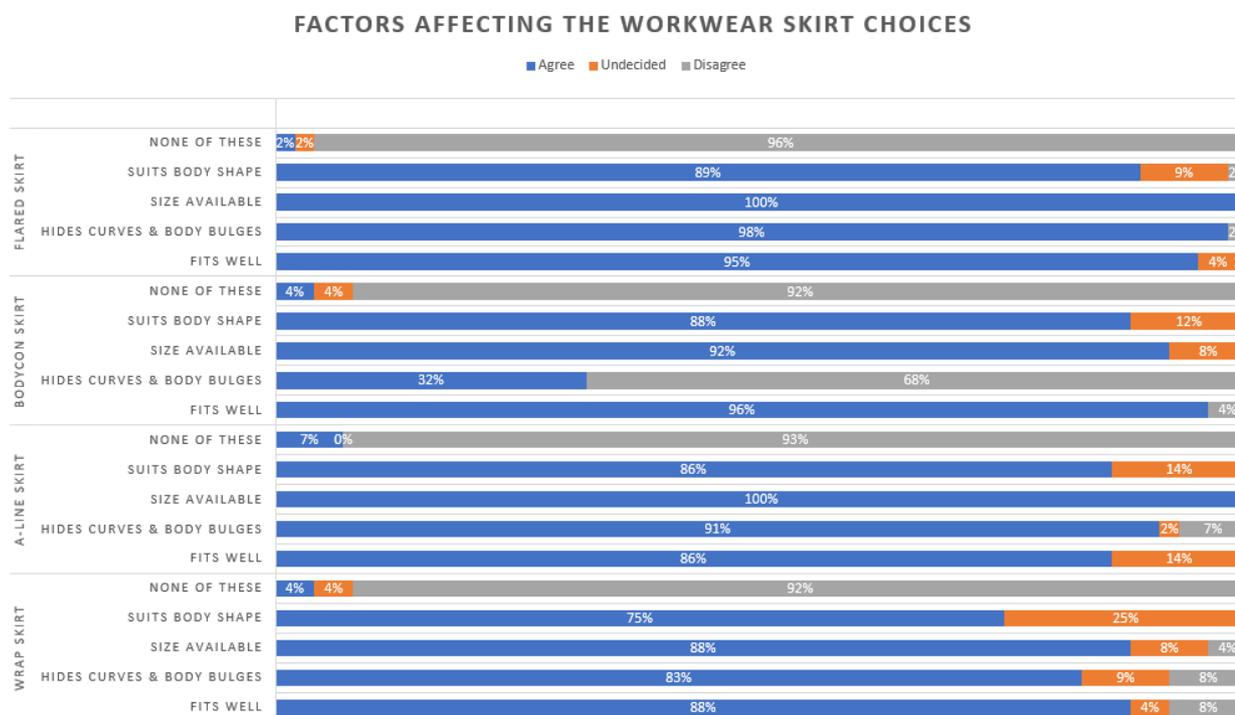
Figure 20: Factors Affecting the Workwear Skirt Choices
Source: Survey Data

Workwear Pants

Figure 21 Four pant styles were given as options to choose from: regular pants, bell-bottom pants, wide leg pants, and oversized flared pants. Among the pants, Straight-leg pants were the most preferred among 42% of the sample. 98% reported the size availability of the garment, while 95% agreed on fit, followed by 86% reported it hides extra bulges. Only 6% reported that none of the options affect their choice of garment.

38% respondents chose oversized flared pants as their preferred pant type. It performed well across all given factors, showing the popularity of the style among plus-size working professionals. 95% reported a good fit, 98% confirmed that it hides extra bulges of the body, while 96% agreed it is suitable for their body shape. In addition to that 93% also confirmed its size availability in the market, while only 2% did not agree on any of the options given.

Size availability and good fit were the most prominent factors in purchasing bell-bottom pants. Overall, 11% of the respondents

preferred the pant style to be bell-bottom, where 100% confirmed its availability in the market, and 94% agreed that it provides a good fit, followed by 81% agreeing on its suitability for their body shapes. But, only 50% agreed that it hides extra bulges and curves, along with 6% deciding that none of the factors influence their buying choices.

In addition, regular pants were only preferred by 9% of the sample, making it the least favorite pant style. 85% acknowledged that it fits well, 92% confirmed the size availability in the market, followed by 85% agreeing that it suits their body shapes. Surprisingly, all respondents disagreed with the statement "none of these." Proving, although the pant wasn't preferred by many, it has somewhat covered all the functional aspects.

Altogether, the loose-fitted silhouettes (wide leg pants and oversized flared pants) were ranked the highest preferred pant types across all factors, showing that plus-size working professionals seek good fit and comfort.

Figure 21: Factors Affecting the Workwear Pant Choices
Source: Own Elaboration
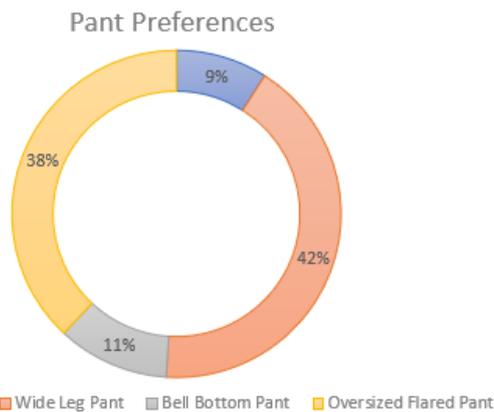
Figure 22: Pant Preferences

Source: Survey Data

Additionally, the study explored the preferred colors and prints of the plus-size working professionals Figure *23*. 32% of the respondents selected dark neutral colors, while any solid color without prints was preferred by 20 % of the respondents. Pastel colors were preferred by 9% while bright neon colors were selected by 6% of the respondents. Florals were the most popular print (16%), other prints, such as stripes (5%), geometric prints (5%), and animal prints (2%) were less preferred by plus-size working professionals
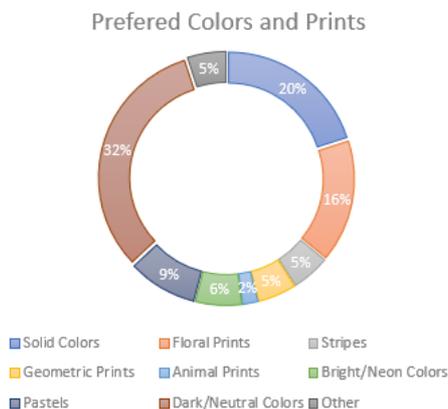
Figure 23: Preferred Colors and Prints
Source: Survey Data

The Role of Body Image

Building on previous research, this section of the study investigated the role of body image in influencing workwear choices of plus-size female working professionals through 7 statements. The statements were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

In Figure 24 A total of 62% of the respondents showed strong dissatisfaction with the statement "I am satisfied with my body image," where 34% strongly disagreed, and 28% disagreed with it. Only 25% of the respondents were satisfied with their body image, stating they agreed by 13% and strongly agreed by 12%. Hence, it is quite evident that body dissatisfaction is an issue among plus-size female working professionals.

When asked about whether they feel confident in their appearance with well-fitted workwear 65% of them agreed with the statement, where 37% strongly agreed and 28% agreed with the same statement. Thus, this study reveals that workwear fit has a direct effect on body image dissatisfaction.

The study also asked whether the respondents feel that body image affects their workwear preferences. A total of 93% (strongly agreed=67%, agreed=26%) acknowledged that body image directly affects their workwear choices. Likewise, a total of 92% (66% strongly agreed, 26% agreed) of the respondents confirmed

avoiding certain types of clothing due to body image concerns. Consequently, the results indicate that body image plays a crucial role in selecting workwear among plus-size professionals. Closely aligning with this 94% (65% strongly agreed, 29% agreed) felt restricted in their clothing preferences due to body image. Another 92% (59% strongly agreed, 33% agreed) of respondents felt pressured to dress in a certain way as a result of body image perceptions. The results not only indicate limitations among plus-size individuals when selecting workwear but also indicate restrictions on freedom of expression through clothing in a professional setting. In addition, the study also investigated how societal perceptions of body image influence the availability of workwear styles. An overwhelming margin of 96% respondents (76%- strongly agreed, 20%-agreed) confirmed that societal perception immensely influences the plus-size workwear market.

The findings of the study not only reveal that body image directly affects the workwear choice of the plus-size working professionals. The negative perceptions about body image reduce confidence and lead the respondents to avoid specific styles, making them feel restricted as well. Emphasizing the need for a more inclusive workwear clothing market for plus-size working professionals, this study further highlights how societal pressure has a direct influence on their wardrobe.
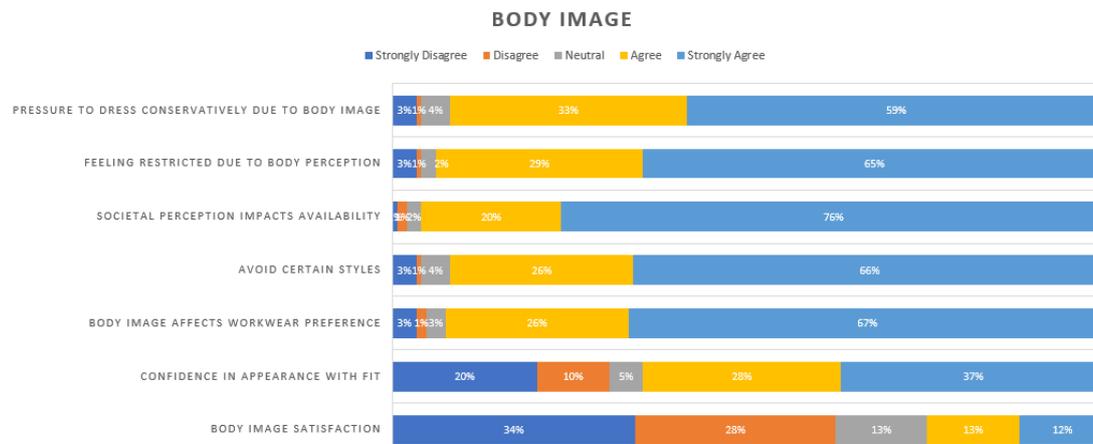
Figure 24: Body Image
Source: Survey Data

Conclusion

The results of the research show that plus-size female working professionals of Sri Lanka face multifaceted challenges when selecting workwear. Fit issues are the most prominent challenge in significant areas such as thighs, waist, stomach, and bust. Further, the findings showed that women had to purchase top and bottom wear in different sizes most of the time, emphasizing the sizing inadequacies in the local market. Along with these problems, the frustration among the plus-size working professionals has increased because of a lack of size inclusivity and a lack of fashionable clothing options, highlighting the need for an inclusive standard sizing framework.

The plus-size working professionals were drawn to more comfortable workwear that offered body concealment as well, such as flared skirts and peplum tops. The bodycon silhouettes. Regular pants and shirts were less favored by plus-size working professionals, showing a dislike towards body-hugging garments. Also, dark neutral tones were preferred by these individuals because of their ability to camouflage the body, and it aligns with the results of previous research as well.

Moreover, a significant number of participants often avoided certain workwear and felt restricted in their clothing choices due to self-consciousness derived from body image concerns. Furthermore, a study showed that societal perceptions affect one's clothing decisions and self-esteem, limiting plus-size individuals from expressing themselves fully in professional attire.

In conclusion, the study urges the Sri Lankan clothing manufacturers to design workwear for plus-size working professionals with a more empathetic, inclusive, fit-conscious approach while responding to the unique psychological and physical needs of them. This boosts the confidence levels of the plus-size individuals and workplace participation. Further research could expand to study body image concerns in depth through interviews to understand their psychological needs and how workwear affects performance in a professional setting.

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