

## **Trial and Error Learning in Influence in Fashion: Clothing Attitudes of the Kings of the Kandyan Kingdom of Sri Lanka**

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Fashion, an essentially a dynamic human activity, earns its survival by influencing others. The objective of this paper is to find out how learning affects on influence in fashion. A qualitative approach was used for this purpose with a historical study setting. Kandyan reign of Sri Lanka from 15<sup>th</sup> Century to 1815 is a well-known historical era for the strong effects of western influences on the society. Clothing attitudes of the selective kings of the era were studied in this research. Kandyan royalties used foreign influenced dress as a problem solving tool. Kandyan royalties' problem was protecting the throne from their own royal clan. They tried different strategies to win over powerful westerners' faith and have military aids to protect the sovereignty. Kings of the Kandyan Kingdom adapted western dress considering its political advantages. During the course of time they learnt through their experience that wearing western dress give more rewards. It can be suggested that the trying of various methods, alternatives were carried out until the right one happens to appear or be found. It is a method of applying a particular set of rules for working out the solution to a problem. The methodology of the research was based on 'Grounded Theory Method'. Information is gathered and analyzed in a way that the logical philosophy is generated. Validity is tested from cross checking of data, and comparing with formerly established theory related to the field. The analysis was done through political factors of the era. The analysis has resulted in developing a theory on trial and error learning to explain how such status was instrumental in bringing about in influences in fashions. The study found that the royal dress of the kings of the Kandyan Kingdom of Sri Lanka was influenced by the western dress. At the beginning, western influences were not prominent in the dress, however, later kings were heavily influenced by the western dress and social etiquettes. The research found out a schematic pattern in influence fashion. It was shown that political factors have direct correlation in influence fashion.

*Keywords:* Costume of the Kings, Political Factors, Western Influences, Trial and Error Learning, Kandyan Kingdom.