



Model of Design Process of Hong Kong Fashion Designers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to identify the underlying model of design process of Hong Kong fashion designers by using the qualitative research method of grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978). In this research, a total of 19 fashion designers, educators and students were interviewed. Five on-site observations of fashion designers and educators were done. The model of design process of Hong Kong fashion designers was synthesised from in-depth interviews and participant observations of fashion designers, educators and students. The results of theory-building research suggested that during the design process, the major factor influencing Hong Kong fashion designers was 'aesthetic presence'.

Keywords: design process, fashion, grounded theory, influential factors, qualitative research method

INTRODUCTION

The design process in fashion includes all facets of the process undertaken in advance of perceiving, constructing and marketing fashion. In order to understand and define fashion design process of the Hong Kong fashion designers in this setting, it is useful to gain insights into theories which have been formulated outside of the specialist field of fashion. A variety of factors have been found to influence designers during the creative process, and these must be understood in advance of proposing a model of design process in fashion. The purpose of this paper is to explore the underlying model of design process of the Hong Kong fashion designers. This paper focuses on four objectives: 1) to examine literature on the

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subject of design theory across a range of disciplines; 2) to inductively identify the factors influencing fashion designers through the perceptions of fashion designers, educators and students; 3) to formulate the framework of factors influencing fashion designers when creating new fashion; and 4) to develop constructs for a model of fashion design process using the qualitative method of grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978). A more thorough understanding of these topics has implications for the fashion design education. Also, it provides insight into the process of creating apparel products of distinctive cultural background.

In the research discussed in this paper, constructs for a model of fashion design

process were synthesized from in-depth interviews and observations to elicit opinions of 19 fashion designers, educators and students in Hong Kong. The model of design process of Hong Kong fashion designers is portrayed through the major construct subsequently identified, namely, 'aesthetic presence'.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The design process used in architecture and engineering design, as well as theories and practices relating to fashion design were reviewed before the commencement of field survey work.

Related Studies on How Fashion Designers are Inspired

In the theories and studies that focus on how fashion designers are inspired during the design process, it seems possible to identify five general influential factors. These are termed as 'the aesthetic factor', 'the historical factor', 'the socio-cultural factor', 'the psychological factor' and 'the marketing factor'.

Aesthetic Factor

"Changing fashions have reflected nineteenth- and twentieth-century art movements" (Sproles, 1985, p.63). Designers develop ideas from different art movements to invent new styles. Those art movements include Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Eclecticism, Functionalism, Cubism, Expressionism, Abstraction, Pop Art and Op Art. "Contemporary fine arts and commercial graphics are an important influence on colour combinations and general fashion trends" (Tate, 1999, p.115). "All the arts give designers visual inspiration be it for colour or mood or a certain spirit that seems to capture the times" (Frings, 1991, p.64). "Societies have ideals of beauty. These are standards for the best or most perfect aesthetic expression in appearance" (Sproles, 1985, p.63). These views suggest that a certain ideal of beauty is recognised at different time periods in different places. People follow the

prevailing ideal of beauty when they make purchasing decisions about fashion.

Historical Factor

"Fashion history shows that the human body has been dressed and decorated in every conceivable manner. Designers look to history for inspiration and fashion often reflects the past" (Sproles, 1985, p.62). Fashion is frequently influenced by the styles prevalent in certain periods, such as the sixties, seventies and eighties. Some designers research the styles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for inspiration. "Garments from the past are invaluable for design inspiration" (Tate, 1999, p.115). Nevertheless, contemporary designs never look quite the same as the previous versions. Designers always reinvent the styles so that only the beauty and special characteristics of the past can be appreciated. "They must become sensitive to the combinations of colours, motifs, lines, shapes, and spaces of design in each historical period of art and costume" (Frings, 1991, p.63). "Designers often turn to the past for line and silhouette ideas that can be used in a new way" (Frings, 1991, p.63). New fashion often shows a minor adjustment from the past styles, for example, the length of the skirt is shortened or lengthened by an inch to several inches. Generally, people are willing to adopt small changes rather than dramatic changes. "Each new fashion is an evolutionary outgrowth and elaboration of the previous fashion" (Sproles, 1985, p.62).

Socio-cultural Factor

Anthropologists and historians study how social and cultural factors affect the activity of creators. Roach (1989) proposed that cultural realities, such as political and religious ideologies, and scientific, technological and innovations influenced artists' style and techniques. Berlo (1991) suggested the gender has an influence on creators' activities in producing aesthetic objects. Jopling (1977) found that the aesthetic preferences of textile art in small-scale societies were related to the economics

of production and marketing for external markets. Silver (1981, p.101) stated that: “the appearance of creativity in any social system, as manifested in the initiation of novel innovations, follows regular patterns which are themselves shaped by numerous socio-economic forces”. Hamilton (1987) supported the use of a cultural model including elements of ideology, social structure and technology to study the socio-cultural influences on fashion and textile creators. The influence of subculture can simply create a fashion statement by its distinctive style and creativity. Once such a style is promoted to the public, it will become a major trend. “Today analysts may see subcultures as exerting a more silent or subtle influence on contemporary trends. Subtle fashion trends can be traced to punk and new wave and homosexual subcultures” (Sproles, 1985, p.60).

Psychological Factor

Creative individuals appear to have an analogous cognitive style in approaching problems and processing information. Amabile (1983) suggested that intrinsic motivation was preferable to extrinsic motivation for the continuation of creative activity. The creator is driven by his or her personal interest in the activity instead of the external evaluations of creativity and task constraints. Hirschman (1983) proposed that there were three types of creativity, namely, self-oriented, peer-oriented and commercialised. The primary audience and objective of the self-oriented creator are the self and self-expression, respectively. A peer-oriented creator finds that the primary audience is the industry professionals and the primary objective is recognition. A commercialised creator considers the public as the primary audience and saleability as the primary objective. Gardner (1983) identified seven sets of cognitive skills, namely, linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, personal and interpersonal intelligence. These cognitive skills influence the creators differently according to the nature of the creative activity. “There are attitudes,

motivations, interests, values, and other personality traits that predispose a person to think and behave more creatively” (Davis, 1975, p.77).

Marketing Factor

“The most widely adopted innovations are those where business makes it easy and pleasant for consumers to adopt. This is done by increasing availability, variety, convenience, affordability and fun of adoption” (Sproles, 1985, p.64). The marketing influence implies that the strategies of designing, production and distribution match with the customers’ wants and needs. “The successful designers must be in constant touch with the times. They must understand the people for whom they design, their interests, attitudes and values of dress, mode of living, and occupations” (Kefgen and Touchie-Specht, 1976, p.166). “They are studying people more closely, in every part of the globe, to learn about their style preferences and needs. The streets are providing unlimited ideas to the manufacturers of apparel and accessories for their collection” (Diamond and Diamond, 1997, p.15). The product ideas can be easily transmitted to the relevant target markets.

Design Process of Architecture and Engineering Design

Three major apparel design models (Watkins, 1988; Lamb and Kallel, 1992; Regan, Kincade and Shelden, 1998) based on the theory of architecture and engineering design are summarised in the following. Walkins’ (1988) design process model and Lamb and Kallal’s (1992) ‘functional-expressive-aesthetic’ model referred to architect Koberg and graphic designer Badnell (1973) for the elementary steps involved in the design process. Regan, Kincade and Shelden’s (1998) design process model was based on Lewis and Samuel’s (1989) engineering design process theory.

In the field of architecture and engineering design, the design process was viewed as the recognition of a problem. Wertheimer

(1959) viewed problem solving as reorganising the structural relationships of a problem until arriving at a perceptive solution. By understanding the problem in the first stage and by applying the method of synthesising or conceptualising, a successful solution could be found. Goel and Pirolli (1992) suggested that different design professions followed the same sequence of procedures to solve design problems. The first step was to explore and decompose the problem. The second step was to identify the interconnections among different components. The third step was to formulate individual solutions for sub-problems and the final step was to combine the individual solutions into the problem solution. Schon (1990, p.139) proposed the concept of designing concentrating on both problem setting and problem solving, and stated that: "the split between generation and selection no longer holds, for the metaphorical development of a design structure determines both the general character of options and the criteria by which to select among them".

Lui (1996, p.442) recommended a two-search model of designing based on the shape restructuring search and the knowledge transforming search, and stated that: "first, the current state is processed in the shape restructuring search to see the current shape in terms of emergent subshapes in a particular interpretation; second, it is processed in the knowledge transforming search to apply the appropriate rules". Lloyd and Scott (1994) considered design as a process of 'generation-deduction-evaluation'. The first step was to create something to reason about and advance the solution. The second step was to perceive and represent the problem and the third step was to organise, plan and reflect the comments on the design situation.

Analytical Framework of Fashion Design Process

The analytical framework of design process in fashion was suggested and based on the concepts of 'analysis-synthesis-evaluation' developed in the field of architecture and

engineering design, and the adoption of creative process. "The creative process is the term used to describe the conceptual steps involved in the development of innovative solutions to problems" (Fiore and Kimle, 1997, p.267). It was a sequence of purposeful, conscious and logical options to create visually the meaning that the creator wants to express (Winner, 1982). The creator arranged formal qualities and linked meanings into mental schemata. New links between unrelated information were developed when the creator perceived similarities between schemata, and resulted in a new creation (Tijus, 1988). The general process started with defining the problem and gathering information. It shifted to synthesising information and generating ideas, and ended with developing and evaluating solutions (Archer, 1984; Jones, 1984; Luckman, 1984). The process was not linear, rather there were specific cognitive activities that the designer drew upon and returned to at various points in the design process (Akin, 1984). In addition, the methods of generating ideas, the aesthetic preferences, and the definition of good design were considered in the core of the design process in fashion.

METHODS

The qualitative method of grounded theory was selected as the most suitable for investigating inside descriptions of design process used by design creators. "The contemporary popularity of qualitative research owes much to its flexibility and to the absence of methodological straitjackets" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.194). Descriptive study using a qualitative approach helped the researcher to understand the phenomena of how new fashions were created. The researcher examined the basic variables such as, 'definition of fashion', 'design constraints', 'definition of good design', 'major influential factor', 'gathering ideas', 'synthesising ideas' and 'design evaluation' and developed constructs of a model of design process of Hong Kong fashion designers. Using different data sources and

data collection methods ensured the validity and reliability of the data, thereby increasing the probability of credible findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

This study employed the inductive approach in the development of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss contended that: “grounded theory, if it has truly been generated from the situation and is grounded in the data, gives the practitioner a conceptual tool with which to guide practice” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.13). Chenitz and Swanson (1986, p.8) declared that: “grounded theory uses the constant comparative method of analysis throughout in that comparisons are made continuously”. The researcher compared and contrasted the findings from different sources of samples. These processes assisted the researcher when looking for patterns, themes, relationships, similarities and differences that might be present in the data. Grounded theory methodology was used to generate an explanatory theory that sensitively and integrated and represented reality (Glaser, 1992). In this study, the grounded design process formulated aimed to explain the factors influencing the fashion designers when creating new fashion.

Data Collection

The literature on the subject of qualitative research strongly confirmed the appropriateness of using in-depth interviews, and on-site observations in

gathering necessary information for the purpose of identifying categories distinguished on the basis of different cultural backgrounds (Glaser and Straus, 1967; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Fetterman, 1989; Burns, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Morgan 1997). In this study, the data collection method included in-depth interviews and on-site observations.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews involved fashion designers, educators and students. The use of in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to collect relevant notions on the topic by means of a series of questions. It helped the researcher to “classify and organise an individual’s perception of reality” (Fetterman, 1989, p.50), and to “gain an in-depth understanding of a person’s opinions and experiences” (Morgan, 1997, p.11).

In-depth interviews involved fashion designers, educators and students in Hong Kong. Three interview guides were developed in this study. The first interview guide was used with the fashion designers (see Table 1), the second with the educators in fashion design (see Table 2) and the third with the fashion students (see Table 3). During the structured interviews, a tape recorder was used to record the conversations between interviewer and interviewee. Each interview typically lasted one to two hours.

Table 1: Interview Guide; Hong Kong Fashion Designers

Number	Content of Question
1	What is your definition of fashion?
2	What are the major design constraints that you have to face?
3	What are the methods that you use to gather information for creating new designs?
4	How do you analyse the collected information for generating new design ideas?
5	What are the influential factors that inspire you in creating new designs, among these influential factors? Is there a principle factor, or a combination of factors?
6	How do you define the standards of aesthetic appearance?
7	What is your definition of good design in fashion?
8	How do you evaluate your new designs?
9	Do you find any similarities and differences in ideal of beauty of Hong Kong, French, Italian, British and Japanese fashion designers?
10	Do you find any similarities and differences in design concepts of Hong Kong, French, Italian, British and Japanese fashion designers?

Table 2: Interview Guide; Hong Kong Fashion Educators

Number	Content of Question
1	What methods and materials do you use to teach design?
2	What and how do you create a positive climate for the learning process?
3	How do you encourage your students to express their opinions?
4	What are the problems that students frequently face when creating new designs?
5	What is most important factor that students have to consider in the first place when creating new designs?
6	How do you evaluate your students' work?
7	What is the most valuable resource that the design institution can offer to the students in learning design?
8	What is your definition of fashion?
9	How do you define the standards of aesthetic appearance?
10	What is your definition of good design in fashion?
11	Do you find any similarities and differences in ideal of beauty of Hong Kong, French, Italian, British and Japanese fashion designers?
12	Do you find any similarities and differences in design concepts of Hong Kong, French, Italian, British and Japanese fashion designers?

Table 3: Interview Guide; Hong Kong Fashion Students

Number	Content of Question
1	What and how can the design institution help you in learning design?
2	What is your definition of fashion?
3	What are the major design constraints that you have to face when creating new designs?
4	What are the methods that you use to gather information for creating new designs?
5	How do you analyse the collected information for generating new design?
6	What are the influential factors that inspire you in creating new designs, among these influential factors? Is there a principle factor, or a combination of factors?
7	How do you define the standards of aesthetic appearance?
8	What is your definition of good design in fashion?
9	How do you evaluate your new designs?
10	Do you find any similarities and differences in ideal of beauty of Hong Kong, French, Italian, British and Japanese fashion designers?
11	Do you find any similarities and differences in design concepts of Hong Kong, French, Italian, British and Japanese fashion designers?
12	Can you name one Hong Kong, French, Italian, British and Japanese fashion designer who is most likely representing the general design concept in fashion of that country? What are his/her design characteristics?

On-site Observations

On-site observations were carried out during the process of interviewing fashion designers, educators and students. Guba and Lincoln (1981, p.192) suggested that: "observational techniques in research are used to record behaviour and events as they occur". The interaction between the researcher and the interviewees could also be recorded. According to the researcher's experience and knowledge of the topic, the use of observation techniques in different sites allowed the researcher to describe

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events and gain a more in-depth understanding about the topics.

Two observation checklists were developed for the purposes of on-site observation. The first checklist was used with the fashion designers and their design activities in their studios were recorded. The second checklist was used with the fashion educators during the normal lectures. The interactions between the educator and the students were investigated. The environment, facilities and learning method were observed.

Selection of Samples

Within the Hong Kong fashion site, fashion designers, educators and students were selected. The selected fashion designers had already established reputable profiles in the fashion industry, and the fashion educators and students were selected from the highly regarded design institutions. All of the selected fashion educators worked as professional designers before joining those design institutions and the selected students either studied in the postgraduate course or in the final year of the undergraduate course in fashion design. Their notions about fashion design and design process were considered to reflect a high level of equivalence in this research study. The mix of informants ensured a better understanding of the phenomenon of creating new fashion. Using different data sources and data collection methods ensured the validity and reliability of the data, thereby increasing the probability of credible findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.231) stated that: “multiple groups make the credibility of the theory considerably greater”.

A total of 19 in-depth interviews were conducted in Hong Kong, these being with five Hong Kong fashion designers – Irene Mak, Kevin Yeung, Virginia Lau, Leo Fan and Judy Mann, 12 Hong Kong fashion students from one design institution – ‘The Hong Kong Polytechnic University’ and two Hong Kong fashion educators from two design institutions – Kim Liew from ‘The Hong Kong Polytechnic University’ and Shaun Cheung from ‘Kwun Tong Technical Institute’.

Data Analysis

A four-step procedure was used to analyse the data collected from interviews and observations. The four steps included: data

sorting, open coding, constant comparative analysis and theoretical coding.

Data collected from interviews and observations were transcribed into a word processing programme to provide a basis for data analysis. Data collected from various informants was sorted into categories according to which questions the informants were responded. For example, the responses on the ‘definition of fashion’ from the ‘fashion designers’ and ‘fashion educators’ were sorted into the first and second group, respectively. The third group included those responses from the fashion students on the same question.

Data sorting also included repeated readings of the transcribed data to better understand the context of each response and to record the uniformity of the responses. In order to achieve a better understanding of the words, the researcher also listened to the tone of the voices and reactions of the respondents on the original cassette tapes. Also, by considering the context and uniformity of the responses, the researcher interpreted the respondents’ words by paying closer attention to the concrete responses.

Coding started with the identification of first level abstractions for the data collected from interviews, observations and surveys. The researcher used the word coding to describe what was happening in a particular fragment of data. Each discreet abstraction was given a code name and sorted into groups with related themes. Based on this process, a coding guide was developed and was used for the rest of the collected data. It was presented in the checklist matrices for fashion designers, educators and students in each site. A sample of open coding for the Hong Kong designers’ responses on the ‘definition of fashion’ is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Open Coding for the Responses on the 'Definition of Fashion'

Hong Kong fashion site/Fashion designers/ Definition of fashion	Code
<p>Question 1: What is your definition of fashion?</p> <p>Kevin Yeung: Fashion is defined as <u>a kind of people's life style</u>. It is a phenomenon of supply and demand between designer and customer. Thus, designer should know their customer's life style well in order to match their tastes. The job of the designers is <u>to introduce something that is artistic and interesting in order to attract their customers</u>.</p> <p>Irene Mak: Fashion is <u>something that can make the wearer looking beautiful and can bring out his or her personality and character</u>.</p> <p>Virginia Lau: Fashion is <u>something trendy and can match the social climate at that particular time period</u>. It also <u>reflects people's life style and the quality of life</u> at that time.</p> <p>Judy Mann: Fashion is <u>a presentation of thought and emotion, art and culture, and a reflection of contemporary life style</u>.</p> <p>Leo Fan: Fashion is any garment or accessory that <u>makes the wearer feel good and emphasises on his/her personality</u>.</p>	<p>Social life</p> <p>Aesthetic sense Psychological</p> <p>Aesthetic outlook Enhance people's personality and character</p> <p>Stylish, match social atmosphere. Reflect social life</p> <p>Psychological, fine art, culture Social life</p> <p>Psychological Enhance people's personality</p>

All resultant abstractions were constantly compared to previous codes, as some codes were refined to describe the data more precisely. Some codes were combined into larger categories. The comparative process was continued until all of the codes and

categories were mutually exclusive and covered all variations. Developing abstract ideas from concrete data gradually reduced the data to higher order concepts and was presented in the meta-matrix of fashion designers, educators and students in Table 5.

Table 5: Meta-matrix of Hong Kong Fashion Designers, Educators and Students

First-order Category	Second-order Category	Third-order Category
Definition of fashion	Match social atmosphere Reflect social life Cultural Stylish Aesthetic outlook Aesthetic sense Fine art Enhance people's personality and character Present a person's individuality Psychological Personal interests Historical	Social attitude Aesthetic presence Psychological satisfaction Historical revival
Design constraint	Needs of customers	Psychological satisfaction

	Needs of people Needs of market Personal interests Personal design style Personal design concept Convey message Commercial Saleable Practicality Aesthetic sense Aesthetic outlook Newness	Aesthetic presence
Definition of good design	Aesthetic harmony Aesthetic outlook Aesthetic sense Aesthetic beauty Newness Design elements Needs of market Needs of customers Functional Show wearers' characters Personal interests Design concept Represent social atmosphere	Aesthetic presence Psychological satisfaction Social attitude
Aesthetic preference	Psychological Show wearer's personality Match people's character Needs of market Personal style Social life Aesthetic outlook Aesthetic sense Aesthetic beauty Design elements	Psychological satisfaction Social attitude Aesthetic presence
Design process		
Major influential factor	Fine art Design elements Aesthetic beauty Social life Humankind Personal interests Psychological	Aesthetic presence Social attitude Psychological satisfaction
Gathering ideas	Social life Cultural Humankind Social events Design elements Aesthetic outlook	Social attitude Aesthetic presence

	Historical	Historical revival
Synthesising ideas	Main theme Personal interests Psychological Main theme Aesthetic sense Design elements	Psychological satisfaction Aesthetic presence
Design evaluation	Aesthetic harmony Aesthetic outlook Aesthetic sense Design elements Newness Psychological Convey designers' concept Personal interests Others' opinions Others' reactions Personal belief Needs of market Practical	Aesthetic presence Psychological satisfaction

Eight fundamental categories, namely, 'definition of fashion', 'design constraint', 'aesthetic preference', 'definition of good design', 'major influential factor', 'gathering ideas', 'synthesising ideas' and 'design evaluation' were integrated into a framework through the adoption of the "causal-consequence model" (Glaser, 1978, p.74). The theoretical framework described the context and conditions under which it occurred, and explained the events and the experiences of those engaged in these events. The framework of factors influencing fashion designers when creating new fashion was formulated. Finally, constructs for a model of design process of

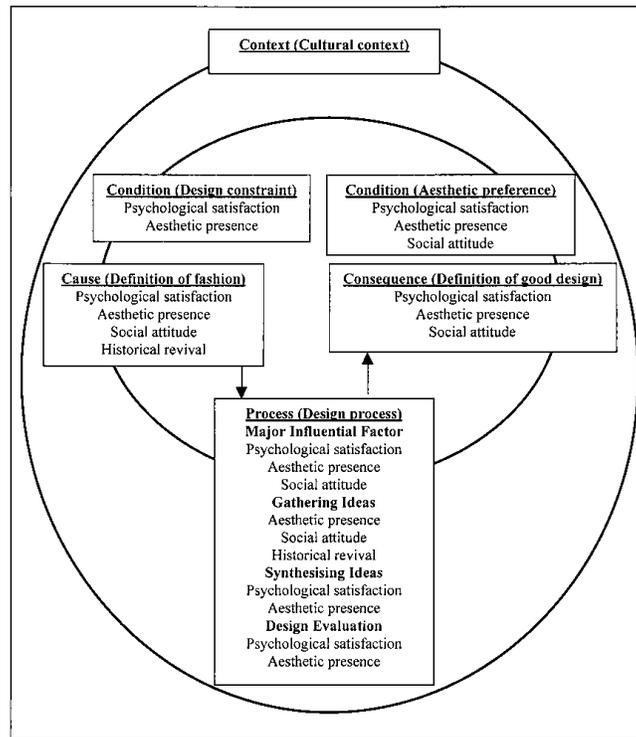
Hong Kong fashion designers were developed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical framework of factors influencing Hong Kong fashion designers was formulated and is represented in Figure 1. The definition of fashion was identified as the causes of creating new fashion. The characteristics of a good fashion design were seen as the consequences under the conditions of facing different design constraints. The design process was described as the process whereby new fashion was created within the distinctive cultural context.

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Figure 1: Framework of Factors Influencing Hong Kong Fashion Designers



Cause: Definition of Fashion

Fashion in Hong Kong is defined as a medium to reflect people’s contemporary life style and represent social standards in a period of time. It is a presentation of thought and is able to bring out the wearer’s personality and character. A fashion product is created for the purpose of showing the aesthetic beauty of the wearer. It is closely related to the cultural and historical matters of society. Thus, the factors ‘social attitude’, ‘psychological satisfaction’, ‘aesthetic presence’ and ‘historical revival’ were identified from the category ‘definition of fashion’.

Consequence: Definition of Good Design

A good fashion design has to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the wearer. At the same time it is able to represent the social atmosphere of that time period and fulfil the customers’ wants and needs. Thus, the factors ‘aesthetic presence’, ‘social attitude’ and ‘psychological satisfaction’ were

identified from the category ‘definition of good design’.

Condition: Design Constraint

The Hong Kong fashion designers need to remain faithful to their beliefs. The new creations have to fulfil the needs of their customers. The aesthetic quality of the garments is another factor that fashion designers have to consider. Thus, the factors ‘psychological satisfaction’, and ‘aesthetic presence’ were identified from the category ‘design constraint’.

Condition: Aesthetic Preference

In order to be viewed aesthetically, the Hong Kong fashion designers believed that the new creation should bring out the wearer’s particular personality and character, and make the wearer feel better about it. It was also able to match his or her lifestyle and bring out the beauty of the wearer. Thus, the factors ‘social attitude’, ‘aesthetic presence’ and ‘psychological satisfaction’ were

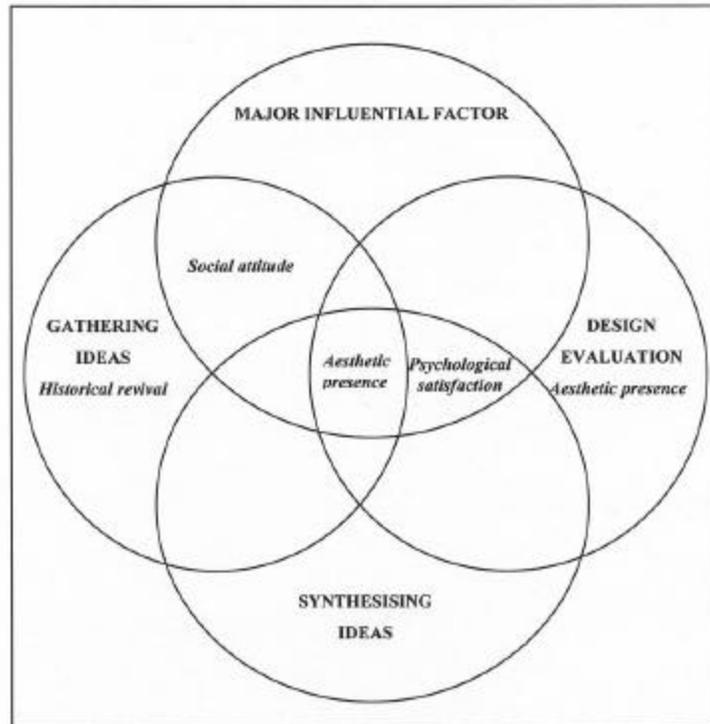
identified from the category ‘aesthetic preference’.

Process: Design Process

During the design process, the major factors influencing Hong Kong fashion designers were ‘social attitude’, ‘psychological satisfaction’, ‘aesthetic presence’ and ‘historical revival’. They gather ideas for inspiration by observing people’s lifestyle, searching historical references from different periods and considering the aesthetic quality of every design detail. They synthesise the collected ideas according to their own feelings and the main theme of the collection, as well as the aesthetic appearance of the new creations. Finally, they evaluate the new designs in the light of the aesthetic harmony of design elements.

The new designs need to make the wearers feel confident about themselves. The resultant model is shown in Figure .2. The major construct ‘aesthetic presence’ was found and linked the four categories, namely, ‘major influential factor’, ‘gathering ideas’, ‘synthesising ideas’ and ‘design evaluation’ together during the design process. The second construct - ‘psychological satisfaction’ – linked the three categories, namely, ‘major influential factor’, ‘synthesising ideas’ and ‘design evaluation’ together. The third construct ‘social attitude’ linked the two categories – ‘major influential factor’ and ‘gathering ideas’ – together. The fourth construct ‘historical revival’ was also discovered in the category ‘gathering ideas’.

Figure 2: Model of design process of Hong Kong Fashion Designers



CONCLUSION

Constructs toward a model of design process of Hong Kong fashion designers were formulated from the data by using the qualitative method of grounded theory. The major construct ‘aesthetic presence’ was the

core variable identified from the design process. The major construct ‘aesthetic preference’ was the most important factor for the Hong Kong fashion designers to consider when creating new fashion.

The marketing factor was not identified as a factor influencing designers when creating new fashion and this finding was inconsistent with the literature. It might be because the fashion designers were able to precisely define their market segmentation in terms of their consumers' personalities, interests, beliefs, values and aesthetic preferences. Such market segmentation was defined as the psychographic segmentation (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1994). The fashion designers might use the information about the consumers group's ideologies and aesthetic preferences to design products within this market segment. As a consequence, the influence of the psychological and aesthetic factors appeared to be far more significant than the marketing factor.

This study investigates the role of social, aesthetic, historical and personal influences on Hong Kong fashion designers. The framework of factors influencing designers and model of design process of Hong Kong fashion designers can be used in fashion design education. Fashion students are encouraged to identify and adopt the proposed design process when creating new fashion. Also, the model of design process can be adopted by fashion designers of different cultural backgrounds. By refining their own creative thinking and design process, they will be able to make their designs more original and successful in the market place.

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