

Study of Developing Model of Creative Conception in Fashion Design

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I . Introduction

Fashion design is the act of making a creative product which satisfies the consumer requirements of the current market situation. If consumers choose a specific design out of designs available in the fashion market, it indicates that this design is competitive. The means that is used to strengthen the competitiveness of fashion design is of great importance. The problems related to the creation of a competitive design can be solved by a variety of methods. One of these methods is through creative conception.

Creative conception does not stem from nothingness. Fange(1959)¹⁾ described that to create is simply to combine existing elements in new ways. It results from a restructuring of existing knowledge or experience by combining or de-constructing it. This kind of restructuring makes it easy for us to improve creativity in design conception by using specific techniques. Many techniques for developing creativity have been introduced in area such as creative engineering and design methodology.

The purpose of this study is to suggest a creative conception model on the basis of the analysis of techniques for developing creativity. To develop a suitable model for fashion design, the characteristics and creativity of fashion design were analyzed with references and existing techniques for developing creativity were used in new ways. The suggested model is examined to analyze the creative conception process of fashion designers in 20th century. The results of this study will be presented the model of creative conception. This creative model is helpful to understand the process of creative conception of designer, to generate the creative conception for fashion design and to improve creativity in fashion design.

II. Creativity in fashion design

1. The characteristics and creativity of fashion design

In this study, fashion refers to a phenomenon or an object in clothes and accessories. Fashion is a changing freshness²⁾ and fashion design is presenting suitable clothes according to this change. The relationship between fashion design and creative conception is as follows.

First, 'fashion is constantly changing'. This aspect of fashion can be dealt with through creative thinking. The relationship between fashion design and creative conception is inseparable. Second, creative conception is one of the important processes³⁾ used to determine the whole direction of fashion design. Creative conception is a unique and specific characteristic of a fashion designer. Third, fashion design makes many designs possible in a short period for designing other products.⁴⁾ In case of national fashion brands, the part of design which is usually consisted of six or eight designers makes 400 styles in every six months.⁵⁾ Fourth, creativity in fashion design is expressed in various ways; it is possible to show a little change from the innovation. Fifth, creativity of fashion design differs from that of pure arts. Creativity of fashion design comes from analytical thought reflecting the consumer's needs and a harmony of formative senses to express them.

The degrees of creativity that is requested in fashion design are quite diverse as it mentioned above. Therefore, many different methods of creative conception are needed to solve the design problems. In this research, we suggest the model which integrate many of techniques to generate the creative conception for fashion design. This model can be utilized in various situations.

2. The characteristics of creative conception

Creation, in this sense, does not originate from absolutely nothing. The creator is the one who completes the combination of existing elements with the freshness created by him or her. To create is simply to combine existing elements in new ways.⁶⁾ This means that there should be a certain precondition. Elements for creation are everywhere around us and, in fashion design, creation requires the elements of knowledge or information of fashion design.

There are many ways to help creative conception out of the existing way of thinking. These are called developing techniques of creativity.⁷⁾ These are devices or processes for an individual or a group to originate many ideas. The methods are divided into free association, forced connection, and systematic combination.⁸⁾ All the techniques of creative conception are not suitable for the conception technique of

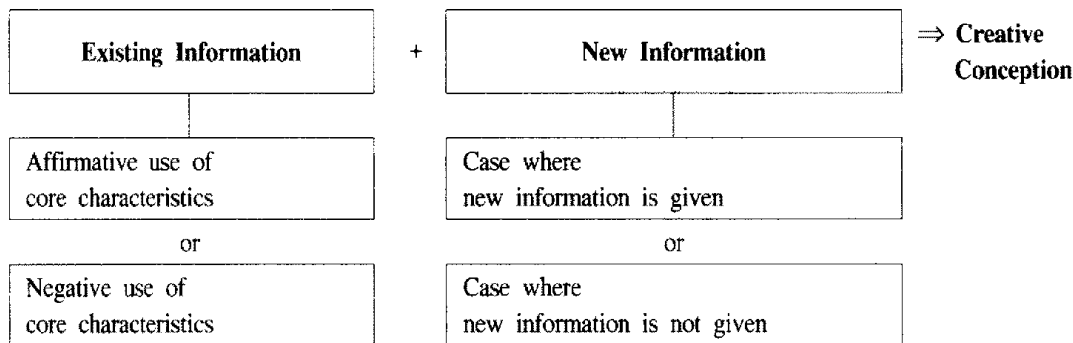
fashion design since they are determined by the needs of a specific area. It is necessary to suggest a suitable model for fashion design by abstracting basic principles of these techniques.

III. The structure of the creative conception model

1. The basic structure of the creative idea generating model

The basic structure of the creative conception model is the combination of existing information and new information. <Table 1> shows the basic structure of this model.

<Table 1> Basic structure of creative conception technique in fashion design



1) Use of existing information (Core characteristics)

Most importantly, existing information should be used actively. The existing information indicates our thought and memory regarding a specific object. For example, when we hear the word 'jacket', all of the features of a jacket are not memorized. Instead, when we hear the word 'jacket', we think of the features of collar, pockets, and sleeves etc.. These are called the core characteristics.⁹⁾ The core characteristics of a specific object may be different or alike among different people. When we change the core characteristics, people sense the change easily and strongly. This is what we call an affirmative use of core characteristics. The core characteristics are indispensable parts but may be obstacles to our imagination. Therefore, it is necessary to refuse the core characteristics. This is referred to as a negative use. It is important in creative conception to understand how to restructure these core characteristics. The core characteristics of existing information can be used affirmatively or negatively. The specific methods are listing characteristics, listing defects, and listing desirable points. By combining the core characteristics and new information, creative conception is possible.

2) Use of new information

With regards to new information, there are two cases--one is when its contents are given and the other is when they are not be given. When new information is given, we can list its content or use a form analysis. One of the listing methods is shown in <Table 2>. The designer can frame specific contents of the list directly and refer to existing studies. In the case of designing a jacket, we can get a new design by using detailed categories applying to conception.

<Table 2> Alteration
















Main Category	Detailed Categories Applying to Conception
Alteration	<p>Distort What kinds of imaginative or practical distortion can we perform? How we make an object abnormally? Can we melt, burn, mash spill anything on, dig, destroy, tear, and 'torture' it?</p> <p>Prevaricate Express it ambiguously</p> <p>Metamorphose Transfigure, transform, and change it Any simple change(eg. the change of colors)? Any dramatic change to transform the subject itself? Think the transforming process in the way of 'from larva to butterfly' The change as time goes by</p>

The form analysis is as follows. In the case of designing a blouse, we should suggest a solution about each of the core characteristics after analyzing the core characteristics of the blouse. In <Table 3>, the designer suggests a solution suitable for design concept. <Table 4> shows an example of combinations as a table of form combination. The following blouse is made by the form combination in <fig. 1>.

We will call listing methods or form analysis unitary idea conception. Unitary idea conception is analytical and the results are obtained clearly. It is composed of methods to list and to combine the form. Conception does not pass through many steps. If this conception method is used, there is much distinction among the alternatives. We can get an innovative idea using this method, but it is a suitable method for the basic design of national fashion brands.

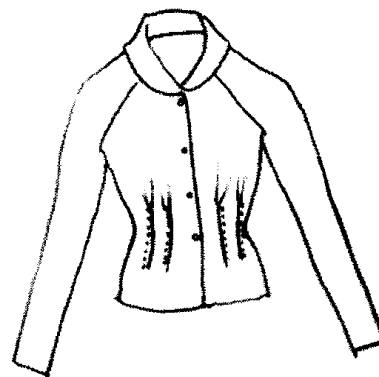
On the other hand, there is compound idea conception. This relies on imagination for us to get innovative results, and it is composed of abstract combination, analogical combination, and heterogeneous combination. We can't understand where conception starts because there is a gap in compound idea conception. Many steps are taken and this method is suitable for essential and innovative fashion design.

<Table 3> Analysis of form elements for blouse design

Form elements	Partial solutions		
	A	B	C
1. silhouette			
2. collar			
3. sleeve			
4. detail	 shirring	 lace	
5. closing	 centre front	 fly-front closing	 centre front

<Table 4> Example of form combination lists

	A	B	C
1	●		
2	●		
3	●		
4			●
5	●		

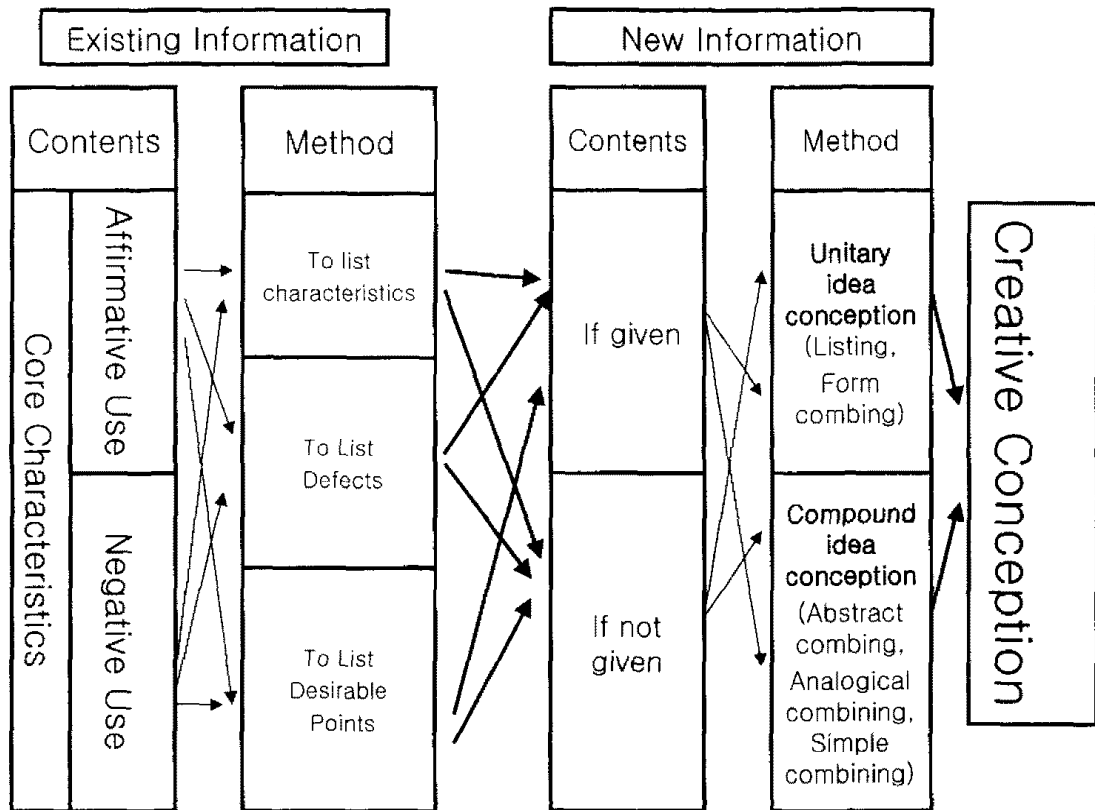


<fig. 1> Example of design with form combination

2. The structure of the creative conception model

We complete the following creative conception model in <Table 5> by developing a basic structure. By using a characteristics listing, a defect listing, and a desirable point listing, we abstract the characteristics of existing information which are supposed to be combined with new information. According to the degree of freshness of desirable designs or a designer's will, we conceive creatively with techniques of unitary idea conception and compound idea conception.

<Table 5> Structure of creative idea conception model



IV. The application of the creative conception model

There are two examples to help the understanding of the practical application of the above model by tracing fashion designers' conception processes conversely. It is difficult to clarify how designers generated their idea in fashion design. The process of an idea generating will be traced by using creative idea conception model from the viewpoint of an observer. First, from winter collections by Junya Watanabe in 1999, <fig. 2> shows a model wearing a jacket. <fig. 3> shows the change of the jacket into a wristlet. It is an example of realizing that 'we hope that a jacket change into a wristlet'. This is a case where the new information of wristlet are combined after analyzing the core characteristics of the jacket. <Table 6> is an example which is applied the creative conception model to the work of Junya Watanabe.



<fig. 2> The design where a jacket changes into a wristlet in the 1999 Winter collections by Junya Watanabe



<fig. 3> The design where a jacket changes into a wristlet in 1999 Winter collections by Junya Watanabe

<Table 6> The example of application 1: the creative conception of Junya Watanabe

Existing Information	Core characteristics
Core characteristics (the part of jacket)	new information is not given
Negative use It changes something other not jacket	Compound idea conception abstract combining A jacket is a wristlet.

Second, the procedure where a chair and a table are transformed into clothes in the 2000 Fall/Winter collections by Hussein Chalayan comes from the conception that 'furniture is clothes'. He explained "I wanted to void a living room of its furnitures. And I expressed this idea on the clothes."¹⁰ That is, the core information of furniture is transformed into clothes by way of compound idea conception, and it is constructed by the abstract combination of furniture and clothes. A model in a slip-dress unclathing the cover of a chair <fig. 4>. Models wearing the dresses, which were covers of chairs <fig. 5>. Two models wearing dresses and the chair changed into a traveler's bag <fig. 6>.



<fig. 4> 2000
F/W collection



<fig. 5>
2000 F/W collection



<fig. 6>
2000 F/W collection

<Table 7> The example of application 2: the creative conception of Hussein Chalayan

Existing Information		New Information
Core characteristics (the part of chairs and table)		new information is not given
Negative use The furniture will disappear. change a chair to the other. a table to the other.	→	Compound idea conception abstract combining The furniture became the clothes.

It is difficult to know what kinds of steps the designers go through in this process in detail. However, from this model, we can analogize the steps they pass through by observing the results of creation. Therefore, every designer can experiment with a new method of conception by analyzing the designers' creative processes with this model.

V. Conclusion

In this study, it is attempted to develop a model that assists the creative conception of designers in fashion design. It is not easy to clarify how designers generated their idea in detail. Fortunately, many of researches in the field of creative engineering and design methodology is insisted that creative conception is not from nothingness. Therefore, this premise is interpreted like that, the designers can obtain it by newly combining existing information. There are various techniques for developing

creativity, but these are devised to meet the needs of a specific area. It is necessary to develop a model suitable for fashion design.

The basic structure of this model is the combination of existing information and new information. Existing information refers to the core characteristics of a specific object. These can be used affirmatively or negatively; a characteristics listing, a defect listing, and a desirable point listing. Creative conception is possible by combining the existing information with new information. There are two cases where this is possible; one is when new information is given and the other is when it isn't given. There are two combining methods of unitary idea conception and compound idea conception. It is suggested a model of the creative conception process and expect that it will be used in a variety of circumstances in fashion design. Furthermore, there are needs to discuss more about this creative conception model in order to promote designer's application.

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