

Trends in Creative Design Scholarship in Textile and Apparel: 2000 – 2016

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Background and Problem

Creative scholarship along with research, teaching, and concept scholarship is an active part of the International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA). Specifically, creative practice is “scholarship initiated from an inspiration, the desire to express an idea, or simply create” (Bye, 2010, p.214). The format of the presentation at the annual conference has been changed throughout the years (i.e. live gallery and exhibition of artifacts), but the main purpose of the ITAA juried design exhibition remains the same: to provide a venue for sharing the contribution to the field of textile and/or apparel design (ITAA, 2018). Even though clothing and textile design has a long tradition in creative practice, there is limited understanding of the design practices (Bye, 2010). Efforts are needed to capture the knowledge of the field in creative practice in clothing and textile discipline and help design scholars to enhance their future practices.

Purpose, Framework and Significance The purpose of this study is to analyze the past trends and suggest new interdisciplinary ways and directions in creative scholarship that contribute to the larger academic dialogue. It is also to position creative practice in design as a tool to advance problem-based research and research through practice (Bye, 2010) in clothing and textile design scholarship. By analyzing the trends over the past 16 years, themes such as target markets, design techniques, sustainability, technology, functional clothing were identified. The study examines trends and gaps in creative practice, and increases engagement and productivity of design scholars who are seeking guidance in framing their future creative practices in interdisciplinary ways.

Method and Data Analysis

A total of 656 ITAA creative scholarship proceedings from every fourth year (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016) was independently reviewed and coded by three researchers. A MaxQDA 12, a software program designed for computer assisted qualitative and mixed methods data was used. The main codes and sub-codes were categorized as level or production, target market, apparel item, sustainability, technology, functional clothing, inspiration, materials, and surface design/design techniques. Researchers had frequent debriefings to ensure the definitions of each code and meanings behind each design work and disagreements in coding were negotiated until the inter-coder agreement of 96% was met.



Figure 1. Content Analysis: Coding in MaxQDA

Results

More than 85% of the target market was women across the five years (2006-2016) and more than 50% of the garment item was women's dress followed by multi-pieces (top with pants and skirts), coat and jacket. The sustainability theme has been steadily increased from 5% to 42% from 2000 to 2016. For 2016, practices under sustainability theme includes minimum waste (34%) followed by recycling/ upcycling (29%), natural dyeing (22%), raising awareness (11%), and biodegradable materials (4%). The integration of technology among design work has been increased from 10% to 52% across the five years and this means, about a half of the design works used technology for the design process. Digital textile printing along with general Adobe creative suites (i.e. Photoshop, Illustrator) was constant technologies that had been used since 2000 and digital textile printing is a prominent tool (more than 25%) that has been applied from 2008 to 2016. The recent application of technologies include laser etching and cutting, virtual prototyping (i.e. digitizing and pattern making in Gerber, Lectra, Optitex), 3D printing, 3D body scanning, KnitPaint, e-textiles (LED lights, solar-power cell). Less than 10% was designed for functional clothing across the five years that integrated theoretical framework and initiated problem solving for various end-use which include activewear, plus-size, hospital gowns, and various uniforms.

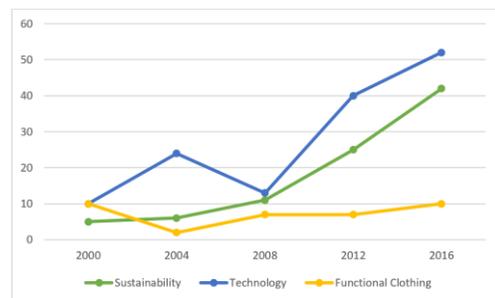


Figure 2. Trends in sustainability, technology, and functional clothing from 2000 to 2016.

Conclusion

The analysis of the past trends in creative practice informs future opportunities for design scholars. The results show that there should be more emphasis on other target markets because about 90% of artifacts are focused on womenswear, specifically one-piece dress. Even though the use of technology has been increased by 40% from 2000 to 2016, the majority application has been the use of digital textile printing. A wide range of technology application to creative practices is needed. Based on this needs, two thematic areas provide opportunities to utilize innovative technology for creative practices: 1) *inclusive target markets* and 2) *sustainable design practice through technology interventions*. The presentation includes in-depth findings of the results with charts and tables and discuss the needs that must be emphasized in the future.

References

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