

The Infusion of Design Elements of *Hanbok* into Modern Fashion Styles

Shu-Hwa Lin & Young-Jin Bahng
University of Hawaii at Manoa

Keywords: Korea-infusion, *Hanbok*, K-style

Only a few western fashion designs inspired by Korean *Hanbok* items in commercial mail-order catalogues were found in the nineteenth century. Compared to the earlier period, recently well-known designers, such as John Galliano and Christian Dior, have presented Korea infusion fashions in runway collections. In fashion showcases, garment prints with the Korean influence are often seen in high-end fashion designs.

A major part of a fashion designer's role is designing products based on his/her creative ideas. To this end, a designer engages in creativity and the creative process. Although there are a number of definitions of creativity, one definition is that creativity is the process of taking existing elements and rearranging them in new ways (Strickfaden, Stafiniak, & Terzin, 2015, Choi, Medvedev, Lee, & Hunt-Hurst, 2009). Additionally, the creative process may be sparked and enhanced by a focus, idea, or inspiration (Friedman, 2003). Designers can glean an inspiration from numerous sources, such as the surrounding environment, social factors, history, or cultures (Cho, 2016, Chung, 2005). The Korea *Hanbok* with inspiring design elements (e.g., empire waist, colors-strips, *Jeogori* with organza used in a skirt, yin/yang printed styles) have expanded and can be broadly seen in the global fashion scene.

Culturally influenced images were selected to compare similarities and differences among current modern styles influenced by traditional Korean costumes (i.e., *Hanbok*) and cultures. In this project, recent western fashion styles were collected from academic and/or nonacademic journals, magazines, newspapers, TV shows, and websites: the mass communication world to be analyzed was based on the theory of construction in design from Freidman (2003). The purpose of this project is to explore the western fashion styles designed under the inspiration of the Korean *Hanbok* and/or cultures, including textile patterns, design motives, selection of colors, and silhouettes of garments. Fashion design is about utilizing inspiration to provoke thoughts and to create new trends. This process also incorporated images from media, such as professional fashion design and life style magazines and music publications, and street fashion reports.

A total of 50 traditional Korean *Hanbok* and 120 modern fashion images reflecting Korean *Hanbok* and/or cultures were collected from numerous sources. These sources included museum visits, fashion magazines, the internet, newspapers, magazines, films, TV shows, student fashion shows, and websites. Design elements in western fashions can be found in East Asian countries (i.e., China, Japan, and Korea). Many female outfits have been significantly influenced by East Asian costume design, both runway and mass production (Choi, Medvedev, Lee, & Hunt-Hurst, 2009).

All design elements, such as textile pattern design (i.e., motifs), garment pattern designs, colors, embroidery patterns and methods, silhouettes, lines, construction methods, utility, and fits were used for analysis. According to Yoon and Woo's research study (2011), the traditional beauty of *Hanbok* is emphasized by using soft curves. Natural beauty is also expressed by using color contrast mostly with white, and by employing natural fabrics like silk, cotton, linen and wool. Often tops of *Hanbok* expose the shoulder. The skirt has many layers, creating beauty with lots of changes and various patterns. The researchers found that designers use traditional *Hanbok*'s hourglass silhouette and straight silhouette, new materials like wool, leather, fur, and polyester, and traditional shapes of collars, sleeves, *goreum* (chest ties) and skirt hems in their designs (Yoon & Woo, 2011).

Some modernized *Hanbok* designers' brands carry *Hanbok* garments found in the market, but many of their designs are closer to western dresses, to which are applied some detail and/or silhouette of *Hanbok*. A well-known modern *Hanbok* designer, Youngjin Kim, owner of the brand *Tchaikim*, creates jackets, blouses, skirts, pants and dresses using *Hanbok* motifs. Youngjin Kim designed a jacket inspired by a sixteenth century *Jeogori* (traditional Korean *Hanbok* blouse) using more than one fabric and different lengths (Moon, 2017). Stylist Younghee Seo also introduced *Hanbok* street fashion at Seoul Fashion Week in 2015. Seo also showed her styling of a skirt of *Tchaikim*, matched with a Gucci quilted jacket in Vogue Korea in 2016 (Moon, 2017). With the popularity of Korean Pop Culture, called Hanryu-Korean Wave - The Korean street fashion and beauty items became popular with K-pop songs, singers and TV dramas. Many Asian designers started researching the Korean street fashion and the Korean designers gained attention from the world. In 2015, Karl Lagerfeld, the creative director for Chanel held a fashion show in Seoul, South Korea, with the theme of Korea. A month after that, Christian Dior also held a fashion show collaborating with some Korean designers in Seoul. The French brand, Maison Kitsune set the theme of their fall/winter collection as Korea using various design details expressing the beauty and/or symbols of Korea. *Hanbok*-inspired garments by Korea designers: Adrian Kim, Lee Young-Hee, Park So Dam, Kim, Youngjin; *Hanbok*-inspired garments in costume designers' shops: commercial selling ready-to-wear items (e.g., Korea designers, such as Lee Haesoon, Tchai Kim; Wester designers like Carolina Herra).

In London 2015, an audience of more than 10,000 gathered to see the K-Style Fashion Show, and in this show some *Hanbok* designs were introduced with modern garments designed by the Korean designers. In this study, we discuss more about the infusion of design elements of *Hanbok* into the modern styles showing various sample photos of garments and detailed analyses of each part of garments. The researchers believe that this study may contribute to the field of clothing and textiles by providing the results of the current movement of world trends with analysis of traditional Korean garments and their history. This project is to learning **Korea *Hanbok*** in current fashion styles from media by using Friedman's theory (2003) to examine collected design objects by transforming less desirable situations to preferred current styles.

References:

- Chung, Y. Y. (2005). *Silken threads: A history of embroidery*. NY: Harry N. Abrams.
- Choi, Y. J., Medvedev, K., Lee, Y., & Hunt-Hurst, P. (2009). How China, Japan and Korea are perceived by Vogue USA in the last 10 years. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 2(1), 3-11.
- Cho, H. Y. (2016). The Study on the Relationship between Fashion and Orientalism. *Journal of the Hwa Gang Textile*, 23(3).
- Friedman, K. (2003). Theory construction in design research: criteria: approaches, and methods. *Design studies*, 24(6), 507-522.
- Moon, H. (2017). Oh! Creator, #35 Hanbok designer Kim, Youngjin. Vol.4. Talk. Retrieved from <https://blog.naver.com/designpress2016/221106578114>
- Strickfaden, M., Stafiniak, L., & Terzin, T. (2015). Inspired and Inspiring Textile Designers Understanding Creativity Through Influence and Inspiration. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 1-16.
- Yoon, J., & Woo, H. (2011). A study on the modern fashion design applying the characteristic of Hanbok. *韓服文化*, 14(1), 77-90.