



CRITICAL PRINCIPLES AND ELEMENTS OF A FASHION COLLECTION DESIGNING

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Abstract: A generally accepted approach to fashion design is to consider a complex system based on different parameters or basic elements such as shape and form, line, color, and textures and basic principles: proportion and scale, balance, unity (harmony), rhythm, and emphasis.

The paper presents the most important elements that influence the impact and quality of a fashion collection: the sketch of the garment (color, shape, texture of the textile materials) and sustainability (as a consequence of circular economy), while the dematerialization and application of SWOT analysis, improve the economic yield.

To better understand the vision of the specialists in fashion design regarding the most important elements that define a garment collection, 5 detailed criteria are presented. In this regard, the answers of the specialists involved in the designing and development of the new middle-price and middle-end fashion garment collection on a survey are presented and a ranking has been done.

Key words: garment, fashion design sketch, sustainability, dematerialization

1. INTRODUCTION

Fashion design is a kind of art dedicated to the creation of clothing, shoes, and other lifestyle accessories. The synergy of textiles and garments is an integral part of fashion design. Fashion designers need to have a profound understanding of how textile materials and structures affect the design and function of the garment, as well as haptic knowledge obtained from hands-on experiences with fabrics [1]. Worldwide, up to 300 million employees are involved in the textile fashion industry, a true economic power that contributes more than 1.3 billion dollars to the global economy [2], [3]. Regardless of the type of fashion design, *haute couture*, *luxury fashion*, *ready-to-wear fashion*, *economy fashion*, or *fast fashion*, designers start with an idea, image, or feeling that motivates them and then, through a creative process, they develop that inspiration into a design concept and finally a finished product.

Essential for a fashion designer is to express their vision and creativity, helped by art, emotions, people, nature, etc. through their design work and transmit their inspiration to the audience, as good they can [4].

Fashion designers are permanently in line with fashion market requirements, being interested in learning new things by upgrading their collections with the trend. A designer should also have some knowledge and experience in tailoring (cutting, draping, sewing, etc.) and be able to tell the difference between different fabric quality levels [5]. By sketching designs, selecting

patterns, fabrics, and accessories, and giving instructions to workers, a fashion designer creates original clothing and footwear pieces. Today, the fashion industry is more and more interconnected with the digital world, both in the creation process (using digital instruments) and in the commercialization of the products (using digital platforms and digital marketing strategies).

As a huge industry with very large market potential, the fashion industry received last year's special attention from the sustainability perspective concentrated on mitigating the harmful impacts of the industry on the natural environment [6]. The main focus is on the production and use of particular types of textiles, minimizing consumption of resources, modifying the production process (e.g., concerning the use of certain chemical substances), efficient use of fabrics (zero waste), and their reuse (recycling and upcycling) [7] more recently known the broader heading of a circular economy [8], [9]

This paper approaches the key fashion design principles from the perspective of fashion designers. For a complete perspective, a survey with 5 generic questions has been proposed by the partners involved in the Digital Fashion Erasmus + Project.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES AND ELEMENTS FOR A FASHION DESIGN

While technological investment becomes strategic as the fashion market experiences a growing speed of fast fashion trends, specialists define 5 main principles, generally available, that lead to a good fashion design and transform any garment into a masterpiece (Fig. 1) [10]

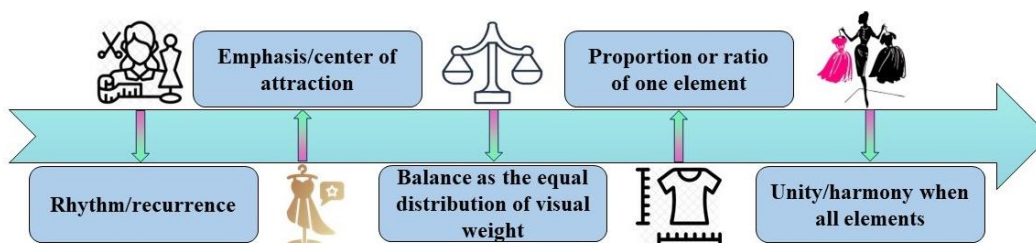


Fig. 1: 5 main principles for a good fashion design

The Erasmus+ project DigitalFashion is a Strategic partnership project for Higher Education, planned for the period 01 Feb. 2022 – 31 Jan. 2025. The project aims to *internationalize digital skills* in fashion and technology, *bridging the existing gap* in digital skills in fashion by introducing new teaching and learning methodologies of digital fashion co-design in a virtual environment and *promoting collaboration* among the partners in online international teaching and learning by addressing the digital skill gaps in the fashion and textile programs that partner countries have in common, targeting the textile and clothing industry. The consortium of the project is formed of 6 education and R&D partners from 5 European countries: Romania France, Belgium, Portugal, and Slovenia, being led by INCDTP Bucharest.

3. KEY ELEMENTS FOR A PARTICULAR WOMEN CLOTHING COLLECTION

While the 5 elements presented in Fig. 1 are considered generally available as pillars in designing, the specialist partners of The Digital Fashion E+ project elaborated a survey with 4



questions to understand what the most important principles of fashion design in a particular case of a casual collection of women's garments of age category 25- 40 years and of mid-price level (middle-end fashion brand).

3.1 The 3 most important fashion design elements - Q1

When creating a collection of clothing for women aged 25-40 with a medium price range, it's important to consider their fashion tastes and preferences, as well as current trends. From the point of view of the questioned design specialists, there are three fashion design elements to consider.

One of the most important visual elements in a fashion collection is **color**. There are multiple color systems: **Hues colors**: *primary* (RYB- red, yellow, blue, RGB-red, green, blue, CMYK- cyan, magenta, yellow, and key (black)); *secondary* (combination of two primary colors); **Tertiary colors** (combination of a secondary color with a primary color) and complementary (more than opposite base hues on the color wheel), with different properties as temperature saturation and value, tint, shade, tone, and mute, that have a strong impact on the perception of a piece of clothing.

On the other hand the **material texture**, with two components (**tactile** - that can be felt by touch (rough, smooth) and visual - that can be seen (shiny, dull, matte) strongly affects the look of a garment, the feel, its lucidity in a way influencing the appearance of the person wearing the garment.

Shape - defined as the silhouette, or overall outline of a garment or other item, can influence how it fits and looks. A shape is a two-dimensional area that stands out from the space around it due to variations in contour, color, or material. Shapes can be geometric or organic. It's important to consider different body shapes and create options that fit different body types so that all types of clients will find something appropriate to wear.

3.2 The successful combination of the fashion design elements – Q2

Some designers consider up to 12 elements that make up the essence of fashion design, but the 3 most relevant and universal are the color, texture, and shape.

The right application of these elements helps a fashion designer enhance the look of an outfit. By combining these elements in a "mix and match" fashion, it is possible to create an endless variety of styles, having as basements the basic pieces of clothing.

The interdependence of these elements can be seen in the success of fashion creation, and a correct forecast on the part of fashion researchers/designers in choosing these elements determines future clothing trends. It implicitly develops new tastes of the final consumers.

To be considered a successful combination of design elements, according to various designers, it is necessary to follow the following sequence: form – colors – material - sustainability - dematerialization, usually defined as a process that consumes fewer resources than former processes but still increases the value.

The shape and finish of a garment are strongly influenced by the type and texture of the fabric. When designing women's clothing, especially when the buyers are in the 25 to 40 age category and the mid-price segment, it is important to consider fashion shapes and forms of outfits first and foremost. This large segment generally wants comfortable and fashionable clothes, where the color and functionality of the clothes play a well-defined role and must be taken into account in defining and designing the collections. Also in creating synergy and unity, the type and structure of the respective lines and texture of the material can determine important changes in an outfit from the point of view of the wearer's posture and dynamics, when combined harmoniously.

To create a coherent collection aligned to the individual and group requirements of the consumer, designers will apply the elements of clothing design in a balanced and consistent way, but a particular understanding of it is also essential.

A well-defined collection creates excitement and delivers a high level of consumer satisfaction. A proposed successful combination of the fashion design elements is schematically presented in Fig. 2

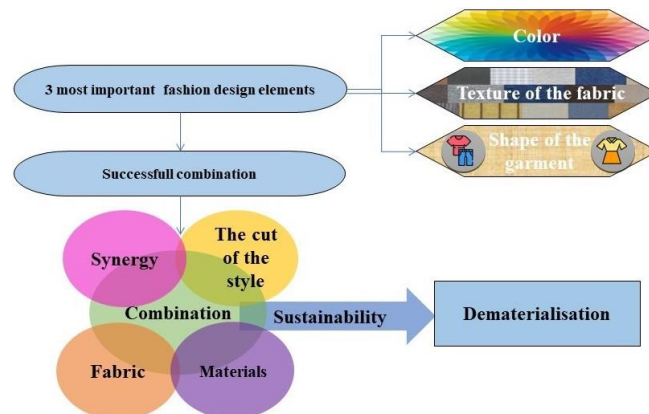


Fig. 2: Swot analysis of the aforementioned collection

3.3 The applying a swot analysis to this design process – Q3

Every fashion brand or business needs a swot analysis to know its present and future position concerning competitors. Swot analysis including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is a useful instrument for understanding where the related fashion brand or business stands in the larger fashion marketplace to meet the needs/expectations of the target public.

Establishing, precisely defining, and promoting brand identifiers greatly influences consumer perception. According to the specialists interviewed, designing a garment in the context of a brand requires that the image, style, price, and target consumer audience are very well defined. The price level of a brand also determines its risks, so at a medium price, the likelihood of it being fashion-oriented is lower, so the expectations of the target group are also lower. In this context, it is necessary to analyze the level of consumer satisfaction and therefore the level of sales.

In the context of a rapidly changing fashion clothing market, developing a Swot analysis of each style of clothing can highlight possible opportunities that should be exploited (e.g. new clothing for a new target group of consumers), and threats should diminished/eliminated (reduction in price of a collection due to competition).

If a new collection is born out of the inspiration and talent of designers, a responsible SWOT analysis by the marketing team defines it and carves a safer path to the target market. This will develop an effective design strategy with a competitive edge during the design process and market launch.

According to the interviewed designers, the analysis of the weakness of a casual collection of women's garments of age category 25-40 years and of mid-price level leads to the following arguments:

- the moderate price range may limit the materials and quality of materials that can be used within the collection.
- the market for women's clothing aged 25-40 is growing, which can provide opportunities for sales growth and market share. This is the biggest opportunity and the strongest point.
- the use of durable and sustainable materials can attract consumers who are interested in

sustainable development and ethical issues
A schematic SWOT analysis for a mid-range designed collection is presented in Fig. 3.

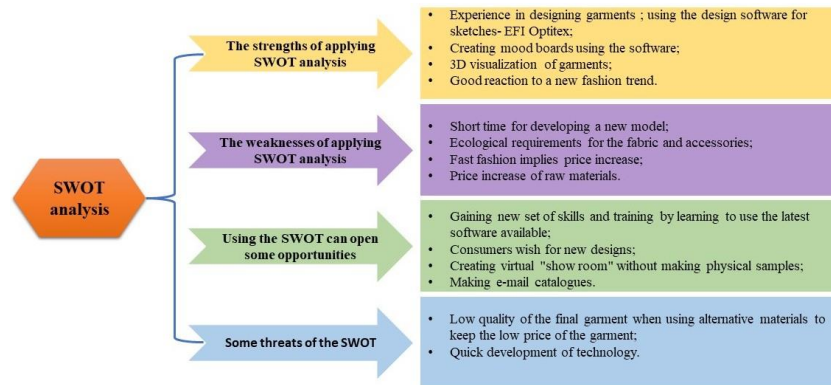


Fig. 3: Swot analysis of the aforementioned collection

3.4 The threats when designing the garments – Q4

The main threats indicated in the case of the collection of clothing for women aged 25-40 with a medium price range are schematically presented in Fig. 4.

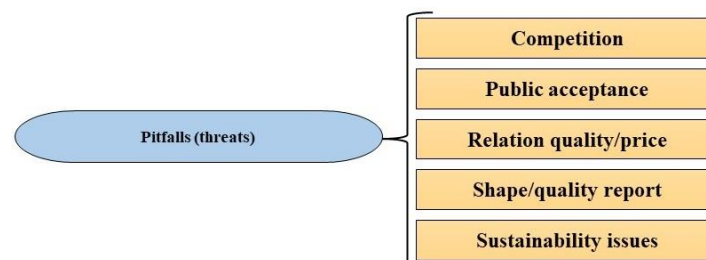


Fig. 4: The threats of the aforementioned collection

The past experiences showed that a good understanding of the brand's "red line", trends, and market analyses is important before drafting SWOT analyses, in the context of the rapid changes in the market. Given the market situation, other particular principles only have the function of expressing some principles more than others. It would rather say the principles serve other requirements that need to be considered.

A market ready and open for the adoption of new fashion trends is an open door for designers to take advantage of new design elements and translate them into strengths in their marketing strategy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Principles and key fashion design elements have been established from the questionnaire by the designers. Based on the feedback it can be concluded that the design fashion elements are very important when designing a collection and that the 3 most important elements are: Color, Shape of the garment, and Texture of the fabric, but the successful combination of them is the key for the consumer's satisfaction. To create a coherent collection aligned with the individual and group



requirements of the consumer, designers have to use the elements of clothing design in a balanced and consistent way and understand its particularities.

Also, can be concluded that a SWOT analysis can be applied in the design process and can be used to meet the needs/expectations of the targeted customers.

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