

# Search for New Design Elements in Time-Honoured Shops in Tainan—On Curriculum Practice about Culture Creative Industry

Ya-Ling Huang, Ming-Chun Tsai, Fan Hsu, Kai-Ru Hsieh

**Abstract**—This paper mainly discusses the research and practice process of a laboratory curriculum by leading students to perform field investigation into time-honoured shops that have existed for more than 50 years in the downtown area of Tainan, Taiwan, and then search again for design elements and completing the design. The participants are juniors from the Department of Visual Communication Design, Kun Shan University. The duration of research and practice is two months. Operators of these shops are invited to jointly appraise the final achievements. 9 works out of 27 are chosen for final exhibition and commercialization.

**Keywords**—Culture creative industry, visual communication design, curriculum experimental.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THIS research is based on the fact that importance has been gradually attached to culture creative industry in Taiwan; many schools have started related courses in the hope of cultivating talents for the industry. However, culture creative industry involves life, culture, language, religion and even living habits. Lots of elements are worthy of students' exploration and research from the perspective of design method under the guidance of teachers. As the students return to their research groups, they should summarize and sort out collected documents and data and then develop into the works with more local design elements. Designed for one semester, this curriculum consists of three stages. Stage 1 features guidance and aims at making students understand cultural content, developmental history of Tainan, colour and image from the perspective of literature review. Design marketing concept is also included so that students selecting the curriculum can get acquainted with design nature and characteristics of culture creative industry. Stage 2 features field investigation. 9 time-honoured shops in Tainan are chosen and the students are divided into 27 groups, namely 3 groups perform research and follow-up design development on each shop. Stage 3 features design and fulfilment. At this stage, advertising company's proposal strategy is simulated. The research groups performing research on the same shop have no ideas about each other's

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design strategy which is fully disclosed when proposals are advanced in the face of the shop operator. This stage can also make the students understand that design strategy should have competitive advantages which can be obtained by means of cooperation and competition.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Background of City of Tainan

Tainan is the first developed city in Taiwan. It is the main residence of Siraya—the aborigines in Taiwan before the 17th century. After the 1620s, Dutch East India Company regarded Tainan as the outpost of international trade and Chikan in Tainan as the administrative centre. In addition to Holland, Taiwan was ruled by Zheng Chenggong in Ming Dynasty and then by Qing Dynasty. Between the late Qing Dynasty to the period of Japanese Occupation, Tainan and Taipei were respectively recognized as two major political and economic centres respectively in the southern and northern regions of Taiwan. Tainan became an important cultural and educational centre in Taiwan in modern times.

Due to the background of diversified cultures, Tainan has presented features which are different from other cities in Taiwan. From the perspective of colour research, Professor Zeng Qixiong performed a series of colour research on “Old Five Channels”—the earliest pivot of port trade in Tainan. Located in the centre of the disappeared “Old Five Channels”, Shennong Street was surrounded by the rivers in Ming and Qing dynasties. Several hundred years later, the street is now characterized with integral old timber and colourful washed pebble. Even though the forms and colours of time-honoured buildings were damaged by road development in recent years, they have gradually revived as a result of reconstruction plan, attracting some art workers to settle down, promoting activation of old houses and making the street a new “Old Commercial Circle” [1] in Tainan. In the research made by Professor Zeng Qixiong, SpectroEye (colour measuring spectrometer) was used to record colour measurement and NSC colour swatch was used to make comparison. It was found that most of the colours of various buildings on Shennong Street are white and blue, and the main materials used are red and yellow timber and light gray washed pebble. It was pointed out in the research that the colours were influenced by time, but the data on colours serve as a referential basis for the initial follow-up creation.

As Tainan was developed earlier than other cities in Taiwan, there are more than 80 time-honoured shops in the city that

have existed for over 100 years according to the investigation by Cultural Bureau under Tainan Municipal Government. One third of them are located in the downtown areas [2]. These shops mainly engage in household goods, Chinese traditional medicine and snacks, etc.

#### *B. The Poly of Culture Creative Industry in Taiwan*

Promoted by policies for culture creative industry, some countries have more chances to learn and exchange with each other along with frequent exchanges of online information. Taiwan's policy for culture creative industry is guided by British policy and influenced by many Asian countries. The central government and local government have promoted the policies through executing various subsidy plans. A cooperative mechanism has been formed as a consequence. For example, the main competent authority in charge of the development of culture creative industry is "cultural creative development company" which has promoted 20 kinds of major work defined in laws and regulations under the organization by Culture Department. They include: 1. Incorporation and registration of relevant tax status; 2. Creation or research & development of products or services; 3. Business establishment; 4. Improvement in broker system; 5. Circulation and application of intangible assets; 6. Improvement in operating and managerial capacity; 7. Application of information technology; 8. Training of professionals and recruitment of worldwide talents; 9. Promotion of investment; 10. Mutual assistance and cooperation in undertakings; 11. Market expansion; 12. International cooperation and exchange; 13. Participation in domestic and overseas competition; 14. Industrial cluster; 15. Application of public estate; 16. Collection of industrial and market-related information; 17. Popularization and advocacy of favourable creative cultural products or services; 18. Protection and application of intellectual property rights; 19. Assistance in activating creative cultural products and services; 20. Other items that promote the development of culture creative industry [3].

With the stipulation of policy for culture creative industry, the central government has carried out cooperation local government, universities and colleges. For example, by the end of 2013, ten universities/colleges out of the 63 ones in Taiwan have established cultivation centres with the aid of Cultural Department. The centres aim at integrating human resources in universities/colleges via the academic circle and assisting small entities engaging in culture creative industry in various places, so that practitioners can enter this industry with the help of professionals [4]. This research is originated from the background: Kun Shan University became one of the first cultural creative education universities recognized by Cultural Department in 2009. The first stage is from 2009 to 2011. A total of five cultural departments in Taiwan subsidize the centres. With such resources, how to integrate future talents and culture creative industry for closer linkage and cooperation has become the important opportunity that is planned by this paper to be developed.

#### *C. Features and Current Status of Culture Creative Industry in Tainan*

As the first developed city in Taiwan, Tainan has accumulated a lot of traditional industrial resources. As times change, industrial operators begin to ponder how to master the original industrial spirit and tradition and how to seek for external assistance so that the industries can be vitalized. Different from culture creative industry of the aborigines or Hakka people, which is endowed with distinct image symbols or special language and living habits, the culture creative industry in Tainan has no distinct totem symbols except that it exists in an age-old city. From the perspective of the city's development scale of culture creative industry, Tainan is currently the fifth largest municipality under the central authority, but culture creative industry is concentrative in Taiwan. Seen from the turnover of culture creative industry in 2013, Taipei City is No.1 creative city in Taiwan; the second one is Taipei County (NTD 68.9 billion); the third one is Kaohsiung (NTD 26.7 billion); the fourth one is Taichung (NTD 25.9 billion); and the fifth one is Taoyuan County (NTD 24.5 billion). These data reveal that the development of creative economy is unbalanced in Taiwan; the differences between urban areas and rural areas and those between southern region and northern region are extremely evident [5]; there is a remarkable issue concerning "creative difference" which also appeared in Tainan after it becomes a municipality under the central authority.

It is due to this reason that in addition to the input of government's fund for development of culture creative industry, how to mobilize common people's demands to engage in the industry and adjust the motives is perhaps the greater driving force for future development of the industry.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

#### *A. Selection Direction of Research Object*

Considering that development of culture creative industry is not promoted targeting at design-related industry, but through combining industries not related to design with design fields. Therefore, operators who are designers or have design background are excluded from the scope of cooperative objects in this case. Factors considered are as follows:


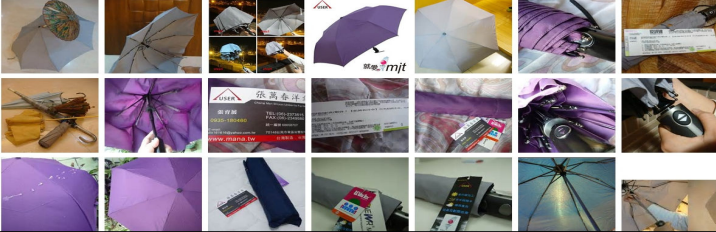


- 1) Have offline shop
- 2) Have Generation II specialized industrial type or more advanced ones;
- 3) Have producing or manufacturing capacity;
- 4) Be located in Tainan; if in other cities, operators who cooperated with the research organ should be preferential.
- 5) Operators are full-time employees with design background who have been employed for a long time.
- 6) Other operators who do not comply with the aforesaid conditions, but possibly have unique characteristics

After asking about operators' desire to participate in the research, the research group chose 9 operators who will participate in the current plan for curriculum research and practice. Information on the operators is as shown in the following Tables I, II).

TABLE I  
BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO COOPERATIVE OPERATORS PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION ON THEIR BACKGROUND

Operator's Name	Initiation Age	Main Business Items	Place	Supplementary Explanations
Kuang-tsai	The 1950s	Traditional religious embroidery	Tainan	Generation I and Generation II are operated at the same time in the hope of realizing transformation from religious embroidery.
Zhang Wanchun Umbrella	The 1935s	Umbrella	Tainan	Generation III is operated after being transformed from traditional manufacture.
Zhen Bei Fang Culture & History Studio	The area coverage was formed in Zheng Chenggong Era; the studio was established in 2000.	Nonprofit organization which is required to assist the area in operation	Tainan	Zhen Bei Fang is the earliest commercial area in Tainan. It is famous for narrow alleys.
Mu Zu Shoes	The 1960s	Sabots	Tainan	Generation II is operated in the hope of being combined with fashion.
Quanxing Tatami	The 1940s	Tatami	Tainan	Generation I and Generation III are operated at the same time, sticking to Tatami production, but young operators want to carry out transformation.
Zhenfa Tea House	1863	Tea	Tainan	Generation V is operated; Zhenfa Tea House is the earliest tea house in Taiwan.
Hecheng Canvas Bag	The 1960s	Canvas bags	Tainan	Generation II is operated after being transformed from traditional manufacture.
San-He Tile Kiln	1913	Tiles and adornments	Kaohsiung	Generation IV is operated after being transformed from traditional manufacture.
Lufu Cultural & Creative Industries	2000	Religious creative cultural commodities	Tainan	It is a new creative brand, but is themed with religion, so it has an advantage in cultural content.

TABLE II  
PICTURES OF CURRENT COOPERATIVE OPERATORS' SHOPS OR EXISTING COMMODITIES

Operator's Name	Shop or Existing Commodities
Kuang-tsai	
Zhang Wanchun Umbrella	
Zhen Bei Fang Culture & History Studio	
Mu Zu Shoes	



Quanxing Tatami



Zhenfa Tea House



Hecheng Canvas Bag



San-He Tile Kiln



Lufu Cultural & Creative Industries



*B. Execution Steps and Limitations*

This plan is combined with the planning for experimental curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum schedule is considered and the execution period is long. The total duration of operation is about two months. Discussion with the tutor must be arranged in this stage.

The research groups and cooperative operators are paired randomly.

Considering there are a lot of research groups and that may form disturbance to the cooperative operators, the groups are required to collect and coordinate relevant data by using

non-participation observation method during the field investigation, namely they are required to collect and coordinate relevant data through observing on the spot the interactions between the operators and consumers, conditions of the operators' shops and current status on the commodities, etc. After that, every group discusses its own design execution strategy according to the collected data. Every group can choose to carry out commodity design according to its own specialities or advance marketing planning in the form of strategy and suggestion. Then the participants, representatives of operators and the teacher jointly make selection. Each

operator can select only one research group. Finally, the university provides expense for relevant materials to assist the students in implementing the planning and publicizing the achievements.

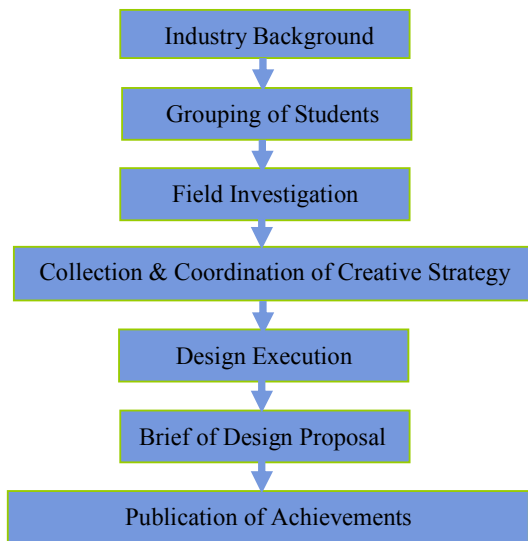


Fig. 1 Research Flow of the Overall Plan

#### IV. RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

After two months of practice, nine groups are chosen to carry out final commodity or marketing practice. The selected subjects are endowed with the following features:

- Every new commodity design strategy has an attractive product name; the commodity has a story behind it.
- Design features, target consumers of commodity, complete design draft and clear briefing skills are advanced during design proposal.
- Most of the groups selected during design proposal raise design proposals different from characteristics of the existing commodities.
- There are feasible design strategies.

The overall achievements are as shown in the following diagrams:

1) Operator: Kuang-tsai

Theme of creation: The Twelve Beauties of Jinling Classic Flower Series (commodity design) (Fig. 2)

Creators: Li Shangda, Tao Guoying, Lin Hanzhen, Li Wanjing

Concept of creation: Twelve beauties with unique features in the Chinese classic literature—Dream of the Red Chamber are regarded as the theme. The embroidering skills of Kuang-tsai that have been evolved for half a century are used to present this theme. Chinese culture and traditional craftwork are combined to display the beauty of oriental culture. Consumers' different personalities are reflected on the selection of every design drawing of commodity. Characters do not directly appear in the design drawings. Flowers represented by various roles are used as symbols that are matched with beautiful silhouettes of

various roles and can enhance the topic.



Fig. 2 Students combine the idea of "The Twelve Beauties of Jingling" with embroidery craft

2) Operator: Zhang Wanchun Umbrella

Theme of creation: Brand image planning of Zhang Wanchun Umbrella (marketing planning) (Fig. 3).

Creators: Li Lin, Huang Jiuli, Li Caizhen, Ma Weichen

Concept of creation: This conceptual work infuses vigour into this age-old umbrella brand-- Zhang Wanchun Umbrella. Redesign of the visual image of the brand includes design of standard characters and drops, etc. Emphasis is also placed on design of online marketing, webpage and fan pages, for the purpose of integrating the image of Zhang Wanchun Umbrella. Bread Tree, the work of the famous painter Yi Bai that is full of the funs of childhood, highly popular online and used to combine young people's market, popularize the brand via different channels and enhance popularity of the brand. Moreover, Facebook is used more positively to effectively and swiftly attain the advertising effect so that this old brand can draw closer attention.



Fig. 3 The illustration work to Zhang Wanchun Umbrella

3) Operator: Zhen Bei Fang Culture & History Studio Theme of creation: Taking foot in Zhen Bei Fang, cruising in Incense Legend (marketing planning) (Fig. 4)

Creators: Wang Huixuan, Lin Fangqi, Zeng Chunping

Concept of creation: The concept of this activity is hoping that visitors can feel every corner of this park in an easier way in summer. Focus is placed on the specific craftwork temples and delicacies in Zhen Bei Fang Cultural Park. Maps, post cards, spring water and handkerchief relating to this park are launched. These four side commodities feature lively patterns; the map is added with a lot of practical information needed by visitors, so that visitors can feel the old age and beauty of Zhen Bei Fang.





Fig. 4 The visual identity design for the bike activity of Zhen Bei Fang

4) Operator: Mu Zu Shoes Theme of creation: WAZ (commodity design) (Fig. 5)  
 Creators: Lin Jiesi, Xi Jingyu, Zhang Yunjuan, Zeng You'an  
 Concept of creation: waz is the abbreviation of "what is". Waz sounds like "sock" in Chinese spelling, which is similar to the conceptually designed product—sabots. This product gives people an impression that is different from their fixed impression of sabots. Advanced and novel ideas are applied to plan for the overall image, so that people will exclaim "What is this" at the first sight. The originality of the highly popular "socks" is combined with sabots, so that theme series are extended from the currently popular elements and local features of Taiwan through combination of old and new elements so as to develop unique and new products with local features of Taiwan.



Fig. 5 The socks design for the clogs

5) Operator: Quanxing Tatami  
 Theme of creation: Shaping—skilfully-formed Tatami (commodity design) (Fig. 6)  
 Creators: Shi Jiaqi, Zhou Junci, Jiang Yi'an, Xie Yixuan, Li Zhijuan  
 Concept of creation: The shape of basic unit is combined with mild colours to form the overall appearance of skilfully-formed Tatami which appears in the form of rim-free Tatami. It is different from the shape of products sold on the market. With the outer shape looking like skilfully-formed rug, the Tatami can be stored and transported more easily. Additionally, skilfully-formed Tatami made of Rush-Straw has the function of anti-dust, anti-acarus and purifying air.



Fig. 5 The tatami is designed for the family with baby in order to substitute for rubber floor

6) Operator: Zhenfa Tea House  
 Theme of creation: Image design of Zhenfa Tea House (marketing strategy) (Fig. 7)  
 Creators: Lin Xiurong, Hong Zhenxun, Zhang Yumin, Lai Yiling  
 Concept of creation: This concept is redesigned for Zhenfa Tea House as a propaganda medium. The major popularizing article is engraved on the seal. 12 solar terms are matched with funny mascot to present kindness. The white paper wrappage can exactly set off uniqueness of the seal. Business card is also used to make people feel that these are a series of things and want to visit frequently, so as to ensure that traditional value of the time-honoured shop can bring about a brand-new image.



Fig. 7 Stamps design of 12 solar terms for the Zhenfa Tea House

7) Operator: Hecheng Canvas Bag Theme of creation: A bag of city (commodity design) (Fig. 8)  
 Creators: Wu Yuping, Zeng Yiya, Wang Yuwen, Chen Hongrui  
 Concept of creation: "A bag of Fucheng" is the slogan of the activity. Canvas bag is combined with map and collected seals of featured shops. It seems as if the bag is full of cultural features of Tainan. Tourists can carry the bag when touring. Even after their journey comes into an end, "A bag of Fucheng" is still full of memories. A brand-new conceptual bag is designed in combination with the concept of traditional wrapper. It is a map when being spread out, from which you can tell the location of every scenic spot. When the string is drawn, it will immediately turn into a light and handy canvas bag which can be carried easily when touring in Tainan. As it is made of canvas, the bag is featured with environmental protection and aesthetic appearance.



Fig. 8 The Tainan map design with circle canvas bag



Fig. 10 The even poster design for the Lufu Cultural & Creative Industries

- 8) Operator: San-He Tile Kiln  
Theme of creation: Tile Scent Chess (commodity design)  
(Fig. 9)

Creators: Zeng Huiling, Xu Zuyun, Lin Yixuan, Huang Yuting

Concept of creation: A cubic board game is designed in a conceptual manner. Common Chinese chess is round in general, which lacks features. If it is made of tile with cubic shape, it will be no longer boring and can make people feel the tactility and texture of tile through playing game. Moreover, it is endowed with the traits of traditional cultural exchange. As tile is used as the raw material, excessively exquisite shapes are avoided during the design of the chess. On the contrary, concise and powerful lines are adopted and the total weight is assessed. The tile Chinese chess is endowed with ancient and classic features. Therefore, it is named "Tile Scent Chess".



Fig. 9 Tile Scent Chess collection design

- 9) Operator: Lufu Cultural & Creative Industries  
Theme of creation: "Go! Lufu" creative colouring competition (marketing strategy) (Fig. 10)

Creators: Wu Yixin, Qiu Liu John, Li Zhenxing

Concept of creation: The spirit of Lufu is spread among consumers so that more people will understand and recognize the spirit. It is hoped that more different consumers will come to know this brand and encircle cultural creativity with a multicolour pencil in everyone's hand, so that it will draw attention from fellow traders and families and make them want to understand their own cultural background; this will make them understand the unique cultural amalgamation of Lugang/Tainan (Fucheng) and inspire different cultural creativity values.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present curriculum operation makes a breakthrough in the previous teaching modes that mainly include teaching, doing schoolwork and reporting, etc. Students are required to participate in actual observation of operation, so that they can tap problems and set the way to solve the problems from the perspective of design operators. Also, how to highlight the groups' own advantages and features, etc. is considered during the comparison of design drafts and horizontal competition, and is applied in the practice of the overall curriculum.

In the foregoing literature discussion and curriculum teaching, emphasis is placed on sharing of cultural resources in Tainan and analysis on some scholars' research achievements. Meanwhile, several problems concerning key points of observation to be conducted by students taking the curriculum in the future are raised at the beginning, so that the students can be reminded of the direction to be chosen. It can be found during the mid-term field investigation conducted by the groups that most of the students are still affected by online information in terms of the source of problem searching. Therefore, during the sharing and discussion on the initial field investigation, most of the groups still discuss on how to acquire second-hand data. For this reason, the teachers must lead students to think or discuss on deeper problems at the stage of field investigation, and then draw up relevant strategies for development after finishing another field investigation.

After two stages of exploration, it can be seen at the third stage that design strategies of the groups are affected by inter-group competition. Accordingly, the groups still need to amend the strategies considerably before the deadline for delivering report. However, regular amendment is still becoming more and more mature. It can be found from the sharing of the cooperative operators' gains from learning after listening to the students' briefing that the cooperative operators recognized the students' originality and executive force in general. However, most of the operators reflected an essential and practical issue, namely cost control. Lots of briefings reveal that the groups did think about cost evaluation, but they still failed to accurately master the actual part in the market. For the majority of the manufacturers participating in the activity, even though designers do not necessarily participate in the actual operation in the industry, they must master the scope of disposal more clearly. This is extremely beneficial to the students, no matter whether they win the final creation award.

For the students taking the practice curriculum, they can

better understand that they need to pay closer attention to direction and details when developing cultural commodities or working out design marketing strategies in cultural creative industry by means of practical experiment and operation. Lastly, the students' research achievements are displayed in public space, which provides more opportunities for exchange and discussion among visitors as well as various possibilities developed from cultural content and cooperation with different industries.

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