

УДК 745/749 : 391

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EMPATHIC DESIGN AS A NEW PARADIGM IN FASHION METHODOLOGY

Традиційна дизайн методологія була доведена надійною протягом приблизно сторіччя постійного удосконалення та полірування, проте нові тренди як етичність та інтерес до людства, визначили започаткування нових методів в методології моди, орієнтованих на користувача. Незважаючи на широке розповсюдження в західних країнах, такі культури як Україна досі не мають змоги прийняти систему через низьку гнучкість розроблених методів.

Дослідження призначено для аналізу сучасних емпатичних методів та пропозиції кореляції для адаптації під потреби українських споживачів.

Ключові слова: *емпатичний дизайн, методологія моди, споживацька поведінка*

Традиционная дизайн методология была доказана надежной в течение примерно столетия постоянного совершенствования и полировки, однако новые тренды как этичность и интерес к человечеству, определили начало новых методов в методологии моды, ориентированных на пользователя. Несмотря на широкое распространение в западных странах, такие культуры как Украина до сих пор не имеют возможности принять систему из-за низкой гибкости разработанных методов.

Исследование предназначено для анализа современных эмпатических методов и предложения корреляции для адаптации под нужды украинских потребителей.

Ключевые слова: *эмпатический дизайн, методология моды, потребительское поведение*

**Матеріали II Всеукраїнської науково-практичної заочної конференції
«Дизайн-освіта майбутніх фахівців: теорія і практика»**

Traditional design methodology was proofed to be reliable during about century of constant elaboration and polishing, however new trends such as sustainability and concerns about humans, determined establishments of new user-centered methods in fashion design methodology. Despite the widespread of techniques in western countries, such cultures as Ukraine still trouble to adopt system due to low flexibility of proposed methods.

Research is designed to analyze current empathic methods and propose correlations to adopt those for Ukrainian consumers.

Key words: *empathic design, fashion methodology, consumer behavior.*

Since the beginning of times, people were widely concerned about their appearance and social representation through clothes. Fashionable dress can be traced as far as back as 25,000 years ago with adorned clothing uncovered in graves of northern Russia. Fashion as an industry has younger history. It believed to be established with the emergence of the industrial and commercial revolution near the end of the eighteenth century. Since then famous practicing as Charles Worth, Callot Sisters, Paul Poiret, Gabrielle Chanel, Christian Dior, Vivienne Westwood and many others would build their own conception of fashion business for many decades ahead (Sterlacci & Arbuckle, 2009). Although quick and widespread appearance of fashion brands and establishment of main design principles in dress development, theory and research around subject still were much more theoretical and philosophical discourse. Empirical studies and framing of fashion design process came into discussion just in XX century, thus weren't documented before (Kawamura, 2005). However, the changing dynamics of the fashion industry since then, such as the fading of mass production, increase in number of fashion seasons, and modified structural characteristics in the supply chain have reorganized fashion process as such and reinforced logical algorithmization of fashion design process in order to minimize loss and speed up production (Doyle, Moore, & Morgan, 2006). This encouraged researchers and

practitioners to develop fashion methodology which will combine and outline the main successful methods, techniques in approaches in fashion design practices. This was resulted in the structure which is known as traditional fashion methodology.

There were no exact reasons to establish dramatical changes into system since then. Improvement in technological process and wide-spread of trends were reasons for just negligible correlations in the process. However, sustainable and, in particular, environmental issues, have reasoned reconsideration of system's sufficiency. Quick trend changing and widespread affordability of clothes are reasons of enormous and sharply growing garment disposal, as well as environmental damages, what is just a foundation of all detrimental consequences. Thus, researches came with conclusion of empathic design, which will be based on long term desires of users, rather than on fake one-moment satisfaction. Although, introduction of empathic component to the existed fashion methodology is not just trivial improvement, but incremental re-configuration. It establish base for further research.

Based on above mentioned data, the aim of the research were distinguished as critical analysis, modification and improvement of existing empathic design methods to the customer group of Ukrainian citizens. In order to achieve main aim, following questions of the research were established:

- 1) Outline current practices of empathic design methodology
- 2) Define empathic design methods which would be suitable for Ukrainian customers
- 3) Modify existed empathic design methods according to recent technological innovations either particularities of consumer's group

With regards to first question, it is necessary to mention that the concept of empathic design is not new, throughout the history of design was evident that manufacturers have to meet needs of customer in order to succeed, thus consider ergonomics and environmental aspects (Rayport & Leonard-Barton, 1997). At the

end of 1990s researchers and industries began to explore feelings, moods of consumers and how they linked to design solutions. All those discussions brought new approaches and methods in the area. Eventually design shifted from user-centered design towards co-design, where people express their experiences in the design process. (Rizzo, 2010). Another approach propose step forward from co-design to imagination, where designers not just face people's experiences but also create World to conduct better user experiences (Vaajakallio, 2010).

Emotional design is becoming more prevalent over the last decade as designers are now required to become in sync with users on a deeper level from the start of the design lifecycle. We are in an innovation driven age, and companies have started to look to their customers for the answers to the next desirable products (Crossley, 2003). Leonard and Rayport argue that standard techniques of inquiry rarely lead to truly novel product concepts. Thus, they have proposed following techniques to implement empathic design: gathering, analyzing, and applying information gleaned from observation in the field. Watching consumers was always obvious but still very important and valuable process. Researchers brought valuable contribution into theoretical frame of empathic design methodology.

Mattelmäki, Vaajakallio and Koskinen conducted wide research on the methodological base of empathic design and proposed following core concepts around which have to be outlined methods. First, ideas have to rise through interactions with people, as important is not what people see, but which meaning they give to it. Second, design research must be done in real life, in the same environment where it will be implemented. Third, 'research methods should come from design and be visual and tactile, inspiration-enhancing, deliberately cheap and low tech, playful, tested in reality, and targeted at the fuzzy front end of the design process.' Fourth, designers should explore all those meanings by themselves and produce visual content such as mock-ups and storyboards (Mattelmäki, Vaajakallio, & Koskinen, What Happened to Empathic Design?,

2014). In another research authors also identified four directions of empathic design: through the observation; generalizing approaches that aim to facilitate user's imagination and provide tools for respondents; combination of facilitation and participation in collection creation; expansion of scope to various stakeholders. Thus, researches identified that people with no design training must contribute to the design activities (Mattelmaki & Visser, Lost in Co-X: Interpretations of Co-Design and Co-Creation, 2011). Wright and McCarthy proposed next types of methods towards: A dialogue-based approach and narrative approach. In one, users are observed and interviewed to access their expertise. A second direction is about generative approaches that aim to facilitate or trigger the user's imagination and expressions with tools provided by design researchers, while the analysis is left to the experts. In the third direction, the designer facilitates but also participates in collective creation; and in the final direction, design researchers support and facilitate a collaborative process among various stakeholders—not just with the assumed users (Wright & McCarthy, 2001).

Sanders proposes three main layers of empathic design conduction: say, do and make. First two relate to interviews and observations. Last one relates to visualizing or expressing people's expectations and dreams. According to Sanders these categories should be explored simultaneously to achieve an empathic understanding of the users (Sanders & Dandavate, 1999). McDonagh has extended this theory and propose full circle of product development (Fig. 1), which begins with empathic constituent from Sanders. Figure reveals main stages of design development from gathering background data to design outcomes and role of each stakeholder in the process. As also evident from the figure, design process can be conducted visa-versa as well, what defines consideration of feedback in next design solutions. Thus, proposed model form solid circulation of design process.

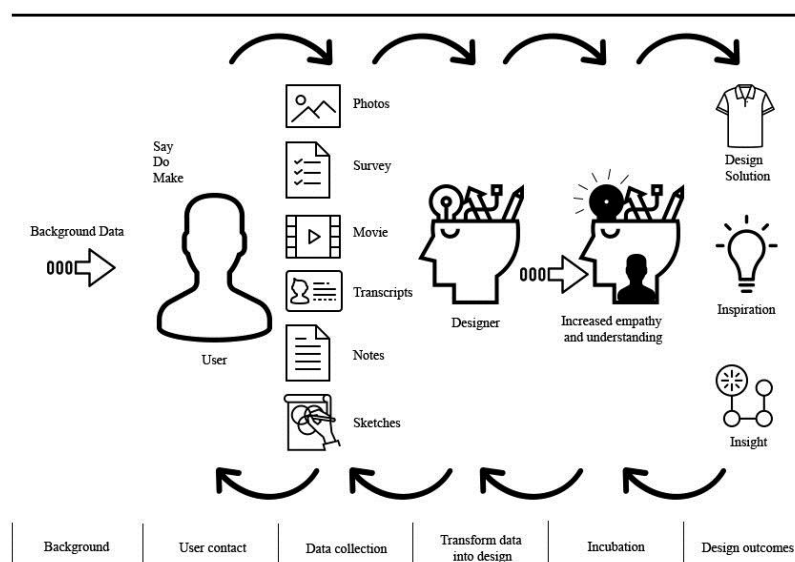


Fig.1. Empathic design model (McDonagh D. , Empathic design: emerging design research methodologies, 2006)

Other studies identify that designers have to widen the scope from task focused usability to consideration of contexts, actions, feelings, attitudes and expectations (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), (Thackara, 2000). Sanders and Dandavate identify also importance of visual components and proposes visual collages as a component to gather data from users (Sanders & Dandavate, 1999). McDonagh and Storer further add mood boards, cognitive maps and visual product evaluation to the list (McDonagh & Storer, 2005). McDonagh-Philip & Lebbon additionally emphasize importance of taking designer out of his comfort zone and put him into user's environment, in short term in can bring him possibility to indicate important issue to be solved and in long-term in will help him to develop more participatory research behavior (McDonagh-Philip & Lebbon, 2000).

Coming to the second question of our research, we have outlined three main empathic methods which can be suitable for the Ukrainian customer group. First one is mood boards technique, which are collections of abstract images that can help communicate emotions and can provide inspiration (Costa, Schoolmeester, Dekker, & Jongen, 2003), (Garner & McDonagh-Philip, 2001), (McDonagh & Storer, 2005). Visual communication is always powerful tool, and Ukrainian, in

particular, are willingly share their photos in both formal and informal contexts, thus such form of data collection should be suitable for target group. Second are questionnaires (Forms), what mean retrieving feedback through use of forms with pre-determined questions (e.g using prepared feedback boxes, rating scales and opportunities for comments), it is beneficial for research purposes as data can be analyzed statistically and generally responses can be combined and gathered by groups, although some people can find this way of data gathering irritating and perform low level of involvement, not to mention the fact that restricted number of variability constantly decrease flexibility of answers. Third one is observation, which is defined as studying individual members of a culture in depth (Fulton, 2003)(Abrams, 2000). This can be used as a complementary method to two mentioned above in order to pursue information which was not collected by direct user interactions either to consider some unconscious details which can be not so easy to distinguish by user, such as introduction of new technologies or particular social rules of outfit etc.

However, all those techniques can be barely applied in pure way, what brings us to the third question of our discussion. In order to understand how exactly following techniques should be modified, we have to refer to the studies of consumer behavior and define the target group for our research. Yulia Cherevko proposes three models of Ukrainian consumer behavior. First one based on generations, thus determine behavior according to their age group (Cherevko, 2010). Based on this, she assumes that the most active consumers in Ukraine are Z generation (born in late 1990th and later), as this generation is born in the era of rapid technology development and globalization, their behavior is influenced much be western patterns of mass-consumers. Generation of late 1980th – early 1990th (Y generation) presumably will be less adored to impulsive purchasing. This generation was witness of the most changeable period in Ukrainian history, from Independence announcement to following revolutions and financial crisis. Thus, people born in this period are more likely to purchase luxury unaffordable goods,

which goes out of their limits (cause such type of goods were unavailable in their most probably poor childhood), but equally they are not used to consumerism patterns, and don't have habits of making unnecessary purchases (cause they used to changes in political and economical situations, thus used to plan their purchases in advance). Generation who were born in early 80th and before (X generation) are more likely to save their conservative purchasing habits (buy once and wear it till the complete physical damage and pass goods to next generations, as it was common during Soviet Union times). We have chose Y generation for our model testing. This generation is still young enough to be active users of new technologies and they used to changes, thus there are more likely to be flexible towards new model implementation. Also, their current customer patterns seem like most sustainable-orientated. As a result of metamorphoses, which during their lifetime was following working generation of people, who are now in their 20s - 30s, their style-life completely differ from standard models of consumers within same income group in other countries. Moreover, it is common for them to not repeat consumer patterns of their own parents or elder generation, as they build completely different priorities in life (Say, 2015). From the other aspect, as rapid technological development during the young age of generation, they are distinguished as active users of Internet technologies. 70% of Millenials confirm their dependence of Smartphone, which they use about 150 times per day in order to get some information. From their prior activities are listening music and making quick random pictures in order to subsequently post in social networks (Say, 2015).

Based on those assumptions and observations, we have presumed that online based data collection for mood boards would be the most suitable way to gather information. In particular, Instagram profiles were proposed to use in order to identify preferences in clothes, entertainment, food and interest of target group. Collected visual data can be then gathered on boards or analyzed statistically in order to distinguish main inclinations of target group.

With regards to questionnaires, whose can be widely customized and narrowed down based on data collected from Instagram, thus questions will be reduced to important and valid either abstract ideas, which would be easier for user to follow. Also, as an active Internet users, analyzed group can find it attractive to fulfill questionnaires through online forms, which will be shared through social networks. In addition, it will make process of results analyzing much easier.

Observation stage may contain just critical points which till that point weren't revealed. It may be innovations in technologies, which are more likely to affect generation of Millennials or widespread of highly-practical material, which can attract interest of target groups. Preferences of social circles or dress-code in regular entertainment places also should be point of consideration.

To conclude, in recent decade wide range of empathic methods were introduced in order to meet preferences of fashion design consumers. However methods lack focus and consideration of social/cultural group particularities. Thus, in addition to achievements in empathic methodology, studies on consumer behavior have to be considered. In current research we have outlined main empathic methods to use for Ukrainian audience and have proofed ways to modify them in order to face particularities of particular group. However, further practical trials should be held to confirm above hypothesis.

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