

*Article***A Case Study on Form Research in Clothing Design**© **Yüksel Şahin**, © **Itır Arat***Abstract:*

The current increase in fashion design education institutions and the momentum in the design industry suggests that creative approaches have been influential in fashion design education. Thus, the research on creative approaches in fashion design education have become important. Form has been a definitive factor in art and design disciplines and allows the employment of creative approaches in clothing design. It could be observed that both ready-made garments and wearable art works possess forms created based on various perspectives. Although the perception of the form varies in these designs, it could be observed that the current innovative form approach has been on the rise. In the present study, it was determined that there were problems in the association between the body and form in the Fashion Design III course on clothing design. Thus, the reflection of the "form/a-form" approach that aims to propose design recommendations for clothing design form research on the creative process was investigated based on applications and views of the participating Eskişehir Technical University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Fashion Design students.

*Key words:* Fashion design, clothing design education, fashion design education, creative dress pattern, deconstructivism in clothing design, form /a-form.

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**Introduction**

Although clothes were defined as a three-dimensional object used to fulfill the various needs of individuals since the early ages, it also started to include social and cultural meanings such as adornment, acceptance and diversification [1, p. 5]. It could be suggested that the clothing as a means of expression has been affected by the economic, political, cultural, political circumstances and artistic approaches in the society. These interactions allowed the development and diversification of clothes with different features and forms. Due to technological advances, the need to produce clothes with various features and forms paved the way for the development of various modes of production in fashion industry [2, p. 3]. In the dictionary, the concept of form is defined as "one of several or many different ways in which something is seen, experienced, or produced", and it is an element employed in clothing design in fashion design education [3]. Seivewright [4, p. 14] described form as a shape or area with certain outlines, an appearance and structure and associated it with shape. Thus, shape/form is a method to create and support something within a structural framework. Seivewright [4, p. 14] mentioned that it would not be possible to create a silhouette without a shape/form in fashion design and form is significant in clothing design, since it provides potential ideas that could be transferred into body and clothes. It is known that in history, Charles Frederick Worth emphasized form in the clothes he designed [5, p. 19]. On the other hand, the slogan of Modernism, which is the foundation of the Bauhaus school, that "form follows function" emphasized the significance of form/shape in design approach, argued that creativity could have certain rules similar to science, and aimed to develop a common design language that would allow the creation of products in the 20th century [6, p. 2]. The impact of 'deconstruction', which was derived from Jacques Derrida's definition of postmodern philosophy, was also observed in the works of designers who questioned the form and structure of clothes [7, p. 13]. It could be argued that several fashion designers such as Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake, Martin Margiela, Rei Kawakubo, Hussein Chalayan and Tomoko Nakamichi influenced the direction of the fashion industry with their designs based on extraordinary and original forms.

Clothes with form features that reflect extraordinary interpretations instead of the usual, familiar forms, could lead to different and original forms based on comfort and functionality dimensions [8, p. 456]. In the present study, the "form/a-form" approach, proposed to investigate the form perceptions of fashion design students, was analyzed based on the student works. The study was conducted due to the problems observed in the formation of the body-form relationship in the Fashion Design III course. The problems experienced by the students in working on the form were effective on the determination of this problem. The present study was conducted for the comprehension of concepts such as the relationship between body and the clothes, form, size, and volume, and to provide knowledge on these concepts. At the beginning of the semester, students were asked to read a list of art history references, and to employ only calico fabric (raw cloth). The main objective of the present study, which strived to improve the perception of form based on the facilities provided by calico fabric, was the comprehension of the form/a-form approach. Different applications were conducted by the students based on this main objective. For example, standard applications such as fashion drawing, sketching, etc. could be employed in the design process. In the course, students were free to select any application. Most students preferred to research, experiment, and conduct fitting on 30-40 cm or full-size dummies with calico fabric, while a few students preferred drawings or clays modeling.

### **Scope and Limitations**

The present study was carried out at Eskişehir Technical University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Fashion Design, where students are accepted with a nationwide central exam, with students who took Fashion Design III course in the 2018-2019 academic year fall semester. The study was based on the design processes of the students and the views on the process. The study sample included six students with a clear design perception based on prior performance in fashion design education, and who were willing to participate; hence the study data were limited based on the properties of the sample.

### **Aim and Method**

The present study aimed to reveal the reflections of the "form/a-form" approach, which was proposed for the development of design approaches in fashion design education, on the creative clothing production of the fashion design students. The study aimed to investigate the acquisitions of the six students who attended the course instructed with the form/a-form approach based on the design process, student views and works. Thus, this study was constructed as a case study, a qualitative research method. The case study approach was defined by Creswell [9, p. 97] as a qualitative research method that could be both the outcome and the object of study. In the present case study, the research topic was investigated with the holistic single case design. The said method was adopted since the form/a-form method was scrutinized as a case on a single analysis unit with a holistic approach. Study participants were assigned with purposive sampling to conduct an in depth and a comprehensive research based on the available robust data.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The present study findings were based on qualitative data. In the study, data diversity was accomplished with the employment of various data collection instruments compatible with the case study approach. Data collection instruments included semi-structured interviews, observation, visual documents, researcher diary and literature review. One of the data collection instruments employed in the study was the observations of the author on the instruction of design education with the form/a-form approach in the project course. The participatory observation method employed in the study was based on the live observations of the author during the data collection process. In this stage, field notes were taken about the classroom environment, the course content, and the interactions between the students. The study data were also collected with semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were more flexible, and the number and order of questions could be altered based on the circumstances [10, p. 90]. In the interviews, predetermined questions on the research problem were asked to the participants and data were collected based on the nature of the semi-structured interviews. In this stage, interview questions were on the content of the form/a-form approach adopted in the course. Seven simple open-ended questions were included in the form and, when necessary, one or two additional questions were included to collect in-depth data. The interviews were conducted at adequate times for both the author and six students. Interviews lasted about 20-30 minutes. Oral consent of the participants was obtained after they were

informed that the interviews will be recorded, and the interview data will be used in the study. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder, and notes were taken by the author during the interviews. Expert views were obtained on data collection instruments to establish study data validity and reliability.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The study data were analyzed with methods adequate for the data collected with various collection instruments. Both observation notes and interview data were analyzed separately with content analysis to achieve comprehensive study data. Furthermore, the author conducted semi-structured interviews with six participants to collect in-depth case study data. The interviews were then transcribed. The study data were coded with content analysis. Thus, the researcher first analyzed the data consisting of the answers given by the participants to the interview questions and coded them in a meaningful way. In the next step, these codes were classified into categories to achieve the study themes. Then, all collected data were interpreted by the author and the findings are presented in detail. The views of two experts were obtained on the interview documents. Experts read and analyzed the data individually. Studies were carried out by determining the points of consensus or disagreement about the codes and themes obtained together with the researchers and experts.

### **Study Validity and Reliability**

In the study, data were diversified by the employment of various data collection instruments to ensure validity. In data collection and interpretation, a chain of records that included participant views, audio recordings, observation notes and researcher diary was developed. Furthermore, the study findings are presented in a clear, comprehensible and accessible manner. Another method that was adopted to ensure the study validity was the confirmation of the accuracy of the study data and findings by the field experts and the authors. The analysis of the data by various experts led to more diverse content. Furthermore, the analysis of the case with different perspectives contributed to the study validity. The data were interpreted by the experts with an objective and ethical approach. To ensure the study reliability, the participants, the environmental properties, the collected study data, and the role of the authors are clearly stated. Experts and authors were included in the analyses, and the themes were determined only upon agreement. Generally, various tests could be conducted to determine credibility, confirmation, reliability and data sources to ensure validity and reliability in research [11, p. 132]. In the present study, the researcher reported the findings based on the diversity of the data collection instruments, the authenticity of the findings, the consistency of the procedures, and the validity of the findings in similar environments. First, the data were systematically and clearly described, and then these cases were discussed and interpreted with an objective approach. To support the study findings and to reflect the participant views, direct quotes are also reported. The quotes were employed as the evidence for participant views. The confidentiality of the participant identities was ensured by coding the student identities (Student 1: S1, Student 2: S2, etc...).

### **Findings**

In this section, the study findings collected with the semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants on participant views, observation notes and researcher diary are presented. The study was based on the observations conducted in classrooms at the two-story faculty building at Yunus Emre Campus during the 2018-2019 academic year fall semester.

Based on the observations, the classroom was a rectangular space, and the windows were located just opposite the entrance door. The windows were covered by dark and thick curtains to prevent excessive light. On the right side of the entrance, there was a board, and a lectern was located right in front of the board. The students were seated to face the board. The student desks were arranged in a u-shape to allow interaction between the students and material/equipment exchange.

Although the study sample included only six students based on performances in fashion design education, other students in the class were also included in the observations since they were the part of the natural observation environment. Each student was allocated desk and chair in the classroom, and they generally worked within their individual boundaries (Fig. 1). It was observed that the students generally brought the material required for the course daily and exchanged these materials with other students. This could indicate that the design environment allowed cooperation among the students. Although the communications were open among the students, there was also an open and respectful communication between the students and lecturers. Thus, it could be suggested that communications among the students and between the students and the instructors supported learning and development.



Fig.1. The Classroom Environment.

Findings collected with the semi-structured interviews and participant views were classified in six themes, namely achievements, experiences, material and technique, awareness, creativity and originality. The findings were supported by researcher diary (RD) data for an in-depth analysis.

### Achievements

The interview findings revealed that the form/a-form approach led to achievements among the participants. Based on the views of the students, these achievements reflected various sub-themes such as problem-solving skills, improvement of self-confidence, independence, focusing on the process, and motivation.

Problem-solving skills were among the student achievements. Four students stated that the challenging nature of the course improved their skills to cope with problems or difficulties. This demonstrated that each student developed problem-solving skills due to their experiences during the design process. The views of S3 and S4 were as follows:

"... When the professor stands next to us and says, 'think about it, attack the concept, I want to see it today, no, you will do it today, I will see it today', there is a pressure, whether you like it or not, you start thinking about stuff you never thought about before, and suddenly you are enlightened, and you are ready to do it before the deadline. This is a compelling effect, but it actually forces your productive side, your imagination, improving your efficiency." (Interview: S3).

"For example, it was wrong, but for example, I asked someone, (s)he said that this would not work like that, but I found a solution after trying a few times..." (Interview: S4).

The author observed the communication between the lecturer and the students in the class. The researcher diary included the following entry: "Students experiences difficulties from time to time with their work, but the course instructor offered them the motivation they needed. The course instructor warned the students to observe each other, to follow the critic provided for the other students; and thus, be ready for similar situations. Also, students exchanged ideas during the design process and produced solutions for design problems via brainstorming" (RD, December/2018).

The views of S3 and S4 revealed that the compelling effect of the project course led to the acquisition of problem-solving skills by the students. Students acquired the skill to produce different solutions for the problems they encountered during design. The compelling effect provided a driving force for the students and contributed to their development by allowing them to work harder, to find solutions to related issues, and to engage their imaginations.

Another sub-theme determined in this theme was the improvement of self-confidence. The views of the participants S1 and S2 were as follows:

"I can say for sure that even my self-confidence started to improve. Yes, I can produce..." (Interview: S1).

"At first, the idea of implementing the design that we imagined challenged me. But then, when I saw what I could do, I felt more self-confident and then you say okay, it was not a big deal, but at first I had a hard time." (Interview: S2).

As mentioned by S1 and S2, it could be concluded that the self-confidence of the students improved during the project course. The fact that they became confident that they would succeed in the course was a positive contribution to the design process.

Another sub-theme of achievements theme was independence. The interviews conducted with the students revealed that five students felt more independent on course topics. S1 and S5 stated the following:



“...I was working in fear. Imagine that I even believed that I was not a productive person. You know, you could remain standard... What can I do about it? Because it was the standard, everyone worked on it, what could I do, it killed the creative side, it is not design, it is not really decoration, but as I said before, you are free.”(Interview: S1).

“I felt free. The restrictive... I mean, when I could not convey my thoughts directly... I did not think I was restricted, but... You know, it actually improved me. I cannot think directly, but I try to do it as much as I can.” (Interview: S5).

The data collected in the interviews conducted with S1, S5, and other participants demonstrated that the students felt independent in the project course, and they tried to do their best, even if they had to follow certain rules. It could be suggested that the participating students who developed a tendency to push their limits and revealed their independent perspectives produced successful results.

One of the problems that the students experienced during the course was focusing on the process. It was observed that certain students, who started the semester with great excitement and enthusiasm, were gradually disconnected from the process due to factors such as performance problems, concerns associated with their products, and efficient use of the time. However, the interview data revealed that the opposite was true in this course. The views of the participants were as follows:

“...It is very good that we dedicated the whole day to the project. Because really, when you leave the school, you immediately start procrastinating, and you do the work in the class with dummies, we have facilities. I think it is great to work here. That is why I enjoy it a lot.” (Interview: S2).

“...at first, I had a bit of a hard time when we went from drawing to the dummy, but then I got used to it. You know, it is also beneficial for us to use the whole evening class hours, otherwise we go home and maybe do nothing, but we work well here...” (Interview: S4).

“...it happens that you think about the project while having breakfast. For instance, while watching the movie, your head is worried about the project, actually you are there physically, but you are gone spiritually, because working on something is not only working on the sewing machine, I can think about the project while walking on the street in daily life, what can I do, how can I do it, which part I can work on, when I think about it, when I decide in my mind, it is easy to transfer it to the pattern, but the thinking process takes longer...” (Interview: S3).

In support of the above-mentioned interview findings, the author noted the following in the researcher diary: “Students were prepared before they came to the class and worked with a plan. Also, students generally worked all day in the classroom or atelier on the project day” (RD, November/2018).

The students stated that they focused on the project throughout the semester, and they controlled the design processes and conducted these processes with a controlled approach. S3 emphasized that design ideas could be developed every hour of the day, and (s)he focused on this work all the time. The students spread the design process they started in the class to other time periods during the day and their focus remained on the process due to creative and effective thinking methods.

Another sub-theme in the achievements theme was motivation. Motivation prepares the student for the class and affects the work positively, which is in turn reflected on clothing design. Five participants stated that they were motivated during the project classes. S2 and S5 stated the following:

“We do not draw, you know, we apply it directly, but we can also create the pattern of what we apply. In other words, the a-form I developed, sometimes I do things that go beyond me, but seeing that I can draw the pattern served a lot and excited me more, frankly...” (Interview: S2).

“...So, my first thought was what it would be like. After realizing how it would be, it was not difficult. You do not force it; you have fun when it is fun.” (Interview: S5).

The author noted the following in the researcher diary: “It was observed that students worked more willingly and enthusiastically after they comprehended new and sometimes challenging knowledge” (RD. 11/2018).

Based on the views of S2, S5, and three participants, it was determined that the students attended the classes with high motivation and enthusiasm. Based on student views and researcher diary, the motivation for the course allowed the students to work more enthusiastically, which was reflected on the design process.

## Experiences

Another finding in the present study was associated with student experiences. It was determined that the participants had similar or different experiences throughout the course instructed with the form/a-form approach. These were categorized in the following themes: experiencing new applications, learning by trial-and-error, and small dummy application (prototyping). The interviews conducted with the participants revealed that the unique experiences of each participant were sometimes shared similar characteristics.

The first sub-theme in the experiences theme was experiencing new applications. The student experiences in the project course about new applications in garment production were narrated by the participants as follows:

“... Actually, I think what we call the a-form is like a righthanded person starting to use the left hand.” (Interview: S1).

“In fact, we worked with drawings last year, and of course it always entailed drawings. We worked with two dimensional on the drawings and this was reflected in our designs, of course.” “Of course, planar things, things made up of lines, you know, like a bulge, never worked on three-dimensional shapes. But in this semester, you know, working on the dummy, we could do these things in three dimensions...” (Interview: S4).

All participants stated that they acquired new learning skills by experiencing new applications that they were not used to. It could be suggested that new applications and learning and design processes allowed various creative innovations in clothing design.

Another sub-theme in the student experiences theme was learning by trial-and-error. The views of the participants were as follows:

“... we do it by trial-and-error, for example, but it does not work, we do it again, you know, I can see the stages myself, so it contributes a lot to me.” (Interview: S2).

“...Now we want to do something with a surface, something small or big. But we inevitably do this in two dimensions, but human is three-dimensional, we have to do it by trial-and-error, constant trial, trying on a dummy, constantly observing errors on a living creature, and correcting these errors accordingly...” (Interview: S3).

“Yes, for example, when I think of something like that later, I will know how to do it because I have done it before, I will think that "this is how it happens" by trial-and-error. (Interview: S5).

The author noted the following in the researcher diary on this issue: “Students spent a lot of effort and cared for their designs. It was observed that they work on a design by trying it, observing it, and deconstructing it, and trying it again when it was not what they wanted. They spent an effort to discover the problematic aspects by discovering design errors with the trial-and-error method. Students conducted various trails until they obtained the best results” (RD, December/2018).

Based on the experiences of the participants S2, S3 and S5, it was determined that learning by trial-and-error method contributed significantly to the student achievements. The students learned based on the causality in clothing design processes. Furthermore, they learned from their mistakes during the trial-and-error process.

Another issue associated with student experiences was the student practice (prototyping) on the small dummy. As they worked with the trial-and-error method, the students who designed clothes in the project course conducted preliminary fittings on a small wooden dummy. The associated student views were as follows:

“Let me tell you, I worked on the small dummy, it was incredibly difficult when compared to the large dummy (dress form mannequin). What was difficult, the drawing or the dummy? Of course, the dummy. But I think it was more beneficial to work on a large dummy (dress form mannequin) ... (Interview: S1).

“For example, I wanted to make something with cubes at first, but I gave up on it because I could not sew tiny cubes, that is, because it ripped the fabric, that was a problem. But in general, for example, if I drew it, I could not do it, so I would not understand the dress pattern. You know, it was much easier because the dress pattern could be seen when I worked in miniature, it was actually a lot easier. It was good in general, but also bad because I cannot implement miniatures in certain designs. For example, I wanted a small piece somewhere in the design, for example, I give up on it because I could not make that small piece even smaller.” (Interview: S5).

“...Yes, we pour out what is in our imagination, the small human, and it is easier for us to fit it on the larger one later on. It was also a reference for us, you know, when transferring it to the larger one.

Because I constantly check how I did it, how I combined it with it. I had a model that I can use as a foundation..." (Interview: S3) (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Small Dummy Application (S3 and S6).

"At first, I was thinking, it would be a bumpy ride. Because, you know, you sew and draw the pattern, I used to say that it would be difficult, but for example, instead of drawing something and giving it up and starting something new, for example, we did something, and since we thought about it and draw different things based on it, you know, a dummy is more logical than drawing..." (Interview: S6).

The following was noted in the researcher diary on the small dummy application: "While this application was easily perceived and implemented by certain students, it was observed that others experienced difficulties. It was observed that the students who experienced difficulties with the small dummy could not reflect the forms in their minds with small fabric pieces due to the small size of the dummy. The benefits of this application could differ based on the student, and it may be beneficial for the volunteering students" (RD, November/2018).

Participants stated that working on a small dummy had both advantages and disadvantages. While certain participants stated that it was more difficult to work on a small dummy, others argued that it was better to try out the design features that they could not express with drawings on the small dummy, which helped them in the determination of the model. These views were consistent with the researcher diary entries. Since the views on the small dummy application differed between the students, this application should be the choice of the student. Since different views on this subject introduced different perspectives in the study, it was considered to contribute to data diversity.

### Material and Techniques

The other study findings determined in the interviews conducted with the participants were associated with the materials and the technique employed in the course. The sub-themes in the material and techniques category included the use of a single type of fabric, working directly with the material, creative pattern experiments, draping (work without a dress pattern), and the correlations between the material, pattern, and production.

One of the sub-themes related in material and techniques was the use of a single type of fabric. The students designed clothes only with calico fabric (raw cloth). Participants stated the following in the interviews:

"Using calico fabric was beneficial if you ask me. Imagine that is a textured fabric. Think of it as something of an eye sore that prevents thinking, there is a great chaos in the city, we are constantly confused, but if I go to a village environment, if I stay in a more productive and quieter environment, as such, the calico fabric makes us more productive, like that calm environment" (Interview: S1).

"...Thus, in this form, when there is color in the other form, individuals' perceptions of color were also mixed with the fabrics, design, and of course, color changes the design a lot... But right now, it only focuses on our design, a-form, when we use only one type of fabric..." (Interview: S4).

"I actually think that limited things develop our imagination more, because you need to do something with that material, you do not reflect on anything else, so you have to do it with it..." (Interview: S5).

The author noted the following on fabric use in the researcher diary: "The use of calico fabric (raw cloth), which was the sole fabric allowed in the course, helped the students to focus on the form of

the garment during the comprehension of the form/a-form approach, and to eliminate the confusion that may arise due to the details of the fabric. Furthermore, since only one type of fabric was allowed, the students could exchange the material when they were out of fabric material” (RD, January/2019).

All other participants, including S1, S4 and S5, stated that the use of a single type of fabric (raw fabric) was beneficial for the design process in the project course. This view was also supported by the data recorded by the author in researcher diary. The participants stated that they were more productive, focused and creative in clothing design with a plain and uniform fabric, and they were more successful in the comprehension and application of the form/a-form correlation.

Furthermore, another issue associated with the material and technique theme was working directly with the material. During the production process, the students could work directly with the material, touch the material, and get to know the material as required by the course. Five students stated that this affected them positively. The views of the participants S1 and S2 were as follows:

“Now, I am not a person who works with drawings, I do not enjoy production unless I can touch the material. And it limits, it limits my creativity tremendously, the colors are not limited like those crayons they gave us. Because the hand memorizes, the eye also memorizes, we try to imagine and reflect as much as we can see and perceive. But at this point, we get involved with the material, maybe integrate with it, interpret it, internalize it...” (Interview: S1).

“...When we practice with fabrics, for example, when we take the fabric and turn it to something else, or pull it to another side, I could see that a-form went in different directions, and it was very good for me to see that I could implement it, that is, in the dummy me...” (Interview: S2).

The participants had the opportunity to produce more clear and novel ideas, since the ideas that emerged while working directly with the material led to immediate results, which could be observed. Working directly with the material, experiencing the material, integrating the material with the design process allowed the students to create new designs by playing with the material.

Another sub-theme in the material and technique theme was creative pattern experiments. In the course, experimenting with creative patterns improved the recognition and working with the material by the students. The experiences and views of the participants S2 and S5 on creative patterns were as follows:

“We do not draw, you know, we implement it directly, but we can also create the pattern of the application. In other words, in the a-form, sometimes I do things that go beyond me, but seeing that I can draw the pattern contributed to me and motivated me...” (Interview: S2).

“Yes, I created several new patterns. It was nice to do it myself. Anyway, we do not use basic patterns, that is, various forms. So, it was very interesting to create a garment based on that pattern” (Interview: S5).

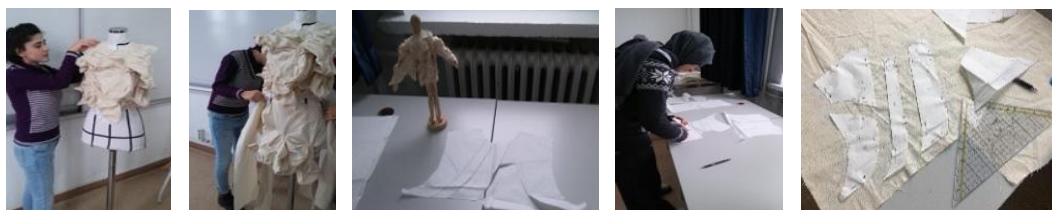


Fig. 3. Application (S3.) – Creative Pattern Experiments (S6).

The study findings based on the views of all participants and S2 and S5 supported that the creative pattern experiments were among the foundations of the form/a-form approach. The students stated that they pushed the limits of their imagination by experimenting with creative patterns, leading to more unusual formal designs (Fig. 3). Creative pattern experiments allowed the students to develop original designs and their sense of form via clothing production.

Similarly, another method employed in creative clothing design was to work without a pattern, in other words, with the draping technique. The draping technique, which could be described as fitting the garment on the dress form mannequin, is one of the oldest and most basic techniques adopted since ancient times [12, p. 40]. In the project course, certain students worked only on the dress form mannequin without any patterns. S1 and S6 stated the following on the draping method:



“I tried it on the dress form mannequin with the draping method. I threw the fabric directly on the dress form mannequin, observed the movements to realize how I can interpret it, how does it look... Then I started to create it. Also, when you work on the sewing machine, it is a completely different process. You plan something based on the crimp or the looks of the fabric, but then, it could completely change” (Interview: S1).

“...I think pattern is very complicated, since this is the draping technique, I think draping is more sensible, you can see how it looks directly on the dress form mannequin. Otherwise, you draw it on paper, for example, but when you cut and apply it to the fabric, something different comes out. In draping, for example, you can really see it, so I think I prefer draping” (Interview: S6).

Another issue associated with material and technique was the correlations between material, pattern, and production. The views of the participants on this issue are presented below:

“The fabric was not that coarse, but we wanted to design something voluminous, and we could not use two layers, you know, we could not use lining material for a fuller look or in the desired form, one starts thinking how I can make it look voluminous. I want it to look voluminous. Yes, this is the fabric I have. So, I cannot use anything else. That was why I divided it into small pieces and formed these pieces to make it look voluminous. We had to do it the hard way. Rather than taking the easy way out. That was actually pretty good for our development” (Interview: S3).

“...How can we adapt that form to the human anatomy, in terms of the pattern and production, and when we associate it with design, this contributed to us. Because when we design a normal dress pattern, we already know it, but how can we fit this form, this three-dimensional shape, to a person, how can we exhibit it in a beautiful way... this was good” (Interview: S4).

Similar to the views of S3 and S4, all participants stated that the comprehension of the form/a-form concept in fashion design education was closely associated with the correlations between material, pattern, and production. The study findings demonstrated that the students created designs that showcased the a-form feature due to their skills to associate the material, pattern, and production. As long as the material, pattern, and production processes are integrated, successful design management would be possible.

### **Awareness**

The participants stated that the course instructed with the form/a-form approach raised their awareness. They stated that their awareness on various topics was raised. The sub-themes of the awareness theme included the concept of dimension, form/a-form perception, artistic awareness, perception of the body, functionality and research.

It has been considered that the concept of dimension, a sub-theme of awareness, is one of the most important topics in fashion design education. The views of the participants on the concept of dimension were as follows:

“How can I say, I tried to transfer it to three dimensions with mud, etc. to perceive the body...” (Interview: S1).

“You know, we take pattern courses. We see the pattern in two dimensions, but the human being is three-dimensional, not two-dimensional. We are trying to dress a three-dimensional person, a living being, with something we designed in two dimensions. This is actually a great success when you look at it that way” (Interview: S3).

“...for example, otherwise, when we draw it, when we draw it on paper, I always did the following; I was thinking in two dimensions, but when I switched to three-dimensions, I always experienced problems. Here, for example, when we do it directly on it, on one hand, you can draw the pattern, and on the other, you can see the possibilities in three dimensions...” (Interview: S6).

The views of the participants S1, S3 and S6 indicated that the students scrutinized the concept of dimension in their designs. After they understood the concept of dimension, the outcomes would be better in designs that fit the human dimensions.

One of the important sub-themes in the awareness theme was the form/a-form perception.

“...What we did was unlike a flat thing, for instance, I cut that flat thing in half, I cut a blouse in half by folding it, or another piece, for example a triangular piece, I put something here, I put a triangular form; and thus, I already go beyond the form”. (Interview: S2).

“...Actually, I understood this, it is a defect in both the form and the pattern. In other words... deformation is not only changing the external appearance, but also distorting the internal form of the pattern. You know, sometimes we do it by breaking it down, sometimes we do it by adding volume...” (Interview: S3).

“In fact, my perception of form changed, when I thought about it before, form was the thing, you know, it will be very rude, crooked, you know, crooked clothes. But in this semester, I realized that even when the clothes are not crooked, we could create different forms with different patterns, by combining different patterns...” (Interview: S4).

Similar to the views of the participants S2, S3 and S4, three other participants stated that their perspectives on form changed and improved during the course. It could be suggested that these views significantly contributed to the research and designs for the comprehension of the form/a-form approach in fashion design education. The development of future designers and their capacity to design with creative forms could contribute to the industry.

Another sub-theme in the awareness theme was artistic awareness. The views of the participants S1, S2 and S4 are presented below:

“I went to the library, I spent time there, but one week, two weeks was obviously insufficient, then you have to keep it on for development. Let me tell you, I made a start, but believe me, I still could not keep it up because I have other courses, I have to focus on this, focus on that, it is always incomplete, but it allowed me to go and spend time in the library. I think this was a joy, I loved it...” (Interview: S1).

“I mean, frankly, I do not know whether it contributed or not right now. Yes, we read, but frankly, I read without questioning it, I read to see what happened at the time, you know, these events at that time, maybe it contributed to my knowledge, but it did not affect my designs since I did not question it” (Interview: S2).

“For example, we do not know the trends. It had this affect. You know, we attend the design faculty and we should know art history. So, maybe we should reflect this in our designs, albeit a little...” (Interview: S4).

The author noted the following in the researcher diary: "The students who conducted reading activities that were limited to a few classes at the beginning of the semester, read the books they borrowed from the libraries, acquired general and new knowledge on the development of arts and design. However, since the course did not completely focus on art and design history, these activities were limited to a few classes in the beginning of the semester, the in-depth knowledge of the students depended on their extracurricular reading activities" (RD, October/2018).

Since reading assignments on art were included only one or two weeks at the beginning of the semester, the participants expressed different views on the adequacy of the reading activities. Certain participants considered preliminary reading activities beneficial, while others considered it beneficial since they learned new information, but also mentioned that these activities were insufficient due to the limited time allocated for the activities. These views were significant since they provided different points of view and data diversity.

In the project course instructed with the form/a-form approach, it was observed that the awareness of the participants about the perception of the human body was raised. The participant S1 stated the following:

“...for example, while conducting research on this subject, I encountered the Stoneman syndrome. Actually, that was my baseline. You know, the body is not like an hourglass as we think, the chest, a thin waist, and the hips. There is no such thing, body types are different. And there are different body types than the standard body structures mentioned in the literature. We ignore these a lot. Long lower body, short upper body, even these are standard. There are also congenital physical disorders, genetic or whatever. There is also scoliosis, the Stoneman syndrome is a completely different dimension, it bends and becomes that way where it bends, I do not know, it is very strange. And how can I say, what those people do... Anyway, I learned all these in this process...” (Interview: S1).

The entries of the author on body perception in the researcher diary were as follows: "While the perspective on the 'human body', which was perceived better with the form/a-form perception, became more meaningful, S1 maximized her/his body perception with research on the Stoneman syndrome. The

fact that the student focused on various physical differences described as disabilities instead of working on healthy human body form strengthened the present study” (RD, December/2018).

Awareness about body perception also introduced the functionality dimension of human clothing. The participant views on functionality in clothing design were as follows:

“that even an A-form garment is wearable in daily life... Because we need to design it this way, it is not as an ornament after all. Because we have to earn somehow. But I think we need to change or manage their perceptions that these are wearable” (Interview: S1).

“So, I considered the basis of functionality, and we learned how to break the form, we learned how to make clothes that are both wearable and without form” (Interview: S2).

“...the aim is both aesthetics and wearability... I saw that it actually came from the past and it has not changed. Thus, it influenced my overall design approach” (Interview: S3).

The participants S1, S2 and S3 stated that the clothes should be functional and reflect a comfortable quality for the human body. These findings demonstrated that the functionality was an important dimension in clothing design.

The students also emphasized the sub-theme of research in the awareness theme. The participant S1 stated the following on research:

“... Maybe the research method started to present [itself], I research articles, I go to the library and research, when there is a theme that interests me, I research it, and it actually became a whole...” (Interview: S1).

Since fields such as design and art require both research and practice, the research skills of the participants improved in the study as well. It could be suggested that this study motivated the participants to conduct research and allowed them to acquire new perspectives.

### **Creativity**

The views of the students on the creativity dimension of the course revealed four sub-themes: imagination, transformation of geometric shapes, creative perspective, and the employment of small pieces of fabric. The views of the participants on imagination were as follows:

“First, I realized the limits of my imagination... You know, the harder I tried, I realized that I could come up with different things...” (Interview: S3).

“So, we found different forms and our imagination developed further. In other words, it was a good thing because imagination is very important for designers...” (Interview: S5).

The views of the participants S3 and S5 emphasized the significance of imagination in fashion design. Students stated that the course widened their imagination and they designed clothes in different forms and pushed their limits. The findings demonstrated that the efforts to create a-form clothing designs that push the boundaries of design principles contributed to the development of imagination.

Another sub-theme in the creativity theme was the transformation of geometric forms. In the project course, the students conducted division, fragmentation, assembly operations based on geometric shapes in search of a-form in the course. The participant views were as follows:

“... What we did was unlike a flat thing, I cut the flat thing in half, I cut a blouse in half, by folding it or, for example with a triangular piece, I put something on it, I put a triangular shape, I already break the form” (Interview: S2).

“I can obtain a different image when I combine the triangle with a triangular surface, when I combine the triangle with a circle, or when I combine it with a square. In fact, such a thing came up because I understood and interpreted what the professor told us. I think it was really good, so it improved my imagination” (Interview: S3).

The emergence of different a-form structures as the participants combined geometric shapes could be considered a richness. These findings demonstrated that a-form clothing designs could be obtained with geometric shapes in fashion design education. Instruction of this approach to fashion design students could be beneficial for the development of effective a-form designs.

One of the present study findings was the creative perspective. The views of the participants S2 and S4 on the creative perspective were as follows:

“We play with these fabrics, you know, on it. In fact, the way we do it, “Oh, it could be like this”, which contributes a lot to our creativity. Because you know you do something very limited with lines, and three dimensional production contributed a lot to my creativity” (Interview: S2).

“I think it definitely affected my creativity because it allowed me to acquire a different perspective. I believe it led to a different way of thinking. You know, we used to think about what we call deformation, even it is a close-fit or not, we thought of it as unfit. Now we know that we can create different forms with different patterns...” (Interview: S4).

In the course, the researcher diary entries by the author were as follows: "It was observed that the students tried to adopt a creative perspective on the a-form to come up with unordinary, unusual and unknown forms in their search for clothing design forms" (RD, January/2019).

Based on the views of the participants S2 and S4 and the researcher diary entries on creativity, it could be suggested that the students took steps to contribute to the development of the design approach by adopting an innovative and creative perspective in the development of a-form clothing design in the project course.

The employment of small pieces of fabric was another important sub-theme in the creativity theme. In the project course, certain students created a-form designs with small pieces of calico fabric. The participants S1 and S3 stated the following:

“... I can say that I just produced one of my products, you create only a small pattern, with the remaining pieces, and it became something totally different. I do not know because it was not standard, it altered my perception tremendously and I can say it was beneficial...” (Interview: S1).

“... we try to fit with small pieces or a whole piece of fabric that we find here and there and give them a shape in our own way. This is different, you know, the method...” (Interview: S3).

In fashion design education, it could be suggested that there are several methods to design clothes with a-form features. Based on the user views, a-form clothing designs could be created with new formal features by combining random fabric pieces. The study findings demonstrated that small pieces of fabric could be used in a-form clothing design and contribute to creativity.

### **Originality**

The views of the attendants of the project course revealed that the form/a-form approach contributed to the originality of the designs. The views of the participants on the originality dimension were categorized in three sub-themes. These sub-themes were original ideas, improvisation and metamorphosis. The views of the participants S3 and S6 on the production of original ideas with the form/a-form approach were as follows:

“...you know, it should be something different from the classical patterns that everyone knows, it should be original, it has to be unique, you should not imitate someone else, you should come up with something new, it is like your signature...” (Interview: S3).

“...Instead of conceiving them as straight, different lopsided, asymmetrical things, different things came up. They really were not like others. It was not like ready-made clothes... More like that... For example, when you look at the products of the people in the classroom, everyone's product was different” (Interview: S6).

The views of the participants indicated that original ideas were among the important elements in clothing design. The participants emphasized that the designs should be different, original, unique and should not be imitations. The findings revealed that the students acquired the skills required to produce original designs with the a-form approach in the course.

Improvisation was another sub-theme in the originality theme based on the views of the participants. The fact that students worked in an integrated flow that developed spontaneously and naturally in the a-form clothing design indicated the impact of improvisation in the creation of original designs. The views of the participants S1 and S2 on natural improvisation during the application were as follows:

“It comes out during the production, in fact, everything comes out during the production. Because I did not design it like that way in my mind. As I said, this arm piece was produced with small or wasted pieces, I created the other arm, then I investigated what would suit the body...” (Interview: S1).



“...When we implemented using the fabrics, for example, when we pull it to another side or pull it to the other side, I could see that that a-form could lead to different directions, and it was very good for me to see that I could implement it...” (Interview: S2).

In the present study conducted in the fashion design project course instructed with the form/a-form approach, the differentiation sub-theme was also determined within the theme of originality. It was determined that the student designs were transformed into original designs during the process. The participants stated the following on the metamorphosis of their designs and the outcomes:

“...I cut the pattern, it was a little big in the first try, you know, for the upper body. Then, when I tried it on the dummy, I could already fit it through the head. Then, I looked at it, and it actually started to turn into something else, and I liked it. I bent one point, I folded another, and then another design came out, in fact, when I cut the first pattern, it became something else since it was a little long, it was transformed, the first one was completely transformed...” (Interview: S1).

“...Since we can also obtain the pattern in this method, I could do more, or for example, I can come up with different things as I bend and twist, I can go beyond the things I wanted to do, but I like this better, I can see and find new things unintentionally” (Interview: S5).

Based on the participant views, it could be suggested that the student designs improved throughout the project course and acquired different dimensions, the clothes were finalized as the designs were transformed. The implementation of the form/a-form approach allowed the students to experience the steps of a-form clothing design, and both student experiences and designs acquired different dimensions during the process (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Fashion Design III / Student Projects (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6).

## Conclusion

The present study attempted to determine the correlation between the body and form based on the clothes designed by the students in the fashion design project course instructed with the "form/a-form" approach. In the study, student works, the views of these students, and the observations were analyzed in the form/a-form creative process. In the qualitative study, it was concluded that the fashion design education contributed to both the students and student designs. It was determined that fashion design students experienced problems associated with self-confidence, concentration, and motivation. Thus, the course syllabus and content could be organized to improve student motivation, self-confidence and independence in fashion design education. It was determined that each participant experienced a trial-based design training with similar or different properties in the course instructed with the form/a-form approach.

The learning methods adopted in the study allowed the students to experience new practices, learn by trial-and-error, and conduct fittings on a small dummy. During the study, the restriction of material allowed the students to design with limited material. The employment of a single type of fabric, detailed in the material and technique section, motivated the students since it established equal conditions among the students. It also allowed creative pattern and draping experiments and working directly with the material allowed the students to experience the material and perceive the correlations between the material, pattern and production. In the course conducted with the form/a-form approach, the awareness of the students about the basic issues required for the designer's perspective was raised.

These issues included the concept of dimension, form/a-form perception, artistic awareness, perception of the human body, functionality and research. At the beginning of the semester, the students read art history resources on a certain time period, which raised awareness about the relationship between art and design. However, although certain participants considered this activity beneficial, they also stated that the benefits were superficial due to time constraints. Thus, it could be recommended that the students should continue to read on art history in their own time throughout the semester. It was also observed that the creativity of the students improved during the course. It was concluded that students developed skills associated with imagination, transformation of geometric shapes, and creative perspective. Thus, it could be suggested that the study was effective in the production of creative clothing designs. In the study, it was determined that the students produced original ideas as an important achievement. It was also significant that the students employed the improvisation method in creating original ideas. The improvised student creations transformed their designs into a different dimension when compared to their initial designs. It could be suggested that original clothing designs were obtained as the participant ideas in the draft form metamorphosed into the production design forms.

It could be suggested that the form/a-form applications conducted in the present study, which was presented as a recommendation in fashion design education, would have significant contributions to design students in the creation of wearable artworks and clothes in fashion industry. Thus, project courses in fashion design education institutions could be instructed with the methods proposed in the present study. However, the different dimensions and features of the presented approach are open to new suggestions and discussions. These views would contribute to the development of the form/a-form approach, its improvement with new opportunities, and the development of an innovative perspective. It could be argued that the present study would contribute to future innovative, conscious and extraordinary designs. The approach could lead to innovative clothing design with unusual forms, and the development of the creativity and originality of design students, and their readiness for the profession and the industry.

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## Article Summary

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### **A Case Study on Form Research in Clothing Design [Тематическое изучение по исследованию форм в дизайне одежды]**

#### *Аннотация:*

Нынешний рост учебных заведений по дизайну одежды и импульс в индустрии дизайна позволяют предположить, что творческие подходы оказали влияние на образование в области дизайна моды. Исследования творческих подходов в образовании в области дизайна одежды стали важными. Форма была решающим фактором в искусстве и дизайне, что позволяет использовать творческие подходы в дизайне одежды. Можно заметить, что как готовая одежда, так и предметы, рассматриваемые как оригинальные произведения искусства, обладают формами, созданными на основе различных точек зрения. Однако восприятие формы в этих проектах различается, можно заметить, что нынешний инновационный подход к форме находится на подъеме. В настоящем исследовании было установлено, что существуют проблемы в связи между телом и формой в курсе Fashion Design III по дизайну одежды. Таким образом, отражение подхода «форма / а-форма», целью которого является предложение рекомендаций по дизайну для исследования формы дизайна одежды в отношении творческого процесса, было исследовано на основе приложений и мнений участвующих в обсуждении студентов Эскишехирского технического университета, (факультет архитектуры и дизайна, кафедра студентов дизайна одежды).

*Ключевые слова:* дизайн одежды; дизайнер одежды; образование в области дизайна одежды; творческий рисунок одежды; деконструктивизм в дизайне одежды; форма и формообразование.

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