A Study on Uniform Design Based on Individuation and Artistry

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Abstract
According to “Xinhua Dictionary”, “design” means “an advanced plan and pattern etc. for certain work”. Therefore, before production and application of a uniform, it also requires a stage of design. Uniform design is special and different from design of other clothes. Only when its basic elements are understood, can a good uniform design is created. Uniform design needs to show an aesthetic standard that is consistent with job nature and requires investigation and survey on nature and characteristics of various occupations, the range of motion of human bodies and requirements of human body protection. It also requires analysis on psychological status and work environments of staff to choose the best data for design. Basically, uniform design should realize expected aesthetic effects through aesthetics and accord with the law of human body and wearing environments, so that staff can love their job and form a sense of pride in their occupations and sense of trust with their clients.

Key words: Uniform design; Artistry; Individuation; Apparel design

Carroll Peytavi, a senior executive of Air France, once said, “In the fashion circle, your clothing design only needs to stay competitive for six months, but clothes designed for an airline company must be stylish over the next 10 years. Hence, the apparel design for airline companies is very special”. Thus is can be seen that as a branch of apparel design, uniform design has its special and artistic characteristics

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1. **Viewpoints of uniform design**

1) **Integration with corporate culture**

Corporate culture refers to all internal spirits of an enterprise including history, spirits and styles of the enterprise. To design uniform integrating with corporate culture by studying culture of an enterprise is conducive to completion of the enterprise image and production and development of the enterprise. In addition, uniform is “cultural production” involving fashion culture and corporate culture. Due to different industries, demands and functions, patterns of design, production, operation and consumption of uniform are different from those of other clothes. Therefore, uniform design doesn’t require as much artistry and additional value as design of other clothes.

2) **Optimization of employee image**

Employee image refers to the general impression of employees of an enterprise conveyed on the public on the basis of personal quality, educational level, professional ethics, mental outlook, appearance and dressing of employees. Staff is the main body of an enterprise. As the most valuable intangible assets of an enterprise, staff is the core of enterprise image building. The artistry of uniform design is important for images of both an enterprise and its employees. Uniform is both consumption and investment for an enterprise. Uniform can create team spirit of an enterprise, stimulate creativity of its staff, strengthen its popularity and enhance its work efficiency.

2. **Design elements of individuation and artistry of uniform**

1) **Production cost**

A production cost is the estimated cost of design and production of uniform. The estimated cost includes all expenses arising in the process of uniform design and production, involving materials, processing, manpower and service etc. Due to specific characteristics of uniform, a designer must evaluate initial production costs and requirements in the long run. It is important to plan and control production costs in uniform design. Production costs of uniform may be restricted because of various factors. Most of the time, initial design cannot be realized in final production. During design, a uniform designer often encounters a problem that his or her design idea and costs are not balanced. As a result, the designer often needs to adjust his or her ideas or make compromises. During initial cost estimation, the designer must take everything into consideration practically and consider how to be economic. The designer should pay attention to economic rationality and integrate design with costs subtly in uniform design.

2) **Design innovation**

Now corporate culture is universal in social life. Uniform stands for the style and taste of an enterprise and directly show the taste of an enterprise to the public. Every enterprise looks forward to unique uniform with special features for itself. As a symbol of an enterprise, innovation is an important approach of establishing and highlighting its image in commercial competition. Uniform design requires cautious and strict innovation, which should not be exaggerated or flat. Exaggerated uniform design may look not professional, while flat design may be not characteristic, which cannot meet the need for innovation of an enterprise. Hence, a small modification of details may be innovative to add a crucial touch improving the overall effect.
3) A sense of series

In fact, a sense of series is a high criterion of uniform design. Most designers who are new to the uniform industry may simply think that a sense of series refers to visual unification. However, if a series of uniforms can reflect certain consistency in respect of styles, profile, color combination, material combination and accessories of uniforms etc., a sense of series can be realized.

This design method is featured by derivation of multiple design subtypes from a parent type. Hence, a design theme for the parent type should be considered first. On the premise of a unified theme, variable factors of uniform, such as materials, colors and accessories, are utilized to design multiple subtypes. To pay attention to inner feelings of uniform is required in uniform design, for it conveys a sense of series through touch (innovation of materials), colors (fully understand effects of colors on people), model design (comfort levels of different models) etc. A random combination of components, colors and materials should be avoided and they should be thought about as a whole. If styles of uniforms are not consistent, there’s no sense of series or a specific aesthetic feeling on the whole. For example, the dominant tone of the current series of uniforms for flight attendants of Korean Air applied since 2005 (see Figure 1) is blue and white and its clipping is slim. Its headwear is an exquisite butterfly hairpin, which is different from a general bowknot. On the basis of hairpins worn by ladies of ancient Korea, its design shows the integration of global fashion and traditional beauty of South Korea. In addition to elegant and delicate appearance, the uniform is comfortable where elastic webbing is applied.

![Figure 1. Uniforms of flight attendants of Korean Air.](image)

3. Design philosophy of uniform: individuation and artistry

1) Unification of individuals and whole

Unlike fashion, uniform is limited by job environments and nature and have numerous constraints relenting to its styles, colors and materials. Therefore, uniform is stable and not as much changeable as fashion. Individuation of uniform should be realized through details, features of fashion can be applied to local design of uniform so that the uniform looks fashionable. In addition to manifesting individuality and temperament of staff, the artistry of uniform aims at conveying image of an enterprise and an industry, namely integration of its individual beauty with the whole beauty. According to professional characteristics and
enterprise requirements, the unique charm of uniform should be expressed to achieve harmony and unity of individuals and whole.

2) Unification of styles and images

The style of a uniform should be unified with the image of an enterprise. First, a designer should fully understand corporate culture, image and business characteristics of an enterprise, background of the industry, and the development direction of the enterprise and job nature of its staff to design uniform that accords with the enterprise image. Second, a designer should carry out on-site investigation and survey on work environments of staff and pay attention to finishing styles, materials, main colors and auxiliary colors tone etc. of work environments to obtain background information for uniform design, so that the style of uniform design accords with the enterprise image. On the basis of requests, overall planning is conducted to be consistent with other designs, stress features of the enterprise and embody the overall beauty, leading to integration of the style and the image. In addition, uniform design should meet expectation of clients of an enterprise so that a good image of the enterprise can be built. For instance, the theme of the Japanese Pavilion at Shanghai World Expo is “Harmony of Mind and Technology”. Architecture of the pavilion and uniform of its staff are harmonious in terms of both styles and colors with smart details, creating a relaxing and natural atmosphere (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. The Japanese Pavilion at Shanghai World Expo.](image)

3) Unification of aesthetics and practicality

Aesthetics indicates people’s visual perception which affects people’s mental feelings to some extent or even directs mental feelings potentially. Practicality shows people’s mental feelings and refers to the actual value during application. That is to say, the unification of aesthetics and practicality means the unification of visual perception and mental feelings. Aesthetics of uniform can be realized through innovation of styles, colors, materials and details and overall combination. Aesthetics is an intuitional feeling, while practicality
indicates application of uniform in practical setting. A practical uniform is suitable for its work environment with convenience and operability. Excellent uniform design should be based on extensive knowledge and rich life experience. In uniform design for an enterprise, industry characteristics, job requirements, environmental characteristics and work experience of the enterprise should be fully understood. It is not proper to consider aesthetics of uniform only and ignore possible inconvenience, discomfort or even security risks brought by the design.

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