

# DEVELOPING MODEL FOR THE USAGE OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN TEXTILE AND FASHION DESIGN: A CASE STUDY ON IDOLS OF ANATOLIAN CIVILIZATIONS

<sup>1</sup>SERDAR EGEMEN NADASBAS, <sup>2</sup>GOKCE COSKUN

<sup>1</sup>Fashion and Textile Design Department, Atilim University Turkey

<sup>2</sup>Textile Design Department, Ankara HaciBayramVeli University Turkey

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>egemen.nadasbas@atilim.edu.tr, <sup>2</sup>gokce.coskun@hbv.edu.tr

**Abstract** - In 21<sup>st</sup> century, where visual elements become very important, fabric and clothing designs are used as an important tool for carrying cultural heritage to the next generations. On the other hand, today's consumption culture forces designers to have a wider approach for inspiration. At this point, tangible or intangible local cultural elements are important sources that can meet this need. With this respect, in this study, which is aimed to create a collection development process model for designers as well as promoting and carrying the cultural heritage, idols belong to Anatolian civilizations from early bronze age are used as a source of inspiration. Capsule fabric and garment collections have been prepared by using this new process model, based on culture oriented design aspect, in the direction of contemporary and universal design approaches. As a result, it was ensured that the cultural items can be used as a design element and it is concluded that designing a product with local features in order to emphasize its cultural value has become a critical issue in the textile and fashion design process.

**Keywords** - Anatolian Idols, Cultural Objects, Culture Oriented Design, Textile Design, Fashion Design.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In parallel with the technological development, increased competition in the market, variety of products, different consumer needs, high quality and performance expectations put more emphasis on design and designers. Although many designers defines design as “the optimization of the market and technology opportunities by taking into account mutual profit of producer and end user” [1] design plays a complex role in modern industrial societies. Besides its explicit practical functions, design also has implicit social functions. Designers not only create useful products and images, but they also produce and reproduce cultural meanings through those products and images [2].

Representing a product with a cultural style and a context can also enhance existing product lines and lead to the development of new market opportunities. Designing with cultural concepts, embodied with symbolic cultural meanings can aid revitalization [3]. On the other hand culture plays a vital role in value-adding and creates the core of product value and the integrating culture features into products' design will become a design trend in global market [4].

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, where visual elements become very important, fabric and clothing designs are used as an important tool for carrying cultural heritage to the next generations. Now many brands and designers such as ReiKawakubo, Issey Miyake, Dolce Gabbana, Carlos Miele, Campana Brothers inspired from their faiths, ethnicities, the geography they have been raised, in brief their own cultures. These designers uses their designs as a tool to transform these sources of inspiration(Fig.1).



Fig. 1 Culture based design examples

On the other hand, consistent consumption triggered by the rapid change, the “new” becoming to a state of regular and boring, the desire to discover and use the “newest” modified the structure of goods and services production. That is the reason why the designers started to use different methods and technics in order to use their creativity up to the end in this exhausting and cruel environment and not to repeat or copy themselves. At this point, tangible or intangible local cultural elements are important sources that can meet this need.

With this respect, this study, which is aimed to create a collection development process model for designers as well as promoting and carrying the cultural heritage, focuses on Anatolia, where many civilizations were hosted for thousands of years and which has a rich cultural heritage. Idols as cultural objects belong to Anatolian civilizations were used as fabric patterns and clothing models in the development of the fabric and garment collections, in the direction of the model which is developed based on Lin (2003)'s culture oriented design aspect.

## II. CULTURE ORIENTED DESIGN ASPECT

Culture refers to a set of values, ideas and meaningful symbols that contribute to, communicate and represent individuals as members of a society. Indeed, traditional cultural products express cultural values as a symbol of a certain time and to certain members of a society [5].

When a culture is accepted as an organic entity, it has three common aspects; 1) The physical or material, 2) The social, and 3) The spiritual. Leong and Clark (2003) divided these aspects of culture into three structural levels in an inverted triangle called the spatial perspective of culture. At the top of the inverted triangle is “outer tangible level” and it is the broadest part of the inverted triangle. In the middle level of the inverted triangle is “mid behavioral level” and at the tip part is “inner intangible level”[6] (Fig. 2).

Lin (2007) has fitted these three levels of culture into three levels of design features (Visceral, Behavioral, Reflective Design). (Fig. 2)

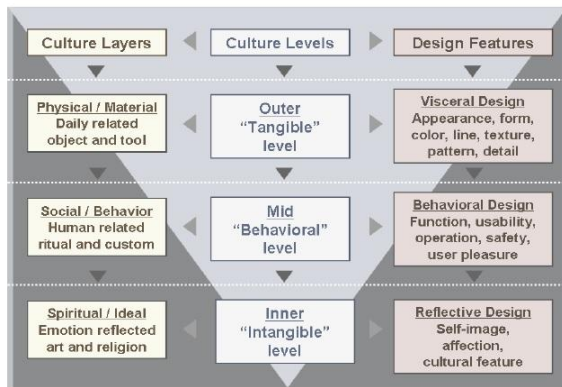


Fig. 2. Three layers and levels of cultural objects and design features [7].

Visceral design level concerns the appearance of a cultural object and aims to transform its form, textures, and patterns into a new product. The behavioral design level concerns the use, function, performance and usability of a cultural object. Reflective design concerns the feelings, emotions, and cognition involved in experiencing a cultural object [7]. The visceral design features become important where appearance matters and first impressions are formed, as in textile and fashion.

## III. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IDOLS OF ANATOLIA

Anatolia has harbored numerous civilizations during various periods throughout the history. Every civilization that has existed in Anatolia has been influenced by the thousands of years of cultural experience that preceded it and by the other cultures because of Anatolia’s geographic location as a transit

point [8]. The cultural heritage of Anatolia serves as a rich source of inspiration in present-day art and design. Figurines and idols could be one of these sources.

A figurine or an idol is a small statuette, usually between 2cm and 20cm in height, depicting anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or abstract themes in various raw materials, such as stone, clay, metal, bone and shell. Traditional approaches to these objects often aim to construct chronologies, interaction spheres and evolutionary origins through typological classifications [9]. Anthropomorphic figurines and idols are among the common and distinctive finds of Anatolian prehistory. Most of the figurines from Alacahöyük and many other central Anatolian sites in the Early Bronze Age depict females. Idols have usually been regarded as magical items, ritual objects, portraits of ancestors, afterlife accessories, territory markers, toys, teaching devices, puberty models, training tools, items used in initiation ceremonies, fertility symbols, or plainly depictions of higher beings such as goddesses in the Old and New World archaeologies [10-12].

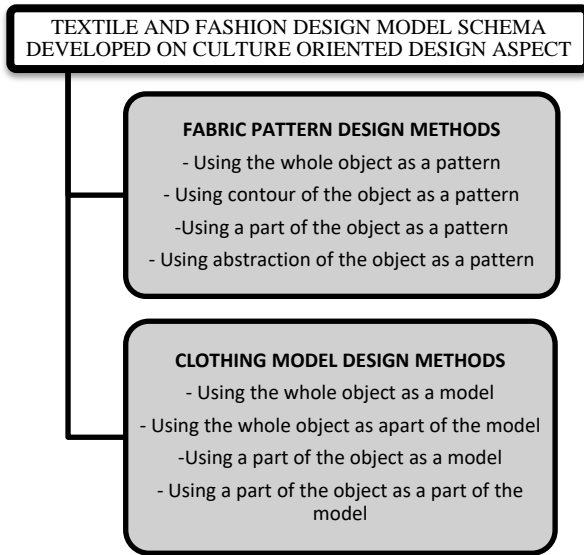
## IV. METHODS

This study as being an practice based research aims to offer the usage of cultural elements in textile and clothing design within the framework of Cultural Oriented Design approach. In the study, Anatolian idols, cultural elements as source of the design, were approached only as visual elements without taking into consideration their actual meanings. With this respect, two different model offerings were developed on how to use idols as visual elements to support creativity in textile and clothing design. Rung- Tai Lin’s (2007) Cultural Objects and Design Features Aspect[7] was used in model developing.

As seen in fig. 2, in the transformation period of cultural objects to design elements it is possible to use their different design specialties (visceral design, behavioral design and reflective design). In this study, idols belong to Anatolian civilizations from early bronze-age were used as a cultural object for development of fabric patterns and clothing models. During this process visceral design, first level of Lin’s cultural object and design features aspect (Fig. 2) was used. With this respect, four staged design schema of visceral design approach on developing clothing model and fabric pattern in textile design was created.

In the study implementations were made for each method takes part in the design development schema and the results were presented with visuals. In the proposed method as shown in the schema, the whole, a part, the contour or abstraction of the idoles used as the design unites in order to create textile pattern designs. In clothing designs the whole or a part of the

idole were used as the whole or a part of the developed design.



In the fabric pattern design process, each selected idol were drawn by using vector based software (Adobe Illustrator CS5) and design units were created. As a second step, the units in question were transformed into pattern by using Bitmap based image process software (Adobe Photoshop C5). By using the patterns designed by taking into account the design principles and esthetic values, a capsule collection was prepared. As a final step these patterns were placed on to home textile products by using Photoshop C5.

In the clothing model design process, the idols were specified for each method takes part in the design development schema. At this point, the main purpose was to ensure body-clothfit without reshaping the original ratios of the idols. Each idol was used as a cloth pattern. The cloth patterns developed from the idols were sewed by using the suitable fabrics to the model. The sewed models were reshaped by using draped method on fitting model.

## V. RESULTS

### 5.1. Implementing the Model on Fabric Pattern Design Process

4 methods proposed for fabric pattern design process were implemented to use the proposed model in textile design. An idol (Fig. 3) dated back to early bronze-age was selected as a source of inspiration for pattern design. The cultural object in question, schematizing female human body, transformed to design units in a vector based software (Adobe Illustrator CS-5) by drawing the whole (Fig. 4), the contour (Fig. 5), a part (Fig. 6) and an abstraction (Fig. 7) of the object. These design units were repeated in different ways to create patterns and

colored in accordance with contemporary and universal design approaches (Fig. 4-7). Fabric pattern designs were placed into the various home textile product images by a bitmap based image processing software (Adobe Photoshop CS-5). Fig. 8 shows the fabric pattern designs created by first and second methods placed on bedclothes. Fig. 9 shows the fabric pattern design created by third and fourth methods placed on upholstery clothes.


Selected idol	Description
	<p>Period: Early bronze age (2800 -2400 B.C)                      Excavated from: Etiyokuşu, Ankara Turkey                      Exhibition place: Anatolian Civilizations Museum, Ankara, Turkey.                      Material: Clay                      Schematization: Human body (Female)</p>

Fig. 3. The idol selected for fabric pattern design [13]


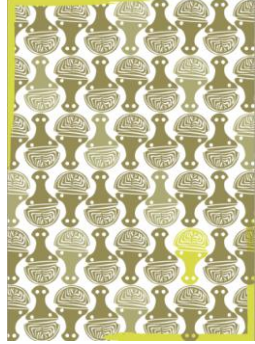
Method 1. Using the Whole Object	
Design Unit	Fabric Pattern Design
	

Fig. 4. Design unit and fabric pattern design created by first method



Method 2. Using a Part of the Object	
Design Unit	Fabric Pattern Design
	

Fig. 5. Design unit and fabric pattern design created by second method


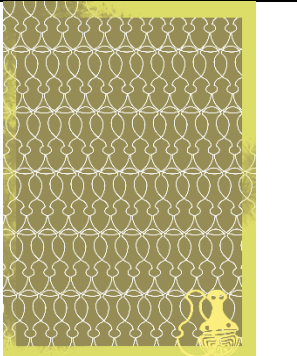
Method 3. Using the Contour of the Object	
Design Unit	Fabric Pattern Design
	

Fig. 6. Design unit and fabric pattern design created by third method


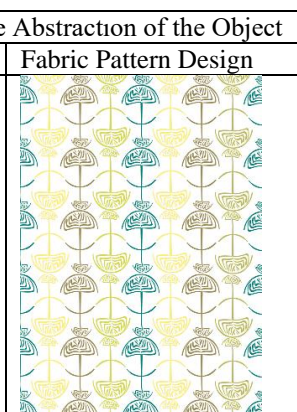
Method 4. Using the Abstraction of the Object	
Design Unit	Fabric Pattern Design
	

Fig. 7. Design unit and fabric pattern design created by fourth method



Fig. 8. Fabric patterns created by first and second methods on bedclothes



Fig. 9. Fabric patterns created by third and fourth methods on upholstery clothes

## 5.2. Implementing the Model on Clothing Model Design Process

4 methods proposed for clothing models design process were implemented to use the proposed model in fashion design. Four idol (Fig. 10, 12, 14, 16) dated back to early bronze-age was selected as a source of inspiration for clothing model design. The cultural object in question, schematizing female human body, transformed to clothing pattern for each method of developed model schema. Prepared clothing patterns were transformed to images by using bitmap based digital (Adobe Photoshop CS5) and were fitted to silhouettes in order to develop designs (Fig. 11, 13, 15, 17). The clothing designs were sewed with suitable fabrics to evaluate its usability and photos were taken with the real models (Fig 18, 19).


Selected idol	Description
	Period: Early bronze age (2800 -2400 B.C) Excavated from: Kozagacı, Antalya, Turkey Exhibition place: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford Material: Marble Schematization: Human body (Female)

Fig. 10. The idol selected for first clothing pattern design [13]



Method 1. Using the Whole Object as a Model	
Design Unit	Clothing Pattern
	

Fig. 11. Design unit and clothing pattern design created by first method



Fig. 12. First method / Final garment visual

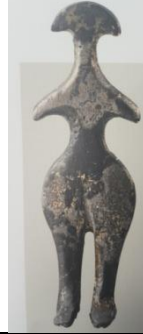
Selected idol	Description
	Period: Early bronze age (2800 -2400 B.C) Excavated from: Alaca Höyük, Çorum, Turkey Exhibition place: Anatolian Civilization Museum, Ankara Material: Silver Schematization: Human body (Female)

Fig. 13. The idol selected for second clothing pattern design [13]


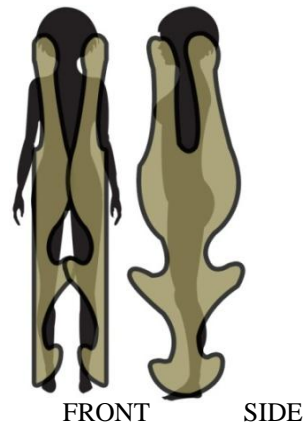
Method 2. Using whole object as a part of the model	
Design Unit	Clothing Pattern
	 FRONT SIDE

Fig. 14. Design unit and clothing pattern design created by second method



Fig. 15. Second method / Final garment visual

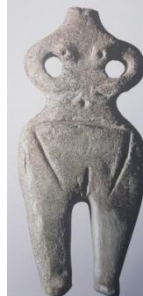
Selected idol	Description
	Period: Early bronze age (2800 -2400 B.C) Excavated from: Unknown Exhibition place: Tatiş Collection Material: Clay Schematization: Human body (Female)

Fig. 16. The idol selected for third clothing pattern design [13]



Method 3. Using a part of the object as a model	
Design Unit	Clothing Pattern
	 BACK

Fig. 17. Design unit and clothing pattern design created by third method



Fig. 18. Third method / Final garment visual


Selected idol	Description
	Period: Early bronze age (2800 -2400 B.C) Excavated from: Ahlatlıbel Ankara Turkey Exhibition place: Anatolian Civilization Museum Material: Clay Schematization: Human body (Female)

Fig. 19. The idol selected for fourth clothing pattern design [13]



Method 4. Using a part of the object as a part of the model	
Design Unit	Clothing Pattern
	 FRONT

Fig. 20. Design unit and clothing pattern design created by fourth method



Fig. 21. Fourth method / Final garment visual

## VI. CONCLUSION

Today, visual elements become very important for carrying out cultural heritage to the next generations. At this point, embedding cultural elements into product design process and increasing their cultural value provide advantage in competitive global product market for textile and fashion industry. There are different studies on levels of culture and their relationships with design features in literature. In this study it is aimed to propose a model schema based on culture oriented design aspect, to develop fabric patterns and clothing models by using cultural objects as a source of inspiration for textile and fashion designers. In accordance to this aim we utilized the rich cultural heritage of Anatolia by using idols as a cultural object. Each step of developed model practiced with implementation on both fabric pattern design and clothing model design processes. Capsule fabric and garment collections have been prepared and the results were presented with visuals. As a result, it was ensured that the cultural items can be used as a design element and it is concluded that designing a product with local features in order to emphasize its cultural value has become a critical issue in the textile and fashion design process.

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