

Tenacity

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Contextual Review and Concept: The intercultural relationship has increased in the last few decades despite cultural symbols and global commerce being not new phenomena in history. Due to fashion's multicultural and international nature, many designers are inspired by Chinese Qipao. Chinese Qipao is a fitted, elegant dress, characterized by its Mandarin collars, front panels, and panko (Chang, 2008). Recognized as a national dress, it has evolved into a modern garment, employing advanced techniques, unique silhouette designs, and a variety of fabrics. Importantly, the contemporary Qipao signifies cultural identity, social status, and aesthetic value.

Existing literature has examined numerous aspects of Qipao and Chinese-influenced clothing, including a comparative analysis of purchasing attitudes between Chinese and American women (DeLong et al., 2005); an investigation into contemporary fashions influenced by various Asian ethnicities, considering factors such as silhouette, color, fabric features, pattern, and accessories (Yu et al. 2001); and a study from the perspective of Chinese and Taiwanese women about Qipao (Yang, 2007). Despite current knowledge of Qipao design and elements, this design explores how ethnic dress can be integrated into current fashion as modern Qipao dress for younger target consumers, such as Generation Z. Moreover, little research has investigated young consumers' preferences for modern Qipao. This ensemble aims to fill this gap by exploring how the 2023 fashion trend of back-focus cut-out design and slim-fit figure silhouette can be applied to modern Qipao. The objective is to better understand young consumer attitudes and behavior concerning this fusion of traditional and modern fashion elements (Baidoo, 2022).

Process, Techniques, and Execution: The design process commences by crafting a slim silhouette, complemented by detachable long sleeves, while simultaneously preserving the traditional front piece of the Qipao. It is a blending of methods, incorporating a cutout at the back in line with the fashion trend of 2023. Initially, the designer employed digital tools, such as Procreate and Adobe Photoshop, to conceptualize the motif sketch of the modern Qipao. Subsequently, traditional elements of the Chinese Qipao, including the high Mandarin collar and the front piece with panko, were selected to lend a refined look to the design *Tenacity*. Incorporating functionality into the aesthetic, the designer included detachable long sleeves during the design process. Once the fabric was chosen - specifically, the cherry blossom pattern Chinese brocade - the designer embarked on delineating the perfect shape and measurements for the back-cut-out design. This was followed by the draping of the fit silhouette on the mannequin. The Mandarin collars were crafted utilizing flat pattern drafting methods and set at a comfortable height of four centimeters, in keeping with traditional Chinese Qipao pattern-making techniques.

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A narrow piece of bias-cut satin fabric was specifically employed to bind the upper edge of the collar and the curvy edges of the sleeves. Multiple muslin prototypes were constructed and refined to ensure an ideal fit for the dress. Upon completion of the sewing process, traditional satin fabric binding was used to finish the collar, front piece, and the back cut-out area. Lastly, a hidden buckle was stitched into the shoulder fabric, creating detachable sleeves and adding a final, innovative touch to the design.

Aesthetics Properties and Visual Impact: The aesthetic design aspect of *Tenacity* is characterized by seamlessly integrating traditional and contemporary elements, resulting in a visually striking and culturally rich garment. The slim silhouette of the dress exudes elegance and sophistication, accentuating the wearer's figure with grace. Furthermore, this slim-fit, high-neck dress enhances the neck-to-shoulder ratio and showcases the body's curves. The inclusion of detachable long sleeves provides a versatile touch, allowing the dress to be styled in two distinct ways for different occasions and personal preferences. The traditional Chinese front piece of *Tenacity*, adorned with delicate panko, infuses the design with heritage and authenticity. The back cut-out design further elevates the visual impact of this modern Qipao, creating an alluring focal point. In Chinese culture, cherry blossoms, which bloom gracefully in the harsh winter, evoke femininity and dignity. Their symbolic significance and delicate beauty are reflected on the Chinese brocade (Figure 1). This redesigned Qipao revitalizes the traditional Chinese garment by incorporating these elements, rendering it fresh and contemporary while honoring its cultural significance. The fusion of the slim silhouette, detachable sleeves, traditional front piece, back cut-out design, and cherry blossom Chinese brocade pattern culminates in a modern Qipao dress that captivates the eye and celebrates Chinese heritage.



Figure 1. The cherry blossom pattern on Chinese brocade, with details of the front piece and Chinese Panko.

Design Contribution and Innovation: While previous research has centered on consumers' reactions to traditional interpretations of Qipao fashion, *Tenacity* illuminates how cultural fashion trends and design elements can be adapted to engage younger consumers. Emerging dress silhouettes from the 2023 catwalk, including wrap X-line dresses with long sleeves and adjustable fits for diverse body shapes, exemplify this trend; the Qipao's stand-up collar particularly embodies this shift. This dress contributes to the globalization of the fashion industry and the dynamism of intercultural exchange by integrating the fashion trend of slim fit, high neck silhouette, and back cut-out. It proposes that functional details, such as detachable sleeves, can accentuate the innovation and modernity of the Chinese Qipao.

Moreover, this study offers insights to designers and retailers in the fashion industry on design elements that resonate with Gen Z consumers in relation to

modern Qipao. It provides guidance on crafting modern Qipao designs that appeal to a younger generation while maintaining respect for traditional Chinese culture. The study underscores the significance of integrating Chinese Qipao into contemporary fashion, thereby preserving and promoting traditional and cultural attire. It also highlights the importance of cultural inheritance in fashion, which can enhance the value of future redesigns of Chinese Qipao garments. Fashion retailers can leverage the study's findings to understand the silhouette, fabric choices, and design elements that most resonate with young consumers, thus enabling them to stock and market apparel that aligns with consumer preferences.

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