Design Scholarship Practices: Analysis of ITAA Professionals' Design Abstracts and Dissemination from 1999 to 2017

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Introduction. A faculty member whose expertise in creative design often contributes to the body of knowledge through disseminating his or her design works at juried or invited exhibits; this type of scholarship is referred to as "design scholarship" (Guerin & Birdsong, 1995). However, design scholarship in the field of clothing and textiles has not been sufficiently recognized from the administrators and decision-makers of promotion and tenure in academic institutions (Adams & Meyer, 2011). Among several factors that lead to this situation, one critical issue is related to the lack of in-depth discussion on assessing how design scholarship has contributed to the body of knowledge in the area of apparel design. In this respect, we aimed to explore how design scholarship has been cited in the discipline for the past two decades, from 1999 to 2017. The specific objectives were to analyze: (1) design abstracts cited in scholarly works (e.g., journal publications, other design abstracts) and (2) design abstracts that were not cited but related to designers' scholarship.

Literature Review. According to Ha-Brookshire and Hawley (2013), design scholarship investigates "a systematic body of evidence through empirical theories regarding design elements and human perception of themselves as well as others" (p. 21). In addition, Adams and Meyer (2011) conducted a survey with the ITAA members to develop a definition of design scholarship in the discipline and stated as "applied research that involves the design process in a way that demonstrates a proficiency of combining creative and technical skills that provide a clear understanding of the inspiration or theoretical foundation, which was peer-reviewed or invited and may or may not be retrievable" (p. 228). In this study, design scholarship refers to the scholarship that often results in a designed artifact that solves users' problems associated with their needs through apparel design, provides an innovative perspective on apparel design practice, or communicates a designer's creative idea (Bye, 2010).

In terms of peer-reviewed journal publications, various metrics exist to assess the academic contribution of each journal publication. The number of citations a scholar receives has been considered a valid indicator of the significance of one's scholarly works (Cole & Cole, 1971) because it indicates the amount of discussion generated from one's publications. However, such a metric does not exist for design scholarship due to various reasons, such as its limited outlets. Instead, the acceptance rate has recently been utilized as a valid indicator for the rigor of design scholarship (Morris & Parsons, 2016), but very few juried exhibit organizers disclose the acceptance rate of their exhibits. Since a meaningful scholarly work should contribute to the

ongoing intellectual conversation and provide a novel perspective in the discipline, efforts to assess design scholarship are much needed (Adams & Meyer, 2011).

Methods. Design abstracts from 1999 to 2017 within the ITAA design proceedings, accessible through online, were used as the primary data source for this study. For this study, we limited our data to the design abstracts accepted at the professional level because professionals often create the culture related to design scholarship, as well as lead and mentor undergraduate and (or) graduate students. A total of 888 design abstracts accepted at the professional level from 1999 to 2017 were identified and used as the primary data for both objectives 1 and 2. To address objective 1, we searched authors' names and the title of each design abstract to explore how one single design abstract was cited or retrieved in scholarly works. Then, to address objective 2, we further searched each designer's works related to his or her design abstracts but were not cited in their works, using authors' names and the title of each design abstract. Then, we explored elemental information (e.g., disseminating outlet, publication year) of the cited and (or) related design abstracts. The data were interpreted through the descriptive analysis methods (mean, standard deviation-SD, percentage, min. and max.). As a result, inter-coder reliability greater than 90% was achieved.

Results and Discussion. Among 888 professionals' design abstracts, 24 abstracts were cited in journal publications and (or) design abstracts. The 24 design abstracts were cited in four articles and 26 design abstracts. Among those, six design abstracts were cited in the four journal articles; among the four articles, three were published in *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* (CTRJ), while one was published in the *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*. In terms of citing agents, all four articles were written by authors who wrote the design abstracts for those designs. Although all four articles dealt with broader contexts of the design abstracts, it took an average of 5 years (MIN = 4; MAX = 7; SD = 1.10) to publish their works from the year of their ITAA design exhibits. Interestingly, one journal article that cited two design abstracts did not indicate the venue of the exhibit, which was the ITAA. By exhibiting one garment in multiple exhibits, design scholars often increase exposure of their design works and further build their reputation. Therefore, ownership of one design is often considered to belong to the designer, which explains why the author did not specify the venue of the exhibit in the journal publication. Among the 26 cited design abstracts, only six were cited by the same authors. It was found authors of design abstracts tend to not choose to self-cite their previous works from which these were derived.

Among the ITAA design abstracts from 1999 to 2017, a total of 402 design abstracts (45.3% of the total 888 abstracts) by 147 designers showed relations to their other scholarly works in terms of inspirations, materials, and design processes. The related scholarly works consisted of journal articles (56%), design exhibits (42.3%), published books (1%), and other works (0.7%) such as magazine articles and patents. Designers often explored innovative inspirations and techniques by creating designs and presenting them at the ITAA design exhibition. After developing several designs with the same concept, they expanded these design practices to their other related works (e.g., journal articles). From 2002 to 2010, 14 design abstracts that won awards for Excellence in Design were published within the CTRJ (Bye, 2010).

Citing the ITAA design abstracts in the CTRJ articles could be one way to recognize the value of creative works and disseminate their design scholarship. However, only a few ITAA design abstracts were cited in the CTRJ Excellence in Design articles, even if they used these abstracts as core work to begin with.

      Conclusion. Citation is the evident way to increase the prestige of the discipline through identifying the significance of contribution, disseminating the information, and enhancing the retrievability and accessibility of the contribution (Kotsiopulos, 2000). Therefore, design scholars need to continuously strive to cite design abstracts in their scholarly work in order to grant more credits to design scholars in the discipline. The encouraging fact is that the number of citations of ITAA design abstracts has continued to grow since 2014 following the discussions regarding retrievability of design scholarship at the ITAA conferences. We hope our study provides an awareness of the strong need to establish a citation practice for design scholars and further spark their interests for future study in this significant area.

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