Designing Multifunction fabric for tourists.

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Abstract

This research aims to study, create and design the multi-function fabric for reflecting the beauty of image and the way of Thai people’s life, and Thai culture through modern design of fabric pattern. In addition, this product is also able to solve the problem on inappropriate dressing of foreign tourists who visit temples, ancient remains or important attractions in order to facilitate the tourists and provide them impression on travelling in Thailand. This multi-purpose product was designed for multi-purpose utilization and it was portable and suitable for travelling. In addition, it was also able to be developed as the commercial design in the form of souvenir for publicizing tourism in Bangkok area.

Keywords: Thai culture; Thai society; Thai identity; Tourist; The Grand Palace

1. Introduction

The researcher considered on the occurred problem on dressing for visiting temples and ancient remains of foreign tourists who visited Bangkok area mainly focusing on the area of Wat Phra Kaew or The Grand Palace. Wat Phra Kaew is an important temple and one of famous attractions of Thailand. Most tourists who visit Thailand wish to visit this place because of its reputation publicized via public relations media and word of mouth on its architectural beauty, interior decoration, and the Buddha image finely created from the local wisdom of people in the past inherited to present. As a result, Wat Phra Kaew or the Grand Palace becomes the center of tourists with various nationalities from around the world including European tourists and even Asian tourists.

In Thai culture when you visit the temples or ancient remains the visitors from whatever country should behave
themselves politely and pay respect to those places through appropriate attire. Thai people believe that appropriate dressing is bringing luck and fortune to such person and most temples and ancient remains in Thailand have the same compliance on dressing code.

However, most foreign tourists have no knowledge on Thai tradition and manner on polite and appropriate attire for visiting important temples or ancient remains therefore some tourists are prohibited from visiting those places or need to purchase some sarong or fabric for changing or covering themselves for visiting temples or ancient remains causing delay and inconvenience for the foreign tourists. Some tourists, they may feel that visiting temples in Thailand is very difficult and waste their time.

From such occurred problem, the research considered that it may be more useful if the tourists were able to own the multi-purpose fabric that was able to respond to the multi-purpose demands and mainly designed for the tourists who had frequent travelling. As a result, it was necessary to consider on weight and convenience for wearing and carrying for the design of this type of stole. In addition, its design must emphasize on beauty reflecting Thai identity in its colours and patterns therefore it would be another channel to promote Thai tourism when it was worn by foreign tourists. Moreover, it was also the way to tell the way of life of Thai people through product that was able to respond to the demands of the wearers on utilization and emotional esthetic. Furthermore, it was also able to be used as the souvenir for foreign tourists.

2. Methodology

This research is a creative research studying on data obtained from papers, photographs, questionnaires, and the interview with the foreign tourists on their feeling towards dress code for visiting temples and ancient remains in Thailand in order to be adapted with the design properly. The researcher collected data from field study through interviewing with the foreign tourists mainly visiting The Grand Palace. In addition, the researcher also studied from listening to the opinions from some experts and the obtained data was studied as the guideline for developing the creation of multi-purpose stole for foreign tourists to have various utilization integrated with Thai identity expressing on its pattern contributing the contemporary product with further commercial utilization.
3. Result

3.1. Based on photographic data collection

Based on a survey conducted in Bangkok, Bangkok University’s Poll, in the beginning of 2010, Wat Phra Si RattanaSatsadaram or Wat Phra Kaew is voted by Thai and Foreign Tourists as the most attractive tourist attraction in Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2010)

Photographic data shot at the outside entrance gate of Wat Phra Kaew revealed that there is a sign giving information about proper costume but the sign cannot be seen clearly because it is located behind the security fortress. Deep blue letters on the shiny silver metal sign were difficult to read. Anyhow, there are officers who help telling tourists around the vicinity about the proper costume. After knowing how to dress proper, some tourists take of and put on the clothes immediately at the spot (entrance of Wat Phra Kaew), which does not look so nice. After passing the entrance, in the temple area, there is an information center to inform the tourists with improper costume to borrow proper clothes, sarongs, blouse, pants or scarfs arranged by the temple to cover the part of body that is disclosed impolitely. Tourists can borrow those outfit in Her Majesty the Queen Textile Museum Building. To borrow the clothes, tourist must pay a deposit of 200 Baht per one piece of cloth. This deposit amount will be returned to the tourists once they return the cloth. At the stair area, there is also a sign showing picture of prohibited costumes to wear when visiting the temple. This kind of sign as well appears at the ticket checking in booth.

![Prohibited Outfits Sign](http://thaiinfonet.com)

- Inappropriate attire.

![Picture of inappropriate attire](http://thaiinfonet.com)

- Appropriate attire.
Based on photos and primary interview of some tourists, it reveals that pattern, colour, and design of the clothes, sarongs, pants, or scarves prepared by the temple do not different from what available in the market. There is no product distinction. Some design even does not represent Thailand at all. Sarong is very difficult to wear (foreign tourists have never seen or worn sarong before).

3.2. Based on 100 sets of questionnaire

Most of foreign tourists who visit Thailand (61%) do not have much knowledge on culture or good practice of wearing proper costume when visiting the temple, or historical site in Thailand, causing them wearing casual costume. According to interview, it has been found that Thailand’s climate is pretty warm and Wat Phra Kaew opens for tourist visiting everyday during 8.30 am. to 3.30 pm. which is the period where the weather is very warm, thus tourists usually wear camisole or tank top with shorts in order to be relieved from heat and more comfort while travelling. In addition, most of the tourists who visit Thailand not only visit Wat Phra Kaew, they also go to the beach in upcountry as Thailand is as well famous for beautiful beach and sea, especially in the southern part of Thailand. Thus, the tourists usually do not bring along many pieces of clothes or thick textile. In conclusion, they takes less piece and small and thin clothes they can wear when visiting the beach or other places in the hot climate such as shorts, tank top or camisole, etc.
Table 1. Analysis process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems / Remarks</th>
<th>Ways to solve the designing process</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Most foreign tourists dress immodestly, when visiting The Grand Palace or historic site in Thailand.</td>
<td>• Design a pattern that can be applied to cover different parts of body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hot Climate is not convenient for the tourists to visit The Grand Palace.</td>
<td>• Silk Chiffon is used because of it is airy, light weighted and gentle touching feeling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mostly the objective of tourists is to spending and be relaxed.</td>
<td>• The design must focus on the light weighted of material, vacation easy to use, and can be worn over the swimming suit when they visiting the beach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dressing style of most of tourists is casual style that provides them comfort in wearing and movement.</td>
<td>• The ways to wear this multi-function fabric should be able to adapt according to tourists requirements.</td>
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<td>• Type of fabric that is the most popular fabric the tourists usually buy in Thailand is Silk.</td>
<td>• Due to the Silk is heavy and difficult to handle the researcher decided to use Silk Chiffon, which is more suitable for using purpose.</td>
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<td>• Most of tourists pay attention on design more than using purpose.</td>
<td>• They usually choose product that is simple, beautiful, up-to-date and many ways of use.</td>
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<td>• Tourists believe that souvenir shall imply the country’s identity.</td>
<td>• Design of multi-function fabric does not only aim to be a souvenir with utility but also helps educating the tourist about the proper costume for visiting temple in Thailand.</td>
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3. Design Conclusion

The fabric used in the design is Silk Chiffon because the silk is not only a kind of Thai fabric with uniqueness but also the best option when the foreigners think about Thai identity and they usually buy silk as souvenir. However, original silk fabric is difficult to deal with and it is quite heavy, as well as easy to be crumpled, and difficult to wash and laundry, thus, it is not match the lifestyle of our target groups who is foreign tourist who keep travelling. The designer therefore chooses Silk Chiffon where shinny property of silk is still remained but with airy and light weighted property. Silk Chiffon can be applied in many different ways. It is light weighted, easy to take to anywhere, as well as much more easily to maintenance when compared to silk.

In the experimental process to determine the best pattern to be used as multi-function fabric, the author cut the fabric into different patterns and wore each of them in many different ways to focus on the best way that is most convenient for the user.

Based on experimental result, the author believes that in order to get optimum benefit of the scarf and to make the scarf be light weighted, the design shall be simple. It should not be decorated with other small pieces of things as it might scratch the scarf itself as well as annoying the user. In short, simplicity and functionality is the key of this multi-purpose scarf. Decorative objects shall be used as less as possible, thus; only flat buttons are used in this case. There is no zipper or tie at all.

Based on above conclusion of design, the author therefore designs a multi-function fabric using rectangle pattern sized 145 x 100 cm (as the width of Silk Chiffon is 150 cm, when the trim is sewed, finished length of the scarf is 145 cm, and the wide of 100 cm comes from the experimental result showing that 100 cm is the most suitable width of the scarf). The buttons are fixed on the fabric at the area of half of 145 cm length and the buttonholes are at the other half of 145 cm length. Number buttons and buttonholes depend on size of the button used. However, the button size should not be too big. Small size or standard size of buttons shall be used. Distance between each button...
should not be longer than 5 cm because when the buttons are fastened up, there will be a gap and the user’s skin will be visible. There should be no zipper or tie up to prevent user’s skin irritation.

Tourists can use this multi-function fabric in several ways depending on the convenience and idea of each user. It can also enhance the creativity of the user. Due to the fabric itself and the pattern, this scarf can be used to get the optimum using benefit according to each using purpose. For example, under strong sun, it can be used as a headscarf. It can also be used as clock to cover the dress, a sarong to cover the lower part of body when visiting temple to be more polite, gabardine over the swimsuit when walking at the beach. Even when the tourists return to their home country and facing cool weather, they can also use it as scarf.

Figure 10. How to use multi-function fabric.
6. Suggestions and Future Research

1. There should be a campaign to promote the good practice of wearing proper costume when visiting temple or historical sites to foreign tourists more.

2. At the cultural attraction site such as temple or historical sites when the entrance fee is charged, price of this multi-purpose scarf shall be included in the ticket as a special promotion for the tourists so that they can take this scarf as a souvenir to stimulate the interesting in the tourist attraction site as well as to promote the domestic tour within the country.

3. To design any kind of souvenir, prominent feather or identity of the country shall be represented in the design in order to add value to the product and differentiate it from other products in the market.

Hence, the author hopes that this research will help educating the tourist on how to travel around in Thailand, especially, the culture and costume practice when visiting temple or historical site in Thailand. Foreign tourists will acknowledge Thai culture and tradition, along with good way of lift of Thai people through the designing of this multi-purpose scarf, which is designed to solve the issue of tourist’s improper costume. It can also response to the other form of using divisibly, as well as being a souvenir that represents beautiful culture of Thai people.

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