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Opinion

An Investigation into the Applicability of Weaving Fabric Design Education from the Perspective of Basic Design Education: The Case of Higher Education Institutions in Turkey

Ayşenur Sakönder*

Master's Degree, Department of Fashion Design, Eskisehir Technical University, Turkey

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***Corresponding author:** Ayşenur Sakönder, Master's Degree, Department of Fashion Design, Eskisehir Technical University, Turkey

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the teaching method and principles of practice of the basic design course, which is taught as a course in some faculties of higher education institutions in Turkey, through the weaving method, a textile design method. The content of the study addresses, from an academic perspective, the synthesis of outputs in both conceptual and practical aspects as a result of keeping the fields of design and textiles in interaction in terms of teaching methodology. Along with these approaches, the study questions the effect of the basic design course on students, the methods by which it is presented to students, and the representability of the course through the weaving method in the field of textile design.

Keywords: Basic Design, Textile Design, Weaving Method

Opinion

Basic design education is a compulsory course offered in the first year of undergraduate programs in higher education institutions in Türkiye. This course is taught in faculties of architecture and design as well as fine arts faculties. It focuses on a fundamental educational framework related to the departments in which students are enrolled. The course is centered on an educational model that provides a conceptual theoretical perspective and a practical, action-oriented perspective for courses to be taken in the first year and subsequent years. The impact of basic design education on students facilitates the learning and practical expression of design research in later semesters. Students directly acquire the ability to perceive and apply this foundational education within other courses related to their departments. The course is not structured around any specific index; instead, it is guided solely by fundamental concepts, allowing for a clearly defined starting point and offering repeatable and developable characteristics. According to Kahraman [1], it is considered necessary for the course syllabus in basic design education to be revised each academic term in parallel with recent developments.

In basic design education, students are expected to correctly transfer concepts onto surfaces through "principles" and "elements." In this direction, the development of conceptual perspectives is supported, and the foundations of concept-oriented approaches are established. The application methods taught in the course are extensive, including geometric form creation, two- and three-dimensional product design, visual composition development, and project-based practices. Basic design education constitutes a comprehensive set of workshop activities focused on abstract and concrete analysis, material usage based on

structural differences, critical multi-dimensional attitudes toward materials, development of production and processing techniques, experimental idea construction, conceptual, figurative, and symbolic thinking, establishing visual communication, generating hypotheses, and concept development. According to Bingöl [2], while criteria based on visual appearance are considered important in works within the field of visual communication, conceptuality is regarded as an equally significant criterion. Sarıoğlu Erdoğdu GP [3] states that the basic design course offers a semantic perspective and approach that has a valid effect in illuminating specific problems. Considering all these aspects and examining the profile of basic design education, it becomes possible to observe the learning outcomes and gains of the course in student activities.

Design corresponds to a process that individuals in the status of designers develop within their own systems of thought over the long term. Design is dependent on suitability criteria related to what actions and formations will provide to the intended design object. The act of designing influences the design object both in terms of functionality, through shared ideas, and in terms of aesthetics, within the boundaries of imagination. An action can only become a correct design object insofar as it is consistent with the accuracy of the planning content. The notion of "accuracy" referred to here denotes the set of rules governing the finalization of the entire organizational structure of the design object. Certain key characteristics make a design object effective; these include research techniques, the designer's unique mental exercises and observations of objects within their environment, the ability to review academic archives, material knowledge, and the capacity to recognize and understand materials. According to Gök and Koca [4], design research is evaluated within a broad contextual framework specific to its field. Designers must effectively maintain their production skills on the design object. The act of productivity, which is required to be continuous, can be activated by analyzing the design object to be produced within its own conditions.

Basic design represents the most fundamental organizational form of an ergonomic or aesthetic design object. It is applied by being embedded into design objects. Therefore, students are required to possess sufficient competence to demonstrate basic design principles and elements on a concrete design object. This competence can only be achieved through experience gained via practice. During the application period of research, students prepare their design objects by integrating concepts such as comparison, analogy, and difference. In line with these preparations, students are expected to produce vector-based and linear studies. Subsequently, technical drawings are prepared by clarifying the lines of the determined forms, followed by coloring and surface pattern application processes.

According to Bingöl [2], during the basic design course period, opportunities and suitable conditions are provided to students to gain practical skills through activities that present the concretization of representations. To strengthen visual expression, surface-finishing compositions should be created using ready-made photographs or two- and three-dimensional digital graphics. The existence of compositional interactions among different surface visuals should be examined, and semantic connections should be established between them. In this way, the student's imaginative capacity will be nourished, and their visual storytelling competence will increase. Following these practices experienced by students, the ability to depict abstraction will emerge and develop naturally. The essential aim here is for students to transform abstract representations within their own thoughts into a form that becomes visible in a concrete product. According to Gök and Koca [4], basic design is a foundational instructional approach that emerges through the transformation of ideas into action.

In some programs within faculties of architecture and design, art and design, and fine arts in higher education institutions in Türkiye, textile design education is provided. This education is implemented with a focus on design and production. Textile design education is predominantly based on manual production. The production stage of this education involves phased and multi-directional processing procedures. Prior to the production stage, several preparatory phases are carried out, including target audience analysis, identification of sources of inspiration, academic research, idea generation, preparation of sketches and technical drawings, formation of "shape" and "form" characteristics, composition of the design, and the selection of tangible yarns and other textile materials. Weaving, as a production method in textile design, is a technique that requires fine craftsmanship and intensive labor. Therefore, students are expected to be careful and observant in activities related to this field.

Woven fabric designs can be produced on different types of looms and machines. Portable looms are often preferred in production due to their suitability for use in comfortable and varied environments. Following the preparatory processes, fabric surfaces are obtained by weaving yarns or other textile materials on the loom during the production phase. Basic weaving patterns and traditional motifs are generally applied to woven fabric surfaces. From a design-oriented perspective, it is known that original and aesthetically focused patterns have the capacity to generate hundreds or even thousands of alternative productions in weaving practices. For this reason, the idea emerges that a method proposal based on basic design principles can be offered for woven fabric designs. When woven fabric designs and surface design development processes are evaluated in terms of material and material-related variables, employing them as a method within basic design education is considered to contribute to both the field of weaving and basic design.

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