A Study of Doujinshi Product Design
— A Case Study on Activities held in Taiwan

Keywords: Doujinshi, Doujinshi Market, Product Design

1. Research Motivation and Background

Taiwan today is a highly developed economic and social environment. We realize that the preservation of our own culture and leading with our own characteristics can help us outperform in an intensely competitive world while all aspects have been fully developed. In the National Development Program, the Executive Yuan has listed “Cultural and Creative Industry Development Program” and combined with “New Hometown Community Creation” and “Water and Green Construction,” building Taiwan into a leader in the cultural and creative industries in the Chinese world.

The publishing industry as been listed as link of cultural and creative industries, and compared with the general publication system, the Doujinshi applies more diversification and flexibility in the operation to provide authors with broader room for elaboration. [1] Doujinshi has been developed behind Taiwan for few decades. The Doujinshi related activities in Taiwan has gradually developed and transformed from the initial passing from Japan to Taiwan, exhibiting it uniqueness and path. It is observed from the increasing number of participants each year that the activities have expanded over the years and become more popular.

Apart from the few Doujinshi officially held in recent years, some smaller individual and independent ONLY market have been are starting to be held with content and form already developed into certain maturity, whereas changes are also observed.

The Japanese animation and Doujinshi culture contain high values. The study starts from the products sold at the Doujinshi market and studies the relationship between Doujinshi creation, product, and product design in addition to analyzing the possibility of combining design with Doujinshi products.

2. Literature Review
2-1 Implications and Characteristics of Subculture

Ma, Ai-Ping defined subculture as: “The term “subculture” does not contain any negative implications but is only relative to the social cultural mainstream developed by adults. It is created by American urban sociologist Fischer, which refers to a group of people with many similar social and individual backgrounds. These people undergo an extended period of interaction and gradually generate a set of mutually understanding and acceptance of specification, values, attitudes of life, and lifestyles. Such mutually understanding of specification and the integration of lifestyles are known as subculture [2].

2-2 Definition of Doujinshi activities

Due to the current definition given to Doujinshi has long been blurry and unclear concept while the news media or magazines are reporting and interpreting derived meanings from the term, the paper hereby offers an overview from the many interpretation versions: The Japanese term “Doujinshi” appeared after WWII, where the availability of print and printing techniques in the 1970s added more diversity to the works published by Doujin groups, as compared to the previous novels and poetries. However, Doujinshin has now evolved into popular comics, novels, and many increasing types such as the games and music in recent years.

Therefore the term “Doujin” also includes “non-commercial” and “amateur.” In a simpler and clearer explanation, “Doujinshin” refers to the “books and magazines published collectively by like-minded people” or “magazines for like-minded people,” “magazines published like-minded people.” Hence, “Doujin” only refers to a publishing method and not representative of general naming of the publication content. The works are further divided into two types:

- Original: The work is constructed and created by the author independently without attachment of original work.
- 2nd Creation (Secondary Creation): Refers to the works with main fundamental structure based on others’ work which are generated from the extended creation of the author.

2-3 The rise and process of Taiwan Doujinshi as well as all Doujinshi activities today

The first Doujinshi market held in record in Taiwan can be dated back to 1997 at the “Autumn Party” held by “Super Orange Group.” At the time, there was no fixed official organizer and even the venue was held in a coffee shop. [1]
Taiwan Doujinshi activity has developed for 13 years today since 1996. The two major organizers in Taiwan include the CWT (Comic World Taiwan) and FF (fancy frontier), which hold the two largest markets at the National Taiwan University Dome every summer and winter vacation. [3] (Figure 1)

The ONLY session held recently refers to the Doujin session held for certain work, certain category of work, or roles of certain works, which are commonly held by individuals or private groups.

1. Doujinshi Products Analysis
2. Product Types Analysis

We have randomly selected 30 different products from the social groups participating in Doujinshi market and we analyzed the trend of the products. The distribution trend of products showed that daily supplies account for the ratio up to 50%, which is inferred that the likelihood of using daily supplies in life is higher, which is thus often sold by relevant products of Doujinshi. The second highest category of products is stationery.

3. Product Material Analysis

The materials used for the 30 products include the following five categories: (Figure 2)
- Plastics: Cheap production cost, extensive purse, easy formation.
- Metal: Exquisite, resistant, superior quality.
- Paper: Diverse types, suitable for picture printing and colors.
- Fabric: Various, special fabric touch and resistant.
- Ceramics: Exquisite, superior quality and special.

Statistics show that plastic products are more likely to be used than other materials. The likelihood of using metal, paper and fabric is similar, indicating the diversity of product types and materials. Ceramics is a material rarely used.

3-3 Product presentation

The 30 products are analyzed through three dimensions, namely: pattern forming method, colors and painting style.

Pattern forming method: Most products are printed. The product is made mainly on a single material and printed with different patterns. The treatment is simple including LOGO and trademarks.

Colors: The statistics show that most products apply color printing to present the diversity in colors and brightness. There is a rare number of product using chromatography or black and white colors, possibly because of the limitation in product materials and printing method that lead to difficulty in using colors or multiple colors for printing methods. For example, backpack and drawstring bags. (Figure 3)

Painting Style: Such products mostly appeal in lovely and cute figures as the style while most of them are applied in small products. Exquisite and glamorous styles are mostly used in products available for delicate printing. There are a least number of products with conversion of painting into totem and icon, indicating the lack of development in this aspect. Most products are observed to remain on the simple combination of “putting image on products”.

4 Conclusion and Recommendation

The following issues are observed through fundamental analysis.

1) Most products emphasize on the printing and change of patterns. There is a limited room for development because similar products are available, and in a lower attraction to user purchase.

2) The change of product material is simpler and although the likelihood of using plastic products is high. Although the product cost remains low, the change also is unlikely which could possible coordinate with different materials for extension.

3) The themed patterns can be extended and transformed according to product characteristics. More changes have been made to the production and the changes in patterns or products according to product characteristics allow product to improve, leaving consumers with better impression.

4) Start from the characteristics as product concepts. Using a story, theme or role to inspire as products with thinking basis can develop its own story. In addition to single product design, new changes can be derived and developed.

In view of Japan today, the economic value of animation and manga is quite high which is highly related to the other objects attached to the work. For the creator of Doujinshi, products undergone more inspiration and transition will have higher extension and enhancement of product levels.

Reference