MULTI-ZIPPER AND CONVERTIBLE FEMALE GARMENTS: A CASE FOR GARMENT CONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

Conventionally, zippers have been used to close openings and plackets in garments. In some cases, they are used as decorative interfaces for garment and accessories. This study explores the use of multiple zippers in the production of garments by first joining textile fabrics together with zippers and sculpting them into garments. Zippers have the following intrinsic properties that were utilised in this study. They increase or decrease the size of an opening to allow or restrict the passage of objects; join or separate two ends or sides of a single garment; attach or detach a separable part of the garment to or from another; attach or detach a small pouch or bag to or from a larger one and finally are used to decorate garments or other accessories. Two female convertible garments were initially made during this experimentation process. However, a third garment was made with zippers used innovatively as seams. The significance of this experiment is not only in these new applications of zippers but also in an elaborate demonstration of how they can be used to construct garments in new ways.

Keywords: Zippers, Garment Design, Garment, Fabric, Practice-Based Research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Zipper was introduced in 1891 as a device used for closing openings and plackets in garments and was initially called “slide fastener”, a name changed to ‘zipper’ in 1923. As Frings (2008) correctly indicated, there are three basic types of zippers depending on the material used, namely polyester-coil, metal, and plastic moulded zippers. Frings further said that zippers are sometimes used as decorative and formed part of the design. On the other hand, Shaeffer (2011) stated that the device was invented in 1893 as a fastener for boots was then called “ clasp-locker” and later a” hookless fastener” or slide fastener” and later change to the zipper by B. F. Goodrich in 1923 as mentioned by Frings. Shaeffer again says that early zippers add more weight to garments and have no resistance to rust when coming into contact with water yet, they were commonly found in less expensive ready-to-wear clothing in the 1930s. Shaeffer, in addition, gave tips to how to manage zipper in garments. Today zippers have always been preferred to other fasteners and closures, including nylon-tape-closure, (Velcro) Buttons, hook and eye, hook and bar, buckles hook and loop, brooches, magnets, fabric ties and laces. And even found in haute couture clothing due to innovation. According to Tyler (2004), besides providing a neat and strong fastening in garments, zippers can be functional or decorative. Decorative zippers (i.e. ‘extra-zippers’ *ala* Lee-Tate 2004) now abound in the market and are used as trimmers. According to McCall’s (1968), zippers are made from metal or nylon chains and identified several types of zippers, namely skirt, dress, neckline, separating, Trouser and slipcover zipper. This study seeks to introduce a new use of zippers, i.e. as fashion/textile fabric for the construction of garments. The study will demonstrate in detail how multiple zippers can be used in garment making.

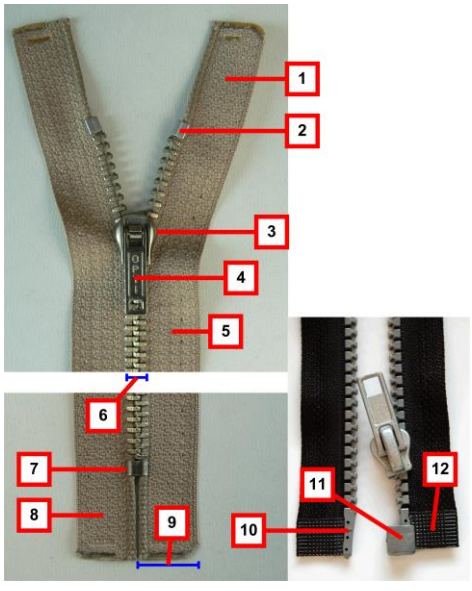


Figure 1. Components of a zipper

The components of a zipper, as illustrated in figure 1 are:

1. Top Tape Extension (The fabric part of the zipper that extends beyond the teeth, at the top of the chain).
2. Top Stop (Two devices affixed to the top end of a zipper, to prevent the slider from coming off the chain).
3. Slider (The device that moves up and down the chain to open or close the zipper).
4. Pull Tab or Puller (The part of the slider that is held to move the slider up or down).
5. Tape Width (Refers to the width of the fabric on both sides of the zipper chain).
6. Chain or Zipper Teeth (The continuous piece that is formed when both halves of a zipper are meshed together) and Chain Width (Refers to the specific gauge of the chain - common gauge sizes are #3, #5, #7, #8 and #10, the bigger the number, the wider the teeth/chain width is).
7. Bottom Stop (A device affixed to the bottom end of a zipper, to prevent further movement of the half of the zipper from separating).
8. Bottom Tape Extension (The fabric part of the zipper that extends beyond the teeth, at the bottom of the chain).
9. Single Tape Width (Refers to the width of the fabric on one side of the zipper chain).
10. Insertion Pin (A device used on a separating zipper whose function is to allow the joining of the two zipper halves).
12. Retainer Box or Pin Box (A device used on a separating zipper whose function is to correctly align the pin, to begin the joining of the zipper halves).

There are other fashion designers that demonstrate how various non-conventional materials are used innovatively as fashion fabric**.** One such fashion designer is C. Lawrence a British designer who used electric cable to manufacture garments on 10th Feb. 2012. Other innovative nonconventional fabric was by S. Tina who made garments out of old computer wires on August 2010 Also; there was the balloon couture dresses published on December 2012 by Hosokai and Takashi.

Brief History Garment and Fashion Fabric

Fabric and garment are a dependent event, and that one cannot do without the other. The first clothing was made from the hides of animals and is worn sometimes tied on with belt strips of made from hiding. However, Genesis chapter three verse seven says that as soon as they had eaten the fruit, they realised that they were naked, so Adam and Eve fig leaves together and uses it to cover themselves. This is obvious that the first apparel was produced from leaves. Today there are thousands of textiles, a fabric in markets comprises of Natural, man-made and combination of the two.

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Evolution of fashion begins the very day Adam and Eve eat the ''knowledge'' fruit and Evolvement takes in when society started to clothed for various purposes. Example. Nudity to accentuate sexual emotions, modesty to cover nudity and adornment to exhibit physical and sexual attractiveness.

Fashion is an intangible art, difficult to analyse but easier than one thinks to achieve. As any other area of specialisation, one can also specialise in one of the numerous lists of costumes from casual, corporate to haute couture wear. Haute couture is a French word means high level of sewing. Fashion and garment are a widespread cycle that repeats it selves in modern and innovative manner this is because designers kept on taking inspiration from the past fashion. It is obvious that the survival of fashion depends on past.

Innovation

Innovation is the key to the economic development to any country and is the building block of the future. There are three levels of innovations, namely; Breakthrough innovation, Technology innovation and ordinary innovation. Ordinary innovation is the one that occurs most often. Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd (2009). Hisrich el at. has explained ordinary innovation as using technology to add value to an existing product or services or introducing a new and better method of doing things. For example, zipper that is becoming decorative effect and at times formed part of the garment (like the writer's zipper seam dress) or as trimming, is seen on all kinds of garments from children to adults though the concept of the zipper is not new". Bucket sleeve "(big kaba sleeves in Ghanaians ladies'' heydays') now called cup sleeve. Before bead jewellery was made on a strand, today it is mostly on multi-strand and so many varieties. Frings (2004) describe innovation as something that requires creativity, research into new ideas and technology and has become the order of the day to every business. And name two groups of people to be fashion innovators. Fashion designers themselves as innovator and individuals who are fashion leaders (fashion role models)

A fashion designer is a professional dressmaker who has the skills. Designer research into the textile and fashion markets and find out what type of fabrics, texture, colours and styles the market is demanding at a particular given of time (trend). And produce to meet market demand.

Fashion leaders (fashion role models); they are kind of people that love fashion so much and can spend a lot their incomes in clothing they create their own designs and are always seen ahead of the current trend in fashion even designers take inspiration from them. Example, a client, went to a fashion lecturer and dress designer with her own tape measure and after showing a sketch of design drew by herself on a piece of

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paper, she said '' madam please I want the dress length to this level'' pointing to the tape measure. Meanwhiles is the same tape measure every designer uses. So this is how a fashion leader or innovator can be aggressive to what he or she wants.

Definition of Fabric and Garment; '' a fabric is a planar structure consisting of yarns or fibres, solutions, fabrics, or any combination of these'' textile product besides being fashion fabric can also be used as sewing accessories (Kadalph, 2007).

Garment; according to Ambrose and Harris (2007) garment is a piece of clothing made up of cut pieces of textile fabric and assembled and that, variation and design details define different fashion.

Samples of Nonconventional Fabrics in Garment Production



Figure 1. Electric cable asymmetric gown, by British designer Craig Lawrence.
Source : https://www.Pinterest.com> pin



Figure 3. Old computer wires use for ball gown by Tina Sparckles
Source: https://www.pinterest.com> pin



Figure 4. Balloon dinner dresses by Rie Hosokai and Takashi Kawada
Source: https://www.ignant.com

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All these nonconventional fabrics innovative garments have inspired the current study. Zipper is currently the major fastener in the clothing industry. Zippers are used to close openings and plackets which allow a wearer to put on and take off garments. Yet, these zippers are mostly used as fasteners and in few cases as decorative on men's wears. The study, therefore, seeks to use these zippers to produce female garments in innovative ways. The main objectives of the study is to use non-conventional material (zippers) as fashion fabric in the production of female garments as the textile fabric is becoming monotonous. The second objective is to use the zippers as seam lines in production of female garment. It is visage that this innovation will add one more to give more variety to textile fabrics used in garment making. The study will also encourage students to improve their creativity and understanding of the fashion design subject at a professional level.

2. GENERAL PROCEDURE

Practice-based Research is type of qualitative research. According to Candy (2006) the practice-based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcome of that practice. Claims of originality and knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes such as images, music, designs models and others.

Design Inspiration

Inspiration is a creative environment which makes it possible for an artist to creative according to his/her abilities. Furthermore, it is the process that takes place when somebody sees or hear something that causes them to have existing new ideals or makes them want to create something especially in art, music, or literature according to the Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary. Based on this, the inspiration for the study was drawn from the Dragon Fly.



Figure 5. Dragon Fly

Idea Generation

Idea generation; the process of creating, developing, and communicates ideas which are abstract, concrete or visual. The process includes constructing through the idea, innovating the concept and bringing the concept to the reality.

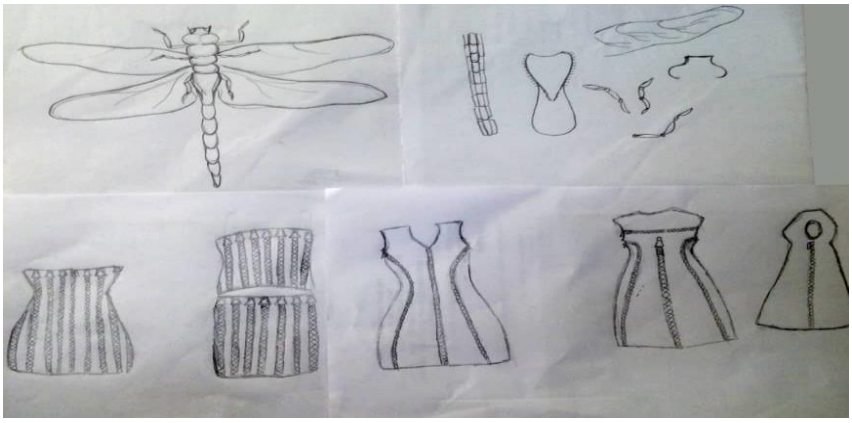


Figure 6. Ideal Generation

Tools and Equipment Used in the Garments Making
Large table
Set of curves
Tracing wheel
Tape measure
Pencils
Shear
Over Lock Sewing Machine
Straight Stitch Machine
Iron and Ironing Table
Dummy

Materials used in the Garments Construction



Figure 7. Decorative zippers

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Figure 8. African prints''enyebre nyi sordza''



Figure 9. Accessories (Polyester Lining, Sewing threads, Hook and bar)

Quantity of Material Used the Productions

In all one hundred and ten (110) zippers were used in production of size 12 skirt and blouse and the size 14 bustier garment. The 110 zippers consist of the following colours: Green 36; Brown 30; Red 14; Black 14; Wine 12 and Yellow 4. The length of the zippers depends on the area of the garment it falls. The zipper-seam garment on the other hand was made up of nine 32'' (inches) decorated zippers and three yards of African print ''enyebre nyi sordza'' meaning'' the angry eyes does not catch fire.

Production of Garments

Pattern-making, laying-out and cutting-out of zipper seams garment as shown in Figures 10 and 11.



Figure 10. Pattern cutting





Figure 11. Draping of Vilene Draping of zippers sewing of zip. and zip. Seams Garments

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The Innovative Garments

The final innovative garments are showcased in both front and back views in Figures 12-14.




Front view




Back view

Figure 12. Innovative garment 1




Front view




Back and side view

Figure 13. Innovative garment 2

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Front view



Back view



Front view



Back view

Figure 14. Innovative garment 3 (Zipper Seams Dress)

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3. RESULTS

Stylish and durability: the garments falls under haute couture clothing; comfortability, resilience, ability to last, classic, unique, and mendable.

Reliability: the garments are ever ready to be worn as at any time; the fabric has crease resistances and need less or no ironing after laundry.

Aesthetic: the vertical layout of the golden teeth and the wonderful colours of the tapes of zippers give an illusion of the nation's mother cloth, ''kente''.

Affordable: the cost is moved affordable compared to the couture garment in fashion and garments industry.

4. CONCLUSION

The researcher, after several experiments came out with exotic female multi-purpose garments made up from decorated zippers which will highly satisfy superstar and fashion innovators who always wanted to look new and matchless. The study concludes by drawing on the quote by Seneca, Roman philosopher, which says, "We live not according to reason but according to fashion".

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