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A Proposal on a method for enhancing creative expression in craft design through reflecting on the creative process

by

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A Dissertation

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## **Abstract**

Craft design plays a crucial role with a historical background in design research. However, inquiring about craft design in contemporary society still left space for enriching the understanding of craft creativity in the design community. This study aims to propose a method to enhance creative expression by reflecting on the creative process of craft design. The passion of this research is rooted in the question, "how do craft designers reflect on their creations?" Is the reflection impact the creative expression? Therefore, exploring designers' reflective practice as a subjective experience from an internal perspective could be an effective way to provide a new understanding within design research and is expected to benefit novice designers. This research focuses on ceramic design as the craft area to explore. On the one hand, ceramic design has a long tradition of interacting with humans and the material world. On the other hand, due to the researcher's background, that experience as a ceramic designer to access the data source. This research seeks to answer the following three questions: what kind of reflection do craft designers engage in the creative process? How can diverse reflection facilitate creative expression? How do we promote novice designers' creative expression through reflective practice?

We primarily served the literature across the design and creativity domain to clarify the existing research concerning reflection, creativity, and craft research. In this standing, we adopted multiple qualitative research incorporating diverse data embedded in three phases to fulfill the research. Study I explored the forms of reflection by interviewing experienced ceramic designers with a design education background. Seven forms of reflection in the creative process have been identified through qualitative content analysis and primarily mapped in a framework with two dimensions according to the data analysis. Appling Material Engagement Theory (MET) to indicate the next research phase. Study II examines the designer's reflection during the execution stage that affects the creative expression by adopting observation and visual data analysis. The findings have characterized the framework generated in Study I and further discussed the implications of experienced designers' reflection associated with Material Engagement Theory (MET) while developing a method to guide novice designers' reflective practice. Study III instructed student designers to conduct reflective practice in a multi-cultural environment in fieldwork and collect photo diaries and self-reports as the data source. Three themes were highlighted in the thematic analysis and referenced Three-Dimensional reflective frameworks from literature to reveal the findings. Finally, we discussed the main results from three studies in this research and suggested an RLCD framework to contribute to craft and design education. The implications and the recommendations for future work also can be found in the discussion and conclusion section.

Keywords: craft design, creative process, reflective practice, design education, creative expression