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PRODUCT DESIGN IN THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

ABSTRACT:

This poster introduces product design in the same sense as *The Experience Economy* (Pine II and Gilmore 1999). This trend advocates that consumers like to pay more for a pleasurable experience above and beyond a better product or service. In this research, experience is defined as a user's thematic engagement with a product in distinction from that with the utility of the product. This study demonstrates that industrial products are able to provide an interesting event or activity for users to participate in.

Figure 1 shows *The Experience Realms* (Pine II and Gilmore 1999) that specify four types of experience: entertainment, education, aesthetics and escapist. For example, seeing a movie is an entertaining experience while having fun in a theme park activates an escapist experience. This model helps guide designers to enable different types of experience based on different user interaction.

Figure 2 shows six products that enable user experience. Both existing and conceptual designs as well as electric and non-electric products are shown. It indicates that experience design is applicable to industrial products. For example, if there is a fake but adorable small fish in a filtered

water pitcher, the user is more likely to refill it to keep the fish looking alive. The user might feel like s/he is saving a fish and caring for it.

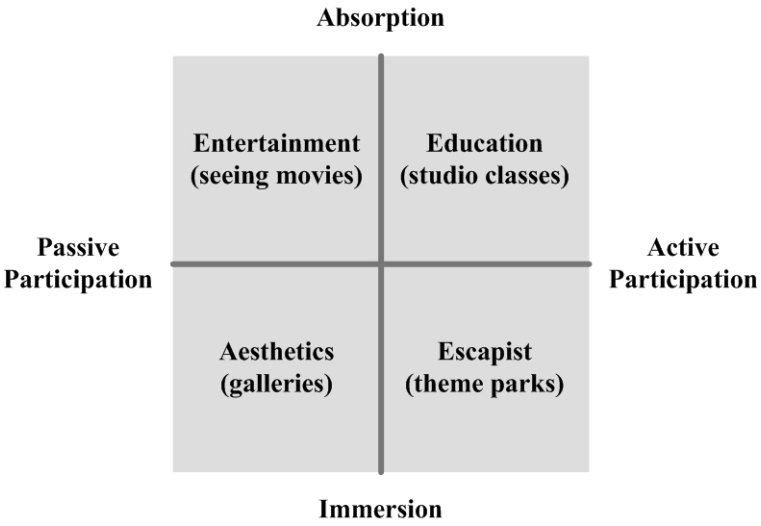
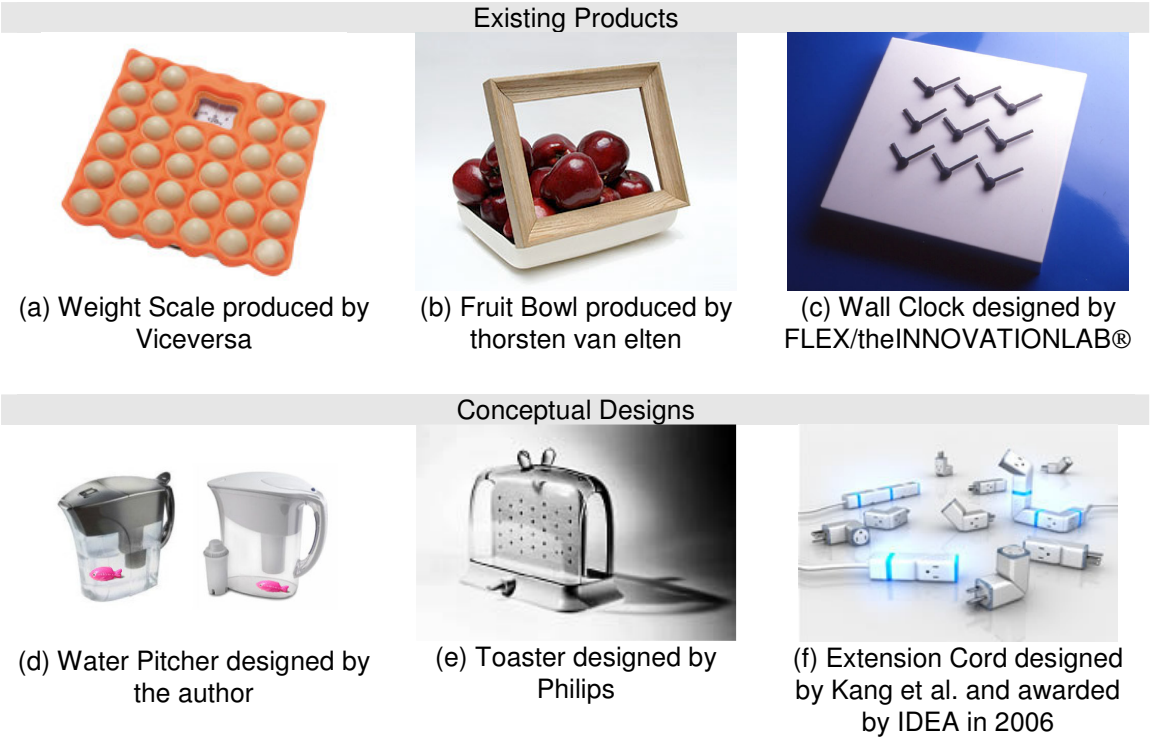


Figure 1: The experience realms (Pine II and Gilmore 1999).



(a) Weight Scale produced by Viceversa

(b) Fruit Bowl produced by thorsten van elten

(c) Wall Clock designed by FLEX/theINNOVATIONLAB®

(d) Water Pitcher designed by the author

(e) Toaster designed by Philips

(f) Extension Cord designed by Kang et al. and awarded by IDEA in 2006

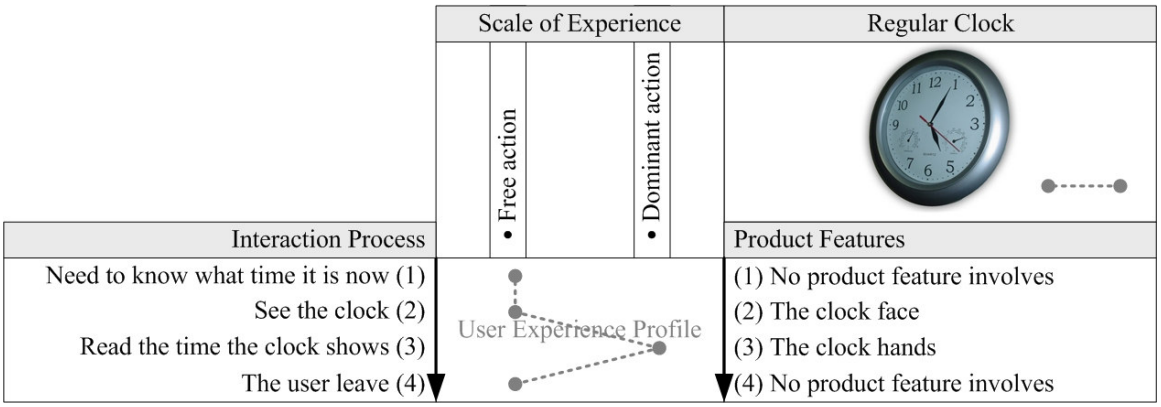
Figure 2: Products and designs that enable user experience.

Table 1 shows the relationships between product properties and the contexts of experience. This finding is based on literature review and the author's inspection on product samples mentioned above. This table inspires designers to design products for enabling thematic experiences. For example, in terms of theatrics, audiences' experience can be enhanced by a stage and its corresponding props.

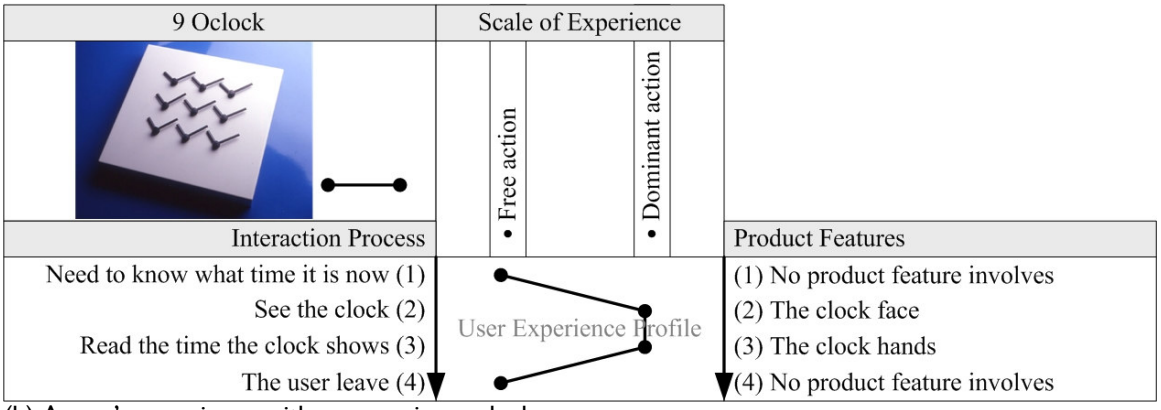
Product Properties	Contexts of Experience
Interaction	Event
Function	Stage
Parts, appearance	Prop(s)
Non-functional output	Souvenir
(Assigned by designers)	Theme
Main purpose or function	Central activity
Periodical use	Individual activity
Free action	Dominant action

Table 1: The relationships between product properties and the contexts of experience.

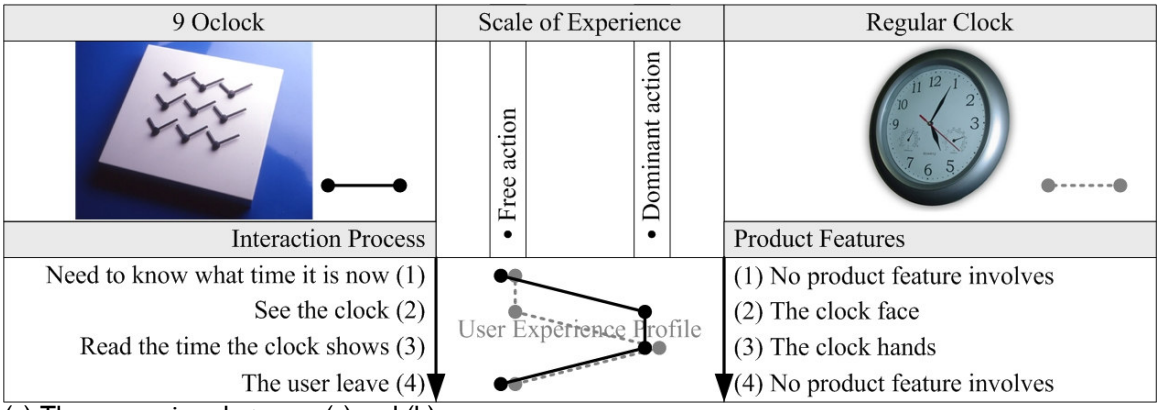
Figure 3 shows the descriptive framework of user experience. It can be applied in several ways for several purposes. For example, figure 3(a) illustrates a user has little or no thematic experience with a regular clock. Thus, it indicates a potential opportunity for experience design. Figure 3(b) illustrates a user has visual experience with an "experience clock". Figure 3(c) illustrates the comparison between (a) and (b). Figure 4 illustrates the comparison of experiences, taking a regular toaster and an "experience toaster" as examples. Last, figure 5 shows the procedural framework for concept generation of experience design and two examples. It provides a simplified way to support designers to turn regular products into experience designs.



(a) A user's experience with a regular clock.



(b) A user's experience with an experience clock.



(c) The comparison between (a) and (b).

Figure 3: The descriptive framework of user experience.

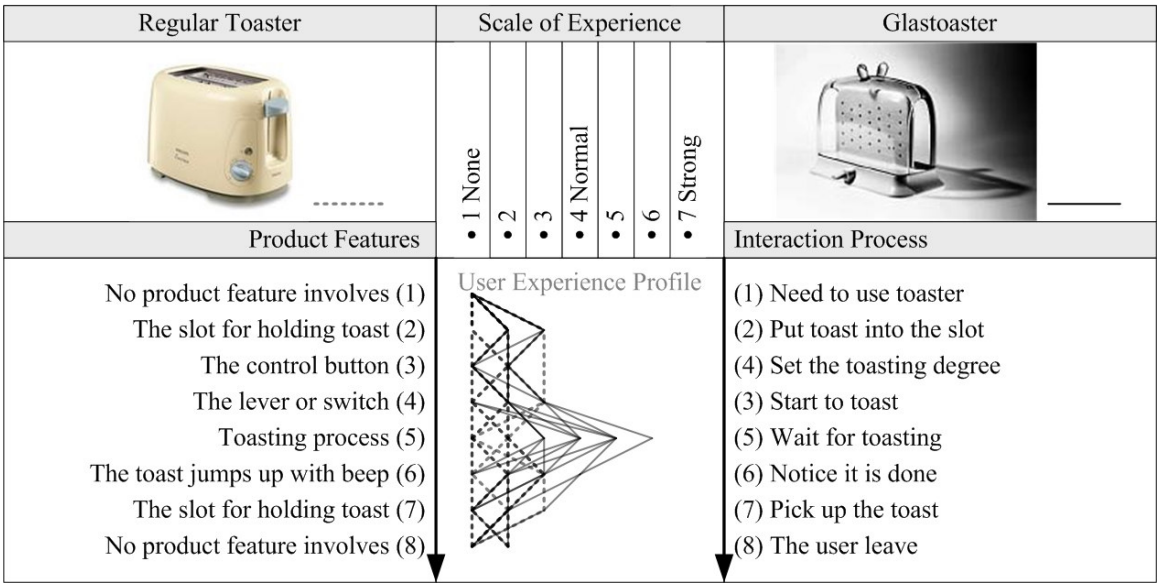


Figure 4: The comparison of experiences, taking a regular toaster and an “experience toaster” as examples.

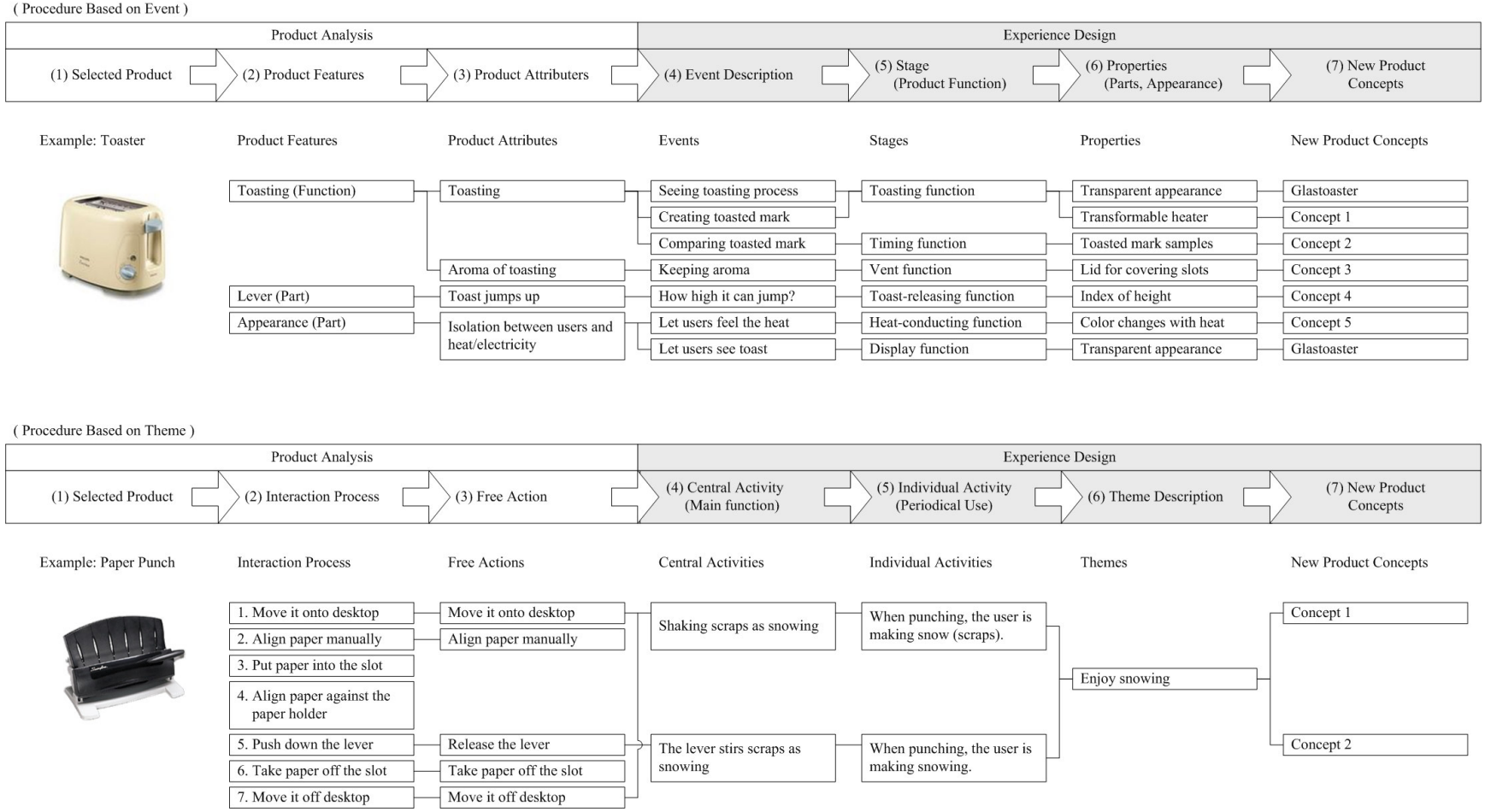


Figure 5: The procedural framework for concept generation of experience design and two examples.