

THE IDEA AWARD AS A DESIGN QUALITY METRIC: PART-A, DRIVING WEB CITATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

Today, the resulting concepts from the conceptual phase are evaluated according to pre-established product criteria. These criteria fail to articulate and measure a concepts industrial design aspects, - leaving selection prone to subjectivity and decision bias, resulting in high failure rates among newly launched products. This body of work represents a portion of a developing methodology, connecting a designer's descriptions of their design to performance metrics in the market place. This is achieved using IDEA awards as a bridge between designer arguments, as captured by the Concept Aspect Profile, and general market awareness concerning a product. The research establishes that products with a high degree of design quality, as measured by the Industrial Design Excellence Award (IDEA Award) criteria, result in a ten times higher general awareness among users than non-qualifying products. Within Gold, Silver and Bronze winners there also exists a ranking and Gold winners have a 76% chance of obtaining more general awareness than Silver winners.

Key words: Evidence based design quality evaluation, evidence based decision-making, Concept Aspect Profile, design argumentation analysis, design awards, web-citations, web-links, web awareness, public awareness, investors expectation, stock-performance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is the issue?

With a 35-41% failure rate in the development of new products [1], [2], [3] and [4] there is a tremendous need for metrics that predict consumer awareness and acceptance. The existence of a leading indicator would aid early stage decision-making with regard to continuing production and actively promoting, or discontinuing new product introductions. Even more desirable, such a metric would aid in selection amongst competing new product concepts. Traditional focus group studies have failed as an indicator of success, neglecting to focus on behaviour as the best predictor. [5] Without a metric for reliable design quantification, decisions made regarding viable concepts will continue to rely on subjective and biased decision-making. The research is reported in two separate papers, this and "The IDEA Award As A Design Quality Metric: Part-B, Predicting Investor Valuation."

1.2 How do awards predict performance metrics?

To improve upon the selection process, we propose using an evaluation tool, the Concept-Aspect-Profile (CAP) [6]. This is based on the recording of designer's verbal presentation of their concepts. The CAP captures design arguments, using the IDEA design award application form as interview guide. Subsequently the designer's argument story is segmented into a hierarchal framework of the key aspects representing a user's experience of the product and corporate design characteristics. Figure 1.

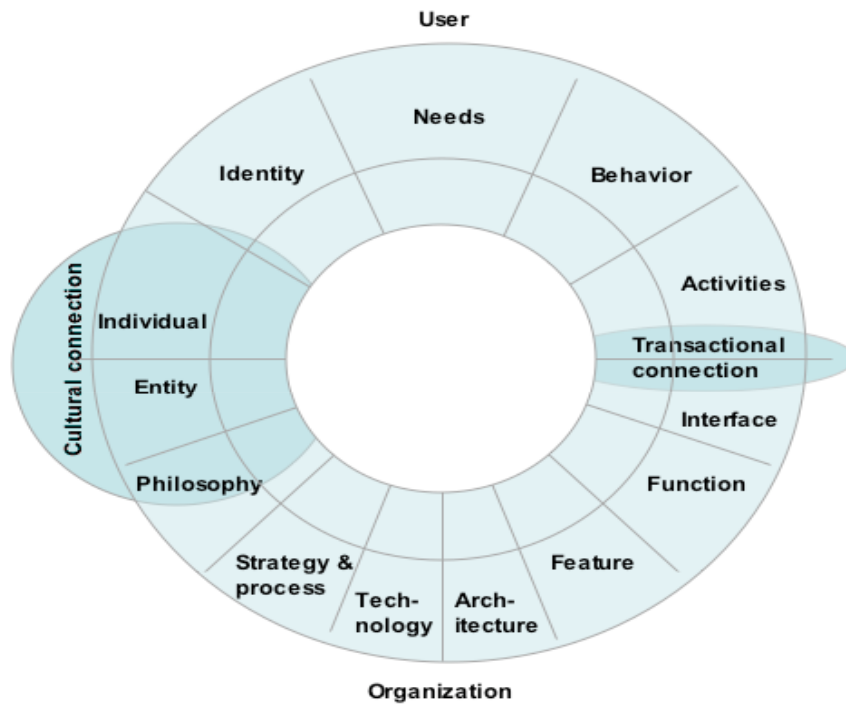


Figure 1. The circular Concept Aspect Profile segment, visualizes how users and corporate providers connect at a transactional and cultural point. At the concrete level, the user connects to the product through its interface. At an abstract level, the user connects to the corporation behind the product through their mutual cultural references.

This framework could eventually aid the decision-making process for concept selection in the conceptual phase, by comparing an actual design argument with historically successful arguments. This connection could be established by identifying a connection from a designer’s argumentation of concepts, as captured by the Concept Aspect Profile, with IDEA Awards received and to public exposure and investor’s expectations. These connections can be established by observing the relationship between the Concept Aspect Profile, the IDEA Award Application Profiles and the IDEA Awards in the Gold, Silver and Bronze categories. These connections can be further established by observing the relationship between IDEA Award reception and a products performance metrics in the market place. Figure 2.

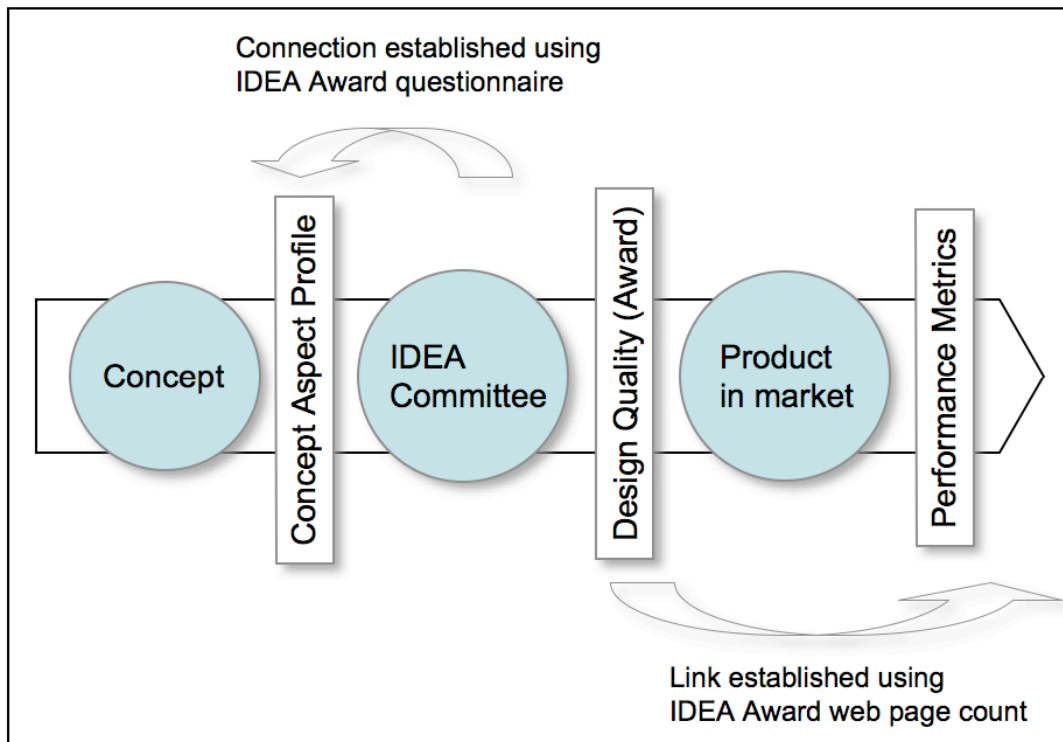


Figure 2. Connecting the Concept Aspect Profile (CAP) segmentation, with the IDEA Award, along with performance metrics in the market place. CAP connects to IDEA through analyzed award applications while IDEA connects to performance metrics through observations of award winners' reception of web links and stock value

1.3 How do awards predict consumer awareness?

Regarding the two metrics of consumer awareness and investor expectations, the objective of this work is to establish a connection between consumer awareness and IDEA Award reception as measured by web-links.

2 PROCEDURE

2.1 Why the IDEA Award?

After auditing historic design quality definitions, I decided to use the IDEA Award. The IDEA is awarded yearly and the winners are announced in Business Week and on the IDSA website. The award's committee evaluates 500+ worldwide design applications from designers, in the consumer product category, granting approximately 10 Gold, 20 Silver and 20 Bronze awards. The applicants, as well as, award recipients represent a wide range of company sizes, geographical areas, operations and origins.

Auditing one hundred and three awards posted on the World Wide Web provided nineteen awards with declared criteria for design quality. Their focus and scope varied between continents, changing from performance metrics in western cultures to strategy focus in eastern cultures. Observing the one hundred and three award's presence on the World Wide Web, the IDEA Award was found to be the seventh most significant within product design and second in the US [7]. Though second in the US, from an awareness standpoint, in US industry, it is regarded as the leading award.

The consequence of using the IDEA Award as a design quality measurement, limits its reference to western products. However, its general applicability as a bridge from design concept argument evaluation to products performance in the market place is not necessarily affected.

Comparing the IDEA Award criteria with that of the Danish Design Prize Table 1, illustrates where the two sets of criteria align. Though there are significant differences, such as the IDEA Award including innovation, while the Danish Design Prize chose to include structural aspects instead. The

