

24 July 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Joseph Lo and I am undertaking a PhD degree at the School of Textiles and Design, Heriot-Watt University in Galashiels in the Scottish Borders.

The working title of my research is: 'Identifying the markers of authenticity in relation to hand-woven textiles from the narratives of weavers'. My research aims to bring out weavers' own understanding of what constitute markers of authenticity for their own hand-woven textiles.

I conducted the first phase of my research in the Outer Hebrides in the first two weeks of July. This phase consisted of interviews with Harris Tweed weavers about their knowledge, experience, and opinions in working with textiles.

Having analysed my findings so far, I'm following up with a questionnaire to find out a little more.

I am writing to you to ask whether you would be able to help me in this second phase by answering a few questions on the attached form.

If you are willing to take part, I'd like you to note the following instructions:

- Please read each statement one at a time, and tick (✓) the appropriate boxes reflecting your opinion as to whether you agree, disagree or do not know.
- For the last 5 statements at the end of the form, could you please reply on a scale of 1 to 5:
 - 1 means you disagree totally with the statement,
 - 3 means that you have no opinion on the matter,
 - 5 means you agree strongly with the statement.

Please note that you should take each of the statements in isolation, without referring to any other statements. Importantly, each category should be considered on the assumption that all other factors are in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Harris Tweed Authority.

If you are willing to help me in my research, please mail back the form **within one week**. I've included a stamped envelope for your convenience.

If you have any questions or you need clarification, please feel free to contact me via email at kkjlo1205@gmail.com or call me on my mobile on 07425 151448.

Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in my research.

Best Regards,

Joseph Lo

Harris Tweed Case Study Phase 2: Questionnaire

	Statements	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
A	Raw Material – Wool			
1	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed can only be woven by using 100% virgin sheep wool from Scotland.			
2	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed can only be woven by using 100% virgin sheep wool from the British Isles.			
3	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed can only be woven by using 100% virgin sheep wool from anywhere in the world, as long as it has been approved by the Harris Tweed Authority.			
4	Using only 100% virgin sheep wool from the Western Hebrides will further enhance the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
5	Only wool from the Cheviot and/or Black Face Sheep (regardless of where they are bred) can be used to produce authentic Harris Tweed.			
6	The cleaning and processing of the fleeces, if executed on the island, will render the eventual piece of Harris Tweed more authentic.			
B	Yarns			
1	Only fleece-dyed wool spun into yarns can produce authentic Harris Tweed textiles.			
2	Tweeds woven with yarn-dyed yarns are not authentically Harris Tweed textiles.			
3	One means of recognizing an authentic piece of Harris Tweed is that the texture of the yarn is more 'hairy' any other types of wool yarn.			
4	Using hand-spun 100% virgin wool produced in the Western Hebrides will enhance the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
C	Colour			
1	Usage of dark, sober, dull and muted colours instead of bright, vivid, vibrant colours is not essential to the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
2	Using colours that reflect the physical landscape of the Outer Hebrides enhances the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
3	The colours of the wool yarns of authentic Harris Tweed are speckled with a multitude of different colours.			
4	The authenticity of Harris Tweed will be enhanced if natural dyes from the islands are used.			
5	Because of the way that the yarn is constructed (fleece dyed), the colours of an authentic Harris Tweed cannot be duplicated elsewhere.			
D	Tools and Technology			
1	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed can be woven on any type of hand or manual loom such as back-strap, wooden frame, Hetttersley or Double-width looms.			
2	Technical improvements and modification on any manual looms will not affect the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
3	Weavers' personal ownership of the loom will enhance the authenticity of its production of Harris Tweed.			
4	Weaving on the original wooden frame-loom will enhance the authenticity of its production of Harris Tweed.			
5	A loom with a traceable history will enhance the authenticity of its production of Harris Tweed.			

E	Construction			
1	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed can be woven using any type of construction (plain twill, herringbone, basket weave, satin, plain/tabby weave, etc.)			
2	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed can only be woven using the twill construction method and no other type of weave is allowed.			
3	New and innovative types of weave (such as manipulating the tension of warp and weft yarns) can be used to weave authentic Harris Tweed textiles, as long as these fulfill the requirements of the Authority.			
4	In my opinion, the number of picks and the weight of the textiles should not define the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
F	Process of Making the Material			
1	The authenticity of Harris Tweed will be enhanced if and when traditional practices such as waulking and blessing of the cloth are revived.			
2	A change in the production process (as long as it is done in the Outer Hebrides) does not affect the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
3	When I ask others to assist me (in warping, winding the pirns, etc.), this will not affect the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
4	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed does not depend on the number of weavers weaving at the same time on a particular site.			
5	A piece of Harris Tweed woven in a crofter's shed is more authentic than one woven in towns in the Outer Hebrides.			
7	The ability to be able to trace a piece of Harris Tweed back to the weaver will enhance the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
G	Labour			
1	The authenticity of Harris Tweed will be enhanced if woven by a native person from the Outer Hebrides.			
2	The authenticity of Harris Tweed will be enhanced if the weaving process reverts back to a more communal activity.			
H	Skill			
1	The upgrading of a weaver's skill will not affect the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
2	Harris Tweeds woven by weavers of the past without a SVQ certification are not authentic Harris Tweed.			
3	The authenticity of Harris Tweed will be compromised if woven by a weaver without a SVQ certification.			
I	Function			
1	The authenticity of Harris Tweed will be enhanced if it is only used for men's outerwear.			
2	The authenticity of Harris Tweed is not determined by the way in which the textiles are used.			
J	Forms of Exchange			
1	The way which Harris Tweed is sold, retailed, wholesaled, bartered, etc... does not affect the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
2	A Harris Tweed that is sold from a weaver's shed is more authentic than one that is sold elsewhere.			

K	Form and Design			
1	The complexity or simplicity of the design, colour and weave does not affect the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
2	Traditional designs such as herring bone, plain twill, celtic cross and barley corn enhance the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
3	The authenticity of Harris Tweed is not affected by the size (width and length) of the textile.			
4	Incorporation of motifs, patterns and designs from other cultures onto Harris Tweed textiles will not affect the authenticity of Harris Tweed.			
5	A hairier piece of Harris Tweed is more authentic than one that is less hairy.			
6	All other things being equal, a heavy-weight Harris Tweed is more authentic than a light-weight Harris Tweed.			
7	All other things being equal, a denser weave will render a piece of Harris Tweed more authentic than one that is less dense.			
L	Quality			
1	An authentic piece of Harris Tweed will last a life-time.			
2	Only hand-woven textiles that reflect the best of my weaving abilities are considered authentic Harris Tweed.			
3	Inconsistency of weave and yarn quality will render a more hand-woven feel to Harris Tweed which will in turn make it more authentic.			
M	Site and Geography			
1	Having specific labels stating whether a textile is woven in Harris, Lewis or elsewhere will render the Harris Tweed more authentic.			
2	In my opinion, the production process executed on the islands is sufficient to make a piece of textile authentically Harris Tweed. The Orb logo is only an institutional endorsement for marketing, commercial and legal purposes.			

Qi Pride in my work and in the quality of textiles I weave are the most important characteristics associated with an authentic piece of Harris Tweed.

1 Totally Disagree	2 Disagree	3 No Opinion	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Qii I take pride in the maintenance of the loom. This pride enhances the authenticity of Harris Tweed textiles.

1 Totally Disagree	2 Disagree	3 No Opinion	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Qiii An authentic piece of Harris Tweed is woven by the 'sweat of the weaver'.

1 Totally Disagree	2 Disagree	3 No Opinion	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Qiv An authentic piece of Harris Tweed signifies the history, continuation of tradition, culture and way of life of the people of the Outer Hebrides. And these qualities may not be physically perceived on the textiles.

1 Totally Disagree	2 Disagree	3 No Opinion	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Comments

Please feel free to add any comments on any of the questions above, indicating which question it refers to.

Section Letter and Question Number	Comment