
The Design of Women's Shirts and Vests with an Approach to Visual Arts Derived from the Mola Art of the Guna Tribe in Panama

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Received 00 September 2018; revised 00 November 2018; accepted 00 November 2018

Abstract

Clothing has been with humans in sync with human civilization, and the development of societies and civilizations has drastically changed it. Clothing reflects the culture of the people of a country and region and can be a means of cultural invasion and influence of other cultures. Iran has a history as old as the history of its people. Cultural richness can be found in any region of this country. The diverse clothing can be seen in different regions of Iran by looking at different tribes, cities, and provinces of the country. Besides, traditional Iranian clothes represent the art and culture of their region. Today, traditional clothes are less popular among people than in the past due to the societies urbanization. So, clothing designers are obliged to present new designs to the market that match the taste and fashion of present generation. In this study, women's vests and shirts are designed by combining the clothing of Central American women, Panama, called Mola, and the traditional clothing of Iranian women. It can be argued that the resulting designs are diverse and can inspire new ideas in the minds of the audience and clothing designers. According to the results, modern traditional arts can be integrated with Iranian traditional arts and new ideas and suitable clothes can be introduced to the audience if it is based on a correct understanding of clothing and fabric design.

Keywords: Traditional Clothes, Panama, Mola, Sewing of Vests.

1. Introduction

One might initially think that the clothes of different tribes in Central and South America have high production costs and prices because immigrants from Africa, Spain, and other countries have entered that

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continent in these years and caused changes in their clothing. So, there have been changes in the designs of clothes with different combinations. For example, the first designed clothing for the Central American men is called Chamanto, designed and sewn from pure silk and colored wool woven in strips. Another clothing that has a specific design is Pollera used for parties and special traditional ceremonies. This clothing was subjected to combined designs from Spain in the 17th and 18th centuries. The third specific clothing in this area is Huipil which is the most specific one. This clothing consists of 2 to 3 colorful silk fabrics combined by sewing techniques. Mexican women usually wear it [1]. Central American local clothing has different meanings understood through the shape and type of its design. The designs sometimes reflect where they live and even their neighborhood or city. It is easy to find out from which part the person has come to the center of the states with which tradition and under what conditions by following the color of the clothes and designs. It is worth mentioning that the culture and designs of European countries such as Spain can be seen in these clothes as well [2]. The Guna Indians are indigenous people living in Panama. One of the traditional clothes of Panama is called "Mola" which is sewn by women of the family for young women. However, some men called Omeggids used to sew these traditional clothes for women too. This traditional clothing, which was popular in the early 20th century, has five main components, including two pieces of "Mola" for the back and front of the dress, which may have the same design, a slit in the middle to cover the neck, and two sleeves [3].

Guna women used to tie a type of shawl called Muswe around their heads. They used to wear skirts with cotton clothes called Sabured and the skirts were often blue, orange, green, or yellow. Guna women used to wear Wini styles, hang beads on their feet and hands, and wear plastic sandals. The term "Mola" generally refers to the hand-stitched blouses worn by Guna women, and also to the paired patches that form the back and front of the blouse. The term "Morro" or "Mor" refers to handwork, and "Mola" refers to a shirt or other finished product. "Mola" is known as a textile folk art. "Mola" is not only an important source of cash income but also serves as a vital symbol of cultural identity and independence for the Guna people. Mola is a living folk art, and the Mola sewing techniques, styles, and even the use of Mola clothing are always in vogue. Many older women still wear traditional clothing, including the Mola. However, some younger women dress in more modern clothing. Traditions and attitudes differ from one island to another. So, some societies accept Western fashion more openly than others [4].

2. Literature Review

Khani and Shirazpour [5] conducted a study titled the Relationship between Architecture and Fashion with a Regional Approach. They examined the relationship between architecture and clothing fashions in today's world according to the approach of different areas of life, arguing that the most common concepts between architecture and clothing design have nine different categories. Furthermore, each region has its traditional dress design according to its climatic condition, just as it has a specific architecture. What psychological effects of colors on people will bring about changes in their social relationships? How awareness of color and its internal effects improves people's social skills and individual social behaviors.

Karimi and Barvar [7] conducted a study titled the Identity of Iranian Architecture and the Formation of Fashion and Clothing Design Ideas. They investigated some common ideas between architecture and fashion design, such as technology, materials, the boundaries of artistic systems, and new design software. They measured the connection between these ideas and both of these fields. The results revealed a significant relationship between the identity of Iranian architecture and the formation of clothing and fashion design ideas.

Hill [2] conducted a study titled Traditional Latin American Dresses and examined the traditional and integrated dresses of this region. He found that due to the implementation of the correct policies of the Ministry of Industries and Textiles, traditional clothes still are used in various ceremonies such as marriages, childbirths, etc.

3. Methodology

Studies can be classified into basic, applied, and action research in terms of objectives. This study is an applied research since its expected results can be used to improve the insight of clothing design and tailoring managers (shirts and vests for women). Moreover, studies can be classified into experimental and non-experimental in terms of the researcher's control over variables. Experimental studies provide a systematic and logical method to answer the question "What would happen if this work were done under controlled conditions?". In these studies, the researcher manipulates the stimulus, behavior, or environmental conditions and examines its effect on changing the situation or the relationships between the variables. However, in non-experimental studies, the relationships between the manipulated variables are examined. They include descriptive, scientific-comparative, post-event, and correlational studies. Accordingly, this is a "descriptive" study because it describes the existing conditions and facts. The literature on Guna clothing were reviewed, the procedure and method of performing this traditional art were extracted, and the Iranian traditional design was implemented using this method.

4. Findings

A storyboard for the clothing design was created based on the results of the research in the library. Due to the small pattern, the fabric was not suitable for cut models and did not give the necessary elegance. Choosing the right sewing pattern will greatly affect the beauty of your work. The first pattern was an animal-themed Mola design with an emphasis on birds. A re-examination of this art and its implementation methods resulted in the use of indigenous and local motifs of Iranian architecture. Yazd is considered one of the most important historical architectural sites in Iran. Therefore, it was decided to use Yazd city architectural design. Cotton fabric was used because the fabric must not flow and must have good flexibility after being cut and turned.



Figure1. Storyboard

5. Discussion and Analysis of the Findings

After research, the method of performing this art was studied and adapted to traditional Iranian art and design so that it could be presented as an idea to the Iranians. Eutods were made, two of which were presented as the final design in the form of a vest and skirt. The implementation procedure is as follows.



Figure2. The final color design of the vest



Figure3. The final color design of the skirt

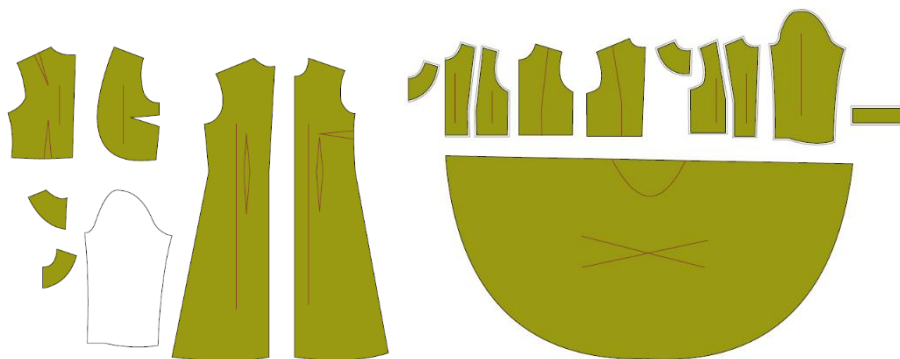


Figure4. The pattern of the skirt and vest



Figure5. The stages of sewing a vest using the Mola technique



Figure6. The stages of sewing a shirt using the Mola technique



Figure7. The final sewing of the vest



Figure8. The final sewing of the skirt

6. Conclusion

Iran and Panama have a history as long as the history of mankind. Iranian civilization is one of the first human civilizations. Iran has very ancient ethnicities and a deep history. Iranian art is one of the most influential arts in human civilization. Panama and the Americas have been cut off from the rest of the planet throughout history. Nevertheless, they have a very deep tradition and Panamanian traditional art goes back to the distant past. Combining the art of two countries can bring very desirable and popular results in the present time because they have old art, rich culture, and traditional designs in designing and producing clothes. In addition, many different designs can be created by combining the traditional art of clothing design of Guna and Iranian women. The combination of Mola's clothing designs and lines with Iranian traditional art, which has a completely different design, brings a new spirit to the traditional art of design and attracts many viewers. This can make a significant contribution to keeping the beautiful Iranian culture alive and creating a beautiful combination. The purpose of this research was to develop new ideas in clothing design for the audience by combining these two traditional arts. Intended for use by clothing designers and manufacturers.

Acknowledgment: Authors are grateful to colleagues of Research Center the Polymer and Textile, Islamic Azad University of Yazd.

Funding: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of interest: The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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