

## INNOVATIVE VEIL DESIGNING USING CONVENTIONALISED MOTIF OF SWABI CHAIL

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### Abstract

The research "Innovative Veil Designing Using Conventionalized Motif of Swabi Chail" has focused on the traditional Swabi chail motifs in modern women's fashion through digital printing techniques. The chail, dotted veil for dignity amongst Swabi women, has been used to develop new scarf and dupatta designs using Adobe Photoshop. Traditional motifs such as sur gulay, half-moon, semi-circle, and polka dots have been redesigned into geometric patterns with a vibrant color palette inspired by nature. The printing of fabric samples was done on silk and cotton; feedback from the 100 respondents showed that 87% of the respondents recognized the cultural motif and liked it, while 94% agreed to its use in fusion with modern fashion. Polka dots on dark backgrounds were most liked, along with cotton fabrics. The findings indicate that digital innovation can help preserve and innovate cultural heritage by merging tradition with modern design to cater to global fashion markets.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Cultural Dresses and Handicrafts of Pakistan

In Pakistan, textiles form part of everyday life; they represent a combination of cultural evolution, migration, and traditional artistry. The country has a rich tradition of crafts, including pottery, metalwork, wood carving, jewelry, leather, and textiles, which are important to the economy and provide income for rural dwellers. The regional diversity and cultural identity of Pakistan are recognizable in its handicrafts: Multan's Kashi Kari or blue pottery, lamps made from camel skin, handmade carpets of Sindh and Punjab, and traditional shoes such as Khussa and Peshawari Chappal. Faisalabad is dominating the sector of cotton textiles, while Ajrak, Sindhi Topi, and handwoven cloths from Sindh represent the pride of and cultural achievement in textile skills. Despite all this value, this sector's micro-enterprises face significant market-related challenges, lack proper resources, and have limited innovation.

### Cultural and Regional Attire

Pakistan's cultural identity is deeply rooted in Islam, influencing its social customs and dress. Each province exhibits unique attire and craftsmanship: **Punjab:** Renowned for *Phulkari* embroidery, truck art, and handloom textiles. **Sindh:** Famous for mirror work, hand embroidery, and the iconic *Sindhi cap*. **Baluchistan:** Distinguished by intricate Balochi embroidery and tribal jewelry. **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pashtun culture):** Traditional *shalwar kameez*, *Peshawari chappal*, and modest attire for women emphasizing *purdah*.

### Swabi Chail: A Cultural Symbol

Swabi, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is renowned for its traditional *Chail*—a dotted shawl worn by women as a symbol of respect, modesty, and heritage. Historically, it originated from the battle of Shamansoor (1823), where women's white shawls were stained with the blood of fallen warriors, giving rise to the red-dotted design (Yousafzai, 2016; Shinwari, 2018). The *Chail* exists in several varieties—*Sur Guly* (red dots), *Tor Guly* (black dots), *Dwagiwal*, *Daal*, and *Punjpir*.

### Cultural Influence and Textile Innovation

Swabi's cottage industries, led largely by women, produce textiles, embroidery, and handicrafts reflecting regional aesthetics. Contemporary designers can reinterpret traditional motifs like the *Chail* through digital printing and textile innovation to preserve cultural identity while appealing to modern markets (Evans et al., 2014; Khan, 2008).

### Application of Traditional Motifs in Textile Design

Motifs serve as carriers of cultural narratives, reflecting nature, beliefs, and social customs (Karolia, 2019). Printing techniques—such as screen, block, and digital printing—enable ornamentation and color expression that influence mood and aesthetic perception (Sorger & Jenny, 2012; Burke, 2011). Integrating traditional motifs with modern technology supports both cultural preservation and creative innovation in textile design.

## DIGITAL TEXTILE PRINTING AND ADOBE PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUES

### Definition of Textile and Women's Role

The term *textile* encompasses fibers and all products made through processes such as spinning, weaving, knitting, and stitching. Historically, women played a central role in domestic textile production, using traditional methods for comfort and livelihood (Rasch, 2010). Modern innovations like Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and Print-on-Demand (POD) have simplified textile creation, especially for women working from home (Bowles & Isaac, 2009).

## Historical Background of Textile Design

Textile decoration originated in ancient India, China, Japan, and Indonesia through methods like *resist dyeing*, *block printing*, and *copper plate printing* (Kadolph, 2010). These traditional practices evolved into mechanized techniques such as *roller printing*, which used engraved rollers for multi-colour designs (Koch & Nordmeyer, 2000). Another notable process, *discharge printing*, involved removing colour from selected fabric areas to form designs.

## Categories of Textile Design

Textile design combines art and technology to produce fabrics for various purposes. It includes three main categories—*woven*, *printed*, and *mixed media* textiles (Clarke & Simon, 2011). Each utilizes distinct artistic and technical approaches inspired by natural and manmade motifs such as florals, geometric, and ethnic patterns (Fish, 2005).

## Role of Textile Designers

Textile designers work across fashion, home furnishings, wallpapers, and gift products (Russell, 2011). Depending on their work environment, designers may create commissioned designs or develop collections independently. They integrate creativity and technical skills to produce innovative fabrics, often merging traditional art with modern digital approaches (Gale & Kaur, 2002; Wilson, 2001).

## TEXTILE PRINTING

### Overview

Textile printing applies color to fabric in defined patterns. Unlike dyeing, which colors the entire fabric, printing targets specific areas with precision. Printing has existed for thousands of years and remains vital to global economies (Lacasse & Baumann, 2004; Zubairu & Mshelia, 2015).

### Direct Printing

In *direct printing*, color paste is directly applied to fabric using pigments or dyes, making it the most widely used method due to its simplicity and cost-effectiveness (Berry et al., 2003; Eldesoky, 2018).

### Block Printing

Block printing is one of the oldest techniques, still practiced manually in many Asian countries. Designs are carved onto wooden blocks, inked, and pressed onto fabric. Although artistically rich, the process is time-consuming and unsuitable for large-scale production (Purushothama, 2018).

### Screen Printing

Screen printing evolved from stenciling, where color passes through mesh openings in a screen to create designs. It can be done via *flat screen* or *rotary screen* printing, both offering flexibility for small or medium production (Shang, 2013; Kashouti et al., 2019).

### Burn-Out Printing

Burn-out printing uses chemical pastes to dissolve selected fibers in blended fabrics, leaving behind intricate raised patterns. It's often used on polyester-cotton blends to achieve decorative transparency (Foaisal et al., 2018).

## DIGITAL PRINTING

### Concept and Development

Digital textile printing applies computer-generated designs directly onto fabric through inkjet technology. Emerging in the 19th century and refined over time, it allows for millions of colors, intricate detail, and reduced waste (Cahill, 2006; Lavanya & Kishore, 2022).

## Process and Components

Designs are created using software like *Adobe Photoshop*, *CorelDRAW*, or *Illustrator*, then printed via inkjet printers. The key components include pre-treated fabric, ink, print heads, feeding systems, and post-treatment processes like steaming or heat setting.

### Inkjet Printing

Inkjet printing deposits micro-droplets of dye or pigment onto fabric without contact, enabling high precision and minimal material use. Pigment-based inks provide better colorfastness and environmental benefits compared to traditional dyeing (Javorsek, 2011).

## COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN (CAD) IN TEXTILES

### Role and Benefits

CAD has revolutionized textile design by reducing production costs, enhancing precision, and enabling creative flexibility (Treadaway, 2007). Designers can easily manipulate motifs, colors, and textures using vector and raster graphic systems (Smith, 2013).

### Artistic Applications

With CAD, designers can combine scanned artwork, hand drawings, and photographs into textile patterns. The technology supports creative layering, color editing, and motif repetition, allowing for both mass and customized production (Bowles & Isaac, 2009; Briggs-Goode, 2013).

### Integration of Tradition and Technology

Although CAD dominates modern design, traditional techniques like stenciling and screen-printing remain valued for their cultural and artistic authenticity. Many contemporary designers blend these approaches to preserve heritage while exploring digital innovation (Burton, 2005; Bowles & Isaac, 2012).

### Significance of the Study

The incorporation of state-of-the-art knowledge and creative materials into fashion design has completely revolutionized the outlook of the fashion industry, resulting in a new era. In this project, the traditional Swabi Chail motif has been adopted to inspire designs for modern ladies' garments using Adobe Photoshop, which will be presented to the modern fashion industry. This research is one major step forward in modern textile design as it connects the past and the present creatively and artistically. Additionally, the research also sought to create an e-repository of traditional motifs and promote the richness and uniqueness of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's cultural heritage at the global level through modern textile design inspired by Swabi culture.

### Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to **preserve and promote the traditional Swabi Chail motif** by incorporating it into modern women's fashion.

1. The specific objectives of the study are to:
2. Develop a **design dossier** for renowned fashion designers to evaluate the potential and market acceptability of these motifs for their respective brands.
3. Present the **traditional Swabi Chail motif** in innovative and stylish patterns and variations, demonstrating its versatility and aesthetic appeal through digitally printed veils.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Introduction

Textile products play a significant role in preserving historical and cultural identity. Since the Mughal era, traditional motifs and designs have remained integral to textile art across the Indian subcontinent, adorning fabrics in decorative forms. Among these, the *Swabi Chail* (chaddar) stands out as a symbol of pride and modesty for women—a white cloth

with red dotted motifs that continues to hold cultural importance (Sher, 2018). Owing to its historical and aesthetic value, there is a pressing need to preserve this motif through modern adaptation in fashion design. The present study focuses on transforming the traditional *Swabi Chail* motif into contemporary digital patterns for dupattas and scarves using Adobe Photoshop.

## Research Design

The study followed the basic elements and principles of design development. It aimed to create innovative, repeatable textile patterns inspired by the *Swabi Chail* motif. The designs were conceptualized, developed, and rendered using Adobe Photoshop, followed by digital printing on selected textile samples (scarves and dupattas). The final prototypes were displayed and analyzed based on consumer responses.

## Data Collection

An exploratory and qualitative research approach was adopted using both primary and secondary data.

- **Primary Data:** Collected through direct observation of traditional *Swabi Chail* fabrics from Swabi District. Photographs were documented and used as design references.
- **Secondary Data:** Sourced from published literature, digital platforms (Pinterest, PicsArt), fashion blogs, online journals, and e-books.

Data were analyzed through semi-structured questionnaires and interviews conducted during an exhibition of the printed prototypes.

## Design Development Process

The design process was structured through several stages using both physical and digital tools to visualize and refine creative concepts.

## Inspiration Board

The design process began with an inspiration board derived from *Swabi Chail* motifs, characterized by circular and square red patterns on a white background. These motifs were digitally modified in Adobe Photoshop while maintaining their traditional integrity.

## Research Board

A research board was developed using images of *Swabi Chail* motifs collected from exhibitions such as “*The Holy Dot*”. These visuals were collaged digitally to explore motif variations for creating repeatable designs for dupattas and scarves.

## Mood Board

Mood boards were prepared to express the overall concept, theme, and aesthetic direction of the designs. They combined imagery, color swatches, and textures to establish the emotional tone of the collection, symbolizing hope, peace, and continuity (Lucero, 2012).

## Color Board

Color palettes were inspired by natural hues—rose reds, leafy greens, and blue tones. Core colors included white, yellow, and red, supported by scarlet, black, and grey for visual contrast and balance.

## Motif Development Board

Using Adobe Photoshop, the original *Swabi Chail* motifs were recreated as 2D sketches and converted into repeatable digital patterns. Fifteen design variations were developed for dupattas and scarves, ensuring harmony in color, layout, and proportion.

## Fabric Board

Fabric swatches were selected based on texture, weight, and weave type. Light to medium-weight fabrics were preferred to enhance print clarity and drape quality.

## Digital Design Board

The final design board illustrated the complete digital design process using Photoshop tools (pen, move, eyedropper, and rectangular tools). Designs were created in CMYK mode at 300 dpi resolution. The standard size for each dupatta was 39 × 98 inches.

### Phase II: Innovative Design Development

During this phase, traditional motifs were digitally rendered into new patterns suitable for contemporary fashion. Fifteen variations of digital prints were developed using Adobe Photoshop to adapt traditional art into modern aesthetics. This stage focused on innovation through symmetry, layering, and motif repetition.

### Phase III: Motif Repetition and Pattern Formation

Using tools such as the rectangular and ellipse marquee tools in Photoshop, motifs were repeated in circular and offset arrangements to form intricate new patterns. These were finalized for printing after visual balance and motif rhythm were achieved.

### Digital Printing Process

Digitally developed designs were prepared in PSD/TIFF formats for printing. The fabric was pre-treated with chemicals for smoothness and ink absorption. Printing was carried out using an inkjet digital textile printer, followed by dye fixation, washing, and drying. The finished fabrics were then ready for display and evaluation.

### Display and Evaluation

Fifteen printed designs were exhibited for assessment by women of varying age groups. Participants evaluated the products based on style, color palette, innovation, and motif placement. Feedback was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire and interviews.

### Population and Sample Size

The focus group comprised 100 female respondents, including fashion design students, faculty members of the Department of Textiles and Clothing (CHE, University of Peshawar), and women with interest in traditional fashion. Their insights represented both professional and cultural perspectives.

### Data Analysis

Responses were analyzed using the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)**. Data from questionnaires and interviews were tabulated and interpreted using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to understand consumer preferences and acceptance of digitally revived *Swabi Chail* motifs.

### Results and Discussion

The present study aimed to assess consumer preferences for innovative digital textile printing on women's dupattas and scarves inspired by *Swabi Chail* motifs. The research involved both observation and experimentation to reinterpret traditional motifs using modern digital techniques, thereby simplifying the design process for Adobe Photoshop users and integrating cultural heritage into contemporary fashion. Data were collected through visits to Swabi and online archives, where artifacts, monuments, and traditional textiles were studied. The process of developing and executing designs was divided into several stages, detailed below.

### Development of the Design Process

The design process encompassed interpretation, rendering, and digital development. It involved the creation of various design boards — including inspiration, research, mood, color, and motif development boards — all of which contributed to the conceptualization of modern fashion inspired by traditional motifs. Digital tools such as Adobe Photoshop,

Illustrator, AutoCAD, CorelDRAW, and Canva were employed throughout the process (Chipambwa & Chikwana, 2022).

## Inspiration Board

The inspiration board served as a visual communication tool between the designer and consumers. It comprised images, textures, and patterns related to the *Swabi Chail* and regional civilization, collected from field visits, books, magazines, and online sources. These visual references helped focus the design concept on reviving deep-rooted textile traditions with creativity and modern appeal.

## Research Board

The research board presented pictorial references relevant to the *Swabi Chail* motif, including historical designs and geometric symbols. These were digitally arranged to explore potential variations and enhance understanding of the motif's aesthetic and symbolic elements.

## Mood Board

Mood boards provided a visual representation of the emotional and thematic essence of the designs. Using applications such as PicsArt, a digital collage was created reflecting themes of nature, peace, wisdom, and cultural continuity. The mood board helped translate abstract inspiration into tangible design ideas (Amir & Malik, 2020).

## Color Board

Color played a crucial role in achieving harmony and appeal in textile design. The color board was inspired by traditional embroidery and featured a diverse palette of warm and vibrant hues, including primary and secondary colors. These colors were later applied to digital textile prints, reflecting both traditional aesthetics and contemporary fashion trends.

## Motif Development Board

Motifs derived from *Swabi Chail* patterns and cultural relics were digitally rendered using Adobe Photoshop and subsequently applied to fabric through digital textile printing. This step emphasized the transition from traditional motifs to digitally enhanced fashion elements, suitable for both local and global markets.

## Execution of Digital Printing on Dupattas and Scarves

The finalized motifs were digitally printed on light and medium-weight fabrics, including dupattas and scarves, using varied color schemes and geometric compositions. Adobe Photoshop facilitated precise manipulation and placement of motifs across multiple design worksheets.

- **Design 1:** Inspired by *Swabi Chail* dots, combined with geometric lines and a vibrant palette of purple, green, maroon, yellow, and blue. The design evoked freshness and natural beauty through floral-inspired color choices.
- **Design 2:** Featured red dots on a black background with multicolored squares and rectangles, blending traditional dot motifs with modern geometric forms, appealing particularly to younger audiences.
- **Design 3:** Incorporated polka dots and rectangles, creating harmony between organic and geometric shapes. The green, black, purple, and yellow palette enhanced visual contrast and structure.
- **Design 4:** Employed the *Sur Gulay* motif in red, adding repetitive circular forms to produce texture and cultural depth. The rose-inspired colors—black, red, pink, and yellow—reflected both tradition and emotion.

- **Design 5:** Featured nested square motifs arranged in a half-drop pattern, utilizing shades of pink, blue, and purple to convey symmetry and modernity through digital precision.
- **Design 6:** Displayed *Sur Gulay* motifs with geometric shapes such as triangles and squares in maroon, red, and gray tones, blending floral inspiration with bold structure.
- **Design 7:** Combined *Swabi Chail* polka dots and half-moon shapes in varying shades of blue, symbolizing harmony and transition. The composition highlighted balance between light and dark tones.
- **Design 8:** Depicted red polka dots on a green surface with detailed border patterns composed of triangles, rectangles, and floral motifs. The blue, pink, and purple palette symbolized tranquility, femininity, and luxury.

## Summary

The study successfully demonstrated how traditional *Swabi Chail* motifs can be revitalized through digital textile printing to suit modern fashion trends. By employing digital tools and design boards, the research established a bridge between cultural heritage and contemporary aesthetics. The resulting scarf and dupatta designs not only reflect Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's cultural identity but also offer creative possibilities for industrial adaptation. This innovative approach supports both cultural preservation and fashion modernization, reinforcing the relevance of traditional motifs in global textile design.

## Display and Analysis

The digitally printed *Swabi Chail*-inspired dupattas and scarves were exhibited in the Exhibition Hall of the College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, to assess their aesthetic appeal and cultural significance. The purpose was to evaluate the designs and create a portfolio for designers seeking to incorporate regional motifs into contemporary fashion.

A panel of fashion designers, faculty members, and students assessed the displayed prototypes. Feedback was collected through self-constructed questionnaires focusing on visual appeal, motif selection, color preferences, and familiarity with *Swabi Chail* motifs.

## Demographic and Awareness Findings

The participants' ages ranged from 20–50 years, with the majority (43%) between 31–40 years. Most respondents (87%) were already familiar with the *Swabi Chail* motif, indicating strong cultural awareness.

## Perception of Motif and Design Appeal

Regarding aesthetic preference, 53% found the motif “appealing to some extent,” and 36% rated it “very appealing.” The “polka dot” pattern emerged as the most favored motif (67%), followed by *Sur Gulay* (23%) and semi-circular forms (10%). Participants appreciated the reinterpretation of traditional elements into modern designs, highlighting the motif's adaptability and visual charm.

## Color, Fabric, and Design Preferences

Most respondents (57%) preferred dark motifs on light backgrounds, while 37% favored the reverse. The white-and-black contrast was the most popular color combination (43%), followed by white-and-red (30%) and green-and-red (27%). Cotton was selected as the preferred fabric by 72% of respondents due to its comfort and suitability for digital printing; silk and linen followed with 20% and 8% respectively.

## Cultural and Technological Insights

A significant majority (94%) supported fusing traditional motifs with modern fashion products. Similarly, 61% emphasized the importance of preserving and promoting

traditional *Swabi Chail* motifs. Digital printing was preferred by 67% as the most suitable decorative technique because of its speed, flexibility, and precision compared to embroidery or weaving. Over half (55%) of the respondents were somewhat familiar with digital textile printing, indicating growing acceptance of new technology in local fashion production.

## Discussion

The findings reveal that *Swabi Chail* motifs are widely recognized and valued as a cultural heritage element. The most popular motif—polka dots—has a timeless global appeal, resonating with international fashion trends since the 1950s (Deasy, 2017; Brown, 2015). Integrating such motifs in modern apparel not only preserves tradition but also enhances cultural identity in design.

The preference for digital printing aligns with global fashion industry trends emphasizing innovation, efficiency, and creativity. Digital textile printing allows unlimited color variations, high precision, and minimal waste (Cantavalle, 2018). Its adoption can revitalize traditional designs and make them relevant to current markets.

The overwhelming support for combining cultural and modern designs (94%) confirms a strong desire to celebrate heritage while embracing innovation. This blend can enrich aesthetic diversity and expand Pakistan's textile identity internationally, particularly by showcasing motifs such as *Swabi Chail*, which carry historical narratives of bravery, respect, and womanhood.

## Summary and Conclusions

The study established that traditional motifs like *Swabi Chail* play a vital role in inspiring modern textile design. The motif—originating from a historical legend of courage and sacrifice—remains a symbol of dignity among Swabi women. By translating this heritage into digital design, the research connected the past with the future of fashion.

### Key conclusions include:

- A large majority (94%) of participants favored incorporating *Swabi Chail* motifs into fashion products.
- Over half found these motifs visually attractive on scarves and dupattas.
- The *polka dot* element was the most preferred motif (67%).
- Cotton emerged as the favorite fabric for digital printing (72%).
- Digital printing proved to be the most effective method for motif application due to its precision and adaptability.
- Adobe Photoshop enabled controlled experimentation with colors and shapes, allowing for multiple modern variations of the same motif.
- Participants acknowledged that the modified *Chail* designs add cultural value and uniqueness to women's wear.
- The study highlighted digital design as a sustainable method for preserving and promoting cultural heritage in the fashion industry.

**Overall**, the findings confirm that integrating traditional designs through digital innovation can bridge the cultural gap between heritage and modern aesthetics, ensuring their continuity and relevance in future fashion trends.

## Recommendations

1. **Cultural Revival through Design:** Fashion designers should adopt local heritage motifs, such as *Swabi Chail*, to strengthen cultural identity and inspire pride in traditional artistry.

2. **Digital Empowerment:** Training programs should be introduced for local artisans in software like Adobe Photoshop to modernize traditional designs with accuracy and creativity.
3. **Adoption of Digital Printing:** Continued research on improving print quality, speed, and ink technology can help expand digital printing across Pakistan's textile sector.
4. **Promotion of Sustainable Fashion:** Utilizing heritage-based motifs supports ethical and sustainable fashion practices that celebrate local craftsmanship.
5. **Global Showcasing:** Fashion exhibitions, both local and international, should promote contemporary apparel inspired by *Swabi Chail* to position Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's culture on the global fashion map.

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