

Integrating Tribal Accessories into Modern Apparel: Functional, Expressive, and Aesthetic Dimensions in Saudi Fashion

Samirah Mohammed Ali Alotaibi

Taif University

Saudi Arabia

smotaibi@tu.edu.sa

S04alotaibi@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the relationship between tribal accessories in western Saudi Arabia and their influence on contemporary fashion garment design. It aims to enrich apparel design processes by applying the FEA framework, a significant tool that broadens the reach of designs, particularly in Saudi markets, while also integrating their cultural identity into the design development. The study focuses on integrating participants' stories and wardrobe interviews. It also proposes the application of functional, expressive, and aesthetic design criteria, interpreting them as garment properties in the development of a prototype garment. The innovative integration of traditional components, specifically embroidery, carrying social beliefs and aesthetic perceptions of Saudi women, is a key highlight that will inspire and intrigue the audience. The study documents and interprets the FEA design model with adjustments that consider individuality, authenticity, and expressiveness in response to unique cultural settings and consumer needs. The incorporation of tribal accessories into contemporary garment design not only demonstrates the growing attention to cultural diversity in fashion but also provides valuable insights into the impact of tribal textiles on contemporary garment design and the importance of cultural identity in the fashion industry.

Keywords: Textiles, Apparel, Design, Embroidery, Tribal, FEA Framework.

دمج الإكسسوارات القبلية في الأزياء المعاصرة: دراسة نوعية ضمن إطار مفاهيمي للأبعاد الوظيفية والتعبيرية والجمالية في الأزياء السعودية

المستخلص:

تستكشف هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين الإكسسوارات القبلية في غرب المملكة العربية السعودية وتأثيرها على تصميم الأزياء المعاصرة. وتهدف إلى إثراء عمليات تصميم الملابس من خلال تطبيق إطار FEA، وهو أداة مهمة توسع نطاق التصاميم، لا سيما في الأسواق السعودية، مع دمج الهوية الثقافية في عملية تطوير التصميم.

تركّز الدراسة على دمج قصص المشاركات ومقابلات تحليل محتوى خزانات ملابسهن، كما تقترح تطبيق معايير التصميم الوظيفية والتعبيرية والجمالية وتفسيرها كخصائص للملبس أثناء تطوير نموذج أولي للزي. ويُعدّ الدمج الابتكاري للعناصر التقليدية، وخصوصاً التطريز الذي يحمل المعتقدات الاجتماعية والتصورات الجمالية للمرأة السعودية، من أبرز جوانب الدراسة التي من شأنها إلهام وإثارة اهتمام الجمهور. توثق الدراسة وتفسّر نموذج التصميم FEA مع تعديلات تراعي الفردية والأصالة والتعبيرية استجابةً للبيئات الثقافية الفريدة واحتياجات المستهلكين. إن دمج الإكسسوارات القبلية في تصميم الأزياء المعاصرة لا يعبر فقط عن الاهتمام المتزايد بالتنوع الثقافي في مجال الموضة، بل يقدّم أيضاً رؤى قيمة حول تأثير المنسوجات القبلية على تصميم الأزياء الحديثة وأهمية الهوية الثقافية في صناعة الموضة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المنسوجات، الملابس، التصميم، التطريز، القبائل، إطار FEA.

Introduction

The intersection of traditional embroidery, crafted by skilled women, and contemporary fashion design has garnered significant attention in recent years. The perception of culturally inspired apparel among consumers is crucial for understanding the impact of ethnic textiles in contemporary fashion. Traditional tribal embroidered textiles significantly represent national culture and historical heritage, encompassing items, garments, and body modifications that hold particular significance for specific groups (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995; Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). In Saudi Arabia, the extensive use of embroidery on women's costumes holds cultural significance, reflecting social values, personal style, and gender identity on both physical and symbolic levels. The choice of threads and fabrics, as well as the styles, patterns, motifs, and extent of embellishment, collectively contribute to a garment's ability to reflect the wearer's opinions and identities, both superficial and profound (Martinez, 2014). In addition, embroidered ethnic textiles play a significant role in cultural differentiation between tribes, as well as demonstrating the skills of the women who craft garments and accessories. More importantly, wearing ethnic garments also plays a crucial role in connecting the new generation to their ethnic and cultural heritage, fostering an appreciation for the continuity of these traditions (Alotaibi & Starkey, 2018; Alotaibi & Starkey, 2020).

The tribes that reside in the mountains of the Western region of Saudi Arabia are renowned for their unique traditions, which are deeply ingrained in their cultural and tribal identity (Long, 2005). However, research on embroidered tribal textiles is lacking, due chiefly to their being manufactured by skilled women who have learned these skills through the passing down of generations, a characteristic practiced by some families to ensure the continuance of such a traditional culture (Ejeimi et al., 2018; Iskandarani, 2006; Tawfiq & Ogle, 2013; Tawfiq & Marchetti, 2017). The ethnic, embroidered textiles, such as bags, from this region are adorned with heavy embroidery (*Figures 1, 2, and 3*). Red is the dominant color for embellishing these traditional accessories, followed by yellow, with hints of blue and green.



Figure 1: The traditional Thawb of Bani Malik heavily embellished with embroidery.

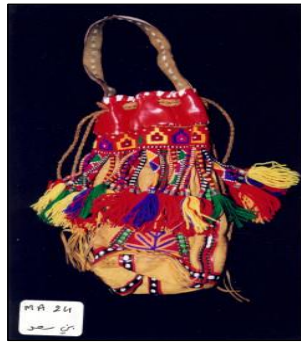


Figure 2: Traditional tribal bag heavily embellished with embroidery.



Figure 3: Traditional tribal bags heavily embellished with embroidery.

Literature review

A Brief History of Clothing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's geographical location has positioned it as a significant commercial hub. Domestication of camels, which are especially skilled to traverse the vast expanse of the desert area, also increased trade activity. Goods traded through this trade, such as silk, frankincense, myrrh, spices, gold, ivory, precious stones, and fabrics, were circulated through trade networks emanating from Makkah to places like Madinah, Petra, Gaza, Damascus, Aleppo, and as far east as cities along the Silk Trail in Iraq, Iran, Central Asia, India, and China (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Silk Road, which was founded during the Han dynasty in China sometime around 200 BCE, continued to be a significant trade network until the fifteenth century. Qaryat al-Faw, being the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Kindah, was a mandatory stop for trade along these trade routes. Archaeological evidence suggests that textile craft existed in Arabia much earlier than the advent of Islam (Alghalib et al., 2021).

The rise of Islam during the seventh century CE led to a significant cultural rejuvenation in the spheres of clothing and textiles. The rise of Islam in the 7th century CE led to a significant cultural revival in clothing and fabrics. Islamic travelers, merchants, and scholars explored distant lands and took part in a rich cultural exchange. They combined Islamic motifs with artistic styles from various regions, including India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and China. This exchange of ideas and designs allowed people to identify textile patterns and embroidery with Arabian origins in distant regions. It shows the cultural richness that developed

through Islam and underscores the worldwide influence of Arabian clothing (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Following the advent of Islam, the pilgrimage movement to the Arabian Peninsula, and more specifically to the Hijaz and Najd, greatly contributed to the widespread adoption of Arab clothing and textiles. The pilgrims who returned to their homelands brought back different samples and pieces of Arab textiles. This helped disseminate these cultural elements worldwide (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Social Dynamics

The lifestyle and culture of Saudis have been profoundly influenced by the religion of Islam and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, the last Messenger of God in Islam. As a result, the observance of Islamic teachings in Saudi Arabia extends beyond standard traditional practices, permeating every facet of Saudi Arabian life, including the legal system and overall way of living.

The historical foundation of Saudi society is deeply rooted in tribalism, with the general social structure being fundamentally based on tribal affiliations. The nomadic lifestyle of tribal people, or Bedouins, has significantly declined due to the impact of urbanization as part of socio-political strategies. However, indigenous individuals belonging to Saudi Arabian tribes have successfully preserved their tribal norms and values, including traditional tribal attire, demonstrating the enduring strength of Saudi culture (Al Dossary, 2012). In Saudi society, possessing tribal genealogy and belonging to a specific tribe is not just prestigious but also a key aspect of identity and social standing (Le Renard, 2014, p. 176). Tribal traditions significantly shape various aspects of Saudi Arabians' lives, attitudes, and behavior (Abu Nab, 2019). Some authors, such as Akers (2001) and Maisel (2014), present a contrasting view. They argue that the influence of tribal traditions on Saudis' behavior has been marginalized due to significant societal changes in the 20th century, including the sudden influx of oil wealth.

Social media, a powerful tool that has connected society with the global community and exposed it to diverse cultural and political narratives, has significantly influenced Saudi society's transformation. Social media's ability to transcend physical boundaries and its focus on instant communication have redefined the way individuals engage, share information, and interact with governing authorities (Rahman & Al-Azm, 2023).

Moreover, Saudi Arabia's geographic location and religious significance, with the presence of the Two Holy Mosques, have made it an attractive destination for expatriates seeking employment, visitors performing religious rites, and tourists interested in its rich history and heritage. Consequently, the influx of expatriates and the pervasive

influence of Western culture have prompted a counter-movement to preserve a purer Saudi social identity rooted in the country's tribal heritage. This has led to an increasing discouragement of social interaction between nationals and expatriates outside the workplace and the enforcement of restrictions on national dress, economic benefits, and residency rights for expatriates at various times. Expatriates are increasingly viewed as threats to Saudi society's cultural integrity and security, leading several states to address the issue of expatriates and foreign influence as a matter of national security (Rahman & Al-Azm, 2023; Peterson, 2014).

Another perspective on the phenomenon of tribalism and modernization frames tribal identity as a proactive agent of social change and transformation rather than a reactionary force against Westernization or a 'social continuity movement' (Rahman & Al-Azm, 2023). Miriam Cooke argues that tribal identity in the contemporary Arab Gulf is integral to modernity, providing avenues for racial privilege, social status, and access to national resources, contrary to the historical view of tribal identity as an obstacle to modernization (Rahman & Al-Azm, 2023; Cooke, 2014).

The emergence of national Saudi brands that combine tribal and modern identities, termed "Tribal Modern" by Miriam Cooke, challenges the stereotype of the region as being strictly tribal or modern, presenting a nuanced understanding that transcends such simplistic categorizations (Rahman & Al-Azm, 2023; Cooke, 2014). This trend is evident in contemporary fashion designers blending tribal and modern elements, reflecting a complex interplay of traditional and contemporary influences within Saudi society.

For this research, tribal modern design is based on Saudi women's needs, and it encompasses the potential for dynamic interaction, enabling the coexistence of social change and stability, transformation, and preservation, as well as Western modernization and tribal tradition within the same space. This design framework confers entitlements and advantages to young Saudi females. In addition, this approach effectively addresses and mitigates resistance to change, compelling the notion of "social continuity," as articulated by Peterson (2014) and other scholars, to redefine modernity within cultural contexts, wherein tribal influences act as a catalyst for modernization.

Kingdom Vision 2030 and Women's Empowerment

The global spotlight is on Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and its implications for women's empowerment, particularly its historical reliance on ultra-conservative traditions and social norms (Tlaiss & Al Waqfi, 2020). Launched in 2016, Vision 2030 aims to position Saudi Arabia as a pioneering global model by catalyzing comprehensive

economic and societal transformation (Vision 2030, 2018). Notably, the vision underscores the government's commitment to empowering Saudi women, who have long grappled with marginalization within societal constructs (Bao et al., 2019).

Traditionally, Saudi women have been confined to domestic roles, perpetuating a societal narrative that limited their professional engagement. However, Vision 2030 seeks to challenge these constraints by targeting a substantial increase in women's labor market participation from 17% to 25% and facilitating avenues for their professional advancement (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016, 37).

Despite these ambitious goals, studies have illuminated the persistent underrepresentation of qualified women in pertinent positions. The pursuit of women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia encompasses multifaceted dimensions, including educational access, professional opportunities, and the eradication of social, economic, and political barriers (Acker, 2009; Blackmore, 2010; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011; Abalkhail, 2016).

A noteworthy transformation is the evolving perception of Saudi women from cultural symbols to active nation-building partners, as espoused by the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which positions women as a significant source of strength in the nation's trajectory (Muhammad, 2020; Abdullah, 2021; Eum, 2019).

Global gender empowerment policies emphasize the intricate interplay between education and employment. However, in the Saudi context, structural and cultural impediments, including socio-cultural, political, religious, and economic realities, pose formidable challenges to women's empowerment (Bao et al., 2019; Kabeer, 2020; Mohanty, 2006; Monkman, 2011).

The Significance of Textiles Handicrafts in Saudi Arabia

The textile handicraft industry in Saudi Arabia boasts a rich and extensive history, reflecting the nation's profound cultural heritage and artistic traditions. Historically, textile crafts were functional and served as a medium for artistic expression and cultural storytelling. Evidence of weaving and dyeing practices dating back centuries has been uncovered at ancient archaeological sites, highlighting the integral role of textiles in daily life and cultural and religious ceremonies within Saudi society (AL Tamimi, 2018).

The evolution of Saudi textile crafts was significantly influenced by trade interactions with neighboring regions, facilitated by the Arabian Peninsula's strategic location along historic trade routes. This cross-cultural exchange enriched Saudi textile traditions as new materials, techniques, and artistic motifs were integrated into local practices (Alghamdi, 2020). Recent studies have identified the influence of Indian

textiles in the intricate designs and vibrant colors characteristic of traditional Saudi textiles (AL Fawaz, 2024; Al Saif, 2019). Additionally, the unique blend of tradition and modernity in Saudi textile crafts, as seen in the practical designs for camel decorations, tents, and everyday items, attests to the adaptability and creativity of Saudi artisans. This adaptability and creativity, coupled with the artisans' innovation to meet market demands, is a fascinating aspect of the industry (Alharbi, 2017).

Traditional practices in Saudi textile handicrafts have been diligently preserved and passed down through generations, demonstrating Saudi artisans' unwavering dedication and significant contribution. Weaving, dyeing, and embroidery are deeply intertwined with the historical and cultural narratives of various regions within the kingdom. In addition, it remains a prominent technique, with recent initiatives focusing on reviving these traditional practices while integrating modern techniques to appeal to contemporary markets (Al Fahad, 2021). By perpetuating these practices, artisans play a crucial role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, thereby ensuring that traditional knowledge and skills are not lost amidst the pressures of modernization.

The textile market is continuously influenced by evolving consumer preferences, cultural trends, fashion, and socio-economic changes. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in artisanal and handmade products driven by a desire for authenticity and uniqueness (Alfawaz, 2024). This shift presents a substantial opportunity for Saudi textile artisans whose work embodies these qualities. Furthermore, there is an increasing demand for bespoke and customized textile products as consumers seek personalized items that reflect their tastes and identities. This trend has led many artisans to offer bespoke services, creating unique pieces tailored to their clients' needs and preferences (Al Turki, 2019).

Moreover, the motifs and patterns present in traditional Saudi textiles are not merely decorative elements but carry profound cultural significance and narratives. These designs serve as reflections of the Saudi people's history, beliefs, and values, functioning as cultural artifacts that link contemporary society with its historical roots. The preservation and promotion of these textiles through modern platforms such as exhibitions, museums, and cultural festivals play a pivotal role in raising awareness and fostering appreciation for Saudi Arabia's rich cultural diversity and artistic heritage, engaging a broader audience in the preservation of this heritage (Alfawaz, 2024).

Tribes in Hijaz and Characteristics of Textiles and Traditional Costumes in The Region

Thaqeef Tribe

The Thaqeef tribe is near Taif, a city renowned for its temperate climate and thriving agricultural industry. Geographically, Taif is situated atop Ghazwan Mountain within the Sarawat Mountain range, 1,700-2,500 meters above sea level, approximately 80 kilometers from Makkah (Alghalib et al., 2021).

According to historical sources, Taif originated around the Plateau of Bab Al Ri, with subsequent villages emerging along the banks of the Waj Valley. The Thaqeef tribe was the predominant tribe in Taif during pre-Islamic times and retained its influence through the early Islamic period. Taif evolved into a settled community hosting various tribes and serving as a pivotal trading post for caravans traversing the Arabian Peninsula (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Today, the Thaqeef tribe, along with its branches and clans, constitutes a significant portion of the population of Taif Province. Several other tribes are also dispersed within and around the city. Notably, the city of Taif has become a unifying home for diverse tribes bound together by a shared national identity (Alghalib et al., 2021).

In the arid regions to the north and east of Taif, the craft of sewing experienced a surge due to the growth of pastoral activities, resulting in the availability of leather, wool, and animal hair for use in the textile industry, as well as in the production of fabrics for bedding and upholstery. Women, in particular, honed the utilization of these materials, developed manufacturing techniques, and explored various applications for them. However, textiles crafted from linen, cotton, and silk were imported from regions beyond the Arabian Peninsula. They constituted a significant portion of the commodities that prospered with the expansion of trade during the pre-Islamic era. This contributed to the establishment and prosperity of multiple trade communities from the first millennium CE onwards. These communities were situated along the "Incense Road," a caravan route connecting the southern and northern regions of the Peninsula, traversing through Taif and Makkah. The abundance of these products fostered the emergence of male and female artisans who specialized in crafting clothing for women and men. Existing remnants indicate that this vocation was influenced by the diverse cultures brought in by pilgrims throughout the Islamic era. Only a few individuals continue to practice this profession, and participation in cultural festivals and events is limited (Alghalib et al., 2021).

The art of dressmaking in Taif and its neighboring villages possessed a distinct local identity, manifested through the embroidery of various colors and shapes, often accentuated with silver and metal beads.

This distinctive process was integrated into women's attire, head coverings, face veils, and other accessories. Such coordination became emblematic of women's clothing in Taif, evident in its diversity and the varied methods of sewing, embroidery, and decoration employed in these garments (Alghalib et al., 2021).

The Hudheyl Tribe

The Hudheyl tribe, located in Hijaz, is a prominent branch residing on the outskirts of Makkah in the villages of Daf Zaini, Wadi Al Nu'man, Wadi Rahjan, and Al Sharai. The Hudheyl tribe is known for its distinctive costume decoration techniques. They utilize the tie-dye technique, incorporating various designs inspired by the midrash arranged in a configuration known as mahamil, as evident in the musaddah thobe. The women of the tribe wear the square Bayram (headdress) with the mujaddara thobe and the triangular Bayram with the musaddah and Suzanna thobes.

The musaddah and Sumatran thobes are made of unbleached raw cotton and are loose and broad rectangular. The thobe is worn with the triangular bayram headdress and is the outfit. The thobe is made from several rectangular pieces of cloth of varying lengths. It comprises four major parts: the bodice, sleeves, sides, and a gusset under the arm. Its neck opening is a small rectangle. Embroidery and tie-dye (tasrir) adorn the dress (*Figure 4*).



Figure 4: Hudheyl tie-dye ample garment with an embroidered yoke on the front and the back. The various tie-dye patterns have different names depending on the design, and the headdresses are suited accordingly.

The Jahdaly Tribe

The Jahdaly tribe, located in Du'aijiyah and the coast of Thuwal between Rabigh and Jiddah, is known for its unique traditional garments women wear. The two main garments worn by Jahdaly tribe women are the minajjal and the mihathal thobe. The minajjal thobe consists of the qad'ah, or dira'ah, which are complementary garment pieces unique to the Jahdaly tribe. The qad'ah includes a bodice, sleeves, and sides, with

variations in shape, looseness, adornment method, material type, and thickness. The Sabrina neckline of the qad'ah features a small square-shaped opening with slits on either side for easy head passage. The sleeves come in rectangular or trapezoid shapes. The qad'ah is typically a single rectangular piece of cloth without seams or stitching in the shoulder areas, often sewn onto the sides with a small piece of fabric added under the armpits, called a khashtag. In some cases, the sides are left open from the armpit, requiring a plain red shirt, known as a badan, to be worn underneath, which might be embroidered according to personal preference (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Additionally, Jahdaly women wear multiple headcovers, such as the tarboosh, the misfa, and the qina. The misfa is a rectangular thick fabric with decorated edges featuring rosewood applique strips defined by lead beads. The qina, made of plain cotton, includes a pleat fold at the forehead, through which a cylindrical stick passes, and is adorned with multiple geometric shapes embroidered with lead beads (Alghalib et al., 2021) (*Figure 5*).



Figure 5: Jahdaly costume appliquéed with fine bands of contrasting coloured fabric and embroidered with small metal beads. The headdress ridayah is made of fabric, and the long tassels are a combination of metal beads with a thread fringe.

The Bani Sa'ad Tribe

The Bani Sa'ad tribe is considered to be one of the branches of the Otaiba tribe. Like many branches of the latter, its people predominantly reside in Taif, neighboring some other tribes of that region, such as the Thaqeef, Bal Harith, Bani Malik, Hudheyl, and Quraysh. The members of Bani Sa'ad are spread within and outside of Taif. The rest of the Bani Sa'ad live in the mountainous region that extends south and falls between Taif and the tribal areas of Thaqeef, Bani Malik, and Bal Harith.

Most historians agree that 'Otaiba is an 'Adnan tribe, descendants of Qays' Aylan, more specifically of Hawazin. They also concur that its different branches lived in Hijaz and its eastern slopes. Towards the end of the twelfth century AH (eighteenth century CE), they spread towards Najd until they reached Dawadmi and its surroundings (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Despite the geographical differences between the concentration areas of the branches of 'Otaiba in general and, more specifically, those of the Bani Sa'ad tribe, they all more or less observe the same customs and traditions and share the same social heritage. These customs and traditions, unique to each region, add to the cultural richness of the Bani Sa'ad tribe. For instance, members of this tribe who were desert dwellers tended to move and migrate, especially in the past. At the same time, residents of the city of Taif and its neighboring villages were relatively more stable.

Since time immemorial, crafts have been - and still are a primary source of revenue. The types of adopted craft have varied with time, depending on people's needs, lifestyles, and the diversity of their geographical surroundings. The Bani Sa'ad tribe is one of those whose members, both male and female, engaged in the multiple traditional crafts and handicrafts that suited their needs on the one hand and made use of available materials on the other. Thus, their crafts proliferated relative to the variety of materials and needs and stood out compared to others originating elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula.

Several crafts have appeared in the (Bedouin desert communities), particularly those based on available materials such as tanning, leather making, weaving, and some other crafts based on animal and agricultural products. On the other hand, different types of crafts appeared in the cities and villages, such as carpentry, black and gold-smithery, construction, shoe making, rose essence manufacturing, dyeing, and several other occupations, trade, and agriculture. Weaving was of distinction. The materials, colors, and shapes that were employed constituted a model for a traditional form of art, which was undoubtedly influenced by their counterparts elsewhere. Cultural exchange contributed to this art form's promotion and growth, reinforcing its distinctive local characteristics.

The costumes of Bani Sa'ad are heavily embroidered and decorated with handmade lead beads. Sewing and weaving are among the main crafts the Bani Sa'ad tribe was renowned for. In the desert areas, wool weaving was prominent. However, sewing and embroidery were much more widespread in the cities and villages. The women of Bani Sa'ad, mainly, were known for their creative use of different materials, colors, and decorative motifs. Perhaps this craft was distinct because of the detailing indigenous to Bani Sa'ad, primarily represented in the women's thobes, which became widely known and particularly prominent as a product associated with this tribe.

The women's clothing industry was generally famous in Hijaz, and many exquisite women's garments that combined precision and creativity emerged in the Taif area. These garments included burqas, qina, and

sirwals (underpants), using various materials, including fabrics, cotton, wool, and silk. They were embroidered with colored silk threads; some contained a medley of embroidery with beads of lead or silver. Although Thaqeef and its many clans, along with several other tribes residing in Taif, such as Bani Malik, Bal Harith, and others, have all used the same materials in the production of women's clothing, specific features in styling and shape distinguished each of them, and sometimes even color. The function and purpose of the clothing, however, remained unchanged.

Tribal Otaibi women embellish their thawbs with heavy embroidery in particular locations: around the neck, side panels, the top of sleeves as well as the edge of the sleeves, and at the hemline (Alotaibi, 2020). The color used most for embellishing the side panels and hemline of the ethnic dress is red, followed by yellow and hints of blue and green. The collar and sleeves are embellished with handmade silver beads (Alotaibi, 2021). Today's fashion in making these thawbs is to use gold beads, which reflect a high sense of fashion and illustrate skills that add uniqueness to the thawbs. A few numbers of skilled women make the gold beads, which are costly in price, besides being heavy. So, women tend to find a fashionable choice that costs less than the handmade one, which is the glass beads (Ejeimi et al., 2018).

These wedding costumes share a crucial element with other ethnic, tribal dresses worldwide: an emphasis on embroidery. Chain stitch is the primary stitch that is used in Otaibi women's thawbs. In addition, stem stitch, flat stitch, cross or half-cross stitch, couching, and buttonhole stitch are used in embellishing this kind of garment. Other stitches, such as open chain stitch, Cretan stitch, long-arm feather stitch, ladder stitch, blanket stitch, dotting or seeding, fly stitch, waves or chevrons, and spider's webs, are also seen in tribal women's dresses (Ross, 1981). In Islamic law, there is a prohibition of any representation of the human form in art, which has led to the emergence of abstract embroidery patterns, including the use of geometric shapes, which are inspired by the historical fortresses and the architectural buildings in villages (Ejeimi et al., 2018). Most of the motifs used in traditional Otaibi thawbs are geometric designs that create rectangular panels that contain different sizes of squares divided by rows of straight lines for repetition (*Figure 6*).



Figure 6: Bani Sa'ad thobe with embroidered sides and the equally embroidered underpants. Around the waist is a silver belt. The silver headpiece is worn for special occasions.

The Bani Malik Tribe

Bani Malik is a tribe from Sarawiyah, located east of Al Lith and south of Taif, between the encampments of the Bal Harith tribe to the north and the Zahran tribe to the south. Their encampments were to be found 140 km southeast of Taif. The regions of Surat and Tihamah were always buzzing with markets, which were open throughout the week. People displayed their produce: from consumer goods to livestock, the markets had it all (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Until around 1960 CE (AH, 1380), the markets of Makkah and Taif were bustling with the crops and products of Surat, a region known for its agricultural abundance. Wheat, almonds, honey, and fruit were among the many goods that were exchanged. The selling process was unique, as it involved the exchange of textiles with what the people of Makkah provided as head-covers (agni'ah, plural of qina', for women), durable quilts, and similar products worn and used by the bedouin Arabs. This trade facilitated the exchange of goods and fostered cultural exchange and understanding (Alghalib et al., 2021).

Elaborate embroidery characterizes the costumes of the female tribal members. Their gowns and head-covers are heavily embroidered with significant quantities of glass beads. They are stitched in parallel and adjacent rectangles. The threads used for embroidering are primarily yellow and red. The Al Sawn thobe, a traditional dress of the Bani Malik tribe, is a testament to their unique cultural identity. Made of plain cotton and, more recently, of satin, it has the shape of a narrow rectangle. The thobe has a bodice, sides, and sleeves. The upper part of the chest is adorned with a piece of appliqué, heavily embroidered with beads, and has a narrow, round neck opening. The two sides of the thobe are sewn from one or two pieces of fabric in the shape of a trapezoid, which is also heavily embroidered. The sleeve, either rectangular or trapezoid, is decorated with woven beads on the upper part. The hem is also heavily

embroidered with different stitching styles, adding to the thobe's unique charm (*Figure 7*).



Figure 7: Bani Malik thobe embroidered predominantly in yellow. Small glass beads decorate the yoke and surround the embroidered panels.

The textiles and costumes of Saudi Arabia are a reflection of the grandeur of the ancient trade routes that once traversed the land and sea. They are characterized by vibrant colors, intricate embroidery, diverse fabric quality, and delicate beading and jewelry, particularly in the attire of the Hijaz region. This rich material culture is a testament to the global dissemination of Arabian textiles, transcending local admiration and consumption (Alghalib et al., 2021). Although many of these characteristics continue to influence contemporary clothing designs, they are predominantly reserved for evening wear, abayas, jallabiyas, and accessories. Modern aspects have not been fully integrated into textiles and tribal Hijazi attire, mainly due to the transmission of these skills from earlier generations. This tradition is upheld by a few remaining families, ensuring the preservation of this legacy.

While the cultural significance of clothing design remains paramount, there is an urgent and growing need for more diverse clothing options for Saudi Arabian women. This necessitates a significant shift in how fashion designers perceive the existing fashion paradigm. This includes a move away from outdated, rigid designs to cater to consumers' demand for unique, fashion-forward products that showcase a variety of craft cultures. Incorporating traditional embroidery inspired by tribal bags into new garment designs would add a distinctive cultural feature to the Saudi market while meeting the evolving needs of consumers. Exploratory research in apparel design is crucial in assisting designers in addressing the requirements of emerging markets and, in this case, the evolving needs of Saudi Arabian women. Therefore, the following section delves into the apparel design research that informed this study.

Customer Satisfaction by Using the FEA Model

Researchers and scholars have proved the FEA model essential for customer satisfaction. The functional, expressive, and aesthetic requirements are crucial in almost equal measure (Akou, 2007). Lamb and Kallal (1992) provided some project examples that used this framework, such as costumes for ice skating, custodial uniforms, and customized garments for consumers with Spina Bifida. Many researchers have used these FEA needs to study their target customers and related design processes (Alotaibi & Starkey, 2020; Alotaibi & Starkey, 2018; Bye & Hakala, 2005; Ejeimi et al., 2018; LaBat & Sokolowski, 1999.)

Developing apparel design products is a creative problem-solving process (Davis, 1987; Dejonge, 1984; Lamb & Kallal, 1992; Rosenblatt-wallin, 1985). This study used the FEA model to guide the overall design process. It can aid apparel designers in designing for intended Saudi consumers whose needs must be routinely met in the marketplace and, therefore, considered unique. Thinking of design for special needs as just another part of a general design framework is a natural parallel to how people with special needs want to be considered (lamb & kallal, 1992). In addition, this model is also used to contextualize the characteristics of characteristics of textiles and traditional costumes in the Hijaz region.

The target consumer (intended user) is the core of the FEA model. For this study, the target consumer is Saudi women aged 20-40, making them contemporary women who appreciate and respect historical and cultural values and expect these elements to be a part of their current clothing choices. Al Maghrabi et al. (2011) found that others' opinions influence Saudi female consumers under 35 more than female consumers above 35. Moreover, Saudi female consumer satisfaction with ready-to-wear clothing in Saudi marketplaces decreased, replaced with an interest in customization. Some Saudi female consumers then looked online and through social media businesses for more variations of options that would fulfill their needs (Al Mousa, 2005). Therefore, looking at Saudi women at this age was critical because their viewpoints would broadly inform the needs of Saudi female consumers.

Design Criteria

Identifying Saudi user needs and wants provides a means for establishing design criteria. In this model, these are classified as functional, expressive, and aesthetic. Functional considerations for apparel products relate to utility (Lamb & Kallal, 1992). Thermal comfort, fit, and ease of movement are functional requirements for this project. Expressive considerations relate to the communicative, symbolic aspects of dress. Research has shown that dress communicates messages about the wearer (Damhorst, 1990). In a tight connection to symbolic interaction theory, Goffman (1959) explained how people present themselves through their appearance in socially accepted and expected

ways. In this study, wearing contemporary garments inspired by tribal traditional attire and accessories conveyed various meanings. Those meanings ranged from cultural significance, such as demonstrations of Islamic modesty, to emotions, beliefs, and social significance of what these costumes convey. As a result, those meanings reflect the tribal society, aligning this concept with the social identity theory. Aesthetics considers the human desire for beauty. Items of dress may also be art objects (Lamb & Kallal, 1992). Aesthetic requirements in this study relate to art, design elements, and the principles of fashion design.

The FEA framework is a comprehensive set of tools that equips designers with the necessary resources for apparel design. While it incorporates features from other design process models, it stands out for its thoroughness. In this study, we focus on the activities directly applied, ensuring that designers are well-prepared for the design process (*Figure 8*).

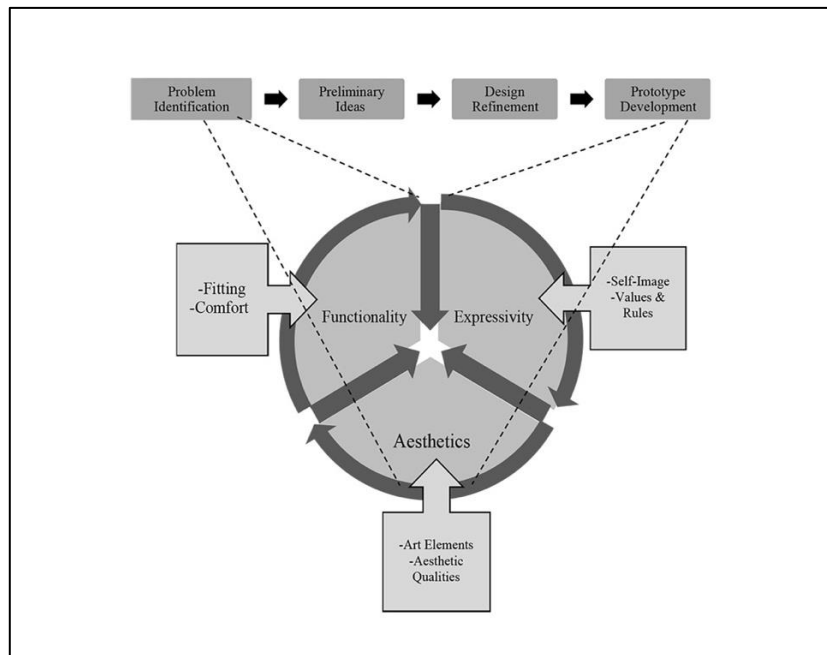


Figure 8: Apparel Design Framework

Method

After receiving Institutional Review Board approval (ID 47-011), A qualitative approach was used for this study. Data were collected via in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eight Saudi women from the Hijaz region who belong to different tribes, such as Bani Malik, Bani Sa'ad, Al Jahdaly, Thaqeef, and Al Hudhayli. Those women live in Jeddah, Mecca, and Taif, cities in the Western region of Saudi Arabia, and speak Arabic fluently. A purposive, snowball sampling strategy or "chain referral sampling" was used to recruit research participants and ensure the collection of relevant data. An initial list of potential

participants was obtained from a critical Saudi informant. In this method, the participants refer the researcher to others who may be able to contribute or participate in the study. This method often helps researchers find and recruit participants who may otherwise be hard to reach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants owned at least one traditional tribal attire.

Each interview lasted approximately three hours and was audio recorded. All interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom. This option allows audio and visual communication at a distance and is an appropriate alternative to the in-person interview (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Salmons, 2014). Today, technology provides various webcam tools to extend the reach of studies and defy geographic boundaries (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Salmons, 2014).

All interviews were conducted in Arabic, translated into English, and reviewed by three readers fluent in Arabic and English. Extra attention was given to the cultural nuances of these personal conversations to make the translations as precise as possible. Participants were asked to respond to questions that discussed the following:

1. Dressing style.
2. What qualifies the piece as desirable enough to buy.
3. Existing clothing in the Saudi market.
4. Ideas and opinions on incorporating tribal attire and its accessories in a modern piece.
5. The value of adding historical elements into contemporary design.

Initially, data analysis was approached using Saldana's coding filters to help organize the data and provide the needed information for this study (2016). The three filters were descriptive, values, and narrative coding. First, descriptive coding aids in identifying the general topics being presented (Saldana, 2016). This type of coding is best used with a wide variety of data forms (e.g., interview transcripts, journals, diaries, and artifacts) (Saldana, 2016, p. 102). Second, values coding is the application of codes to qualitative data that reflects a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs and represents her perspectives or worldview (Saldana, 2016, p. 131). Third, in keeping with a narrative inquiry, narrative coding is "exploratory," "speculative," and "interpretive," which is focused on the human experience, identity, and "presentation of self" (Saldana, 2016, p.154). Memos were created with descriptive notes to define those codes and ensure consistent code application.

Apparel Design Process Using the FEA Framework

The apparel design process for this study followed the general guidelines presented by Lamb and Kallal's (1992) FEA Model. It was initiated by the intended user (Saudi women from different tribes in the

Hijaz region). It sought a resolution to a specific apparel problem, summarized as the lack of modern apparel containing ethnic elements, precisely the tribal motif in traditional attire and its accessories. The problem was what generated and fueled the design process from this point. The designer identified and defined the FEA criteria of the target user within the context of the ideation of the problem (Lamb & Kallal, 1992). Therefore, the garment created for this project resulted from incorporating both the FEA framework and apparel design practice.

Documentation of the process

Reflective analysis was the cornerstone of this research, serving as a sense-making tool throughout the various stages of the design process. It provided the designer with the opportunity to revisit her thinking and creative process, thereby enhancing future practice related to this study. The methods used to document and reflect upon the design process were journaling, sketching, and digital photography.

Journals

The first type of journal that was used to document the design process was a small notebook, the idea log. This notebook was used to write down new ideas, references, sources of inspiration, and trend information. A place to record and reflect upon ideas that came to mind, the idea log prevented these basic ideas from getting lost or discarded (Starkey & Parsons, 2019). The second type was the design process journal, a sketchbook containing reflections, inspirational photos, research notes, and notes about garment construction and materials used for the garment. Those notes or reflections can lead to better-informed design decisions during the process. In addition, these types of documentation can be used as valuable resources to generate ideas for future design prototypes.

Sketching

The design sketches were done using a tablet and were created after gathering information. Two types of sketches were produced in this study: thinking and alternative. Thinking sketches represent an initial, unarticulated design idea based on only a few ideas. It was a crucial step for the designer to sort out the design ideas and determine the direction and themes of the designed garment collection. The second type, alternative sketching, represents a detailed and fully articulated design that could be used in the design (*Figure 9*). These types of sketches identify the chosen colors as well as materials for the garment. The type of sketching represents the explicitness and completeness of the design ideas produced by the designer (Goel, 1995; Eisentraut & Gunther, 1997). In principle, working from thinking sketches to alternatives helps produce a sufficiently determined design so detailed scale drawings and

work instructions can be produced (Seitamaa-Hakkarained & Hakkarainen, 2000).



Figure 9: Variety of sketches featuring fashion illustrations for the design.

Digital images

Documenting a design process using digital photography enables designers to describe different stages of their process accurately (Jarvis et al., 2012). Photographs were a natural documentation medium for this study. It communicated well with the design thinking and approach and was organically integrated into the design process. The designer used digital images to record draping and patternmaking exercises, hand embroidery, the different stages of garment construction, and the outcomes. In addition, a digital image file enabled the designer to determine the type of materials, colors, and embellishments used for each garment (*Figure 10*).



Figure 10: The process of color selection for hand embroidery.

Garment Inspiration and Construction**Garment Inspiration**

Designers rarely start designing from scratch but instead transform, combine, or adapt existing designs' elements (examples) to generate new ideas (Eckert et al., 2005; Eckert & Stacey, 2000). A data-based research endeavor could then implement those preferences into a product line by investigating Saudi women's preferences in contemporary garments influenced by the traditional textiles and clothing of tribes of the Hijaz region. Therefore, it was essential to explore and gather information about the traditional tribal attire and accessories that could inspire the garment's design. Generally, the clothing is decorated with geometric motifs. The colors and stitches of motifs were used to distinguish identity between different tribes in the Hijaz region and, therefore, used as a primary inspirational source for this study (*Figure 11*).



Figure 11: Varieties of handmade bags of tribes in Taif City.

The aesthetic value of the garment was a key concern during the design process. In order to achieve the aesthetic component of the piece, the researcher collaborated with skilled women of the Hijaz region, drawing inspiration from the tribal bags they make. These inspirations were used to create a surface design with historical references to the garment, enhancing the piece's value and adding more historical textile crafts, such as embroidery. To achieve these needs, the designer of this study created a similar pattern of tribal bag motifs (*Figure 11*). She then asked skilled women to embroider these motifs on the fashion fabric, making them an integral part of the design process.

Furthermore, it was essential to maintain an awareness of fashion trends so that the garment was perceived to meet the user's needs and be up-to-date in current fashion. Additional garment information was derived from participants' ideas about current fashion trends and their existing clothing options. Examples included long capes, large headpieces, and natural fabrics. Sketches were then developed in the prototype stage partly based on this information and the designer's vision (*Figure 12*).



Figure 12: A mood board of the design.

Garment Construction

The researcher of this study designed and developed the finished garment, so she witnessed the entire design process (ideation, design development, pattern drafting and draping, prototyping, and garment construction). The garment was made based on the participants' preferences and followed current fashion trends that satisfy Saudi consumers. Modifications of these trends were applied to designs for originality and to add longevity to the piece, making it more timeless yet still trendy. The garment was geared toward Fall- and winter wear, thus determining the design type (*Figure 13 & 14*).



Figure 13: Photos of the finished garment.





Figure 14: Photos of the finished garment worn by influencer Yasmin Dakheel at Saudi Cup 2024.

The Apparel Design Process

The design process of this study consisted of four major stages: problem identification, preliminary ideas, design refinement, and prototype development. This study adapted Lamb and Kallal's framework and used it as the framework for this venture. The researcher acknowledged that the evaluation and implication phases were not used and intends to use them in future research following this study.

Problem Identification Phase

This research focused on the problem of a lack of contemporary garments that contain historical elements inspired by the tribal textiles of the Hijaz region. As mentioned earlier, current garments that incorporate details reflecting the tribal Saudi heritage need to be more modern, unique, and feminine clothing designs (Ejeimi et al., 2018; Iskandarani, 2006). Therefore, it was necessary to develop options to incorporate a unique traditional embroidery technique into new garment designs to fulfill this segment of women's needs. This is important because it enhances a sophisticated contemporary look while incorporating ancient art; this solution closes the gap between old-fashioned apparel and modern approaches to dressing.

This model's core was the target consumer, Saudi women. The intent is to clarify these consumers' needs and wants regarding how the

apparel is used. During this phase, the needs of the young tribal Saudi consumers were analyzed so that the designer could develop a profile of the user (*Table 1*).

Table 1. *Background Information of Participants*

Participant	Age	Tribe	Highest Level of Education	City	Occupation
P1	40	Hudhali	Ph.D.	Meccah	Professor at Umm Al-Qura University
P2	35	Hudhali	B.S.	Taif	Housewife
P3	32	Jahdali	B.S.	Jeddah	Content creator
P4	28	Malki	B.S.	Jeddah	Entrepreneur
P5	26	Otaibi	B.S.	Taif	High-School Teacher
P6	23	Jahdali	B.S.	Jeddah	Merchandiser at Aziz Mall
P7	22	Thaqafi	M.A.	Meccah	Social Media Manager
P8	20	Malki	HS	Taif	College Student

Note. B.S.= Bachelor of Science; M.A. = Master of Art; HS = High school diploma; Ph.D. = Doctor of Philosophy.

For this specific user, the FEA model was used to create apparel that met their needs. Lamb and Kallal's (1992) FEA model provides flexibility in meeting many users' needs in various cultural environments. Therefore, functionality, expressivity, and aesthetics were used as significant considerations of the FEA model. Furthermore, other characteristics participants desired were considered, such as uniqueness and authenticity, two concepts that were not part of Lamb and Kallal's model but were added to expressivity considerations by the researcher of this study. Orzada and Kallal (2019) suggested that the FEA criteria were meant to be modified relative to specific design problems or user needs and wants. It is the responsibility of the designer/researcher to investigate and specify the criteria essential to meeting the needs of their customer within that user's cultural context, whether that is an individual client or a targeted market group.

Preliminary Ideas Phase

The idea phase aims to generate ideas to aid in achieving the goals. This most creative phase produces design solutions through sketching, brainstorming, research, and question-and-answer sessions (Lamb & Kallal, 1992). Through this stage, gathering opinions about fashion, style, materials, and garment preferences was the primary means to understand tribal Saudi women's needs better. In order to collect ideas and opinions about the users' needs, it was essential for the researcher to create a type

of stockholder about Saudi consumers. This consisted of making a list of the people potentially involved with the product, which, for this study, included women from different nationalities between 20 and 40 years old who were interested in fashion and style.

The designer considered two major principles that guided this stage: differences in needs are ordinary, and detail is essential. In apparel design, it is important to note that needs are as unique as the individual wearing the garment and that attention to detail aided the designer in better satisfying those needs (Starkey & Parsons, 2019). During this phase, creative ideas were documented using the idea log and design journal, as noted earlier (Starkey & Parson, 2019). The inspiration files and sketches listed earlier were instrumental to this activity and aided the brainstorming process (Starkey & Parson, 2019).

Design Refinement Phase

This phase describes the part of the process in which preliminary ideas are subjected to scrutiny (Lamb & Kallal, 1992). In direct response to the preliminary ideas phase, the design refinement phase involves developing solutions to meet the identified needs (Lamb & Kallal, 1992). Some preliminary ideas have been modified or discarded, and others have been elected by the designer for the development phase. During this time, the designer/researcher begins to apply FEA criteria. According to Lamb and Kallal (1992), this phase should result in a few ideas that can be tested. Many ideas were stimulated in the previous stage that needed to be refined in this phase. Ideas that matched the consumers' styles and preferences were encouraged.

The information provided through the interview sessions provided a solid foundation to generate ideas that helped create design solutions for the consumers' needs. The FEA criteria were a direct outcome of the needs identified during this phase, specifically from the data analysis. These considerations were based on the needs and the general apparel product qualities that were regarded as the most important from the data. These were fit, adjustability, comfortability, protection, mobility, and ease of movement under the functional considerations. Expressive considerations include self-image, status, uniqueness, authenticity, values, and rules. Aesthetic considerations include aesthetic quality and art elements. The FEA considerations guided the apparel design process. They evaluated the design refinement and prototype phases to ensure that the designs met the tribal Saudi women's needs. Design refinement informed the development of initial prototypes that offered possible solutions to different combinations of needs identified by young participants. Designs were developed from the themes discussed in chapter four.

Prototype Development Phase

In this stage, ideas that hold the most promise are evaluated. These ideas result from data collected from the preliminary ideas and design refinement phases, which inform the design and development of the designed apparel prototype. The prototypes of this project were sample constructions in selected materials used to determine appropriate stitch selections, material handling, and construction requirements (Lamb & Kallal, 1992). In addition, patterns were developed before the actual garment was constructed. Reflection was crucial in all stages of design activity, taking place before, during, and after garment construction by the researcher. As mentioned, the design process has been documented using diaries, journaling, and photography techniques. Designing and constructing the garments was another way for the researchers to make sense of the data and detailed descriptions.

Findings

Emergent Themes

The influence of tribal clothing and textiles on the social identity of Hijazi women

The study's results indicate that Saudi women wear clothing to express their ethnic identity. By incorporating traditional attire and symbols, these women demonstrate their allegiance to their ethnic roots, expressing originality, personality, self-esteem enhancement, appreciation, authenticity, and ethnicity. Participants emphasized that the inclusion of authentic tribal motifs on modern garments serves as a significant form of cultural identity expression. The accounts provided by Saudi women regarding their ethnic heritage through traditional dress demonstrated a significant increase in cultural significance. This significance is formed through social interactions among individuals and subsequently becomes a shared meaning. These women exhibited a deep sense of connection to their authentic clothing and textiles. Furthermore, the symbolic consumption of ethnic attire by tribal Hijazi women reflected a solid commitment to their traditions, particularly in transitioning to a new phase of life, such as marriage. Acquiring and using these traditional garments symbolizes the woman's embrace of her new social role and aids her transition into the married phase.

Assessing consumer choices in modern fashion utilized by the FEA model to evaluate garment characteristics

Findings of this study demonstrate some garment characteristics to support consumers' demand for functional, expressive, and aesthetic apparel that integrates craft culture.

Functional Apparel

In contemporary fashion, the FEA model has been employed to assess consumer preferences in garment selection. Functional aspects played a crucial role in shaping consumer choices, with a focus on comfort, fit, and mobility. Participants strongly preferred garments that offered a soft, tactile feel and were constructed from natural fibers, emphasizing the importance of comfort. Furthermore, the study highlighted the significance of a good fit, with participants noting the need for garments that accommodate diverse body shapes and allow for easy alterations. The ease of donning and doffing garments emerged as a critical consideration for consumers, as did the ability of garments to meet specific requirements for different body types. In order to cater to tribal Hijazi consumers, it will be essential to identify styles and silhouettes that align with their preferences for the right fit and ease of wear.

Expressive Apparel

The study's findings illustrate that tribal Hijazi women place significant importance on their attire's communicative and symbolic elements, particularly regarding self-perception, social standing, personal values, distinctiveness, and genuineness. The research indicates that the attire serves as a medium for conveying messages about the wearer and as a visual representation of their individuality. Consequently, tribal Hijazi consumers select garments to express their style, showcase their uniqueness, cultivate a favorable self-image, and project an authentic representation of themselves. The historical and cultural significance of these garments plays a crucial role in preserving the genuine tribal identity of the wearers, effectively aligning with their stylistic preferences and their aspiration to present a positive self-image.

Aesthetics Apparel

Consumers expressed a strong interest in acquiring garments that adhere to high product quality standards in the context of aesthetic preferences. These standards typically encompass the material composition, sewing techniques, and decorative elements utilized in the garment's construction, as well as the overall quality of finishing, comfort, fit, and mobility. Notably, utilizing high-quality fabric woven from natural fibers possessing desirable attributes such as softness, durability, and the ability to drape elegantly was paramount in meeting consumer expectations. The color palette employed in the collection drew inspiration from traditional tribal attire and reflected the preferences of the target consumer demographic. Emphasis was placed on meticulous garment construction and sophisticated finishing techniques. Participants expressed a strong affinity for their cultural traditions and ethnic heritage, indicating a desire to possess contemporary apparel that incorporates elements of their cultural background. It was imperative to infuse the

garment with a distinct luster and aesthetic appeal inspired by tribal attire, effectively reflecting the cultural identity of the Saudi Hijaz region while simultaneously evolving to meet contemporary tastes and preserving national identity. Consequently, traditional embroidery techniques were employed to adorn and embellish the garment created for this study.

Analyzing the interplay of functional, expressive, and aesthetic framework in modern apparel design

Lamb and Kallal (1992) developed the FEA consumer needs model as a framework to guide the development of modern apparel with traditional details to meet tribal Hijazi consumers' needs. Participants' narratives and wardrobe interviews supported using functional, expressive, and aesthetic for the design criteria categories. The criteria were then translated into garment attributes and used to develop a prototype garment. The most significant design feature of the finished garment was the addition of the traditional elements in an innovative way that added another layer to this study (which focuses on the identity of women in Saudi Arabia), as it is argued that embroidery is reflective of social values, personal style, and gender identity .

In addition, this study fully documented and evaluated the FEA design framework, something that needed to be improved in most other studies - particularly those that focused on the cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia. In this study, the FEA model was modified to include two new aspects: uniqueness and authenticity and expressivity considerations. These two concepts were added to the consumers' needs and connected to the consumers' cultural context within the FEA Model. Adding these two concepts to the original FEA model enabled it to adapt to various specific user needs. In general, all three FEA criteria have been utilized in this study. However, study findings demonstrate that the balance of the three criteria differed. In other words, a higher recommendation of expressive considerations was reported by study participants who used dress as a communicative medium to which people assign meaning, and thus is an instrument for identity expression. In line with the symbolic interaction theory and social identity, tribal women used their traditional and contemporary dress that contained some historical elements as a way of belonging to their tribe and as a medium of communication relative to identity .

Furthermore, the specific FEA four phases, which include problem identification, preliminary ideas, design refinement, and prototype development, complement and overlap with other apparel design processes, which include documentation, inspiration, and information gathering, as well as experimentation, exploration, and prototyping.

Problem Identification Phase

This phase served as the starting point of the overall research and the apparel problem, which seeks resolution for Saudi users whose unmet wants and needs in the Saudi fashion market. In order to solve this issue, their needs had to be identified before a sample collection was made. A total of 8 consumers from different tribes were interviewed to share opinions about the tribal attire and its accessories, its value to them, and to understand the phenomena from the perspective of this segment in depth. This segment provided some valuable ideas about the FEA criteria used in the design refinement stage and the prototype stage.

Preliminary Ideas Phase

During this phase, the primary objective was to generate ideas to fulfill specific objectives. Various activities, including sketching, brainstorming, and research, were undertaken to address *how to meet the identified needs?* Ideas were derived from interactive question-and-answer sessions with participants, allowing the researcher to gather insights on fashion, style, materials, and garment preferences relevant to tribal Hijazi women. This phase served as a crucial mechanism for gaining a deeper understanding of the target demographic's needs. The documentation of processes and idea generation utilized a range of media, including the idea log, design journal, and inspirational files and sketches.

Design Refinement Phase

In this phase, the selected ideas from previous stages are further refined and developed for implementation in the creation or prototyping phase. This often involves modifying or eliminating specific ideas based on established criteria, such as functional, expressive, and aesthetics, informed by participant feedback and preferences gathered in earlier phases. During this stage, the designer develops a cohesive solution that addresses the identified needs, integrating a few ideas into the overall garment design.

Prototype Development Phase

Throughout this phase, our work's central question was, "How can the needs be met?" The design process adhered to standard garment creation protocols, which involved the development of patterns preceding the actual construction of a garment. Subsequently, a fashion fabric was utilized for the final garment prototype. Reflection played a pivotal role at all stages of the design process, occurring both before and during garment construction and persisting even after the garment was completed. The researcher meticulously documented the design process using diaries, journaling, and photography techniques. Designing and constructing the garment served as a means for the researcher to derive meaning from the data, employing detailed descriptions. As prototype development is an ongoing process, encompassing multiple evaluations rather than

culminating in a single assessment, these evaluations were essential in generating diverse solutions to cater to the users' needs.

Discussion and Recommendations

This study, unique in its approach, served as a starting point for the researcher to utilize Lamb and Kallal's (1992) framework. Not all the FEA phases were applied to this study (the evaluation and implications phases). The research is problem-based design research, starting with a clearly defined problem derived from an identified need. In this study, that need is looking at ways to develop new apparel designs for tribal Hijazi women that bridge the gap between outdated, historical styles and modern, fashion-forward approaches to dressing. This garment was made to meet the needs of the Saudi market sector by combining the two contradictions of heritage and modernity. Valuing the cultural heritage of historical elements, such as embroidery from the traditional attire of Hijazi tribes, and adding this value to contemporary design would solve the issue of a lack of cultural heritage and spread awareness of the Hijazi identity uniquely.

Traditional dress has been one aspect of successful nation-building in Saudi Arabia, where it has been essential to create a national identity across the different tribal-oriented and formerly independent Saudis. Local handcrafters or tribal skilled women who make ethnic dresses play an essential role in creating a national identity and are immensely proud of their work. It will be a priority in the future to enhance the role of Saudi crafters by creating a collaboration between designers, researchers, and handcrafters and spreading awareness of other Saudi crafts that could be implemented into apparel design. This collaborative approach is critical in exploratory research in apparel design, helping designers meet the needs of emerging markets and, in this case, the changing needs of Saudi Arabian women. The next step is to explore new ways to translate other traditional methods of weaving and quilting into contemporary Saudi Arabian designs in addition to embroidery.

Furthermore, future researchers could explore the significance of the traditional attire of other regions within Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries such as Qatar, Yemen, and Jordan. Because of this traditional attire's significance and symbolic nature, it will be advantageous to incorporate these qualities into modern fashion designs, reflecting tribal and cultural pride. Furthermore, identity is performed and managed by deploying visual resources to meet specific discursive aims. Regarding traditional dress, fashion designers and researchers must understand its place in a society where it is essential to consolidate a distinctive national identity and where young women live as a minority within a complex international population. Thus, they must connect to a broader flow of visual representations of traditional and modern taste in fashion.

References

- Abalkhail, J. (2016). Women in management in Saudi Arabia. In R. J. Burke, & A. M. Richardson (Eds.), *Women in Management Worldwide: Signs of Progress* (3rd ed., pp. 323–338). Farnham: Gower.
- Abdullah, N. (2021). The social and economic empowerment of women working in the educational sector. *Journal of Studies in Social Work and Human Sciences*, 1(53), 377–408.
- Acker, J. (2009). From the glass ceiling to inequality regimes. *Sociologie du Travail*, 51(2), 199–217.
- Al-Fahad, R. (2021). The Importance of Handicrafts in Saudi Arabia. *Destination KSA*, 10, 50-70.
- Alfawaz, M. A. (2024). Evolution of Handicraft Industries in the Textile Sector in Saudi Arabia: A Comprehensive Analysis of Trends and Innovations. *Journal of Textile Science and Technology*, 10(03), 82–100.
- Al-Ghamdi, N. (2020). The Cultural Heritage of Saudi Handicrafts. *Wafy*, 14, 55-73.
- Alghalib, L. F., Alireza, H., & Wilding, R. (2021). *Traditional Costumes of Saudi Arabia: The Mansoojat Foundation Collection*. ACC Art Books.
- Al-Harbi, F. (2017). *Saudi National Handicrafts Program Turquoise Mountain*.
- Alotaibi, S. M.A., & Starkey, S. (2018). Conventional but contemporary. *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings*, 75(1).
- Alotaibi, S. M.A & Starkey, S. (2020). Retaining ethnic identity in the apparel design of modern Saudi dress. *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings*, 77 (1).
- Al-Saif, H. (2019). Revisiting Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia. *Destination KSA*, 9, 60-80.
- Al-Tamimi, S. (2018). Saudi Arabia's Traditional Crafts and Artisans. *Arab News*, 11, 23-40.
- Al-Turki, F. (2019). Revisiting Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia. *Destination KSA*, 8, 50-70
- Blackmore, J. (2010). Special Issue: Disrupting notions of leadership from feminist post-colonial positions. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 13(1), 1–6.
- Cooke, M. (2014). Tribal Modern: Branding new nations in the Arab Gulf. *Middle East Policy*, 21(4), 159–160.
- Eicher, B., & Sumberg, B. (1995). World fashion, ethnic and national dress. In J.B. Eicher (Ed.), *Dress and ethnicity*.
- Ejeimi, S., Sparks, D., & Yan, R. (2018). Revival of Hejaz embroidery: A collaborative design process engaging Saudi female academics. *Research Journal of Textile and Apparel*, 22(2), 138-156.
- Eum, I. (2019). New women for a new Saudi Arabia?" A Gendered Analysis of Saudi Vision 2030.
- Hayfaa A. Tlaiss & Mohammed Al Waqfi (2020). Human resource managers advancing women's careers in Saudi Arabia: caught between a rock and a hard place, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*.
- Iskandarani, B. (2006). المنورة المدينة في العروس وملابس للنساء التقليدية الملابس (Trans: Traditional clothes for women and bridal dresses in Medina). Khwarezm.
- Kabeer, N. (2020). "Women's Empowerment and Economic Development: A Feminist Critique of Storytelling Practices in "Randomista." *Economics. Feminist Economics*, 26(2), 1–26.
- Long, D. (2005). *Culture and customs of Saudi Arabia* (1st ed.). Greenwood Press.

- Martinez, A. (2014). Researching dress and identity in Saudi Arabia: – 'What a strange power there is in clothing' – Isaac Bashevis Singer – Asfar. Asfar.
- Monkman, K. (2011). "Framing Gender, Education, and Empowerment." *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 6(1), 1–13.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2006). "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review*, 30(1), 61–88.
- Muhammad, A. (2020). The role of Saudi women in the economic and social development in the view of the Kingdom's Vision 2030: an analytical study. *Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 89–72.
- Peterson, L. R. (2014). *Culturally Relevant Leadership: Developing a Culture of Equity*.
- Rahman, M. M., & Al-Azm, A. (2023). *Social Change and Transformation in the Gulf Region*.
- Roach-Higgins, M., & Eicher, J. (1992). Dress and identity. *Clothing And Textiles Research Journal*, 10(4), 1–8.
- Tawfiq, W., & Ogle, J. (2013). Construct
- Tawfiq, W., and Marcketti, S. (2017). Meaning and symbolism in bridal costumes in Western Saudi Arabia. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 35(3), 215-230.
- Tlaiss, H., & Kauser, S. (2011). Women in management in Lebanon. In M. J. Davidson, & R. Burke (Eds.), *Women in Management Worldwide: Progress and Prospect*.

References for Figures

- Figure 1: The traditional wedding thawb of Bani Malik.* (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://mansoojat.admin.ssl.co.uk/proof/ixbin/indexplus? IXSR = BFhg00ff MD& IXSP =122& MREF =1424& IXSS =%252asform%3dgeneric form %26 IXACTION %3dsummary%26 IXFPFX %3dtemplates%252ffull%252f%26%253a%3dthobe& IXACTION =display& IXSPFX =templates/full/>.
- Figure 2: Bani Sa'ad Tribe.* (n.d.-a). Mansoojat Foundation. They were retrieved from <http://mansoojat.admin.ssl.co.uk/proof/ixbin/indexplus? IXSR =zOm4YImD 0GN& IXSP =8& MREF =1262& IXSS =%252asform%3dgeneric form %26 IXACTION %3dsummary%26 IXFPFX %3dtemplates%252ffull%252f%26%253a%3dbag& IXACTION =display& IXSPFX =templates/full/>.
- Figure 3: Traditional tribal bags heavily embellished with embroidery.* (n.d.-g). Mansoojat Foundation. They were retrieved from http://mansoojat.admin.ssl.co.uk/proof/ixbin/indexplus? IXSR =v4UweW_q SAs& IXSP =3& MREF =1331& IXSS =%252asform%3dgeneric form %26 IXACTION %3dsummary%26 IXFPFX %3dtemplates%252ffull%252f%26%253a%3dbag& IXACTION =display& IXSPFX =templates/full/.
- Figure 4 The Hudheyl tribe.* (n.d.-c). Mansoojat Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.mansoojat.org/costume04.html>.
- Figure 5: The Jahdaly tribe.* (n.d.-a). Mansoojat Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.mansoojat.org/costume01.html>.
- Figure 6: The Bani Sa'ad tribe.* (n.d.-a). Mansoojat Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.mansoojat.org/costume10.html>.
- Figure 7: The Bani Malik tribe.* (n.d.-a). Mansoojat Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.mansoojat.org/costume11.html>.
- Figure 8: Bye, E. (2010). A direction for clothing and textile design research. Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 28(3), 205-217.*

Figure 9: Alotaibi, S. (2024). *Variety of sketches featuring fashion illustrations for the design.*

Figure 10: Alotaibi, S. (2024). *The process of color selection for hand embroidery.* Photograph, Taif City.

Figure 11: Wilding, R., Alireza, H., & Alghalib, L. (2021). *Varieties of handmade bags of tribes in Taif City.* Photograph, Traditional Costumes of Saudi Arabia: The Mansoojat Foundation Collection.

Figure 12: Alotaibi, S. (2024). *A mood board of the design.* Photograph, Taif City.

Figure 13: Alsuhaime, M. (2024). *Photos of the finished garment.* Photograph, Riyadh City.

Figure 14: Althumali, M. (2024). *Photos of the finished garment worn by influencer Yasmin Dakheel at Saudi Cup 2024.* Photograph, Riyadh City.