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An Integration between Baluch's Costumes and Contemporary Iranian Woman: An Apparel on Aesthetics Elements

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Abstract

This paper investigates costume fashion design of a specific Iranian group, specifically Baluch people. In this study, we have conducted a research to make an appropriated and functional association between modern daily fashion and Iranian local regional clothes as a social and cultural identity characteristic. There are some textile manufacturing industries in Iran, in which about 400,000 employees are working in different branches of production. Baluch's history indicates that their traditional costume has been derived from Iranian fundamental designs. Baluch culture has long been settled in the East of Iran. Baluch people are among the few Iranian tribes who are committed to their local costumes. This study is a cross-sectional survey in which 100 volunteers filled out the 7-scale questionnaires throughout some social networks among Iranian adult women (Age: 30±0.5). We also gathered some information based on the literature review, observation and museums and exhibitions of handicrafts visits. In this study, we focused on Baluch ethnic costumes, and we studied some articles in this field to develop a practical method in observing and assessing the sample costumers. Our data analysis indicates that 32% of volunteers partially agree that they have tendencies to pick fashionable clothing, 34% of volunteers agree that they prefer to be unique, 33% of volunteers partially agree that the national identity is important when it comes to fashion, and 28% of them partially agree about the importance of local origin of fashion. These results also express that 36% of volunteers partially agree that the traditional Iranian costume is appealing to them, and 33% of them partially agree that traditional costumes are usable as contemporary clothing. Per foregoing features of Baluch costumes in aesthetic, social and cultural context, and obtained results and relevant statistical analysis, it seems that Baluch costumes aesthetical identity can be applied in contemporary Iranian women's clothing, considering fashion principles. Last but not least, design process is based on questionnaire results and the traditional Baluch costume analysis. Our findings show that the importance of considering some criteria during design process, such as national identity, tendency to wear local and colorful costumes, applying traditional handicrafts and motifs on contemporary clothing, uniqueness and elegance. The presented design is recommended based on the deduced results of previous phases.

Keywords: Baluch, Traditional costume, Design, Fashion, Iranian women, Dressing.

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Introduction

Nowadays, fashion is known as a communication way among people (Barnard, 1996), in which regards, aesthetics and aspects and characteristics related to it are imperative. Interoperation of objects and perceiving aesthetic values depend on the mode of interaction recognizing aesthetic qualities of objects, as a part of the aesthetic experience, which leads them to attain significance (Vieria, 2009).

Fashion objects embody semiotic functions of symbolic representations of concepts as a way of communication (Weller, 2007), and the tactile experience of fashion can be considered a visual language (Vieria, 2009).

Designer's original concept is expressed through the design process and creating aesthetic codes to expose this kind of combination. Fashion as a communication means makes a visual language in which textile and other related objects have a prominent role (Brathes, 2006).

Fashion plays a significant role in expressing the local and regional identities in daily modern lives. Although innate social identities have been introduced to the world with some difficulties, many young people and specially women—according to time and place—have endeavored to present and produce innovative designs by their creativeness. In this study, we conducted a research to make an appropriated association between modern daily fashion and Iranian local regional clothes as a social and cultural identity characteristic. Also as there are some different cultures in Iran, the Baluch was selected.

Textile industry and fashion

Clothing is viewed as a cultural criterion all over the world, because it is supposed to indicate the embodied belief, religious, social and even artistic characteristics of a tribe or a nation, through the inhabitants' costumes, rather than just a covering element (Pourbahman, 2008).

In most cultures, clothing is considered as a symbol of gender segregation and social class determination, and conveys aesthetical, political, religious, social and occupational symbols.

A social group, or a tribe and a nation costume collection has two principle components: cultural pattern which is followed to select and measure the material, color, shape, technique and sewing of costumes by people, and second costumes' role and function in various fields of social, cultural, occupational, religious and traditional ceremonies. According to diversity of lifestyles, tribes and religions in Iran, there are various kinds of costumes (Khatibi zadeh, 2011).

Before the nineteenth century, Iranian clothing was very traditional and fashion types varied depending on the diverse ethnicities in the country. Some common examples of designs included many bright colors within one garment, multiple layers of flared skirts, hand beading and embroidery details, pants worn under skirts, as well as many varieties of headscarves (Ghayournejadian, 2007).

The export of Iranian textile products has experienced a significant increase, which shows the improvement of textile products portion in international market. On the other hand, \$122 million import of textile machinery in the current economic situation represents the dynamic investment in this industry (Farzandi, 2014).

Nowadays, weaving industry is considered one of Iran's strategic industries that is very old and domestically widespread. As mentioned earlier in this article, textile industries have a firm association with fashion design. There are some textile manufacturing industries in Iran, in which about 400,000 people are employed. These industries include about 12% of all kinds of manufacturing industries in Iran (Soltani, 2015).

Rationale of the study

Baluch's history indicates that this traditional costume has been derived from Iranian fundamental designs. Baluch's costumes are deeply associated with cultural context of this society, and embody the original Iranian costume design through combining green, red, orange and black silk with traditional handcraft of Baluch's women which is called needle-lace.

Caring about Baluch's local costumes which has basically been their identity representative, is a significant and impressive issue for them, thus many extortionate expenses have been expended to preserve this rich culture and civilization by Baluch's women in the southwestern of Iran.

Antiquity and introduction of Baluch's women needle-lace art could be mentioned as resemblance of these needle-lace patterns with 5-6 BC earthenware geometric patterns which have been discovered. From some researchers point of views and based on existing evidences, Baluch needle-lace patterns have also a strong resemblance to prehistoric stone-reliefs patterns, that this archaism has augmented the attraction and esteem of this mysterious art (Gheibi, 2007).

Baluch people are among the few Iranian tribes who are committed to their local costumes. These sumptuous costumes are distinguished and popular among Baluch women so much so that needle-lace art has been the first tourist attraction point in this area, and for shopping, needle-lace products have priority over other souvenirs (Bagherkord, 2015).

Today in some cases fashion is associated with crafts; traditional crafts are still the designers' favorite, no matter in east or west. Various styles, elegant, plain or generous disposition are the exhaustive source of designer's inspiration. Modern design with tradition crafts is a recreation of traditional crafts, and an inheritance and development (Hong, 2010).

Although needle-lace art and consequently Baluch women's costumes have been popular among people and Iranian art and culture enthusiasts around the country and even beyond borders, due to the lack of efficient marketing, needle-lace products have been used

exclusively by high society. Unfortunately, public is deprived of accessing this precious art, because of marketing restriction of this handcraft.

Baluch



Figure 1: Baluch costumes (anonymous photo)



Figure 2: Baluch costume in detail (photo by Afghan Tribal Arts)

Baluch ethnicity has long been settled in the East of Iran. They mostly work in agriculture sectors husbandry and are mostly nomadic. Some of them that live in bordering Oman Sea survive with fishing. Baluch women clothing includes: Keshik —Gitan costume lines underarm three angular cutting on sleeves—, Fillet (snood) of ordinary fabric or value, dark or colorful two-piece cloth with embroidery in chest and cuff, pants with tight shales and usually the margin of them has embroidered rib band and embroidery. Embroidery cassock, in the past the cassock was embroidered very carefully but later, it has been reduced to black veil net and a local shoe (Javari, 1960).

Baluch women spend a significant amount of their income for their clothes, though this group belongs to region of Baluchistan, which is a low-income state. Baluch women like to wear

new clothes in traditional festivals such as “Eid al Fitr, Nowrooz, etc.” by bonding their tradition (Pourbahman, 2007).

Baluch women's clothing has changed in appearance with the passage of time, but it has never undergone a radical fundamental change, because these changes have not had any effects on the original form of Baluch clothing or needlework designs. However, this change is always for the charm and beauty of the clothing and if a change is against the culture of Baluch people, it will be ephemeral and will not have durability (Bozorgzade, 2015).

Method

This study is a cross-sectional survey in which 100 volunteers filled out the 7-scale Likert questions throughout some social networks. All of them were Iranian adult women (Age: 30 ± 0.5). Also we gathered some related information based on the literature review, observation and visiting museums and exhibitions of handicrafts. In this study we focused on Baluch ethnic costumes. In addition, to develop a practical method in observing and assessing the sample costumers, some related articles were studied.

According to Chon (2013), Niinimäki (2014), Klerk (2004) and Hu (2009), we introduced a new diagram as follows (Diagram 1). Chon (2013) pointed out that the aesthetic identity of a product or an apparel is associated with the relevant studies in product specific, context or situation and also representing state of mind/being, which are restated in diagram (1) as product specification, context and concept respectively, and mentioned to the importance of context in divers aspect such as social, cultural and semiotic effects Niinimäki (2014) add that the apparel aesthetic conclude technical elements in addition to visual aesthetic principles, and also determines that consumer’s interaction and necessities and functional aspects play a deciding role in an apparel analysis process, which are embedded in following flow in the concept section. Klerk (2004) has indicated that apparel analysis in both consumer perception aspect and physical qualities of the apparel have a role specially in apparel aesthetics. Hu (2009) pointed out that a comprehensive apparel analysis may only be obtained if the regional effects, tribal occupation, traditional culture and customs and handicrafts are considered.

From the above it is clear that an apparel aesthetics method is not only be planned with considering the conventional visual aesthetic principles, but also contextual effects and the concept of an apparel creation play a significant role in this process, as schematically proposed in Diagram 1.

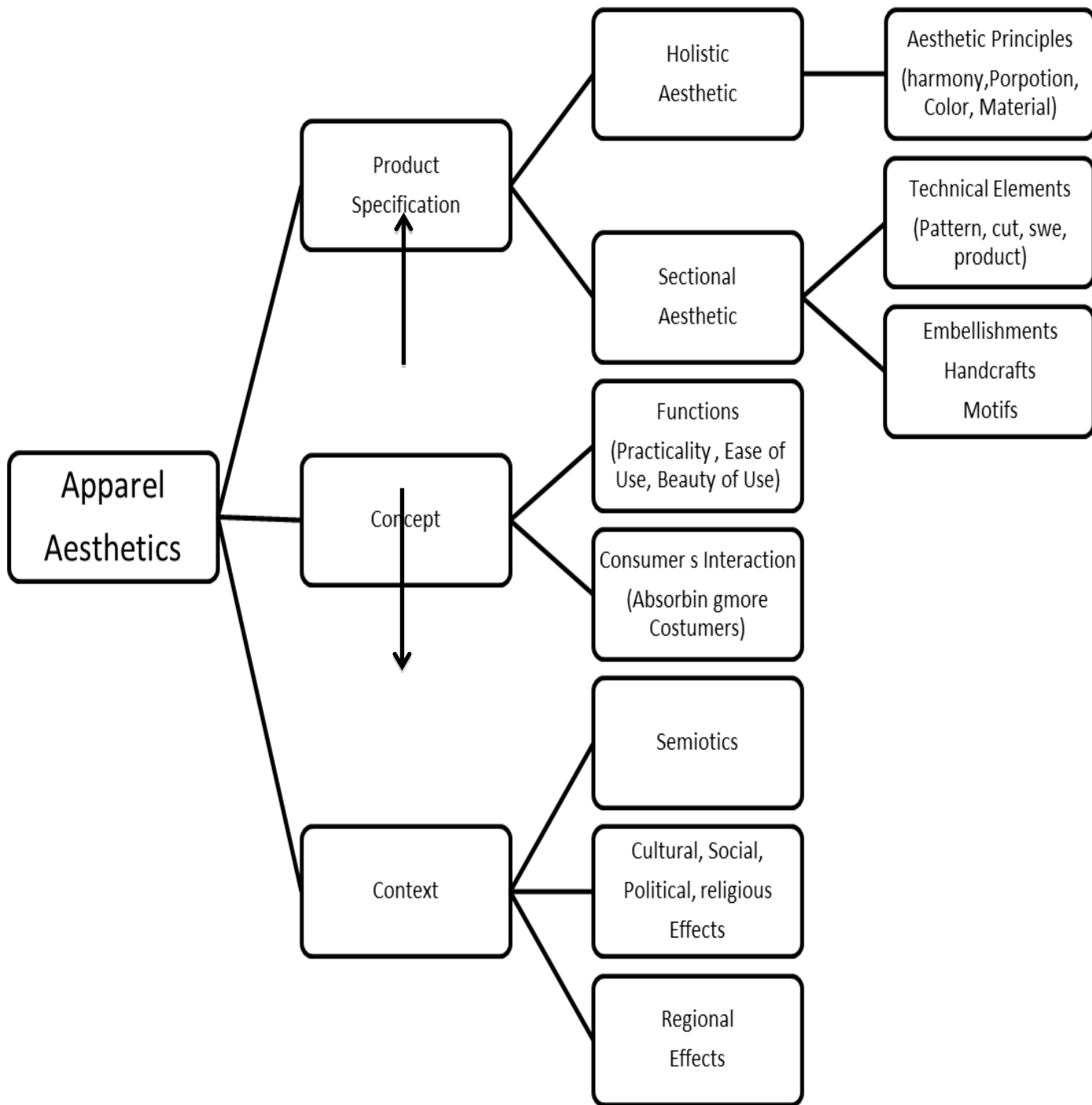


Diagram 1: Apparel Aesthetics Flow

Color	The costume decoration	Cloth material	The costume features	Folk
Black/gold and etc.	Sequins, Embroidered coins	Colored satin often without flowers and plants	(with simple cut)	Bakhtiari
Red/green/blue, orange, white etc.	Embroidered ribband, Embroidered coin, needlework	Silk usually red silk	Mey blend	Turkman
Green, orange, yellow, black, red	Sequins, Naqshbandi, beaded, margin fancywork		Long skirts with both sides slash up to reins	Qashqai
Purple, red and orange-green, jujube, blue-spotted black and white	Embroidery, Embroidered ribband, Gold embroidery, fancywork	Cotton or light wool	Smooth loose robe up to leg and Pants with tight Shales	Baluch
Gold, silver	Sequins, Seldom beaded	Thin fabrics mostly floral	Long	West Azerbaijan Kurd
Gold, silver, etc.	Sequins and beaded	Simple or colored floral fabrics	Long skirts	Kurdistan
Purple, green, blue, orange, etc.		Floral fabrics and colorful velour	Long and loose	Kermanshah
Purple, green, blue, orange, etc.	Embroidered ribband		Short to knee	North Khorasan's Kurd (Quechan)
Black/white, red/green, etc.	Embroidered coin, Embroidered lace, Embroidered ribband		Short to knee, both side slash, Wrinkled skirt	Lor
Black-red-green, etc.	Embroidered ribband,		Short to knee with pants	East Gilan

Table 1: Separation of Iranian ethnic costumes

The people of Baluchistan are one of the few ethnic groups that adhere to their local costume. The fine costumes are the first reason for tourist to visit this area, and buying Baluch costumes is a priority for visitors. The people clothing has always been evolving throughout human history and living location has changed the material of it, but unlike other ethnic groups, who have forgotten about their old costumes, the Baluch have kept their costumes constant, and adjacency to other cultures have not made them change the overall form and originality of their clothing and has not gotten out of its overall framework (Blukbashi, 2004). Table 1 indicates separation of Iranian ethnic costumes and characteristics.

Results and findings

Statistical analysis of questionnaire indicates that;

There is a significant difference between national identity and religious attitude ($P=0.004$), and between national identity and sumptuous/fine costumes ($P=0.01$).

There is a significant difference between uniqueness and tendency to wear local costumes ($P=0.015$). Furthermore, there was a significant difference between tendency to use happy colors and beauty of Baluch costumes ($P=0.002$). However, there was not a significant difference between cost and Baluch costume characteristics. This seems significant difference between tendency to wear fashionable clothes and payment ($CI= 0.006$).

This study also shows a significant difference local origin and unfitness and also tendency to wear simple clothes. There is a significant difference between capability of applying handicrafts in apparel design, beauty of local costumes, simplicity and also age. Also, there was a significant difference between age and unfitness ($CI= 0.057$). Age, marital statues and sumptuous/fine costumes had significant differences, respectively ($CI= 0.002$) and ($CI=0.013$).

Our data analysis indicates that 32% of volunteers partially agree that they have tendencies to pick fashionable clothing, 34% of volunteers agree that they prefer to be unique, 33% of volunteers partially agree that the national identity is important when it comes to fashion, and 28% of them partially agree about the importance of local origin of fashion. These results also express that 36% of volunteers partially agree that the traditional Iranian costume is appealing to them, and 33% of them partially agree that traditional costumes are usable as contemporary clothing.

In order to integrate these findings, design process was accomplished based on questionnaire results and traditional Baluch costumes analysis (Table 1), as a last phase of the study. Questionnaire results which declared contemporary Iranian women's necessities emphasize on the importance of considering some criteria during design process, such as national

identity, tendency to wear local and colorful costume, applying traditional handcrafts and motifs on contemporary clothing, uniqueness and stylishness, to approach their sights.

On the other side, analyzing the Baluch costume characteristics by the composed diagram in the method section (Diagram 1), some dominant and applicable criteria were presented (Diagram 2) as an inspirational indicator in contemporary Iranian women's clothing design. Per Diagram 2 some of distinguished aesthetic features which are compatible with contemporary Iranian women's desires -based on questionnaire results-, such as a line silhouette, dolman sleeves and geometric motifs have the capability to conform in a modern costume design. Additionally, some conceptual factors like tendency to preserve local fabric industry and wear costumes inspired by traditional signs, considering context effects such as cool as warm natural colors, religious covering obligations and using natural and light woven fabric can be embedded in the following recommended designs.

Figure 3 presents our recommended final design in both sides, considering Diagram 2 mentioned results, as the last phase of the study. This design is inspired by Baluch costumes elements, considering contemporary trends from Iranian women point of views, that employ heritage industry skills and changing attitudes and tastes amongst consumers by concentrating on their desires and necessities based on the questionnaire results. Main distinct characteristics of the recommended design are as follows:

A line silhouette of the 2-pieced robe, dolman sleeves, closed ripped collar, geometrical needle-lace patterns in combination with modern fabric manipulation techniques like smocked fabric on the front side of the dress, to embody the costume lines-which is called Gitan-, underarm three angular cutting inspired by Keshik in Baluch costumes sleeves, three angular French sleeves and collar, and the observance of Muslim covering laws due to religious and cultural context effects.

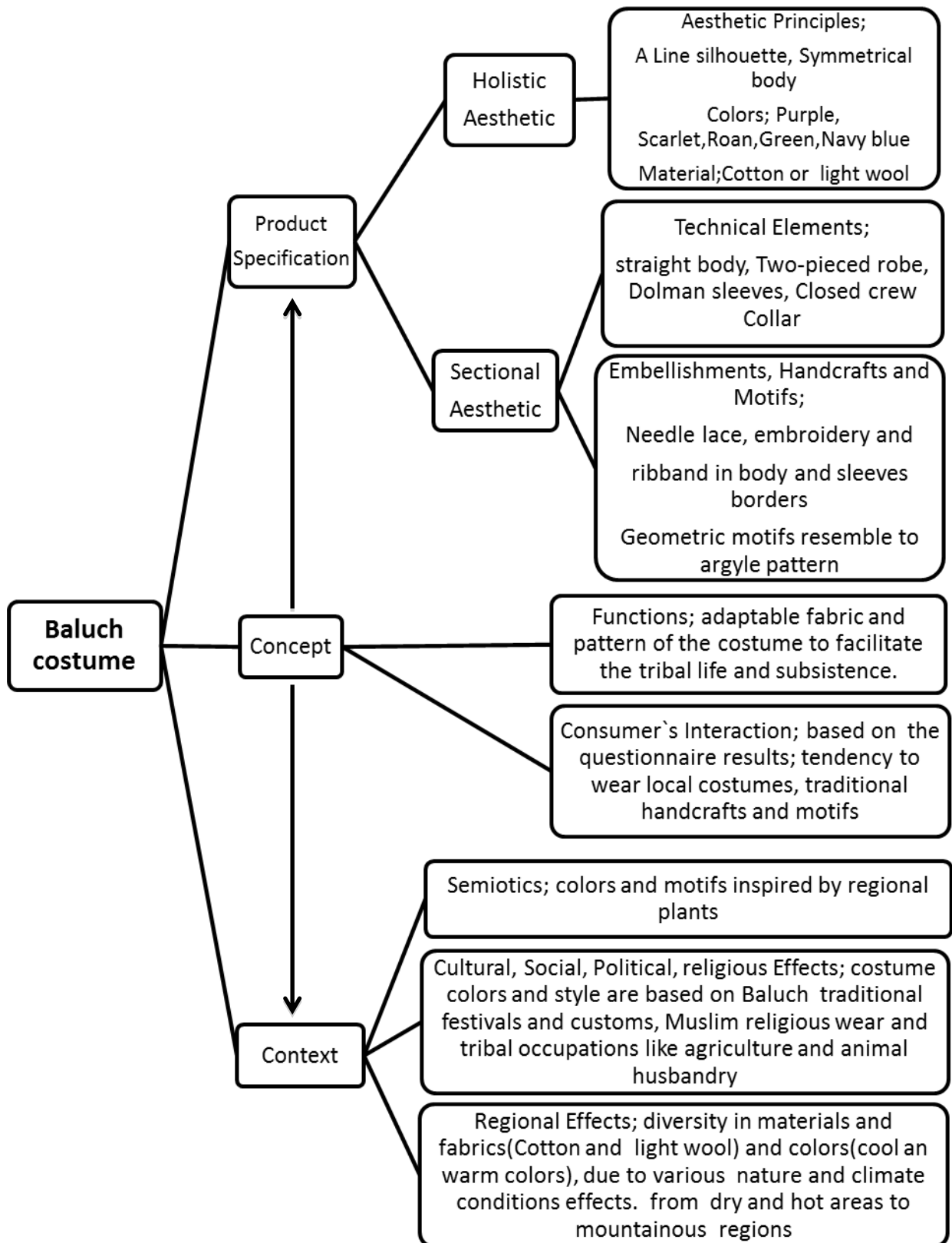


Diagram 2: Baluch costume aesthetics analysis

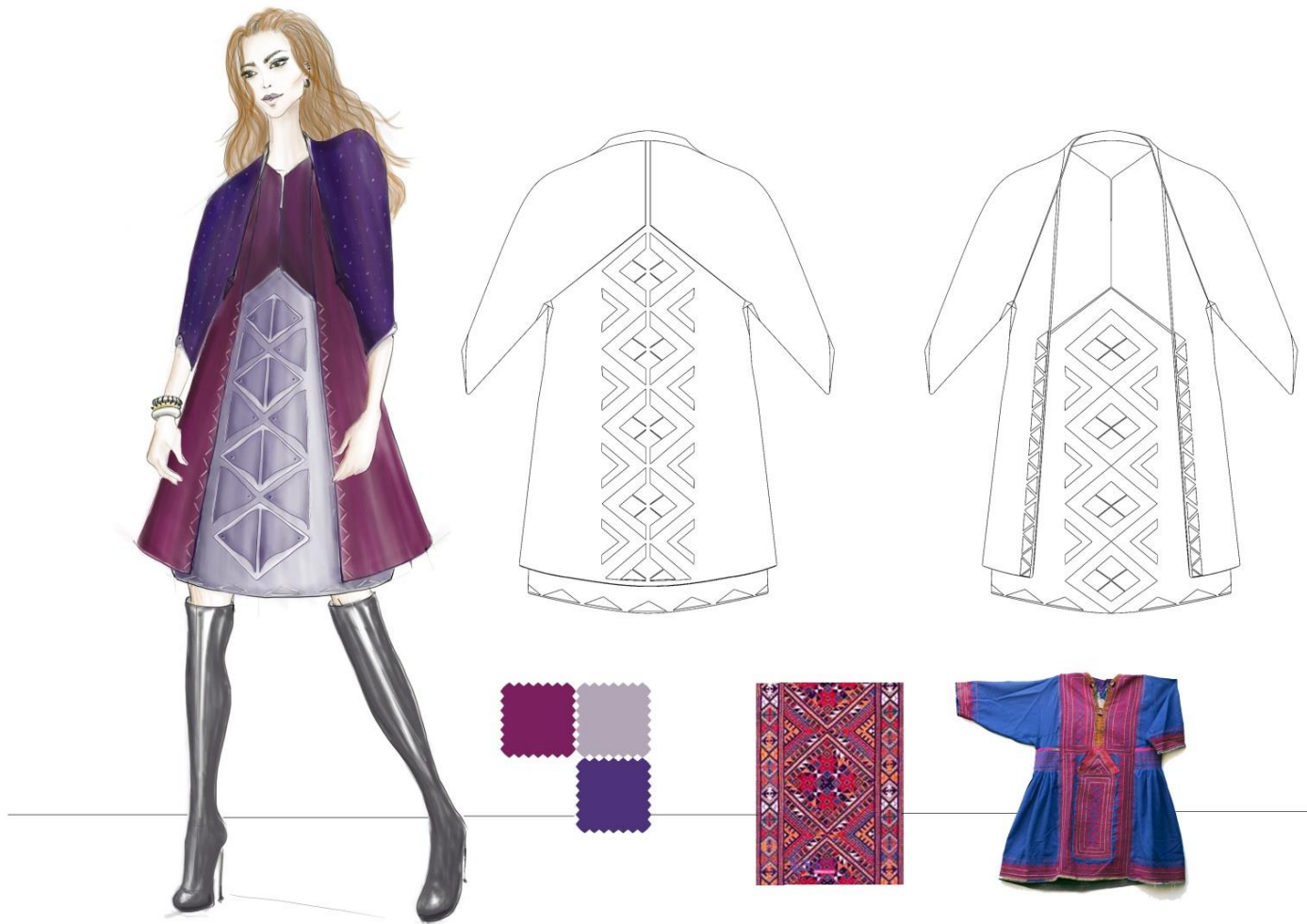


Figure 3: Recommended design

Conclusion

Clothing in all countries is considered as a cultural indicator because the cloth of a folk represents their beliefs, religion and the art of that folk, carries symbolic value, expressing characteristics typifying social structures (Pourbahman, 2007).

People always pay more attention to the visual national costume elements than to the inherent and spiritual elements because the former is more intuitive (Hong, 2010).

Fashion is generally considered more important to women more than it is to men. Social traits of female groups play the main role of the unique female beauty from different regions, races, groups and age grades. In addition, forming process of this trait is directly affected by the aesthetic values. Social and individual aesthetic psychology and behavior tendency have been embodied by the basic support element of aesthetic values, to realize aesthetic choice (Zhao, 2004).

Creating a balance between the contemporary trends of fashion, with costumers' needs, is considered a principle issue for fashion designers to be surrounded by upcoming fashion trends and remain up to date in the fashion world. The designer's aptitudes and the quality of final products are the most effective criteria to valuate a design (Mete, 2006).

On the other side, regarding significant difference between age and gender, attention to fashion updates and also common tendency to traditional costume characteristics among Iranian women, it might be concluded that Baluch costumes aesthetic elements can be inspiring in design process of contemporary Iranian women clothing, and this application has not only contractionary with religious and cultural features, but also conformity with them.

Although applying traditional elements in design process has been pervading among new generation of Iranian designers, and some initial movements have been emerging in the last decade, there seems to be the shortage of acceptance and demand in consumers toward these designs for the real usages. The recommended design of this study (Figure 3) is a modified expression and exposure which many Baluch costume's conceptual aesthetic identities are embedded in implicitly without any excessive traditional motifs, exaggerated colors and any other inconsistencies with current trends. Popularization of this design due to conforming with Iranian women's desired styles based on questionnaire results, has also entrepreneurial advantageous by reviving traditional artifact industry and ethnic subsistence. In addition to the contemporary street style, the usage of the proposed design might be noticeable in international art events as a representative of regional arts which convey originality and elegance of Baluch costumes. Adapted traditional elements of this design prevent this traditional costume from declining, retaining, and transmitting the core elements of these heritage treasures for future generations.

This case study has contested the usability of Baluch traditional costume elements for a contemporary apparel and revealed several cultural and ethnic values of Iranian tribes - specifically Baluch which has been studied in this survey- which might be applicable in the modern Iranian women's styles. Per obtained results and relevant statistical analysis and general fashion principles, performing this approach will facilitate propagation of native cultures of the country and application of these feature in current fashion trends. Furthermore, many disregarded cultural and traditional features that have been restricted by traditional region, will be developed and expanded to the modern life.

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