

# Comparative analysis of China (Han) & Bangladesh cultural authentication and transformation context on “Motif Design”

## Abstract

Now a day, fashion design and clothing manufacturing is going to update day by day. Modern fashion designers are interested to work with the new color, trend, design, pattern, outline. “Motif Design” and its application may have been a positive way to deal with the ideal tasteful look, while social confirmation and diversification have been considered as key factors. In this study, the author tries to investigate the cultural elements motif between Bangladesh and china (Han). The author investigates different Blogs, magazines, journals, and websites used for the analysis. In order to make this research authentic and credible different local and international published books and articles have been studied. Different websites helped by representing historical progress and reference of the information which adorned in this research. Few Bangladeshi and Chinese apparel fashion brands those who worked with traditional costume were also a way to understand today’s influence of Cultural elements. After the analysis, the author finds some features of motif like style, positioning, color and pattern. The research team analyzes those points from the view of two sides. Then the authors finally find out the key similarities from the analysis between the two countries. From the finding, the author designs (flat sketch) a series of dresses for the Contemporary market for future sustainability.

**Keywords:** motif, cultural elements, cultural transformation, flat sketch, collection, sustainability

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## Introduction

Technology can never replace the feelings of love and warmth in application of cultural elements in dress design. In the term of fashion cultural elements application has a great value to increase the aesthetic look of a design, when the cultural elements are from their national costume. Now a days the traditional costume is being more and more attention from the designers and counted be users.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand movement towards global awareness motivates fashion leaders to research the world for fresh ideas.<sup>2</sup> It has become the key issue of the design practice how to combine the national costume elements and modern elements.<sup>3</sup> “Motif” (a decorative image or design, especially a repeated one forming a pattern) is a small elements of any cultural elements or national costume elements. The crossover design is popular in modern design.<sup>4</sup> Once again the fashion business is a resource-consuming function.<sup>5</sup> Here the corresponding cultural elements China (Han) and Bangladesh “Motif” (pattern, color, technique and position) would have been play a significant role to fashion education as well as series (a group or a number of related or similar design) collection of dress design.

### Chinese han cultural elements

Culture as Chinese nation’s “core culture”, is the cultural symbol of Chinese nation.<sup>6</sup> The so-called Chinese elements, in general terms, are able to be reflected with the elements of Chinese characteristics. From the perspective of fashion designers, the categories of Chinese elements

have no boundary. The materials which can provide inspiration for designers, and have the characteristics of Chinese culture or Chinese spiritual can be called with Chinese style design elements.<sup>4</sup> Chinese Han culture is a blend of different cultures from many ethnic groups and it demonstrated great breadth and applicability.<sup>6</sup> Though the culture has been generated from different region or part, the elements also been constructed with the collaboration of different ethical or societal characteristics for instance art, painting, music, literature etc. The elements addressed with the term of “Motif” which is an art and iconography, or an element of image. Through all over the world traditional motif design mainly contain spinning, knitting, dip dyeing, color painting, embroiling, beading, American quilting, knotting and many other jewelry technologies.<sup>7</sup> The application of their motif found in architecture, woodcarvings, pottery, cave painting in artistic format with the combination of natural and artificial elements of Han culture. The natural elements cover floral pattern motif (leaf, tree) animal pattern motif, (tiger, dragon), Text pattern motif, (Chinese character, word composition) Fish pattern motif and bird pattern motif. The artificial elements cover the composition of above mentioned natural true and false elements with extreme movement and usually created for extreme illusion by two or more repetitive items.<sup>8</sup>

### Bangladesh cultural elements

In the extremely globalized fashion business; styles have been driven by a culture that becomes commercialized in Fashion,

especially; cultural element that represents by festival are one of the experiences as well as great sources of inspiration for the fashion industry.<sup>9</sup> Bangladesh has a series of festival respectively by each and every religion people namely, Eid-ul-Fitar, Eid-ul-Adha, Duraga puja, Bodhu purnima, Pohela Boisak etc. which refers to mixed cultural and diversified influence of culture,<sup>10</sup> represented by architecture, music, dance, painting, folk art, literature, clothing etc. All above festival are being colorful with the application of their ethical values of individual believes and thoughts, where motif is one of the positive way to transform their religious authentication throughout the dress design. The common format of application is printing, embroidery, applique or stitching in different size and shape. The motifs mostly inspired from the local or rural heritage; such as, local flowers, boat, hand fan, tiger face, owl, fish, birds or some image of local musical instruments (tobla, dholl, ektara) and any other decorative abstract designs that purely reminds of the entire culture of Bangladesh.<sup>9</sup> Traditional clothing items from several places of Bangladesh represent the cultural heritage like as- 'Moslin' pioneer old Dhaka, 'Khoddor' in Comilla, 'Tant' is Tangail, 'Monipuri clothes' represent Sylhet, 'Silk' from Rajshahi, 'Jamdani' from Narayanganj are the main costume symbols of Bangladesh.

### Chinese modern fashion design inspired on traditional motif

Designer's eye to history for encouragement and fashion mostly reflects the past and it's remain tradition always.<sup>11</sup> Traditional motif design, when it has been apply on modern fashion design it enjoy the unique principles of collection and clothing style as well as fabric lay out.<sup>2</sup> They have to concrete costumes style and modeling, structural dealing and theme resulting the design took place an important part. At the same time the designer use some collar variation, like bright spot color, pattern or decorative elements to make more delightful their collection through using their traditional motif design application. Designer Xander zhou 2016 Spring/Summer men's collection has been addressed traditional ethnic elements (Figure 1). Etro Spring/summer 2019 women's collection Designers boldly adopt the Chinese elements and vintage flowers motif to show oriental beauty and some ethnic features (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Xander Zhou 2016 Spring/Summer men's collection.



Figure 2 Etro Spring/Summer 2019 women's collection.

### Bangladesh modern fashion design inspired on traditional motif

Bangladesh is a country for rich culture and its customs values whole over the world.<sup>12</sup> Due to the British influence during colonization, shirt-pant and suits are very common for men's wear. Shari is the main and traditional dress of Bangladeshi women. Salwar kameez is usually preferable to young lady. The traditional fashion elements motif adorned with the dress by printing, embroidery, applique and hand stitching technique enhance the interest of clothing. Designer Afsana ferdousi in Garnet magazine 2020, has introduced traditional cultural elements motif in her collection (Figure 3) (Figure 4). The hand stitching and embroidery technique applied on the dress to make it fashionable with cultural elements.



Figure 3 Afsana ferdousi Garnet magazine SEP 2020.



Figure 4 Afsana ferdousi Garnet magazine SEP 2020.

### Research objective

The aim of this research is to investigate the main characteristics of Bangladesh and china (Han dynasty) cultural component (Motif) usually applied in the casual dress design. For investigating this matter, the author reviewed the historical and cultural background of those countries. During investigating the design the author finds some technique, pattern, applications & color difference between two countries design. After getting the findings, author will produce a new design for the contemporary market that will sustain in future market.

### Material & method

**Materials:** Pencil, Paper, Color & Brush for manual sketch of the design, Adobe illustrator cs6 & Adobe Photoshop CS6 software.

**Methodology:** The most controversial topic is data collection in the field of design research, as because gathering rich and sufficient data without interrupting designer’s activities and creation is very much

crucial. Hence, new and multiplex data purchase methods were often proposed to insert the designer’s thinking process.<sup>13</sup> Acknowledging this topic, the author investigates different Blog, Magazine, journals and website used for the analysis. In order to make this research authentic and credible different local and international published books and articles have been studied. Different websites helped by representing historical progress and reference of the information which adorned in this research. Few Bangladeshi and Chinese apparel fashion brands those who worked with traditional costume were also a way to understand today’s influence of Cultural elements. The target of this research was to understand the comparative and significant use of cultural elements “motif” and a way of design trendy collection in Bangladesh as well as china. This research also provides some pictures from runway of different fashion week. The summary of the review segments were used to find out the main outcome of this research.

- i. Traditional costume elements of China and Bangladesh.
- ii. World’s fashion changes throughout the heritage of individual culture.
- iii. Differences and similarities regarding color, placement and application of Motif
- iv. Observation and discussion with the fashion leaders of fashion ground.

### Methodological framework

In this methodological framework, the author wants to show the total research outline. At first, the author has reviewed the total cultural elements between two countries to classify and define the cultural elements (motif). In this process of review, the authors also investigate the embroidery and printing design history for getting cultural elements, pattern design, diversified cultural elements (Motif) and also the applications. After the analysis, the author finds from this research some elements like Positioning, color, pattern and motif characteristics. The research team analyzes those points from the view of two sides. Then the authors finally find out the key similarities from the analysis between two cultures. From the finding, the author designs a series of dress for the Contemporary market for future sustainability. In below, the Figure 5 shows the total overview of the thought of the research.

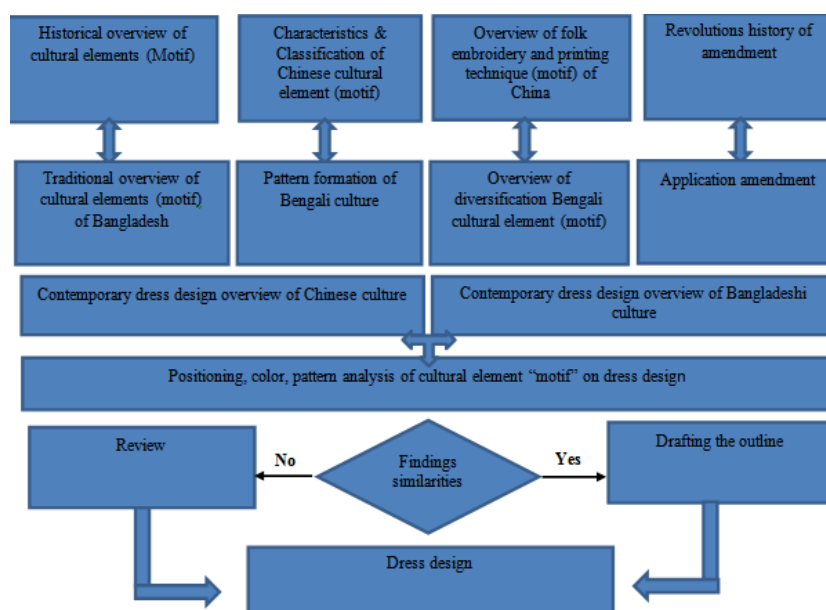


Figure 5 Methodological framework.

## Result & discussions

### Analysis-I: Pattern characteristics

**China:** Motif design always belongs to specific meaning and application. Through all over the world traditional motif design mainly contain spinning, knitting, dip dyeing, color painting, embroiling, beading, American quilting, knotting and many other jewelry technologies.<sup>14</sup> According to the Chinese concept Motif Materials were wood, bamboo, copper and silver of ancient lacquer ware. In ancient lacquer design content was fictional Animals; Dragon, Phoenix, Monster wild animals; Tiger, Leopard, Deer, Birds and Mandarin duck (Figure 6) (Figure 7). These were featured for the decorative pattern and a small amount of individual patterns. The repetition of motif placed symmetrically as well as asymmetrically to the object. Sometimes swing and other practices constitute a continuous pattern has a strong flavor of life. The use of the curve line along with superb skills creates strong sense of rhythm.



Figure 6 Chinese lacquer work.



Figure 7 Ancient Chinese dragon.

**Bangladesh:** Alpana, Potchitra, Nakshi Katha are the common and popular form of motif application in Bangladesh. Alpana explain itself as a colorful motifs applied as the form of holy art in Bangladesh like Puja, wedding or special community events (Figure 8). Potchitra is the symbolic form of folk tales as well as religious tales like Jatok story, the love affair of Ramayana, Krishna, Beulah, story of Mohorrom, myth of Lakhindar, Sonai Madhob etc (Figure 9). Nakshi Katha is a form of embroidery quilt where materials are thread, needle and double layer of cloths (Figure 10). Decorative motifs on Nakshi Katha illustrate narrative and abstract thoughts.<sup>15</sup> Apart from this three

type of media, motif also applied in pottery, sculptor, wall painting, furniture etc.



Figure 8 Alpana.



Figure 9 Potchitra.



Figure 10 Nakshi Katha.

### Analysis-2: Positioning

The application and positioning of motif to the clothing is not similar. Several positioning helps to create different outlook and features, in fact it's changed as per pattern and cutline. For instance,

In Bangladesh Motif elements are used at neck line, rib case level, sleeve hem and sometimes throughout the whole garments (Figure 11). On the other hand Motif mostly used in Chinese clothing to the neck line, bottom of sleeve , waist line and center to princes line with long continuous repetition of elements (Figure 12).



Figure 11 Aarong (fashion brand Bangladesh). boishakh collection 1425.

Figure 12 Traditional chinese (Han) wedding dress.

**Position report:** The following diagram (Figure 13) depicts the motif placement in neck line, waist level and bottom hem level has moderate use in dress design where sleeve hem, yoke and bust level is top priority to the designer. There are less application in back and bicep position. This statistics has been created from the design analysis of different fashion brand home and abroad.

### Analysis-3: Color

A Chinese Motif element has wide range of color variety (Figure 14). Usually bright color elements are applied on dark surface in order to get emphasis on particular place. Bangladesh cultural elements has also shiny tint regarding its application on gloomy surface (Figure 15).

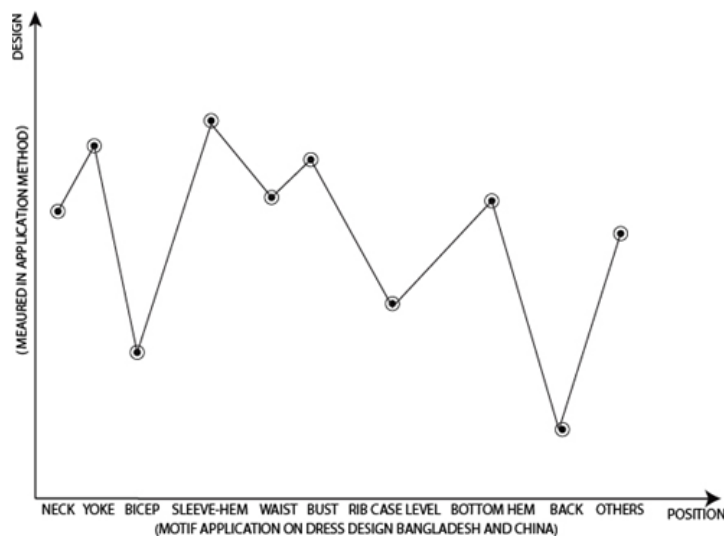


Figure 13 Motif positioning graph.



Figure 14 Bangladeshi traditional Motif color.

## Findings & design process

### Source of inspiration image

The images will be described under two separate headings by analyzing following Figures 15 and 16. There are 08 images taken as the source of inspiration and 08 flat sketches have been created to understand the line, shape and pattern of motif design by pencil (2b)

individually. From the flat sketches 8 blending image will represent the initial outlook of cross cultural influence to design. All flat sketches will be colored as per the findings of their individual origin. Later on the motif application will take place of different suitable position of dresses, where position will be demonstrated through short images. The dress design will be the form of blending both region's significant silhouette.



Figure 15 Chinese traditional Motif color.

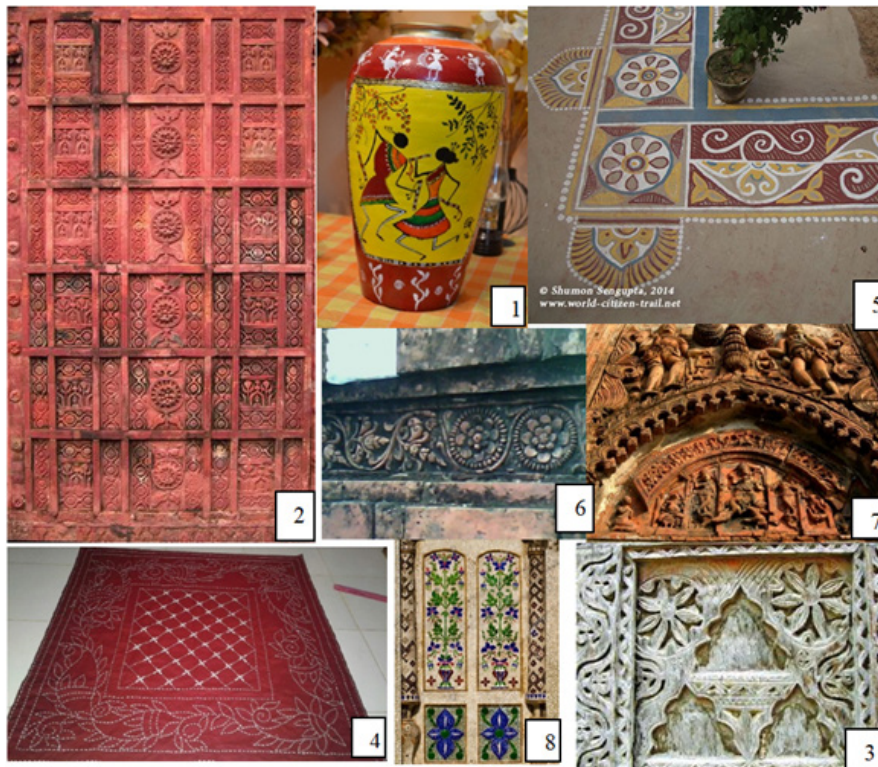


Figure 16 Source of inspiration image: Bangladesh.

**Source of inspiration; Bangladesh:** The images have been taken as the form of inspiration or the evidence of cultural elements Bangladesh. Images included wooden craft, pottery, street painting, terracotta, Nakshi kantha, door painting and Building painting which represents the cultural elements uniformity (Figure 16). In all reference images have different shape, color and construction to reflect the authenticity of motif in Bangladesh.

**Source of inspiration; China (Han):** Chinese (Han) tomb, wooden furniture, wooden painting, terracotta, pottery, wall painting and liquor work has been taken the form of inspiration. The images reflects the characteristics, pattern, color and shape of Chinese Han cultural motif. The repetitive pattern of flower, animal, typography or their blending has created a complete object to furnish individual products (Figure 17).



Figure 17 Source of inspiration image: china (han).

### Draft, design and motif application

The draft sketches initiated after the analysis process described in the “Result & discussions” part. There are two column separated the sketches of individual culture. Therefore, two similar motif of separate culture merged into one. Finally they will be applied into a dress design according to the color and position that have been found in the “Result & discussion” part also. The sketches have been divided into two columns where A will interpret the motif construction of China (Han) culture and B for Bangladesh. Only the dominating character drawn from the source of inspiration and repetitive elements adorned to make it polished object

**First draft sketch:** In every flat sketch creates a specific story with the shape and elements of motif. Gel pen and cartage art paper used to generate individual motif in a 2”/2” box. Column A depicts the motif construction elements of china where (C1; Dragon skin repetitive pattern, C2; Animal ride with floral pattern, C3; Geometric floral blending, C4; Geometric shape blending, C5; Calligraphy, C6; Dragon, C7; Phoenix, C8; Geometric) every construction has a separate meaning (Figure 18). Column B also interpret isolated shape and meaning of motif construction of Bangladesh where (B1; Puppet, B2; Geometric pattern, B3; Geometric with floral pattern, B4; Phoenix, B5; Floral pattern with line, B6; Floral pattern with geometric shape, B7; Geometric structural pattern, B8; Flower with line and shape) main features covered by sketches (Figure 19).

Column A-China (Han)

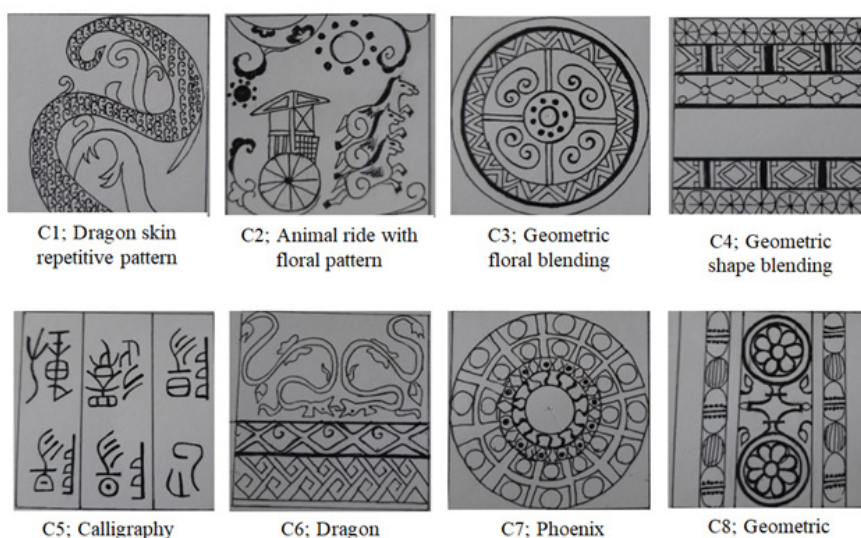


Figure 18 Motif construction elements of China.

Column B-Bangladesh

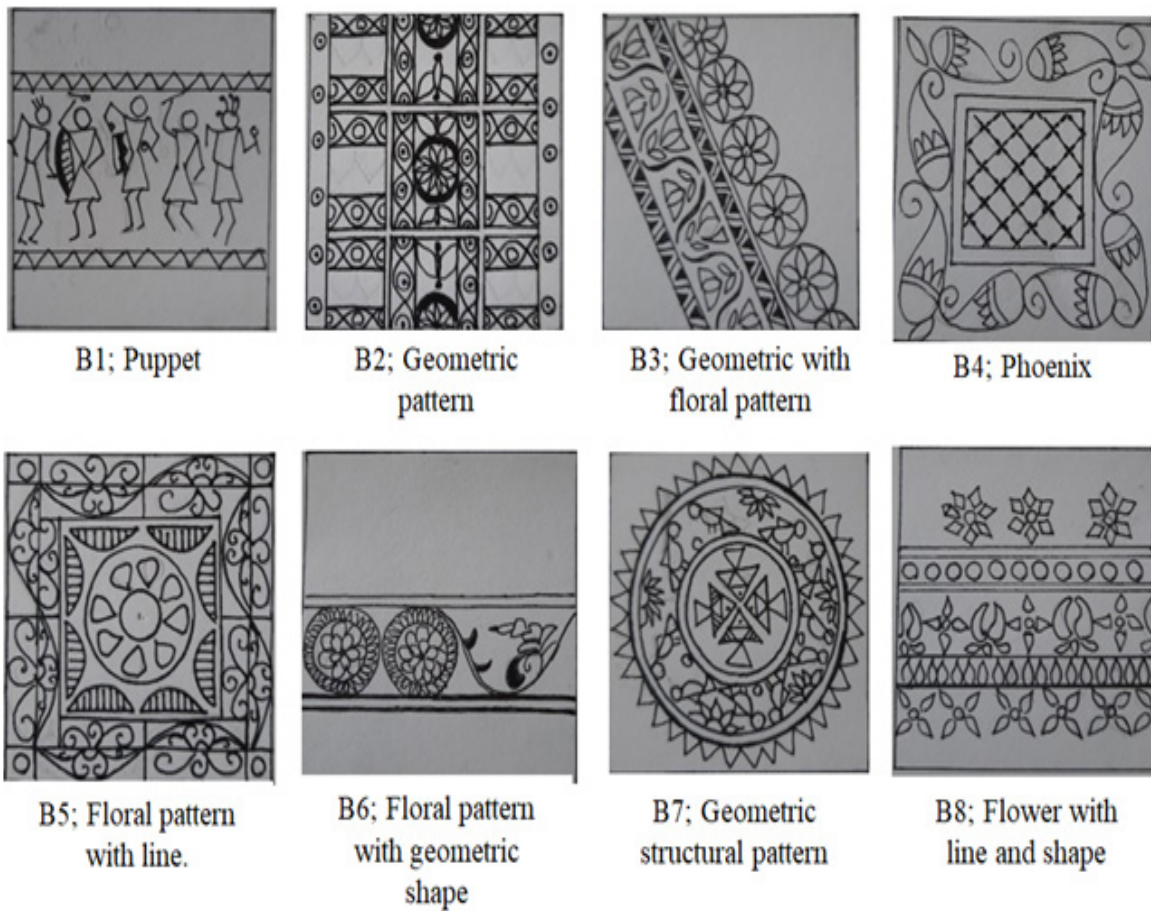


Figure 19 Motif construction elements of Bangladesh.

**Second draft sketch:** In the second draft sketches, the motifs have been merged based on similarities of their elements, materials and styles for instance a Bangladeshi motif with a Chinese motif. The flat

sketches will be placed on a dress as a surface decoration along with color and the result of position (Figure 20).



Figure 20 Motif merged design.

**Design and application:** Deliberately-created images convey meaning, and visual style is often a significant component of image meaning.<sup>16,17</sup> We perceived the main features of the source of inspiration image, and immediately linked those features to design elements in the fashion domain. We strategically explored the various possibilities for each perceived element by intuitively applying design principles into a sketch (Figure 21). Motif elements have been manifested based

on second draft sketches and the position, color from previous result of analysis. Through the reflective drawings in the first two draft sketches we developed preliminary visual units by merging individual concepts of both countries.<sup>18,19</sup> Basic stylized silhouette chosen for the motif application as the form of surface decoration by maintaining cultural authentication of both countries (Figure 21).





Figure 21 Design and application.

## Conclusion

The traditional Chinese (Han) elements i.e. Motif design is specious and profound alternatively Bangladesh has tremendous popularity of their cultural elements. Chinese & Bangladesh culture elements composition will play vital rule in modern design in the spirit of traditional design by applying motif design as the form of surface decoration. The heritage of Han culture and Bangladeshi traditional cultural elements can relate in terms of application, placement and their intimate color. Both of the nation has generated and will continue to generate extensive and far-reaching impact to their individual origin as well as the world fashion creation throughout the correspondence culture elements. In order to make distinctive fashion creation globally, correlative culture elements of different nation or part is important as people are moving place to place for business, travel or education purpose. The research reported here is just a beginning towards this direction.

## Limitation

This study is aimed as a pilot study for further research, and so its initial value is that it embed a draft for the study of the subject and identify a set of consignment to be explored by further research. With a view to recognize new subjects and issues in creative process research through separate culture for design students in-depth understanding of one design process case is essential.<sup>20</sup> However, a single case can be fishy in terms of accuracy; therefore, the design recipe found in this article may be too shortly to be standardized. The design process demonstrated here is not desired to illustrate the only possible standard process; however, it will cleanly be of value to educator, researchers, and students if research on the design process can be followed further, as this researcher intends to do.

As this research is talk about two different nation, there has some boundary regarding observation and analysis. China is a large country, where they have long history and diversified culture. As their culture

is wide and lingering, they have plenty of heritage elements which is rich and contextual. The author only focused on an elements i.e. Motif apart from their vast culture elements. Chinese language is little bit difficult to understand for foreigners, as their local websites is written in Chinese the author faced difficulties to find the suitable things related to this research. Bangladesh has no that much long history compare to china. There are few websites, blog, fashion brand, journal and books found to compare with a resourceful Han culture. In order to flawless or inclusive outcome the author might visit some places in China as well as Bangladesh, but the pandemic situation hampered to meet the demand.

## Implications for design education

In general, Designers are always aware of his usual method of developing and solving design problems as he worked through his process and drew from his accumulated experiences. They always look for local resources and contemporary fashion trend as their source of inspiration, thus subconsciously they are avoiding the small but impactful concepts. Usually we rarely go for global culture as a designer for our new creation, but the contemporary world is moving in a cooperative manner in all aspects of their needs and demand. However, it is important for us as researchers to capture this so that we can apply to the design education. Just as Designer we captured intriguing motif elements of two countries and applied different design principles to them, students could benefit from a series of exercises using various design principles from different countries culture as per design theory (e.g. repeats, contrast, and proportion) to develop small concepts and combine them into a finished design. Since this is a pilot study of two cultures, it is too soon to define specific exercises or activities on some other culture that would be more effective in learning design process of fashion students. That will promising be a payoff of further research and will impact the improvement of methods for teaching design.

## Recommendation

In recent years world fashion is moving forward with technology and artificial intelligence which might causes the disregarded of the heritage and history of culture. Now day's designers are also interested to make fusion of their culture with the contemporary technology. From all above discussion the author can recommend following issues can be concentrate for inclusive result.

- i. Designers should practice with cultural elements nationally and globally to signify their heritage.
- ii. There should have specific contextual websites regarding cultural elements and fashion which discussed in English for overseas or guest learners.
- iii. In academic degree of fashion designing, cultural study has to be emphasized.
- iv. Designers should travel their own country as well as overseas countries to get inspired by heritage and make fusion with global fashion.
- v. Cultural exchange program among the designers and consumers should be increased.
- vi. Correspondent Cultural elements implant technique and application technology should be developed.
- vii. Marketing strategy, fashion campaign, workshop and exchange program regarding cultural elements should be increased domestically and internationally to enrich fashion creation.

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## Conflicts of interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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