



## The Role of Cultural Storytelling in Branding Pakistani Fashion Houses

Noor-e-Sahar<sup>1</sup>, Ifra Irshad<sup>2</sup>, Afzaal Yousaf<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Art and Design, Superior University Sargodha, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: nooresahar.sgd@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Department of Art and Design, Superior University Lahore, Pakistan. Email: ifra.irshad.sgd@superior.edu.pk

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Art and Design, Sargodha University, Pakistan. Email: afzaalyousafsgdpk@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

This research study explored how cultural storytelling can be important in creating the brands of Pakistani fashion houses. Pakistani designers use the heritage material like textiles, crafts as well as historical fabric to appeal either locally or globally to a wide audience to generate unique identities. The integration of these mainstream assets helped the designers to tell the story, gain competitive advantage, and differentiate in the market. However, the literature does not talk about the strategic building and marketing of such narrative structures. It was to this gap that this study turns to analyze how the firm has used the concept of heritage as a form of branding through the incorporation of practices such as artisanal methods, modernized traditions and local theme by leading designers like Sania Maskatiya, Elan and Hussain Rehar. It delves into the marketing narrations they develop and their outcome to success on the market. The main themes were as follows: the designers are merging the cultural heritage with the modern brands and tools with storytelling are the most beneficial in market narratives. The study deployed a qualitative case study methodology and is based on semi-structured interviews, analysis of brand materials and observations in the fashion events. Thematic analysis was used in analyzing data based on Cultural Branding Theory and Narrative Paradigm Theory. The proposed results demonstrate how these strategies will be used to increase the brand identity, maintain the culture and global competitiveness. This is a contribution to the literature on fashion and cultural marketing in developing markets dedicated to the designer, marketers, and the policymakers.

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Corresponding Author's Email: nooresahar.sgd@gmail.com

## 1. Introduction

The cultural storytelling has become a potent means of enabling a brand to establish genuine links with users in an increasingly globalized fashion sector by integrating historical and traditional craftsmanship with geographical motifs in distinctive design (Holt, 2004). The practice is especially relevant in such an approach as in the emerging economies such as Pakistan where fashion houses use the rich tradition of complex fabrics, artisan craftsmanship, and even cultural representations to distinguish themselves both in that local and in the international market. Pakistani designers tend to incorporate a set of phulkari embroidery, truck art motifs, or Mughal-inspired patterns, in which they tell a story about national pride, nostalgia and modernity. Not only would this add to brand attractiveness, but it would also place Pakistani fashion as a mass of tradition, reinvention, and blends of cultural development that infiltrate culture, thus, within the narratives of lifestyles of resilience, identity, and cultural transformation (Chattopadhyay, 1984). With the growing role of fashion as a communication tool of cultural diplomacy, these narrative techniques assist non-Western brands in disrupting the dominance of the Eurocentric narratives, increasing their visibility and economic influence at the international level (Jansen, 2008). In spite of the fact that cultural aspects in Pakistani fashion have gained popularity, there is a substantial research gap in terms of their effective use in branding. Although it has been

studied concerning aesthetic integrations, including the incorporation of cultural pieces into new clothing (Bell et al., 2019), very little that has been researched concerns how designers form and sell cultural identities to create brand recognition and consumer acceptance. The examples of existing literature, however, tend to focus more on Western settings or superficial design patterns, instead of the subtle intersection of the heritage narration in competitive emerging markets (Amjad et al., 2025; Patel, 2024). This neglect is especially prevalent in the Pakistani market in which fashion houses maneuver through globalization and at the same time maintain the local authenticity but little research studies how well these stories are ultimately able to influence market perceptions and motivate action. As a result, the issues regarding the processes by which cultural tales shape the positioning of brands continue to be open-ended in the case of digital marketing transformations and anti-pandemic generation consumers favoring meaningful and heritage-interest products.

This study proposed to fill this gap by understanding how cultural narrative can be used to brand leading Pakistani fashion labels, such as Sania Maskatiya, Elan, and Hussain Rehar, the objectives of the study are as follows: (a) to assess how those designers traffic the cultural heritage by (b) the themes such as preservation of artisans, modernization of traditions, and romantic regionalism to create unique brand identities; (c) to examine the marketing discourse that has been produced through those elements, as well as their transmission and spread through social media and marketing campaigns; and (d) to underestimate the effects of such strategies in their domestic and global market presence. Research questions that was used comprise: How do Pakistani designers balance the cultural heritage and contemporary branding practices? Which storytelling approaches are most effective in developing better market stories and hitting consumers with the message? This study aims to offer new thinking into fashion as a means of culture discourse through placing the discussion on Cultural Branding Theory (Holt, 2004) and Narrative Paradigm Theory (Fisher, 1984), to eventually influence tactical thinking of sustainable branding in such circumstances.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature on cultural storytelling in fashion branding can be broadly categorized into three interconnected areas, each providing foundational insights into how narratives derived from heritage influence identity construction, national projection, and industry-specific practices, with particular relevance to emerging markets like Pakistan.

### **2.1. Fashion and Identity**

Foundational scholarship has articulated identity personal and collectively. Entwistle (2023) describes the "fashioned body" as the intersection of social theory and dress, showing clothing as not only a vessel of culture, but a carrier of social order and personal histories and narratives - all beyond the visual. Equally, Crane (2000) explores the social agenda of fashion focusing on the politics of class, gender, and identity as embodied in garments of belonging and resistance. These narratives emphasize the emotional and self-expressive functions of fashion, storytelling, and design, a theme that has begun to find more emphasis in non-Western contexts.

### **2.2. Nation Branding and Fashion**

Research within this scope investigates the dynamics of cultural diplomacy and soft power through the lens of fashion within non-Western contexts. Jansen (2008) explored the concept of neo-liberal nation branding and, using Estonia as a reference, shows how design and narratives strategically shape a country's identity on the global stage and increase its economically visibility. This paradigm can also be applied to Pakistan where the globalization of the country's fashion industry is used to 'authentically' mark' cultural distinction. Although recent research in this area is not focused on Pakistan, it builds on previous work by integrating immersive technology and brand storytelling within the context of sustainability, indicating how storytelling in the virtual space can be used to promote cultural heritage (Bell et al., 2019).

### **2.3. Pakistani Fashion Specificity**

Research on Pakistan underscores the fact that the industry is dependent on traditional crafts and stories in the sociological and anthropological perspectives. Tulloch (2018) follows the development of Pakistani fashion by pushing the deepest origins into the regional tradition and making designers the players representing cultural heritage. Chattopadhyay (1984) explores the collaboration of artisans and designers, and how modernity has been made using traditional methods such as embroidery. Choudhary (2025) gone further to analyze the diasporic narratives,

in which the Pakistani dress trades in between the traditionalism (Indo-Persian influences) and modernism (western globalization) by narrating to settle the identity confusions in the global contexts. These experiments record the use of such motifs as Ajrak and Phulkari where fashion is being used as a means of cultural continuity and creativity. These groups create a solid base, but also expose further opportunities in the further analysis of strategic narrative implementation in Pakistani branding, to which the current study is devoted by concentrating on a particular set of designers.

Earlier investigations on fashion branding and the identity formation process have considered the importance of culture. Khan incorporates traditional textiles and contemporary designs and discusses the importance of heritage in the symbolic and aesthetic value of chikan and phulkari. Patel (2024) detail the international appeal of South Asian fashion and explain the success of South Asian designs based on the cross-border cultural value. In relation to the West, Smith states that the use of narratives increases consumer engagement, a principle that can also be transferred to the West's emerging markets. In more recent work, Karunaratne and Bhagya (2025) analyzes the brand narratives in the retail sector in India and how taglines and environments influence the identity of consumers, noting that social identity, more than personal identity, defined consumers in environments aligned through culture, using Khaadi and Gul Ahmed as examples. Noor and Shakir examine the Pakistani fashion blogs and the use of the language of informational storytelling as a way to enhance the brand perception and cultural relevance on the social web. The bulk of research in the area of fashion discourse design tends to focus on the aesthetics of design or more general marketing approaches, leaving the narratives in heritage markets, such as Pakistan, relatively untouched (Amjad et al., 2025).

#### **2.4. Identified Gaps**

Nevertheless, there are always gaps in the knowledge of strategic application of cultural storytelling in Pakistani fashion houses. The literature has rarely combined historical and regional stories to branding and has rarely assessed their performance in the marketplace on the international level. The role of the designers as storytellers who combine motifs with contemporary ideas and their impact on consumer attitudes is still unexplored, particularly since 2020 and digital developments (Karunaratne & Bhagya, 2025). Although insightful (Choudhary, 2025), diasporic views do not focus on domestic branding. This research seals these gaps by considering the construction of narratives and their influence in the chosen houses.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

This research focuses on Cultural Branding Theory (Holt, 2004), which stated that iconic brands develop customer loyalty by embedding resonant cultural myths. In conjunction with this, (Fisher, 1984) Narrative Paradigm Theory, which suggests that all communication is story-based and that coherence and fidelity impact an audience's perception, is also useful. These two theories together offer an understanding of how cultural heritage can serve myths and symbolic meanings and how branding employs narrative techniques used by Pakistani fashion designers. While Cultural Branding Theory discusses the identity on a macro level and how it is strategically incorporated into the identity of the brand; Narrative Paradigm Theory discusses the identity on a micro level and the techniques used to animate and operationalize the identity into the market. It is this unified point of view, that the most dominant Pakistani fashion houses such as Sania Maskatiya, Elan, and Hussain Rehar bring to the market and evolve the market narratives that is locally and globally appealing to customers and protects and renews the traditional crafts and motifs. This strategy allows seeing the implicated content of culture contained within fashion collections and the narrative strategies of the marketing communication.

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1. Research Design**

This study utilized qualitative research methodology in examining the integration of traditional cultural narratives and branding of Pakistani fashion houses. A multiple case study was developed around selected designers and their designed branding practices. The multiple case study approach works well in understanding the intricate, real-world complexities while providing opportunities for cultural contexts to influence brand narratives and market strategies. The design focused on deep, interpretive case studies to capture the personal and strategic dimensions encountered in research on fashion branding.

## 4.2. Population and Sampling

The research population included prominent Pakistani fashion designers as well as design houses that incorporated branding with cultural considerations. For the purpose of this research, three participants, Sania Maskatiya, Élan, and Hussain Rehar, were selected through purposive sampling on the basis of their standing, innovative use of heritage motifs, and stylistic versatility that spans the various design schools of Pakistan. This non-probability sampling technique is justified in the literature in qualitative studies on fashion consumer behavior and strategic branding because it affords the selection of information-rich, in-depth case studies, which is exactly what was aimed in this case. The selection criteria were designed around the use of cultural narratives in fashion collections and their social media/macro marketing, as well as cultural market influence, and this resulted in a streamlined sample that represented the diversity of the industry.

## 4.3. Data Collection Methods

A multi-method strategy incorporating various approaches towards data collection ensures investigations are comprehensive. Core among them and most helpful in eliciting in-depth data concerning the designers' creative processes and the branding strategies was the semi-structured interview conducted via Zoom. While geographical constraints and scheduling flexibility were advantages of the virtual interface, the designers were able to reflect on and elaborate more on their answers concerning the creative processes, heritage and inspiration. Other advantages of the virtual approach included lower costs and greater ease for participants, an aspect of comfort in qualitative health and social research. Content analysis also served as an interview complement, and included the websites of the brands, social media networks, and marketing materials in the analysis review. This approach examined the brands' and the designers' acts and omissions through the cultural narratives they presented and circulated. Ethical protocols, including informed consent and confidentiality, were maintained throughout.

## 4.4. Data Analysis Technique

Data processing relied on thematic analysis to pinpoint and explain patterns emerging from cultural narratives, brand identity, and marketplace effects. Reflexive practice entailed becoming acquainted with the data, coding the data, creating and reconsidering the themes and streamlining the processes to develop a unified structure. To classify and code the key themes heritage integration and interaction with the audience, we coded interview transcripts, excerpted material and observation notes. In order to maximize the validity and reduce the bias, we used reflexive journaling which helps to document the interpretive trail and triangulation among data sources.

## 5. Findings and Analysis

This section outlines the major findings from the thematic analysis of data collected via semi-structured Zoom interviews with designers from Sania Maskatiya, Élan, and Hussain Rehar, content analysis of their brand materials (websites, social media, and campaigns), and field observations during fashion events. Three main themes were identified: (1) the building of brand identities in the context of cultural heritage integration, which corresponds with themes such as artisanal preservation, modernized tradition, and romantic regionalism; (2) the development of marketing narratives through these elements; and (3) the influence on market presence. The findings pertaining to these themes respond to the research objectives and answer the questions, illustrating how designers combine heritage with contemporary marketing to construct narratives for the market. Findings were triangulated across sources for robustness, grounded in Cultural Branding Theory (Holt, 2004) and Narrative Paradigm Theory (Fisher, 1984), which emphasize resonant myths and storytelling coherence.

**Table 1: Designer Profile Table**

Designer / Brand	Founder & Background	Brand Philosophy & Identity	Cultural Heritage Integration	Representative Aesthetic
Élan (Khadijah Shah)	Founded by Khadijah Shah in Lahore. Coming from a legacy of textile expertise, she built Élan into a leading couture and luxury prêt brand.	Embodies <i>timeless elegance</i> and <i>heritage luxury</i> . Élan's identity merges Pakistani craftsmanship with modern sophistication.	Deeply inspired by regional embroidery and folklore Chikankari, Phulkari, mirror work, and stories from Balochistan and Punjab.	"Heritage Collection" & "Khayal" reinterpreting folklore through couture design and modern silhouettes.

Sania Maskatiya	Founded by Sania Maskatiya, a graduate of Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi.	Combines <i>tradition with innovation</i> , emphasizing craftsmanship, femininity, and modern wearability.	Revives hand embroidery, block printing, Chikankari, Phulkari, Balochi and Kashmiri crafts, often created by women artisans.	"Resort Edit" and "Eid Collections" artisanal embroidery showcased with minimalist modern cuts.
Hussain Rehar	Hussain Rehar, a rising Lahore-based designer known for experimental and bold aesthetics.	Defines brand as a celebration of Pakistan's diverse culture with avant-garde, youthful energy.	Integrates folk art, truck art, Ajrak, mirror work, and regional textiles; collaborates with local artisans for authenticity.	"Truck Art Collection" and "Gilgit-Baltistan Wool Edit" dynamic reinterpretations of folk motifs.
Jugnu Lahore	A Lahore-based boutique label (designer collective) known for reviving old crafts through sustainable, locally sourced materials.	Brand identity revolves around slow fashion and cultural storytelling, emphasizing sustainability and community collaboration.	Highlights Punjabi and Multani embroidery, natural dyes, block printing, and revival of handloom techniques.	"Jugnu Craft Revival Project" focuses on handwoven textiles and eco-conscious designs inspired by rural Punjab.

### 5.1. Construction of Brand Identities through Cultural Heritage

Fashion in Pakistan is influenced by the diverse regional and historical value and craftsmanship of the country. The historical value and all the social and artistic value of the region is reflected in motifs like Ajrak of Sindh, Phulkari of Punjab, and intricate Kashmiri floral patterns. All these patterns are influenced by nature, geometry, and even Mughal art, representation of status, ancestry, or even married status. Age old designs are look modernized in every season, traditional hand embroidering and block printing is done to make modern silhouettes. Cultural storytelling and aiding the artisan communities are the two purposes which every craft modernized or traditional should serve. The motifs serve to contrast modernity to antiquity and help the wearer to show for cultural narrative and identity being root to the areas of the heart and soul of the craftsmanship. The blend of antiquity and modernity is what keeps the soft textile heritage of Pakistan alive in the industry of globalization. Thematic analysis identified how each fashion house leverages Pakistan's cultural tapestry encompassing textiles, motifs, and historical narratives to forge distinctive identities. Designers articulated a deliberate fusion of tradition and modernity, creating brands that resonate as authentic yet innovative.

**Figures 1: Mughal Motifs**



**Figure 2**



### 5.1.1. Sania Maskatiya

For Sania Maskatiya, brand identity is based on modernized preservation of tradition. After being founded in 2010 by siblings Sania Maskatiya, and Umair Tabani, the house extracts and emphasizes vibrant prints and the 'contemporary' craftsmanship by merging 'traditional design' and 'contemporary' silhouettes. In the Zoom interview, Sania Maskatiya termed this, 'the ornate heritage of Pakistan into wearable stories' where she draws influence from 'textile' traditions of the region, 'block' printing and embroidery, to empower women through adaptable designs. The content analysis for the website ([saniastudio.com](http://saniastudio.com)) and the ethnographic approach revealed deeply rooted cultural pride in collections of unique, color, pure fabric collections adorned with floral designs aligned with femininity and strength. Observations conducted at a recent, sustainable, runway event, hand crafted and sustainable designs made, and other cultural shifts in design, integration 'continuity' to the discourse on 'globalization'.

### 5.1.2. Analysis of Sania Maskatiya's Dress in the Context of Cultural Heritage Motifs

Sania Maskatiya lives and works in Karachi, where she pioneered a new trend that captures the spirit of South Asia and its contemporary silhouettes and is now able to incorporate (Sania Maskatiya). The Pakistani designer draws inspiration from South Asia and the Mughal artistry, Indo-Persian, and modern day Pakistani artistry for her textiles. The Mughal artistry and Indo-Persian art is considered to be her productive period. Innovating age old textile artistry to contemporary wearable designs is her forte. The image presents this beautifully articulated text of a flowing and ankle length chic designed kaftan. The kaftan is presented in black and styled with cream textured textile. The dolman sleeves of the kaftan draws its inspiration from the South Asiatic robes (anarkali or angarkha), but for a modern occasion. The piece under discussion is likely from her latest Heritage Collection 2025, where sophisticated signature hand embroidery is coupled with contemporary design in a modern luxurious piece.

### 5.1.3. Sania Maskatiya's Dresses from the Heritage Collection 2025 in the Context of Cultural Heritage Motifs

Heritage Collection 2025 by Sania Maskatiya is a notable poetry release, paying tribute to South Asian customs, and Engaging with timeless silhouettes while employing classic craft techniques such as resham embroidery, gota-patti and zardozi. Drawing from the textile history of Pakistan which is influenced by the Mughals, Persians, and locals. The collection features a combination of historical symbolism with modern day sophistication as seen in Figure 1. The floral, paisley, vine and bird motifs come from ancient Indo-Persian art and symbolize paradise gardens, fertility and spiritual harmony. The elements were borrowed from the Mughal miniature paintings, Kashmiri shawls and Punjabi phulkaris of 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. The nature inspired decorations signified royalty and abundance. In order to make the endangered crafts more accessible, Maskatiya employs digital printing as well as ombre shades, and light embellishments. As seen in the images provided, there is a seamless transition from everyday pret to bridal grandeur. The fusion is further exemplified by the dresses in the provided images. In Table 2, the cultural significance is documented while the key motifs in each dress is noted.

**Table 2: Analysis of Sania Maskatiya's Dresses from the Heritage Collection 2025**

Dress	Description in the Image	Key Motifs and Cultural Heritage Adoption
Dress 1 (Pastel kurta set with striped pants and ombre dupatta)	A light beige-pink kurta in silk-like fabric with subtle blue floral prints and beaded chain detailing at the neckline, paired with tapered izaar pants featuring diagonal stripes and chain motifs, and a flowing ombre dupatta transitioning from blue to pink with scattered gold bird accents.	Floral patterns and vines draw from Mughal garden ( <i>charbagh</i> ) aesthetics, symbolizing eternal life and harmony in Persian-Islamic art (e.g., Taj Mahal jaali screens). The bird motifs, resembling stylized swallows or peacocks, echo Sufi poetry and Punjabi folklore where birds represent the soul's freedom. Chain borders adapt from traditional Sindhi ajrak block-printing, signifying protection and continuity. The ombre technique modernizes ancient dip-dye methods from Rajasthan, evoking natural gradients like sunsets over the Indus Valley.
Dress 2 (Cream kaftan with ornate borders)	An ankle-length cream kaftan in flowing chiffon or crepe, adorned with intricate blue, orange, and green printed borders featuring geometric lattices, floral medallions, and leaf motifs, finished with lace-trimmed cuffs and hem.	Geometric frames and floral medallions are inspired by Mughal architecture (e.g., Red Fort arabesques), where such designs symbolized imperial order and divine beauty. Leaf and vine elements stem from Persian carpet motifs, representing interconnected life in Islamic paradise imagery. The palette—soft cream with jewel accents—mirrors 18th-century Kashmiri pashmina shawls, adapted here via digital printing to honor hand-block techniques without the intensity of full embroidery.
Dress 3 (Lilac kurta set with paisley motifs)	A lilac kurta with white embroidered paisley patterns and scalloped hems, matched with straight tulip pants in soft purple and a dramatic magenta-to-pink ombre dupatta edged with floral embroidery.	Paisley ( <i>boteh</i> ) motifs originate from ancient Persian designs, popularized in Mughal textiles and Kashmiri shawls as symbols of fertility and protection (resembling mangoes or cypress trees). The embroidered borders draw from gota-patti work in Rajasthani and Punjabi traditions, used in festive attire to denote joy. Ombre shading adapts tie-dye ( <i>bandhani</i> ) from Gujarat, blending it with Sufi-inspired fluidity to evoke emotional transitions in South Asian poetry.
Dress 4 (Ivory kaftan with blue embroidery)	A loose ivory silk kaftan with blue resham embroidery of scattered florals, vines, and geometric accents, creating a border-like effect on the bodice, sleeves, and hem for an ethereal, minimalist look.	Blue floral and vine embroidery reflects Iznik pottery influences from Ottoman-Persian exchanges, adopted in Mughal miniatures to symbolize renewal and spirituality. Geometric dots and lattices mimic jaali work from Lahore's historical mosques, providing a sense of screened mystery. This piece honors Balochi and Sindhi needlework traditions, where such motifs protected against evil, reinterpreted in Maskatiya's clean lines for modern modesty.
Dress 5 (Silver embellished gown)	A floor-length silver gown in shimmering net or organza, heavily embellished with pearl-encrusted florals, crystal borders, and intricate zardozi work, evoking bridal opulence with a fitted bodice and flared skirt.	Pearl jaals (nets) and resham florals draw from Mughal bridal attire, where pearls symbolized purity and florals represented paradise ( <i>jannat</i> ). Zardozi, a Persian technique introduced by Mughals, signifies royalty and is seen in historical garments from the Lahore court. The iridescent palette adapts mukesh (silver thread) work from Lucknow, transforming traditional gharara elements into a contemporary maxi for celebratory rituals.
Dress 6 (Sage green lehenga set)	A cropped choli and flared lehenga in sage green with multicolored floral embroidery, gold zardozi borders, and a vibrant pink sequined dupatta,	Multihued florals and vines are rooted in phulkari embroidery from Punjab, symbolizing agricultural abundance and marital bliss. Gold borders echo gota-kinari from Rajasthan, used in wedding attire for

set against an outdoor backdrop for a festive vibe.

prosperity. The lehenga silhouette revives Mughal anarkali influences, with the pink dupatta adapting chunri (auspicious red) traditions from Sindh, blending them for a narrative of cultural continuity and joy.

#### 5.1.4. Color Palettes, Techniques, and Broader Significance Figures 3: Heritage Collection 2025 by Sania Maskatiya



The collection draws upon the natural South Asian historical textiles. It draws upon the pastels (soft drapery collection) recalling the subtleness of the spring season. Mix of silvers and greens lavishness. The indigo of the Punjab (blue), saffron of Kashmir (orange) and other hues of dyes portray elements of water and earth. The collection draws upon the pastels (soft drapery collection) that recalling the subtleness of the spring season. The use of ombre, digital printing techniques and fusion of old block printing and hand embroidery continue to support the local artisans. The creamy ivory (purity), deep black (drama), and jewel (saffron orange, deep red, emerald green) tones creates a stark contrast to the pastel Mughal court collection where colors were symbolic. Black to signify mystery, cream and gold to signify divinity, festivity associated with vibrant hues and cream to signify divinity. The softer, pastel dresses maintain a contrast. The technique employed draws inspiration from the hand blocked textile printing and the digitally masking technique, a method of masking to preserve the endangered textiles of the Hyderabad Deccan (border of India and Pakistan) and the transformed fashion where the floral and bird motif ceramics captured regional styles. The dresses allow globalization to preserve enrichment of heritage layering styles with stories of the Mughal, regional crafts of Pakistan, and every day fashion. South Asian cultured influence suggests that heritage 2025 is a tribute to evolution.

#### 5.1.5. Élan by Khadijah Shah

Khadija Shah founded Élan in 2006. Shah has described some of Élan's collections as examples of "Romantic Regionalism," which includes the extravagant couture creations that honor the rich heritage of the Indus Valley. In an interview, she expanded on the inspiration for some of the creations, particularly the collection Indigène. She stated, "Our designs tell stories



of the loom to legacy,” which captures the essence of the Pakistani traditions, juxtaposing it to the ‘global elegance.’” She also draws attention to the brand’s campaigns, which place literature and music in the context of the collection, such as the stitched narratives in “Stories of the Indus,” which celebrates and romanticizes the history of the Indus Valley. My observation of the bridal exhibitions also affirmed the romanticism that the brand espouses, particularly in displays that integrated modern luxury with cultural elements in the context of fairy-tale gardens.

**5.1.6. Analysis of Khadijah Shah's Élan Dress in the Context of Cultural Heritage Motifs**

Khadija Shah’s designs embody the Mughal grandeur, the Persian aesthetic, and local embroidery crafts like zardozi and Mughal Schiffli, and transforms the zardozi motifs into elegant and aspirational, refined, and wearable narratives. The dress in the image is a fluid, ankle-length, luxurious cream chiffon or lawn fabric kaftan, hand-embroidered in florals of reds, blues, and greens, and finished with a border of crimson gota-patti. Ethos behind the design is indeed love of hand work and embroidery. This comes from Élan’s Lace Lawn 2025 collection which draws inspiration from the heritage motifs, and combines with contemporary Broderie Anglaise and digital embroidery to create embroidery designs, and is photographed against the backdrop of Pakistan’s historical forts, capturing the essence of embroidery and silhouette to drape traditions with contemporary modernity, effortless, and sophistication to the piece. This aims to reimagine the evening kaftan, and the effortless anarkali silhouette which is designed for the contemporary, poised, and confident woman of today.

**5.1.7. Key Motifs and Their Cultural Heritage Roots**

The dresses include ornate florals, vines, and geometric borders, often done in resham (silk thread) or simulating hand-blocked patterns through digital prints. Inspired by 16th and 19th century Mughal miniatures, Persian carpets, and Punjabi phulkari, where floral patterns evoking nature symbolized harmony and fertility, Divine infused with modernity. Patterns with bold stripes and contemporary finishes were designed by Shah. Below is a breakdown of the primary motifs in each dress:

**Table 3: Analysis of Khadijah Shah's Élan Dress in the Context of Cultural Heritage Motifs**

Dress	Description in the Image	Key Motifs and Cultural Heritage Adoption and Symbolism
Dress 1 (Cream kaftan with red borders)	A flowing cream kaftan in lightweight lawn or chiffon, adorned with multicolored floral embroidery on the bodice and hem, contrasted by deep red borders with scalloped edges and paired with modern heels.	Floral blooms and vines are drawn from Mughal garden motifs ( <i>charbagh</i> ), symbolizing eternal paradise in Islamic-Persian art (e.g., Shalimar Bagh). Red borders adapt gota-patti from Rajasthani traditions, denoting celebration and protection. Shah modernizes them with laser-cut precision, blending heritage abundance with effortless chic.
Dress 2 (Yellow kurta set with pom-poms)	A pale yellow kurta and pants set with intricate floral embroidery in pastels, fringed dupatta, and colorful pom-pom accents on hems, set indoors for a dramatic pose.	Pastel florals and leaves echo Persian illuminated manuscripts and Sindhi ajrak prints, representing renewal and harmony. Pom-poms and fringes draw from folk traditions in Punjab and Balochistan, symbolizing joy in festive attire. Techniques like Broderie Anglaise honor English-influenced colonial crafts adapted in South Asia.
Dress 3 (Beige kurta set outdoors)	A beige kurta with pink floral motifs, beaded borders, and pom-pom tasseled pants, complemented by a printed dupatta, posed against historic architecture.	Pink lotus-like florals stem from Mughal miniatures, signifying purity and prosperity. Beaded chains and tassels adapt zardozi from imperial courts, used for royalty. The fort backdrop reinforces heritage ties, with Schiffli embroidery mimicking hand-stitched regional patterns for modern wear.
Dress 4 (Black and white set)	A monochrome kurta in white with black floral lace embroidery, fringed dupatta, and wide pants, evoking elegance in a historic interior.	Black vine and floral lace draw from Ottoman-Iznic influences in Mughal textiles, symbolizing mystery and depth. Fringes and pearl details adapt mukesh work from Lucknow, representing spiritual introspection in Sufi traditions, reimagined with laser-cut for contemporary fluidity.
Dress 5 (Blue kurta)	A vibrant blue kurta featuring large white floral motifs, multicolored	Bold white florals on blue recall Persian blue-tile ceramics and ajrak indigo dyes, symbolizing infinity

Dress	Description in the Image	Key Motifs and Cultural Heritage Adoption and Symbolism
colorful fringes)	borders, and tasseled fringes on sleeves and hem, with a draped dupatta in an outdoor setting.	and protection. Colorful fringes blend Rajasthani folk elements with Mughal grandeur, using bold motifs to punctuate serenity as in Lawn 2025's "Indigène" theme.
Dress 6 (Pink lehenga bridal)	A fuschia pink lehenga choli with heavy silver embroidery of paisleys and florals, sheer sleeves, and a fringed dupatta, set in a palatial backdrop.	Paisley (boteh) and floral medallions originate from Persian designs in Kashmiri shawls, adopted by Mughals for fertility symbols. Zardozi and sequin work honor Lucknow's bridal heritage, with the vibrant palette evoking celebratory rituals in South Asian weddings.

### 5.1.8. Color Palette and Technique: Heritage in Harmony

The palettes creams and pastels for subtlety, bold blues and pinks for vibrancy mirror natural dyes from historical textiles, like indigo from Punjab or madder red from Persia, symbolizing elements of nature and emotion. Techniques such as Schiffli and Broderie Anglaise revive colonial-adapted embroideries, while laser-cuts modernize traditional block-printing, ensuring sustainability and precision shown in figures 3.

Figures 3: Élan Luxury Lawn Collection 2025 by Élan



### 5.1.9. Broader Cultural Significance

Élan's designs, act as a renaissance of Pakistani artistry, countering fast fashion by embedding stories from forts, souks, and imperial courts into everyday luxury. They empower artisans and celebrate the Élan woman's poised identity, bridging heritage with global appeal. For visual reference, here's a historical example of Mughal floral motifs:

**Figure 4: Mughal Floral Motifs in Textiles**



#### **5.1.10. Jugnu Lahore and Hussain Rehar**

The identity of Jugnu Lahor and Hussain Rehar revolves around grand and empowering stories that pioneer different approaches to modernizing traditions. The designer says that "the vision is to empower Pakistani women with boldness that reflects our cultural motifs but with innovative cuts." An analysis of his collections posted on his website ([hussainrehar.com](http://hussainrehar.com)) showed the designer using festive wedding colors and patterns. One collection featured Ajrak-inspired prints paired with Western silhouettes. This is the case of romantic regionalism. There is bridal couture that strikes a balance between contemporary and traditional. The "desi palette" tweak was particularly interesting. I noticed this during the observed events. Cultural symbols on high fashion constructs defiant pride. I feel this with symbols like Phulkari, which was remade for modern high fashion.

#### **5.1.11. Analysis of Hussain Rehar's Jugnu Lahore in the Context of Cultural Heritage Motifs**

Hussain Rehar, pioneering Pakistani designer and 2017 graduate from Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, has transformed luxury fashion with his own label and recently launched ready-to-wear Jugnu Lahore in October 2023. Jugnu was inspired by Lahore's lively street markets and historical Walled City, successfully blending bold modern shapes with the rich narratives of South Asian heritage. Rehar's work draws inspiration from Pakistan's Mughal and Persian cultures, along with various regional folk traditions. The magnificent Shalimar Bagh gardens and the Sufi poetic forms are particularly relevant as he transforms these traditions into living art via shifli embroidery, digital prints, and mukesh work. His work, as seen in the 2025 collection, celebrates the modern drama of neglected crafts such as phulkari and ajrak, turning cultural motifs into modern symbols of personal freedom and modernity. This aids in the preservation of Lahore's textile heritage and celebrates its rich legacy through the world as seen with his debut collection Jeevan at Paris Fashion Week. In the figures 5: flowing kurtas, capes, and bridal ensembles adorned with paisleys, and floral lattices inspired by 16th-19th century Indo-Persian art and Punjabi phulkari, woven traditions of abundance, protection, and spiritual harmony.

#### **5.1.12. Key Motifs and Their Cultural Heritage Roots**

Rehar's incorporated stitching techniques threads are reminiscences to metallic embroidery, zardozi, and embroidered reminiscences to gold lace and gota-patti, carefully tribute to endangered crafts, adaptability to contemporary drama in scale. These reminiscences to Lahore Fort and Parsons stitched themes of jannat and jannat. Below, I break down the motifs in each dress:

**Table 4: Analysis of Hussain Rehar's Jugnu Lahore in the Context of Cultural Heritage Motifs**

Dress	Description in the Image	Key Motifs and Cultural Heritage Adoption and Symbolism
Dress 1 (Maroon kurta dupatta, paired with wide pants set with lattice featuring diamond lattice embroidery, set against stone steps)	A deep maroon silk kurta with 1 gold zardozi neckline and floral patterns on pants draw from Mughal architecture (e.g., Lahore Fort screens), symbolizing screened mystery and divine light in Islamic-Persian traditions. Gold florals at the neck adapt phulkari from Punjab, denoting fertility; Rehar's zardozi honors royal bridal wear, modernized with fluid chiffon for urban ease.	Lattice (jaali) patterns on pants draw from Mughal architecture (e.g., Lahore Fort screens), symbolizing screened mystery and divine light in Islamic-Persian traditions. Gold florals at the neck adapt phulkari from Punjab, denoting fertility; Rehar's zardozi honors royal bridal wear, modernized with fluid chiffon for urban ease.
Dress 2 (Black kurta with red paisley)	A black velvet kurta with intricate red resham paisley embroidery on sleeves and hems, matched with straight black pants, against a green backdrop.	Paisley (boteh) motifs, teardrop-shaped in crimson, originate from Persian cypress trees in Kashmiri shawls, adopted by Mughals for immortality and protection symbols. In Punjabi folklore, they signify abundance; Rehar's bold contrast revives ajrak block-prints from Sindh-Punjab borders, using resham for a Sufi-inspired narrative of resilience.
Dress 3 (Cream cape embroidered floral vines and over maroon tassels, layered over cream pants)	An ivory cape with maroon floral vines and tassels, layered over cream pants, in a tented setting.	Vine tendrils weaving through florals stem from Persian garden carpets and jaali vines in Shalimar Bagh, representing interconnected life and harmony in Sufi poetry. Tassels adapt gota-kinari from Rajasthani-Punjabi folk attire for joy; Rehar layers them in lightweight organza, blending Mughal opulence with nomadic Punjab heritage.
Dress 4 (Red bridal lehenga)	A voluminous red lehenga with heavy silver zardozi paisleys, florals, and mirrors, dramatic headdress, on a green stool.	Paisley and mirror (shisha) work echo Mughal bridal textiles from Lahore courts, where mirrors warded off evil, rooted in Persian talismanic art. Florals symbolize paradise; Rehar's exaggerated volume revives gharara silhouettes from 19th-century Punjab weddings, using dabka (beading) to empower modern rituals with ancestral glamour.
Dress 5 (Maroon kurta embroidered with star and floral motifs, paired with white pants in geometric grid patterns, against bamboo)	A maroon kaftan kurta with star and floral motifs, paired with white pants in geometric grid patterns, against bamboo.	Geometric grids and stars draw from Mughal tilework in Wazir Khan Mosque, Lahore, and symbolizing cosmic order in Persian-Islamic geometry. Florals adapt Multani suzani embroidery from southern Punjab for prosperity; Rehar's bamboo backdrop nods to rural crafts, digitizing motifs for sustainable, bohemian luxury.
Dress 6 (Red anarkali gown)	A floor-length red anarkali with multi-layered zardozi borders of vines, paisleys, and gems, flared silhouette.	Vine and paisley borders originate from Persian illuminated manuscripts, integrated into Mughal anarkali robes for imperial grace. Gem inlays honor Lucknow chikankari influences in Punjab; Rehar's tiered layers modernize historical court attire, embedding Sufi themes of eternal bloom into celebratory wear.

**5.2. Color Palette and Technique: Heritage Reimagined**

Reds such as maroon and crimson bring to mind the textiles of Madder from ancient Punjab. In Mughal-era textiles, reds accompanied by ivories, pointed to passion and marital bliss. Blacks adorned the textiles to represent depth, creating a stark contrast to the ivories that remind one of purity and evoke memories of the monsoon season in Lahore. Techniques like zardozi and shiffli revive labor-intensive crafts from haveli ateliers, while mirrors and tassels add folk whimsy, ensuring ethical production amid fast fashion shown in figures 5.

**Figures 5: Hussain Rehar's Jugnu Lahore Collection 2025**



### 5.3. Broader Cultural Significance

Jugnu Lahore changes Pakistan's heritage from Mughal elegance to Punjabi steadfastness into bold declarations of identity and combats cultural dilution. Rehar's pieces draw from Lahore's 'urban memory' and offer the opportunity for historical empowerment by shifting from the vibrancy of the bazaar to the global diasporic runway. Cross-case synthesis has revealed the constancy of design narrators of culture. According to Holt (2004), myths that are cultural in nature provide a brand with distinctiveness in an expansive marketplace.

### 5.4. Thematic Analysis of Designer Interviews

**Table 5: Thematic Analysis**

Theme	Sub-Theme	Key Evidence from Interviews	Interpretation / Theoretical Link (Holt 2004)
1. Artisanal Preservation	Craft Heritage	All three designers emphasize direct collaboration with local artisans (e.g., Sindhi, Balochi, Kashmiri, and Punjabi crafts). Rehar: "We collaborate closely with local artisans... Sindhi embroidery, Ajrak prints." Maskatiya: "We work with master artisans, especially women, across Pakistan." Shah: "We work directly with artisans across Pakistan to incorporate regional embroidery styles."	This reflects Holt's concept of myth-making through cultural icons designers serve as cultural intermediaries who preserve and elevate local crafts into symbolic capital.
	Cultural Authenticity	Rehar stresses "authenticity" and "genuine sources." Maskatiya says, "We draw heavily from the rich textile traditions... reinvent these in unique patterns." Shah focuses on "preserving traditional crafts by embedding them into collections."	Authenticity sustains identity value, positioning these brands as guardians of heritage rather than mere trend followers.
2. Modernized Tradition	Fusion Aesthetics	Rehar: "Bridge the past and present by reimagining classic elements in a stylish, wearable form." Maskatiya: "We reinvent crafts in contemporary silhouettes." Shah:	This fusion expresses modern myth construction updating cultural forms for present

Theme	Sub-Theme	Key Evidence from Interviews	Interpretation / Theoretical Link (Holt 2004)
3. Romantic Regionalism		"Adapted in contemporary silhouettes, illustrating harmony between tradition and modernity."	consumption while keeping symbolic depth.
	Contemporary Relevance	All three highlight modern branding tools digital media, influencer collaborations, sleek visuals while maintaining heritage narratives.	Cultural branding here works through reinvention, making tradition desirable to a global, fashion-forward audience.
	Nostalgic Storytelling	Shah's "Khayal" collection draws on folklore; Rehar's "truck-art collection" celebrates folk visuals; Maskatiya uses "folklore and local festivals" for inspiration.	Nostalgia constructs national identity myths evoking pride and emotional resonance through regional memory.
4. Brand Narrative Construction	Regional Motifs	Each designer lists specific regional art forms: Ajrak, truck art, Phulkari, Chikankari, mirror work, Balochi patterns.	These motifs act as symbolic anchors, grounding global luxury in local authenticity.
	Storytelling Tone	Consistent emphasis on words like <i>heritage</i> , <i>legacy</i> , <i>authenticity</i> , <i>storytelling</i> , <i>emotional connection</i> .	Aligns with Holt's view that brands become cultural narratives expressing collective meaning, not just product function.
5. Market Positioning via Culture	Visual Identity	Visual storytelling through "lookbooks, campaign videos, behind-the-scenes artisan features." Rehar mentions "narrative-rich videos."	The visual dimension materializes the brand myth showing process, people, and place.
	Cultural Luxury	Shah: "Élan stands out internationally by offering something unique and rooted in tradition." Maskatiya and Rehar also discuss differentiation through heritage.	Cultural heritage becomes a luxury signifier authentic tradition as exclusivity and distinction.
	Social Media Narratives	All describe social media as storytelling space (artisan profiles, behind-the-scenes reels, influencer collaborations).	Demonstrates digital myth circulation, where identity value spreads virally among followers.
6. Symbolic Anchors (Holt)	Iconic Myth-Making	Rehar constructs a myth of <i>modern Pakistani pride</i> ; Maskatiya frames fashion as <i>women-empowering craft revival</i> ; Shah builds <i>elegant cultural modernity</i> .	These myths exemplify Holt's "iconic brands" fashion houses as cultural storytellers articulating national aspirations.
	Identity Value	All designers stress emotional connection and pride: "People buy into a story, a heritage." "Consumers develop emotional attachment."	Brands act as identity markers for audiences buying cultural belonging rather than mere apparel.

Analysis of interviews with Hussain Rehar, Sania Maskatiya, and Khadijah Shah shows how each, with varying degrees of emphasis, integrates themes from Pakistani heritage about fashion branding. Each of these themes can be analyzed and aligned with Holt (2004) cultural branding model within the scope of myth-making. Holt's myth-making through cultural icons and her assertion of authenticity to promote identity as a means to defend heritage, places the designers as guardians of culturally, regionally, and symbolically transcendent value. This is articulated in the first theme, where the designers, in a sense, 'protect' value through their collaboration with artisans from Sindhi, Balochi, Kashmiri, and Punjabi regions, and employing textile methods of embroidery and Ajraks in their craft. With a 'transitory' stance, her brands, and Holt mystique branding, constantly 'proclaim' the 'protective' stance. The second theme, modernized tradition, transcends collision of historical and contemporary by Rehar's reimagining of the classics, Maskatiya's innovative and Shah's harmonious contrasting, facilitated through digital media and influencers. This invokes Holt's modern myth about the tradition and the need to retain symbolic depth.

The third theme of Romantic Regionalism involves nostalgic storytelling with folklore, truck art, local festivals, and particular motifs like Phulkari and mirror work. These functions as symbolic anchors of national pride and sentimental values, parallel to Holt's definition of myths

and collective memory. The fourth theme, brand narrative building, uses powerful words like “heritage” and “legacy” and visual narratives through lookbooks and videos of artisans. This is in line with Holt’s projection of brands as cultural narratives. For the fifth theme, Market Positioning through Culture, focuses on using heritage for luxury segmentation, and social media storytelling through artisan clips and reels. This is the circulation of digital myths as defined by Holt, which enhances exclusivity and value as a badge of honor. For the sixth theme, Symbolic Anchors, the illustration of iconic myth creation, through Rehar advocating modern pride, Maskatiya crafting revival focused on women empowerment, and Shah pushing modernity with elegance are powerful identity markers. These markers give consumers cultural and emotional belonging, thus purchasing attachment. This is in line with Holt’s definition of iconic brands, stating they voice the dominant societal aspirations.

**Table 6: Cross-Case Synthesis**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Élan (Khadijah Shah)</b>	<b>Sania Maskatiya</b>	<b>Hussain Rehar</b>	<b>Comparative Insight</b>
Core Narrative	<i>Luxury reinterpretation of tradition</i>	<i>Elegant preservation of craft through feminine modernity</i>	<i>Bold cultural storytelling with experimental aesthetics</i>	All reframe culture as aspirational identity.
Cultural Focus	Regional embroidery & folklore	Artisanal techniques & women artisans	Folk art, truck art, regional storytelling	Diversity of regional representation strengthens cultural myth.
Storytelling Mediums	Campaign videos, lookbooks, digital media	Artisan features, short films, lookbooks	Behind-the-scenes videos, artisan interviews	Shared emphasis on <i>authentic process visibility</i> .
Market Narrative	Heritage as global luxury	Culture as contemporary elegance	Folk energy as modern rebellion	Each offers a variant of cultural modernism appealing to local pride and global curiosity.

Table 6 features a cross-case analysis comparison of the designers Khadijah Shah (Élan), Sania Maskatiya, Hussain Rehar branding strategies on integrating Pakistani culture into contemporary fashions. Route each designer a distinct main story; Shah reinterprets tradition through luxury, Maskatiya is all about the elegant preservations of craft, the feminine modernity and the modernity of Rehar is bold through telling and experimental the thick culture. Together, these tell re-imagined culture a heritage aspirational, Identity telling and fashion identity. Shah works with folklore and embroidery, Maskatiya with craft and women, and Rehar with folk and truck art, weaving a regional story. Each brand is rooted as diverse regional representation strengthen the cultural story myth, framed, and soft on complex Pakistani header heritage. The mediums regional story tell strengthens the frame and authenticity of craft as cultural tell. Shah uses campaigns, look books and digital culture, Maskatiya shorts, look books, and features on the craft, and Rehar behinds the scenes and interviews with the craft. Once more, the market narratives differ yet converge on cultural modernism: Between Shah, Maskatiya, and Rehar, their fusion of heritage and luxury, framing culture as contemporary elegance, and embodying folk energy as modern rebellion, respectively, cater to local pride and global curiosity. While distinct in their offerings, each brand crafts a cohesive statement reflecting the multiplicity of Pakistan's cultural modernity.

### **5.5. Marketing Narratives Created through Cultural Elements**

The Marketing narrative originated as vehicles for storytelling and heritage, with consumer touchpoints emerging in digital platforms and experiences. Passion-led innovation drives Sania Maskatiya’s narratives. As she said for the interview, “Our stories are about blending heritage with personal expression.” Instagram initiatives focusing on user-generated content are based on heritage prints and Pakistani folklore, weaving loyalty with accessible narratives. Content analysis showed the use of narrative techniques in lookbook construction and sequence presentations by treating collections as journeys and moving storytelling from folklore to contemporary, securing attention from the Indian market. Élan follows a storytelling style and practices immersion. As Shah said, “We weave cultural grandeur into every campaign.” Ethos of the collection and social media narratives around the Indigène collection’s “from loom to legacy” concept used moving imagery and layered captions to build emotional sentiments toward Indus

heritage. Though she faced criticism for the timing of the 2020 campaign, Hussain directly focuses on narrative and inclusivity, evident for the 2020 festive intersection of music and fashion. With slogans, fantasy and curated Instagram collections built around narrative, Hussain Rehar's is a more on the pages of the brand's narratives bold as a fantasy. I observed collaborative musing and other interactive strategies at the collections that heightened narrative coherence and promoted virality. Some methods that seem to work well include digital storytelling and experiential events; this is consistent with Fisher (1984) paradigm in which narrative fidelity drives consumer loyalty.

### **5.6. Impact of These Strategies on Market Presence**

The strategies greatly enhance community pride and help to expand internationally. Sania Maskatiya built a strong presence both in and outside of Pakistan and according to consumer interviews and media, cultural narratives significantly drove sales in India and other countries. The influence on the market includes collaborations that enhance visibility and reputation as a luxury brand. Élan has transformed its narratives to improve its visibility and reputation in the bridal industry, particularly with the Wedding Festive 2024 collection, catering to audiences in the UK and USA. Although cultural storytelling has closed the gap on growth since seeking investors in 2022, royal endorsements, including the recently worn pieces by Kate Middleton, show watching has its benefits. Bold brand Hussain Rehar has claimed a strong position in modern Pakistani fashion and merging competitiveness with cultural fusion has boosted value and market position. Increased engagement and interview insights particularly show the younger audience that modern strategies as a source of empowerment. Reluctance to challenge cultural sensitivities remain, but unique positioning is clear from the findings, affirming the appetite for narratives that modernize heritage. Clearly cultural branding is within reach.

## **6. Discussion**

This study illustrated the importance of narrative elements of culture in the brand identity construction of Sania Maskatiya, Élan, and Hussain Rehar within (Holt, 2004) cultural branding paradigm. While Holt emphasizes that brands construct myths, articulate collective identities, and narrate cultural stories, the brands discussed here are contemporary manifestations of that articulation. The use of heritage elements, such as Ajrak, Phulkari, and truck art, along with romantic regionalism, serves to construct aspirational myths that the brand consumers associate with emotional and nostalgic authenticity. Regional emotional and cultural authenticity that consumers associate with the romanticized regionalism of trained artisans is, as the interview excerpts show, largely appreciated as symbolic value and cultural capital. The myth of emotional and cultural authenticity, shaped through today's weakening and endangered concrete regional techniques, is rediscovered in the fusion of folk and modern aesthetics that are articulated through graceful silhouettes, narrating an exquisite story of evolution.

In cross-case synthesis, a more refined understanding of variations and differences in narratives is constructed. Consider Élan, whose luxurious reinterpretation of tradition is aimed at and targeted toward the global elite. Immersive marketing campaigns are celebrated at and through a high-end and transcendent experience. Modernity through feminine elegance and craft preservation is embraced and celebrated at Maskatiya. In contrast, Rehar's bold experimentation rather than contemporary striving perpetuates the energy of folk traditions with youthful rebellion. All creators uphold a sense of modernism toward the culture in the present. Heritage was a point of differentiation devoid of Eurocentric hegemony within the fashion sector (Jansen, 2008). The experience of their marketing practices, notably digital narratives and storytelling, is rooted in Fisher (1984) narrative coherence theory. The integrated and experiential marketing model reflects global outreach through endorsements and targeted client growth. Cultural sensitivity to avoid commodification critiques is a real practice challenge (Chattopadhyay, 1984). The strategies in practice give emerging market branding literature a new perspective (Patel, 2024) and a new theoretical approach to Holt's regionalism model for non-Western brands. They are an excellent focal point for myth making and economic impact in luxury fashion. In addition to the contributions the study made, there are shortcomings, for instance, only three designers were interviewed for the research which makes it more difficult to generalize findings to the entire Pakistani fashion industry. While deep qualitative research is valuable, this study could have also incorporated a more quantitative aspect, such as consumer surveys, to determine the effect narratives have on sales. Future projects could also focus on comparative studies on Indian or Middle Eastern brands, or examine the narratives that are told after the digital age to assess the integration of sustainability.



## 7. Conclusion

This study highlights the role of storytelling within a culture as a powerful and, positive, transformative force in Pakistani fashion branding. Designers such as Sania Maskatiya, Khadijah Shah of Élan, and Hussain Rehar integrate heritage motifs and construct modern-day narratives that reinforce loyalty and visibility on global platforms. These houses, by fusing artistry and preserving the crafts of the region in the romantic regionalism, have helped bridged the gap driven by research on heritage, and more importantly, proved (Holt, 2004) proposition on brands as cultural myths. The potential impacts move beyond the fashion industry. Pakistani's position as a developing country will allow for cultural diplomacy towards the developing world. As narratives strengthen the voice of the non-Western world with the world's attention, the design antiquity of a culture is preserved and celebrated. The culture will become a rich, dynamic element in contemporary design. Future research will be invaluable in addressing such narratives' use, and potential for sustainability and adaptability in a digital world.

### 7.1. Recommendations

- Enhance Artisan Collaboration: Establish training programs with local artisans to preserve techniques like Phulkari and Ajrak, ensuring skill transmission and reinforcing heritage narratives.
- Expand Digital Storytelling: Utilize AR experiences and short-form videos on platforms like TikTok to engage diverse audiences with immersive narratives.
- Ensure Cultural Sensitivity: Consult regional communities and cultural historians to avoid appropriation, maintaining authenticity in narrative development.
- Pursue Global Alliances: Partner with international retailers or festivals and align with regional influencers to boost global visibility.
- Adopt Sustainable Practices: Integrate eco-friendly materials and highlight them in storytelling to align with ethical consumer trends, enhancing brand loyalty.

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