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Designing an Iranian Abaya Inspired by the Geometric Patterns and Color Palette of the Architecture of Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, Shiraz

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Abstract

This applied study employed a mixed-methods (qualitative–quantitative) approach to design five Iranian abaya prototypes inspired by the architectural elements of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, with particular emphasis on its color palette, light, geometric patterns, and tilework. In the qualitative phase, the preliminary abaya designs were developed based on formal and abstract interpretations of the mosque's architectural features while emphasizing spirituality, dignity, and compatibility with Iranian–Islamic culture. In the quantitative phase, a researcher-developed questionnaire was administered to a sample of 20 experts in fashion design, architecture, and fashion studies. The proposed designs were evaluated according to five main criteria: aesthetics; identity and cultural concepts; creativity and innovation; functionality and compatibility with Iranian clothing; and harmony of colors and patterns with the source of inspiration. Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the experts assigned the highest scores to identity and cultural concepts (Mean = 4.72) and aesthetic quality (Mean = 4.55), highlighting the importance of reflecting Iranian–Islamic identity and visual appeal in the proposed designs**.** Creativity and innovation (Mean = 4.08) and the harmony between colors, patterns, and the inspirational source (Mean = 4.32) also received high evaluations. The lowest mean score was related to functionality and compatibility with Iranian clothing (Mean = 3.99), suggesting that cultural and artistic considerations were prioritized over practical and commercial aspects in the experts' evaluations. Overall, the designs that successfully achieved a balance between cultural authenticity and artistic attractiveness received the highest evaluations. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between traditional architecture and contemporary fashion design and provide a framework for creating innovative fashion products while preserving cultural heritage.

Keywords: Abaya, Fashion design, Nasir al-mulk mosque, Islamic architecture.

1 | Introduction

Architecture and fashion design are two artistic disciplines that may appear independent at first glance; however, they share a profound connection rooted in aesthetics, cultural identity, and creativity. Just as architecture embodies the spirit and cultural values of a nation's historical periods, fashion design reflects the spiritual, cultural, and aesthetic needs of society. Throughout history, humans have developed architecture to create shelter and clothing to meet the need for protection. Beyond these primary functions, however, both

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have evolved into powerful forms of artistic and cultural expression. Consequently, exploring the relationship between these two disciplines provides a rich foundation for conceptual development and the creation of innovative works in contemporary design [1]. 1. Introduction Among the remarkable examples of Iranian–Islamic architecture, the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz, constructed during the Qajar period in the Qavam neighborhood, stands out for its exceptional use of light, color, and geometric ornamentation. Owing to its extensive use of stained-glass windows, the mosque is also widely known as the "Pink Mosque." It is regarded as one of the most visually striking masterpieces of Iranian architecture. As the morning sunlight passes through its colorful stained-glass windows, a vibrant spectrum of colors is projected onto the carpets, walls, and ceiling, creating a dreamlike and poetic atmosphere within the interior. The harmonious integration of geometric patterns, intricate tilework, carved stone columns, and radiant muqarnas (stalactite vaulting) has established the mosque as one of the most outstanding architectural masterpieces of the Qajar era [2]. The visual and conceptual characteristics of this monument, including its harmonious combination of warm colors such as pink and yellow, the use of well-ordered geometric patterns, and the organization of space through the interplay of natural light, have inspired contemporary designers across various artistic disciplines, including fashion design, photography, and visual arts. In fashion design, the first and most fundamental stage is the development of a unique concept inspired by cultural, historical, or natural contexts. Drawing inspiration from authentic Iranian architecture provides designers with an opportunity to create works that preserve cultural authenticity while expressing a contemporary aesthetic [3]. Accordingly, the present study aims to design an Iranian abaya inspired by the geometric patterns and color palette of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz. To achieve this objective, the architectural and aesthetic characteristics of the mosque were examined and analyzed, and five conceptual abaya designs were developed based on these inspirational elements. The proposed designs were subsequently evaluated through expert judgment involving specialists in fashion design, architecture, and Islamic art. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this study seeks to establish a framework for integrating traditional Iranian architecture with contemporary fashion design. Furthermore, it offers practical insights for fashion designers interested in reinterpreting culturally authentic garments within a modern design context, thereby contributing to the preservation and revitalization of Iranian cultural heritage.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, numerous studies have explored the relationship between Islamic architecture and fashion design in Iran. These studies have primarily focused on how the visual, ornamental, and symbolic elements of historic mosques can serve as sources of inspiration for creating garments that embody cultural identity and authenticity. Yazdanjou and Dehghan (2025), in their study titled "An Investigation of the Forms, Colors, Patterns, and Architecture of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque and Their Application in Daywear and Eveningwear Design," analyzed the architectural structure and decorative elements of the mosque, proposing design concepts inspired by its distinctive features. Their findings indicate that the mosque's harmonious color compositions, geometric patterns, and the dynamic interplay of light and shadow provide a valuable source of inspiration for creating garments with both strong visual appeal and authentic cultural significance [3]. Similarly, Nouri (2025), in a study entitled "Application of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz as a Source of Inspiration for Evening Wear Design," employed a descriptive–analytical approach to investigate the role of the mosque's ornamental motifs and decorative elements in evening wear design. The findings demonstrated that incorporating authentic decorative features of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque can effectively strengthen Iranian Islamic identity in fashion design [2].Barandeh and Mousavi (2025), in their article entitled "Investigating the Role of the Patterns and Colors of the Tilework of the Jameh Mosque of Yazd in Manteau Design," examined the visual and decorative characteristics of this historic mosque. Their study demonstrated that the creative ornamental motifs and distinctive color palette of the mosque's tilework can be effectively translated into contemporary women's fashion design, particularly in the design of the manteau, while preserving its cultural and artistic identity [4]. Farhadi and Ashab-e-Sahaf (2024), in their article entitled "An Investigation of the Tilework of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque and Its Influence on the Design of Clothing

Ornaments of Pashak," focused on the distinctive characteristics of the mosque's tilework in comparison with other Safavid architectural monuments. They incorporated the motifs derived from this architectural masterpiece into the collar design of the local garment known as **"**Pashak**."** The findings of their study indicate that applying traditional architectural motifs in local clothing design can contribute to the reinterpretation of cultural values while simultaneously introducing visual innovation [5]. Akbari and Zal (2023), in their study entitled "An Investigation of the Architecture and Motifs of Soltani Mosque in Kashan and Their Application in Clothing Design," analyzed the architectural ornaments and tilework of the mosque through a descriptive-applied approach and presented examples of Islamic clothing designs based on the motifs of this mosque. The findings indicate that decorative elements influenced by Western arts, along with indigenous motifs such as Gol-o-Morgh (flower-and-bird motifs) and avian patterns, possess significant potential for reproduction in contemporary fashion design [6].Masoudi (2023), in the article entitled **"**Women's Clothing Design Inspired by the Historical Dowlatabad Garden in Yazd with an Aesthetic Approach," aimed to revive Iranian-Islamic art and promote national cultural and artistic values by examining and applying the architectural elements of the historical Dowlatabad Garden in Yazd to women's clothing design. This descriptive-analytical study was conducted using a library-based research method and demonstrated that the aesthetic principles and unique structural features of Iranian architecture, particularly in a prominent monument such as Dowlatabad Garden, can serve as an effective source of inspiration for creating innovative designs in the field of clothing design with an Iranian-Islamic identity [7].Rahimi et al. (2023), in the article entitled **"**A Study and Investigation of the Relationship between Fashion Design and Architecture: The Case Study of the Historical Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz,**"** analyzed the ornamental features of this magnificent monument using library-based and field research methods. They examined the relationship between fashion and architecture through the reinterpretation of cultural identity and artistic tourism. Their findings indicate that Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, with its colorful Orosi windows, authentic motifs, and exquisite tilework, continues to be regarded as one of the prominent sources of inspiration in Iranian fashion and clothing design [1]. Rahmani (2022), in the article entitled **"**Investigating the Muqarnas Motifs of Goharshad Mosque in Women's Clothing Design," studied the relationship between Islamic architectural ornaments and the design of women's social outerwear (manteau). The findings demonstrate that incorporating traditional and indigenous elements into clothing design can contribute to the expansion of culturally appropriate and national patterns within the contemporary Iranian fashion landscape [8].Nouhe Khvan (2021), in the article entitled "An Analytical Study of Conceptual and Modern Clothing Design Inspired by Parametric Architecture," examined the relationship between the characteristics of parametric architecture and modern clothing design. This descriptive-analytical study was conducted to achieve new clothing patterns based on the geometric motifs of contemporary architectural structures. The results indicated that extracting architectural geometric parameters and recreating them through digital tools provides a creative platform for producing modern garments and fashion accessories aligned with contemporary global trends [9].Overall, a review of these studies indicates that the interaction between Iranian-Islamic architecture and clothing design, from the perspectives of aesthetics, color, and cultural identity, has gained a significant position in art and design research. However, most existing studies have focused on general clothing designs, such as manteau or evening wear, and fewer studies have addressed the design of the abaya as an authentic and symbolic garment in Iranian-Islamic culture through an analytical approach based on expert evaluation. In this regard, the present study seeks to take a new step in connecting Islamic architecture and Iranian clothing design by drawing upon the visual and conceptual inspirations of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz.

3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach (qualitative–quantitative) with an applied research orientation. In the first section (qualitative phase), five preliminary Iranian *abaya* designs were developed by utilizing the architectural elements of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz, including color, light, geometric patterns, and tilework decorations. In the second section (quantitative phase), the study followed a descriptive-evaluative approach and examined the perspectives of experts in the fields of clothing design,

Islamic architecture, and the aesthetics of Iranian art. The purpose of this section was to evaluate experts' perceptions of the proposed designs in terms of aesthetic quality, cultural appropriateness, creativity, and applicability within the contemporary context. The statistical population of the study consisted of specialists in clothing and textile design, professors of Islamic architecture and arts, and experts in the field of Iranian-Islamic fashion. From this population, 20 qualified experts were selected through purposive (purposive-accessible) sampling. The selection criteria included having relevant academic education, teaching experience, or professional activity in design, and familiarity with the concepts of traditional Iranian architecture. The main data collection instrument was a researcher-developed questionnaire designed to measure experts' subjective evaluations of the five proposed *abaya* designs. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

Main Variable	Sub-Indicators
Design Aesthetics	Visual appeal, balance, harmony, and aesthetic quality of the proposed designs
Cultural Identity and Concepts	Representation of Iranian-Islamic identity, cultural meanings, and symbolic elements
Creativity and Innovation	Novelty of ideas, originality of design, and creative transformation of architectural elements
Applicability and Compatibility with Iranian Clothing	Suitability for contemporary Iranian clothing, functionality, and conformity with cultural requirements
Color and Motif Harmony with the Source of Inspiration (Nasir al-Mulk Mosque)	Compatibility of colors, patterns, and decorative elements with the architectural features of Nasir al-Mulk Mosque

1. **Respondents' demographic information**, including gender, field of study, educational background, and professional experience in the fields of design and art.
2. **Design evaluation items**, which were developed based on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from very low to very high). The main variables and sub-indicators of the questionnaire were determined based on the objectives of the study and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Main Variables and Sub-Indicators of the Questionnaire

To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha method was applied based on the analysis of data obtained from five experts. The calculated alpha coefficient was 0.86, indicating an acceptable and desirable level of reliability for the research instrument. The content validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed through the evaluation of three university professors specializing in clothing design and Islamic architecture. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to determine the overall perspectives of experts regarding each design. Subsequently, through mean ranking, the designs that achieved the highest scores in terms of aesthetic criteria, cultural identity, and creativity were selected as the superior designs, and a detailed qualitative analysis was conducted on them.

4 | Findings

In this section, the five proposed *abaya* designs inspired by the architecture of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque are first introduced. Initially, the results obtained from the analysis of questionnaire data were examined based on the five-point Likert scale to determine the performance of each design according to the five main criteria: aesthetics, cultural identity, creativity and innovation, applicability, and harmony of color and motifs.

1.4 | Design

As shown in Figure 1, this design was inspired by the architecture and stained-glass windows of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque. The inspiration is expressed primarily through formal and abstract interpretations rather than direct representation. The long and elongated silhouette of the garment, emphasizing dignity and modesty, is aligned with the vertical and spiritual structure of the mosque's prayer hall. The repetition of curved arches in the chest and skirt areas recalls the vaults and framing structures of the mosque's *Orosi* windows. The use of dotted pearl embroidery represents a minimalist translation of the orderly and rhythmic geometry of the windows, while the selection of brown and golden tones instead of the vivid colors of the stained glass provides a subtle reference to the warmth of brickwork and the architectural atmosphere of the building. This approach has allowed the garment to maintain both practicality and wearability.



Fig. 1. Abaya No. 1 and its source of inspiration.

As shown in Fig. 2, this design was inspired by the architecture and stained-glass windows of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, with its inspiration expressed mainly through formal and abstract interpretation rather than direct representation. The long and elongated silhouette of the garment, emphasizing dignity and modesty, corresponds with the vertical and spiritual structure of the mosque's prayer hall. The repetition of curved arches in the chest and skirt areas recalls the vaults and framing structures of the mosque's *Orosi* windows. The use of dotted pearl embroidery can be considered a minimalist translation of the orderly and rhythmic geometry of the windows, while the selection of brown and golden tones instead of the vivid colors of the stained glass provides a subtle reference to the warmth of the brickwork and the architectural atmosphere of the monument, allowing the garment to remain practical and wearable. Overall, the layered rhythm of the skirt evokes the reflection of light on the mosque's floor, and the design can be categorized as an architecture-inspired work based on a formal–abstract approach.



Fig. 2. Abaya No. 2 and its source of inspiration.

As shown in Figure 3, this design was inspired by the interplay of color and light within the interior space of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque and adopts a more modern and graphic approach. The zigzag cut line on the front of the garment is an abstract interpretation of the geometric breaks and framing structures of the mosque's Orosi stained-glass windows. Rather than repeating the classical arch form, it refers to the polygonal and mosaic-like rhythm of the window patterns. The use of deep purple tones combined with a lighter underlying layer creates a contrast reminiscent of the interplay between shadow and light in the prayer hall, where colored light filters through the windows onto darker architectural surfaces and generates visual contrasts. The delicate embellishments along the cut line are also considered a minimalist translation of the geometric details of the tilework, while their fragmented movement evokes the dynamic dispersion of colored light across the mosque's floor. [3] Overall, this design falls within the category of architectural inspiration with a formal–graphic approach, emphasizing the energy of color and the geometry of light rather than focusing on the form of the mihrab.



Fig. 3. Abaya No. 3 and Its source of inspiration.

As shown in Figure 4, this design was inspired by the repetitive rhythm of arches and the regular geometry of the prayer hall in the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, with an emphasis on geometric patterns. The diagonal and diamond-shaped divisions across the surface of the garment reflect the geometric grids of the tilework and the composition of the mosque's muqarnas-like ceiling structures. The repetition of these motifs creates a sense of depth and spatial continuity, evoking the extended atmosphere of the mosque's columned corridors. The selection of dark green tones combined with black details refers to the semi-shadowed atmosphere of the architecture while creating a contrast that highlights the ornamental patterns. Meanwhile, the curved

pathway of the buttons, with its diagonal movement, evokes the trajectory of colored light passing through the *Orosi* windows and extending across the floor. Overall, this design adopts a formal–geometric approach toward its source of inspiration and, by transforming architectural ornamental structures into surface divisions of the garment, establishes a structural and coherent relationship between architecture and clothing.



Fig. 4. Abaya No. 4 and its source of inspiration.

As shown in Figure 5, this design was inspired by the repetitive rhythm of arches and the regular geometry of the prayer hall in the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, with an emphasis on geometric patterns. The diagonal and diamond-shaped divisions across the surface of the garment reflect the geometric networks of the tilework and the composition of the mosque's muqarnas-like ceiling structures. The repetition of these motifs conveys a sense of depth and spatial extension, reminiscent of the atmosphere of the mosque's columned corridors. The selection of dark green tones combined with black details refers to the semi-shadowed ambiance of the architecture while creating a contrast that enhances the visibility of the ornamental patterns. The curved path of the buttons, with its diagonal movement, evokes the trajectory of colored light passing through the Orosi windows and extending across the floor. Overall, this design follows a formal–geometric approach to its source of inspiration and, by transforming architectural ornamental structures into surface divisions of the garment, establishes a coherent and structural connection between architecture and clothing.



Fig. 5. Abaya No. 5 and its source of inspiration.

2.4 | Descriptive Statistics

In this section, the data collected through the research questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis. The analysis was performed using SPSS software at two levels: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Initially, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined. Subsequently, descriptive indicators of the research variables and the performance of each design based on the mean scores assigned by the experts were presented. The results related to demographic characteristics, including gender, educational level, and professional experience, are presented in Figures 6 to 9.

The mean and standard deviation of the research variables were calculated, and the results are presented in Table 2.

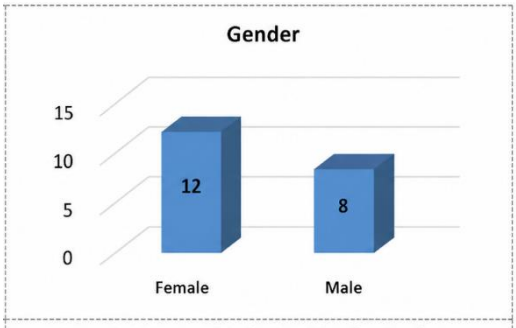


Figure 6. Frequency Distribution Related to Gender

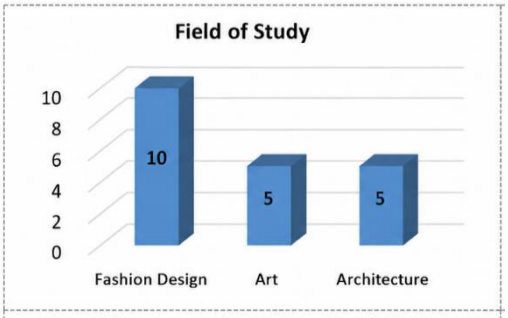


Figure 7. Frequency Distribution Related to Field of Study

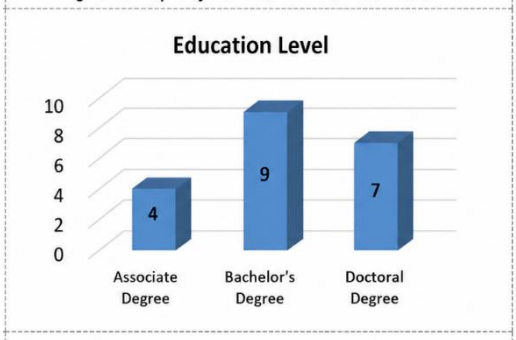


Figure 8. Frequency Distribution Related to Education Level

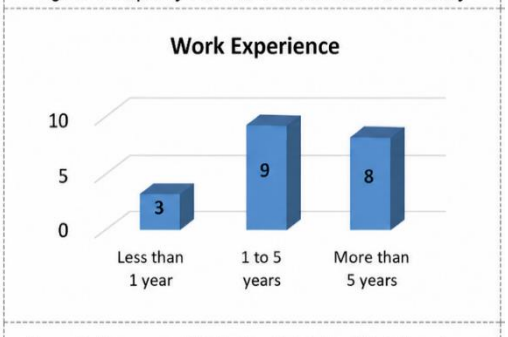


Figure 9. Frequency Distribution Related to Work Experience

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Research Variables

Standard Deviation	Mean	Variable
0.42	4.55	Design aesthetics
0.38	4.72	Cultural identity and concepts
0.54	4.08	Creativity and innovation
0.60	3.99	Applicability and compatibility with iranian clothing
0.47	4.32	Harmony of color and motifs with the source of inspiration

The results obtained from the mean and standard deviation of the five evaluation components indicate that the experts' perspectives were primarily focused on the cultural and aesthetic aspects of the designs. The highest mean score was related to cultural identity and concepts**,** demonstrating a strong consensus among experts regarding the importance of reflecting Iranian–Islamic authenticity in abaya designs inspired by the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque. Design aesthetics ranked second, indicating the experts' positive perception of the combination of form, proportion, and visual appeal of the proposed designs. The variable of color and motif harmony with the source of inspiration also received a relatively high score, emphasizing the evaluators' attention to the conceptual and visual relationship between the designs and the architectural source of inspiration. In contrast, creativity and innovation, despite receiving a favorable evaluation, showed greater

variation in opinions. This difference may be attributed to the diverse perspectives among experts, ranging from more conservative views emphasizing the preservation of authenticity to more modern approaches focusing on innovation and reinterpretation of traditional elements. Finally, applicability and compatibility with Iranian clothing obtained the lowest mean score, suggesting that cultural and artistic dimensions were considered more significant by the experts than functional and commercial considerations. Overall, these findings indicate that experts' evaluations of the designs were primarily centered on preserving visual–cultural identity and enhancing aesthetic quality. From their perspective, the most successful designs were those capable of establishing a balance between cultural authenticity and artistic appeal.

5 | Conclusion

This study aimed to integrate the remarkable architectural structures of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque with Iranian clothing design by creating and evaluating five *aba* designs. The most significant finding was that, from the experts' perspective, the success of a traditional modern clothing design depends largely on its ability to convey a sense of identity and cultural concepts. This aspect was identified as the strongest influential factor in the acceptance of the designs. In addition, visual appeal and the artistic harmony between the designs and their architectural source of inspiration were among the other key elements considered important. These findings emphasize that, for expert audiences, preserving authenticity and maintaining a conceptual connection with architectural heritage have a higher priority than purely functional considerations. The results showed that although all evaluated dimensions received relatively high scores, differences in the level of ratings revealed a hierarchy of values among the criteria. The highest score assigned to **"**cultural identity and concepts" and the lowest score assigned to "applicability" suggest that Iranian fashion designers are currently more focused on creating visual cultural statements rather than merely producing everyday garments. This indicates that, in this field, clothing is perceived as a medium for representing the rich heritage of architecture and Iranian identity. The greater variation in opinions regarding **"**creativity and innovation" also reflects the existence of two different perspectives among experts: one group emphasizing maximum fidelity to traditional elements, and another supporting the acceptance of completely innovative structures and reinterpretations. This study faced several limitations that should be considered. First, the evaluation sample was limited to 20 experts, which may not fully represent the diversity of perspectives within the fashion and design industry. Second, the assessments were conducted based on preliminary design models, and aspects such as fabric durability, long-term comfort, and final consumer market responses were not examined at this stage. Therefore, future studies are recommended to focus on evaluating the impact of such designs on actual consumers, as well as conducting qualitative investigations into strategies for integrating functional aspects without compromising cultural authenticity. At the practical level, it is recommended that designers focus on developing designs capable of translating complex architectural geometries into minimalist and expressive textile applications. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration with architects is suggested for creating coherent collections. In this way, the final product can become not only an artistic work rooted in cultural heritage but also a garment with greater acceptance and usability within the social and everyday context of society.

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