

EXPLORING THE SIMILARITIES OF GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND COSTUME TO DEVELOP DESIGNS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY WEAR BY USING GOTHIC FEATURES

VAISHALI MENON¹ & KAUVERY BAI²

¹Research scholar, Department of Textiles and Clothing, Smt. VHD Central Institute of Home Science,
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Clothing and Textiles, Smt. VHD Central Institute of Home Science,
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

ABSTRACT

Architects and Costume designers both use 3 – dimensional space to create shelter for protecting human body. It is a physical expression of any culture to give aesthetic beauty to a new concept. Both disciplines share similar aesthetic expressions influencing each other's style, during an era.

Gothic architecture during medieval era was a revolution, resulting in some magnificent structures. Fashion was influenced heavily from architectural styles of this era.

The present study was undertaken to find these similar influences in architecture and costumes of Gothic style during medieval era.

Key characteristics of architecture were compared with costumes and it was observed that silhouette, color, form, construction, fabrics, embellishments and accessories like shoes and headgear were influenced by the style of architecture.

KEYWORDS: Gothic, Medieval Era, Fashion, Architecture & Silhouette

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INTRODUCTION

Buildings and monuments are the products of art work with bricks, stones and mortar. The creator of this artwork is an artist who visualizes and expresses his imagination in three-dimensional form. Each era brings buildings of a distinct style, providing reference material for the future generations about religion, art, design, culture and lifestyle of the people who used them.

Architecture intersects with many other disciplines and fashion is one of the discipline which share similarities in aesthetic expression. Architects and fashion designers both create three-dimensional structure to be used by humans using geometry to generate forms, create structure, design lines and shapes for protecting and sheltering human body.

Fashion designer Coco Chanel has said, "Fashion is architecture. It is a matter of proportions".

Classic designers like Versace, Balman and Cardin all studied architecture before switching on to Fashion. Pierre Balman (1919-1982) declared, "Dressmaking is the architecture of movement and nothing is more

important in a dress than its construction”.

Gothic style is a medieval art movement that first appeared in the later half of the 12th century in France and continued till 16th century all over Europe. The old style of Romanesque architecture, with its round ceilings, huge thick walls, small windows, and dim interiors had been replaced by soaring Gothic arches, thin walls, huge stained glass windows which flooded the interior with light.

Some of the important characteristics of Gothic architecture have pointed arches, flying buttresses, high pinnacles, rib vaults, the Gorgyles, window tracery and a narrative style of architecture in which the buildings appear to be explaining to visitors how it works and what is going on inside. You can guess where the important parts of a church are because the architecture and decoration on buildings varies to suit the activity within.

Thus, the Gothic architecture was revolutionary in nature, changing the rules of how buildings were to be constructed. These 300 years of aesthetically productive period has created several kinds of art forms influencing each other in the process. Costumes created during this era were also influenced by distinct Gothic styles borrowed from architecture. These similar influences were translated into a newer style of fashion like long and slender silhouettes, pointed headgears and sleeve ends, decorative gothic motifs and lot of pleats resembling pillars.

This study was undertaken to research and study revolutionary styles of Gothic architecture and costumes worn during this era. This was done to find parallel influence of architecture on costume to prove that all art forms evolve from similar thought process in each period, where underlying inspiration can be the same influencing the creation of new product in the art field.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The style of architecture, we now call Gothic first emerged in northern France in 1140s. It evolved during the construction of great churches in the Paris region in a move towards greater height, light and volume. The key features include the pointed arch, rib vaults, flying buttress and window tracery.

(Victoria and Albert Museum)

The 300 years of Gothic architecture created 3 main styles: Early, High and Late Gothic.

Early Gothic was characterized by the introduction of the pointed arch, buttress, Rib vaults and high pinnacle. High Gothic was also called as ‘Decorated’ was broken into Geometric and Curvilinear style and was characterized by its window tracery. In Late Gothic, the emphasis was on vertical lines. Small details, lacy ornaments and flamboyant style were the characteristics of this era. (Patrick Nuttgens, 1980, Pocket guide to architecture, Simon and Schuster, NY)

- **Characteristics of Gothic Architecture:** Grand, tall designs, sweeping upwards with height and grandeur. This was achieved by newer techniques like flying buttress, ribbed vaults, multiple window openings, enabling architects to spread the weight of taller walls and loftier towers.
- **The Flying Buttress:** The defining external characteristic which helped to spread the weight of the tall walls by transferring to the ground. Often decorated with intricate carvings.
- **The Pointed Arch:** Distributed the force of heavier ceilings and bulkier walls, and vertical height.

- **The Vaulted Ceiling:** Allowed the ceilings to be taller than before, providing the impression of height, grandeur and elegance. They were built in different shapes and sizes, spreading the weight.
- **Light, Airy Interiors:** Gothic architecture emphasized light, bright and airy interiors
- **Stained Glass Windows:** resembling precious stones, glowing without fire were abundantly used.
- **The Gargoyles:** Decorative, monstrous creatures used as spouts for rain water to drain off. (from 7 characteristics of Gothic architecture/Slide share.com)

Fashion was characterized during the Gothic era by a series of extremes like long trails, broad sleeves, armholes cut till hips. Costumes showed variations in decorations with transparent multicolour layers. Noble women embroidered husband's family on the right and wives on the left. There were strict laws for material and colours to be used for clothes based on wealth and social class. The late Gothic period saw costumes in brighter colours and early Gothic period saw costumes in darker colours. New Construction techniques were invented to hold the weight of extra-long fabric used at the back.

Costumes were made of several components like Chaise which was the outer pleated gown made of light weight linen, Surcoats with wide armholes showcasing inner layer, Houppelande was an outer gown with deep v neck high waisted and belted, Tight tunics worn inside with chemise, Trails and veils were all part of one costume thus making it a complicated structure which was multilayered with different fabrics. Most of the costumes had variations in the design for front, back and sides with variations of pleats, embroidery and lacing techniques to tighten the dress.

(History of Western costume/costume during 1100 to 1600)

Aim

To explore the influence of Gothic architecture on costume and to develop designs using Gothic features for contemporary wear.

Objectives

- To study Gothic architecture.
- To analyze costumes worn during the Gothic period.
- To explore the influence of Gothic architecture on the costume.
- To design garments based on similar features of the Gothic period.
- To evaluate the acceptance of designs.

Scope

Architects and Fashion designers both use elements and principles of design to create a 3-dimensional structure to shelter human form. The creative process and aesthetics have similarity influencing and inspiring each other. Costumes during an era are products of different art forms, providing glimpses of progress in art scenario. This is an attempt to find a parallel connection between Gothic architecture and costumes prevailed during this medieval era between 1150 and 1500.

METHODOLOGY

Collection of Data

- Literature on Gothic architecture was collected through books, journals, internet, essays, slides, photographs and interviews with architects.
- A survey was undertaken to gather information on features of Gothic architecture and similar influences found on costumes worn during this era.
- Costumes worn during the Gothic period were analyzed through paintings, books and internet.
- Interviews were conducted with architects, fashion design students and faculty in Textiles, Fashion design and Architecture departments.

Design Development

- Collected data were analyzed to find similar features in architecture and costumes worn during this era to find if art had any influence on fashion.
- New designs were created based on similar features for contemporary wear.

Acceptance Phase

- 1. Assessment of garments was done with interviews schedule and a questionnaire.

ARCHITECTURE DURING GOTHIC ERA (1150 TO 1600)

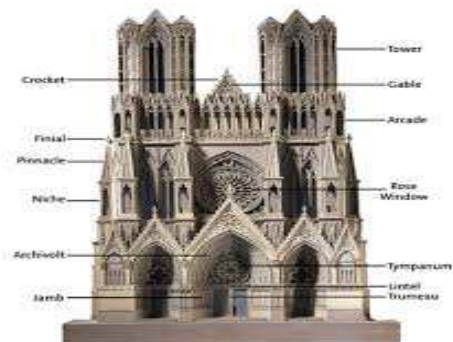


Figure 1: Gothic Structure



Figure 2: Rib Vaults and Pillars



Figure 3: Ornamentation



Figure 4: Colorful Stained Glass Windows



Figure 5: Flying Buttress



Figure 6: Gargoyles



Figure 7: Pointed Arches



Figure 8: Pinnacles



Figure 9: Spires, Several Supporting Structure around the Main Building

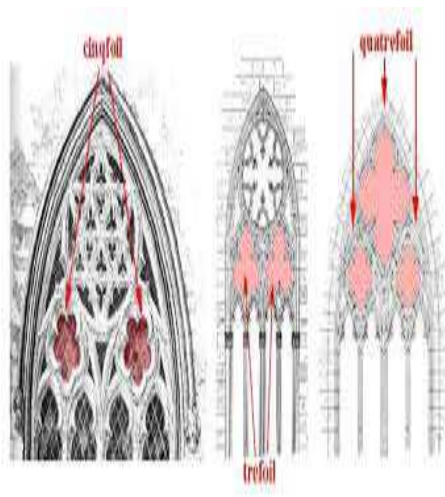


Figure 10: Window Tracery

Costumes Worn During 1100 To 1600



Figure 11: Layers, Tall Silhouette, Colorful



Figure 12: Surcoat: Armholecuts Low, Long Trails



Figure 13: Tall Headgear, Long Sleeves, Length



Figure 14: Complicated Garment Layers of Fabric

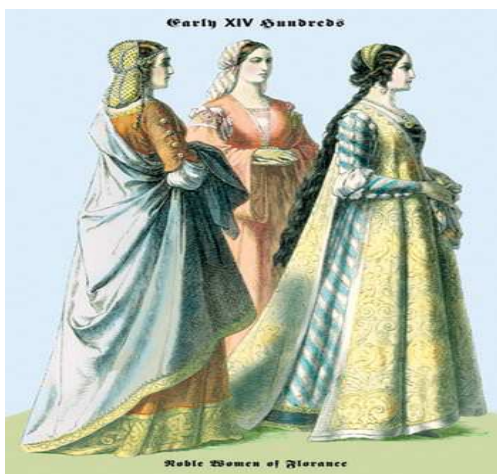


Figure 15: Trails, Veils, Outer Coat, Decorative Embroidery



Figure 16: Houplande, Tall Headgear



Figure 17: Medieval Houpplande



Figure 18: Lacing Technique



Figure 19: Bright, Rich Colours of Stained Glass



Figure 20: Pleats Resembling Pillars

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A survey was undertaken to find out the awareness of the interrelationship between Art, Architecture and Fashion. Interviews were conducted by architects and fashion designer and academicians to validate the findings of similarities found between Gothic architecture and fashion. Costumes were designed for contemporary wear based on the similarities found in these two disciplines and acceptance study was conducted with faculty, architects, and fashion designers to assess the designed garments.

The results are explained below.

Awareness of Interrelationship between Architecture, Art and Fashion

- **84%** of those interviewed were aware of architectural styles of Roman, Greek, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassical and Mughal era.
- **16%** were not aware about Baroque and Neoclassical style of architecture.
- **77%** agreed that visual arts, applied arts and performing arts influence architecture.

- 33% did not agree with music or performing arts and Graphic design influencing architecture.
- 100% agreed that artist in one field of art can be influenced by other art forms.
- 100% were aware of interrelationship in all art forms.
- 100% believed that art and architecture can influence fashion.
- Results for which part of the costume is influenced by architecture revealed following observations
- 50% agreed colour of the costume can be influenced by architecture
- 83% believed silhouette of costume can be inspired by architecture.
- 60% said the texture of the costume can be inspired by surface texture of a monument. 52% were aware of similarities found between surface ornamentation on a garment and surface decoration on the surface of a monument.
- 100% were aware of Gothic style being a medieval art movement
- All architects were aware of Gothic Architecture is being revolutionary, changing the rules of how buildings were constructed.
- 87% of the respondents agreed that the costumes worn during this period can be influenced by architecture.

Comparative Table of Parallel Influence between Gothic Architecture and Costumes Worn During the Same Period

Table 1

Gothic Architecture	Gothic Fashion
1. Tall sweeping structures	1. The tall, slender silhouette was common for women's garments.
2. Extremes in architectural styles.	2. Matched by extremes in fashion like Long trail, Wide sleeves touching the ground, Deep cut of armhole touching till waist.
3. Abundant use of colorful and transparent stained glass windows.	3. Rich, deep colours was found in gowns during the high gothic era when stained glass was popular.
4. Decorations, carvings and sculptures were placed only on the prominent places on the building.	4. Surface ornamentation on costumes was also found only in the front or borders or neckline.
5. Complicated design and construction with vaults and buttress.	5. Costumes too had complicated silhouettes with layers of fabric and lacing techniques.
6. Gargoyles were used for rain water drainage and to instill fear in people.	6. Headgear on women and men resembled the scary creatures like Gargoyles, used for evil eye protection.
7. Variations in the design of the building which were not similar in the front, back and sides.	7. Costumes too varied in their silhouette in the front, back and sides with change in design.
8. Texture in the Gothic architecture was created by carvings, window tracery, stained glass windows, pillars etc.	8. Texture in garments was created by pleating, embroidery, lacing etc.
9. Several supporting structures around the main building, making it as a single monument.	9. Several components together make one single garment, which may include 6 to 7 different layers and cuts.
10. Architecture was characterized by piers, pillars, colloneds, spires etc. making the structure look taller and slender.	10. Silhouette of the costumes was narrow with pleats, like houppelande making costume look slim and tall.

Analysis of Results Discussed Under the Headings of Silhouette, Colour, Texture, Design and Technique Observed in Costumes Worn During Medieval era which are Largely Influenced by the Different Features of Gothic Architecture are as Follows:

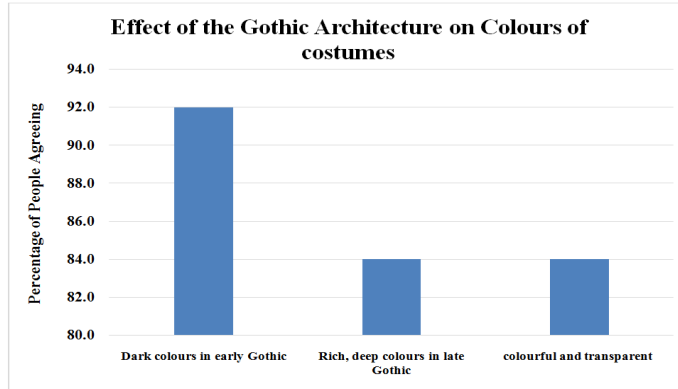


Figure 21

From the above figure, it was found that

- 92% people agreed that dark colors of costumes in an early Gothic era resembled tall dark structures.
- 84% people said rich, deep colours in a late Gothic era were influenced by the decorative and ornate structures of the buildings.
- 84% people agreed the use of transparent colours were largely influenced by the stained-glass windows of Cathedrals which were used to bring light inside.
- Thus, 86% of total respondents agreed that colors of most costumes worn during the Gothic era were influenced by the colours used inside the monuments and buildings, changing from darker hues in the beginning of the period to brighter, richer with more transparent values.

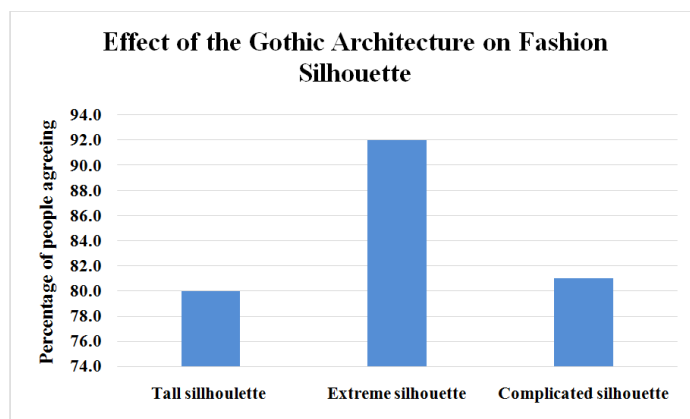


Figure 22

From the above figure, it was found that

- 80% of the respondents agreed that tall structures in medieval era influenced long slender silhouettes.
- 90% people said extreme architecture matched extreme styles like long trails, wide sleeves, deeply cut armholes.

- 81% agreed that complicated construction with several vaults and flying buttress may have influenced complicated silhouettes with layers of fabric and lacing techniques.
- Thus, 84% of total respondents agreed with the statement that Gothic era architecture influenced the silhouettes of the garments worn by women during this time and influence can be seen most often in narrow, slender outer shape with the complicated styling of all the different layers which had to be adjusted with the help of lacing techniques.

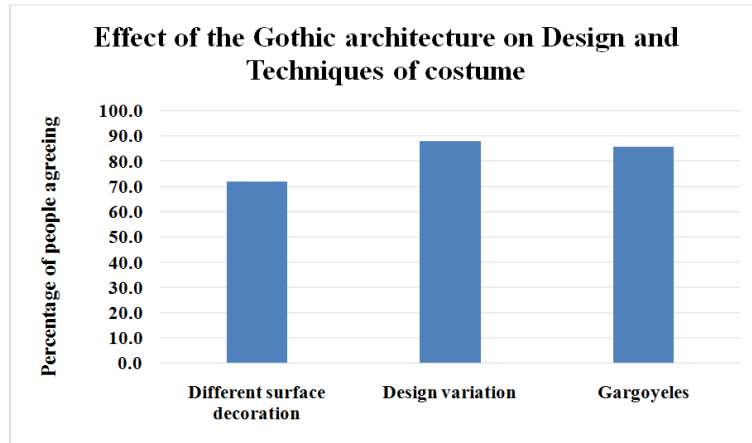


Figure 23

From the above figure, it was found that

- 72% of the respondents agreed about the surface decorations like carvings and sculptures being there on the prominent parts of the structures like front façade or altar. This observation was matched with having surface embellishments on the prominent parts of the garments.
- 88% agreed that buildings differed in design in the front, back and sides which was also similar with costumes where designs differed in the front, back usually had a long trail and sides usually had some lacing technique to tighten the topmost layer.
- 86% of people agreed about headgear resembling Gargoyles on the outside of the monument used for rainwater drainage and to instill fear in people.
- Thus, a total of 82% people felt Gothic architecture influenced design and techniques of costumes.

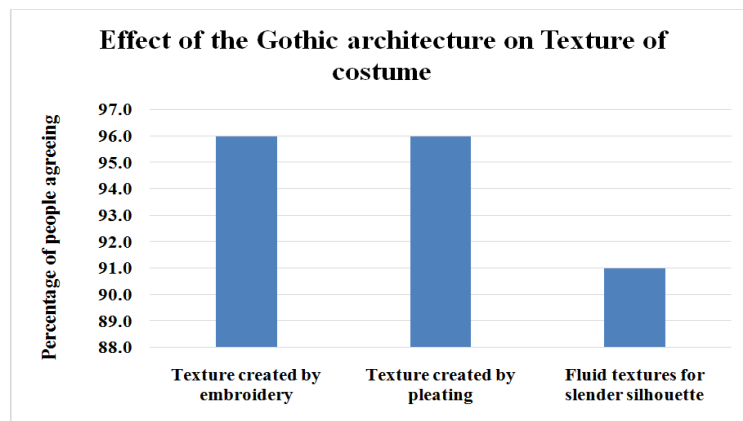


Figure 24

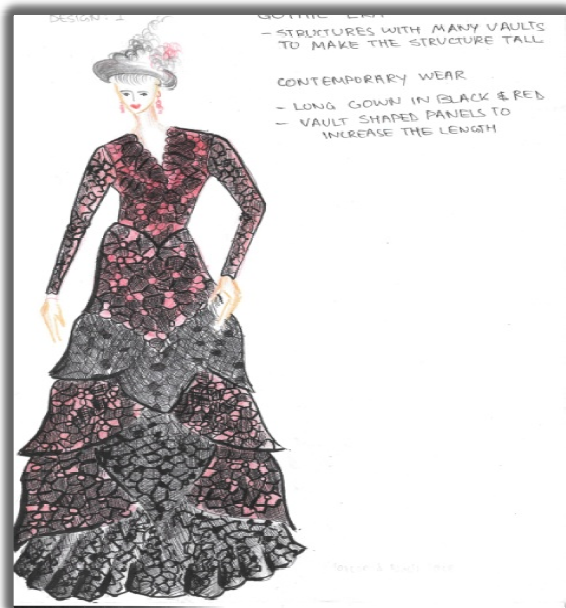
From the above figure, it was found that

- 96% agreed that texture on the monuments were created by carvings similar to texture created on costume with the help of embroidery.
- 96% agreed that pleating and folding techniques used on costumes like Houppalande created texture similar to textures on pillars, piers and colonnades.
- 91% of the respondents said that fluid textures were used in most costumes to depict slender and tall silhouette resembling tall, narrow structures.
- Thus, 94% of total respondents agreed that there was influence of Gothic architecture on texture of the costume.

Thus, from the above analysis, it can be said that an average of 86% of the respondent agreed that Gothic architecture positively influenced the costumes worn during the same period. Influence was prominently seen in colour, silhouette, texture, design and techniques used in both architecture and fashion. This was further proved by test of the proportion where the resultant value $3.6^{**} > 1.64 > 2.33$ is

Highly significant which lies in the critical region so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis at 1% level of significance that proportion of agree is more than proportion of disagree, thus proving that the architecture during the Gothic era was influenced by fashion incorporating features of architecture into styles and designs of garments worn by women during this period.

Based on the above observations and conclusive results, contemporary garments are designed using Indian fabrics. Acceptance study was carried out with fashion designing students and architects on parameters like symbolism, innovation, texture, colour, appearance, aesthetic appeal, market acceptability and commercial viability. The conclusive results for designing garments along with designs are as follows:



**Design 1: Inspiration: Vaults
Fabric: Lace, Satin**



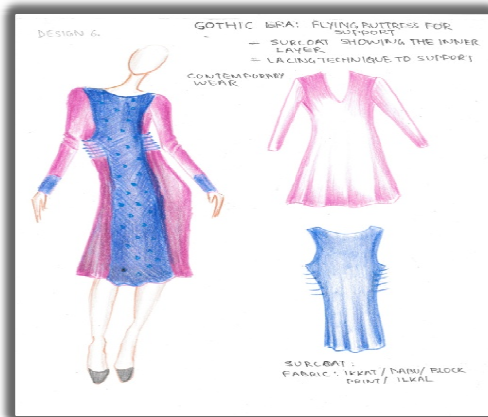
**Design 2: Inspiration: Stained
Glass window**



Design 3: Inspired by Tall Dark Structures



Design 4: Inspired by Pillars



Design 5: Inspired by Flying Buttress for Support



Design 6: Inspired by Tall, Dark Structures

ACCEPTANCE STUDY RESULTS

Acceptance study was conducted after designing the above garments with help of a rating scale

Each garment was rated on 6 parameters by the same sample of mix of architects, Fashion Designers, and faculty.

The results are as follows

Table 2

	Design 1	Design 2	Design 3	Design 4	Design 5	Design 6
1. Symbolism	68%	48%	68%	68%	44%	68%
2. Innovation	80%	60%	60%	64%	36%	80%
3. Texture	60%	52%	60%	48%	32%	60%
4. Colour	68%	48%	68%	64%	24%	68%
5. Appearance	60%	68%	68%	76%	32%	76%
6. Aesthetic appeal	66%	66%	62%	80%	36%	80%
7. Market acceptability	36%	48%	36%	86%	45%	86%
8. Commercial Viability	36%	48%	36%	86%	46%	86%

Symbolism: This was related to the Gothic architecture. **Design1, 3, 4, and 6** were liked by everyone. Most of them said these 4 designs were symbolic of the gothic architecture and they could relate Gothic era to these designs.

Innovation: It was associated with new design, fabric, style, pattern or technique and innovative use of fabric to match the design sketched. It was found that **Design 1 and 6** were accepted as the most innovative in all the parameters mentioned above. 80% respondents liked these two designs where fabrics like Ajarakh print modal silk and Lace fabric with red satin is used to construct a modern silhouette of long gown.

Texture: Design 1, 3 and 6 were well accepted by majority of the respondents. They found Lace, Satin, Velvet, Modal silk as the most suitable texture resembling textured surfaces of Gothic architecture. These textures were suitable for the designed silhouettes.

Colour: Design 1, 3 and 6 were found to be appropriate for the colours of the fabric used by most of the respondents. All the colours were dark which resembled the dark Gothic structures of early medieval times.

Appearance and Aesthetic Appeal: Design 4 and 6 were found to be most satisfactory by majority of respondents. They found these two designs as the most appealing visually for balance of colour, texture and silhouette. Fabrics used matched the designs which added to the aesthetic appeal.

Market acceptability and Commercial Viability: Design 4 and 6 were found to be the most commercially viable and acceptable garments in the market. Since these two designs also scored high on aesthetic appeal and appearance with respondents, they were most appropriate for commercial production.

Overall Appeal: Design 6 scored high on all parameters to be considered as the best for overall appeal.

Followed by **design 4, 1, 3, 2, 5** in the decreasing order of popularity.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In any given era, culture plays a big role in shaping a society forming certain rules or values to be followed which influences how people live their lives.

Culturally distinct invaders maintain their identity by changing their immediate surroundings which include the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothes.

Goths were Germanic pagan tribes which invaded former territories of the Christian Roman empire. They brought on architecture and aesthetics which were completely different from subtle, symmetrical Greek Roman style, invoking extreme response of awe and fear with exaggerated proportions in revolutionary Gothic architecture.

Designers in all fields rely on associative thinking connecting with similar ideas and techniques in different art fields.

This study was undertaken to find if all art forms influence each other with the example of architecture influencing costumes of the Gothic era. (1100 to 1500)

The researcher collected data on Gothic architecture and Gothic costumes. Distinct features of Gothic architecture were studied in detail along with studying costumes for colour, texture, silhouette, surface ornamentation and techniques of garment construction.

These features were compared to find if there are any similarities between fashion and architecture. These

similarities were further validated with the help of architects, fashion designers and academicians. Results obtained from these opinionnaire were tabulated in the form of graphs and tables.

The researcher found a positive correlation with architecture in the Gothic medieval era and costumes worn during this time. Similarities were observed in the silhouettes, textures, colour, design, techniques and accessories used by women in Gothic era.

Similar features found were used as an inspiration to design garments for contemporary wear. These garments were assessed on 8 parameters (symbolism, innovation, texture, colour, appearance, aesthetic appeal, market acceptability and commercial viability) to find the best overall garment.

Thus, it can be concluded that fashion and architecture are two fields of art based on similar design principles. Both the fields represent the cultural identity of a specific era, influencing or inspiring each other in the process of creating a unique product.

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