

## **Copy to Paste Industry: Common Practices of Pakistani Textile Print Technology Industry**

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**Abstract:** Design is a process which is formulated in order to get or fulfilled the customer demand and requirement. A good design is to be considered if it satisfies the customer requirement and which gives good number of sales in the market. But design cannot be considered as good or successful unless it follows the complete original design process as well. In Pakistan various textile entrepreneurs own textile apparel/home textile brands and they all are running after good number of sales. No matter if originality occurs in their design language/process or not. A successful design can be reshaping by putting all ingredients of processes with more important the ingredient of ethics again. In this research study, information is collected to identify the need of conscious approach during research and interpretation phase of design process by various entrepreneurs of Pakistan. This study ultimately establishes a bench mark in reshaping the design process along management of execution and entrepreneur behaviors of Pakistani textile print technology industries. Ethics contribute as ultimate ingredient to design process for the future developments in Pakistan's apparel design textile industry.

**Key words:** Visual plagiarism, design ethics, textiles, entrepreneurs, requirement, demand

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the past few years, we have seen a rapid growth in Pakistan's domestic apparel industry. The culture of ready to wear has flourished as well as unstitched luxury textile/fashion brands. About 2 decades ago the apparel textile domestic market had few designer brand names to provide with exclusive print collections while the rest and most market was occupied by textile industries lawn and print collections available at retail stores. The concept of flagship stores in this field has also been introduced lately. This influx has drastically affected consumer behavior. The market of unstitched print collections seems to be segregated in to two main streams, one as the "original designer's collection" and the other as "piracy prints". The prior category is ranked high because of the creative original and premium quality but the other also gets good business from those customers who wish to buy the original signature prints of their favorite brands if their pocket allows them.

This research aims to identify the responsibility of designers to offer design solutions with considerations to authenticity. This research discovers few design examples of different premium quality apparel designer brands to reflect on the design development process. The discovery of the commonly practiced design methods in well-established design houses has helped to inquire on

challenges for future advancement in apparel design industry as well as the role of design education in future scenario.

This research is conducted through questionnaires, interviews with designers and personal observations during our research experience with industrialists and CEO's. Another survey was conducted with the consumers to know their choices driven by aesthetics. The collected information has helped to analyze the expectations of primary stakeholders from similar product (Sagaran, 2015). A-Industrialist or CEO of the design company, the money maker, B-designer, the creator, C-Customer the user. The role of all these three in determining the aesthetics and function of a product is vital. An efficient design can be the one which satisfies each in the loop.

This baseline research shall open debatable venues on the manifesto of design education in training of designers and other relevant professionals for design industry aware and conscious about design ethics of a product.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Design ethics-what which and why:** The involvement of ethics in textile sector is a major concern. There are certain codes of conduct for industries either in pre or post

production or fabrication process. These rules are mostly established in terms of child labor, workmanship, environmental impacts and health and safety measures, etc. If ethics are understood in their literal meaning, they constitute an attempt to articulate and reflect on guidelines for human activity and conduct. In this regard, another very important department which vows to be considered for ethics is “Design”. Taking care of design ethics might not be a new subject if we consider international design scenario even though according to Richard Buchanan, the university of Chicago press, 1995 “ethics was not needed within design until quite recently because until quite recently the activity known as designing did not play a prominent role in human affairs”. Focusing on Pakistan’s domestic fashion and textile Industry, design ethics must be realized as an important aspect in design thinking (Kazmi and Takala, 2014).

Design ethics seems a rare practice in apparel industry. The act of plagiarism and copying is becoming its essential part. This might lead apparel design sector away from the essence of originality. It is important to rethink design processes practiced in the design houses, the way, we develop and what we prefer to do should be reconsidered? A recurrent question shall be answered by each individual involved at any stage of product development-Is it ethically right to do? In this research the study is conducted on basis of ethical values in terms of originality in design development with some recommendations for apparel sector.

Around the year numerous fashion/apparel brand launches at least two to three season based collections. It is observed that, since, few years there has been a trend of launching multiple sub collections during the season as well. These sub collections are titled as chapters and volumes by different brands followed by the number of collection, e.g., chapter 1, 2 or so. These collections are offered as incentives to increase sell ability. Buy shop the future of shopping has reported that there are 30 big brand names who launched designer’s lawn collections in 2015. These lawn collections are mostly based on prints and embroideries which use a wide image vocabulary collected from various resources. During the same year of 2015, many of these designer brands were accused for developing their collections with full essence of plagiarism without any sort of ethical hesitation. Express, Anonymous (2015a, b) reported plagiarised designs of Sapphire. “In Pakistan, high-street industry practices are such that many designers lift designs off the internet with it being difficult to ascertain the owner of the patterns. Although, this does not make it acceptable, Shah acknowledging her brand’s mistake.” Figure 1 shows that, Sapphire’s design (L) was an exact replica of artwork by Sweden-based illustrator Johanna Burai. Photo, Aamiriati/Instagram.



Fig. 1: Sapphire’s design (L) by Sweden-based illustrator Lohanna Burai



Fig. 2: Aamiriati copycats-keep-on-coming in 2015

A series of copied designs involving designer Zara Shahjahan, Sana Safinaz, Nishat and more have been reported by various resources of social media and press. Few examples are quoted here.

Aamiriati copycats-keep-on-coming in 2015 Designer Ayesha Khurram plagiarized illustration off of Instagram and worst of all the affected illustrator Antonio Soares himself started calling her out (Fig. 2).

The prints of Zara Shahjahan in her high street label, Coco were plagiarized. Her luxury pret, print-based collection, love bug which was accused of being a plagiarized version of Matthew Williamson’s collection (Fig. 3).

Haider (2015) the following Alexander Morton and Co print was copied by Nishat as well as by Sana Safinaz as shown in Fig. 4.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Copy multiplied by copy:** Unfortunately this culture of selling plagiarized aesthetics trickles down. There are many companies few even Anonymous which make business by producing copies of the copied. In many retail stores across the country these copy prints are making good business. It will not be justified if a luxury brand speak against this business niche.

Aamiriat copycats-keep-on-coming-in Shares, “Ironically, last week the Federal Investigation Agency FIA raided the shop of a cloth merchant in Tariq road for producing fake Sana Safinaz joras, victory for copyrights Act proponents! It’s probably the first such arrest after Oxford University Press Pakistan got a printer arrested for making pirated copies of their books. But what an irony it is that Sana Safinaz ha ha ha hmm” (Anonymous, 2015).

**Let’s go to Europe:** Fortunately, we are not alone in the world of plagiarism, the essence of selling plagiarism into the products either in the form of complete print or a garment this also reflected in western brands too. Not only our national designers or industrialist doing copy to paste type of product development. The picture reveals from outside Pakistan also seems to be same. When we go into Europe, they are also heavily impressed by many other designers or illustrators or even also from the artists like us. A very well-known brand called Zara also went into the act of plagiarism and done great job on doing copy and then paste. This intelligent research is here (Fig. 5).

Bassen’s designs, the Los Angeles-based artist has accused fast fashion brand Zara of plagiarism. Photograph: Instagram/@tuesdaybasse. Here, the journey of Europe not over. Further more, the fast-fashion brand Zara is facing criticism for allegedly copying the designs of Tuesday Bassen an independent artist based in Los angeles.

Bassen, an illustrator and designer, posted a side-by-side comparison of her pin designs next to Zara’s. “You know what? Sometimes it sucks to be an artist because companies like @ zara consistently rip you off and deny it.

Bassen has worked with playboy, the New Yorker, the United Nations, Nike, Adidas and others, according to her website. This was her first interaction with Zara (Fig. 6).

The main reason of doing such things is only to sell their products and earn profits in terms of money. But unfortunately by doing such act, they can earn profits on short run basis on long run they put all of their brands



Fig. 3: Victoria Garcia floral print used in Zara Shahjahan’s Coco line photo: Luxe Pakistan



Fig. 4: Design by Sana Safina





Fig. 5: Bassen's designs



Fig. 6: Zara steals from independent artists. Just compare this original artist work with the illegal reproductions released by Zara (including their brands Pull and Bear, Bershka and Stradivarius). All examples are from current or recently-available Zara merchandise with images found from their USA and international websites. Support the independent artists by purchasing their work directly and hold brands accountable for this behavior: a) Original research by Tuesday Bassen available at [shoptuesday.com](http://shoptuesday.com); b) Original research by Juliette Mallette available at [cousuzette.etsy.com](http://cousuzette.etsy.com); c) Original research by Adam J. Kurtz available at [shop.adamjk.com](http://shop.adamjk.com); d) Original research by Georgia perry available at [gegiaperry. Net/shop](http://gegiaperry.Net/shop); e) Original research by Maria Inges Gul available at [mariainesgul.bigcartel.com](http://mariainesgul.bigcartel.com); f) Original research by Big Bud press available at [bigbudpress.com](http://bigbudpress.com); g) Original research by Ivonna Buenrostro available at [ivonnabuenrostro.etsy.com](http://ivonnabuenrostro.etsy.com); h) Original research by Strawberry moth available at [strawberrymoth.com](http://strawberrymoth.com); i) Original research by Gabriella Sanchez available at [thatnoisegallery.etsy.com](http://thatnoisegallery.etsy.com); j) Original research by Explorer's Press available at [explorerspress.com](http://explorerspress.com); k) Original research by Mokuyubi Threads available at [mokuyubi.com](http://mokuyubi.com) and l) Original research by Anna Santaguida available at [bananabones.etsy.com](http://bananabones.etsy.com)

and companies onto the risk of losing credibility and positioning in customer mind as well in design world. Here in this study, we discussed some of the brands as an example case but in actual there are many more in the world of plagiarism who not following design process by using ethics as a main ingredient.

**The insight of creativity:** To observe if plagiarism is considered unethical during design development process within design houses, a base line research was conducted through questionnaire and interviews with the designers of leading apparel brands of Pakistan. Data is collected from 10 different design houses and a sample of 25

designers was taken from Lahore and Faisalabad. The names and details of designers and design houses are not disclosed in this study. In questionnaire, key informative interview technique was used in collecting the data and questions were asked on the basis of qualitative method (Kevin and Rajendra, 1988). The questions were asked about the stages of design development from idea to execution. The collected data was analyzed for three stages of design development. These three stages were identified by the researchers where there is possibility of intriguing plagiarized content into design:

- Initial idea: when the collection is perceived before it is actually visualized on study
- While an idea is perceived and it is shaped up on study and in sampling. Bar 2 and 3
- When the design research is analyzed for market place in competition to contemporary brands

In an interview designer A explains, “Our marketing and design directors visit those international brands which they consider as their role models. They hunt for interesting products which could best sell. The same quality fabrics and designs are reproduced by designers and technical experts employed in the design house, sometimes we outsource the fabrics with closest appearance too.”

Designer B who owns his own luxury label besides designing for industry concludes, “It depends for whom I am designing. While working on designs for various producers they are not conscious if it is copied or not. They usually have tough deadlines which are not realistic if we want to start right from the scratch. But at the same time, designs which I develop to gain my signature, i make them without any plagiarized content since I don’t want to gain such name in market where clients come to me for a less expensive solution of other designer’s outfits.”

Designer C who reserach in one of the top most high street brands explains we do often use internet and book resources to develop art reserach. The initial idea of collection is originated from various sources of international trend reports and collections of international brands. Few of the themes are decided on the selected mood. Sketching is done where we take references from various internet sources frequently.

Interestingly designer D who takes a step ahead to avoid any bad reput explain that one should copy in such a way that it is not recognizable. So, if one takes reference from somewhere it should be blended with some other references. This sample of designer represents those design houses which have earned good name but still are not considered the top most ones. So, this

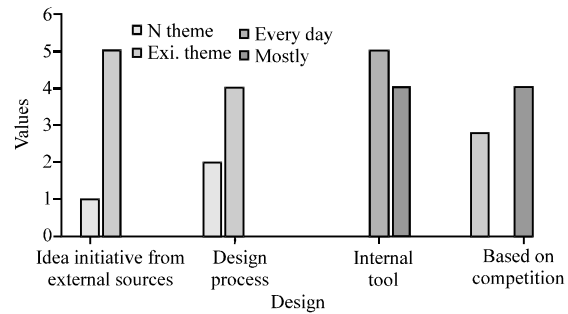


Fig. 7: The designer’s actions on the three stages of design development

designer adds up in narrating his creative process, “also majorly seeing what our brand lacks in comparison to competitors as, we still are in the initial growing stage.”

The data has been interpreted using string numeric method of quantitative in order to summarize the information. Figure 7 represents that most of the respondent’s start their research based on existing themes or external resources, using mostly internet image resources and also look upon on their competitors. In most situations the initiative is taken from international designers brands and forecast/trend reports. Many design houses do collect samples from the in store fresh collections of their competitor brands to pick the pulse of hot seller designs. Most of them opt for this type of process to produce efficient results in short period of time.

The study of research processes with in design houses revealed that making good business is the key to the whole process. To cope with the short time lines at ease originality is compromised (Fig. 8).

**The outer shell-users:** To observe the preferences of customers a survey was conducted. This survey was intended to analyze if the user really care about the vocabulary of patterns and prints or there are some other incentives as well which make them buy a certain brand. This realization may find new ways and directions of creative solutions for designers. The users were asked about the reason of liking any certain brands and the results were as following:

- The 48% buy a certain brand because of fabric quality
- The 36% like prints and layouts of that certain brand
- The 16% other

The results show that 36% of customers are conscious about the brands they prefer. These loyal

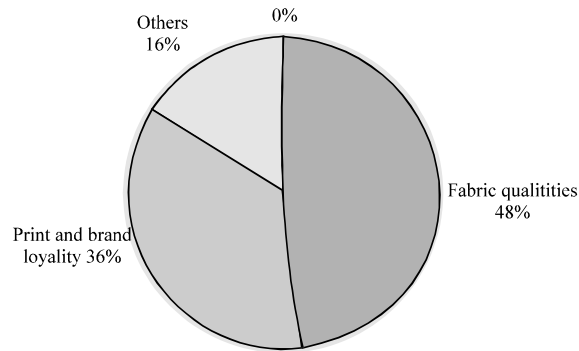


Fig. 8: Customer choices

customers like their respective brands for the colors and layouts amongst these brands which have left an impression on the customers are unfortunately of those which have been accused for plagiarism. A large group of customers are not sensitive about the patterns and art research. Their preference is breathability, color fastness and hand feel of fabrics. The extreme weather conditions of most areas of Pakistan also justify their preferences. A smaller group of 16% are fed up with this lawn culture and they want to wear something different than print in future summer collections. They are also concerned about the price range of these designers lawn which all look similar to them. This provides a good possibility to research on new ideas to break the monotony. New dressing concepts can be developed in our design houses around these key words, quality, breathable, economical, no prints.

### CONCLUSION

From the above study on the ethical issues with respect to plagiarism in design practice, it is concluded that there must be a forum or a bridge between the designer and industrialist that evaluates the plagiarism content before going into the final execution of the product. The process of reshaping design process is needed in order to redo reserach for design execution. Designers and entrepreneurs of the fourth industrial

revolution era where technology and quick easy access to virtual world has made it possible to sneak into others creativity. At the same time a self-realization of plagiarism is needed from both ends the designer and the design house owner, be it be a CEO, creative head or industrialist. Also, some training for both stakeholders must be provided that focus on how to minimize the content of plagiarism by working more and more on originality. The study represents the very biased decisions made by the industrialist and designer only for the sake of the profits and they are running behind their volumes releasing dates. Beside the pressure from the authorities of time line it is moral duty of them to evaluate their research on originality and also encourage the design process with the use of original idea and theme. The design educational setup also put attention consciously in producing new designers with the essence of ethics in terms of plagiarism that helps in reducing the content of plagiarism.

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