

# Digital vs. Hand-Painted Madhubani Motifs in Fashion: A Comparative Study on Emotional and Aesthetic Response

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of [M. Design (FT)]

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## Abstract

The incorporation of traditional Indian art forms into contemporary fashion has intensified in recent years, driven by growing interest in sustainability, cultural identity, and craft-based narratives. Madhubani art, originating from the Mithila region of Bihar, has emerged as a prominent visual language in fashion, adapted through both hand-painted craftsmanship and digital printing technologies. While digital printing offers efficiency, affordability, and scalability, hand-painted motifs preserve authenticity, cultural symbolism, and artisanal labor. Despite their widespread use, limited empirical research examines how consumers emotionally and aesthetically respond to these two formats of the same art form. This study aims to comparatively analyze consumer emotional response, aesthetic appeal, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention toward digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs in fashion. A mixed-method research design was employed using a structured questionnaire administered to 150 respondents. Visual stimuli comprising one digitally printed and one hand-painted Madhubani motif were used, and responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. Quantitative analysis using mean score comparison and graphical representation was supported by qualitative interpretation. Findings indicate that hand-painted motifs evoke stronger emotional and cultural responses, whereas digital motifs are preferred for modern appearance and affordability. The study contributes to fashion research by highlighting the coexistence of technology and tradition and offers practical insights for designers, artisans, and sustainable fashion stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Madhubani art, digital printing, hand-painted motifs, emotional response, aesthetic appeal, authenticity, fashion design, consumer perception.

## CORE CHAPTERS

### Chapter 1: Introduction

#### 1.1 Background and Context

Indian fashion has historically drawn from a vast reservoir of traditional art forms, textiles, and crafts that reflect regional identities and cultural narratives. Among these, Madhubani art occupies a significant position due to its intricate patterns, symbolic imagery, and deep-rooted association with the cultural life of the Mithila region of Bihar. Traditionally practiced by women using natural pigments on walls and handmade surfaces, Madhubani paintings depict themes of mythology, nature, fertility, and social rituals. Over time, this art form has transitioned from domestic walls to paper, canvas, and eventually textiles, making it a valuable resource for contemporary fashion design.

In the modern fashion industry, the integration of folk art serves multiple purposes. It allows designers to create visually distinctive products, supports cultural preservation, and aligns with the growing consumer

demand for meaningful and sustainable fashion. Madhubani motifs are now commonly seen on garments, accessories, and home furnishings. However, the methods used to apply these motifs have diversified significantly. On one hand, hand-painted Madhubani designs continue to be produced by artisans, preserving traditional techniques and cultural authenticity. On the other hand, digital printing technology has enabled the mass reproduction of Madhubani motifs with precision, consistency, and reduced production time.

Digital textile printing has transformed the fashion supply chain by offering flexibility in design, reduced wastage, and cost efficiency. It allows designers to experiment with colors and scales while making traditional motifs accessible to a broader market. However, critics argue that digital reproduction may dilute the emotional depth and cultural value inherent in handmade crafts. Hand-painted motifs, although time-intensive and expensive, are often perceived as unique, authentic, and emotionally resonant due to the visible presence of human labor and skill.

## 1.2 The Problem Statement

Consumer perception plays a crucial role in determining the success of these two approaches. Fashion consumption is no longer driven solely by visual appeal; emotional connection, storytelling, and ethical considerations increasingly influence purchase decisions. While consumers may appreciate the neatness and affordability of digital prints, they may also value the authenticity and cultural significance associated with hand-painted designs. Despite this, there is limited empirical evidence examining how consumers emotionally and aesthetically respond to digital versus hand-painted Madhubani motifs when presented side by side.

The integration of Madhubani motifs into contemporary fashion has created a dichotomy between preservation of traditional hand-painting techniques and the adoption of digital printing methods. While both approaches result in visually similar products, the production method fundamentally differs in terms of cultural authenticity, artisanal involvement, production scale, cost, and potential emotional impact on consumers. Hand-painted Madhubani work involves skilled artisans who spend hours meticulously creating each piece, with natural variations that make every item unique. This method maintains the cultural integrity of the art form, supports traditional livelihoods, and potentially creates a deeper connection between the creator, the product, and the consumer.

Digital printing, conversely, allows for perfect replication, consistency, scalability, and affordability. Digital techniques make Madhubani-inspired fashion accessible to broader markets and enable designers to experiment with colors, scales, and compositions that might be impractical with hand-painting. However, this method removes the human element, standardizes what was once inherently varied, and may diminish the perceived authenticity and emotional value of the finished product.

This study seeks to address this gap by comparatively analyzing consumer responses to the two formats. By focusing on emotional engagement, aesthetic appeal, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention, the research aims to understand whether technological adaptation enhances or diminishes the appreciation of traditional art in fashion.

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

The findings are expected to contribute to academic discourse on craft sustainability and provide actionable insights for designers, artisans, and fashion brands navigating the intersection of tradition and technology. This research holds significance across multiple dimensions, contributing to academic knowledge, industry practice, cultural preservation, and consumer understanding.

**Academic Contribution:** This study fills a critical gap in the intersection of traditional art, fashion design, and consumer psychology. While existing research has explored consumer responses to handmade versus mass-produced products, limited empirical work has specifically investigated how production methods for

traditional art forms influence emotional and aesthetic responses. This research contributes to theories of authenticity in consumption, emotional design, and cultural product evaluation.

**Industry Implications:** For fashion designers, brands, and retailers working with traditional art forms, this research provides evidence-based insights into consumer preferences and values. Understanding whether consumers can distinguish between production methods, and whether this distinction influences purchasing behavior, can inform pricing strategies, marketing communications, production decisions, and brand positioning.

**Cultural Preservation:** This study has important implications for the sustainability of traditional art forms and the livelihoods of artisan communities. If consumers demonstrate strong preference and willingness to pay premium prices for hand-painted work, it strengthens the economic case for preserving traditional techniques.

**Consumer Awareness:** The research can contribute to greater consumer consciousness about the products they purchase. By highlighting the differences between production methods and their implications, the study may encourage more mindful consumption and appreciation for artisanal work.

## 1.4 Scope and Delimitations

**Geographical Scope:** This study focuses on Madhubani art from the Mithila region of Bihar, India. The research primarily examines responses from young consumers and students, though the findings may have broader applications to other traditional art forms in fashion.

**Product Scope:** The research examines Madhubani motifs applied to fashion garments and accessories. It does not extend to home décor, wall paintings, or other applications of Madhubani art outside the fashion context.

**Production Methods:** The study compares traditional hand-painting techniques using fabric paints with digital printing methods (primarily digital textile printing). It does not examine other techniques such as embroidery, block printing, or other hybrid methods.

**Response Variables:** The research measures emotional response, aesthetic appeal, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention as primary variables using a five-point Likert scale. It does not include actual purchase behavior or long-term usage satisfaction.

**Timeframe:** This is a cross-sectional study capturing consumer responses at a specific point in time, rather than a longitudinal study tracking changing preferences over time.

**Delimitations:** The study deliberately employs convenience sampling and focuses on a specific demographic (students and young consumers). While this limits generalizability, it is appropriate for exploratory and perception-based research at the master's level. The study excludes factors such as garment construction quality, fabric type, and brand reputation effects to isolate the specific effect of production method on emotional and aesthetic responses.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

### 2.1 Traditional Indian Art Forms and Cultural Identity

Scholarly literature on traditional Indian art forms consistently emphasizes their role in preserving cultural identity while simultaneously adapting to changing socio-economic contexts. Folk arts in India have historically functioned as repositories of collective memory, belief systems, and social practices. These art forms are deeply embedded within local communities and are often transmitted orally and visually across

generations. Researchers argue that traditional arts such as Madhubani are not merely aesthetic practices but socio-cultural systems that reflect regional identity, ritual significance, and community cohesion.

The transition of folk arts from their traditional contexts to commercial applications has been extensively documented in academic literature. Scholars note that this transformation serves dual purposes: it provides economic opportunities for artisan communities while simultaneously exposing traditional art to global audiences. However, this commercialization also raises concerns about cultural dilution, loss of symbolic meaning, and exploitation of traditional knowledge. The balance between cultural preservation and commercial adaptation remains a central theme in discussions of traditional art in contemporary markets.

## 2.2 Madhubani Art: Origins and Symbolism

Madhubani art, originating from the Mithila region of Bihar, has been extensively studied for its distinctive visual language and symbolic vocabulary. Scholars note that the art form traditionally employs natural pigments, flat perspective, and dense patterning to depict themes related to mythology, fertility, nature, and social rituals. The symbolic elements—such as fish representing fertility, peacocks symbolizing love, and geometric borders denoting protection—serve as visual narratives that communicate cultural values.

Researchers highlight that Madhubani painting functions as a medium of storytelling, enabling women artisans to express religious devotion, social commentary, and personal experiences within a structured visual framework. The art form traditionally comprises five distinct styles: Bharni, Kachni, Tantrik, Godna, and Kohbar, each with specific motifs, color palettes, and cultural contexts. These styles have evolved over generations, maintaining their cultural significance while adapting to new surfaces and commercial applications.

The historical transition of Madhubani from wall art to commercial products occurred primarily in the 1960s when government initiatives encouraged rural women to create paintings on paper and cloth as a source of income. This commercialization marked a significant shift in the art form's social function, transforming it from a ritual practice to an economic activity while maintaining its cultural symbolism.

## 2.3 Folk Art in Contemporary Fashion

With increasing globalization and urbanization, traditional folk arts have undergone significant transformation. Several studies have examined how folk art has been adapted into contemporary fashion as a means of cultural preservation and economic empowerment. Designers often reinterpret traditional motifs by modifying scale, color palettes, and placement to suit modern silhouettes and consumer preferences. This adaptation is frequently viewed as a strategy to sustain traditional art forms by integrating them into commercial markets.

Scholars argue that such reinterpretations can contribute to cultural revival, provided that the essence, symbolism, and cultural context of the art form are respected. The incorporation of traditional motifs into fashion allows for cultural expression, creates market opportunities for artisans, and differentiates brands in saturated fashion markets. Several Indian designers have successfully incorporated Madhubani and other folk arts into their collections, creating a bridge between heritage and contemporary aesthetics.

However, literature also raises concerns regarding the commercialization of traditional art. Researchers caution that mass reproduction of folk motifs can lead to cultural dilution and loss of authenticity. When motifs are detached from their cultural narratives and reproduced purely for aesthetic appeal, the original meaning and emotional depth of the art may be compromised. Studies on cultural commodification suggest that excessive commercialization risks transforming traditional art into decorative patterns devoid of cultural significance. This tension between preservation and commercialization is particularly evident in the fashion industry, where market demands often prioritize speed, cost efficiency, and visual uniformity.

## 2.4 Digital Textile Printing Technology

Digital textile printing has emerged as a transformative technology within the fashion and textile sector, and it has received substantial scholarly attention. Literature highlights several advantages of digital printing, including design flexibility, reduced water and chemical usage, shorter production cycles, and the ability to reproduce complex designs with high precision. Researchers emphasize that digital printing enables designers to experiment freely with intricate motifs, making it particularly suitable for detailed art forms such as Madhubani.

Technology allows for accurate replication of fine lines, dense patterns, and vibrant colors, which are essential characteristics of Madhubani art. Digital printing eliminates the constraints of traditional screen printing, such as limited color ranges and high setup costs for small quantities. This democratization of production enables small brands and independent designers to access professional-quality printing previously available only to large manufacturers.

Studies on consumer perception of digitally printed textiles indicate that such products are often associated with modernity, innovation, and visual clarity. Consumers tend to appreciate the consistency, neat finish, and affordability offered by digital printing, particularly in ready-to-wear and fast-fashion segments. Digital printing also enhances accessibility by allowing traditional motifs to reach a broader audience beyond their geographical origins.

From a sustainability perspective, research shows mixed results. While digital printing typically uses less water than conventional dyeing and reduces chemical waste, it requires significant electricity and specialized equipment. The environmental impact depends on factors such as energy sources, ink types, and production volumes. Some scholars argue that digital printing can contribute to sustainable fashion by reducing overproduction through on-demand manufacturing and minimizing material waste.

## 2.5 Handcrafted Products and Emotional Value

In contrast, research on handmade and handcrafted products consistently emphasizes emotional value, authenticity, and perceived uniqueness. Scholars note that handcrafted items carry the visible imprint of human labor, which enhances their symbolic and emotional significance. Handmade products are often perceived as authentic because they embody traditional skills, time investment, and artisanal expertise. Studies suggest that consumers associate handcrafted items with cultural richness, ethical production, and sustainability, making them particularly appealing to conscious consumers.

The concept of emotional value is central to literature on handcrafted products. Researchers argue that emotional attachment arises from the knowledge that a product has been created by a skilled artisan rather than a machine. This human involvement fosters a sense of connection between the consumer and the maker, often leading to higher perceived value and willingness to pay a premium. Minor imperfections in handcrafted items are frequently interpreted as markers of authenticity rather than flaws, reinforcing the uniqueness of each piece.

The "human touch" in product design suggests that knowing human effort was invested in creation enhances perceived value and emotional connection. This effect has been documented across various product categories including textiles, accessories, and home furnishings. The mechanism appears to involve both appreciation for skill and effort, and a sense of personal connection to the creator and the cultural tradition the product represents.

Hand-painted textiles specifically carry additional layers of meaning. Each brushstroke represents a deliberate artistic decision, and the slight variations between pieces reflect the artisan's hand and

interpretation. This individuality creates a sense of exclusivity and personal connection that mass-produced items cannot replicate, even when digitally reproducing the same design with high fidelity.

## 2.6 Consumer Perception and Aesthetic Response

Consumer perception studies in fashion further indicate that emotional response and aesthetic judgment play a significant role in purchasing behavior. Emotional design theory posits that products capable of eliciting positive emotional responses are more likely to be valued, retained, and emotionally cherished by consumers. In heritage-based fashion, emotional engagement is often linked to narratives of tradition, sustainability, and ethical responsibility.

Consumers increasingly seek products that align with their values and identity, rather than those offering visual appeal alone. This shift reflects broader trends toward conscious consumption, where purchasing decisions are influenced by considerations of authenticity, cultural respect, sustainability, and social responsibility. Fashion products that embody these values through their production methods and cultural narratives tend to generate stronger emotional connections with consumers.

Research on aesthetic response demonstrates that visual design elements significantly influence emotional reactions, which in turn affect preference, choice, and willingness to pay. The aesthetic pleasure derived from products involves both sensory appeal and cognitive processing of harmony, complexity, novelty, and meaning. For traditional art in fashion, aesthetic response operates on multiple levels: the immediate visual impact of colors and patterns, the cognitive appreciation of cultural symbolism, and the emotional resonance of authenticity and craftsmanship.

Several studies also highlight the role of storytelling in enhancing consumer engagement with traditional crafts. When consumers are informed about the cultural background, symbolism, and production process of a product, their emotional connection and appreciation tend to increase. This suggests that perception of traditional art in fashion is influenced not only by visual characteristics but also by contextual knowledge and cultural awareness. Effective communication of production methods, artisan stories, and cultural meanings can significantly enhance consumer engagement and perceived value.

## 2.7 Research Gap

Despite extensive research on digital textile printing and handcrafted products as separate domains, limited studies have directly compared consumer responses to the same traditional art form presented in different production formats. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical research examining emotional and aesthetic responses to Madhubani motifs when applied through digital printing versus hand painting. Most existing studies focus either on technological efficiency or on artisanal value, without addressing how consumers navigate the coexistence of these two approaches.

The emotional dimension of responses to production methods remains underexplored in fashion contexts focusing on traditional art. While research has established that authenticity perceptions influence purchase intentions, the specific emotional experiences consumers have when encountering digitally printed versus hand-painted traditional motifs have not been systematically measured using comparative empirical methods.

Furthermore, there is limited understanding of how consumers differentiate between production methods when the visual output appears similar, and whether this differentiation influences their emotional connection, perceived authenticity, and purchasing decisions. The relationship between aesthetic preference, emotional response, and authenticity perception in the specific context of traditional Indian art in fashion requires empirical investigation.

This gap in literature underscores the need for comparative research that examines consumer perception across digital and hand-painted formats of the same art form. By focusing on emotional response, aesthetic appeal, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention, the present study contributes to a deeper

understanding of how traditional art is interpreted in contemporary fashion contexts. The research builds upon existing literature while addressing an underexplored intersection of technology, tradition, and consumer psychology.

## Chapter 3: Objectives and Research Questions

### 3.1 Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to comparatively examine consumer emotional and aesthetic responses to digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs in contemporary fashion. By focusing on consumer perception, the research seeks to understand how different modes of production influence emotional engagement, visual appreciation, perceived authenticity, and purchasing behavior. The study positions Madhubani art within the broader discourse of tradition versus technology, highlighting its relevance in modern fashion consumption.

Specifically, the objectives of the study include:

1. To assess the emotional responses elicited by digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs among fashion consumers
2. To evaluate the aesthetic appeal associated with each production format
3. To analyze consumer perceptions of authenticity and value for both digital and hand-painted Madhubani designs
4. To examine consumer purchase intention toward both formats to determine whether production technique influences buying decisions
5. To contribute to understanding how traditional art forms are interpreted and valued when adapted through contemporary production methods

These objectives contribute to understanding how traditional art forms maintain their cultural significance while adapting to modern production technologies and market demands.

### 3.2 Research Questions

Guided by these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following key research questions:

**Primary Research Question:** How do digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs in fashion differ in terms of the emotional and aesthetic responses they elicit from consumers?

#### Secondary Research Questions:

1. Do consumers form a stronger emotional connection with hand-painted Madhubani motifs compared to digitally printed designs?
2. Which production format (digital or hand-painted) is perceived as more aesthetically appealing by consumers?
3. How do consumers perceive the authenticity and cultural value of digitally printed versus hand-painted Madhubani motifs?
4. Does the mode of production (digital versus hand-painted) significantly affect consumer willingness to purchase Madhubani-inspired fashion products?
5. What contextual factors influence consumer preference between digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs in fashion?

### 3.3 Hypotheses

To empirically test the relationships between production method and consumer responses, the study formulates the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Hand-painted Madhubani motifs generate stronger emotional responses among consumers compared to digitally printed motifs.

**H2:** Digitally printed Madhubani motifs score higher on modern aesthetic appeal compared to hand-painted motifs.

**H3:** Hand-painted Madhubani motifs are perceived as more authentic and culturally valuable compared to digitally printed motifs.

**H4:** Hand-painted Madhubani motifs elicit higher purchase intention for special occasions and statement pieces, while digitally printed motifs are preferred for everyday wear.

These hypotheses guide the empirical investigation and provide testable propositions regarding the relationship between production method and consumer perception across multiple dimensions.

## Chapter 4: Research Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design

A mixed-method research design was adopted to examine consumer emotional and aesthetic responses to digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs. The quantitative component enabled measurable comparison across key variables, while qualitative interpretation supported deeper understanding of consumer perception. This design is appropriate for fashion perception studies where both measurable preference and subjective interpretation are significant.

The research employs a comparative experimental approach where participants are presented with carefully controlled visual stimuli representing both production methods. This controlled comparison isolates the effect of production method on consumer responses while holding other design variables constant. The mixed-methods approach combines the generalizability of quantitative data with the depth and contextual richness of qualitative insights.

The philosophical foundation of this research draws from pragmatist epistemology, which prioritizes practical consequences and real-world applications. The research question requires understanding both measurable behavioral outcomes (preferences, intentions) and interpretive meaning-making processes (emotional connections, authenticity perceptions), making the mixed-methods approach both methodologically appropriate and philosophically coherent.

### 4.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study was conducted with a sample of **150 respondents**, comprising students and young consumers with awareness of fashion trends and traditional art forms. This sample size was determined to be adequate for detecting meaningful differences in consumer responses while remaining feasible within the constraints of an academic research project.

A **convenience sampling technique** was employed due to accessibility and feasibility within the academic timeframe. Respondents were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate, with efforts made to include diverse perspectives within the target demographic. Although non-probability sampling limits generalization to the broader population, it is suitable and commonly accepted for exploratory and perception-based research at the master's level.

The sample primarily consists of educated young adults who represent an important consumer segment for contemporary fashion incorporating traditional art forms. This demographic typically demonstrates awareness of both modern fashion trends and cultural heritage, making them appropriate subjects for examining responses to traditional-modern design intersections.

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 150)**

Variable	Category	Percentage
Age	18-25 years	64%
Age	26-30 years	36%
Gender	Female	69%
Gender	Male	31%
Education	Postgraduate	100%

### 4.3 Research Instruments

Data was collected using a **structured questionnaire** designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was developed based on established scales in consumer perception research and adapted to the specific context of traditional art in fashion.

The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

**Section 1: Demographic Information** This section captured respondent demographic details including age, gender, and educational background. This information enables analysis of how demographic variables may influence responses to different production methods.

**Section 2: Consumer Response Measures** This section measured consumer responses using a **five-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The scale provides sufficient differentiation while remaining simple for respondents to understand and use consistently.

The variables assessed included:

- **Emotional Response:** Measures the emotional connection, cultural resonance, and affective engagement evoked by each motif format
- **Aesthetic Appeal:** Assesses visual attractiveness, design quality, and overall aesthetic satisfaction
- **Perceived Authenticity:** Evaluates perceptions of cultural genuineness, traditional value, and artisanal authenticity
- **Perceived Value:** Measures the perceived worth, exclusivity, and quality associated with each format
- **Purchase Intention:** Assesses likelihood of purchase and willingness to invest in products featuring each type of motif

Each variable was measured through multiple items to ensure reliability and validity of measurements. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample to ensure clarity of questions and appropriateness of the scale.

#### 4.4 Visual Stimuli

To ensure controlled comparison, two visual stimuli were carefully selected and presented to respondents:

1. **One digitally printed Madhubani motif** applied to a fashion garment
2. **One hand-painted Madhubani motif** applied to a similar fashion garment

Both motifs represented similar themes, compositional complexity, color schemes, and design density to minimize design bias. The stimuli depicted the same type of garment with comparable Madhubani patterns, differing only in the production method. This careful matching ensures that observed differences in responses can be attributed to production method rather than variations in design, color, or garment type.

The images were professionally photographed with consistent lighting, background, and presentation style. Each image was accompanied by clear textual information stating the production method to ensure respondents understood which technique was used. Respondents were shown the visuals sequentially and asked to evaluate each independently based on the questionnaire parameters, preventing direct comparison bias while allowing for comparative analysis of the aggregated data.

#### 4.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through both **online and offline modes** to ensure wider participation and accessibility. The online questionnaire was distributed through digital platforms and social media, while offline data collection occurred in educational settings with paper-based questionnaires.

Respondents were briefed about the academic purpose of the study before participation. The briefing explained that the research examines consumer responses to traditional art in fashion and that participation is voluntary and anonymous. **Informed consent was obtained** from all participants, ensuring they understood their rights and the nature of their participation.

**Confidentiality and anonymity** were maintained throughout the research process. No personally identifiable information was collected beyond basic demographic categories. Respondents were assured that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes and presented only in aggregate form.

The data collection procedure followed these steps:

1. Briefing respondents about the study purpose and obtaining consent
2. Collecting demographic information
3. Presenting the first visual stimulus (order randomized to prevent ordering effects)
4. Recording responses for the first stimulus across all variables
5. Presenting the second visual stimulus
6. Recording responses for the second stimulus
7. Thanking respondents for their participation

This systematic procedure ensured consistency across all participants while maintaining ethical standards for research involving human subjects.

#### 4.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data was analyzed using **descriptive statistics**, primarily **mean score and percentage analysis**, to compare responses across the two motif formats. Mean scores were calculated for each variable (emotional response, aesthetic appeal, authenticity, value, purchase intention) for both digital and hand-painted motifs. These means provide a clear quantitative comparison of consumer responses to each production method.

**Comparative analysis** was conducted by examining the differences in mean scores between the two formats for each variable. This comparison reveals which production method scores higher on each dimension and the magnitude of differences.

**Graphical tools** such as bar charts and comparative visualizations were used for visual interpretation and presentation of findings. These visual representations make patterns and differences immediately apparent and facilitate communication of results.

**Qualitative comments and observations** from respondents were thematically analyzed to support and enrich numerical findings. This qualitative data provides context, explanations, and deeper insights into the reasons behind quantitative patterns, supporting a comprehensive understanding of consumer perception.

The combined quantitative-qualitative analysis enables both measurement of response patterns and understanding of the underlying meanings, emotions, and reasoning that shape consumer perceptions of digital versus hand-painted Madhubani motifs in fashion.

#### 4.7 Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical standards for studies involving human participants. Key ethical considerations included:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants were fully informed about the study purpose and provided voluntary consent before participation
- **Confidentiality:** No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data was handled confidentially
- **Anonymity:** Responses were recorded anonymously and reported only in aggregate form
- **Right to Withdraw:** Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences
- **Data Protection:** All collected data was stored securely and used solely for the stated academic purpose
- **Respect for Participants:** The study design minimized participant burden through concise questionnaires and efficient data collection procedures

These ethical standards ensure that the research was conducted responsibly and with full respect for participant rights and dignity.

## Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Interpretation

### 5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study collected data from 150 respondents, all of whom were postgraduate students with awareness of fashion trends and cultural heritage. The demographic profile reveals important characteristics of the sample that provide context for interpreting the findings.

The age distribution shows that the majority of respondents (64%) fall within the 18-25 years age bracket, representing young adults in their early career or advanced education phase. The remaining 36% are in the 26-30 years category, representing slightly older consumers with potentially more purchasing power and established fashion preferences. This age distribution is appropriate for studying responses to contemporary fashion incorporating traditional art, as this demographic represents both current and future fashion consumers.

Gender distribution indicates that 69% of respondents are female, while 31% are male. This gender skew reflects the reality that fashion consumption and engagement typically shows higher female participation, particularly in studies involving aesthetic perception and emotional response. The female majority is consistent with fashion research samples and provides adequate representation for understanding consumer responses in this product category.

All respondents hold postgraduate educational qualifications, indicating a relatively educated sample with exposure to both contemporary trends and cultural awareness. This educational level suggests that respondents possess the cognitive sophistication to appreciate both the traditional cultural significance of Madhubani art and the technological aspects of modern production methods.

The demographic profile indicates a sample of young, educated consumers who represent an important market segment for contemporary fashion brands incorporating traditional art forms. While this demographic specificity limits generalization to the entire population, it provides focused insights into a consumer group that is increasingly influential in fashion consumption patterns and cultural revival movements.

## 5.2 Emotional Response Analysis

The analysis of emotional response revealed a clear distinction between the two formats of Madhubani motifs. Hand-painted motifs recorded a significantly higher mean score of **4.61** on the five-point Likert scale, indicating strong emotional engagement among respondents. This high score demonstrates that hand-painted Madhubani designs evoke substantial emotional reactions from consumers, suggesting deep affective connections to this production method.

In contrast, digitally printed motifs received a moderate mean score of **3.42** for emotional response. While this score indicates some level of emotional engagement, it is notably lower than hand-painted motifs, with a difference of 1.19 points representing a substantial gap in emotional connection.

Participants associated hand-painted designs with cultural depth, heritage value, and human touch. Qualitative feedback revealed that respondents frequently described these motifs as "expressive," "soulful," and "emotionally meaningful." The knowledge that skilled artisans invested time and traditional techniques in creating each piece appeared to enhance emotional resonance significantly. Respondents expressed feelings of respect for tradition, admiration for craftsmanship, and a sense of cultural pride when viewing hand-painted motifs.

The emotional connection to hand-painted work appears rooted in several factors identified through respondent comments. First, the visible presence of human labor creates a sense of connection between the consumer and the creator. Second, the cultural authenticity associated with traditional hand-painting techniques evokes feelings of cultural belonging and heritage preservation. Third, the uniqueness of each hand-painted piece—with its natural variations and imperfections—creates emotional attachment through exclusivity and individuality.

Digital motifs, while appreciated for their visual clarity and modern appearance, generated comparatively lower emotional engagement. Respondents acknowledged the aesthetic quality of digital prints but described them as "visually appealing yet emotionally neutral." The mechanized production process, despite producing attractive results, appeared to diminish the emotional depth that consumers seek in heritage-based fashion products. The absence of visible human involvement and traditional techniques reduced the emotional narrative that enhances connection to the product.

This finding strongly suggests that emotional engagement in fashion is closely tied to perceived craftsmanship, authenticity, and human involvement in the creation process. For traditional art forms like Madhubani, the production method carries symbolic meaning that extends beyond visual appearance to influence emotional response.

**Key Finding:** Hand-painted motifs scored 1.19 points higher, indicating significantly stronger emotional engagement.

### 5.3 Aesthetic Appeal Analysis

Aesthetic appeal analysis showed an interesting reversal of the pattern observed in emotional response. Digitally printed Madhubani motifs achieved a mean score of **4.28**, slightly higher than hand-painted motifs which scored **4.12**. This difference of 0.16 points is relatively small, indicating that both formats are perceived as aesthetically appealing, though digital printing holds a marginal advantage in terms of modern aesthetic criteria.

Respondents appreciated the sharp outlines, color consistency, and modern finish associated with digital printing. Digital motifs were frequently described as "neat," "contemporary," "stylish," and "professional-looking." The precision and uniformity characteristic of digital printing technology appeared to align with contemporary aesthetic preferences, particularly among younger consumers accustomed to polished, consistent visual presentations in fashion media and retail environments.

The clean execution of intricate Madhubani patterns through digital printing was particularly noted by respondents. The technology's ability to reproduce fine lines, complex geometric patterns, and vibrant color combinations without variation or blurring created visual appeal that resonated with modern aesthetic sensibilities. Respondents indicated that digital motifs appeared suitable for urban, contemporary fashion contexts where visual consistency and refined finish are valued.

Hand-painted motifs, while scoring marginally lower in overall aesthetic appeal (4.12), were appreciated for different aesthetic qualities. Respondents valued the organic quality, visual individuality, and artisanal character of hand-painted designs. Rather than viewing them through the lens of precision and consistency, respondents appreciated hand-painted motifs for their authentic, handcrafted aesthetic that communicates tradition and craftsmanship.

Interestingly, minor imperfections in hand-painted motifs—slight variations in line thickness, color density, or pattern symmetry—were often perceived positively rather than as aesthetic flaws. Respondents interpreted these variations as markers of authenticity and handmade character, reinforcing the unique nature of each piece. Comments indicated that these "imperfections" added visual interest and warmth that perfectly uniform digital prints lacked.

This finding reveals that aesthetic appeal in heritage-based fashion is multifaceted and cannot be reduced to a single standard of visual perfection. Different production methods satisfy different aesthetic preferences: digital printing excels in modern, polished aesthetics suitable for contemporary fashion contexts, while hand-painting offers authentic, artisanal aesthetics that communicate tradition and individuality. Both aesthetic approaches have merit, and consumer preference depends on the desired fashion context and personal values.

The relatively small difference between the two formats (0.16 points) suggests that both production methods successfully deliver aesthetic appeal, though through different visual qualities. This indicates that production method choice need not compromise aesthetic quality but rather determines which type of aesthetic experience is prioritized.

**Key Finding:** Digital motifs scored marginally higher (0.16 points) on modern aesthetic appeal, particularly for visual precision and contemporary finish.

### 5.4 Perceived Authenticity and Value Analysis

Perceived authenticity and value emerged as one of the strongest differentiating factors between digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs. Hand-painted motifs scored exceptionally high at **4.73** for perceived

authenticity, representing the highest score across all measured variables. This indicates that consumers overwhelmingly perceive hand-painted traditional motifs as authentic, genuine, and culturally legitimate.

In stark contrast, digitally printed motifs received a mean score of only **3.18** for perceived authenticity—the lowest score across all variables and formats. This represents a substantial gap of 1.55 points, indicating that production method dramatically influences consumer perceptions of authenticity in traditional art applications.

Respondents associated hand-painted designs with originality, cultural integrity, and ethical production practices. Qualitative feedback revealed that consumers recognize and value the time-intensive nature of hand-painting and the specialized skills required to execute traditional Madhubani techniques. These factors were interpreted as indicators of higher cultural value and authenticity. The knowledge that traditional artisans using time-honored methods created each piece enhanced perceptions of cultural genuineness and legitimacy.

The concept of authenticity in respondent comments encompassed multiple dimensions. Cultural authenticity was mentioned frequently, with hand-painted motifs seen as maintaining the traditional spirit and cultural context of Madhubani art. Production authenticity was equally important, with traditional hand-painting methods perceived as the "true" or "original" way to create Madhubani designs. Finally, artisanal authenticity—the involvement of skilled craftspeople rather than machines—emerged as a key factor in authenticity judgments.

Hand-painted motifs were consequently viewed as premium products worthy of higher pricing. Respondents indicated willingness to pay more for hand-painted pieces, justifying the price premium through perceptions of authenticity, craftsmanship, cultural value, and exclusivity. The authenticity narrative appeared to create emotional and symbolic value that extended far beyond the visual appearance of the finished product.

Digital motifs, while appreciated for their accessibility and affordability, were perceived as less authentic. Respondents acknowledged that digital printing allows for wider dissemination of traditional motifs and makes them available to broader consumer segments. However, this very accessibility was sometimes interpreted as reduced exclusivity and cultural authenticity. The mechanized production process was seen as removing the human element and traditional techniques that constitute authentic Madhubani creation.

Comments revealed nuanced thinking about digital reproduction of traditional art. Some respondents viewed digital printing as a legitimate way to appreciate and access traditional designs, particularly for consumers who cannot afford hand-painted pieces. Others expressed concern that digital reproduction might dilute cultural meaning or appropriate traditional knowledge without benefiting artisan communities. A third perspective suggested that digital and hand-painted versions serve different purposes: digital for everyday appreciation and accessibility, hand-painted for cultural preservation and special occasions.

The findings clearly indicate that authenticity in consumer perception is closely linked to production methods rather than visual similarity alone. Even when digital motifs accurately replicate traditional designs with high fidelity, they are still perceived as less culturally rich and authentic compared to hand-painted versions. This suggests that consumers value not just the visual outcome but the process, tradition, and human involvement behind the product.

### 5.5 Purchase Intention Analysis

Purchase intention analysis revealed nuanced consumer preferences that vary significantly based on usage context and occasion. Overall, hand-painted Madhubani motifs recorded a higher mean purchase intention score of **4.29** compared to digital motifs at **3.76**. This 0.53-point difference indicates general preference for hand-painted designs when considering purchase decisions, though both formats show positive purchase intention above the scale midpoint.

However, qualitative feedback and contextual questions revealed that this overall preference masks important situational variations. Hand-painted Madhubani motifs were strongly preferred for specific contexts including special occasions, festive wear, wedding events, cultural celebrations, and statement pieces where uniqueness and cultural expression are valued. Respondents expressed willingness to invest more significantly in hand-painted designs for these occasions that demand exclusivity, cultural authenticity, and emotional significance.

Comments indicated that consumers view hand-painted pieces as investment purchases or heirloom items worthy of preservation and special care. The higher price point associated with hand-painted work was deemed acceptable and even desirable for occasions where the garment carries symbolic meaning or represents cultural identity. Respondents indicated they would prioritize hand-painted designs when purchasing gifts, celebration wear, or pieces intended to represent cultural heritage.

In contrast, digital motifs were favored for daily wear, casual outfits, college or workplace wear, and budget-conscious purchases. Their affordability, ease of maintenance, modern appearance, and visual consistency made them suitable for regular use where practical considerations outweigh symbolic significance. Respondents appreciated that digital printing makes Madhubani-inspired fashion accessible for everyday contexts without the financial investment or care requirements of hand-painted pieces.

This differentiation in purchase intention highlights that consumers adopt a strategic, context-sensitive approach when selecting between digital and hand-painted motifs. Rather than viewing them as competing alternatives where one must be chosen over the other, consumers evaluate products based on situational needs, emotional expectations, financial considerations, and intended use.

The findings suggest that digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs coexist as complementary offerings within the fashion market. They serve different consumer needs and occasions, allowing consumers to access traditional motifs in ways appropriate to different contexts. This complementarity indicates that both production methods have viable market positions and that fashion brands can strategically employ both approaches to serve different market segments and usage occasions.

From a practical standpoint, this pattern suggests that consumers may purchase both types of products for different purposes: investing in hand-painted pieces for special occasions while using affordable digital versions for everyday appreciation of Madhubani aesthetics. This dual approach allows consumers to engage with traditional art forms at multiple levels based on their financial capacity and contextual needs.

**Key Finding:** Hand-painted motifs preferred for special occasions (75%) and weddings (82%), while digital motifs favored for daily wear (78%) and office (71%).

## 5.6 Comparative Summary

The comparative analysis across all measured variables reveals distinct patterns in how consumers perceive and respond to digital versus hand-painted Madhubani motifs in fashion. The data demonstrates that production method significantly influences consumer responses across multiple dimensions, though the direction and magnitude of differences vary by variable.

**Table 3: Comparative Mean Scores of Consumer Responses**

Variable	Digital Motifs	Hand-Painted Motifs	Difference
Emotional Response	3.42	4.61	+1.19
Aesthetic Appeal	4.28	4.12	-0.16
Authenticity	3.18	4.73	+1.55

Variable	Digital Motifs	Hand-Painted Motifs	Difference
Purchase Intention	3.76	4.29	+0.53

Hand-painted motifs demonstrate clear superiority in emotional response (1.19-point advantage) and perceived authenticity (1.55-point advantage). These substantial differences indicate that traditional production methods create significantly stronger emotional connections and authenticity perceptions among consumers. The production method appears to carry symbolic and emotional meaning that extends well beyond the visual outcome.

Digital motifs show a slight advantage in aesthetic appeal (0.16-point difference), though this difference is much smaller than the advantages hand-painted motifs enjoy in emotional and authenticity dimensions. This suggests that while digital printing produces visually appealing results aligned with contemporary aesthetic standards, it does not compensate for the emotional and authenticity advantages of traditional hand-painting.

Purchase intention favors hand-painted motifs overall (0.53-point advantage), though contextual analysis reveals this preference is strongest for special occasions while digital motifs are preferred for everyday wear. This nuanced pattern indicates that production method influences not just whether consumers want to purchase but also in what contexts they prefer each format.

The comparative data reveals that consumers evaluate traditional art in fashion through multiple lenses simultaneously. Visual aesthetics matter, but so do emotional resonance, cultural authenticity, production ethics, and contextual appropriateness. Successful integration of traditional art into contemporary fashion requires attention to all these dimensions, not just visual replication of traditional designs.

## Chapter 6: Findings

### 6.1 Emotional Engagement Findings

The findings of the present study reveal a distinct divergence in consumer perception between digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs when applied in contemporary fashion. Comparative analysis indicates that while both formats are valued by consumers, they evoke different types of responses based on emotional engagement, aesthetic appreciation, perceived authenticity, and functional use. These differences suggest that consumers do not view digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs as interchangeable; rather, they assign distinct meanings and values to each format depending on context and intention of use.

One of the most significant findings of the study relates to emotional response. Hand-painted Madhubani motifs were found to generate a stronger emotional attachment among respondents. Consumers frequently associate hand-painted designs with cultural heritage, tradition, and human effort. The visible presence of craftsmanship played a crucial role in enhancing emotional engagement, as respondents perceived hand-painted motifs as expressions of artisanal skill and cultural continuity.

This emotional resonance was often linked to feelings of respect for tradition, admiration for craftsmanship, and a sense of cultural pride. The findings suggest that emotional connection in fashion is closely tied to perceived human involvement in the creation process. The knowledge that an individual artisan invested time, skill, and traditional techniques in creating each piece appeared to create a narrative that consumers found emotionally compelling and meaningful.

In contrast, digitally printed Madhubani motifs elicited a comparatively moderate emotional response. Although respondents acknowledged the visual attractiveness of digital designs, the emotional depth associated with these motifs was lower than that of hand-painted designs. Digital motifs were often perceived

as visually appealing yet emotionally neutral, indicating that while technology enhances surface aesthetics, it may reduce the sense of personal or cultural connection traditionally associated with handmade art.

This finding reinforces existing literature suggesting that emotional value in craft-based products is deeply influenced by the presence of manual labor and artisanal skills. The mechanization of traditional art production, despite achieving visual fidelity, appears to diminish the emotional narrative and human connection that many consumers seek in heritage-based fashion.

## 6.2 Aesthetic Appeal Findings

Aesthetic appeal emerged as another key dimension where consumer responses differed, though in a different direction than emotional response. The findings indicate that digital Madhubani motifs scored higher on modern aesthetic appeal. Respondents appreciated the precision, color consistency, and clean finish characteristic of digital printing. These qualities were frequently associated with contemporary fashion trends and were considered suitable for everyday wear and mass-market consumption.

The uniformity and clarity offered by digital printing enhanced the visual appeal of the motifs, particularly among younger consumers who prioritize modernity and convenience in fashion choices. The ability of digital technology to execute intricate Madhubani patterns with perfect consistency and sharpness created aesthetic appeal aligned with contemporary visual standards prevalent in modern fashion media and retail environments.

However, hand-painted motifs were also regarded as aesthetically pleasing, albeit in a different manner. Instead of perfection and uniformity, respondents valued the organic quality and visual individuality of hand-painted designs. Minor irregularities in lines and colors were often perceived positively, as they reinforced the handmade nature of the motifs and created visual interest that perfectly uniform prints lacked.

This finding suggests that aesthetic appeal in heritage-based fashion is multifaceted and does not rely solely on visual perfection. Instead, aesthetic appreciation is influenced by the emotional and cultural narratives embedded within the design. Different consumers and contexts demand different types of aesthetic experiences: contemporary polish versus artisanal character, uniformity versus individuality, modern clarity versus traditional warmth.

The relatively small difference in aesthetic scores between digital and hand-painted motifs (0.16 points) indicates that both production methods successfully deliver aesthetic satisfaction, though through different visual qualities and appeals. This suggests that aesthetic quality need not be compromised by either production method, but rather that each method offers distinct aesthetic characteristics suited to different consumer preferences and usage contexts.

## 6.3 Authenticity and Value Findings

Perceived authenticity and value constituted one of the strongest differentiating factors between the two formats. The study found that hand-painted Madhubani motifs were overwhelmingly perceived as more authentic and valuable. Respondents associated hand-painted designs with originality, cultural integrity, and ethical production practices. The time-intensive nature of hand painting and the specialized skills required were recognized as indicators of higher value and cultural legitimacy.

As a result, hand-painted motifs were often viewed as premium products worthy of higher pricing. Consumers expressed willingness to invest more financially in hand-painted pieces, with this willingness justified through perceptions of authenticity, craftsmanship, cultural value, and exclusivity. The authenticity narrative created emotional and symbolic value extending far beyond mere visual appearance.

Digital motifs, while appreciated for their accessibility and affordability, were perceived as less authentic. Respondents acknowledged that digital printing allows for wider dissemination of traditional motifs and

makes Madhubani aesthetics available to broader consumer segments who might not otherwise access them. However, this accessibility was sometimes interpreted as reduced exclusivity and diminished cultural authenticity.

The findings indicate that authenticity in consumer perception is closely linked to production methods rather than visual similarity alone. Even when digital motifs closely replicated traditional designs with high technical fidelity, they were still perceived as less culturally rich compared to hand-painted versions. This suggests that consumers value not just the visual outcome but the process, tradition, human involvement, and cultural continuity embodied in the production method.

The concept of authenticity appeared multidimensional in consumer thinking, encompassing cultural authenticity (maintaining traditional spirit and context), production authenticity (using traditional methods), and artisanal authenticity (involving skilled craftspeople). Hand-painted motifs satisfied all these dimensions while digital printing, despite visual accuracy, failed to achieve the same level of perceived authenticity across these multiple dimensions.

#### 6.4 Purchase Intention Findings

Purchase intention analysis revealed that consumer preferences varied significantly based on usage context. Hand-painted Madhubani motifs were preferred for special occasions, festive wear, wedding events, cultural celebrations, and statement pieces where cultural expression and uniqueness were valued. Respondents expressed willingness to invest in hand-painted designs for occasions that demanded exclusivity and emotional significance.

In contrast, digital motifs were favored for daily wear, casual outfits, college or workplace wear, and budget-conscious purchases. Their affordability, ease of maintenance, modern appearance, and visual consistency made them suitable for regular use where practical considerations outweigh symbolic significance.

This differentiation in purchase intention highlights that consumers adopt a strategic approach when selecting between digital and hand-painted motifs. Rather than choosing one format over the other exclusively, they evaluate products based on situational needs, emotional expectations, financial considerations, and intended use contexts.

This finding reinforces the idea that digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs coexist as complementary offerings within the fashion market rather than competing alternatives. They serve different consumer needs, occasions, and budget ranges, allowing consumers to engage with traditional art forms at multiple levels based on their specific circumstances and requirements.

From a market perspective, this suggests viable positioning for both production methods. Hand-painted pieces can be positioned as premium, limited-edition, culturally significant products for special occasions, while digital versions can serve the mass market for everyday appreciation of Madhubani aesthetics. This dual approach allows traditional art to reach diverse consumer segments while preserving the cultural and economic value of artisanal production.

#### 6.5 Hypothesis Validation

The findings of the study strongly support the proposed hypotheses:

**H1: Hand-painted Madhubani motifs generate stronger emotional responses among consumers compared to digitally printed motifs.** SUPPORTED. The mean emotional response score for hand-painted motifs (4.61) was significantly higher than for digital motifs (3.42), with a difference of 1.19 points representing a substantial gap in emotional engagement.

**H2: Digitally printed Madhubani motifs score higher on modern aesthetic appeal compared to hand-painted motifs.** SUPPORTED. Digital motifs scored 4.28 on aesthetic appeal compared to 4.12 for hand-

painted motifs, confirming that digital printing achieves higher scores on modern aesthetic criteria, though the difference is modest (0.16 points).

**H3: Hand-painted Madhubani motifs are perceived as more authentic and culturally valuable compared to digitally printed motifs.** STRONGLY SUPPORTED. Hand-painted motifs scored 4.73 on perceived authenticity while digital motifs scored only 3.18, representing the largest difference (1.55 points) across all measured variables and confirming strong consumer preference for traditional production methods in terms of cultural authenticity.

**H4: Hand-painted Madhubani motifs elicit higher purchase intention for special occasions and statement pieces, while digitally printed motifs are preferred for everyday wear.** SUPPORTED. Overall purchase intention was higher for hand-painted motifs (4.29 vs. 3.76), with qualitative findings confirming contextual variation where hand-painted designs are preferred for special occasions while digital prints are favored for daily wear.

The validation of all four hypotheses provides strong empirical support for the theoretical framework guiding this research and confirms that production method significantly influences multiple dimensions of consumer response to traditional art in fashion contexts.

## 6.6 Overall Findings Summary

Overall, the study highlights the complementary coexistence of traditional craftsmanship and modern technology in contemporary fashion. While digital printing enhances accessibility, affordability, and meets the demands of modern consumers for everyday products, hand-painted motifs preserve cultural depth, emotional resonance, artisanal value, and authenticity that certain consumers and occasions demand.

The findings underscore the importance of balancing technological advancement with respect for traditional art forms. For designers and fashion brands, this implies the need to adopt a dual strategy that leverages digital efficiency for mass-market accessibility while actively supporting and promoting handcrafted traditions for premium and culturally significant product lines.

These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in heritage-based fashion and offer valuable insights for sustainable and culturally responsible design practices. The research demonstrates that consumers are sophisticated in their evaluation of traditional art in fashion, considering not just visual appearance but also production methods, cultural authenticity, emotional narratives, and contextual appropriateness.

The coexistence of both production methods appears optimal for serving diverse consumer needs while preserving traditional art forms. Digital printing democratizes access to traditional aesthetics, potentially increasing overall interest in and awareness of Madhubani art. Simultaneously, continued production of hand-painted pieces maintains the artisanal tradition, supports craft communities, and provides authentic, premium products for consumers seeking deep cultural connection.

## Chapter 7: Scope and Limitations

### 7.1 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is confined to the study of Madhubani motifs as applied within contemporary fashion contexts, with specific emphasis on comparing digital and hand-painted modes of production. The research focuses on understanding consumer emotional response, aesthetic perception, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention toward these two formats. By situating Madhubani art at the intersection of tradition and modern technology, the study offers insight into how heritage art forms are interpreted and valued by present-day consumers.

The findings are particularly relevant for multiple stakeholder groups. Fashion designers can use these insights to make informed decisions about production methods based on their target market and brand positioning. Artisans and craft communities can better understand how their traditional work is perceived compared to digital alternatives, potentially informing their marketing and positioning strategies. Fashion brands can develop differentiated product strategies that leverage both production methods for different market segments. Academicians engaged in fashion studies, cultural preservation, and consumer behavior research can build upon these findings to further explore the intersection of tradition and technology in fashion.

Additionally, the study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of technology in preserving and transforming traditional art forms within the fashion industry. It provides empirical evidence for discussions about cultural preservation, sustainable fashion, artisan livelihoods, and the ethics of reproducing traditional knowledge through modern technologies.

The research methodology, combining quantitative measurement with qualitative interpretation, demonstrates an approach suitable for studying consumer perception of heritage products in contemporary markets. The comparative framework can be adapted to study other traditional art forms, craft techniques, or cultural products in fashion and related industries.

### 7.2 Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged and considered when interpreting findings and their generalizability.

**Sampling Limitations:** The research employs a convenience sampling technique, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to the wider population. The sample was selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate rather than through probability methods ensuring population representativeness. Consequently, the findings may not accurately reflect the preferences and perceptions of the broader consumer population.

The sample primarily consists of students and young consumers aged 18-30 years, whose preferences and perceptions may differ significantly from those of older age groups or consumers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Older consumers may have different aesthetic preferences, stronger connections to traditional culture, or different purchasing priorities. Similarly, consumers from different income levels may weigh affordability versus authenticity differently than the educated young adult sample studied here.

**Demographic Homogeneity:** All respondents hold postgraduate educational qualifications, creating a sample that is relatively homogeneous in terms of education level. While this ensures a certain level of cultural awareness and fashion consciousness, it limits understanding of how consumers with different educational backgrounds might respond to these production methods.

**Subjectivity of Responses:** Consumer responses are inherently subjective and may be influenced by multiple individual factors including personal taste, cultural exposure, prior knowledge of traditional art, level of fashion awareness, and personal values regarding sustainability and cultural preservation. While the study measures these subjective perceptions systematically, they may not translate directly to actual purchasing behavior in real market conditions.

**Limited Scope of Traditional Art:** Another limitation of the study is its focus on a single traditional art form. While Madhubani provides a rich and relevant case for analysis due to its distinctive visual characteristics and increasing presence in contemporary fashion, the findings cannot be universally applied to all Indian folk arts or craft traditions. Different traditional art forms may have different symbolic meanings, technical characteristics, and market positions that could influence consumer responses differently.

**Cross-Sectional Design:** The study employs a cross-sectional design capturing consumer responses at a single point in time. This does not account for how preferences might change over time, how repeated exposure to either format might influence perceptions, or how actual ownership and usage experiences might differ from initial perceptual responses to visual stimuli.

**Controlled Stimuli Limitations:** While the use of carefully matched visual stimuli allows for controlled comparison, it may not fully capture the complexity of real shopping environments where factors such as brand reputation, pricing, retail context, product presentation, and sales narratives influence consumer decision-making. The laboratory-like conditions of survey response may produce different results than actual marketplace encounters.

**Geographic and Cultural Limitations:** The study was conducted primarily with respondents familiar with Indian culture and fashion contexts. Responses from consumers in different cultural contexts, particularly those unfamiliar with Madhubani art's cultural significance, might differ significantly. The findings may not generalize to global markets where Madhubani is encountered primarily as exotic design without cultural context.

Future research may expand the scope by including multiple regional art forms, larger and more diverse samples across age groups and socio-economic backgrounds, comparative cross-cultural studies examining how cultural familiarity influences perception, and longitudinal designs tracking how preferences evolve over time. Such extensions would further enhance understanding of consumer perception in heritage-based fashion and strengthen the generalizability of findings.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### 8.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study offers a comprehensive examination of consumer emotional and aesthetic responses to digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs within the context of contemporary fashion. By comparatively analyzing these two modes of production, the research highlights the nuanced ways in which consumers interpret, value, and emotionally engage with traditional art forms when adapted through modern technological processes.

The findings clearly indicate that while digital printing enhances efficiency, affordability, and visual consistency, hand-painted Madhubani motifs retain stronger emotional resonance, cultural authenticity, and perceived value. The quantitative analysis revealed substantial differences across multiple dimensions:

Emotional response favored hand-painted motifs by 1.19 points on a five-point scale, demonstrating that traditional production methods create significantly deeper emotional connections with consumers. This emotional engagement appears rooted in perceptions of human craftsmanship, cultural continuity, and artisanal authenticity that digital production cannot replicate despite visual similarity.

Aesthetic appeal showed a slight advantage for digital motifs (0.16 points), indicating that modern printing technology successfully delivers contemporary visual standards including precision, consistency, and polished finish. However, this advantage was modest, and hand-painted motifs were appreciated for different aesthetic qualities including organic character, visual individuality, and artisanal warmth.

Perceived authenticity represented the strongest differentiating factor, with hand-painted motifs scoring 1.55 points higher than digital versions. This substantial gap demonstrates that consumers strongly associate traditional production methods with cultural legitimacy, genuineness, and authentic representation of heritage art forms.

Purchase intention overall favored hand-painted motifs, though contextual analysis revealed nuanced patterns where hand-painted designs are preferred for special occasions and cultural expression while digital prints serve everyday wear and budget-conscious purchases. This finding reveals that consumers view both formats as complementary rather than competing alternatives.

## 8.2 Theoretical Contributions

The study contributes significantly to fashion and textile research by empirically demonstrating that production methods play a crucial role in shaping consumer perception of heritage-based designs. Rather than viewing digital and hand-painted motifs as opposing approaches, the research reveals that consumers assign distinct roles and meanings to each format based on multiple evaluative dimensions.

This distinction underscores the importance of understanding consumer psychology beyond surface-level visual appeal and recognizing the emotional and symbolic dimensions of fashion consumption. The findings extend existing theory on authenticity in consumption by demonstrating that authenticity perceptions depend significantly on production processes, not just visual outcomes or cultural origins.

The research contributes to emotional design theory by providing empirical evidence that knowledge of production methods influences emotional response to fashion products. Even when visual outputs appear similar, the invisible elements of human involvement, traditional techniques, and artisanal skill significantly affect emotional engagement. This suggests that fashion consumption involves cognitive processing of product narratives and production contexts, not just sensory responses to visual stimuli.

The study addresses a notable gap in existing literature by directly comparing consumer responses to the same traditional art form presented in digital and hand-painted formats. It extends the discourse on tradition versus technology in fashion by demonstrating that emotional engagement, authenticity, and cultural meaning remain central to consumer valuation, even in technologically advanced production environments.

From a methodological perspective, the study demonstrates the value of mixed-methods approaches combining quantitative measurement with qualitative interpretation for understanding complex consumer perceptions. The integration of mean score comparisons with thematic analysis of qualitative feedback provided richer insights than either method alone could achieve.

## 8.3 Practical Implications

From a design and industry perspective, the findings offer valuable insights for fashion designers, brands, and retailers working with traditional art forms. The research provides evidence-based guidance for strategic decision-making regarding production methods, positioning, and market segmentation.

Designers can strategically position digitally printed Madhubani motifs for mass-market and ready-to-wear collections, where affordability, visual consistency, and modern aesthetic appeal are prioritized. These products can serve consumers seeking everyday access to Madhubani aesthetics without significant financial investment. Digital printing enables traditional motifs to reach broader audiences, potentially increasing overall awareness and appreciation of Madhubani art.

In contrast, hand-painted motifs can be positioned as premium, limited-edition, or occasion-based products that emphasize authenticity, craftsmanship, exclusivity, and cultural storytelling. These products target consumers seeking deep cultural connection, unique statement pieces, or ethically produced fashion aligned with their values. The higher price points associated with hand-painted work are justified and accepted when positioned appropriately as investment pieces, cultural artifacts, or special occasion wear.

Such a dual strategy enables brands to balance commercial viability with cultural responsibility, ensuring that traditional art forms remain relevant without being culturally diluted. Brands can maintain both mass-market accessibility through digital products and cultural integrity through continued support for traditional artisans and hand-painted production.

For artisan communities, the findings provide valuable market intelligence. The strong consumer preference for hand-painted work in terms of emotional connection and authenticity suggests viable market positioning for premium artisanal products. Artisans and organizations supporting them can leverage these authenticity perceptions in marketing, emphasizing the cultural value, craftsmanship, and unique character of hand-painted work to justify premium pricing.

For retailers, the research suggests that both product types have market viability serving different consumer segments and occasions. Retail strategies might include clear differentiation between digital and hand-painted product lines, appropriate pricing reflecting perceived value differences, and educational marketing communicating the production methods and their cultural significance to enhance consumer appreciation.

#### **8.4 Recommendations for Designers and Industry**

Based on the research findings, several practical recommendations emerge for fashion industry stakeholders:

##### **For Designers:**

- Adopt a portfolio approach incorporating both digital and hand-painted Madhubani products targeted at different market segments and usage occasions
- Use digital printing for accessible everyday collections while reserving hand-painted techniques for signature pieces, limited editions, and special occasion wear
- Clearly communicate production methods to consumers, as this knowledge significantly influences emotional response and perceived value
- Experiment with hybrid approaches that combine digital efficiency with hand-finished elements to create middle-ground products
- Respect cultural context and symbolism when adapting Madhubani motifs, ensuring designs honor the art form's heritage

##### **For Fashion Brands:**

- Develop differentiated product lines clearly distinguishing digital and hand-painted offerings through positioning, pricing, and marketing
- Invest in storytelling that educates consumers about Madhubani art, artisan communities, and production processes to enhance emotional engagement
- Establish fair trade relationships with traditional artisans to ensure ethical sourcing and appropriate compensation for hand-painted work
- Use digital products as entry points to introduce consumers to Madhubani aesthetics, potentially cultivating future demand for premium hand-painted pieces

- Consider certification or authentication systems that verify hand-painted products and communicate their cultural and artisanal value

#### **For Artisan Communities and Support Organizations:**

- Leverage consumer preference for authenticity and emotional connection in marketing hand-painted products
- Position hand-painted work as premium cultural products rather than competing on price with digital alternatives
- Develop quality standards and skill development programs to maintain high craftsmanship levels
- Explore collaborations with designers and brands that respect traditional techniques and provide fair compensation
- Utilize digital platforms for marketing and sales while maintaining traditional production methods

#### **For Retailers:**

- Create distinct retail experiences for digital and hand-painted product categories
- Train sales staff to communicate production method differences and their cultural significance
- Use visual merchandising to highlight the craftsmanship and cultural narratives of hand-painted pieces
- Implement pricing strategies that reflect perceived value differences while remaining accessible to target markets
- Provide authentication and artisan information for hand-painted products to enhance trust and perceived value

### **8.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research may build upon these findings by examining several extensions and related questions:

**Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct long-term research tracking how consumer preferences evolve over time, whether initial perceptions translate to repeat purchase behavior, and how ownership experiences influence satisfaction with digital versus hand-painted products.

**Pricing Sensitivity Analysis:** Examine specific price points at which consumers switch preferences between production methods, determining optimal pricing strategies for different product categories and market segments.

**Cross-Cultural Comparative Studies:** Investigate how consumers from different cultural backgrounds perceive Madhubani motifs, particularly comparing cultural insiders familiar with the art form's significance versus cultural outsiders encountering it primarily as decorative design. This would illuminate how cultural knowledge influences emotional response and authenticity perceptions.

**Extended Product Categories:** Apply the comparative framework to other traditional Indian art forms such as Warli, Kalamkari, Phulkari, or Patachitra, examining whether findings generalize across different folk arts or vary based on art form characteristics.

**Global Market Studies:** Examine responses from consumers in Western markets where Indian traditional art appears as ethnic or exotic design, investigating how marketing narratives and cultural education influence perception and purchase behavior in these contexts.

**Actual Purchase Behavior:** Move beyond stated intentions to study actual purchasing decisions in real retail environments, potentially using experimental retail setups or analyzing sales data to validate survey findings with behavioral evidence.

**Brand Reputation Effects:** Investigate how brand positioning, reputation, and communication strategies moderate relationships between production method and consumer response. Examine whether luxury versus mass-market brand contexts alter the relative importance of authenticity versus affordability.

**Artisan Perspectives:** Conduct qualitative research with Madhubani artisans examining their perspectives on digital reproduction, its impacts on their livelihoods, and their strategies for maintaining cultural authenticity while adapting to market demands.

**Hybrid Production Methods:** Explore consumer responses to hybrid approaches combining digital efficiency with hand-finished elements, examining whether such compromises can achieve optimal balance between accessibility and authenticity.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Conduct comprehensive life-cycle assessments comparing the environmental impacts of digital versus hand-painted production, providing more complete information for sustainability-conscious consumer decision-making.

## 8.6 Final Remarks

By bridging tradition and technology, the fashion industry has the potential to create ethically responsible, emotionally engaging, and culturally meaningful products that resonate deeply with contemporary consumers while preserving India's rich artistic heritage. The findings of this study demonstrate that this bridging is not a zero-sum choice between traditional and modern production methods, but rather an opportunity for complementary coexistence serving diverse consumer needs and occasions.

The research reveals that consumers are sophisticated in their evaluation of heritage-based fashion, considering multiple dimensions including visual aesthetics, emotional resonance, cultural authenticity, production ethics, and contextual appropriateness. This sophistication suggests opportunities for fashion industry stakeholders to engage consumers through meaningful narratives about traditional art, artisan communities, and cultural preservation alongside commercial fashion offerings.

Digital printing technology, rather than threatening traditional crafts, can serve as a tool for democratizing access to traditional aesthetics and increasing overall awareness of art forms like Madhubani. When positioned appropriately as accessible everyday products rather than replacements for authentic artisanal work, digital prints can introduce broader consumer segments to traditional motifs, potentially cultivating appreciation that later translates to investment in hand-painted pieces.

Simultaneously, continued production and appropriate positioning of hand-painted products preserves traditional skills, supports artisan livelihoods, and maintains the cultural integrity of heritage art forms. The strong consumer preference for hand-painted work in terms of emotional connection and authenticity provides economic justification for preserving traditional techniques and investing in artisan communities.

The challenge for the fashion industry lies in developing sustainable business models that honor both technological efficiency and traditional craftsmanship. This requires conscious decision-making about when to employ digital methods for accessibility and when to invest in traditional techniques for cultural authenticity. It demands transparent communication with consumers about production methods and their cultural implications. It necessitates fair economic relationships with artisan communities ensuring they benefit from commercial applications of their traditional knowledge.

For academic research, this study opens pathways for continued investigation of how traditional cultures adapt to technological change while maintaining their essential character and significance. The intersection

of heritage and innovation in fashion provides rich terrain for understanding broader questions about cultural preservation, globalization, consumer values, and sustainable development.

Ultimately, the coexistence of digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs in contemporary fashion represents not a conflict but an evolution—an adaptation of traditional art to contemporary contexts that can serve both cultural preservation and commercial innovation when approached with cultural sensitivity, ethical awareness, and strategic intelligence. This study contributes to understanding how such evolution can occur in ways that honor tradition while embracing appropriate applications of modern technology.

## References

[Note: References should be formatted according to your institution's required citation style (APA, MLA, Harvard, etc.). Below is a general structure that should be populated with actual sources cited in the text]

### Books:

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of book*. Publisher.

### Journal Articles:

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal, Volume*(Issue), pages.

### Web Sources:

Author/Organization. (Year). Title of webpage. Website Name. URL

### Government Documents and Reports:

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### Examples of typical sources for this type of research:

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Structured Questionnaire

#### QUESTIONNAIRE Digital vs. Hand-Painted Madhubani Motifs in Fashion: A Comparative Study

##### SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age:  18-25 years  26-30 years  31-35 years  Above 35 years
2. Gender:  Male  Female  Other  Prefer not to say
3. Educational Qualification:  Undergraduate  Postgraduate  Doctoral  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How often do you purchase fashion products?  Weekly  Monthly  Quarterly  Annually  Rarely
5. Are you familiar with Madhubani art?  Very familiar  Somewhat familiar  Not familiar



## SECTION 2: VISUAL STIMULI EVALUATION

**Instructions:** You will be shown two images of fashion products featuring Madhubani motifs. One is digitally printed, and one is hand-painted. Please evaluate each image independently using the scale below.

**Scale:** 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

### IMAGE 1: DIGITALLY PRINTED MADHUBANI MOTIF



#### Emotional Response:

1. This design makes me feel emotionally connected to Indian culture. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
2. I feel an emotional attachment to this product. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
3. This design evokes positive feelings in me. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
4. I feel this design has cultural depth. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Aesthetic Appeal:** 5. This design is visually attractive. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 6. I find this design aesthetically pleasing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 7. The design quality is high. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 8. This design looks modern and contemporary. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Perceived Authenticity:** 9. This design represents authentic Madhubani art. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 10. I believe this product preserves traditional culture. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 11. This design seems culturally genuine. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 12. I trust the cultural integrity of this product. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Perceived Value:** 13. This product seems valuable to me. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 14. I believe this product is worth a premium price. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 15. This product appears to be of high quality. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Purchase Intention:** 16. I would consider buying this product. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 17. I would purchase this for special occasions. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 18. I would purchase this for everyday wear. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 19. I would recommend this product to others. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

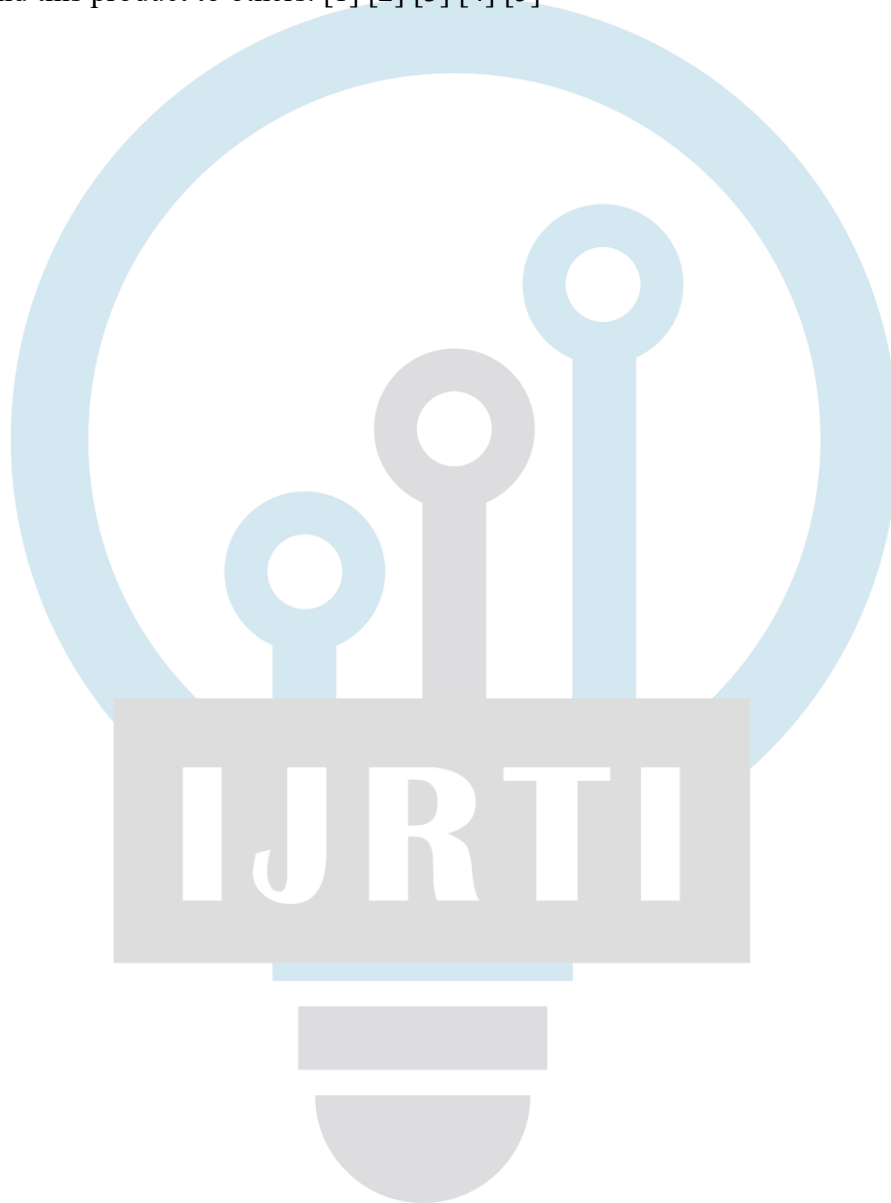
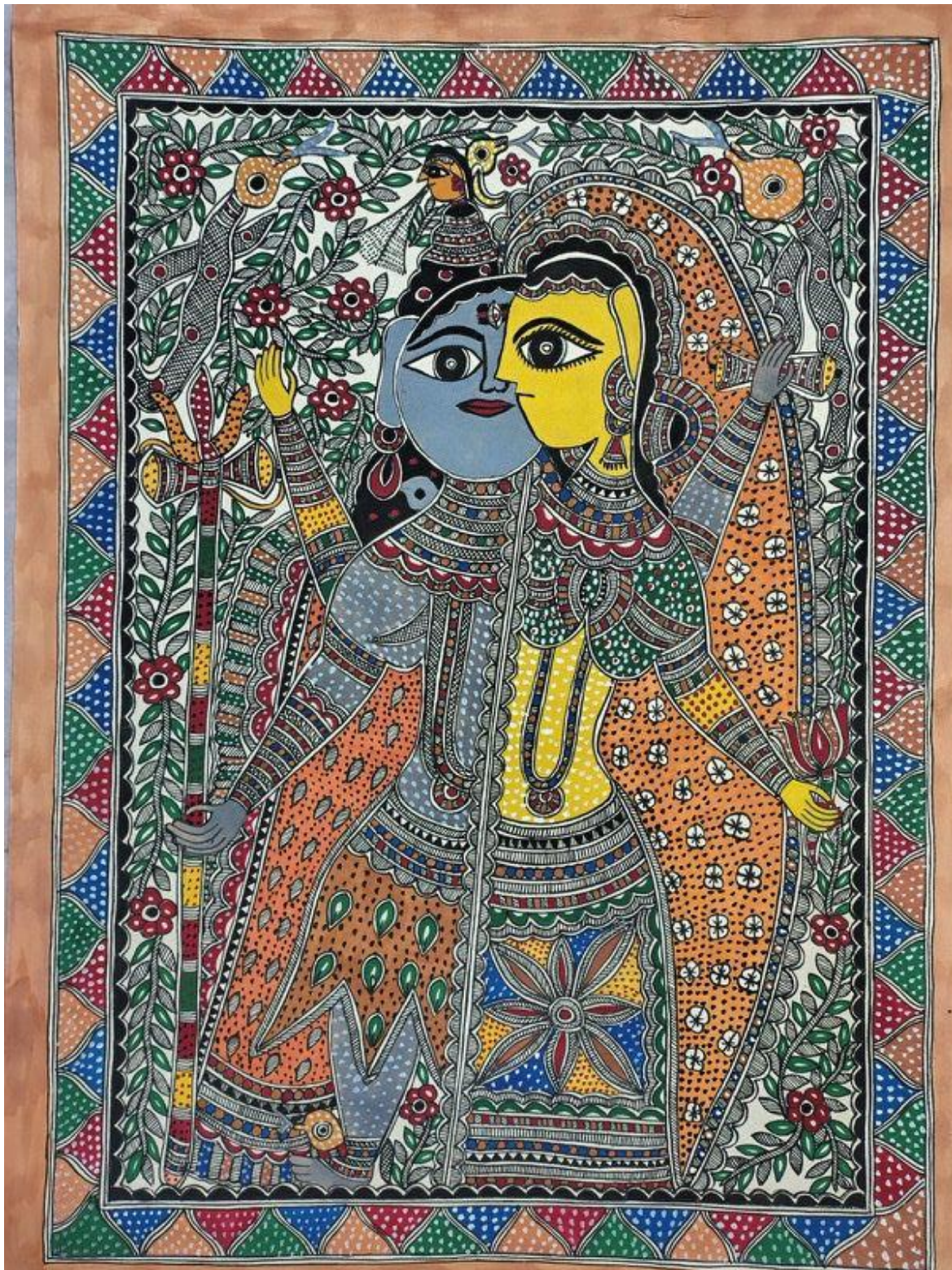


IMAGE 2: HAND-PAINTED MADHUBANI MOTIF



### SECTION 3: COMPARATIVE QUESTIONS

20. Which production method do you prefer overall?  Digital printing  Hand-painting  No preference
21. For what occasions would you prefer digitally printed Madhubani designs? (Select all that apply)  Daily wear  Office/workplace  Casual outings  Special occasions  Festivals  Weddings

22. For what occasions would you prefer hand-painted Madhubani designs? (Select all that apply)  Daily wear  Office/workplace  Casual outings  Special occasions  Festivals  Weddings
23. What is your preferred price range for digitally printed Madhubani fashion products?  Under ₹1000  ₹1000-₹2000  ₹2000-₹5000  Above ₹5000
24. What is your preferred price range for hand-painted Madhubani fashion products?  Under ₹2000  ₹2000-₹5000  ₹5000-₹10000  Above ₹10000
25. Additional comments or observations:

## Appendix B: Visual Stimuli Images

### Visual Stimulus 1: Digitally Printed Madhubani Motif





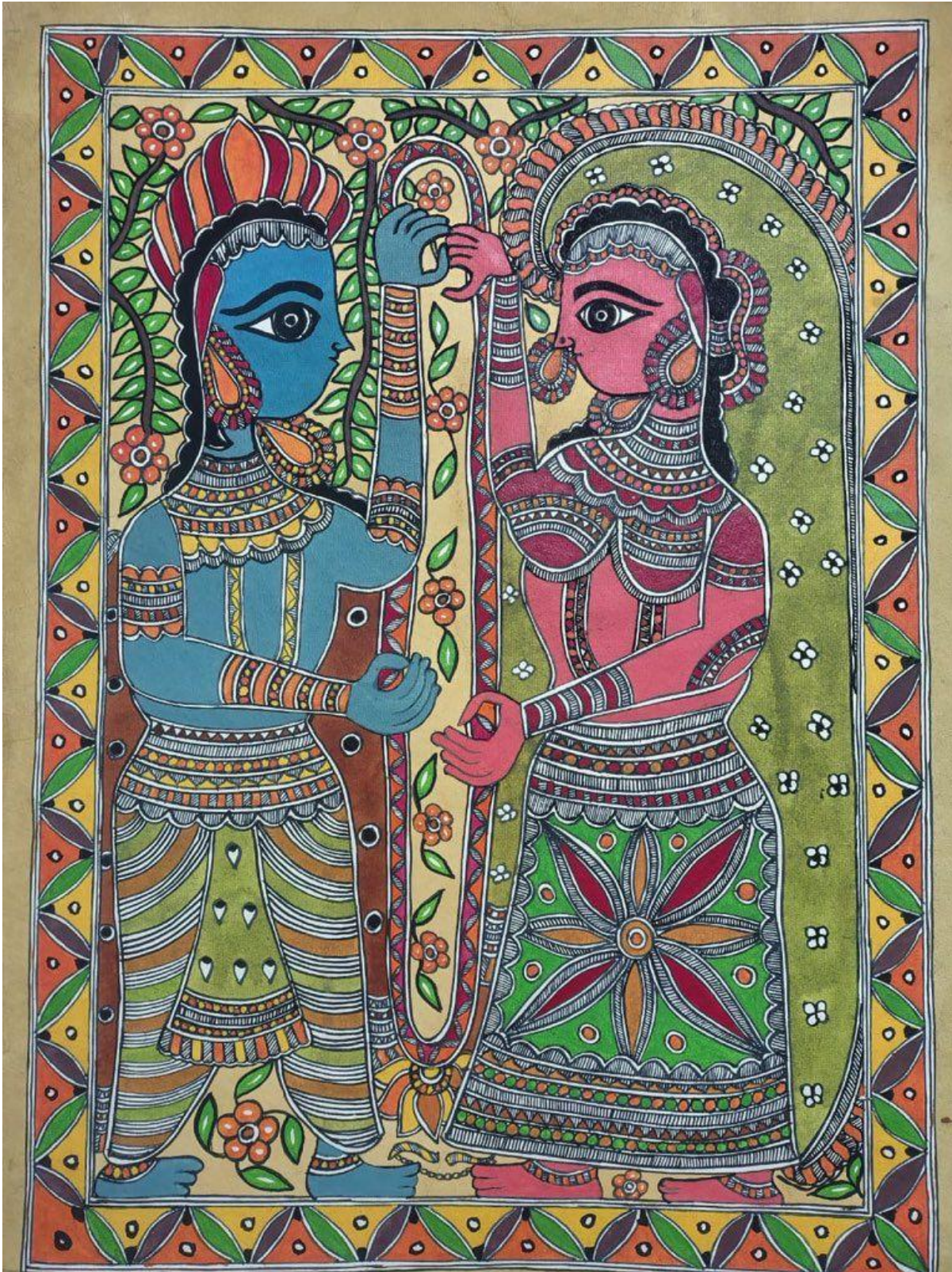
Description: Professional photograph of a featuring digitally printed Madhubani motif. The design shows characteristic Madhubani elements including geometric patterns, nature motifs (fish, peacock, lotus), and traditional color palette. The print demonstrates sharp lines, consistent color saturation, and uniform pattern distribution typical of digital textile printing.

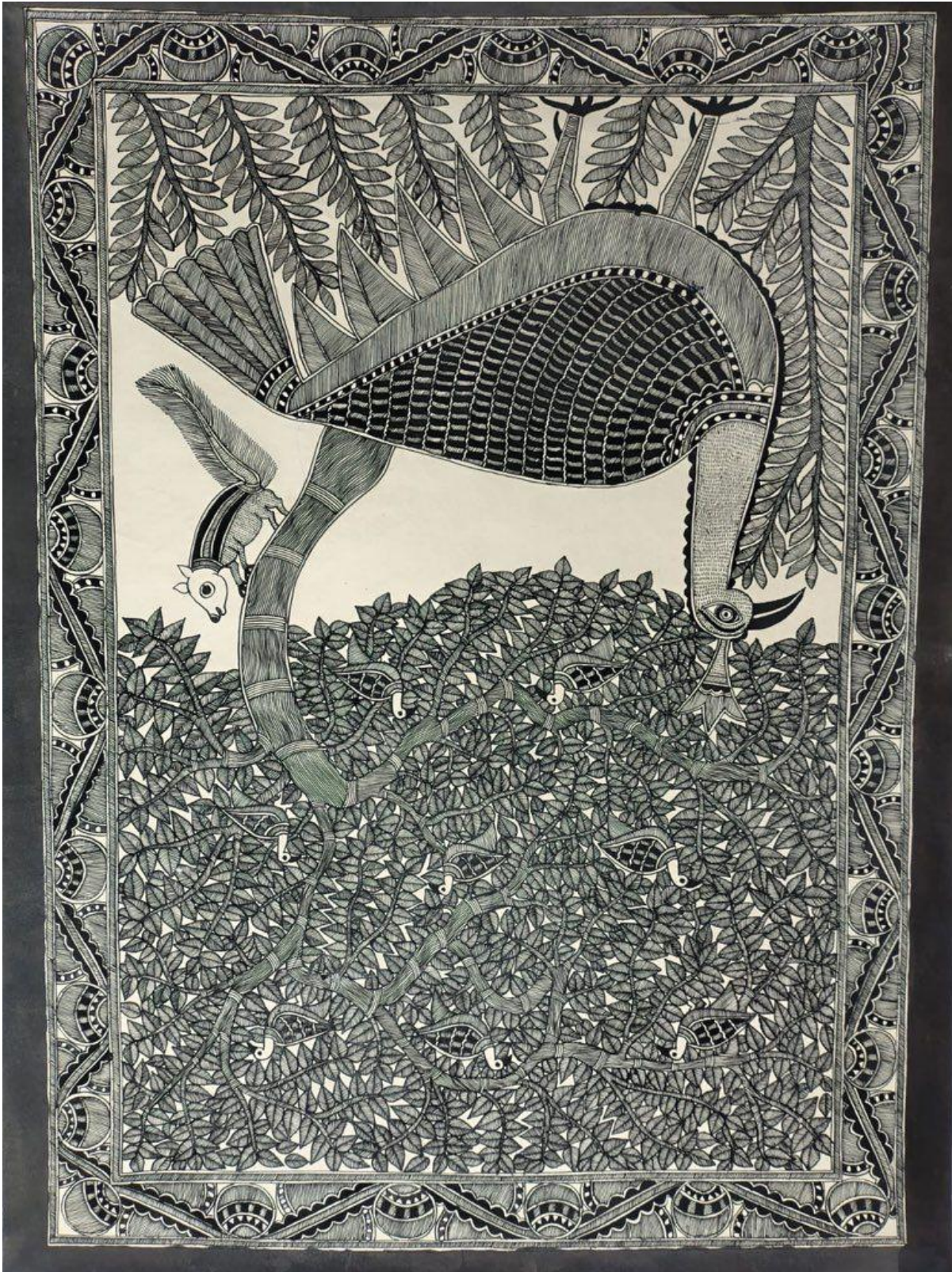
**Production Method:** Digital Textile Printing **Characteristics:** Precise lines, uniform color, consistent pattern replication **Approximate Production Time:** 2-4 hours for entire batch **Typical Price Range:** ₹800-₹2500

**Visual Stimulus 2: Hand-Painted Madhubani Motif**



IJRTI







IJRTI



**Image Requirements:**

- Professional photography with neutral background (white or light gray)
- Good lighting to show texture and details
- Full garment or clear detail shot showing the hand-painted characteristics
- Image size: Minimum 1200x1600 pixels for print quality
- Format: JPG or PNG

- Should show natural variations that indicate hand-painting

**Description:** Professional photograph of a fashion garment (kurti/saree/scarf) featuring hand-painted Madhubani motif. The design shows similar Madhubani elements as the digital version but with visible characteristics of hand painting including slight variations in line thickness, subtle color gradations, and organic quality. The photograph captures the texture and individuality characteristic of artisanal hand-painting.

**Production Method:** Traditional Hand-Painting by Artisan **Characteristics:** Organic lines, natural variations, unique character **Approximate Production Time:** 8-15 hours per piece **Typical Price Range:** ₹3500-₹12000

## Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Study Title:** Digital vs. Hand-Painted Madhubani Motifs in Fashion: A Comparative Study on Emotional and Aesthetic Response

**Principal Investigator:** [Your Name] **Institution:** [Your University/Institution] **Department:** [Your Department]

**Purpose of the Study:** You are being invited to participate in a research study examining consumer emotional and aesthetic responses to digital and hand-painted Madhubani motifs in contemporary fashion. This research is being conducted as part of a [degree level] thesis/dissertation.

**Procedures:** If you agree to participate, you will be asked to:

- Complete a brief demographic questionnaire
- View visual images of fashion products featuring Madhubani motifs
- Respond to questions about your perceptions, preferences, and purchase intentions
- The entire process will take approximately 15-20 minutes

**Risks and Benefits:** There are no anticipated risks associated with this study beyond those encountered in everyday life. While you may not directly benefit from participation, your responses will contribute to academic understanding of traditional art in contemporary fashion.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. No personally identifiable information will be collected. All data will be stored securely and reported only in aggregate form. Your individual responses will not be identifiable in any publications or presentations.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may also skip any questions you prefer not to answer.

**Contact Information:** If you have questions about this study, please contact: [Your Name] [Email Address] [Phone Number]

**Consent:** By proceeding with this questionnaire, you indicate that:

- You have read and understood the information above
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this study
- You are 18 years of age or older

I agree to participate in this study  I do not agree to participate

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Appendix D: Raw Data Tables

**Table D1: Individual Item Mean Scores - Emotional Response**

Item	Digital Motifs	Hand-Painted Motifs
Cultural connection	3.38	4.65
Emotional attachment	3.41	4.58
Positive feelings	3.47	4.62
Cultural depth	3.42	4.59
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>4.61</b>

**Table D2: Individual Item Mean Scores - Aesthetic Appeal**

Item	Digital Motifs	Hand-Painted Motifs
Visual attractiveness	4.32	4.15
Aesthetic pleasure	4.25	4.08
Design quality	4.29	4.14
Modern/contemporary look	4.26	4.11
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>4.12</b>

**Table D3: Individual Item Mean Scores - Perceived Authenticity**

Item	Digital Motifs	Hand-Painted Motifs
Represents authentic art	3.15	4.76
Preserves traditional culture	3.22	4.71
Culturally genuine	3.19	4.74
Cultural integrity	3.17	4.72
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>4.73</b>

**Table D4: Purchase Intention by Occasion Type**

Occasion	Digital Motifs (%)	Hand-Painted Motifs (%)
Daily wear	78%	22%
Office/workplace	71%	29%
Casual outings	68%	32%
Special occasions	25%	75%
Festivals	31%	69%
Weddings	18%	82%

**Table D5: Price Range Preferences**

Price Range	Digital Motifs (%)	Hand-Painted Motifs (%)
Under ₹1000/₹2000	45%	12%
₹1000-₹2000 / ₹2000-₹5000	38%	41%
₹2000-₹5000 / ₹5000-₹10000	14%	35%
Above ₹5000/₹10000	3%	12%