

Kansei and Iranian Cultural Challenges; The use of traditional motifs in design

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Abstract: Often customers make their purchase decision based on price, quality and functionality of the product. Sometimes the decision is influenced by the perceived value, which is always subjective and emotion-driven. In order to ensure successful launch of a product, it is extremely important to predict the perceived value of design alternatives systematically based on the common language understood by both target users and designers. It was believed that human verbal expression could not be quantified with absolute values and should be more adequately interpreted. Kansei is a method which does this interpretation. This cross-sectional study was done based on Kansei method and it consists of three stages: First, through newspapers, magazines, web pages, users, interviews and other related sources Kansei words were collected, and four different motifs were tested on the product which is car. One of these samples has been designed with Iranian motifs. A focus group was invited to identify the essential elements that influence the perceived value of product. Third, the perception differences of sample products were conducted to verify the validity of culture index. The findings of this study demonstrated that culture was effective for decision making in product design.

Keywords: kansei, design, traditional Motifs, culture, user behavior.

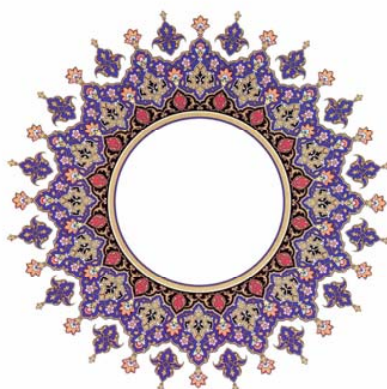
1. Introduction

1.1. Persian designs and motifs

Over the centuries, Iran has borne the brunt of periodic invasions. Elements of these foreign cultures, including Greek, Arabic, Turkish, Mongolian and European influences, were incorporated into the native artistic tradition but transmuted by Persian artists into a highly original and uniquely Iranian style. This outstanding collection of motifs comprises over 244 examples of this rich tradition, ready for use in a multitude of design areas. Ranging from prehistoric pottery painting to 4th-century calligraphy, this volume spans the full spectrum of Iranian art, including the Achaemedeans, Parthian, Sassanids and Safavids eras. Included are designs drawn from textiles (weaves, printed fabrics, embroidery and carpets), ceramics (pottery and tile), carved and incised work (stucco, stone, and metal), miscellaneous ornament, book illustration and calligraphy.

1.2. Persian motifs

Persian motifs have a rich history and the Persian language has an extensive terminology concerning the design and sorts of these motifs. The motifs include floral designs, geometrics, arabesques, mythical creatures, rosettes, paisley patterns, palmettos, medallions, border and marginal decorations, scrolls, curves and hunting scenes. Embodying the sumptuous detail, rich texture and elaborate ornamentation that constitute the glory of Persian art, these motifs also exemplify the Iranian artist's traditional devotion to symmetry, harmonious pattern, and purity of line and form.



Picture No1 - Shamseh, an Iranian Motif

Motif in a work of art is a distinctive recurring pattern, design and shape or form. Some artists and artisans choose to expose elements of nature, such as leaves, in their works of art. Some leaf designs are traditional, handed down through generations, while others are original with the artist. By noticing and identifying natural elements in works of art, viewers can think about the significance of the element to the artist, culture, religion, and to himself.

There are a lot of different motifs in the Iranian culture; the designs are inspired from the shapes of plants. The names of motifs are considered from the way of craftsmen's decoration or artists.

1.3. The Contemporary usage of Traditional Persian Motifs

Traditional Persian motifs are being used in the design of everyday products. They are used in a wide variety of areas, such as decoration art, tiles, ceramics, glass, printed cloth, enamel, emboss

and lighting products. Today, many countries are using technology to reintroduce traditional craft work in an attempt to revisit their own cultural roots. The aim of these countries is to introduce diversity and their own cultural identity to the world whilst remaining competitive. In Iran there are several products that have been inspired by traditional cultural products and a number of designers using these motifs in their designs to protect of their cultural treasures.

2. Method

Kansei method is used in this project, which consists of three stages: First, Kansei words were collected, identifying Kansei structure and communicate Kansei features and physical characteristics. Initially, four different motifs were tested on the product which is car. One of these samples has been designed with Iranian motifs. Firstly relevant words from various sources such as newspapers, magazines, web pages, users, interviews and other related sources were extracted. These words were then grouped into eight key words in two sets. Then, using the semantic differences, 10 men were questioned that are associated with the vehicle and its design.



Picture No2 - inside the cars

Results are presented graphically and the average score was determined for each plot according to the words of Kansei. The words of Kansei were compared with physical attributes needed for product and the most influential product design features were identified. In the final stage, design was done according to the key words and after comparing superior concepts gained with the characteristics of Kansei engineering methods, the effectiveness of cultural motif was measured.

3. Results

Firstly, according to the categories of Kansei words, five groups were selected as keywords (Table 1).

Table 1 - Classification of Kansei words

Kansei words	Collection of words
Local-New	Urban - New- Iranian - regional - global - Rural - native structures - Local

Domestic-none domestic	Identity - home - personal - identifiable - belongs to - know - Twin - both at home - like
Lovely-unlovable	Great - Positioning - large - small - visible - impossible to see - special - unique - space - Prospective - Dream - Fantasy - mentally - tangible - intangible - false - true - incomprehensible - Complexity - incomprehensible size - simple - minimalism - simple levels - by volume - organic volumes- complex forms
Strength - frailty	Tight - weak - weak - power - powerful - powerless - vulnerable - susceptible - stable - unstable
Familiar-none familiar	Kind - companion - Helper - friend - friendship - unfriendly - far - near - surface
Luxury-cheap	Cheap - you can buy - available - low price - Expensive - cost - low cost - public - be far behind - the inability to buy
Beautiful-ugly	Attractive - lovely - nice - notable - attracting attention - brilliant - different - ugly - hateful - detestable - makeup - chunky

After reviewing the questionnaire, which was designed using semantic differential, the rating of each product according to the Kansei words was obtained. (Fig 01)

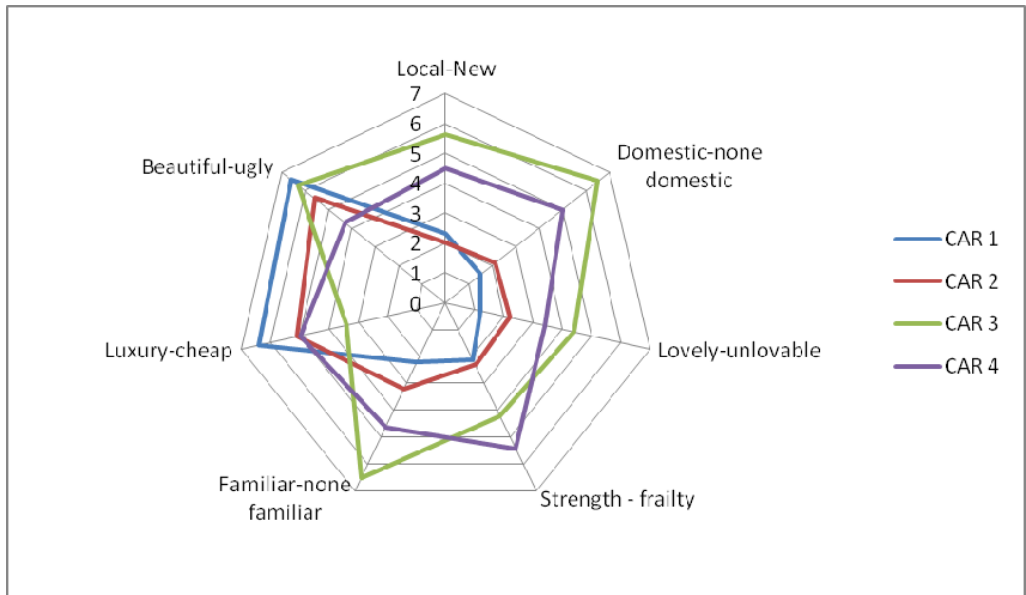


Figure No1 - Semantic differential questionnaire results

According to the obtained scores concept No.3 with the highest score was selected. Concept No.3 was most loved, most familiar, most domestic and most native concept among all the concepts.

Concept No.1 was the most beautiful concept from the perspective of the users.

Table No2 - rated products according to the Kansei words

Kansei words	CAR 1	CAR 2	CAR 3	CAR 4
Local-New	2.3	2	5.6	4.5
Domestic-none domestic	1.5	2.1	6.5	5
Lovely-unlovable	1.2	2.2	4.4	3.4
Strength - frailty	2.1	2.3	4.2	5.4
Familiar-none familiar	2.2	3.2	6.5	4.6
Luxury-cheap	6.4	5.1	3.4	5
Beautiful-ugly	6.6	5.6	6.3	4.3

After this step, to achieve the brief-list for design physical characteristics of the product were located next to Kansei words for comparison. (Table No3)

Table No3 - Comparison of physical characteristics and the words Kansei

Kansei words					Local-New	Domestic-none domestic	Lovely-unlovable	Strength - frailty	Familiar-none familiar	Luxury-cheap	Beautiful-ugly	
	1	2	3	4								
body	steering wheel	1	1	1	1	3.2	5.6	2	6.1	5.1	2.1	6.2
	Dashboard	1	1	1	1	2.2	6.2	2.1	4.1	6.4	1.5	6.6
	Gear	1	1	1	1	4.2	4.3	4.5	2.6	5.1	5	3.5
detail	Controllers	1	1	1	1	6.5	6.3	5.6	3.2	3.4	6.5	4.3
	texture	1	0	1	1	4.12	5.6	3.6	4	4.97	3.77	5.15
	color	0	1	1	0	2.2	6.2	2.1	4.1	6.4	1.5	6.6

pattern	0	0	1	0	4.12	5.6	3.6	4	4.97	3.77	5.15
Sum					27	40	24	28	36	24	30

At this stage the most important words according to physical characteristics were Domestic, beauty, and familiar.

4. Discussion

The results obtained show the importance of designer's role in translating the culture into product. Cultural and local motifs attract more users and make well communicate with them. This emotional connection is not only the familiarity of users with motifs but also represents a new area in the design world. In many cases, the motifs associated with specific cultures are not only looking for a local audience but also wants to export the products of these motifs. The situation exists for many different symbols of different countries. Cars are the products which show cultural translation in the streets and many people see them moving and cars also transfer concepts of modern cultural in "FORM" type.

5. Conclusions

Native forms for many years have been seen by users, and users are familiar with the concept. A familiar form can help users better understand the product and it invites them to interact more with the product. Sense of intimacy with the knowledge unconsciously gives users a sense of complacency that can keep users satisfied with the product. The more users well-communicate with the product they would love it more and as a result the product is used more. Local forms help the primary connection. These motifs can be used in different products with different features. Understanding these motifs can help designers to represent more local and native products.

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