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ABSTRACT

The revitalization of textiles produced through traditional manufacturing techniques presents a significant challenge for contemporary design. This paper examines how the unique material properties and finishing processes of heritage textiles can be systematically translated into modern apparel. Focusing on Gambiered Canton Silk (Xiangyunsha), a distinctive silk fabric renowned for its specific mechanical properties and aesthetic qualities, this study introduces a Tripartite Translation Framework (TTF) to analyze its application in current design contexts. The traditional production of Gambiered Canton Silk entails multi-stage vegetable dyeing followed by a unique mineral mud finishing, resulting in singular surface characteristics. Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, this research investigates how designers translate the textile's physical properties (Materiality), surface aesthetics (Motif), and production narratives (Narrative) into contemporary products. The findings indicate that successful revitalization extends beyond direct material usage; it necessitates innovation in fabric handle and drape, dissemination of process-derived visual data into new textile designs, and integration of the narrative of sustainable finishing processes into brand value. The proposed framework offers a systematic pathway for the sustainable development of products rooted in traditional textile technologies, effectively bridging heritage craftsmanship with modern garment manufacturing.

KEYWORDS

Gambiered Canton Silk, textile finishing, natural dyes, silk fabrics, textile design

INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of cultural heritage preservation has increasingly shifted its focus toward the intangible dimensions—living traditions, skills, and knowledge that constitute cultural identity. Within this realm,

traditional textile craftsmanship occupies a particularly vulnerable yet essential category [1]. These textiles transcend mere artifacts, representing complex systems of ecological knowledge, social practice, and aesthetic expression woven into the fabric of communities over centuries. However, the proliferation of industrial manufacturing, evolving consumer preferences, and the disruption of master-apprentice knowledge transmission have rendered many ancient textile arts susceptible to obsolescence [2,3]. The central paradox confronting preservationists and designers is how to ensure the continuity of these traditions without relegating them to static museum archives—a phenomenon often referred to as cultural fossilization [4]. The challenge, therefore, lies not in static preservation but in dynamic revitalization, requiring a nuanced and intelligent translation of heritage into forms that resonate with contemporary lifestyles, values, and markets.

This paper investigates design translation as a critical mechanism for revitalizing traditional textiles. Moving beyond a general survey, it undertakes a focused, in-depth analysis of a single, highly significant case: Gambiered Canton Silk (香云纱, *Xiangyunsha*). Originating in China's Lingnan region, this textile is recognized as national-level Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), celebrated for its unique, fully ecological production process [5]. The silk undergoes repeated dyeing with *Dioscorea cirrhosa* tuber juice, sun exposure, and a final coating with mineral-rich riverbed mud, creating a fabric that is crisp, antibacterial, and develops a distinctive patina over time [5,6]. Despite its cultural significance and sustainable credentials, Gambiered Canton Silk faces modern challenges, including traditional stiffness, high cost, and a somber color palette, which have limited its appeal to broader contemporary audiences. Many attempts to incorporate it have resulted in products that are either culturally alienating pastiches or commercially unviable replicas of historical garments.

A discernible gap exists in the current literature. While numerous studies have documented the historical and technical aspects of heritage textiles and broadly discussed the importance of innovation in craft preservation, there is a lack of systematic research providing a granular framework for analyzing *how* the core attributes of a traditional craft are deconstructed and reassembled into successful contemporary products. The critical process of translation—the *how*—remains undertheorized and is often regarded as an intuitive, artistic endeavor rather than a structured design strategy. This research addresses this gap by posing the central question: What specific design translation strategies facilitate the effective revitalization of Gambiered Canton Silk in the contemporary cultural and creative product market? To answer this, the paper proposes a Tripartite Translation Framework (TTF), encompassing Materiality, Motif, and Narrative. By applying this framework to

two contrasting archetypal case studies, the study validates the framework's utility in characterizing diverse pathways of successful translation. The objective is to offer a rigorous, replicable model that can inform and guide revitalization efforts for other endangered textile heritages globally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Design Translation in a Cultural Context

The concept of translation in design extends well beyond its linguistic origins. In the context of cultural heritage, design translation refers to the process of transferring meaning, form, and function from a historical or traditional source into a contemporary context [7,8]. Scholars in design studies argue that this is not a process of literal replication but one of interpretation, adaptation, and mediation. Effective translation respects the “source code” of the heritage object or practice while re-encoding it to ensure relevance and legibility for modern audiences. This process inherently involves transformation [9]. The challenge lies in ensuring that such transformation retains an authentic and discernible link to the original, thus avoiding superficial appropriation. The balance between fidelity and reinvention is central to successful revitalization of traditional crafts. Some theorists describe this as a dialogue between past and present, where the designer acts as a mediator, negotiating tensions between tradition and modernity, handcraft and technology, and local identity and global aesthetics [10]. Furthermore, the translation of form is not limited to explicit, representational patterns. Contemporary design theory, especially within minimalism and sustainability-focused movements, increasingly elevates the concepts of “material honesty” and “surface tectonics”—the visual and tactile qualities that reveal the material's origin and making process—as motifs in their own right. In this context, the texture, incidental imperfections, and unique patina of handcrafted materials are viewed not as secondary qualities or flaws, but as primary signifiers of aesthetic value and authenticity. This theoretical shift is crucial for analyzing heritage crafts such as Gambiered Canton Silk, where aesthetic identity is defined entirely by its unique finishing process rather than by an applied decorative pattern. Thus, in these cases, the motif is the process-derived surface itself.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and Its Sustainable Revitalization

The UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH marked a global shift toward recognizing the importance of living traditions [11]. For textiles, this framework emphasizes safeguarding the entire

ecosystem of the craft: raw materials, tools, artisans' embodied knowledge (*savoir-faire*), and associated cultural expressions. The literature on ICH preservation consistently warns against "museumification," wherein a craft is preserved as a static artifact rather than as a living practice [12,13]. Sustainable revitalization, therefore, emerges as the alternative, integrating heritage into contemporary economic and social life. This approach necessitates innovation that is both culturally sensitive and economically viable. Research highlights that successful revitalization projects often involve multi-stakeholder collaboration, connecting artisans, designers, marketers, and consumers [14]. The goal is to create a new value chain where the cultural significance of the craft enhances its economic value, and its economic viability in turn ensures the continuation of the tradition.

Economic Viability and Business Models in Craft Revitalization

Beyond the challenges of cultural translation, the long-term sustainability of ICH crafts is fundamentally an economic issue, directly related to the high-cost challenge identified earlier. The literature on craft revitalization consistently highlights significant economic hurdles, including fragmented or unreliable raw material supply chains, inherent inefficiencies of non-industrial, handcrafted production that complicate cost-scaling, and the challenge of competing with mass-produced goods. To address these issues, scholars and practitioners have explored various business models aimed at economic sustainability. These range from luxury branding strategies that leverage scarcity and authenticity to justify higher price points, to artisan cooperatives and direct-to-consumer (D2C) platforms that seek to capture greater value for producers. However, a persistent tension remains between the need for economic efficiency and the preservation of traditional techniques and cultural authenticity—a tension this paper's framework seeks to navigate.

Gambiered Canton Silk: History, Process, and Characteristics

Establishing a baseline for analysis requires understanding the intrinsic properties of Gambiered Canton Silk. Its history spans over 500 years in Guangdong Province, China [15]. The production process exemplifies pre-industrial, sustainable technology. Pure silk fabric undergoes approximately thirty rounds of immersion in filtered juice from the *Dioscorea cirrhosa* plant, a local yam species. After each immersion, the silk is sun-dried on a grass lawn [16,17], imparting a reddish-brown color and a characteristic stiffness. The final, critical step involves coating one side of the dyed silk with a thin layer of iron-rich, alluvial mud from the Pearl River Delta. A chemical reaction between the tannins in the dye and the ferric ions in the mud creates a lustrous,

black microfilm on the surface, rendering it water-resistant and antibacterial [16,17]. The uncoated side remains reddish-brown, resulting in a two-toned fabric. Traditionally, Gambiered Canton Silk was valued for its durability and cooling effect in the humid southern climate. Its primary material characteristics include a paper-like crispness that softens with wear, low stretch, and a unique sound when moved. While these properties were historically advantageous, they present significant challenges for contemporary fashion design, which often prioritizes softness, drape, and elasticity. The technical and aesthetic specificity of Gambiered Canton Silk makes it a compelling subject for design translation.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, multiple case study methodology to explore the phenomenon of design translation in depth. This approach is particularly well-suited for investigating complex, contemporary issues within their real-world contexts, enabling a rich and nuanced understanding that quantitative methods may not capture. The focus is on the *how* and *why* of design strategies, making the case study an ideal research tool.

The core of this research is the application of the newly proposed analytical framework: the TTF. This framework deconstructs the design translation process into three distinct yet interconnected dimensions:

Materiality Translation: This dimension examines how designers engage with the physical and tactile properties of Gambiered Canton Silk. It analyzes strategies for modifying the material itself (e.g., through new finishing techniques such as enzyme washing to enhance softness) or innovating garment construction. This includes combining Gambiered Canton Silk with other fabrics (e.g., wool, cotton, modal) to alter its drape and feel and exploring new structural forms that leverage or mitigate its inherent stiffness. Data for this dimension were gathered by analyzing product materials, construction details, and technical descriptions.

Motif Translation: This dimension focuses on the visual and aesthetic elements of the heritage craft. While Gambiered Canton Silk is largely unadorned, its “motifs” are derived from its unique process—the subtle cracks in the mudded surface, uneven coloration from sun exposure, and the distinctive black-and-brown palette. This analysis investigates how designers translate these visual cues, whether by using them directly or abstracting them into new prints, patterns, or color stories applied to the fabric itself or other materials within a collection. This dimension explores the reinterpretation of the craft’s visual identity.

Narrative Translation: This dimension is arguably the most critical for creating deep cultural value. It analyzes how the story of the craft—including its unique process, cultural narrative, and sustainable ethos—is translated into product brand identity and market positioning. This includes communicating the sustainable, time-intensive, sun-and-earth-based production to consumers and assessing whether the brand leverages the narrative of craftsmanship, naturalness, and cultural heritage as a core component of its value proposition, thereby translating the intangible story and values of the craft into tangible brand equity.

Case selection was based on specific criteria: (1) The brand or designer must have a dedicated and sustained focus on utilizing Gambiered Canton Silk in their collections; (2) They must demonstrate strategic viability and relevance in the contemporary market. Due to the proprietary nature of financial data in the luxury fashion sector, this study adopts “Market Resilience” as the primary indicator of viability. In the hyper-competitive fashion sector, where the attrition rate for independent designer brands is exceptionally high within the first three years, sustained market operation (2023–2025) serves as a rigorous survival filter, indicating that the brand has achieved a product-market fit sufficient to generate recurring revenue and validating its revitalization strategy; (3) Sufficient public-domain data must be available for analysis, including official websites, designer interviews, press coverage, and detailed product catalogues. Utilizing a purposive sampling strategy, two archetypal design studios—anonimized as “Studio A” and “Studio B”—were selected to represent distinct polarities of the proposed framework rather than statistical representation. Studio A exemplifies the Purist paradigm, focusing on material preservation, while Studio B illustrates the Reinterpreter paradigm, emphasizing aesthetic abstraction. This comparative case study approach enables rigorous validation of the TTF, demonstrating its applicability across the spectrum of revitalization strategies, from strict adherence to tradition to radical innovation.

Data were systematically collected from public sources for the period 2023–2025 and analyzed through the lens of the TTF. Specifically, for each studio, the analysis corpus included: (1) Product catalogues, examining approximately 15–20 core product descriptions per studio to code material composition, finishing claims (e.g., pre-softened), and garment construction notes; (2) Brand narratives, drawn from “About Us” pages, at least three distinct designer interviews, and relevant press coverage, coded for keywords related to “heritage,” “nature,” “innovation,” and “craftsmanship”; and (3) Visual data from seasonal lookbooks, analyzing silhouettes, color palettes, and the application of texture or print. To address the validity challenge of inferring design processes from secondary sources, this study draws on Science and Technology Studies (STS) principles

regarding the construction of socio-technical systems. Public-facing materials are acknowledged as rhetorically constructed and are not treated as transparent records of designers' internal intentions. Marketing texts are not proxies for intended strategy; instead, a "Reverse Engineering" approach is adopted, analyzing brand narrative as "Narrative Design"—a deliberate, constructed component of the final product system. The translation strategy is defined as the objective configuration of the encoded artifact, distinguishing between "Embodied Strategy" (physical evidence verified by fabric composition) and "Narrative Strategy" (marketing rhetoric analyzed as a deliberate value-creation mechanism). Data analysis followed a deductive thematic analysis approach, with coding facilitated by NVivo software to ensure rigorous data management. Reliability was ensured through iterative reviews and cross-verification by the research team to resolve discrepancies and reach consensus.

This study specifically delimits the scope of "Design Translation" to the tangible and symbolic attributes of the product system (Materiality, Motif, and Narrative). Operational factors such as pricing strategy or distribution channels are acknowledged as supporting business elements but fall outside the scope of this artifact-centric design analysis. The TTF was employed to rigorously decode the specific configuration of verifiable, public-facing product outputs.

RESULTS

Application of the TTF to the selected cases reveals distinct and sophisticated strategies for revitalizing Gambiered Canton Silk.

Case A: The Purist Approach

Studio A embodies an approach centered on reverence for the original material, with innovation focused primarily on application and user experience. The studio's philosophy is to celebrate the intrinsic qualities of Gambiered Canton Silk, adapting it for suitability within a modern minimalist wardrobe.

Materiality Translation: Studio A's core strategy is to mitigate the fabric's primary drawback—its initial stiffness. Product descriptions consistently reference the use of pre-softened or garment-washed Gambiered Canton Silk. This industrial washing process accelerates the natural softening that occurs with wear, rendering garments comfortable from first use without fundamentally altering the fabric's chemical composition. This reflects a "Pragmatic Purism": while visually maintaining the traditional aesthetic, Studio A technically modifies the material's hand-feel to align with contemporary sensory

expectations, sacrificing strict historical accuracy for market wearability. Their designs feature simple, architectural silhouettes—A-line dresses, wide-leg trousers, and boxy shirts—that do not require significant draping, thus leveraging the fabric’s stiffness to create clean lines and sculptural forms. Studio A rarely blends the silk with other fibers, preferring its pure form to maintain authenticity. The purist approach extends to the fabric’s two-toned nature; garments consistently use the black, mud-coated side as the external surface, honoring traditional application, while the reddish-brown reverse is treated as a lining, not utilized for contrast or reversible designs, reinforcing the philosophy of material authenticity over novel reinterpretation.

Motif Translation: Studio A’s approach to motifs is subtractive and minimalist, eschewing applied patterns or prints and treating the fabric’s inherent texture as the primary visual element. The subtle, irregular crackle of the mudded surface and the rich, solid fields of black and brown are central features. The color palette is strictly limited to the textile’s natural hues. This strategy is distinct from materiality translation: while materiality involves physically modifying the fabric’s handle (e.g., softening), motif strategy is an aesthetic choice to isolate and elevate the fabric’s inherent visual properties. The beauty is derived from process-driven imperfections, intentionally framed as the sole decorative element. In this minimalist approach, inherent surface texture replaces applied pattern, allowing the process-derived aesthetic to function as the primary motif.

Narrative Translation: Narrative translation is a cornerstone of Studio A’s brand identity. Marketing narratives, website “About Us” sections, and product tags are saturated with detailed descriptions of the Gambiered Canton Silk production process, using phrases such as “kissed by the sun,” “nourished by the earth,” and “a gift of time.” High-quality photography and videography depict the fabric laid out on grass fields and artisans at work. By foregrounding the slow, sustainable, and entirely natural production process, Studio A translates the craft’s origins into a powerful narrative of eco-luxury and mindful consumption, appealing directly to consumers who value authenticity, sustainability, and cultural depth over fast fashion trends.

Case B: The Reinterpreter Approach

Studio B exemplifies a more avant-garde and deconstructionist approach. While utilizing the physical fabric, Studio B focuses primarily on reinterpreting its conceptual and aesthetic essence in abstract ways.

Materiality Translation: Studio B frequently engages in radical material hybridization. A key collection

features garments in which panels of stiff Gambiered Canton Silk are juxtaposed with fluid, transparent silk chiffon or soft, knitted wool. This creates a dramatic dialogue of textures and forms within a single garment. The stiffness of the heritage silk is employed to create sharp, geometric elements that contrast with the softness of modern textiles. This strategy does not seek to “correct” the material’s properties but rather to celebrate them through dramatic contrast, establishing a new tactile and visual syntax. Studio B also actively deconstructs the fabric’s two-toned property, intentionally exposing the reddish-brown reverse side in several designs as a primary visual element for contrast panels, lapels, or cuffs. This reversal of traditional orientation is a key Reinterpreter tactic, transforming what was once the fabric’s inside into a celebrated feature.

Motif Translation: Studio B’s strategy diverges sharply in motif translation. High-resolution digital scans of the mud-cracked silk surface and mottled plant dye patterns are manipulated and recolored to create new digital prints. These prints are applied not only to Gambiered Canton Silk but also to conventional fabrics such as cotton and viscose within the same collection. In this translation, the motif is decoupled from the original material and becomes an independent aesthetic element. The visual language of the craft is abstracted and re-contextualized, enabling its essence to permeate a broader range of products and price points.

Narrative Translation: Studio B translates the craft narrative as a story of artistic inspiration rather than pure tradition. Branding emphasizes design innovation and artistic vision, presenting Gambiered Canton Silk as a starting point for creative exploration. Notably, despite radical aesthetic abstraction, Studio B relies heavily on the “Heritage Authority” of the original craft in marketing to justify luxury positioning. The origin is not erased; rather, the ancient lineage validates avant-garde experimentation. This approach appeals to high-fashion consumers interested in novelty, conceptual depth, and the artistic process behind garments. The value lies in the designer’s act of creative reinterpretation rather than in the authenticity of the original craft alone.

DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of Studio A and Studio B demonstrates that success in revitalization is not determined by a singular method but by the structural coherence of the translation strategy. The TTF serves as a diagnostic tool for verifying this coherence. Studio A’s viability is underpinned by the alignment of Purist materiality with a “Heritage” narrative; any deviation, such as applying digital prints to this narrative, would

undermine strategic coherence. Conversely, Studio B's success is validated by the alignment of "Hybrid" materiality with an "Innovation" narrative. This study posits that strategic coherence—defined as the logical alignment between Materiality, Motif, and Narrative—is a measurable predictor of market resilience. The cases validate the framework by demonstrating that distinct, logically consistent configurations can both achieve market survival.

Analysis of Studio A and Studio B through the TTF provides compelling evidence that revitalizing heritage textiles is not a monolithic process but a spectrum of strategic design choices. Success hinges on the internal coherence between translations of materiality, motif, and narrative. Rather than viewing the studios as a dichotomy, it is more rigorous to consider them as distinct positions along a wider spectrum of hybridization. For example, Studio A's design logic is based on nuanced hybridity rather than rigid tradition. The use of industrial softening—a material intervention—addresses a functional barrier: the fabric's inherent stiffness and lack of drape. From a design engineering perspective, this intervention serves as a technical enabler for market entry, removing sensory friction and aligning the product's physical performance with modern standards. Thus, "Purism" is not raw preservation of the past but a carefully engineered strategy, combining significant materiality intervention with a purist approach to motif and narrative. Similarly, Studio B's Reinterpreter strategy represents another point on the spectrum, with radical material hybridization, motif abstraction, and a narrative of artistic innovation that are mutually reinforcing.

Failure would occur if, for example, a brand adopted abstract digital prints (a Studio B motif strategy) while claiming a purely authentic and traditional narrative (a Studio A narrative strategy), resulting in cognitive dissonance for consumers. These coherent strategies are not without risks. Studio A's Purist approach risks cultural fossilization, potentially confining the craft to a high-cost niche market rather than fostering widespread revitalization. Studio B's Reinterpreter strategy occupies a controversial ethical position; digitally scanning the crackle motif and printing it on industrial cotton or viscose constitutes "simulation," creating a copy devoid of the original's substance. This risks functioning as cultural appropriation rather than authentic revitalization. Given that the core ICH value of Gambiered Canton Silk lies in its ecological finishing process rather than merely its surface pattern, Studio B's strategy decouples signifier from signified. While this strategy succeeds in Iconographic Revitalization—making the visual aesthetic trendy and accessible to a mass market—it poses a threat to the craft's ontology. If consumers equate inexpensive, printed copies with handcrafted originals, the economic incentive to preserve labor-intensive processes may diminish. Thus, Studio B represents a Commercial Paradox: it revitalizes the heritage image while potentially endangering its

practice. A critical application of the Tripartite Framework must therefore assess this tension, ensuring that translation does not devalue its source.

These findings extend the literature on design translation and ICH revitalization by moving the discourse from a general call for innovation to a structured understanding of its components. The framework demonstrates that the “source code” of a traditional craft can be parsed into distinct elements—physical substance, visual appearance, and production ethos—each translatable independently or in concert. This allows for nuanced, strategic design development. For instance, designers may choose purism in materiality but abstraction in motif, creating hybrid strategies.

Furthermore, the results underscore a crucial market insight: different translation strategies employed by Studio A and Studio B effectively create distinct products for different markets. Studio A appeals to the sustainable luxury and “quiet fashion” market, where value is derived from quality, longevity, and narrative. Studio B targets the high-concept fashion market, where value is driven by novelty, artistic expression, and brand vision. This suggests that revitalizing a single traditional craft can generate multiple, diverse economic pathways, enhancing overall resilience. It is not a zero-sum contest between tradition and modernity; rather, heritage like Gambiered Canton Silk can inspire a variety of contemporary expressions, each authentic in its own right. The key determinant of success is the objective coherence of the final product system—where the material narrative aligns with the brand narrative.

Although this paper refers to “Cultural and Creative Products,” the analysis focuses on apparel, as high-end fashion is a prominent and commercially significant avenue for the revitalization of luxury heritage textiles, providing clear contemporary examples of the Purist (Studio A) and Reinterpreter (Studio B) strategies. However, the TTF is not limited to this category. Future applications could analyze materiality translations in homewares (e.g., leveraging the fabric’s stiffness for lampshades or wall coverings) or motif translations for accessories (e.g., applying the crackle pattern to leather goods), offering further opportunities for sustainable revitalization.

While the framework was derived from the specific properties of Gambiered Canton Silk, its logic is generalizable to heritage textiles with varying core attributes. For example, in Ikat, where the heritage value lies in the resist-dye weaving pattern (Motif) and process (Narrative) rather than a specific tactile property (Materiality), the framework remains applicable. Motif translation may involve purist use of traditional patterns in contemporary silhouettes or Reinterpreter approaches such as digital abstraction of blurred edges onto new materials. Narrative translation would focus on communicating the complex resist-dye process

rather than the sun-and-mud story of Xiangyunsha. Similarly, for Brocade, challenges related to cost, weight, or delicacy might be addressed through materiality translation (e.g., engineering lighter versions or using small panels with modern fabrics), while motif could be intentionally preserved. In each case, the framework provides a consistent structure for deconstructing the craft's core and identifying coherent pathways for contemporary reinterpretation.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated specific design strategies that enable the effective translation and revitalization of traditional textiles in contemporary creative products. By focusing on the case of Gambiered Canton Silk and applying the TTF, the research demonstrates that successful revitalization is a multidimensional and strategic process. It is not achieved by simply incorporating heritage fabrics into new garments but through thoughtful, coherent reinterpretation of the craft's core attributes: materiality, motifs, and narrative. The case analyses reveal diverse market-resilient models, ranging from minimalist purism that celebrates material authenticity to avant-garde reinterpretation that abstracts the craft's aesthetic essence. While financial viability remains to be quantified, these cases illustrate that strategic coherence—the alignment of material, motif, and narrative—is essential for establishing brand value and achieving survival in a competitive marketplace.

The primary contribution of this paper is the establishment of a structured, analytical framework. The TTF offers a systematic tool for both analysis and creation. For researchers, it provides a method for deconstructing and comparing revitalization strategies across different crafts and cultures. For designers and brands, it serves as a strategic guide, enabling conscious and coherent engagement with heritage materials to ensure that final products are aesthetically pleasing, functional, and culturally resonant. By elucidating distinct pathways of translation, stakeholders in the cultural heritage sector can foster innovation that is respectful of tradition and relevant to contemporary society, ensuring that the interwoven legacy of textile heritage continues to evolve for generations.

This research has limitations. The analysis was conducted using publicly available data from two archetypal cases representing the extremes of the design spectrum. While this validates the boundaries of the TTF, the absence of hybrid cases occupying the middle ground is a limitation. Future research could expand upon this framework by incorporating direct interviews with designers and artisans to gain deeper insights into creative processes and intentions. Additionally, quantitative consumer research could validate the market appeal of identified translation strategies. Applying the framework to textiles with different core challenges could

generate specific hypotheses. For instance, for motif-centric crafts such as Ikat, where heritage value lies in complex, blurred patterns created by pre-dyeing yarns (process narrative), successful motif translation would involve either purist use of authentic patterns in contemporary silhouettes or digital abstraction of the signature blur onto new materials. For material-centric crafts like opulent Brocade, defined by structural weight and metallic threads, revitalization may depend on materiality translation—engineering lighter versions or hybridizing in panels with modern fabrics—while preserving traditional motifs. Testing these hypotheses represents a critical next step in refining the framework’s parameters. Ultimately, the goal remains to bridge the gap between preservation and innovation, ensuring that the warp of tradition and the weft of modernity are interwoven into a vibrant and sustainable future.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study were available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Author Contributions

Yujie Ji designed, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Yujie Ji conducted the study, critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content, and gave final approval of the version to be published. Yujie Ji participated fully in the work, take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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