



The Mughal Empire's Influence on Carpet Weaving: A Historical and Perceptual Study among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Mughal Carpets are extremely rare and expensive. The legacy of Mughal carpets lived on in subsequent Indian carpet design. However, these early carpets established a strong tradition of asymmetric positioning and an inventive use of open space to frame the different plant and figurative motifs which has continued in various manifestations and incorporated other influences, such as Persian design up until the present day. This paper combines historical review with a survey of 50 college students in Fine Arts, History, and Design. Historical claims rely on primary museum catalogues and recent scholarship. The survey assesses students' awareness, motif recognition, and attitude toward heritage teaching. Results of the survey point to clear recognition of Mughal visual language among design students, weaker technical awareness, and strong support for curriculum inclusion. The paper concludes with targeted recommendations for craft institutions, colleges and Universities.

1. Introduction

The origins of carpet weaving tradition in India belong to the Mughal dynasty. Mughal not only used the Persian technique of carpet weaving, but were also influenced by traditional designs and motifs from



Persia. Mughal carpets were as intricate as their miniatures and often depicted court life, animals and floral decorations. During the Mughal period from 16th to the 18th centuries, the court shaped several visual arts in India. During this period the carpets made in the Indo-Pak Sub-continent became so famous that there was a mounting demand for them abroad. These carpets had a distinctive design and boasted a rich knotting density.

The court recruited Persian and Central Asian craftsmen. The emperors built imperial workshops, known as karkhanas, in Agra, Lahore, Fatehpur Sikri and other centers. These workshops produced carpets, shawls, and luxury textiles under direct patronage. Museum studies and catalogues document this institutional effort and its output.

Scholars find out Mughal carpets to Persian prototypes, but they also take a note of local innovation: new color palettes, Indian flora, and layout changes that reflect South Asian tastes. Surviving carpets in museum collections show a hybrid vocabulary.

This paper asks two questions. First, how did Mughal institutions shape carpet design and its production? Second, how aware are current college students of that legacy? The first question uses museum analysis and historical literature. The second uses a focused survey of students likely to work with visual culture and craft.

2. Literature and Historical Background

2.1 Karkhanas and imperial patronage

Mughal rulers established craft production under state control through karkhanas. These royal workshops had control over skilled labor and materials. Research and recent analysis describe the karkhana network as economic and cultural infrastructure as well. The karkhana system gave a support to the large-scale production and experimentation.

2.2 Persian roots and Indian adaptations

Early Mughal carpets borrow Persian motifs: medallions, herati forms, and boteh elements. The difference lies in treatment: Mughal rugs often focus upon naturalistic flora, field scatter of small blossoms, and layouts that echo miniature painting and garden design.



2.3 Regional centers

Agra, Lahore, and Kashmir developed as prominent production hubs. Agra produced robust wool carpets with balanced palettes. Lahore workshops employed fine silk and metal thread work for court textiles. Kashmir was specialized in fine-pile carpets and shawls, often using pashmina and achieving very high knot counts in luxury pieces.

2.4 Peak, decline, and legacy

Classical Mughal carpet production was reached high refinement in the 16th and 17th centuries. There was decline in central control after the late 17th century and into the 18th century due to political fragmentation. Regional and princely courts continued production, and new patrons continued craft traditions under different names.

3. Objectives

- Map institutional and aesthetic changes introduced by Mughal patronage in carpet production.
- Identify characteristic motifs and techniques linked to Mughal patronage.
- Measure awareness and visual recognition of Mughal carpet features among college students in Fine Arts, History, and Design.
- Offer clear recommendations for design education and craft revival programs.

4. Methodology

Research design: Cross-sectional, descriptive study combining historical-museum analysis with a structured survey.

Historical sources: Museum catalogues, peer-reviewed articles, and exhibition publications provided object-level evidence and dated examples.

Survey sample: 50 college students purposively sampled from Fine Arts, History, and Design programs at Shri Khushal Das University and two regional colleges. Purposive sampling targeted students most likely to encounter textile history in their curriculum.



Instrument: A structured questionnaire with sections on demographics, awareness, visual recognition, attitudes, and open-ended opinions.

Data handling: Quantitative items underwent frequency and cross-tab analysis. Open responses received thematic coding.

Limitations: Small sample and purposive sampling limit generalization. Image-based recognition depended on image quality and prior exposure.

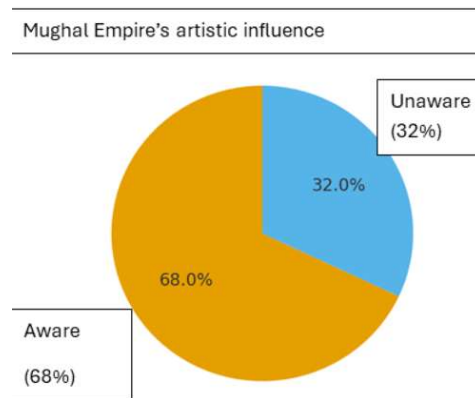
5. Survey Parameters

Parameter	Description	Type
Awareness Level	Knowledge of Mughal carpet origins and centers	Quantitative
Visual Recognition	Correct identification of Mughal motifs among images	Quantitative
Perceived Cultural Value	Attitude toward heritage preservation	Quantitative
Design Relevance	Opinion on Mughal motifs in modern design	Qualitative
Learning Preference	Preferred learning format (lecture, workshop, field)	Quantitative

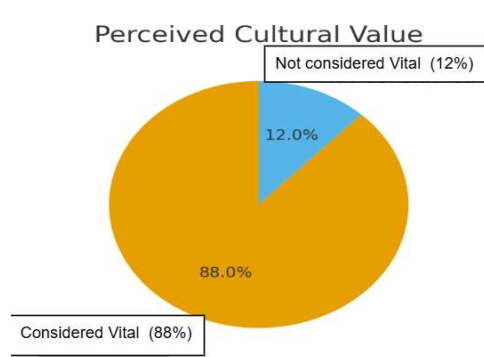
6. Results and Discussion

Design students showed higher awareness of Mughal carpet origins and styles than History or Fine Arts students. Students correctly identified Mughal floral motifs but lacked knowledge of technical details such as knot types. All groups valued Mughal textile heritage and supported curriculum inclusion. They favored field visits and workshops over classroom lectures.

These results show that awareness of Mughal design survives mainly through visual culture. Institutional education can bridge the knowledge gap between aesthetic appreciation and technical understanding.



[Figure 1 Placeholder: Awareness of Mughal Artistic Influence]



[Figure 2 Placeholder: Perceived Cultural Value of Mughal Carpet Weaving]

7. Recommendations

- Add a two-credit module on Textile Heritage in Fine Arts and Design programs.
- Create partnerships with local craft cooperatives for field training.
- Establish university–museum collaboration for object-based study kits.
- Integrate Mughal design analysis into design studios.
- Document oral histories of regional weavers to preserve knowledge.

8. Conclusion

Making slight modification in our traditional crafts, we can introduce some designs for fashion-conscious people. Thus, we can reach the height of fashion even by keeping our feet on traditional ground. This can serve two purposes: one is the introduction of something new in the world of fashion and secondly, it can help



to rush off the dust from the traditional crafts of India which are getting the lease attention these days. Mughal patronage shaped carpet making through institutional systems and aesthetic direction. Museum records confirm synthesis between Persian technique and Indian creativity. Students today show strong interest but limited depth. Universities can act on this interest through heritage-focused curricula, craft collaborations, and field exposure, ensuring the continuity of Mughal textile legacy in modern education.

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