Exploring Structure and Content: Genre Analysis of a Pakistani Clothing Brand Website

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Abstract

Analyzing the genre of websites helps in understanding the minimum requirements expected out of that particular virtual space. The idea of understanding the structure and content of a well-established e-commerce website is particularly important for those who are relatively novice in the field. For this purpose, the current study investigates how a popular Pakistani clothing brand has constructed its website by keeping its potential users in forefront. The theoretical framework comprises of genre-based approaches of Swales (1990) and Bhatia (2014). Moreover, the investigation outlines how genre-based studies help in understanding the meaning-making processes prevalent in the minds of the creators of that genre. The study also compares and contrasts the studied website with other similar websites to provide an overall comprehension of this sub-genre in particular.

Keywords: Female education; economic development; women empowerment; Pakistan

Introduction

Formulating a discourse community for the users, websites become viable mediums to disseminate information (Mohd & Ali, 2015). Beyond the fulfillment of this basic functionality, websites' genres will vary with variation in their targeted audience (Emigh & Herring, 2005). For example, Miller and Shepherd (2004) explored blog websites in their study, and argued that this genre fulfills rhetorical needs of the users, by providing a virtual space to them for writing their thoughts.

The genres of websites of business companies designated for e-commerce (i.e. online stores) have been investigated by a limited number of studies (Mohd & Ali, 2015). Consequently, for broadening this scope, the current study intends to further explore this genre in clothing brands' websites. Moreover, a genre analysis of such e-commerce websites can reveal the strategies employed by the respective business companies, to fulfill certain needs of their targetted audience.

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Rationale

Websites have become increasingly significant in establishing a reliable image of any commercial enterprise (Helin, 2014). Moreover, the 'easy-to-access' convenience of online shopping has made these webpages even more popular amongst the general public (Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015, p. 19). Considering these general trends in the consumer market, according to Javed and Khan (2014), all major Pakistani brands have well-established e-commerce websites as well. Furthermore, a positive attitude of consumers towards online purchasing of clothing and fashion items from Pakistani brands has been explicated by studies (Javed & Khan, 2014; Khan, 2015). Besides, Zeb, Rashid, & Javeed (2011) found significant consumer interest in clothing brands of Pakistan. Considering this consumer behavior, the way the e-commerce websites are strategically structured – to achieve diverse demands of the users – can be investigated. Accordingly, the current genre-based investigation explores, and delimits itself to, an e-commerce website of a Pakistani clothing brand, named '*Khaadi*'.

The selected clothing retail brand '*Khaadi*', launched in 1998, started its e-commerce website in the year 2014, and has been consistently managing its local and international purchases through this medium (Kazmi, 2017), since that time. Furthermore, Rafiq and Abbasi (2016) explored attitudes of consumers towards different Pakistani clothing brands; the participants exhibited a highly positive attitude towards '*Khaadi*' and its products. Expanding upon aforementioned previous studies, this research examines the format, structure and organization of the selected brand's e-commerce website. Moreover, analysing this genre would bring to knowledge that how the owners manage and maintain a positive relationship with the user, by purposefully structuring content of their website.

Methodology

Genre analysis deciphers how intricately discourse is organized at multiple levels (Cretiu, 2013). Moreover, it helps the novice author in understanding what content to place where and how to construct the document. Using the qualitative approach, the present study

investigates Khaadi's official website based on the interpretvist paradigm. The study utilizes two theoretical frameworks to decipher the structural construction of this genre. Firstly, it builds its conceptual foundation by the genre as an approach proposed by Swales (1990). Secondly, it employs the genre analysis approach given by Bhatia (2014) for deconstructing the website's entire layout and content.

Questions About Writers

Author of this website is the organization itself (see Figure 1). There is no separate indication or mention of an individual or another company, who could have been potentially involved with the process of its creation. Hence, it can be concluded that the members of the production team – including the content contributors – have been kept 'invisible' and, consequently, the organization's name has been kept 'visible' for the website's visitors.

Figure 1: Organization's Ownership: *Khaadi's* **Copyright Indication on Official Website**
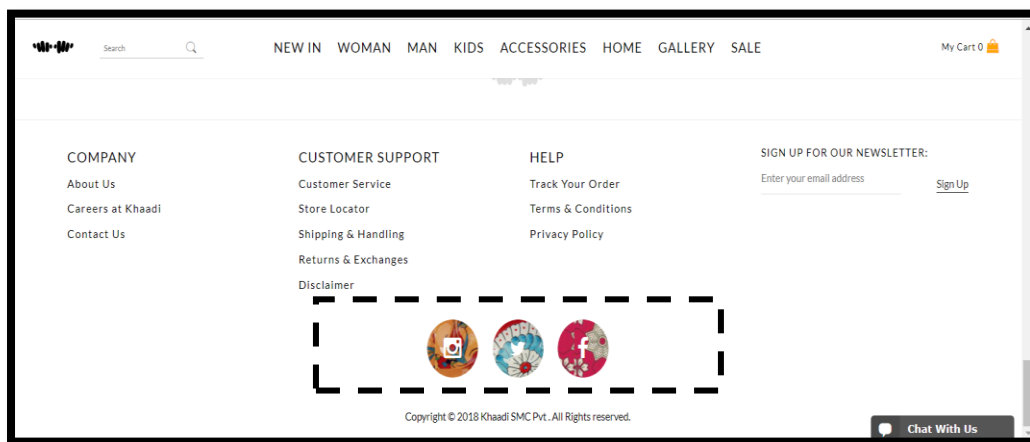
Credibility appeals, according to William (1987,186), influence the audience's reception of a message; they will not counterargue a perspective if it comes from a reliable source. Khaadi explicates credibility appeals through a number of different ways. For instance, the copyright mention (as seen in Figure 1) is a credibility appeal in itself. The immediate depiction of the company's logo on the homepage (see Figure 3), including the weblink's

domain name under the brand's name (i.e. www.khaadi.com) showcases credibility appeal on their part. Moreover, their depiction of links to Facebook and Instagram; showcasing of high resolution pictures of each product (see Figure 3); invitation to sign up official newsletter; placement of official phone numbers; 'About Us' section; 'Chat with Us' section; 'Need Help?' section; side note of 'Welcome to Khaadi'; and separate 'Privacy Policy' section (see Figure 2) – all contribute in developing a credible image of the company.

Figure 2: Credibility Appeal – Privacy Policy page of *Khaadi's* Website
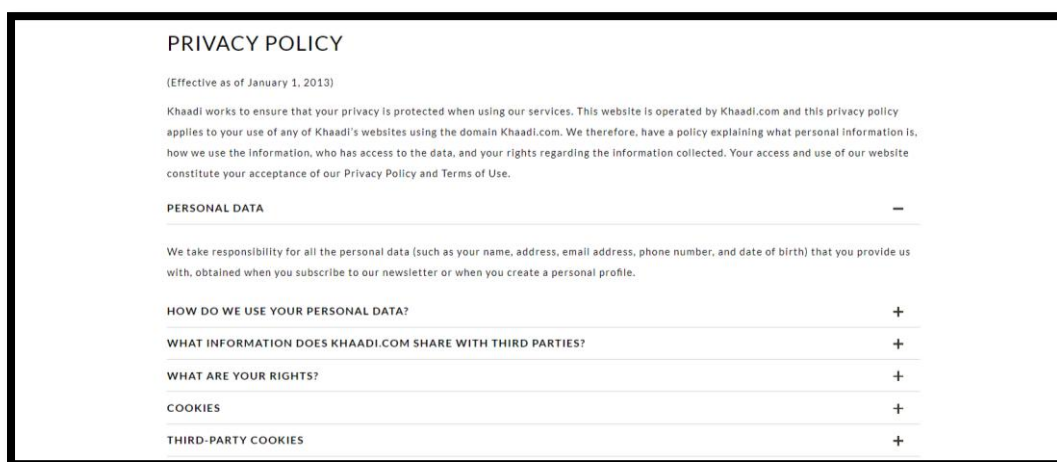
The identity of Khaadi is immediately revealed when the visitor opens the homepage (see Figure 3). The depiction of ladies modelling for the brand's clothes and jewelry is witnessed – which exhibits that this brand majorly caters to women's fashion needs.

Purpose of the website is revealed after a visitor enters onto this website, because the 'Shop Now' button appears immediately under all pictures placed on the first page (see Figure 3). This inclusion indicates that the website not only displays the latest products from the brand, but also provide the option of online shopping to the visitor. Moreover, the corner 'Cart' section adds to the same function of the site. Thus, the website's e-commerce functionality is visibly and immediately revealed to the user, in this way.

Figure 3: Homepage of *Khaadi's* Website – Revealing E-commerce Functionality
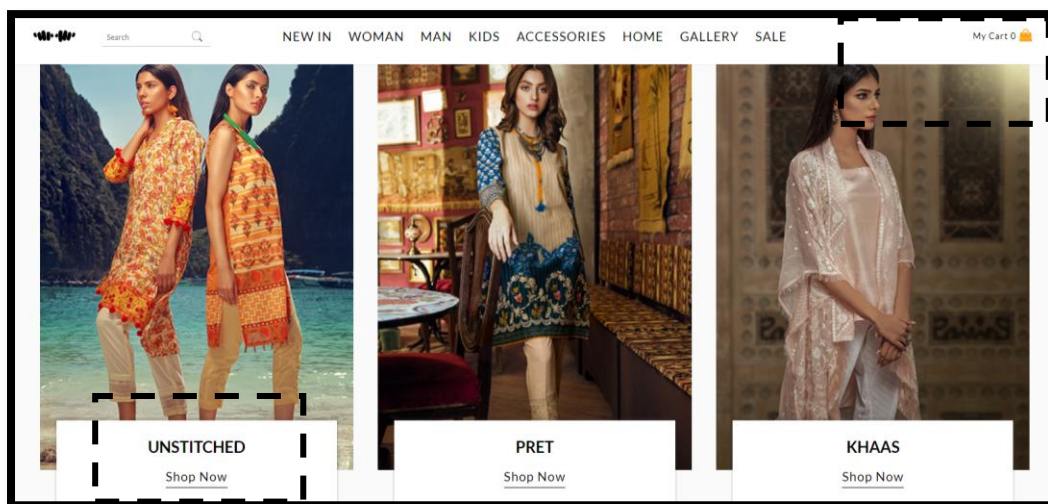
Women are most likely the primary users for this website, because majority of the displayed products deal with clothing, jewelry, bags, home accessories, footwear and fragrances for women. The secondary user group, for this website, can be men because it has one section for men's eastern wear as well. Moreover, this website caters to Pakistanis as well as international visitors; this fact is evident when one enters the webpage, and it immediately asks the visitor to select his/her country from the list (see Figure 4)

Once a visitor reaches the homepage, he/she can browse a variety of items. There is no single path for all visitors, rather they are provided with a freedom to select any tab option to see further paths available for browsing. For instance, if a visitor is looking for feminine wallets, then he/she will follow this path (see Figure 5):

Home Page > 'Accessories' Tab > Woman > Wallets

However, in case if he/she is looking for bed sheets then he/she will follow this path:

**Home Page > Home > Bedroom > Bed Sheets**

These options indicate that each pathway is tailored to address different needs of the customers/visitors. For instance, if a male visits this website, then the tab button for 'man' can be selected, by him, for browsing the products suitable for his liking.

Figure 4: Categorizing the Audience – Request for Location on *Khaadi's* Website
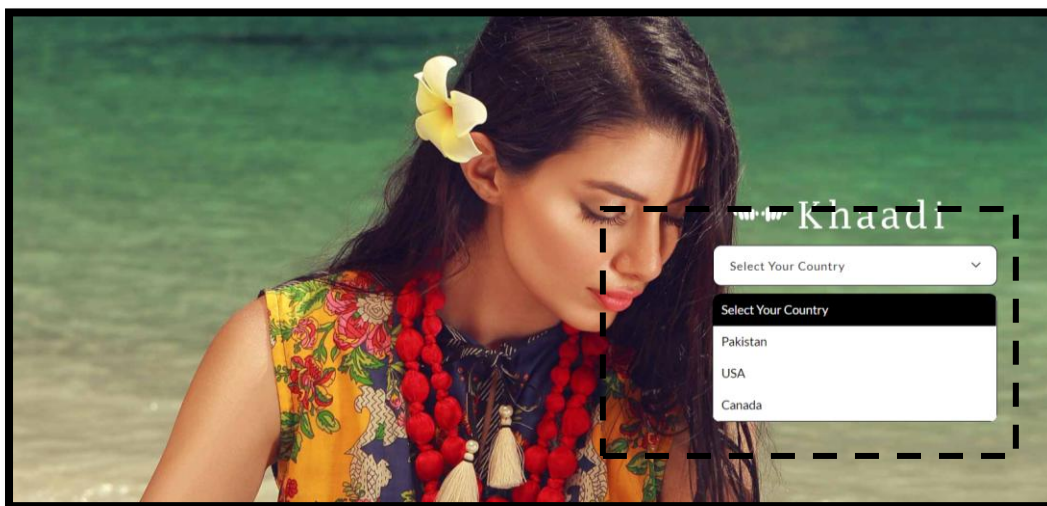
The website provides 'search' options through its designated search bar. Moreover, this website can also be bookmarked by an interested customer – for a keeping a check on the website's products. Furthermore, the visitors can also take a print out of his/her ordered item, its details and even its invoice, for future reference.

Figure 5: Path to look for Women's Wallets on *Khaadi's* Website
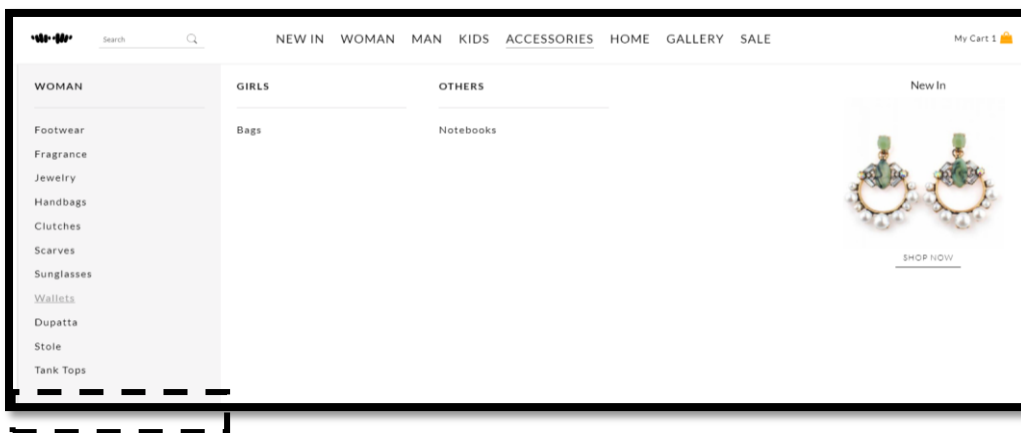
Format and Organization

Certain conventions, which are regularly found in all Pakistani clothing brands' pages, are also found in *Khaadi's* website. The commonly found web pages include presence of 'About Us' page; 'Contact Us' page; 'Size Guide' page; 'Store Locator' page; 'Privacy Policy' page; 'Returns & Exchanges' page; and 'Catalogues' page. Furthermore, all Pakistani clothing websites display high resolution pictures of each product for the visitors to carefully zoom-in and view the intricate details (for comparison see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Comparison of Product Views: *'Nishat Linen'*, *'Junaid Jamshed'* and
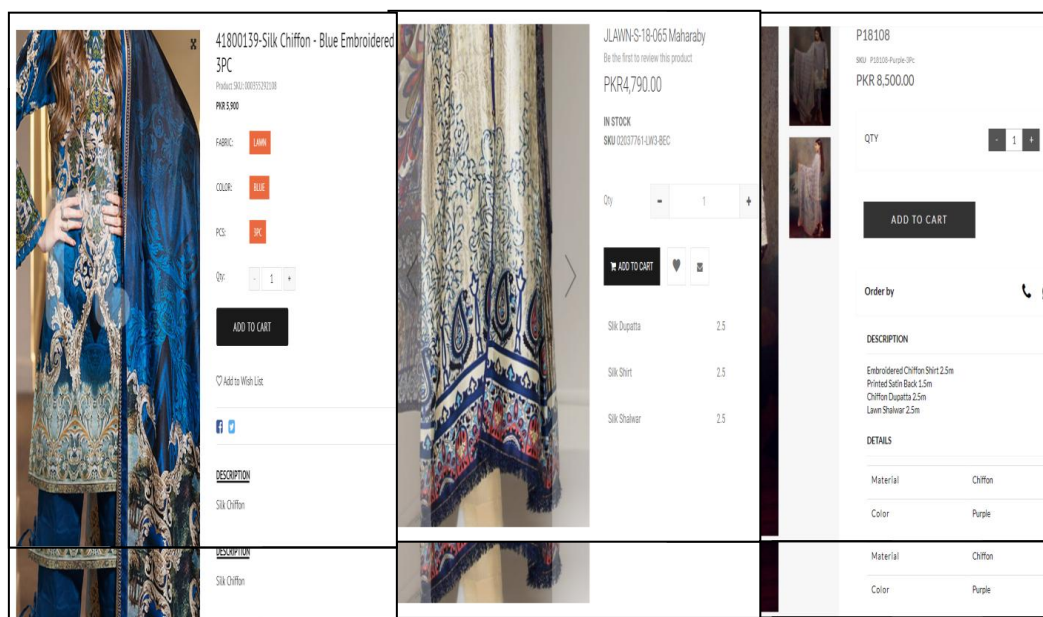
'Khaadi'

There is a definite logic behind the manner in which the website of *'Khaadi'* has been formulated. The website's nodes can also be explained in terms of 'research process' logic: the visitor first identifies the tab and type of product he/she wants to browse (i.e. 'identifying the topic'); then, he/she explores the product details (i.e. 'background information'); he/she might open all those products' pages which he/she liked out of the entire stock (i.e. 'sampling and collecting data'); then, he/she may compare one product with another product in terms of price, composition, etc. (i.e. 'analyzing data'); lastly,

he/she may add it to the cart, place the order and obtain his/her invoice (i.e. 'finalization of report'). An detailed illustration of the various nodes of this website is presented in Figure 7.

Khaadi's website offers a number of different nodes, based on the path of the visitor. Moreover, the website displays many visual images for potential buyers' convenience. In this sense, the visual space can be estimated to cover 60-70% of the website's space. Besides these visual cues, there are no sound-based or video-based inputs available on this website.

Level of Formality

The language of the website is formal, with complete sentences, in certain sections (like on the 'About Us' page, 'Privacy Policy' page', 'Disclaimer' page, etc.); and informal in other sections (like on the home page, product view page, gallery page, etc.). Overall, the language is characteristically precise, and to-the-point, with a professional tone. The phrases usually begin with verbs for instance, *'shop now', 'turn up the glam',* etc.

The page layout varies for the home page and the product view sections. The home page emerges with main sections/nodes and individual pictures for each section. On the other hand, the product view format includes high resolution visuals for a selected product. The pictures are, usually placed on the left side, taken from different angles to showcase the entire product. Furthermore, the product's material, length, accompaniments, style, color, design number and quantity is written on the right side of the respective product's picture (see Figure 8).

Use of Visual Cues and Images

For supporting navigation, *Khaadi's* website presents a horizontal navigation bar at the top of the page. This bar covers all the basic themes related with the products, which are sold on the website. This navigation bar contains all words in boldface and fully capitalized for grabbing attention of the visitor. However, the sub-categories are written in lower case format (see Figure 5 for reference). Moreover, the product descriptions are written in a relatively smaller font size and regular style.
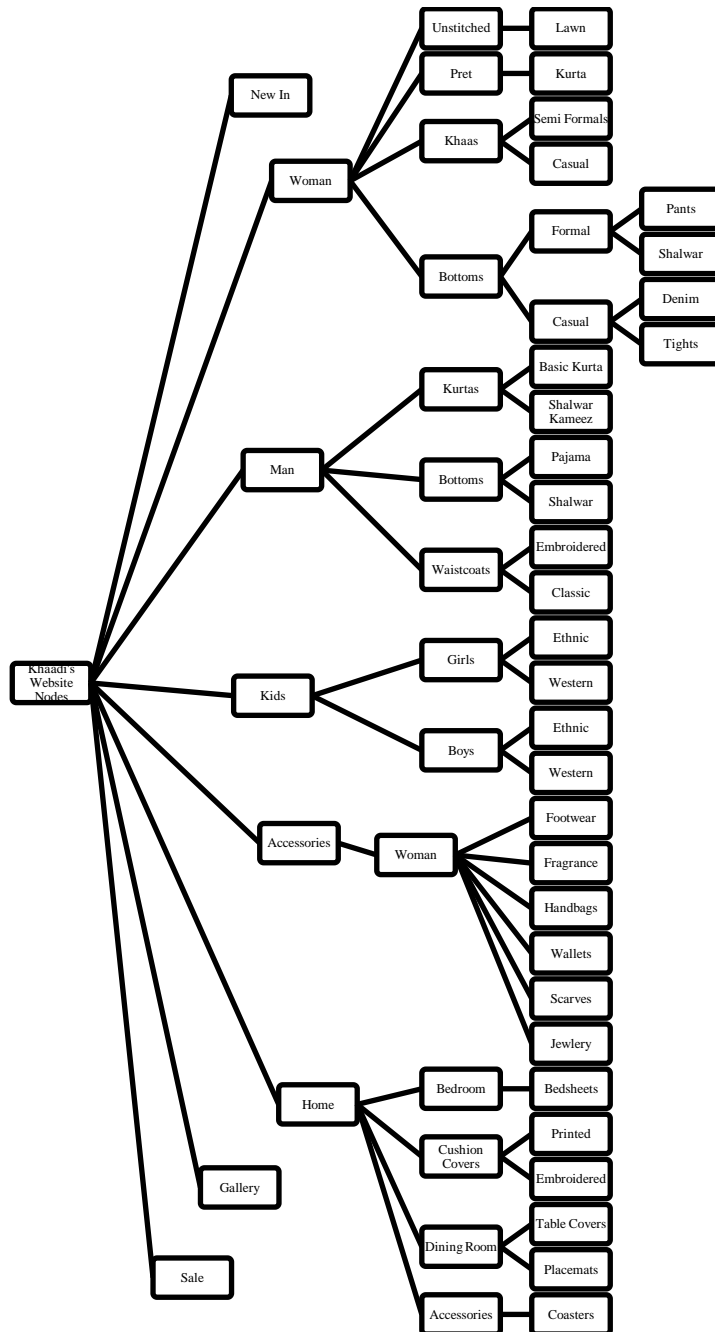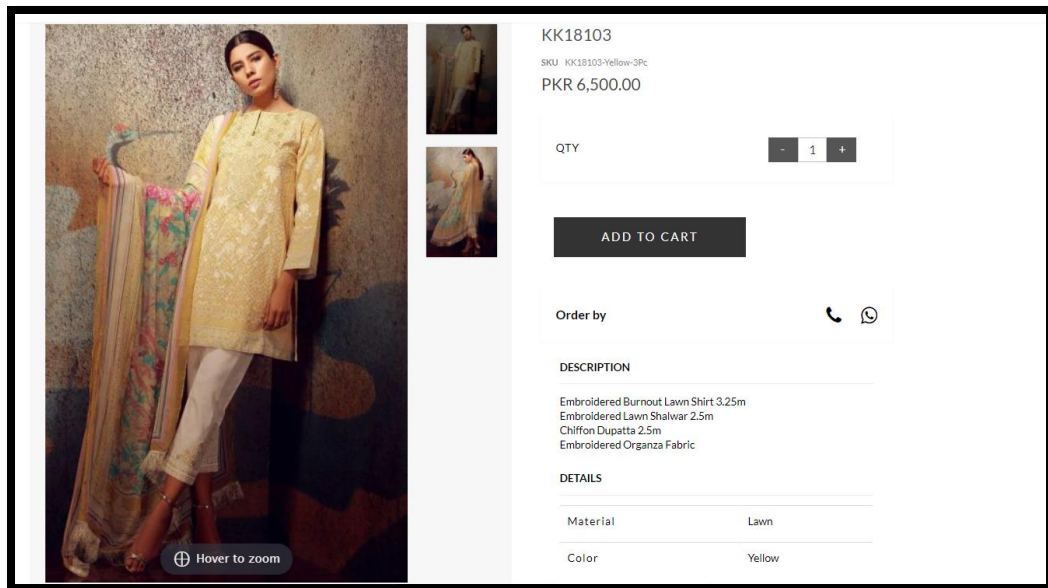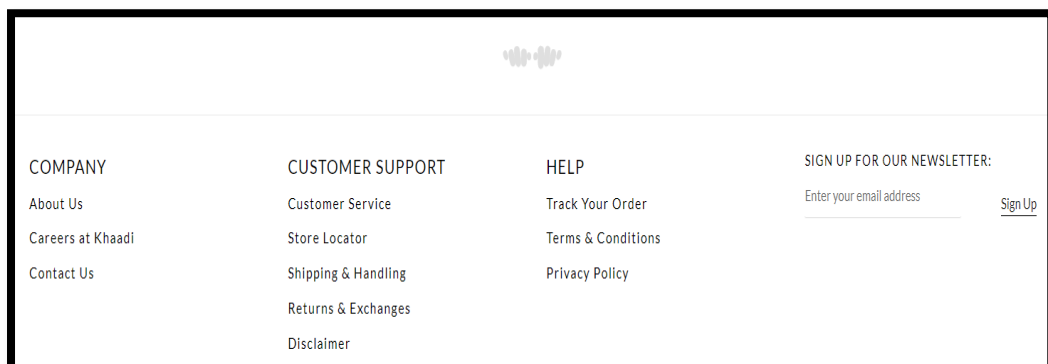
**Figure 7:** *Khaadi's* **Website Nodes**

Figure 8: Example of a product view page on *Khaadi's* website

The website utilizes vertical four column format for presenting additional links to other pages. These units are thematically organized into further sub-units (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Links to Additional Information on *Khaadi's* Website in Four Column Format

There are certain interactive techniques employed by the website, which make it a user-friendly website for browsing. For instance, if the cursor is placed on a product's theme, it immediately changes color to indicate that it is a hyperlink, and, is thus, clickable (see Figure 5 for reference). Furthermore, while browsing a list of products, one can see their different pictures by just pointing the cursor on the product's picture in the list (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Interactive visual modes for Products on *Khaadi's* Website
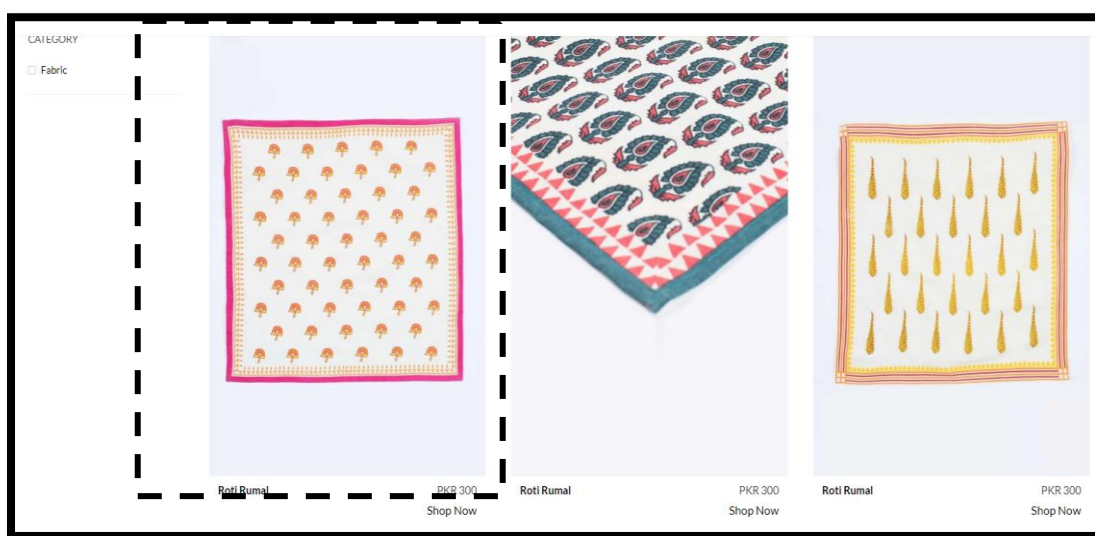
Range of Variation

In comparison with other Pakistani brands' websites, there are certain similarities and differences of the selected website. For instance, *Nishat* Linen, another Pakistani clothing brand, has a slightly different set of navigation bar for the main tabs/nodes of the website; it includes the tabs of 'Freedom to Wear', 'Ready to Wear' (instead of the term 'Pret' used by *Khaadi*), 'Lowers' (which is a not a main node, rather a sub-node, in *Khaadi*), etc. On the other hand, *Junaid Jamshed* (also known as *J dot*), another Pakistani clothing brand, has different set of themes for navigation bar – which includes tabs of 'New Arrivals', 'Men' (this comes after the 'Women' tab in the case of *Khaadi*), 'Women', 'Boys & Girls'(*Khaadi* uses the generic term of 'Kids' for this category), 'Fragrances' (in

Khaadi's website this is a sub-node instead of a main node), 'Make up'and 'Grooms Collection' (both of these categories are neither in *Khaadi's* nor in *Nishat's* website). Furthermore, the content of product view pages is almost similar in pattern amongst the renowned clothing brands of Pakistan (see Figure 6 for reference); there might be slight variations only. Another big deviation observed in Khaadi's website is the inclusion of 'Careers at Khaadi' hyperlink, which leads the visitor to another webpage for exploring on how he/she can work for the organization. Thus, Pakistani clothing brands' websites include certain conventions and also certain deviations. The deviations can be considered purposeful as they separate the identity of the website, otherwise, all such websites would look almost the same to an onlooker.

Conclusion

The genre-based analysis intended to explore patterns and structures on the basis of which the Khaadi website was constructed. This in-depth examination can be utilized as a guideline for conducting similar studies on other e-commerce websites and drawing comparisons between them. Furthermore, an exploration of the website excavates this genre's multidimensionality and varied functionality. Lastly, the current study is hoped to aid web developers in knowing how to effectively structure the websites for clothing brands.

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