UNCOVERING THE DUPATTA

BY

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ABSTRACT

We live in a society that is bound by a multitude of threads, woven together to form a hugely multi dimensional kaleidoscope of religion, traditions and culture. The tell-tale signs of a rich society, these facets influence life in their own prominent ways. Like all aspects, clothing has been molded by these inputs. The best example of this is dupatta. It is the epitome of harmonious collaboration between religion, tradition and culture. It is the unique trait of the dupatta that gives it the importance of being a symbolic article of clothing. It is the Endeavour of the writer in this study to define, understand present the ideas, views and factors that make this garment a versatile article. The background, points of view of people, ideas and history shall be presented. The idea is to probe deep into the factors that make this simple yet instrumental garment so influential in our lives.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The fashion sense in the subcontinent or for that matter anywhere on the globe is driven by a multitude of inputs. Social, religious, regional, climatic and cultural influences all shape up the overall structure and the face of the fashion sense and general aesthetic overview of the region.

For south-east Asia, and especially Pakistan, these influences have been hugely dependent on the ideological basis of the nation. Pakistan’s social fiber is woven tightly around our social ideology and impute of religion and its associated influence.

The dupatta is a prime example of this proposition and the main focus for my dissertation. The impact of Islam on the region has brought many influences on all walks of life and attire is one sphere that has had the most drastic manipulations. The idea of social integration of religious ideas is most pronounced in apparel and attire of modern Muslim states. The dupatta has emerged as a social compulsion and a prized accessory, which has many different conceptual understandings. They differ from region to region and are as diverse as the land itself.

This paper shall cover this topic in three facets:

- Social Perception
- Religious Obligation
- Cultural/ Fashion Statement
The main focus and objective shall be to unearth the ideas, stories, myths and general ideas about the inception, compulsion and fusion of this accessory into our society and our fashion. The history shall also be brushed upon briefly.

The reader can expect to be enlightened on the different aspects of ideologies behind the dupatta, its socio-religious acceptance and how it has been infused into the very basis of our culture. The attached Research Methodology has been devised after carefully selecting the sources and pointers. The sources vary from street people to religious and social experts and of course, fashionistas.

The dupatta has been the target of many debates and the topic of much discussion throughout our history, especially in the emerging moderate-secular religious views. However, the eccentric idea of this paper is not to dig into the long unresolved, bitter confrontation between the moderates and the hardliners; this will eventually lead to a standoff between ideologies. Instead, this is a softer view into the fundamental idea of integration and fusion. This will be an insight into how fashion has been influenced by social obligations and how a wonderful blend of modern design and traditional aesthetics has infused a new spirit into Pakistani fashion. This brilliant fusion of intertwined ideas and aesthetics gives us today, a very overwhelming fashion picture, that is highly balanced and equally appealing.

The findings have been initiated with the origin of the dupatta through which roots of the dupatta have been more focused. Dupatta is one of the examples through which we can understand the fusion of the culture, religion and the new trends and as a result becoming
a graceful garment. Dupatta has been very common among all the sections of the subcontinent.

The next discussion is about the subcontinent fashion in which Mughals have been focused. There are three factors due to which the foundation of fashion in our culture has been created which are culture itself, religion and the social stature. Then the dupatta has been discussed as a social religion tool in post Mughal era.

The panache and grace are the main traits of dupatta. Dupatta itself has to be taken as symbol of elegance, sobriety and more over the symbol of being vibrant and rich. The discussion then leads to the women of Pakistan and dupatta. How they have been related together and how did the perception of the dupatta changed throughout the time because of the imposition of the politics and the rapid changed in it.

The social divide is based on the research and survey, which has been done in two different cities; Karachi and Lahore. The Pakistani society has been divided into different classes because of the economic conditions. Every group has different views and perception towards the use of dupatta. The intricate balance between tradition and modernity is the most prominent feature of Pakistani fashion.

The fine balance needs to be maintained in order to keep the end product easily acceptable to the masses, yet classy and stylish. It is a very daunting task and very few cultures have survived the onslaught of one factor or the other. In order to perfectly balance both the facets, the designer must be fully aware of the convoluted ideas and the rationale behind the key ingredients.
Mastery over cultural, traditional and historical details and the complex intertwined justifications for each of them lies at heart of a successful outcome. The product thus produced is commercially viable, socially acceptable and aesthetically pleasing. The dupatta is a fine example of how these contributors collide. It is one of the most smoothening parts of a modern design and adds accents and smoothes out any ridges of acute unacceptability. The dupatta neutralizes the design and adds grace, panache and simplicity. It also provides a softer view to the observer.

It is very interesting to see sleeve-less outfits, otherwise looked down and frowned upon, getting acceptable by the masses by virtue of a dupatta. Hence, it is not just the aesthetic aspect; it is the overall appeal of the dupatta that makes it a very important article of clothing. In this aspect, the dupatta is more of a social screen than a religious façade.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The topic highlights and underlines the importance of the dupatta as a fashion tool and analyses if it is a socio-religious compulsion or just an accessory. The topic encompasses a vast field of study and encapsulates the ideas of social, religious, cultural and theological explanations. In doing so, the author has mainly used three major aids:

- Public surveys
- Published literature
- Interviews of prominent experts

This part of the dissertation shall review the published literature, Internet articles, magazine reads and similar works cited in different sources. The limited amount of published works on the specific topic made the task complex and cumbersome. Being an opinion-based topic, the bulk of relevant subject matter comes from the views and ideas of the general public. However, to cover the social ideologies and some historical importance, many published works were consulted.

Review Structure:

The review has been divided into three major parts. They are:

- Published Matter
- Internet Reading
- Magazine Articles

Each section has the details of the relevant published work so far and will present the reader with the work already available on the topic.

**Published Matter:**

Although not directly related to the topic, the book Women in Islam\(^1\) in its chapters related to ‘hijab’\(^2\) cover a very in-depth analysis on the reasons, ideas, principles and contradictions relating to the debate over the hijab. This work cites many schools of thought and presents a viewpoint for each one.

A very strong publication is Uncut Cloth\(^3\) a book by Nasreen Askari and Liz Arthur. It studies in depth the idea behind the use of such garments in SE Asia and presents some historical account. It also graphically illustrates the varying types of dupatta, headscarves, sashes and chadors. The book is a very delightful insight into the world of regional fashion. The book is one of the only cited works, which touches on the history, the idea, evolution and types of dupatta. It shows in graphic detail the idea of using colors, lines, designs and motifs to amplify the effect of the dupatta and explains each design in very fine detail.

**Internet Reading:**

\(^1\)An Anthology from the Q’uran by Nicholas Awed
\(^2\)Hijab refers to both the head covering traditionally worn by Muslim women and modest Muslim styles of dress in general.
\(^3\)Uncut cloth by Nasreen askari and Liz Arthur.
This article⁴ “dupatta symbol” by Kulsoom explores various aspects of the evolution, use and theories about the social importance of the dupatta. It highlights the social dogma surrounding the dupatta and represents the views of different women from all walks of life. The blogger goes into detail regarding the social facet of the dupatta and how the general public perceives the idea. In a very short piece, the blogger manages to sum in the history, significance, social causes and problems and the evolution of the dupatta.

One of the more elaborate works on the topic, this article⁵ “Dupatta: a statement of style” By Zahra Shahid Hussain an ex-pat, who has had the opportunity to closely see how the dupatta has evolved, changed and created a separate identity. It goes on to beautifully describe the history of the cloth and the uses, which led to its identity.

The article is one of the more complete Internet resources. It goes on to explain as to how the dupatta has been worn for centuries in both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. It is used to denote reverence and covers the wearer during prayer time and solemn occasions, and as a form of hijab. Since Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim state came into being; women have been wearing what they consider an appropriate according to their religious norms. However, over the years it has undergone many transformations and changes. From the pristine white cotton dupatta of the early years to flowing chiffons

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⁴The Dupatta Symbol By Kulsoom
http://changinguppakistan.wordpress.com/2010/02/26/the-dupatta-symbol/
⁵ Dupatta: a statement of style By Zahra Shahid Hussain
http://www.khaleejtimes.com/pakistan/dupatta.asp
from France, this piece of garment has become more than just a cover and cultural more.
It became a fashion statement and an adornment.

The next article\textsuperscript{6} “Dupatta, a vanishing accessory” By Saadia Qamar is a very fact-based narrative of how the art and business of dupatta-making and dyeing has diminished. This market has been a very lucrative part of the garment industry. This piece interviews many shopkeepers and businessmen and shows how the changing and evolving trends affect business for those who have been at helm of this trade.

The dupatta business has been a hub of activity. However recent trends have shown that a change in price levels and demand for economical products have changed the market dynamics completely.

This article is a short and concise narrative of the economic facet of the dupatta industry. It has the potential of research and the writer has shown great effort by piecing together facts and actual ground realities.

Magnier\textsuperscript{7} wrote “Dupatta Are More Than a Fashion Statement” is a very informed Western analyst on SE Asia’s affairs and cultures and presents a very radical and unique viewpoint. It is one of a critic and an innocent bystander, to whom covering one for the

\textsuperscript{6} Dupatta, a vanishing accessory By Saadia Qamar
\textsuperscript{7} Dupatta Are More Than a Fashion Statement By Mark Magnier
sake of religion and society is a rather impressive task. He is bewildered by the approach and analyses it deeply. He goes on to describe some history, social significance, styles and its impact on the society. He has displayed the traits of a true investigator by going deep into the roots of the garment and has elaborately described all facets of its existence. Essence of femininity, grist for film and literature, political statement, cultural icon, albatross, these few ounces of cotton or silk fabric have woven their way across Pakistan's shoulders, history and fashion runways, morphing from protest symbol to political must-have to sometimes-burdensome accessory demanded by Islamic fundamentalists.

The South Asian dupatta, which lies somewhere between its religious cousins -- the shorter head scarf popular in Turkey and Indonesia and the take-no-prisoners niqab\(^8\) and burqa\(^9\) worn in Saudi Arabia -- is such a fixture of Pakistani culture that many women here say they feel naked without one.

And while it may grow longer or shorter, wider or narrower, plainer or more extravagant with fashion's whims, it's a long-standing fixture in this conservative Islamic country, with a role in bolstering izzat\(^10\), or modesty and respect. Nearly all-Pakistani women wear a dupatta, at least occasionally.

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\(^8\) Niqab - a face veil covering the lower part of the face (up to the eyes) worn by observant Muslim women.

\(^9\) A loose, usually black robe worn by Muslim women, especially in Arabic-speaking regions, covering the body from head to toe and often worn with a headscarf and veil.

\(^10\) Honor, pride, or dignity worth.
In ancient India “odhni” also known as ‘dupatta’ has been used in different ways in different periods. In post-Vedic period and pre mauryans periods, the unstitched upper garment was also used as odhni and a patka.\textsuperscript{11}

Odhni had a lot of importance in this period among the religion circles. In mauryans and sunga period the chaddar\textsuperscript{12} of the women who belonged to the upper class were generally made of thin material, which were decorated with elaborated borders and often worn as the head covering. In Satavahana period the village women brought a change to their costumes to odhni with an elaborated border, which were covering their heads as well as their back at same time. The material of their clothing was also thinner. In kushan period the odhni were mostly worn across the back and over both shoulders.

Back in Mughal era, the costumes of women comprises of wide range of variety that included ghagra\textsuperscript{13} and chudidaar\textsuperscript{14}. But all had one thing in common which was the beauty of perfect fabric, amazing and exotic colors and the other adornments that included embroideries; all these added a lot of beauty to their dresses. One thing, which was always the main part of Muslim women’s costume, was dupatta or odhni. The Mughal kings and queens were very particular about the fashion that was going through that era. Which is the only reason that the dupatta of Rajput women superseded the woman’s turban at the era of the Mughals? Many alterations were made to the designs of these costumes because of the change in the climate and also the incorporation of the Indian costumes brought a lot of changes to their costumes. Only because of these foreign

\textsuperscript{11} It is a scarf worn by Sikh men.
\textsuperscript{12} a cloth used as a head covering (and veil and shawl) by Muslim and Hindu women
\textsuperscript{13} Ghagra is a traditional skirt worn by Asian women.
\textsuperscript{14} long tight-fitting trousers, worn by Indian men and women
tribes the fashion of the Mughal era kept changing. New embroideries and fabric were introduced and because of use of different material of fabric and adornments the garments looked more beautiful. Scarf was also introduced during this time, which was another sort of headdress.

This all shows the evolution of the dupatta in different periods and eras and also their significance in that time period.
CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

The research methodology shall entail a four dimensional approach towards the topic. It shall consist of:

- Public Conception
- Analytical Facet
- Extraction of General Ideas
- Conclusive Insight

All four of these phases have been designed keeping in view the requirements of the topic, the importance of the phase and the requisites of the paper. A sketch showing the process of information collection, sorting, extracting ideas and presenting in a conclusive manner have been drafted in this table:

|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|

To collect data, facts, myths and stories to have a basic understanding of the topic. Purely scientific in approach, this part shall pave way for establishing ideas and general perceptions in all spheres of life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYTICAL</th>
<th>Extraction of Ideas</th>
</tr>
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This part shall indicate the major trends, ideas and concepts, in light of the data collected. This shall create distinct points to be discussed in detail and analyzed for a conclusive argument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>Classification of Major Factors</th>
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Discussing the major aspects and devising a conclusive argument, to support the data, ideas and the writer’s personal ramifications.

The research shall include Questionnaires for the public, students, working women, housewives, men and elders of varying ages. These Questionnaires will be analyzed and represented using graphical aids and different analytical techniques.

The interviews shall entail the following purposes:

- Short informative introduction
- Significance to the topic
- Views
- Unique attribute about the person related to the dupatta
- Questions
The interviews, as with the Questionnaires, shall be analyzed for ideas and aspects. This shall constitute the data facet of the dissertation, and provide a larger picture to work with.

After the collection of the data, a complete analysis of trends will follow and suitable conclusions will be devised. This shall focus primarily on the social, cultural and religious aspects.

This shall provide a basis for the final conclusion that would be suggestive of the views of the people, the general ideas and the manifestation of the writer’s own views.
CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussions

Like many of our fashion trends influenced by the religious and socio-cultural obligations, the dupatta has its roots in the fission of these values. The religious obligation takes its roots from the obligation of covering the ‘Satar’ for women. The obligation has been largely debated as being vague and the Q’uranic view has been a subject of much discussion, owing to the problems faced in translation transliteration. Nonetheless, all schools of Islamic thought believe that it has been prescribed mainly as a tool to safeguard honor, dignity, and grace and above all prevent the incitation of diabolical sentiments.

The religious teaching of covering one’s prescribed body parts and the ever-repeated and often misunderstood concept of hijab takes its roots in the very nature of humans that has been clearly described in the Q’uran. It makes clear that the evil inside men shall arise if left unchecked. The best-prescribed way is to restrict the ever-present lust.

The order for women to cover their bosoms has been given to eliminate the factor of lustful enticements. The views of many scholars point towards the fact that it’s the men who are weaker and the decree has been ordained for them. Contrary to popular belief by outsiders, the Islamic order is not geared towards suppressing women; rather it is more of a protective umbrella for them. In all its completeness, it is a check and balance on men and the ever-present vice of lust.

\[^{15}\text{It is the part of the body defined by Islam to be covered by men and women. For men it is from the navel to the knees, and for women it is her all body parts.}\]
As with many of our fashion trends, the dupatta uses this religious argument to augment this garment into the social fabric. This has been reflected in our cultural views and has been fused into the moral identity of the whole community. The dupatta is one of the many examples of how culture, religion and fashion have fused and blended into creating a whole new, vibrant and albeit very graceful yet practical garment.

The dupatta is one of the few items of clothing that has been common to all sections of the society in the subcontinent. Having huge contrasts and being in stern opposition, the Hindus and Muslims always had the dupatta as a common deliberation. It is assertive of the fact that though there was a huge disharmony between the two communities over a number of issues; some items of mutual respect and cultural sobriety did exist and continue to do so.

**Subcontinent Fashion- The Mughals:**

As discussed earlier, the fashion in this part of the world has several very eminent influences. The fashion takes shape with acute manipulations from these factors. The result is invariably very graceful, sober, highly graceful and conforming to the norms of our culture.

The following factors encapsulate the foundations of fashion in our culture:

- **Religion:** The most prominent of them all, religion carves the fundamentals of life in our culture. Like all fields of life, clothing and eventually fashion has been hugely affected by religious views and commandments.
- **Culture:** The joint Indo-Pak culture has evolved out of the very essence of religion. It is one of the most remarkable examples of a balanced retrospect between religious obligations and cultural aspirations; all fused to create a way of life that conforms to the regional aspirations.

- **Social Stature:** It’s not just religion and culture that affect the way of life in a group of people. A very instrumental influence comes in the form of our royal legacy. The Mughals and later the Nawabs\(^\text{16}\) have cast a very regal and graceful shadow on our social ideology. It has been one of great class and carries a lot of panache. The very polished idea of fashion, the very majestic way of living and the imperial styles set forward in these times still reflect in the way we dress today.

It is in fact the inclusion of this imperial attitude that has left a mark on our fashion and style philosophy. The queens in the Mughal era set the standards for graceful, flowing clothes and ornaments. But the dupatta has always been an integral part of their design. They included the idea of stylizing the dupatta with embellishments, jewels, embroidery and delicate work. The idea of using fine fabrics, lighter hues and better materials was driven by the climate of the region and thus the dupatta was made an indispensible part of the attire, yet it was as practical as anything.

**The Dupatta as a Socio-Religious Tool in Post Mughal Era:**

The downfall of the Mughal Empire did not spell the end of class and style. In fact, the Nawabs and Khans, in the British Raj, made regional fashion more acceptable in terms of

\(^{16}\) A Muslim ruling prince or powerful land owner in India.
ease, comfort and practicality. However the facet of class and panache remained the
cornerstones of the era.

The Begums took lighter materials, like net and vented cotton, earthy and subdued tones
in colors, lighter and delicate embroidery and many such variations made the dupatta a
very comfortable part of everyday attire.

It is noteworthy that this era saw the widespread acceptance of the dupatta by the Hindus,
especially the lower classes. An in-depth analysis of the era reveals that the Islamic
teachings, which had been somehow modified by the Mughals in their dictatorial rule,
were revived by more ‘genuine’ Islamic views. The resurgence of these moderate, yet
authentic religious views was accompanied by a radical change in the perception of the
dupatta. It became a tool of modesty, a sign of piety and a very practical means of
implementing and fusing religion in the evolving changes in social lifestyle.

This era also saw the rapid influx of religious views supporting the ‘burqa’ and became
commonplace in the social echelons of the post-Mughal family system. However, the
newest factor in the list of influences shaping lifestyle and fashion in the region came
from the amalgamation of British and European ways of life. The modern styles from
these societies could not be accepted as a whole, therefore with a few modifications,
influences were taken. This led to a whole new dimension, which shall be discussed in
detail in later chapters.

In short, this era made it highly imperative that modernity can be accepted in any form.
The begums of the era showed how fashion could be practical, easy and yet very graceful.
Grace and Panache: The Traits of the Dupatta

The ideal mix of religion and fashion, with cultural and social highlights, is something that is practical, acceptable, conforming to the norms and rules and yet very graceful and full of panache. The dupatta, as discussed earlier, is essentially a religious implication. Using this in a society based on religion and being hugely conservative is a very delicate topic. The dupatta has to be taken as a symbol of sobriety, elegance, piety and above all flamboyance.

The dupatta lends a woman the respect she needs while working in today’s fast-paced world. It is more of a social phenomenon, as most of the workingwomen who responded to our questionnaires stated that they feel more comfortable working with a dupatta and it is not a hassle in their everyday work. Some however disagreed to this notion, as in their line of work having a flowing long dupatta is a liability.

Our social mindset has manifested from the idea that someone not wearing a dupatta lacks the strength in character and the piety one expects from a Pakistani woman. This is nothing but ill-structured views, which have thrived from the ongoing influx of hotheaded religious fundamentalism.

In other cultures, like Iran for instance, a long robe-like jacket that serves the basic purpose of covering a woman has acutely augmented the dupatta. Contrary to popular Muslim misunderstanding that wearing Western clothes is not allowed in Islam, the much tougher Iranian regime allows women to wear whatever they want with the long jacket and a headscarf and participate in social, educational and professional life as much as
men. This is one of the best examples of how practicality can be inculcated into tradition and values be used in modernity.

**Designer’s aspect:**

The Pakistani fashion industry is a fast-paced, evolving enterprise. It is one of the most drastic and dynamic facets of modern Pakistan. The fashion professionals of Pakistan have a unique responsibility of fusing modernity with traditions. Striking this critical balance is a very fine art and the intricacies of maintaining these details are very important.

The fashion professionals and designers of Pakistan have used the dupatta as they have fused many other traditions and cultural values in their modern designs. This idea is to use tradition as a base to build up on this infusion of modernity and tradition.

Emraan Rajput a designer who deals with urban and western wear believes that dupatta in past was worn by women as a compulsion and more over it had a lot of embellishments which added a lot of beauty to dupatta itself but with the change of time and fashion, a progression has taken place in the fashion, due to which accessories which are used everyday have been given more importance. Similarly, dupatta has taken changes too which has become part of new age designs and draping.

He further included that those days have been gone when dupatta was just used as a product to cover head and body, but now it is playing an important role of any outfit, whether be urban or western and only dupatta can create a whole new range of outfits.
According to Emraan Rajput, dupatta is our cultural icon. There are some parts in our society where dupatta is merely used as a fashion accessory but apart from that part, there is a sector which caters to dupatta not just in the perception of fashion but also as part of their socio-religious norm. By giving the example of our wedding dresses, Emraan Rajput said that our wedding dress has been given many alterations as followed by the cuts and style but the main attribute of the dupatta has always been kept the same because of the traditions. He thinks that dupatta has never been hassle for modern women but it is all their choice whether to include it in their outfit or not but as the modern fashion has more loose and long kurta\textsuperscript{17} which are fulfilling the necessity of dupatta.

Emraan Rajput when was asked to give his professional views about seeing dupatta in next 20 years, said that dupatta has always been part of our culture for many centuries and even in future it will remain part of our wardrobe and fashion.

When spoken to a young designer Tehreem Zahid who runs her boutique with name “Tanka embroiders” about dupatta, According to her dupatta is a symbol of high fashion. She believes dupatta won’t be anywhere in next 20 years because high fashion has taken over the culture and traditions.

According to Mariam Zakaria a designer who is recently teaching at Textile institute of Pakistan believes that Dupatta is the trademark of eastern culture, which makes it a fashion statement itself. She believes dupatta currently is more of a fashion accessory because now it is more important on how one dresses up and she also said that dupatta is

\textsuperscript{17} a loose collarless shirt worn by many people on the Indian subcontinent (usually with a shalwar or chudidaar or pajama)
not a hassle and it never has been one. When she talked about her own designs influenced
by dupatta, she mentioned that it is something one can do a lot at same time; it is amazing
how it can be molded into many different shapes and designs. In her personal views about
dupatta she said that dupatta is more of an individual’s choice. It’s up to oneself whether
to carry it or not but one can always follow different ways of carrying a dupatta and
various ways of modifying it. She believes that if to make dupatta remain part of our
culture and fashion, the masses should be offered in different forms so that they can
always accept that dupatta is something which is fashionable and modest both. It can
fulfill the both purpose of feeling good and looking good.

According to her Dupatta is something that has emerged from the history, from the era's
we take inspiration from. Which adds up to it having so much history behind it, icons
wearing it makes dupatta a classic item or more graceful. She believes its more modest
yet feminine and something that comforts women.

According to her, when talked about the dupatta significance in her design philosophy,
she said her philosophy is usually based on layering. She likes to experiment and create a
whole outfit by adding and mixing bits and having a key feature that makes it a fashion
statement. According to her dupatta is a fashion statement that can be introduced and
made in different ways, fabric, colors and patterns.

A young textile designer Owais Haq recently working with Amir Adnan when was asked
about dupatta being a socio-religious compulsion or a fashion accessory said that it works
as both. It sometimes acts as a veil for a female figure form but with the advent of lawns
and stoles dupatta has become a fashion accessory. In further discussion he said that for a
household woman dupatta is one way to cover her without the use of abaya or burqa. He thinks that dupatta has become a hassle for the working women but it is sort of a dichotomy that is occurring. He said it depends from client to client and outfit to outfit. According to him stoles and scarves are creeping in to replace the 2.75 yards of dupatta along with casual wears. And most of the time women create designs of their own by mixing and matching dupatta with different outfits.

According to Owais, 20 years is a long time span to foresee the trends and fashions but in next few years, for young generation, mixed variation is to be seen by using dupatta and stoles over smart casuals.

**Pakistani Women and the Dupatta:**

Pakistan has a very unique society. It has been the target of all kinds of intrusions and influences, owing to our changing policies and interests. We have been the subjects of various ideologies, ranging from Bhutto’s liberal socialism to Zia’s dictatorial Islam. The basic idea is still the fact that we have been doing whatever the government has tried to impose on us, by means of popular communication. The dupatta is no exception to the long list of influenced articles.

The 70’s saw the rapid shift in Pakistan’s policies. We saw a very modern outlook taking shape, hugely influenced by the West and very liberal in its approach. The socialist movement had started and religion was sidelined a guiding principle. The capitalist approach towards life elevated the standard of living of the people and the society became much porous to foreign influences.
This decade saw a drastic change in fashions, including a huge backlash of sorts on the dupatta. The dupatta became a fashion article rather than a practical social accessory. The styles of wearing the dupatta changed from the head-covering sort to a mere accessory around the neck. With the advent of much more Western fashion, the ideals changed. The regime believed in emancipating women, whereas the critics termed it humiliating religion and strongly opposed this newfound idea.

Like in every period, the suppressed opposition voices soon started revolting against the regime and armed with the US as the new ally, the dictatorial attack on Pakistan came with the idea of armed jihad. The Afghan War started off and the US needed Pakistan to help in the armed jihad. One of the best ways was to temporarily ‘Islamize’ Pakistan, and inculcates a sense of global warrior spirit in the people.

Hence, the 80’s saw a rapid influx of Islamic teachings in the society. The government became paranoid over religion and soon the idea that Pakistan is an Islamic state took over the idea of basic secularism. This meant that the men had to sport beards, wear shalwar-kameez and forcefully follow radical Islam, as this was the only way to sustain the ongoing Jihad in Afghanistan.

The women were also subject to the same implications, as newscasters on TV were told to cover their heads with a dupatta and thus a drastic change in state attitudes towards the dupatta. Thus, a new age started, where women started wearing the dupatta as a sign of piety. This can arguably be the stage where the actual distortion of the use of the dupatta began.
This age points to the fact that regimes have played a very important role in changing the trends in the dupatta. The drastic changes in regime policies and their effects on the people can be thoroughly examined keeping these examples in mind.

The dupatta took a very central position in our fashion since the 70’s. It has been pivotal in Pakistani fashion and holds a very prominent place in the evolution of what we see today as the Pakistani fashion genre.

However, in the evolving social trends since the 80’s, the dupatta went through a lot of changes. It became an integral part of the attire and working women adopted it again to get into the mainstream. Thus it has been very important in the uplift of women in the society and how they operate alongside men.

During the surveys, a number of workingwomen suggested that their reason for using the dupatta has been solely the fact that it allows them freedom to operate in the workspace. Their views also suggest that men have a certain degree of respect for women with dupatta. However some were of the view that basing one’s views on how a person is dressed and comparing the length of the dupatta to the piety of the woman is a very vague and somewhat dubious measure. The yardstick has been created after the 80’s and has been very detrimental for the overall social structure. These views, however, have to do with the social divide in the country and shall be discussed in detail in the next few chapters.
The Social Divide: Classes and Views

During the course of the research, it was heavily evident that the results shall vary according to the class difference in the different areas of the country. Hence the research was conducted in various cities and the varying views were catered to.

The Pakistani society is widely divided and diverse in its own right. The huge differences between the classes have emerged out of the economic conditions and the growing social problems in the last few decades. The country has been plagued by an acute lack of honesty in the institutions and the very basis of the system is corrupt; widening the gap between the classes.

In essence, the Pakistani society is divided into three prominent section; the elite upper class, the workings middle class and the lower echelons. In every era, the rich and the poor have been virtually unaffected, whereas the middle class has been struggling. In the last few decades, the middle class has been particularly hard-pressed due to the lack of opportunities.

This social void is not only evident in the fashion sense, but can also easily be observed in the views. The varying viewpoints depend on social stature, religious inclination, area of observation and background. The biggest clash in idea lies in the fact that people have varying perceptions about the dupatta. In this clash of ideals, the largest two groups are those who dwell on either extremes of the social void.

On one hand, one group agrees that the dupatta is compulsory for every woman and there’s no escape in adhering to this rule. This group believes in the fact that the dupatta is not just a measure of piety but also an acute feature of respect. It is this facet of the
society, which is often considered fundamentalist. However, this point of view takes its roots from the very idea of the background and surrounding ideas that encapsulate these women in their homes. It is just a mindset created by the people and is the product of a closed male chauvinist approach towards the society. So in a nutshell, there is nothing wrong or negative about this approach and it is strictly understandable in correct in the circumstances and conditions it thrives in.

The second group has the identity of the modern, post 80’s generation, influenced by the West. The minds have been framed in the essence of these very liberal mindsets. They believe in the fact that every person has a choice and nobody shall be allowed to judge someone on the basis of attire and looks. This approach has evolved out of the restrictive and imposing regimes of the oppressive dictatorial era. This particular type has been instrumental in staging pro-democracy movements and believes in freedom of expression, having a clear mind and a broad horizon when it comes to social taboos. They cannot be blamed for their approach, as the oppressive regimes in the 80’s eradicated and snatched away the essential civic freedoms.
CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

From the research conducted for this study, the following major conclusive manipulations can be extracted:

- **Religion:**

  Religion holds an important place in our lives our premise of being an ‘Islamic Ideological State’ has been the basis of the majority of our views. The ideological basis of all our social facets is derived from the deep-rooted history of Islamic traditions that we inherit by virtue of our existence. This has to be the most instrumental input that shapes the way we live.

  Like all credentials in social life, clothing and attire have been hugely influenced by religion. From the studies conducted during the course of this research, the most daunting aspect was the religious facet. It was considered the most important and the biggest stakeholder in the larger fashion sense that prevails in our region; in particular in our country.

  The religious teaching of covering one’s prescribed body parts and the ever-repeated and often misunderstood concept of hijab takes its roots in the very nature of humans that has been clearly described in the Q’uran. It makes clear that the evil inside men shall arise if left unchecked. The best-prescribed way is to restrict the ever-present lust.
Hence, the religious involvement of the dupatta or hijab has been the centre of all development in this phenomenon. This decree, like many others, has been pivotal in our social interpretation of the dupatta. However, this basic decree has often been misused and over-exaggerated, rather than promoting virtue and preventing vice.

It can, therefore, be said that it’s not only the implementation of the order that matters. What is more important is the basis, idea and the rationale behind the ordainment. In this case, it is the prevention of vice, by sheltering the weaker of the two sexes. For want of a better word, women can be termed ‘volatile’ and ‘nubile’.

So, like many religious obligations, we as a society, have taken the dupatta as a compulsion. During the course of research, it has been established that the dupatta has its roots deep in our religion and in fact has been the most important show of religious ideals being transformed into social implementations.

- Cultural History:

The cultural history of the region has made the dupatta even more active. Taking its roots in the religious teachings, the social history of the region has made extensive steps towards the integration of Islamic principles, laws and teachings into important facets of fashion.
Our forefathers have gone to great lengths to keep the spirit of Islamic modesty alive in the traditional attire. The development and evolution of traditional apparel in the region has been in line with Islamic values and it can be safely said that it has been granted an aspect of sheer elegance has been by our forefathers.

The dupatta has been a cultural tool of great significance and has evolved out of a tiresome maturing process. In keeping up with Islamic principles, the social aspect of the dupatta has been significant. It has become a symbol of modesty, pride, honor and, most of all, sheer elegance.

The dupatta has granted a sense of social security to women. It has become a symbol of refuge from the outside world. It has become a nest for the Pakistani woman, that keeps her snug in the almost holy, virtually engulfing aura of a social symbol; aimed specifically at keeping her protected.

Socially, someone who doesn’t wear a dupatta is too impure to be accepted in the mainstream social stream. It’s a huge sea of social ideals, with rivulets flowing out. Each of them has a different rationale behind and the ones not wearing a dupatta are in the muddiest, polluted and disliked ones. This has perhaps to do with the wave of Islamic fundamentalism, which overwhelmingly surrounds us today. The inferno of religious extremism has engulfed social life and the dupatta, niqab or the hijab presents a much disfigured ideal of piety in the evolving social scenario.
As the moderates are pushed into a very confined sphere and are targeted for voicing their concerns against the defaced deep-seated religious ignorance, the problems surrounding them increase exponentially. The dupatta is one of the most burning issues, as discovered during the course of research for this study. It has been the pivotal point of discontent between both extremes of the social spectrum.

- **Social Compulsion:**

The long scarves that many wear with traditional shalwar-kameez outfits are infused with religious and cultural significance. For some it's a sign of Islamic modesty, for others a cumbersome relic and some, part of cultural attire.

What’s a dupatta? Its roots can be traced back to the ancient Indus valley civilization, which was perhaps later adopted by Indian Mughals and finally became an integral part of women's clothing in all of Indian subcontinent. Different South Asian communities have different types of dupatta. It has been a symbol of a woman's modesty in South Asia. It is also an alternate to burqa a traditional black covering from head to toe. Historically speaking, veils, hijab and scarves have been in use throughout India and South Asia for hundreds of years.

A country with a culture that’s a mixture of religion, old values and Subcontinental traditions, history of Dupatta is bound to have all these elements within.
For women in Pakistan, dupatta is more than just a cultural icon or a fashion statement. Pakistani dupatta, changing with the ever-changing fashion in Pakistan is one fixture in a Pakistani woman’s outfit that many consider themselves naked without it. Since Pakistan, a predominately Muslim state, women have been wearing what they consider an appropriate according to their religious norms.

The dupatta is ubiquitous; there is no hierarchy regarding it and is worn by women of all ages, social class and status. Maids wear it as well as the women they are working for. Dancing girls wear is provocatively while other women cover themselves during Prayers. Young and old, wealthy and poor have worn it for centuries and continue to wear it in Pakistan.

Regarded as an integral part of a woman’s outfit in Pakistani culture, the dupatta not only underwent many transformations over the past decades, but also played a significant role in politics – often subjected to state interference. Previously the country’s right-wing politicians to exploit women at times now use a symbol of pride as a religious tool.

- **Fashion Statement:**

  As with every accessory to compliment the dressing ambiance of our society, the dupatta has been stylized and conformed to modern designs by our designers and fashion gurus. The dupatta has taken a very central spot in our fashion identity, as it serves two major functions. One, it reflects modesty and social resurrection and
makes fashion acceptable to the mainstream social classes of our conservative populace. Two, it inculcates into our design the edge of panache, grace, elegance and, most importantly, a unique tinge of difference and identity; making it exclusive and endowing a very regal feel to the overall look and feel.

The interviewed designers all agreed to the fact that Pakistani fashion has evolved into a very modern phenomenon, but the dupatta has remained the same since its inception. The idea of the dupatta has been an integral and defining part of our design and remains to be the centerpiece of all fashion developments.

It can be easily said that the dupatta is very pivotal to our fashion and holds a much-esteemd position for designers and costumers alike. The future of the dupatta is very secure, as designers consider it a very vital and instrumental facade of our design philosophy.

**Final Words:**

The dupatta is one of the most important and crucial socio-religious manipulations that hold a very central position in our lives. It has been and will be one of the sorest points for discussion and continues to be the center of heated discussion all over.

From the research, it can safely be said that it is not just a fashion tool; it is a very complex mix of social, religious, cultural and traditional sentiments. It has become such an integral part of our lives that it is almost virtually impossible to eliminate it from the
social fiber of our everyday lives.

On one hand it has become an essential part for women to operate in our society and for this part of the social kaleidoscope, it is practically impossible to shed the dupatta. Shedding it would mean complete alienation in the society, the wrath of extremists and a feeling of social insecurity.

On the other hand, for a particular slice of the society, the dupatta is just an add-on to the bothersome rules of our conservative traditions that have been thrust upon them. This very rare fragment considers the dupatta a cumbersome accessory and a mere compulsion. The reason for this approach is the mixture of cultural confusion that our youngsters are in today and the fact that the true representation of Islamic principles has been very murky in our region.

In all, the dupatta has been the most significant example of how religion, culture and tradition shape a nation’s overall lifestyle. It is a prime testament to the fact that a society needs an ideological base and how it affects the minute details. In this case, a 3 meter long cloth signifies and represents a centuries old teaching. It symbolizes cultural significance. It represents social evolution and binds the society in a much-needed ideological shell. This shell is needed for both realizing the ideologies of our society and keeping them alive for the future. In essence, the dupatta does all this and more; whilst being a simple cloth… 3 meters in length!
CHAPTER 6

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CHAPTER 7

Glossary

Abaya: A loose, usually black robe worn by Muslim women, especially in Arabic-speaking regions, covering the body from head to toe and often worn with a headscarf and veil.

Burqa: A loose, usually black robe worn by Muslim women, especially in Arabic-speaking regions, covering the body from head to toe and often worn with a headscarf and veil.

Chudidaar: It is a long tight-fitting trouser, worn by Indian men and women.

Chaddar: A cloth used as a head covering (and veil and shawl) by Muslim and Hindu women.

Dupatta: It is a long, multi-purpose scarf that is essential to many South Asian women's suits.

Ghagra: It is a traditional skirt worn by Asian women.

Hadith: A collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad that, with accounts of his daily practice (the Sunna), constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Q’uran.

Hijab: Hijab refers to both the head covering traditionally worn by Muslim women and modest Muslim styles of dress in general.
**Kurta:** A loose collarless shirt worn by many people on the Indian subcontinent (usually with a shalwar or chudidaar or pajama)

**Nawabs:** A Muslim ruling prince or powerful land owner in India.

**Niqab:** A face veil covering the lower part of the face (up to the eyes) worn by observant Muslim women.

**Patka:** It is a scarf worn by Sikh men.

**Purdah:** The practice in certain Muslim and Hindu societies of screening women from men or stranger by means of a curtain or all-enveloping clothes.

**Satar:** It is the part of the body defined by Islam to be covered by men and women. For men it is from the navel to the knees, and for women it is her all body parts.

**Sari:** A garment consisting of a length of cotton or silk elaborately draped around the body, traditionally worn by women from the Indian subcontinent.


APPENDIX

Interview with Tehreem Zahid

1. How do you think the dupatta has evolved as a definitive fashion statement?

Dupatta has always been the definitive style of statement. Yes the time has changed and style has also, if we look at back history in 1950 dupatta was considered as a haya for women in the films as a symbol of showing shyness. Today dupatta is considered more as a style icon. Just putting on a side and wearing it with shalwar kameez. Also since we are in 20th century and we are competing with Paris Milan and Dubai. So we as designers think that modernity is more important than keeping simple things close. Like Marylyn man roe already said less is more. So in fashion world we are too busy in keeping the standard of high fashion up high. Rather than that we are forgetting more important things like keeping our traditions safe.

2. Is the dupatta a socio-religious compulsion or a fashion accessory?

Today we are self divided our self. Many people think it’s a fashion accessory but according to a religion aspect it’s a necessary thing. Again modernity has taken over. It has nothing to do with religion. Every girl has different views on it. But if we go to the lower middle class they will say it’s a must for women. It’s all based on self division of Pakistani women.

3. How has it emerged as a graceful icon?
Some of the designers like Yasir Waheed and Deepak Parwani have brought this as a symbol of high fashion. So we adopt it as a graceful icon. First time in history dupatta has been a symbol of fashion.

Is the dupatta a hassle for modern women?
See again two societies elite and middle. Yes for elite it’s a hassle for middle it’s not.

4. How have your designs been influenced by the dupatta?
As I am a textile designer so ill talk about designs which are made in mills. See they don’t know anything about high fashion all they know is it’s a design and we have to cater it to all the classes so designs are made in a way of keeping dupatta in a mind. So when they make design they make sure that the same thing goes on dupatta as well. It’s the GUL AHMED lawn who brought a sudden change also origins. But some way or the other designs can be of everything. It’s not only for dupatta.

5. What is the significance of the dupatta in your design philosophy?
I am a person with old thoughts and culture. I still believe that in USA, UK and even in France designers are creating gowns with a small scarf and a dupatta. But we here are too busy to bring high fashion here. To me the significance of dupatta is the icon of a Pakistani or an Indian or Any Muslim lady.

6. What modifications do you use?
I have not brought any modifications in dupatta as yet but yes designs can always change.
7. Where do you see the dupatta in the next 20 years? What are your professional views?

I don’t see dupatta anywhere in next 20 years. May be history has already spoken this time. So i think May be time will come that shalwar kameez will be obsolete. But me as a designer won’t bring any change.

**Interview with Mariam Zakaria**

1. How do you think the dupatta has evolved as a definitive fashion statement?

   Obviously fashion has changed within the years and so has the perspective. May be a while ago it was just a dupatta, now the same piece of fabric can be worn in different ways, with different cuts. It gives a finished look to the outfit also Dupatta is the trademark of eastern culture which makes it a statement itself.

2. is the Dupatta a socio-religious compulsion or a fashion accessory?

   Currently it's more of a fashion accessory as it's more about how an individual dresses up.

3. How has it emerged as a graceful icon?

   Dupatta is something that has emerged from the history, from the era's we take inspiration from. So basically if it's something that has so much history behind it and icons wearing it makes dupatta a classic item in other words graceful. I think it's something that looks very modest yet it looks feminine and comfortable.

4. Is the Dupatta a hassle for modern women?
No, Definitely Not.

5. How have your designs been influenced by the dupatta?

Definitely, it is something you can do so much with. I remember working with Cords stitched across a dupatta for one of my projects. It's amazing how many shapes and forms it can be molded into.

5. What is the significance of the dupatta in your design philosophy?

My design philosophy is usually based on Layering. I like creating the whole outfit by adding bits and having a key feature that makes a statement. A Dupatta usually is that key statement which can be made in different fabric, color and patterns.

6. What modifications do you use?

A scarf, Shrugs (Waterfall Cardigans) also gathers and ruffled pieces.

7. Where do you see the dupatta in the next 20 years?

As history repeats itself, I think Dupatta will still be a fashion statement, probably something longer than the usual dupatta.

Your professional views?
I think it's more of an individual’s choice whether to carry a Dupatta or not. In my opinion there are different ways of carrying a dupatta and various ways of modifying it, maybe it should be offered to the masses in different forms so they can accept the fact that it is something which is fashionable and modest both. It can make you feel good and it can make you look good.

INTERVIEW WITH EMRAAN RAJPUT

1. How do you think the dupatta has evolved as a definitive fashion statement?

In past dupatta was a basic necessity and was used by women out of compulsion and tradition. Even at that time it was embroider and detailed with work to make it look good while carrying. Over time Fashion has progressed into a life style by taking accessories used commonly everyday and converting them into style statement. Same way dupatta has also evolved and became part of our new age designs and draping. Gone are the days when dupatta was merely a product used to cover the head and body, now it’s a part of outfit in so many different ways that it creates a whole you new range of outfits.

2. Is the dupatta a socio-religious compulsion or a fashion accessory?

At present it is both, even though some parts of our society take dupatta merely as a fashion accessory, however there is a whole segment which caters to dupatta not just in a fashion perspective but as a part of their socio religious norm. Dupatta is our cultural icon. Like our new age wedding dresses, the style and cuts can be altered to have a fresh
look but the main attribute of THE Dupatta always remains the same which is following the tradition and culture.

3. How has it emerged as a graceful icon? Is the dupatta a hassle for modern women?

In past it was just a part of social norm and was designed specially on occasions only but now women carry dupatta as a part of their style statement. I don’t think Modern women find dupatta as a hassle as it is entirely up to their choice to include dupatta in their outfits or not. Also new designs of long loose shirts and kurta are fulfilling the necessity of dupatta. Therefore I think it varied from individual to individual.

4. How have your designs been influenced by the dupatta?

I am a men’s wear designer so this question really doesn’t apply.

5. What is the significance of the dupatta in your design philosophy?

I am a men’s wear designer so this question really doesn’t apply.

6. What modifications do you use?

I am a men’s wear designer so this question really doesn’t apply.

7. Where do you see the dupatta in the next 20 year? What is your professional view?

Dupatta has been part of our cultural norms for many centuries and its design and usage evolved over time. I think that in future also it will remain part of our wardrobe and fashion.
INTERVIEW WITH OWAIS HAQ

1. How do you think the dupatta has evolved as a definitive fashion statement?

There is a growing dichotomy of sorts wherein within the same region and even same households. Women wanting dupatta and others shunning it totally max is they have to then a stole

2. Is the dupatta a socio-religious compulsion or a fashion accessory?

It’s both, it sort of acts as a veil for a female figure form since the staring issue is sort of rampant in the society but with the advent of lawns and stoles it has become a trendy fashion accessory.

3. How has it emerged as a graceful icon?

For a household woman it is one way to cover her without the abaya or burqa and has continued to do so since even when a 'modern woman' goes out to areas in old Karachi she tends to cover herself with a dupatta rather than a burqa.

4. Is the dupatta a hassle for modern women?

Yes it sort of has and hasn’t become a hassle, again it is sort of a dichotomy that is occurring since the 'modern woman' today can’t be generalized and categorized into a bracket. And dupatta provides you with an ample amount of canvas to play with in terms of design.
5. How have your designs been influenced by the dupatta?

Again it varies from client to client and outfit to outfit.

6. What modifications do you use?

Well stoles and scarves are creeping in to replace the 2.75 yards of dupatta along with smart casuals however many women mix and match dupatta with their clothes and create new looks every time they carry it off.

7. Where do you see the dupatta in the next 20 years? Your professional views?

20 yrs is a long time span to foresee in terms of trends but yes in next few yrs, for a younger lot a mixed variation is to be seen from mix and match looks to scarves and stoles over smart casuals.
**Dissertation Questionnaire**

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Please fill in the following questionnaire. For fields which you do not want to discuss please write “IRNS” (I’d rather not say).

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<td>Do you wear a dupatta regularly?</td>
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<td>Why do you wear the dupatta?</td>
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<td>Does it make you feel secure?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Do you feel working with a dupatta is a hassle?</td>
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<td>Do you think it makes a great accessory?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>As a Pakistani do you feel compelled wearing a dupatta?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Is covering your head necessary?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Does your family pressurize you to wear a dupatta?</td>
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<td>Do you think it’s unethical or ‘Un-Islamic’ going around without a dupatta?</td>
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Please say what you think about the duppatta. How do you think it’s infusion into Pakistani fashion has affected us? Is it good or bad?

Thank you for your time and valuable view
Interview Questions:

1. How do you think the dupatta has evolved as a definitive fashion statement?

2. Is the dupatta a socio-religious compulsion or a fashion accessory?

3. How has it emerged as a graceful icon?

4. Is the dupatta a hassle for modern women?

5. How have your designs been influenced by the dupatta?

6. What is the significance of the dupatta in your design philosophy?

7. What modifications do you use?

8. Where do you see the dupatta in the next 20 years?

9. Your professional views?