

Balancing Aesthetics, Sustainability, and Safety in Handmade Fabric Face Masks: A Testimony of Creativity and Adaptability

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Abstract : The COVID-19 pandemic that ravaged the world in 2020 brought about the need for handmade fabric face masks in South Africa and beyond. These masks showcased individuality and environmental responsibility and effectively aided our battle against the virus. These practical masks held significant meaning, representing human creativity, resilience, and commitment to sustainability in adversity. This paper examines how aesthetics, sustainability, and safety were achieved in the Handmade Fabric Face Masks. It analyses how their integration signified human agility and resilience to the pandemic while promoting dignity and environmental welfare. The research conducted a qualitative analysis to choose handmade fabric face masks and assess their aesthetic, sustainable, and safety features. The study involved interviewing a group of mask designers and users who evaluated the masks' efficacy in providing protection, aesthetics, and environmental sustainability. Although the designers demonstrated a high level of knowledge in the design aspects, the results indicated a need for more information regarding the functional safety measures and some environmental factors in mask selection and production. The mask analysis also revealed that the masks available in the market combined aesthetics and environmental protection but had limited safety measures. Despite the lack of balance of aesthetics, sustainability, and safety among the designers and the users of hand-fabric masks, functional aspects of fabrics and sustainability literacy are essential

Keywords : sustainable fashion, fabric mask, aesthetics, safety measures

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