

**TEKSTİL VE MODA TASARIMINDA GELENEKSEL VE DİJİTAL BASKI
YAKLAŞIMLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANALİZİ: LİNOL BASKI VE
SÜBLİMASYON TRANSFER BASKI ÜZERİNE DİSİPLİNLERARASI BİR
İNCELEME**

**COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL PRINTING
APPROACHES IN TEXTILE AND FASHION DESIGN: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY
STUDY ON LINOCUT AND SUBLIMATION TRANSFER PRINTING**

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ÖZET

Tekstil ve moda tasarımı alanı, dijitalleşme, sürdürülebilirlik ve kullanıcı odaklı üretim yaklaşımlarının itici gücüyle önemli bir dönüşüm sürecinden geçmektedir. Bu dönüşüm, dijital üretim teknolojilerinin yanı sıra geleneksel baskı tekniklerinin de yeniden değerlendirilmesini gerektirmiştir. Bu çalışmada, geleneksel bir yüzey baskı yöntemi olan linol baskı ile dijital bir tekstil baskı teknolojisi olan süblimasyon transfer baskısı, estetik, teknik, sürdürülebilirlik ve disiplinlerarası üretim potansiyelleri açısından karşılaştırılmıştır.

Araştırma, belge analizi ve tematik analiz gibi nitel araştırma yöntemlerine dayanmaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında, her iki baskı tekniğinin üretim süreçleri, yüzey özellikleri, kullanıcı deneyimi, malzeme ilişkisi, endüstriyel uygulanabilirliği ve akıllı tekstil sistemleriyle entegrasyon potansiyeli değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular, linol baskı tekniğinin benzersizlik, dokunsal yüzey efektleri, küçük ölçekli sürdürülebilir üretim ve deneysel tasarım uygulamaları açısından önemli avantajlar sunduğunu göstermektedir. Buna karşılık, süblimasyon transfer baskının yüksek çözünürlük, seri üretime uygunluk, renk haslığı, kitlesel özelleştirme ve dijital üretim sistemleriyle entegrasyon açısından üstün olduğu bulunmuştur. Ancak, her iki yöntemin de sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında kendine özgü avantajları ve sınırlamaları olduğu

gözlemlenmiştir. Linolyum baskı, düşük enerji tüketimi ve emek yoğun üretim modeliyle öne çıkarken, süblimasyon baskı, düşük su tüketimi avantajına rağmen, polyester bazlı yapısı nedeniyle çevresel endişelere yol açmaktadır.

Mevcut literatürde linolyum baskı ve süblimasyon transfer baskı tekniklerini ayrı ayrı inceleyen çalışmalar bulunsa da, tekstil ve moda tasarımı bağlamında, özellikle estetik, sürdürülebilirlik, kullanıcı deneyimi ve hibrit üretim modelleri açısından bu iki yöntemi karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendiren araştırmalarda belirgin bir eksiklik vardır. Özellikle, geleneksel baskı teknikleri ile dijital üretim sistemleri arasındaki ilişkiyi ele alan disiplinlerarası araştırmalarda önemli bir boşluk bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, geleneksel ve dijital baskı tekniklerini sadece teknik bir bakış açısıyla değil, aynı zamanda kültürel, sürdürülebilirlik odaklı ve deneyime dayalı tasarım yaklaşımlarıyla birlikte değerlendirerek literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, analog ve dijital üretim paradigmalarını bir arada ele alan disiplinlerarası bir yaklaşım sunarak tekstil yüzey tasarımı literatürüne katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Linolyum Baskı, Süblimasyon Transfer Baskı, Dijital Tekstil Baskı, Yüzey Tasarımı, Sürdürülebilir Moda, Akıllı Tekstiller.

ABSTRACT

The field of textile and fashion design is undergoing a significant transformation driven by digitalization, sustainability, and user-centered production approaches. This transformation has necessitated a reevaluation of both digital production technologies and traditional printing techniques. In this study, linocut—a traditional surface printing method—and sublimation transfer printing—a digital textile printing technology—were compared in terms of their aesthetic, technical, sustainability, and interdisciplinary production potentials.

The research is based on qualitative research methods such as document analysis and thematic analysis. Within the scope of the study, the production processes, surface properties, user experience, material relationship, industrial applicability, and integration potential with smart textile systems of both printing techniques were evaluated. The findings indicate that the linoleum printing technique offers significant advantages in terms of uniqueness, tactile surface effects, small-scale sustainable production, and experimental design applications. In contrast, sublimation transfer printing was found to be superior in terms of high resolution, suitability for mass production, color fastness, mass customization, and integration with digital production systems. However, it was observed that both methods have their own unique advantages and limitations in the context of sustainability. While linoleum printing stands out for its low energy consumption and labor-intensive production model, sublimation printing, despite its low water consumption advantage, raises environmental concerns due to its polyester-based structure.

While existing literature includes studies examining linoleum printing and sublimation transfer printing techniques separately, there is a notable lack of research that comparatively evaluates these two methods within the context of textile and fashion design, particularly regarding aesthetics, sustainability, user experience, and hybrid production models. In particular, there is a significant gap in interdisciplinary research addressing the relationship between traditional printing techniques and digital production systems. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by evaluating traditional and digital printing techniques not only from a technical perspective but also in conjunction with cultural, sustainability-focused, and experience-based design approaches. The research aims to contribute to the literature on textile surface design by presenting an interdisciplinary approach that integrates analog and digital production paradigms.

Keywords

Linoleum Printing, Sublimation Transfer Printing, Digital Textile Printing, Surface Design, Sustainable Fashion, Smart Textiles

INTRODUCTION

The textile and fashion industry is currently undergoing a significant transformation shaped by digitalization, sustainability-oriented production models, and emerging material technologies. Rapid developments in digital manufacturing systems have redefined not only textile production processes but also design methodologies, supply chain structures, and consumer expectations. In this context, digital textile printing technologies have become central components of contemporary textile manufacturing due to their flexibility, speed, and capacity for mass customization (Ujiie, 2006; Nayak & Padhye, 2015). Among these technologies, sublimation transfer printing has gained particular prominence through its ability to produce high-resolution, durable, and color-intensive surface applications while supporting digitally integrated production systems.

Despite the dominance of digital textile technologies, recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in traditional printing methods and handcrafted production practices. This shift is closely associated with growing critiques of fast fashion systems, industrial standardization, and excessive mass production. Contemporary design discourse increasingly values slow production, material authenticity, local craftsmanship, and experiential consumption (Fletcher, 2014; Sennett, 2008). Within this framework, traditional printmaking techniques are no longer perceived merely as historical production methods but as alternative and sustainable design approaches that reconnect users with materiality and craft-based processes. Linocut printing, in particular, has re-emerged as a relevant technique within textile and fashion design due to its expressive, tactile, and experimental characteristics.

As a relief printing technique, linocut printing is based on the interaction between carved and raised surfaces, producing visually rich and materially distinctive textile applications. Unlike industrial printing systems that prioritize uniformity and precision, linocut printing embraces irregularity, trace, and manual intervention as aesthetic values. This handcrafted structure establishes a direct relationship between the designer, the material, and the production process, reinforcing tactile and sensory dimensions within textile surfaces (Grabowski & Fick, 2009; Sennett, 2008). In contemporary textile design, tactile experience and material-based aesthetics have become increasingly important due to the growing emphasis on user-centered and emotionally engaging design approaches. Consequently, linocut printing contributes not only to visual surface design but also to experiential and conceptual textile practices.

In contrast to handcrafted printmaking methods, sublimation transfer printing represents the industrial and technological dimension of contemporary textile production. Operating through a thermally induced dye transfer mechanism, sublimation printing allows disperse dyes to penetrate polyester fibers at a molecular level, resulting in permanent coloration with high durability and color fastness (Shishoo, 2007). The technique supports rapid production cycles, high-resolution imagery, and precise color management, making it highly suitable for sportswear, technical textiles, and digitally driven fashion applications (Dias, 2015; Briggs-Goode, 2013). Furthermore, sublimation printing aligns with Industry 4.0 production systems by enabling on-demand manufacturing, mass customization, and digitally integrated workflows that reduce inventory surplus and increase production efficiency.

Alongside technological developments, sustainability has become one of the most critical issues in textile and fashion research. The environmental impacts of conventional textile production—including excessive water consumption, chemical pollution, and waste generation—have encouraged the exploration of alternative production methods and circular design strategies (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Within this context, both linocut and sublimation transfer printing present distinct sustainability potentials and limitations. Linocut printing supports low-energy and small-scale production models while emphasizing material consciousness and handcrafted manufacturing. Conversely, sublimation transfer printing reduces water consumption and chemical discharge compared to traditional dyeing systems; however, its dependence on polyester-based materials raises concerns regarding fossil resource dependency, recyclability, and microplastic pollution (Kant, 2012; Fletcher, 2014). Therefore, sustainability discussions surrounding textile printing technologies must address not only process efficiency but also material lifecycles, user practices, and environmental consequences.

Although numerous studies have separately examined traditional printmaking techniques and digital textile printing systems, comparative research evaluating linocut printing and sublimation transfer printing within the same conceptual framework remains limited. Existing literature primarily focuses either on the artistic and craft-oriented dimensions of traditional printing or on the technological efficiency of digital textile production. Consequently, there is a lack of interdisciplinary studies investigating how traditional and digital printing paradigms intersect within contemporary textile and fashion design, particularly in relation to sustainability, tactile experience, hybrid production models, and smart textile applications.

In response to this research gap, the present study comparatively examines linocut printing and sublimation transfer printing within the context of textile and fashion design. The research aims to evaluate both techniques in terms of technical processes, aesthetic characteristics, sustainability implications, user experience, and interdisciplinary innovation potential. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore how analog craftsmanship and digital manufacturing systems may coexist within hybrid textile production models. By integrating perspectives from textile design, material studies, sustainability research, and smart textile technologies, this study contributes to the development of a broader theoretical understanding of contemporary textile surface design and its future-oriented production paradigms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Traditional Printmaking Techniques and Linoleum Printing

Traditional printmaking techniques hold an important place in textile and fashion design, not only as production methods but also as forms of cultural and artistic expression. Among these techniques, linoleum printing stands out for its handmade nature, tactile surface qualities, and potential for experimental design. Emerging as a relief printing technique in the early 20th century, linoleum printing evolved alongside modern art movements and began to be widely used in illustration, poster design, and textile surface applications.



Figure 1. Linocut printing technique (URL1)

Unlike industrial printing systems based on standardization and mechanical repetition, linocut emphasizes manual intervention, material interaction, and surface irregularities.

Sennett's concept of "craftsmanship" explains this process through the direct relationship established between the maker and the material. In this context, linocut printing creates not only visual outputs but also experiential and tactile design values.

Recent research indicates that the resurgence of handmade production methods is closely linked to sustainability-focused and slow fashion approaches. Linocut printing promotes uniqueness and a trace-based aesthetic while supporting low-energy and small-scale production systems. These characteristics position this technique as an alternative to mass-produced and highly standardized textile surfaces.



Figure 2. Relationship between positive and negative space (URL2)

Additionally, linocut printing is increasingly being discussed within interdisciplinary design contexts. Its compatibility with conductive inks, layered surfaces, and experimental material applications demonstrates its potential for integration with emerging smart textile technologies. Therefore, linoleum printing should be understood not merely as a nostalgic craft practice, but as a contemporary and adaptable design methodology capable of interacting with digital and functional textile systems.

Digital Textile Printing and Sublimation Transfer Printing

Digital textile printing technologies have transformed contemporary textile production by enabling rapid production, high-resolution surface applications, and flexible customization processes. Among these technologies, sublimation transfer printing has become one of the most widely used systems, particularly for polyester-based textile structures.

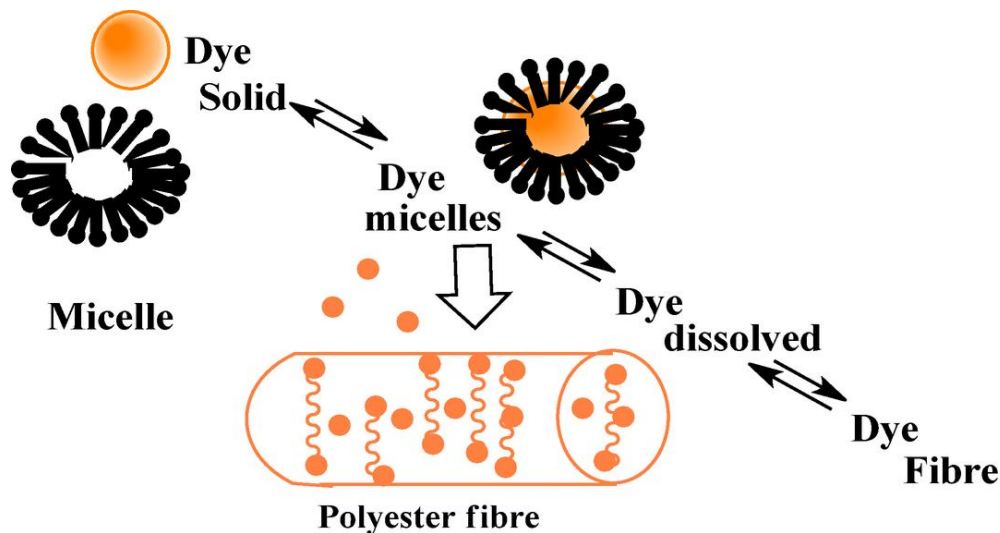


Figure 3. Dye on Polyester based fibre

Sublimation printing operates through a thermally induced phase transition where disperse dyes directly transition from a solid to a gaseous state and penetrate the polymer structure of synthetic fibers. This molecular-level integration provides durability, high colorfastness, flexibility, and abrasion resistance while preserving the textile surface's softness and breathability.

Growing demand for mass customization and on-demand production has accelerated the adoption of sublimation technologies in the textile and fashion industries. Unlike traditional textile printing systems, sublimation printing enables responsive production models compatible with Industry 4.0 principles and digitally integrated manufacturing environments.

From a sustainability perspective, sublimation printing offers various environmental benefits, such as reduced water consumption, decreased chemical waste, and minimized post-processing requirements. However, its reliance on polyester and synthetic materials raises critical ecological concerns regarding microplastic pollution, recyclability, and the consumption of fossil-based resources.



Figure 4. Sample with sublimation printing

In addition to decorative applications, sublimation transfer printing is gaining increasing importance in the field of functional and smart textiles. The precision and repeatability of digital printing processes enable the integration of sensor-compatible surfaces, thermal regulation systems, and performance-enhancing textile applications.

Hybrid Production Paradigms in Contemporary Textile Design

Contemporary textile and fashion design is increasingly active in hybrid production environments where analog craftsmanship coexists with digital production systems. Rather than positioning traditional and digital printing methods as opposing systems, recent design approaches emphasize their complementary relationships within interdisciplinary production models.

The rise of sustainable design discourse, slow fashion movements, and experience-driven consumption have contributed to the renewed appreciation of handcrafted textile surfaces. At the same time, digital technologies continue to dominate industrial textile production due to their efficiency, scalability, and precision. This dichotomy has led to the emergence of hybrid production paradigms that combine tactile uniqueness with digital flexibility.

In this context, linocut printing can serve as a highly expressive, material-focused design layer, while sublimation transfer printing provides technical precision and industrial reproducibility. The combination of these approaches enables designers to integrate handmade aesthetics with digital surface engineering, creating innovative textile experiences that blend individuality with technological efficiency.

Hybrid textile production systems support interdisciplinary innovation by connecting textile design, materials science, digital manufacturing, and smart textile technologies. Such approaches expand the role of textile printing beyond surface decoration, repositioning it as an active component of functional, interactive, and sustainable textile systems.

Consequently, the relationship between traditional and digital printing techniques should not be interpreted as a binary opposition. Instead, contemporary textile design is becoming increasingly reliant on integrated production models that can combine the cultural depth of craftsmanship with the technological capabilities of digital production.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative comparative research methodology to evaluate linocut printing and sublimation transfer printing within the context of textile and fashion design. The research is based on document analysis and thematic analysis methods, which enable an interdisciplinary examination of both traditional and digital printing systems.

The study examines the two printing techniques across four key analytical dimensions:

- ✓ Technical production processes
- ✓ Surface aesthetics and tactile qualities
- ✓ Sustainability and environmental impacts
- ✓ Functional and interdisciplinary application potential

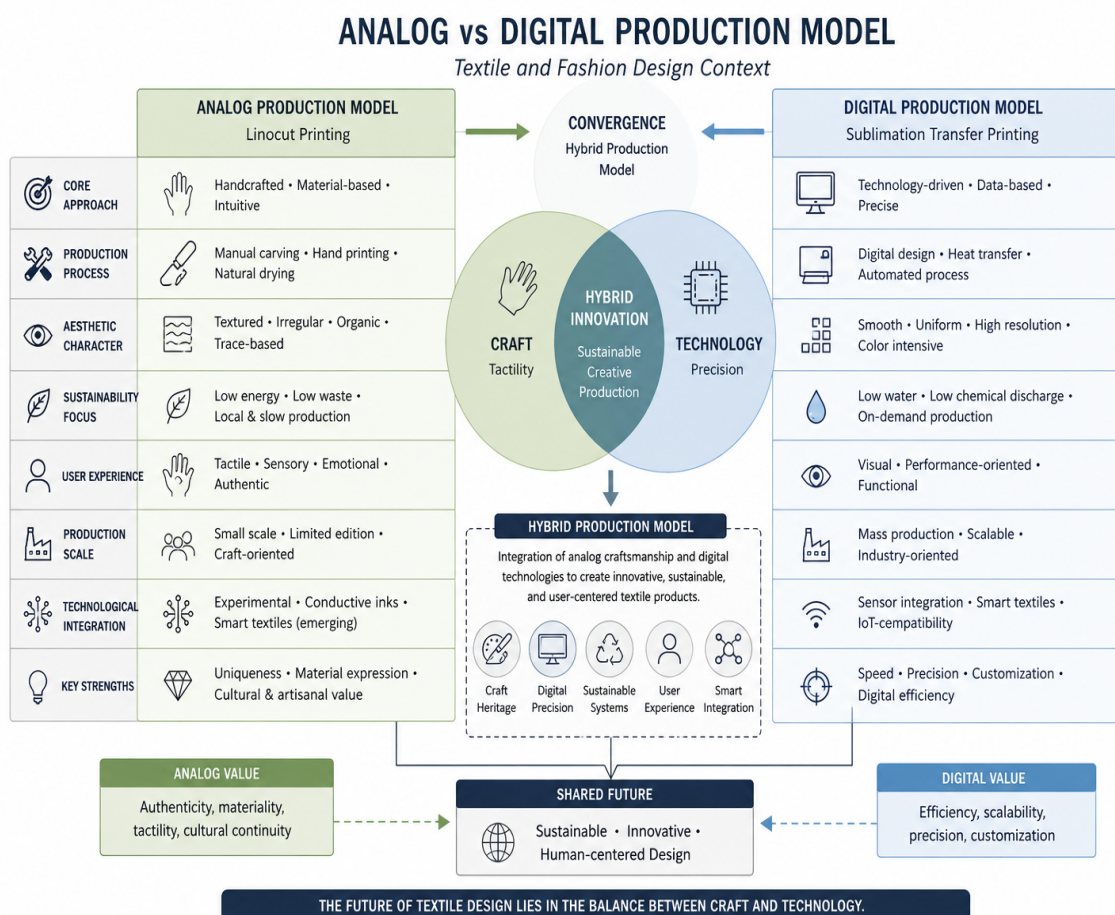
The document analysis process involves the systematic review of academic publications, textile design literature, sustainable fashion studies, and research on digital textile technologies and smart textiles. Additionally, visual examples and material-based applications associated with both printing techniques have been evaluated comparatively.

Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring conceptual patterns related to craftsmanship, digitalization, sustainability, user experience, and hybrid production systems.

These themes were subsequently interpreted within the broader framework of contemporary textile and fashion design theory.

The comparative structure of the research allows for the identification of both convergent and divergent characteristics between linoleum printing and sublimation transfer printing. Rather than treating these techniques as isolated production methods, the study evaluates them as representative models of analog and digital design paradigms within contemporary textile applications.

Table 1. The future of textile design lies in the balance between craft and technology



Furthermore, the research incorporates an interdisciplinary perspective by examining the compatibility of both techniques with emerging smart textile applications, experimental surface systems, and future-oriented sustainable production models. This approach contributes to a broader understanding of how traditional craftsmanship and digital textile technologies can coexist within innovative textile design processes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that linocut printing and sublimation transfer printing represent two distinct yet increasingly interconnected production paradigms within contemporary textile and fashion design. Rather than functioning as opposing systems, these techniques reveal the evolving relationship between craftsmanship and digital manufacturing in contemporary surface design practices. This convergence reflects broader transformations within the textile industry, where sustainability, customization, user experience, and technological integration have become central design concerns.

One of the most significant discussions emerging from this research relates to the growing reconsideration of handcrafted production methods within a highly digitized textile environment. The dominance of industrialized and digitally controlled textile production systems has generated critiques regarding standardization, material disconnection, and excessive consumption associated with fast fashion models (Fletcher, 2014). Within this context, linocut printing offers an alternative design approach grounded in tactility, material interaction, and slow production processes. The handmade characteristics of linocut printing create surface irregularities, variations in ink density, and trace-based aesthetics that enhance the uniqueness and experiential quality of textile surfaces. These characteristics align closely with contemporary slow fashion discourse and experience-oriented design approaches emphasizing emotional durability and material authenticity (Sennett, 2008).

At the same time, the findings confirm that sublimation transfer printing has become one of the most efficient and technologically advanced methods within digital textile production. Its capability to produce high-resolution imagery, durable coloration, and rapid customization positions sublimation printing as a key component of Industry 4.0-oriented manufacturing systems. In particular, its compatibility with on-demand production and mass customization strategies supports flexible manufacturing models capable of responding rapidly to evolving consumer demands (Pine, 1993; Nayak & Padhye, 2015). From a production perspective, sublimation printing demonstrates how digital technologies have expanded the possibilities of textile surface design while increasing industrial efficiency.

However, the comparative analysis also reveals a critical sustainability paradox. Although sublimation printing reduces water consumption and minimizes chemical discharge compared to conventional dyeing processes, its reliance on polyester-based materials introduces significant ecological concerns related to fossil resource dependency and microplastic pollution

(Niinimäki et al., 2020). Conversely, linocut printing supports low-energy and small-scale production systems but may face limitations regarding scalability and industrial standardization. These findings suggest that sustainability in textile printing cannot be evaluated solely through production efficiency; instead, it must be understood through a broader lifecycle perspective encompassing materials, production systems, user practices, and end-of-life impacts.

Another important discussion concerns the role of tactile experience and materiality in contemporary textile design. Digital textile production often prioritizes visual precision and technical consistency, whereas handcrafted techniques emphasize sensory interaction and physical engagement with the material. Linocut printing, through its textured and trace-based surface qualities, contributes to the creation of emotionally engaging textile experiences. This tactile dimension becomes particularly important in contemporary fashion and textile design, where consumers increasingly seek authenticity, individuality, and sensory richness beyond purely visual aesthetics.

The study further indicates that the future of textile printing may depend on hybrid production systems combining analog craftsmanship with digital technologies. Hybrid approaches enable designers to integrate the expressive and tactile qualities of traditional printmaking with the precision, scalability, and reproducibility of digital textile production. Within this framework, linocut printing can function as a material-oriented and conceptual design layer, while sublimation transfer printing provides technological control and industrial adaptability. Such integrations expand the possibilities of textile surface design by creating innovative relationships between craft aesthetics and digital engineering.

In addition to aesthetic and production-related considerations, both printing techniques demonstrate potential within the development of smart and functional textiles. The experimental use of conductive inks and layered surface systems in linocut printing suggests opportunities for handcrafted interactive textile applications. Similarly, the precision and repeatability of sublimation transfer printing support the integration of sensor-compatible and performance-enhancing textile structures (Stoppa & Chiolerio, 2014; Dias, 2015). This interdisciplinary convergence highlights the increasing integration of textile design, engineering, material science, and digital fabrication within future textile innovation systems.

Ultimately, this study suggests that contemporary textile design is moving toward production models that value both technological advancement and material authenticity. The

coexistence of traditional and digital printing systems reflects a broader shift in design culture, where innovation is no longer defined solely by technological progress but also by the ability to integrate sustainability, sensory experience, and cultural continuity within textile production processes.

CONCLUSION

This study comparatively examined linocut printing and sublimation transfer printing within the context of textile and fashion design, focusing on their technical structures, aesthetic characteristics, sustainability implications, and interdisciplinary application potentials. The findings demonstrate that both techniques possess distinct advantages and limitations, reflecting different yet complementary production paradigms within contemporary textile design.

The research revealed that linocut printing continues to maintain relevance as a handcrafted and experimental surface design technique despite the widespread dominance of digital textile technologies. Its tactile qualities, material-oriented production process, and ability to generate unique and non-repetitive surface variations position linocut as an important approach within sustainable and experience-centered textile design practices. Furthermore, its compatibility with interdisciplinary and experimental applications indicates its continued potential within innovative textile development processes.

In contrast, sublimation transfer printing represents the technological and industrial dimension of contemporary textile production. Its ability to produce durable, high-resolution, and color-intensive designs while supporting rapid production and mass customization has established sublimation printing as a dominant digital textile printing technology. The technique's compatibility with digitally integrated manufacturing systems further strengthens its importance within Industry 4.0-oriented textile production environments.

However, the comparative findings also emphasize that neither traditional nor digital printing techniques can independently address all contemporary challenges related to sustainability, user experience, and production efficiency. While linocut printing supports low-energy and small-scale manufacturing processes, sublimation printing offers reduced water consumption and industrial scalability. Nevertheless, sustainability concerns associated with synthetic materials and microplastic pollution remain critical limitations for sublimation-based systems. These results underline the necessity of evaluating textile printing technologies through holistic and lifecycle-oriented sustainability frameworks.

One of the most significant conclusions of this study is that future textile and fashion design practices will increasingly depend on hybrid production models integrating analog craftsmanship and digital manufacturing systems. Rather than replacing traditional techniques, digital technologies may function as complementary tools that expand the creative and functional possibilities of textile surface design. In this context, hybrid design approaches combining tactile authenticity, technological precision, and sustainable production strategies may become central to future textile innovation.

Moreover, the interdisciplinary integration of textile printing technologies with smart textile systems presents new opportunities for both aesthetic and functional textile applications. The convergence of textile design, material science, engineering, and digital fabrication indicates that textile surfaces are evolving beyond decorative functions toward interactive and performance-oriented systems.

In conclusion, linocut printing and sublimation transfer printing should not be interpreted solely as traditional and digital alternatives. Instead, they represent interconnected approaches within a broader transformation of textile and fashion design shaped by sustainability, technological innovation, and evolving user expectations. The coexistence and integration of these methods may contribute significantly to the development of future-oriented, sustainable, and interdisciplinary textile design practices.

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