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Need for functional design solutions in modest fashion industry: A review

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Abstract

Muslim clothing, often known as modest clothing, is a specific dressing style for women who follow the Islamic faith. Women always have worn this attire as a sign of devotion to their faith. Surprisingly, Muslim dress has grown in favour among women of all ages in the last decade, not just as a part of their faith, but also as a fashion statement.

Hijab wearers are aware of the Religious requirements for modest dress, however they tend to blend the notions with the trendy aspect. Hijab wearers who are inspired by fashion, on the other hand, have changed the modesty component in their style. The media and celebrity portrayals of stylishly modest hijab influenced the adjustment of modesty. As a result, fashion has been pushed to be viewed as modest, and modesty has become synonymous with fashion.

The impact of culture on Muslim women's dress etiquettes led to a better understanding of what Muslim women expect from their attire and the identification of possible prospects in the modern modest fashion industry.

As more women get educated, work, and earn their own money, Muslim women in developing nations have transformed from a traditional to a modern lifestyle. They have evolved as modern sophisticated Muslim women in the way they dress and wear their hijab while adhering to the Shariah-compliant dress code. In the fashion literature, Muslim women's fashion, particularly hijab fashion, has gotten minimal attention.

The primary goal of this article is to analyse consumer perceptions of Muslim clothing and the underlying causes that are bringing it forward in the worldwide market. The findings show that religious responsibility, aesthetics, and the influence of opinion leaders all play a role in the expanding popularity of Muslim clothing.

Keywords: Modest wear, Islamic women, evolution, adaptation, consumer awareness

1. Introduction

The hijab can be viewed of as a tool of empowerment, a fashion statement, or a way to show one's self. Wearing the hijab in a Muslim setting means more than just covering one's hair; it also represents modesty, morality, natural beauty, and a harmonious relationship between a Muslim woman and society. (Siti Hasnah Hassan, Harmimi Harun, 2016).

Muslim women wear the Islamic veil, also known as hijab, to establish Islamic values based on the teachings of the Qur'an, which strive to protect women and their dignity (Hassim, 2014)^[19]. Religion is belief, but religiosity is the evaluation of an individual's quality and state of mind, which is founded on religious ideals that lead to conviction. Wearing the hijab is a symbol of devotion to their religion and acceptance of the act as a divine requirement (Majid, 2016)^[30].

The word "hijab" literally means "to cover, or to screen." Although the terms "scarf" and "hijab" are synonymous in English, the hijab has cultural meanings in many Muslim nations. The hijab in this study merely refers to the veil or headscarf that covers Muslim women's hair and is worn with acceptable, modest clothing. For Muslim women, wearing a hijab is both a religious and cultural expression of their identity and spiritual beliefs (Galadari, 2012)^[9]. In recent years, the hijab has become a symbol of Islamic consciousness, as many women see it as a sign of their willingness to participate in an Islamic resurgence, particularly in places where it is not mandatory or in non-Muslim nations. (Siti Hasnah Hassan, Harmimi Harun, 2016).

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Muslim women today have more fashion and style options than ever before, according to Ghani (2011), since to the development of Muslim fashion media, blogs, designers, and merchants.

The current hijab fashion trends aim to update the modest style while keeping the essence of traditional and cultural values. This fashion establishes a new style and trend for Muslim women who are merging fashion with their Islamic faith, and it delivers a refreshing modern sensation of elegance and energy. (Siti Hasnah Hassan, Harmimi Harun, 2016).

The term "Muslim dress" does not refer to any specific type of clothing. Rather, it might be described as any apparel that adheres to the modesty ideal. Women's attire in public should cover the entire body and primarily be composed of non-transparent fabric, according to the Islamic tenet of modesty (Boulanouar, 2006; Jackson and MonkTurner, 2015) ^[6, 22].

Any modest clothing that covers a woman's entire body is considered Islamic attire in Islam. Despite the belief that women's bodies must be concealed, Mossière (2012) ^[34] suggests that women's clothing should be of a kind that conceals body contours. Islamic wear should not be too tight to the body, and the fabric should not be too thin, according to Muslim scholars, so that women's body is not exhibited too much. It should have long and loose sleeves that cover the arm and modestly conceal the neckline and hair of ladies. (Mashruha Zabeen, Shahpar Shams, Nayeema Sultana, 2017) The fashion business, by its very nature, is always changing and adapting to new fashion styles and trends. Muslim clothing has been a fashion trend in the last decade, and it is gaining acceptability and appeal at an accelerated rate. Designers have recently incorporated Muslim garb to the runways, particularly in Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates (Genel and Karaosmanolu, 2006; Gökarıksel and Secor, 2009; Sobh *et al.*, 2010; Hassan and Harun, 2016) ^[10, 11, 12, 40, 18]. On the other side, nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom have opened up to diversity, which has helped to the proliferation of Muslim clothing in those communities (Ali, 2005) ^[1].

2. What is Modest Fashion

Fashion may be seen of as an element of a consumer's culture in which the purchase of fashion helps them establish their identity. Fashion is utilised to transmit a social identity as a code and as a form of self-expression, according to (Cardoso *et al.* 2010). The fashion business, by its very nature, is always changing and adapting to new fashion styles and trends. Muslim clothing has been a fashion trend in the last decade, and it is gaining acceptability and appeal at an accelerated rate. Designers have recently incorporated Muslim garb to the runways, particularly in Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates (Genel and Karaosmanolu, 2006; Gökarıksel and Secor, 2009; Sobh *et al.*, 2010; Hassan and Harun, 2016) ^[10, 11, 40, 18]. On the other side, nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom have opened up to diversity, which has helped to the proliferation of Muslim clothing in those communities (Ali, 2005) ^[1].

From an Islamic standpoint, any modest clothing that covers a woman's whole body qualifies as Islamic apparel. Despite the worry that women's bodies must be covered, women's clothing should be of a kind that conceals body forms (Mossière, 2012) ^[34]. Islamic clothing should not be too near to the body and the textiles should not be too thin, according to Muslim scholars, so that women's flesh is not exposed too

much. It should have long, loose sleeves that cover the arm and modestly conceal the neckline and hair of ladies.

Islamic goods fall into three categories: Islamic Finance, Islamic Food/Halal Food, and Islamic Fashion. Numerous academic studies have been conducted on Islamic banking and Islamic food, both of which are regarded to be powerful worldwide sectors. However, because Islamic fashion has only lately acquired popularity, it is still largely unknown and needs a thorough knowledge from both marketers and buyers. (Shahpar Shams, Mashruha Zabeen, Nayeema Sultana, 2017) Historically, the colour has been limited to primarily black (Mahfoodh, 2008) ^[29] and has been worn as a sign of religious devotion (Ali, 2005) ^[1]. However, Muslim dress has evolved over time to include new colours and styles to appeal to a wider audience.

3. Evolution in Muslim Modest Fashion

Many Muslim nations' socio-demographics have improved as a result of urbanisation, redefining the role of Muslim women in society. Muslim women have continued to seek possibilities for empowerment in response to the West's religious prejudices and persecution. The role of Muslim women in society has been redefined as a result of urbanisation and improved socio-demographics in many Muslim nations. Muslim women have continued to seek possibilities for empowerment in response to the West's religious prejudices and persecution. (Siti Hasnah Hassan, Harmimi Harun, 2016). Muslim businesses are becoming more aware of the importance of integrating fashion with modest Muslim clothes by adopting Islam's moral principles. Through their own independent clothing lines, Muslim women entrepreneurs have achieved success in the fashion business. As a result of this phenomena, Muslimah-compliant clothes has grown in popularity in the fashion industry, and this trend is expected to continue. (Siti Hasnah Hassan, Harmimi Harun, 2016).

Many influencers, entrepreneurs, bloggers, models, and athletes are defying stereotypes about modest fashion by owning hijab and Muslim apparel companies, doing hijab tutorials and styling various clothing pieces, turning heads on the runway, and even winning Olympic gold. As a result, these Muslim women are inspiring examples of people who demonstrate that their faith does not prohibit people from expressing themselves in different ways. Hijab has undergone several remarkable alterations throughout the years, bringing us to the present day, when we style our hijabs to our liking, wear garments that complement them, and sometimes even accessorise according to the colour of our hijab. (Fathima Nisar, 2021).

The hijab has developed significantly over the years, with forms like as the Burqa, Niqab, Turban, Jilbab, embellished hijabs, and so on, yet women all over the world continue to be judged for what is in reality their birth right. (Fathima Nisar, 2021).

Today's Muslim women are increasingly mindful of their self-image and social identity, and this awareness influences their purchasing decisions, including fashion. The present market's lack of modest yet attractive apparel for Muslim women has created a challenge for them (Potts, 2009) ^[36], and they often turn to Western culture for fashionable attire.

The revivalist veiling style has evolved over time to become more attractive. The headscarf has evolved, growing smaller and more colourful, or being replaced with a solid-colored rectangular shawl, with new knotting, folding, and wrapping designs being produced on a regular basis. A number of

outerwear styles have mostly supplanted the full-length, loose-fitting overcoat (e.g. more form-fitting and three-quarter-length overcoats, loose-fitting and thinner long coats, the Ottoman ferace and kaftan, and European-style jackets, duster jackets, trench coats and duffle coats). Overcoats that mirror the trends of the early 1990s are now worn only by elderly ladies, women of modest income, and women from religiously orthodox backgrounds. Other headscarf-wearing ladies consider these 'grandmothers' overcoats' to be archaic and unattractive. Young headscarf-wearing women also wear three-quarter-length tunics and long covered dresses (i.e. full-length, long-sleeved, and high-necked gowns) without an overcoat or any extra layer in public settings, whether loose or more precisely fitting. The colour pallet has been broadened, with vibrant hues replacing the 1990s' dismal palette. Non-transparent, rather thick materials, ranging from luxurious silks to modest cottons, have also been expanded.

Each season has its own set of colours, design elements, and unique components. 'In your perspective, which are the important items in Islamically suitable clothing?' a journalist questioned a headscarf-wearing fashion designer in AQ4 2013. 'Long skirts, long dresses, tunics, overcoats, silk blouses, and silk headscarves are among the key components in the wardrobes of veiled women,' she said. The must-haves this season are high-waisted skirts, wide-leg pants, colourful silk rectangle headscarves, and compact handbags. In order to create the trends in veiling clothes, designers and stylists blend various aesthetic components from Eastern and Western sartorial repertoires, as well as past and contemporary designs.

Nonetheless, an increasing number of (young) observant Muslim women have begun to wear the veil in a fashionable manner. Fashionable veiling criticism is a common occurrence in their daily lives. This is especially true for very prominent and innovative practitioners of trendy veiling, such as fashion professionals who wear headscarves. They've risen to fame as fashion designers, editors, stylists, bloggers, and journalists during the 2010s. Dissatisfied with what the market had to offer in terms of style and quality for headscarf-wearing women, they attempted to position themselves as arbiters of aesthetics, bringing modest clothes with a greater design input within reach of headscarf-wearing consumers from all walks of life.

The majority of them began wearing the veil as teenagers, however some have only recently begun to do so. All of them, however, emphasise that they opted to veil out of a desire to fulfil a religious obligation. They come from a variety of social origins, with the majority being from the lower middle class and only a handful from the upper class. Many obtained short-term fashion instruction, which supplemented their moms' on-the-job training at tailoring ateliers. A few are design department grads from universities. They are 'Islamic in social and cultural terms, [and] neoliberal in economic terms' (Ozyegin 2015, 19). They are successful newcomers to what is a very profitable industry in Turkey, namely the Islamic fashion industry (Crăciun 2017).

In the Arab Gulf, the long-held notion of female modesty is eroding (Sobh *et al.*, 2015) [39]. Traditionally, the majority of Gulf women wore all-black traditional abaya dresses and sheila1 headscarves (Sobh *et al.*, 2015; Lindholm, 2013) [39, 28]. Women have begun to dress in a greater range of ways in recent years, based on politics, culture, religion, familial pressure, social standing, and/or personal desire (AlQasimi, 2010; Lindholm, 2014) [4]. For example, Saudi Arabia repealed the law requiring women to wear the abaya in

October 2019, yet women continue to do so owing to cultural traditions (Wall Street Journal, 2019) [46]. Qataris and Emiratis, likewise, wear the abaya for cultural reasons (Shimek, 2012) [38].

Women from the above-mentioned nations, on the other hand, wear the abaya in a variety of ways, with different decorations, colours, cuts, and designs (Lindholm, 2010) [27]. Kuwaiti women, for the most part, do not wear the abaya and instead choose for Western apparel or local designers' creations that combine Western trends with Arab original styles, such as flowing, colourful open abayas or decorated matched sets (Gonzalez, 2013; Botz-Bornstein & Khan, 2014) [13, 5]. Each Gulf country has its own concept of female modesty, which has evolved over time.

It's essential to comprehend how modesty was formerly regarded and how that understanding has changed over time in order to comprehend this phenomenon.

New trends in clothing, colour, and accessories have been produced in response to the rising market of a worldwide and youthful Muslim community. As can be seen, Muslim women all across the world are adopting trends that reflect not just their religious preferences, but also their unique sense of style. Hijabistas are modern Muslim women who choose trendy dresses and matching headscarves to maintain a fashionable lifestyle while adhering to Islamic dress requirements. They are a significant market sector for the fashion industry (Hassan and Harun, 2016) [18].

4. Current Modest Wear Concerns

Muslim women comprehended the notion of modest wearing, according to Hassan, Anas, and Santosa (2015) [17]. People are shown to be more inclined to follow all of Islam's principles, even if fashion changes. This demonstrates that they are well-versed in selecting appropriate Muslim attire. Prihandini and Suminar (2017) [37] discovered that, while understanding that stylish hijab does not always adhere to Islamic standards, respondents felt more secure and at ease wearing it than they did when wearing the conventional hijab. Furthermore, respondents believed that by wearing attractive hijabs, non-wearers would be encouraged to start wearing one since it was not old and conventional.

According to Maqsood, Cluver, and Chen (2016) [31], conventional hijabs are unpleasant and inconvenient for women since they must be adjusted regularly or pinned in order to keep them in place. Respondents noted that a solution was needed to guarantee that the hijab stayed put on their heads and that the cloth was one-piece, allowing them to cover both their hands and faces at the same time. Traditional hijab fabrics are a source of worry since they do not provide better breathable functions. Women may wear hijab more attractively and comfortably by changing the style and material.

5. Need to design for development of Modest Fashion Industry

Consumers purchase a thing not just for its functional features, but also for the statement made by owning the goods. Symbolic consumption, as defined by Grubb and Grathwohl (1967) [14], occurs when persons Hijab fashion consumerism utilise a product as a tool to form, develop, and sustain their identity. Identity is formed by interaction with group references and social surrounds during the course of social experience. Individuals are more inclined to utilise the product's visibility to communicate symbolically something about themselves to others in the consuming circumstance

(Lee, 1990) ^[25]. The meaning linked with the items must get social acceptance and be properly understood by the social segment. However, not all Western cultural items are enticing and appropriate for Muslim buyers (Al-Mutawa, 2013) ^[3]. If they are not linked with the Islamic worldview, products that are fit for an irreligious market in an Islamic market might constitute a threat (Ahmad *et al.*, 2014). As a result, Muslim women who want to adopt global culture ideals often struggle with social acceptability and identity loss (Potts, 2009) ^[36].

Muslim women wear the hijab in innovative styles in hijab fashion. Muslim women who are fashion-conscious build a strong basis of knowledge about hijab fashion, allowing them to be recognised as Muslims. Individuals classify themselves into social groups, according to Tajfel and Turner (1979) ^[42], and identify with the group to which they belong by embracing the group's identity and ideals.

Fashion, as a cultural phenomenon concerned with perceptions through direct visual communication, allows individuals to make statements about themselves and their identities (Kratz and Reimer, 1998) ^[24]. Individuals may convey who they are, who they want to be, and what sort of social group they belong to by wearing clothing, accessories, and other fashion items. As a result, Muslim customers who are fashion savvy may desire to identify with imagery connected with Muslims as an expanded form of their identity will be more likely to purchase hijab fashion.

The way people dress may reveal a lot about their personalities. Individuals' interest in clothes or the manner in which they dress is referred to as dressing style (Wan *et al.*, 2007) ^[47]. Customers that wear a certain type of clothing become members of a style tribe. Individuals who dress similarly and have the same outlook are members of a style tribe. When designers, companies, and specialised merchants are tied to a characteristic style that appeals to customers, they can be regarded leaders of a style tribe (Brannon, 2000) ^[7]. Consumers, on the other hand, may have their own interpretations of certain fashions, and their own clothing choices may reflect such views. Wan *et al.* (2007) ^[47] found a link between fashion consciousness and clothing style. Clothing selections and how they complement people's looks and styles reflect their self-concept (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004) ^[35]. As a result, dressing style may be viewed as a potent technique for enhancing self-esteem. Consumers who are concerned about their own appearance are likely to be fashion-conscious.

Women who were successful in adopting a modern urban dress code ascended to higher professional positions than women who were seen to be 'still' wearing their 'traditional' apparel, whether ethnic, rural, or religious (R. Arzu Ünal, 2019). Adopting the aesthetics of a modern wardrobe and integrating the new motions and postures demanded by these items played a significant effect in the development of these women as contemporary subjects (R. Arzu Ünal, 2019).

Consumer and urban studies, as well as fashion and dress studies, have influenced recent research, allowing for new, multiple readings of the headscarf to emerge. 'Islamic fashion' research has focused on women's visibility management, which has included a change away from an emphasis on headscarves to encompass the rest of one's appearance (R. Arzu Ünal, 2019).

In addition, new anthropological research has broadened the scope of studies on Muslim female subjects by emphasising the importance of other activities that women engage in, such as sports and leisure (Deeb and Harb 2013; Rana 2017; Sehlkolu 2016; Sehlkolu and Karataş 2016), beyond the

binary of the veiled/unveiled woman (Deeb and Harb 2013; Rana 2017; Sehlkolu and Karataş 2016). (R. Arzu Ünal, 2019)

Observant Muslim women all through the globe experiment with different materials and designs, drawing influence from both past and present, Eastern and Western fashions, and inventing new forms of covered clothing. This stylish veiling has sparked passionate disputes as well. Veiling is an ethical practise of self-cultivation, according to the revivalist movement's definition. It exhibits experimentation within a religiously sanctioned aesthetics, and the practitioner's public behaviour demonstrates both religiously defined conduct and transgression. Fashionable veiling has recently been a popular trend among observant Muslim women all around the world. They play around with different headscarf wrapping styles and garment shapes, artistically adorn and layer clothing, wear bright colours, match colours and patterns, and accessorise with costume jewellery, large sunglasses, and multicoloured headscarf pins. However, as one might expect, stylish veiling has sparked passionate disputes over opposing ideals of piety, modesty, fashion, and modernity. (Magdalena Crăciun, 2017)

Muslims have a much likely higher brand awareness than the overall public. They were, however, mostly overlooked by the fashion industry in the past, maybe because to perceptions that being a Muslim hampered people's lifestyles. With the rise of the Muslim community, there is now a greater need for modest yet attractive apparel among the youth, who have tremendous purchasing power. At the same time, traditional Middle Eastern elite and rich customers who previously shopped for attractive apparel in European countries are increasingly preferring to support domestic Muslim fashion designers (Faegheh Shirazi, 2017).

The rise of the new hijab trend, it has been discovered, stimulates Muslim women to wear hijab today. They do so because they want to follow the latest fashion trend while also meeting their religious obligations.

To begin, combining modesty with a trendy headscarf entail adhering to Islam's three-part dress code. It was shown that respondents prefer to buy a hijab based on the material and price rather than the brand's aesthetic. Because hijab is worn for the sake of ease and comfort.

Women may look attractive and set an example for young hijab wearers by wearing a trendy hijab. Academicians are observed to choose stylish hijab styles in order to seem respectable as women. Fashionable hijab style is becoming increasingly popular, and it has altered the appearance of women of all ages. (Bazlin, D. A. T., Darren, Y. W. T., Goh, C. G., Lee, J. A., Lee, P. Y., Lee, Z. D., & Teh, S. Y. (2019).

6. Conclusion

In addition, new anthropological research has broadened the scope of studies on Muslim female subjects by emphasising the importance of other activities that women engage in, such as sports and leisure beyond the binary of the veiled/unveiled woman.

Islamic consumerism has evolved beyond halal products and services to Islamic compliance lifestyle and fashion apparels as the number of Islamic followers throughout the world has grown. Hijab fashion is becoming a valuable industry all over the world.

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