

An Insight to the Framework Development of Fashion Consciousness in Modest Fashion Industries: A Conceptual paper

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to propose a conceptual framework to study the underlying relationships among the influence factors of fashion consciousness in modest fashion industries. Modest fashion industries have escalated rapidly in the past few years, leading to the growing intense competition among modest fashion brands. Obviously, it has become the main challenge for companies to maintain relevance in the fashion industry. Thus, the study provides a fruitful understanding of Muslim women consumer involvement in fashion consciousness related to modest fashion industries to spur ideas for managers as well as marketers to serve this market segment. This study investigates the motives behind the relationship of three variables that affect fashion consciousness, namely, fashion uniqueness, fashion knowledge and celebrity endorsement.

Key Words: Fashion uniqueness, fashion knowledge, celebrity endorsement, fashion consciousness, modest fashion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Generally, fashion holds the concept of beautifying women and breathing new life into them. This is achieved by embellishing their self-confidence, aiding in the enhancement of their self-esteem and self-identity and bonding by their culture (Jan & Abdullah, 2015). Fashion certainly serves in the same way for both men and women - however, women are generally considered to be more fashion conscious than men. Due to the importance of fashion, modest fashion or Islamic fashion is seen as an emerging phenomenon and this scenario has led to the growing global Islamic clothing market and apparently, captured the attention of the fashion industry players as well as famous designers throughout the world (Hassan et al., 2018; Radwan et al., 2019).

In relation to that, the global evolution of the Islamic lifestyle has modernized the modest fashion by injecting a fresher, newer look, with the aim to fulfil a fashion conscious society among Muslim women (Hassan et al., 2018). This modernization serves as an eye-opener for both high street brands as well as international designers to untap the lucrative market and diversity in the fashion industry that meets the demands of a redefined modest fashion - modest but also fashionable (F. H. Hassan et al., 2018). This demand led to the intense competition among modest fashion brands to stay competitive in the market (Zainudin et al., 2018). It is noted that, competition is rife from many new designers, local and foreign, to set up their businesses in Malaysia particularly when the raw materials from Vietnam and China are easily accessible (Zainudin et al., 2018).

From the perspective of a developing country like Malaysia, Muslim women have transformed from living in a traditional way to a modern lifestyle, due to them becoming more educated, holding careers and earning their own money. As they become more sophisticated Muslim women, they have also changed the way they dress, albeit still adhering to a Shariah-compliant dress code (Hassan & Harun, 2016). Thus, it is vital to understand the Muslim women's perception on fashion consciousness in order to

offer the right product to suite their preferences (Hassan & Ara, 2020). Moreover, there is a limited number of studies pertaining the consumption pattern of Muslim women on modest fashion and the aspect of marketing. Since, the consumption pattern of Muslim women are complex as it represents their religiosity and Muslim identities, it is critical to study on the motives that influence fashion consciousness among Muslim women (Hassan & Ara, 2020).

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1. Modest Fashion Industry

There is a surge in the growth of popularity of modest fashion over the past decade among Muslim women regardless of age group because now, dressing styles are viewed as fashion statements rather than a religious symbol or obligation (Zabeen et al., 2017). Though modest fashion does not relate to any religion of the world, the image is identical with the way Muslim women don their attires (Menon et al., 2020). Muslim women perceive modest fashion as a fashion trend which is associated with religious symbols and modern trends in mainstream fashion brands, but not forgetting, the marketing strategies of local brands that target the Muslim society (Kamarulzaman & Shaari, 2021).

The fact that the demand of modest fashion has extended to Western countries shows that Islamic fashion is no longer boring and dull (Kamarulzaman & Shaari, 2021). It is noted that, high-end fashion has also experienced a shift in the fashion landscape by untapping the modest fashion market. For instance, the well-known luxury brands, namely, Dolce & Gabbana, DKNY as well as Max Mara are among the brands that now produce modest fashion clothes for the Muslim target market. In 2017, the total expenditure of Muslim on modest fashion reached US\$270 billion and in 2023, the growth of modest fashion market is predicted to achieve US\$361 billion (Thomson Reuters and DinarStandard, 2018)

In Malaysia, the market size of modest fashion is represented by 61 percent of the Muslim population in the country (Zainudin et al., 2018). Hence, there is a room for an opportunity for modest fashion brands to penetrate the market in the country. Furthermore, the government has initiated their support for modest fashion by approving the retail industry as one of its components of The Malaysian Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) in order to position the country as one of the world's leading shopping destinations (Fitriati, 2016; Zainudin et al., 2018).

2.2. Fashion Uniqueness

One of the key factors in creating fashion consciousness amongst Muslim women in modest fashion is fashion uniqueness. Therefore, Muslim women who are fashion conscious, desire to achieve fashion uniqueness in their modest fashion attires. The uniqueness factor is one's desire to look different from others in order to illustrate one's individuality (Hassan & Harun, 2016).

Modern Muslim women tend to keep their fashion statement as their own identity to maintain individualism (Ullah et al., 2020). They seek to find uniqueness in their fashion as compared to non-conscious consumers. Moreover, the current trend of modest fashion is to be different and unique in fashion and styles as compared to the common trends, as part of expressing one's individuality (Ullah et al., 2020).

Previous studies have shown that fashion uniqueness is the key factor influencing fashion consciousness and it positively impacts on Muslim women's buying behaviour in modest fashion (S. H. Hassan & Ara, 2020; Hassan & Harun, 2016; Ullah et al., 2020).

2.3. Fashion Knowledge

Previous studies have shown that sources of fashion knowledge influence hijab fashion consciousness. Muslim women who are fashion conscious will always keep track of the latest trend in fashion and spend time to search for information on fashion from a variety of sources. Sources of fashion knowledge furnish consumers with latest trends, style, news, outfit ideas as well as tips on locations to shop. (Hassan & Harun, 2016).

Sources of fashion knowledge include fashion magazines and catalogues, fashion expos, the internet, as well as friends. It is believed that fashion conscious Muslim women are eager to search ideas from a variety of sources to equip their fashion needs. Moreover, studies have shown that the existence of sources of fashion knowledge will increase the level of fashion consciousness of Muslim women as they passionately search the information of their fashion needs (Hassan & Harun, 2016).

2.4. Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrities are using their celebrity endorsement to create impact on consumers. Therefore, it is vital to capture the minds of consumers. Consumers are easily influenced by products which are promoted by their celebrity of choice (Hung et al., 2011). Thus, celebrity endorsement contributes to influence fashion consciousness as consumers are influenced by celebrities that they like. Therefore celebrity endorsement influences a person who is fashion conscious as he or she views celebrities as a leader in fashion (Fernandez et al., 2009).

Studies have shown that celebrity endorsement has significant relationship toward fashion consciousness, particularly to Muslim women who are inspired by the celebrities in modest fashion (Khalid & Akhtar, 2018).

2.5. Fashion Consciousness

Fashion consciousness is defined as a person’s degree of involvement toward fashion as well as styles of attire (Nam et al., 2007). It also applies to individuals who are highly involved with all goods related to fashion (Cass et al., 2013). It is noted that modest fashion brands, marketers as well as retailers need to give attention to fashion consciousness since it plays a significant role in luring Muslim women to purchase fashion attires. Muslim women demonstrate their fashion consciousness by exhibiting individual styles in order to identify them personally (S. H. Hassan & Harun, 2016).

Previous studies have shown that sources of fashion knowledge and fashion uniqueness are the main determinants that merit focus in creating fashion consciousness in modest fashion products (Hassan & Harun, 2016; Ullah et al., 2020).

3. METHODOLOGY

The paper attempts to study the factors that influence fashion consciousness of modest fashion industry in Malaysia. The proposed independent variables are fashion uniqueness, fashion motivation and celebrity endorsement.

The study will use descriptive research for the purpose to better gain fruitful insights and to explain the relationship of fashion uniqueness, fashion knowledge and celebrity endorsement that influence fashion consciousness amongst Muslim women in choosing modest fashion. Structured questionnaire will be given to respondents, who are Muslim women, to assess their fashion consciousness on modest fashion. Moreover, several statistical tools will be adapted for the study, namely, descriptive analysis, correlation as well as multiple regression. Thus, the proposed conceptual framework are as follows:-

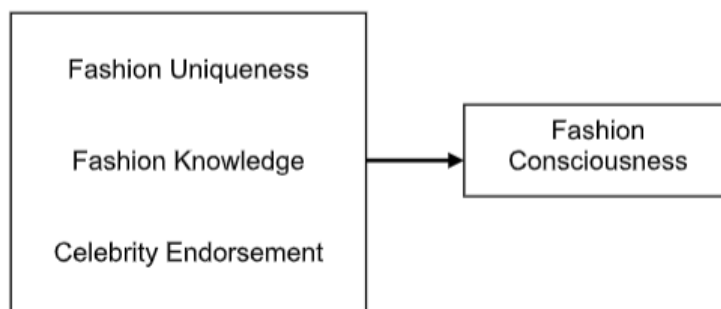


Figure 1: The proposed conceptual framework of fashion consciousness

4. DISCUSSION

From the literature reviews, the study found that previous studies have shown the relationship between fashion uniqueness and fashion consciousness. A consumer with the attribute of fashion uniqueness is a person who wants to look different from others in order to illustrate his/her individuality as well as to keep his/her fashion statement as their own identity to maintain individualism (Hassan & Harun, 2016; Ullah et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the study found evidences from previous research mentioning the relationship between sources of fashion knowledge and fashion consciousness. As such, the knowledge gathered from different fashion materials is used to equip consumers’ fashion needs (Hassan & Harun, 2016).

Moreover, the study also attempts to engage the relationship between celebrity endorsement and fashion consciousness. It is noted that celebrities play a vital role in influencing fashion conscious

consumers as they are influenced by celebrities that they like, and these celebrities are viewed as leaders in fashion (Fernandez et al., 2009; Khalid & Akhtar, 2018).

Due to the intense competition in the modest fashion industries, assessing of Muslim women's fashion consciousness is important for both business and marketers since there is a rapid change in fashion taste and preference.

5. CONCLUSION

The study proposes the development of a model to describe the relationships between fashion uniqueness, sources of fashion knowledge, celebrity endorsement and fashion consciousness. It is hoped that the study will provide a fruitful understanding in the ways Muslim women consumers' involvement in fashion consciousness are related to modest fashion industries, subsequently spurring ideas for managers as well as marketers to serve this market segment.

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