



# Islamic Culture and Pakistani Women: A Self Perception and Understanding

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**ABSTRACT-** Now Pakistan is one of the world's Muslim fashion centers. Muslim fashion has been deemed too rigid and outdated in the past. In line with technological advances and modernization, it is an important fashion and trade stage in the last two decades. Nowadays, Muslim fashion's meaning and position are linked to requirements of religious doctrine and part of Pakistan's pattern of mode that women can quickly enter. This study aims to establish how women's self-image is viewed when wearing Muslim and other women who wear Muslim. This study gathered data from 490 women in Pakistan aged between 20-40 years using open-ended questionnaires to collect data using quantitative methods. After a content analysis, the answers of the subjects are tabulated. Other Muslim wearers are considered to be beautiful, proud, and religious. Overall, the use of Muslim wear influences self-image development. And it also affects how other women perceive their image. However, these two things are not always in line, although they obtain the same positive credit.

**Keywords: technological developments; self-image; quantitative methods**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Muslim fashion design in Pakistan has increased markedly. The number of people wearing the Muslim style has risen in recent years and is not limited to only those classes. The transition of Muslim fashion from traditional to modern to contemporary trends is easily identifiable. In old times, the Muslim style was more commonly used by adult women, young girls, and young people to use modern Muslim fashion.

Based on data from the Directorate General of Small and Medium Industries (SMI) of the Ministry of Industry in 2012, at least 20 million women in Pakistan use the hijab. This corresponds to the evolution of the Muslim fashion industry, which grew seven percent annually. Of the 750,000 SMEs in Pakistan, 30% are Muslim models. Fashion of Pakistan

Designers Association or APPMI report that the Muslim fashion industry launched its campaign by following the map; in 2015, Pakistani Muslim fashion was able to penetrate the ASEAN market, join the Asian market by 2020, and 2025 the world market a reality.

Looking back on Pakistan's history of Muslim fashion, this issue became a political and cultural issue. Pakistan's tale behind Jilbab is not as beautiful as it seems today. The drama of banning the veil in Pakistan occurred in the 70-80s when the Department of Education released a regulation to ban all Muslim girls wearing headscarves due to the political influence of Muslim ethnic groups who feared growing during Suharto's period. However, the strictness of protests and fights against this law has successfully produced SK 100/C/Kep/D/91, which revokes the National School Uniform rules on the previous veiled threshold.

The term hijab is used in the Qur'an many times, but it applies only to women's attire once. The two clothing items mentioned are khimar (the head-veil) and jilbab (the long robe), not newly introduced by Islam, but possibly already in the robe of this period (El Guindi 1999). In a western context, one of the most noticeable and contentious aspects of Islam is the dress code — particularly the headscarf. There are a variety of explanations. Others are based on confusion, some on politics, and some only on Islamic and contemporary Western codes (Boulanouar, 2006).

The word veil has no visual context, and Muslim women are commonly veiled in different countries and ethnicities. The veil, for instance, maybe a plain headscarf or a cloth that covers a lot of faces, hair, and neck or part of an enormous cloak that protects both the body and the front, with a mesh on the eyes. The veil style typically implies race or nationality and often reveals the wearer's conservatism (Benhabib, 2002).

In Pakistan, the use of the Muslim model is being transformed. From the head cover kerudung, jilbab, to hijab. Kerudung is a headcover used by Pakistani women since ancient times. The shape and use are straightforward. Since the 1980s, however, so many Muslim urban and educated women have become Jilbab, ready to follow Islamic teachings in everyday lives. In 2012, appears a new trend of veil design, trendier and more modern among young women. Manned by the culture of Hijaber, today's usage of the veil or the so-called hijab looks trendy.

Today, talking about Muslim fashion speaks of the Syar'i idea and the influences of the cultural change in society. The Koran is not a cover nakedness with concrete details and shapes about the model clothes. Clothing is a culture or habits of a nation shaped by space and time according to the region's environment. What the faith decides is polite and avoids 'tabarruj.'

Solomon & Rabolt (2004) explains that the person wears those clothes for a different purpose when talking about the mode. And some hypotheses can explain this. The principle of modesty claims that people wore clothes to cover their body's private parts. Moralists claim that inherent feelings of remorse and embarrassment for being nude contributed to clothes. Yet modesty is not universal, which in all cultures is the same. And the word modesty alters overtime. The principle of immodesty notes that clothing is intended to attract attention to certain parts of the body. People use the terms decent and acceptable to refer to the adequacy of body exposure by choosing clothes. The idea of erotic chaste ambivalence comes as women's mode cover and excites.

Defense theory explains that people use clothing to shield the body from cold, insect, animal, or even harmful spirits elements. People use bridal veils to guard the bride against evil spirits or lucky charms or jewels to bring good luck. And perhaps the universal purpose of clothing is decoration, personal décor, or esthetic language. Clothes obtain adornment. Adornment displays status and identity and also increases self-appreciation. This original role of clothing can be understood as intrinsic motives or reasons for clothing decisions.

The self-concept refers to the belief in a person's characteristics and how they judge these qualities. The self-concept is a dynamic and multidimensional structure. Self-concept is defined as a judgment that refers to its characteristics in general and in different fields such as cognitive competence, social acceptance, and physical appearance (Harter, 1988). Self-concept can be defined as a self-perception or a self-image where they are attributed based on observations of a person's actions. They gain input from others to help them create a picture of themselves. You want to wear to comply with how you want to look to others and see yourself.

The concept of looking at glass explains how people want to express themselves, functions as a psychological sonar reverses others' signals, and attempts to project their experiences. Women wearing hijab may seem underwear, but they can also be regarded as having immense personal freedom. Husain (2001) notes that "Freedom is a state of mind and a way of life,

## II. METHOD

The study participants are 490 females from 20 to 40 years of age in Pakistan. They used Muslim wear for more than one year. Using quantitative methods, researchers developed an open-ended questionnaire as a tool for data collection. The answered question was evaluated with an interpretation of the material. The answers were subsequently graded according to the evolving topics

### III. RESULT

Based on a statistical study of 490 responses, the content analysis showed that women's self-perception using Muslim clothing is beautiful, religious, and confident (Figure 1).

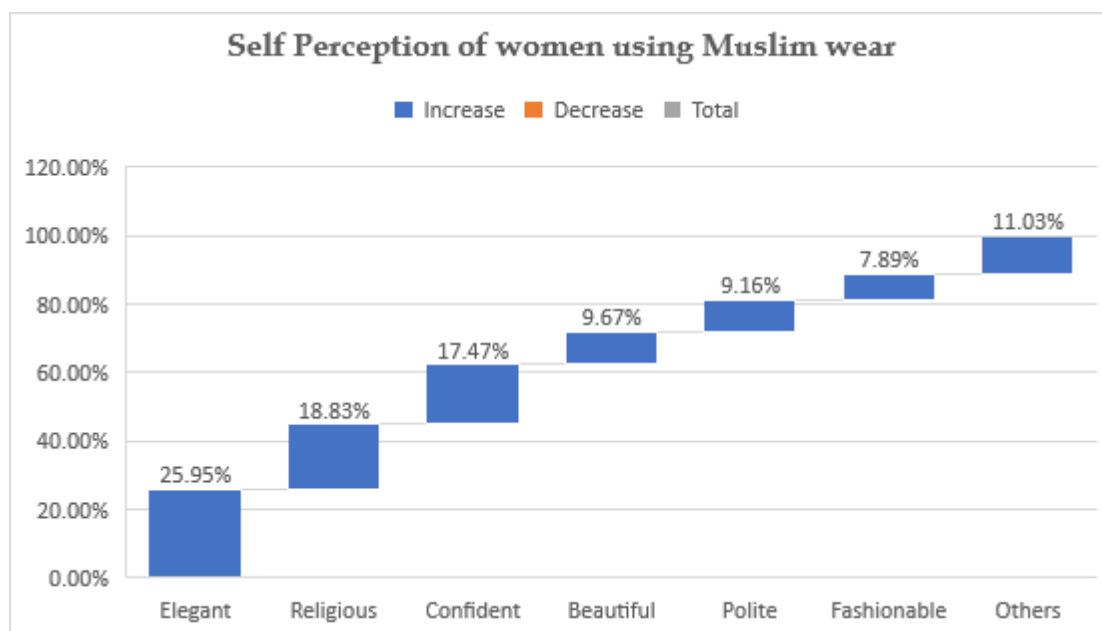


Figure 1

These findings suggest that most women feel elegant when they are using Muslim fashion. They also feel religious, feel like women who obey the rules, and devout to religious teachings. A total of 17.47% of women feel more confident when using Muslim fashion. There are at least 9.67% of women who feel beautiful, and unfortunately, only a few women think polite and fashionable when using Muslim fashion.

Based on the results of a more in-depth description of the response, respondents stated that they also felt honored and have higher self-esteem as religious women. They do not deserve to be disturbed and feel more secure when meeting the opposite sex.

For those who feel elegant, this woman said there was an exclusive value of the use of Muslim clothing. The beauty emitted has a value that is expensive, not tacky, and cheap. Meanwhile, only 7.89% of women feel fashionable for successfully follows the up-to-date trends of fashion at that moment and feel like a woman who is never left behind in fashion trends.

The content analysis also showed that 27.5% of participants see other women as beautiful women when using Muslim fashion. As much as 19.7% said, women who wear Muslim fashion became a symbol of pride for their religion. 17% of women state that women who wear Muslim fashion perceived as a woman who can be an inspiration for others. Meanwhile, 12.3% of women see other women as the same group in the same boat. And only 10.5% see other women as religious women Figure 2.

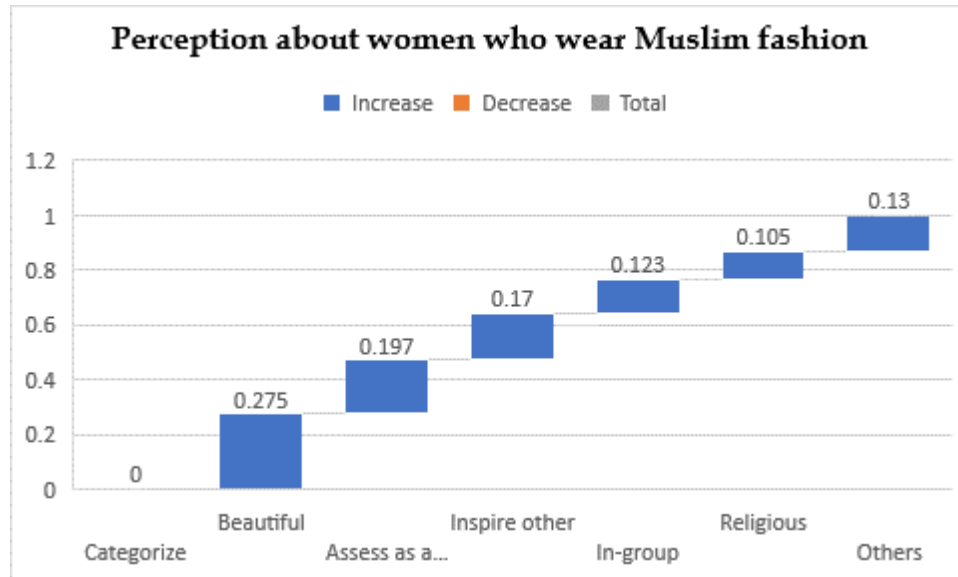


Figure 2

This study also showed that 86.8% of participants will still use Muslim fashion, even if, in turn, religion does not define it as an obligation. The results of a more in-depth description of the response showed that Muslim fashion had become a fashion that gives them comfortable, safe, and effective ways to dress. They don't have significant problems using Muslim fashion in daily life. Meanwhile, 9.7% stated that they would change their mind. Because they want to do more experiment with dressing style, give them more freedom about how to dress, want to dye the hair, have more stylist hair and other people aware about that, and bothered with dressing preparation in daily. The rest participants declared absent mostly because they cannot imagine this situation.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

You're just what you wear. This quote may sound cliché, but it showed how fashion plays an essential role in self-defining. Dress as a type of material culture is well adapted to the representation of the relationship between personal values and the material object, and ultimately to the concept of self-perception. The style of what a person wears affects and represents the sense of self, serving as a filter between the individual and the surrounding social environment. The type of dress is essential for the perception of the body image and, of course, has further implications for the sensitive attitude (DeLong, Salusso-Deonier&Larntz, 1980). Everyone at the time of his/her contact with others, by clothes, selects the characteristic that he/she wants to be. Present research reveals that most participants have optimistic self-perceptions on how they dress in Muslim fashion. It gave a unique description of the dynamic character that they were creating in the way they dress. Beauty is expressed not in a sexy and desirable word but beauty as graceful, confident, respectful, and steadfast in upholding the concept of obedience to the rule of religion. It is precisely how women, when using Muslim fashion, have more worth and more dignity. The dressing is an essential and controllable way to express one's values, particularly rich in emotional and psychosocial consequences. The public and immediately recognizable nature of fashion make it a perfect area for studying the customer's meaning as a connection between values and clothing. The style of dress is a mixture of personal expression and social rules. The dressing is conditioned by dominant beliefs, social attitudes, socio-economic status, life status, and some of the situations under which people want to ensure their self-implantation (Arvanitidou&Gasouka, 2011).

According to Boulanour (2006), the idea of modesty is discussed from many perspectives in Islamic teachings. In physical terms, humility is linked to awra, an Arabic word meaning 'inviolable insecurity' or 'what needs to be protected' and consisting of a human being's private body parts. For women, the topic of awra' is more extensive and more difficult. A woman's awra, concerning men outside her mahram (mahram) (family members and those forever ineligible to marry her) and non-Muslim women, consists of her entire body,

except her face and hands. Islam allows the Muslim to be careful about his appearance, dress decently, maintain his dignity, and appreciate what Allah has made for clothing and ornament. From the Islamic point of view, clothing has two purposes: covering the body and embellishing the look. Islam has made it compulsory for Muslims to cover their private parts; cleanness is the essence of good appearance and the beauty of any decoration. Beautification and attractiveness are not merely allowed but are required by Islam and, in general, condemn any effort to ban them. The standard components of Islamic women's clothing specifications are head-covered, loose-fitting, non-transparent clothing covering the entire body, likely except the hands and the face. How these criteria are met depends on a woman's culture and personal likes and dislikes.

Appearance is significant when it produces the same identity by the observer as that expected by the wearer. In hijab, its meanings and motivations can be different for those who wear it compared to those who see it worn (Tariq-Munir, 2014). This study shows that, when looking at other Muslim-style women, the perception that emerges is beautiful. This finding is interesting since the previous self-image data findings do not position "beautiful" as the first order. This indicates that when looking at other people's self-image, the first impression is linked to the recognizable outward appearance where the term "beautiful" reflects this appraisal. The "beautiful" world is not a word that women willingly associate with themselves. Women tend not to differentiate themselves from other women regarding their appearance or physical attractiveness (Etkoff et al., 2004).

As 19.7% said, women wearing Muslim fashion have become a sign of pride in their faith. Seventeen percent of women say that women who wear Muslim fashion are viewed as women who can inspire others. People from Eastern culture countries score less on global self-esteem self-reporting than Western self-reporting. It is generally accepted that modesty's cultural values are higher in East Asian countries than in North American and Western European countries (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It might clarify why it would be easier to judge others by pride than to claim that they are proud of themselves or see themselves as people who can encourage others.

Identity can be identified with some social classes and reject others. 12.3% of women see other women on the same boat as the same group. Goffman (1959) refers to a team's roles and how its identity in the general public makes or breaks the case. These are what he terms "co-worker classes." Members of some of these groups can be highly recognizable in that a member's prestige does not rely directly on other members' importance. A Muslim woman suggests to others that she belongs to a social community (based on Islam) and is unrestricted for all but those she takes away the hijab (Tariq-Munir, 2014). Another important observation is that, with Muslim fashion, only 10.5% of the participants consider other women as religious. Muslim women wearing hijab are morally considered "healthy." If they are good or not in their daily lives is something else.

This study's result is also in line with Swami et al. (2014), who studied women's body image in Britain, where wearing the hijab is optional. The women who wore the hijab, at least some of the time, had more positive views of their bodies on average. They had less desire to be thin. They appreciated their bodies more. And they weren't as influenced by media messages about beauty standards. But the hijab's effect on the body isn't likely to be the same where women are required to wear it or aren't allowed to wear it. This study also showed that most participants will likely still use Muslim fashion, even if religion does not define it as an obligation. Wearing the hijab eliminates many of the hassles women have to go through, gives them comfortable, safe, and effective ways to dress. This could be a beneficial option and worth to be continued in the long term. Despite the use of the Muslim dress, especially Hijab, as a personal decision or a religious obligation is still debatable, Muslim fashion positively affects how women build their self-image.

## V. CONCLUSION

In the last few years, the number of young women in Pakistan who have started wearing hijab or jilbab has dramatically increased. Muslim fashion has become more than just a statement of religion. More women are putting their stylistic touches into Muslim dress. The new style where fashion and religion melt into one package allows women to maintain modesty while dressing fashionably. The whole point of being modest, as in religious teaching, is to dress inconspicuously, but if there's a specific guideline for what to wear, it's just that: a guideline. Those women can still make it look elegant, confident and don't have to look old-fashioned.

Overall, the use of Muslim wear affects the formation of self-image and enhances their protection. And also affects how they perceive other women's images. The same facts are narrated in Sura Alahzab (33;59). But these two things are not always in line, although it gets the same positive credit.

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