

REVIEWING THE LITERATURE ON MULTIPLE THEMES OF ISLAMIC ATTIRE USAGE AMONG MUSLIM WOMEN

مراجعة الأدبيات المتعلقة بأنماط متعددة في ممارسات الملابس الإسلامية بين المسلمات

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Abstract

Islam calls upon its men and women believer to preserve their chastity, in which one of the ways to achieve it is through proper clothing that covers their aurah. Various Quranic verses and prophetic traditions provide guidelines about how one should cover their aurah. Nevertheless, Islam does not specify the type of clothing to be worn, affirming that that any clothes are permissible, as long as it follows the guidelines of aurah covering. Even though it is undisputable that it is a religious commandment in Islam for its believer to dress in a manner that their aurah is not revealed, the fact is that nowadays, many other themes other than religion are layering Islamic attire usage among Muslim women whether it is hijab, jibab, abaya, or any other Islamic apparel. This article aims to review literatures related to the usage of Islamic attire among Muslim women within the last 10 years, focusing on the themes accompanying it among Muslim women around the world. Adopting the library research method, official-based and academic-content literatures related to Muslim women attire from 2010 until 2020 are selected and analysed to discover the themes involved in the usage of Islamic attire among Muslim women. This article found several important themes behind the usage of Islamic attire among Muslim women, namely religion, culture, society, family, fashion, and media. The finding in this article may be useful for academics and researchers to further undertake the topic of Muslim women attire, as well as to fill the gaps on aspects yet to be studied on the topic of Muslim women attire.

Keywords: *chastity, aurah, Islamic attire, religion, hijab.*

INTRODUCTION

Islam made it obligatory for its man and woman believers to cover their *aurah*. The first commandment for Muslim women to cover their *aurah* was revealed is through Surah Al- Ahzab, verse 59, where Allah said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزُوجِحْ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلْبَابِهِنَّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ ۗ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾

Meaning, "O Prophet tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful" (Al-Quran. Al-Ahzab, 59).

This verse was revealed when the women believers complained that they are being verbally harassed by the adulterers on the road. Those ill- mannered adulterers offered them money if they agree to have intercourse with them, as they are unable to distinguish between women slaves and free women in the night. As a respond to the women believer complaints, this verse was revealed, commanding them to lower their outer garment so that they will be known with chastity (Al-Balkhi, 2002). According to At-Tabari (2000), "bringing down the outer garments" in this verse means tightening it onto their forehead.

Aurah is the male or female body parts that are obliged by Allah upon the Muslims to be covered (Qal'aji, 1988). Majority Muslim scholars of Islamic school of thoughts; the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'e and Hanbali hold the opinion that a woman believer's *aurah* is her whole body except her face and palm (Al- Qardhawi, 1998). The Hanafi scholars view that other than face and palm, the foot is also not considered *aurah* for a women believer (Al- Jassas, 2010). Some scholars like Ibn Taimiyyah (1985), Ibn Uthaimin (2007) and At-Tuwejri (1980) have the view that on top of that, the face of a woman believer is also considered *aurah*.

In order for Muslim women to observe the *aurah* covering commandments, Islam has set a few guidelines to be followed by them in doing so. First, a Muslim woman needs to make sure that her clothes cover all the areas that are considered as *aurah* (Al-Albani, 2002). This depends on which opinion of scholars that the Muslim woman holds to. Second, a Muslim woman must make sure that her clothes do not depict her body neither by wearing a tight-fitting cloth or sheer cloth (Al-Albani, 2002). This is derived from the hadith recorded by Abi Daud, narrated by Dihyah Al-Kalbi:

{أَتَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِقَبَاطِيٍّ فَأَعْطَانِي مِنْهَا قُبْطِيَّةً فَقَالَ " اصْدَعَهَا صَدْعَيْنِ فَاقْطَعْ أَحَدَهُمَا قَمِيصًا وَأَعْطِ الْآخَرَ امْرَأَتَكَ تَحْتَمِرُ بِهِ " . فَلَمَّا أَذْبَرَ قَالَ " وَأْمُرِ امْرَأَتَكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ تَحْتَهُ ثَوْبًا لَا يَصِفُهَا }

Meaning, "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) was brought some pieces of fine Egyptian linen and he gave me one and said: Divide it into two; cut one of the pieces into a shirt and give the

other to your wife for veil. Then when he turned away, he said: And order your wife to wear a garment below it and not show her figure.”

The hadith showed that the Prophet s.a.w ordered Dihyah to tell his wife to wear another garment underneath the one that he is giving, in order to prevent it from showing her figure, in which can be derived that a Muslim woman should avoid her figure to be revealed. Third, a Muslim woman should not wear clothes resembling men or the non-muslims. This is stated in a hadith recorded by Abi Daud:

{ لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الرَّجُلَ يَلْبَسُ لِبْسَةَ الْمَرْأَةِ وَالْمَرْأَةَ تَلْبَسُ لِبْسَةَ الرَّجُلِ }

Meaning, “Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Messenger of Allah s.a.w cursed the man who dressed like a woman and the woman who dressed like a man.”

Lastly, a woman believer should not wear the clothes of fame, according to the hadith recorded by Abi Daud, Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar:

{ مَنْ لَبَسَ ثَوْبَ شُهْرَةٍ أَلْبَسَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثَوْبًا مِثْلَهُ }

Meaning, “The Prophet as saying: If anyone wears a garment for gaining fame, Allah will clothe him in a similar garment on the Day of Resurrection”.

TYPES OF ISLAMIC WOMEN ATTIRE MENTIONED IN THE QURAN

Islam does not limit the type of clothing to be worn by Muslim woman, as long as it fulfils the *aurah* covering parameters. There are several types of woman clothing’s stated in Quranic verses and prophetic traditions.

Khimar

The term “*khimar*” is stated in the Quranic verse:

﴿ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضَضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا ۗ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ ﴾

Meaning, “And tell the believing women to reduce (some) of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which (necessarily) appears thereof and to wrap (a portion of) their headcovers over their chests...” (Al-Quran. an-Nur: 31).

According to Ath- Tha’labi (2002), the word “*khimar*” here means woman’s headcover.

Jilbab

Another type of Muslim woman clothing stated in the Quran is *jilbab*, which is stated in the Quranic verse:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزُوجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلْبَابِهِنَّ ۗ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴾

Meaning, “O Prophet tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful” (Al-Quran. al-

Ahzab: 59). In this verse, the word “*jilbab*” means a cloak worn on top of “*khimar*” and larger in size than it (Al- Balkhi: 2002; Al-Qurtubi: 1988).

Sirwal

Other than that, the word “*sirwal*”, or similar to trousers, which is a type of clothing that covers from the belly button until the knees or the feet (Abdul Hamid, 2008), is mentioned in the hadith recorded by Al-Baihaqi:

{ كُنْتُ قَاعِدًا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِالْبَيْعِ فِي يَوْمٍ دَجِنِ مَطَرٍ، فَمَرَّتْ امْرَأَةٌ عَلَى حِمَارٍ مَعَهَا مَكَارٍ، فَهَوَّتْ يَدُ الْحِمَارِ فِي وَهْدَةٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ، فَسَقَطَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ، فَأَعْرَضَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ عَنْهَا بِوَجْهِهِ، فَقَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّهَا مُتَسَرِّوْلَةٌ، فَقَالَ: "اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُتَسَرِّوْلَاتِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي" ثَلَاثًا، "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّخِذُوا السَّرَاوِيَالَاتِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ أَسْتَرٍ ثِيَابِكُمْ، وَحَصَّنُوا بِهَا نِسَاءَكُمْ إِذَا خَرَجْنَ }

Meaning, Ali r.a narrated: “I was sitting with the Prophet s.a.w in Al-Baqi’ on a rainy day, when a woman passed by on her donkey. The donkey’s leg sunk in a hole on the ground, and the woman fell down. The prophet s.a.w turn his face away from the woman. They (the people there) then said: “O Messenger of Allah, she is wearing trousers”. The Prophet s.a.w said: “O Allah, please give forgiveness to women who wear trousers” three times, and said “O people, wear trousers, for it has more coverage among your clothes, and guard your women with it when they go out”.

MUSLIM WOMEN ATTIRE IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD

Among the role that dressing style is carrying out is marker of religious affiliation, geographical origin, and ethnic origin (El-Geledi and Bourhis, 2012). Muslim women around the world from different geographical locations and ethnics have different common attire they wore to cover their *aurah*. Even in terms of *hijab*, there are different types of Islamic veils worn not only across Muslim countries, but also in receiving societies of the western world.

Middle East and Africa

Several common Islamic attire that Muslim women wear in the Middle Eastern and African countries includes *abaya*, *niqab* and *chador*. *Abaya* is the free cut, beltless long traditional Arabic dress designed to be worn in public places (Monkebayeva, Baitenova & Mustafayeva, 2012). In Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, wearing *abaya* in public places is compulsory (DeCoursey, 2017). Another variety is the full-length one-piece *balto* and two-piece *sharsharf* that are more are loose-falling and made from thicker material than the *abaya*, which serve as overcoats (Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015). In Sudan, a similar garment is the *tobe*, a rectangular Sudanese dress that covers the whole body except the face and palm (Halim, 2019).

Niqab is the Muslim woman's face cover, with a narrow slit for the eyes, usually made with black clothes (Monkebayeva, Baitenova & Mustafayeva, 2012). In San'a, Yemen, most Muslim women wear the *niqab* (Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015), as well

as Saudi Arabia (El-Geledi and Bourhis, 2012). In contrary, it is rarely worn in receiving countries of the western world (El-Geledi and Bourhis, 2012). However, not all Middle Eastern and African countries have most of their women wear the niqab. In Cairo, majority of the Muslim women only wear the *hijab* without the *niqab* (Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015).

Chador, a style of dress that is considered conservative or religious in Iran, on the other hand, is a full-length sleeveless cloak worn over the head and held shut in front by the hands that conceals the whole body except for the face and feet (Pazhoohi & Burris, 2016).

Asia

Different Muslim countries in Asia have different usage of common Muslim attire while preserving the essence of modesty. Some southeast Asian's country like Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei that named Islam as their official religion share quite similar attire to cover the *aurah*. More traditional types of attire include *sarong* (a long skirt), *baju kurung* (loose top worn over long skirt) and *baju kebaya* (a long sleeved two pieces cloth that are fastened by buttons on the front) (Hassan, Zaman & Santosa, 2015). In Brunei, the practice of wearing a loose headscarf over traditional attire like *baju kurung* or *baju kebaya* had long been rooted even during the times of British colonial (Siti Mazidah, 2018). In Malaysia, the widespread usage of *baju kurung* and *baju kebaya* is proved by them being worn as uniforms in many government offices or functions until today (Hassan, Zaman & Santosa, 2015). In Indonesia, *baju kebaya* is more popular compared to *baju kurung* and is regarded as ceremonial fashion transformed into a fashion diplomacy (Suciati, 2020).

To cover their head, Muslim women in these regions use *hijab*, or known here as *selendang* (a long rectangle shawl) or *tudung* (a square head scarf) that covers the hair and the neck without the face (Siti Mazidah, 2018). In Malaysia, most Muslim women use the *hijab* to cover their heads nevertheless it remains a choice to many as the use of *hijab* is not compulsory despite the implementation of *shariah* laws (Nurzihan, 2014), unlike Brunei that implemented the compulsory *hijab* wearing on 2014 (Siti Mazidah, 2018). *Niqab*, a veil which cloak the totality of the hair, neck, shoulders and face, except for the eyes is not common as women in these countries generally left their face bare (Hochel, 2013). On the contrary, the usage of *burqa*, a veil which covers the whole body, including the head, face and eyes is common in Afghanistan (Everett, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

This article adopts library research method based on literatures related to Muslim women attire for ten years from 2010 until 2020. Articles, studies, research papers and theses that are accessed from various databases are extracted to find out the discover the themes involved in the usage of Islamic attire among Muslim women. The review focuses specifically on literatures written in the areas of Muslim women attire which are not restricted to *hijab* only, but any traditional or contemporary attire

that are regarded as the Islamic attire or meeting the criteria of aurah covering that are practiced by Muslim women. The themes involved in the usage of Islamic attire among Muslim women are not narrowed into Muslim-majority countries only, but also among Muslim woman immigrant in western countries or Muslim-minority countries.

The descriptive analysis will highlight the notable themes associated with adopting Islamic way of dressing from the literatures reviewed. Themes that are drawn from these articles are religion, culture, family, society, media and fashion.

MULTIPLE THEMES OF ISLAMIC ATTIRE USAGE AMONG MUSLIM WOMEN

Religion as the fundamental driving force behind usage of Islamic attire

Viewing from the point of Shari'ah (Islamic jurisprudence), religion is the basic theme for Islamic attire usage by Muslim women. In fact, non-Muslim majority host countries that are receiving Muslim immigrant see the hijab as a religious symbol (El-Geledi and Bourhis, 2012). However, adopting the Islam way in dressing no longer stick solely to religious interpretations. As how Everett (2014) put it, the practice of *hijab* is a contentious, gendered religious tradition associated with a complex array of symbolic meanings which to some, it is a sign of oppression and cultural separatism; while to others, it is an exercise in modesty, pious devotion, and even self-expression. A lot of themes emerged along the way such as culture for the practice of wearing *abaya* in Saudi Arabia (DeCoursey, 2017). The practice of *hijab*, on the other hand, can be a fashion statement (Grine and Saeed, 2017; Rahman, Islam & Ferdousi, 2018), a mark of identity (MacKay, 2013), self-protection (Novitasari, 2014; Kamal & Fayyaz, 2016; Maqsood, 2013), or family affiliation (MacKay, 2013), which all will be further discussed later in this paper.

Nevertheless, the primary religious purpose of practicing the Muslim women attire have not yet been forgotten. Various studies conducted among Muslims in Malaysia (Grine and Saeed, 2017), Brunei (Haji Mohammad, 2018), Indonesia (Novitasari, 2014), Bangladesh (Rahman, Islam & Ferdousi 2018), Pakistan (Kamal & Fayyaz, 2016), Saudi Arabia (DeCoursey, 2017), Mauritania (Bhowon and Bundoo, 2016), Egypt (Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015), Yemen (Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015), Britain (MacKay, 2013), Canada (Litchmore and Safdar, 2016), and America (Koura, 2018; Li Chen et. Al, 2014; Maqsood, 2013) have found that despite the multiple issues associated with the *hijab*, Muslim women still consider the religious goal to be their main goal of wearing it. The multicultural setting has an effect on Muslim women 's religious ideas and values, but it is explicit about their religious behaviour, which welcomes the *hijab* as a fashion in this setting but does not alter its definition as a religious obligation. (Grine and Saeed, 2017).

Role of Culture in Muslim Women Attire

Despite their primary function to implement religious orders, Muslim women cannot deny the role of culture in the usage of Islamic attire. Several researches

conducted among Muslim communities in different countries proved this fact. A study conducted in Indonesia found that the *hijab* fashion is part of the culture in Indonesia that was present in daily life (Puspitasari & Dolah, 2018), while in the United Arab Emirates, the local women's national outfit consists of a *hijab* and an *abaya*, a long black robe worn over the clothes of the woman that helps to minimise the presence of feminine curves. (Pasha-Zaidi, 2015). In Pakistan, despite not being the main reason for Muslim women to wear the headscarf, the environment or the culture of the country still hold a modest share of the reason for wearing the headscarf or the *hijab*, and it was a significant factor for modern veiled women who wore modern clothes (Kamal & Fayyaz, 2016).

This is not surprising, because the reasons for practicing Islamic attire vary from culture to culture. As for women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, they consider wearing the *abaya* is more culturally authentic than a religious duty (Decoursey, 2017). This fact is in line with a study conducted in Mauritania, which found that participants recognized that the shape of clothing and the extent of coverage may change over time and differ from culture to culture (Bhowon and Bundoo, 2016). However, the practice of *hijab* as a popular religious and cultural practise was, in reality, a highly individualised experience for each woman. (Litchmore and Safdar, 2016).

Beyond the context of Muslim countries, culture also plays an important role in contexts where Muslim women are migrants in the host country. A study conducted in Oregon, USA, found that Muslim women living in Western societies are fully aware of their position as representatives of not only their religions but cultures as well (Maqsood, 2013), while in a study conducted in Texas, America, found that some of their participants admit that their family ask them to wear the *hijab*, saying that it is part of their culture (Tariq-Munir, 2014).

The cultural aspect of the issue of Muslim women attire usage overlapped from different points of view. In exercising their roles as a motive for covering the *aurah*, culture and religion are two traditional driving forces in the practice of the *hijab*, before fashion entered as a modern one (Woldesemeit, 2012). The *hijab* denotes a religious identity and visual references to the wearer's cultural background, thus reflecting influence of cultural norms that can be seen in different ways in which the headscarf is worn (Pasha-Zaidi, 2015). On the other hand, religion and culture intersect with the passage of time, and thus affect the history of the veil to a complex history (Slininger, 2013). A study in Senegal (Diop and Merunka, 2013) reported that wearing traditional dresses that usually meets the criteria of *aurah* covering among Senegalese, indicates that the wearer shows respect and obedience to the Muslim religion where tradition is well anchored in consumer culture and offers important end-goals with religious goal being one of them.

Culture and traditions also play their respective roles in resulting wide variations in *hijab* styles across the Islamic world (Maqsood, 2013). Different cultural and religious backgrounds seem to contribute to the different model and style of the *hijab*, as well as its colour and material (Nistor, 2017). The influence of culture in observing its regional and social characteristics of the *hijab*, which is explained in the

quality of the fabric and colour, cannot be denied (Monkerbayeva, Baitenova & Mustafayeva). With the potential of culture crossing geographical boundaries and fashion today, the transnational cultural and religious expansions of different styles have given an added value in terms of cultural and religious messages, which in the case of fashion related to the *hijab*, different ethnographic components of different cultures and also a reflection on current social and economic phenomena (Nistor, 2017). As a result, when it came to the Islamic styles on display, women had a wide range of clothing styles, from a variety of cultures, from which they could choose, and were familiar with the outfits on offer (Bhuiyan, 2018).

While the styles of the *hijab* differ from one culture to another and from one place to another, one of the reasons behind this is different interpretations of religious requirements in covering the *aurah* (Maqsood, 2013). Woldesemeit (2012) argues that although there are some guidelines in the Quranic verses and prophetic tradition regarding *aurah* covering, the definition of chastity is left into cultural and social interpretations of Muslims (Woldesemeit, 2012). Findings from Abdul Razak, Rokis & Ahmad Tajudin (2017) found this evident in the emergence of different names and types of *hijab*, with differences in culture.

Family and Muslim Women Attire Usage

There are many studies that brought up family themes in the decision making of Islamic attire usage among Muslim women. Rita (2017) found out in her study carried out in Bangladesh that although *aurah* covering is a religious matter, 16.1 percent of respondents wear *hijab* following family decisions. Meanwhile, Bhowon and Bundoo (2016), in their study carried out in Mauritania, found that for some mothers, they make the decision to wear *hijab* after marriage, while all girls in that study reported that their parents want them to wear the *hijab*, even though they are not pressuring them to do so. Likewise, another study in Malaysia found that 92 percent of respondents agreed that parents played an important role in guiding and influencing their daughters in wearing the *hijab*; rather, parents, friends, and siblings have more influence in wearing the *hijab* than other sources (A. Manaf & Wok, 2019). MacKay (2013) found out in her study conducted among the Muslim community in Britain that nearly 70 percent of the respondents referred to their families, including their husbands, in a decision-making consultation whether they wear the *hijab* or not.

Wearing the veil can also be used to reassure Muslim family members that one remains loyal to the precepts of Islam while pursuing western educational and professional achievements not otherwise acceptable without wearing of the Islamic veil (El-Geledi and Bourhis, 2012).

Muslim Women Attire: Between Faith and Fashion

The original religious purpose of practicing Islamic attire still exists among Muslim women (Grine and Saeed, 2017; Novitasari, 2014; Rahman, Islam & Ferdousi 2018; Kamal & Fayyaz, 2016; DeCoursey, 2017; Bhowon and Bundoo, 2016; Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015; Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015; MacKay, 2013; Litchmore and Safdar,

2016; Koura, 2018; Li Chen et. Al, 2014; Maqsood, 2013). However, Muslim women still welcome the fashion elements. Taking the *hijab* as an example, Muslim women agree that *hijab* would be part of fashion (Rita, 2017), and even when they practiced Muslim women attire to cover the *aurah* as a religious duty, they still care about the way in which they dress to cover their *aurah* in terms of fashion (Rahman, Islam & Ferdousi, 2018). In his study conducted in Pakistan, Sethi (2019) found that women wanted more styles of *abaya*, including integrations of Western fashions and traditional *abayas*, or Western evening dresses inspired *abaya*. Young Muslim women who live predominantly in Western cultural contexts, or even their peers who live in traditional Islamic societies, show their elegant and modern *hijab* by combining it with modern and elegant clothing and brands (Nistor, 2017). In fact, the last decade has seen increasing popularity of the Muslim attire in all age groups of women not only as part of their religion, but also as part of their fashion statement (Zabeen, 2017).

The growth of Muslim women attire as a fashion entity started from the demand that exist within consumers and followed by opportunity grabbed by fashion brands. Fashion-conscious Muslim consumers may want to become acquainted with images associated with Muslims by displaying their choice of fashion as an authentic way of expressing their religion. (Hassan and Harun, 2016), in which its beginning is still new, as it became a specific phenomenon in the 1980s (Bhuiyan, 2018). In terms of *hijab* as an expression of faith that are blended with contemporary fashion, this opens up effort for integration between Islamic rules and the elegant concept of *hijab* to reduce the conflict between these two concepts, in which Muslim fashion designers as well as makeup brands have a great influence in the integration process between the concept of *hijab* and fashion (Puspitasari & Dolah, 2018).

Without denying the positive impact of this phenomenon in providing an alternative for Muslim women to wear clothes that are compatible with their religion, one of the aspects that must be paid attention to is the adherence of these clothing lines to the guidelines of *aurah* covering. While current *hijab* fashion trends claim to preserve the essence of traditional and cultural viewpoints in their attempt to modernize the modest style of Islamic clothing (Hassan and Harun, 2016), complying with *aurah* covering guidelines may not be the first consideration when Muslim women choose their clothing from the so called Islamic fashion. Instead, the use of bright colours, stunning accessories, gorgeous prints, and a style of wearing that showcases one's own skill emerges as the reasons for being easily influenced by *hijab* trends (Hassan and Harun, 2016). In addition, fashion stimulation is one of the factors that distinctively affect the consumption of *hijab* fashion among consumers (Hassan & Harun, 2016), and the adherence to *aurah* covering guidelines is not anywhere between conformity to the wearer's personality, acceptance of their peers, personal satisfaction, and conformity to special occasions trends (Hassan and Harun, 2016).

This may be a side effect of Islamic struggles by Muslim women, who are trying to be accepted in a modern, fast-moving society, making the current forms of *hijab* even more distinctive (Hassim, 2014). Although the religious goal of choosing Islamic

fashion is still apparent, the fact that the psychological and unconscious effects of modern veil on Muslim women are related to notions of beauty and self-image rather than religiosity should not be minimized (Hassim, 2014). Hence, Muslim women wear Islamic attire intending to adhere to their religion, but in practice, they care more about the fashion aspects of choosing their clothes than they are concerned with the compliance of these fashion to the *aurah* covering guidelines.

The Role of Media in the Emergence of Islamic Attire Usage

According to A. Manaf and Wok (2019), the media is a significant factor influencing the wearing of the *hijab* after social or personal influence with Facebook, blogs, and magazines are among the top three media outlets that have such influence. This is especially true in promoting a novelty trend in *hijab* fashion. For example, Aquila Asia, the Singaporean magazine for Muslim women, describes Muslim women as an imagined, powerful, and modern poised trends (Hassan and Harun, 2016). When analysing Instagram's influence on this issue, one study argues the possibility of constant communication with Instafamous through their Instagram account indirectly affects their fans' perceptions of the *hijab* (Shariffaddeen & A. Manaf, 2019).

From another point of view, the media plays a vital role in terms of fashion and design by providing all information about the *hijab*; including how to wear it, where to buy it, and many other information that can be found on the Internet and from social networking sites (A. Manaf & Wok, 2019). This has affected the usage and consumption of covert clothing, as there is a positive relationship between marketing through social media and consumer buying decision making that includes information research, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behaviour (Prasath & Yoganathen, 2018).

On the other hand, the source of media influence on the usage of Muslim women attire is no other than the women themselves. A study conducted in Malaysia indicated that the new generation of modern Malay Muslim women have interchangeable roles; as a consumer of the media, and as an authorised source of information in the communication process where their opinions matter and influence others (Hassim, 2018).

However, the nature of role that the media plays in influencing Muslim women attire usage is still subjective. While the influence of media propaganda continues to influence young Malaysian women feelings and encourages them to join the homogeneity of modern Muslim women to wear the *hijab* (Hassim, 2018), the understanding of the right concept of *aurah* covering through the usage of Muslim women attire represented by the media can sometimes be compromised. For example, a study on the magazine Hijabista, a *hijab* fashion magazine, revealed that the said magazine may not be entirely ideal for women looking to seek religious affirmation and embrace true vocation as Muslim, as contents in the said magazine have been found skewed towards fashion reviews and style recommendations as a result of sourcing their articles mainly from stylists rather than religious scholars or academician, in which none of their article is sourced from the latter (Hassim, 2014).

In addition to that, media marketing pushes the *hijab* into an elite lifestyle that includes high-end diversity, luxurious pieces of fabric and narrow coloured clothing, which depart from conservative Islamic standards, and which transform the veil as a socially desirable experience, where universal elements increase the acceptance of Muslim women in the modern Islamic global community that in return, the culture of consumption highlights the lack of coherence between religiosity, as the veiled woman sees herself as distinct and not closer to God, because she belongs to a special community of Muslims (Hassim, 2014).

Societal Influence over Muslim Women Attire

Society is among the theme associated in the usage of Muslim women attire. Litchmore and Safdar (2016) highlighted that the decisions to wear or not to wear a headscarf go through not only individual, but also social process simultaneously before taken. The *hijab* also serves as a form of acceptance into society (Abdul Razak, Rokis & Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017). A study based on the Muslim community in Britain found that among the participants, those who did not wear the headscarf were fully aware of the fact that members of the Muslim community often considered them non-practicing Muslims, while the women who did wear the headscarf later in life spoke out about the greater confidence they feel when being outside the home and within the Islamic societies in which they live (MacKay, 2013). Similarly, when talking about the relation between Muslim women who observe their modest Islamic clothing and their approachability, Pazhoohi & Burriss (2016) found out in the study they conducted, a woman wearing liberal Islamic dress is 6.71 times more likely to be offered a ride when she is seen standing by the roadside than the same woman wearing conservative Islamic dress..

The usage of Muslim women attire and society also plays interchangeable roles in importance, as the *hijab* is sometimes considered important to society, and sometimes, the influence of society itself is important in wearing the *hijab*. This is true when 90.3 percent of respondents in a study conducted in Bangladesh agreed that the headscarf is important to society (Rita, 2017), while another study conducted on the Muslim community in Canada found that the encouragement of members of the Islamic Association for the school of female participants affected their desire to wear the *hijab* (Atasoy, 2006). Likewise, in a study conducted in Malaysia, majority of respondents admit that their friends or colleagues play a major role in influencing the wearing of the *hijab* (A. Manaf & Wok, 2019). Another study conducted on Muslim societies in America found that often, practice of the veil is identified by relatives and friends (Tariq-Munir, 2014). For many Muslim women settled in western democracies, practicing *hijab* can symbolize personal and collective identification with particular varieties of the Islamic faith, while it can also serve as a marker of social differentiation from the Christian mainstream (El-Geledi and Bourhis, 2012).

Muslim women's fashion styles and preferences are much affected by the setting of society they are in. Professional, middle class Muslim women wear attires to suit their urban lifestyle and social setting, unlike from those who work in rural

areas. Working professionally requires them to look presentable but practical and comfortable enough to suit their standard of living (Hassan, Zaman & Santosa, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Islamic attire usage among Muslim women had drawn the attention of researchers to investigate the matter from different points of view. Being one of religious fulfilment, Muslim women around the world are found to still be aware of this fact, in which they realize that their practice of Islamic attire is an expression of faith and fulfilling religious obligations. This expression, directly or not, instil the view from the perspective of non-Muslim community around them that it is a religious symbol.

Besides religion, culture is also one of the important influences accompanying Muslim women in practicing Islamic attire, in which it can be among the reasons of why Muslim women choose to practice Islamic attire and also the navigator behind wide variations of Muslim women apparel across the globe.. Some Muslim women practise *aurah* covering, modest looking clothing because it is part of the culture that she is rooted from, while sometimes, the culture she is within itself executes *aurah* covering clothes. Often, culture can be among the reasons of why Muslim women choose to practice Islamic attire. Another important role brought by the theme of culture is that culture is the navigator behind wide variations of Muslim women apparel across the globe.

As for family, it plays the role in encouraging Muslim women to practice Islamic clothing and influencing them in decisions whether to cover their *aurah* or not. Other than that, migrating Muslim women would also dress in Islamic attire to reassure her family that she is still upholding religious values despite pursuing education or career in Western countries.

Quite similarly, society as a theme in Islamic attire usage among Muslim women provides insight that Muslim women tend to be affected in the way they practice Islamic attire by the societal setting they are in. Conforming to societal norms is important to Muslim women, which encourage them to wear Islamic attire. Practicing Islamic attire is regarded important to the society apart than being a form of acceptance in their society.

Apart from the conventional themes, fashion is a contemporary theme in Muslim women attire usage. Muslim women are cautious about how they look when they intend to dress accordingly to Islamic principles, that eventually creates demands by Muslim women consumer. The opportunity is grabbed by fashion brands in providing wide range of Muslim women attire, thus giving birth to the Islamic fashion or *hijab* fashion. These fashions, sometimes meeting the criteria of *aurah* covering and sometimes not, grow into a powerful source in influencing Muslim women to adopt Islamic attire, as well as to drive fashion houses to produce Muslim friendly clothing lines.

Another non-traditional theme in Muslim women attire is media. The media is playing its main role in promoting the Islamic fashion or *hijab* fashion itself. The

media is also forceful in providing information on where to purchase Islamic attire such as *hijab*, how to wear it and latest trend of it.

This article concluded that other than religion, many other themes are also associated in the usage of Islamic attire among Muslim women namely culture, society, family, media, and fashion. These themes might be the driving factors behind adopting Islamic attire among Muslim women, as well as diversifying the types of Islamic attire that s worn by Muslim women.

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