

Concept of Islam in Fashion

Mohammed Ibrahim

Fashion, Design and Textiles Studies, Kumasi Technical University, P. O. box 854, Adum, Kumasi

Abstract: Fashion posed a challenge to some Muslim youth because fashion is perceived as Western and does not support Islamic teachings, practices and beliefs. Since Quran is in support of clothing and adornment, learning fashion as Muslims would help to know how to conceal the private parts and also know the proper way of Islamic dressing. The study aimed at finding out the concept of Islam in fashion. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. Convenient sampling technique was used to select the leaders (Imams) or sheiks of traditional Muslims. Questionnaires were handed over to the respondents individually and a total of 42 out of 50 were returned, attaining 84.0% response rate. The study discovered that Islam embrace fashion, requiring Muslims to wear clothing that covers their body and to beautify their appearance. The study further revealed that the part of the body from the naval to the knees should to be covered, clothing should not be that is specific to non-Muslims, dressing should be in conformity to the moral standard of community accepted by Islam, and men adoption of fashion should not resemble clothing worn by women. Recommendations were made that Islam communities should advice Muslim who actually goes against by displaying fashion in a way that causes harm to oneself or to others, as it totally goes against the objectives of Shari`ah.

Keywords: Islam, Muslims, Fashion, Imam, Sheiks

1. Introduction

Fashion is a term that usually applies to a prevailing mode of expression, but quite often applies to a personal mode of expression that may or may not apply to all. Inherent in the term is the idea that the mode will change more quickly than the culture as a whole. The terms "fashionable" and "unfashionable" are employed to describe whether someone or something fits in with the current popular mode of expression. The term "fashion" is frequently used in a positive sense, as a synonym for glamour and style. In this sense, fashions are a sort of communal art, through which a culture examines its notions of beauty and goodness.

Every human being need to clothe, the garment chosen should be accepted by the society in which they live. If the style and design of the cloth is accepted by the society then it is considered as fashion (Ulzen-Appiah, 2003). The appearance of a person in an Islamic society is important as they frown on the use of indecent garment. Every dress code that deviates from the one acceptable to the community especially as it affects the set moral standard or judgment of the community is termed indecent. Muslim wear garment and present themselves in the Islamic context in their day to day activities; every attire or garment chosen must be morally accepted and must look good in appearance and should not show one's (awrah) private part.

Today fashion posed a challenge to some Muslim youth because fashion is perceived as Western or Christian and does not support Islamic teachings, practices and beliefs. Since Quran is in support of clothing and adornment, learning fashion as Muslim student would help to know how to conceal the private parts and also know the proper way of Islamic dressing. Not only that, but will also educate them on selection of appropriate fabric for clothing and the purpose of wearing garment. It will also help them know how to blend and make good use of elements and principles of design in garment making as well as selections.

2. Literature on Fashion in Islam

Islam permits, and in fact requires, that the Muslim be careful about his appearance, dress decently, maintain his dignity, and enjoy what Allah has created for the purpose of clothing and adornment. According to Encyclopedia of Islam and Muslim World (2004), Islamic dress has for centuries been used to symbolize purity, mark status, or formal roles, distinguish believer from non-believer and identify gender.

Muslims were admonished to dress modestly in garment that did not reveal the body silhouette and extremities. Head covering are also expected. However, dress form varies at different periods and regions as does the interpretation of modest dress and adherence to Muslim dress code (Mohammed, Sayd& Osman, 2011). From the Islamic point of view, clothing has two purposes: to cover the body and to beautify the appearance. Allah Subhanahuwata'ala counts His bestowal of clothing and adornment upon human beings as one of His favors to mankind:

O children of Adam! Verily, We have bestowed upon you clothing to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment to you.... (Quran 7:26).

Whoever neglects either of these two aspects, covering or adornment, has deviated from the way of Islam toward the path of Satan. Accordingly, Allah warns people concerning both nakedness and neglect of good appearance, as these are snares of Satan, in the following verses:

“O children of Adam! Do not let Satan seduce in the same manner as he expelled your parents (Adam and Eve) from the Garden, stripping them of their raiment in order to expose their shame” (Quran 7:27).

“O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but do not be wasteful” (Quran 7:31).

Islam has made it obligatory on Muslims to cover their private parts, which everyone naturally feels a sense of shame at exposing in order that they may be distinguished from the naked animals; in fact, it instructs them to avoid uncovering these parts of their bodies even when they are alone so that they may attain perfection in morals and religion. Bahazibn Hakim, on the authority of his grandfather, reported the latter as saying:

I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! What should we conceal and what can we show of our private parts?' He replied, 'Let no one see them except your wife or your bondwoman.' I then asked, 'What if some people live together (e.g., during travel, or camping)?' He replied, 'If you can manage it, try not to let anyone see them.' I then said, 'And what if no one is present (meaning if one is alone)?' He said, 'Allah Tabarakawata'ala is most deserving of your modesty.' (Reported by Ahmad, Abu Daoud, al-Tirmidhi, and IbnMajah.) Al-hadith.

Islam holds in very high esteem and the Islamic roles of covering are intended to protect and guard dignity and honour. Women use *hijab* to cover their body. All qualified Muslim scholars throughout the history of Islam agree that fulfilling the condition of dress code is an obligation on all Muslim men and women. They based these conditions on evidence found in the Quran and Sunnah. (Quran 33:59 and Quran 24:31)

Women Dress Code in Islam

Islam makes it *haram* for women to wear clothes which fail to cover the body and which are transparent, revealing what is underneath. It is likewise *haram* to wear tightly fitting clothes which delineate the parts of the body, especially those parts which are sexually attractive. For examples leggings which has become common amongst the ladies. Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger, of Allah (peace be on him) said,

I will not be a witness for two types of people who are destined for the Fire: people with whips, like the tails of cows, who beat the people (i.e., tyrannical rulers who are the enemies of their own people), and women who, although clothed, are yet naked, seducing and being seduced, their hair styled like the tilted humps of camels. These will not enter the Garden nor will its fragrance even reach them, although its fragrance reaches a very great distance (Reported by Muslim, as cited in Qardawi, 1995).

The Prophet (peace be on him) described such women as being clothed, yet naked, since their clothing, being transparent and fine, does not do the job of concealing the body but is rather intended to reveal it; such is the dress of the women of our time. The Prophet (peace be on him) likened their hair-style to the hump of a special breed of camel (bakht) which has very large humps, because they put up their hair in a beehive shape from the middle of their heads. It is as if the Prophet (peace be on him) were looking beyond the centuries to the present age, when dressing the

hair of women and styling it in variety of shapes has become a profession dominated by men who charge top prices for their work. And this is not all. Many women, not satisfied with what Allah gave them in the way of natural hair, buy wigs made of artificial hair to add to their own in order to increase its body, beauty, and luster, imagining that this renders them better looking and more sexually attractive.

Women who choose to wear *hijab* do not make the decision lightly. In fact many women testify that they faced great animosity from their Muslim or non-Muslim families when they decided to cover themselves with *hijab*. Across the globe there are numerous instances of women having to defend their right to wear the *hijab*. *Hijab* can be a symbol of piety and it can be a sign of great inner strength and fortitude. A woman wearing *hijab* becomes a very visible sign of Islam. While Muslim men can blend easily into any society, Muslim woman are often put on the line, and forced to defend not only their decision to cover, but also their religion (Encyclopedia of Miracles of quran and Sunnah). Nevertheless, women who wear *hijab* insist that the advantages far outweigh any disadvantage conjured up by media bias or general ignorance.

Men Dress Code

Beautification and elegance are not merely permitted but are required by Islam, and in general it rejects any attempts to prohibit them.

Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of His providing? (Quran 7:32).

Islam has, however, prohibited two kinds of adornment for men, while permitting them to women. These are, first, gold ornaments and, second, clothing made of pure silk. It was reported that prophet Mohammed (peace be on him) took some silk in his right hand and some gold in his left, declaring, "These two are *haram* for the males among my followers." (Reported by Ahmad, Abu Daoud, al-Nisai, IbnHayyan, and IbnMajah, who reports the additional phrase, "but *halal* for the females."). *Halal* is something which is declared good. Umar reported that he heard the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Do not wear silk, for those who wear it in this life shall not wear it in the Hereafter."

There is however, a social aim underlying these prohibitions. The prohibition of gold and silk to males is part of a broader Islamic program of combating luxuriousness in living. From the Qur'anic point of view, luxurious living leads to weakness among nations and to their eventual downfall; the existence of luxury is also an expression of social injustice, as only a few can afford luxurious items at the expense of the deprived masses of people. The Qur'an says:

And when We intend that We should destroy a township, we permit its luxury-loving people to commit wickedness therein. Then the word is proved true against it, and We then destroy it utterly. (Quran 17:16).

3. Methodology

The study employed quantitative method and utilized primary data. The primary data was collected through field survey and relied on questionnaire as a data collection instrument (Creswell, 2003). The target population for the study is the leaders (Imams) or sheiks of traditional Muslims. Taking into consideration other constraints (such as financial and difficulty in selecting all Imams or sheiks of traditional Muslims) to answer the research question, 105 leaders of traditional Muslims in the Ashanti Region of Ghana were conveniently selected. All the Imams/ sheiks in Ashanti Region were used as the sample frame.

The main instrument used was a structured questionnaire containing items on respondents demography which include: age, educational level, and years of being a leader (Imam) or sheik. A five point Likert Scale was also used ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to solicit responses on the notion of Islam in fashion. The questionnaire was handed over to respondents individual and a total of 42 out of 50 retrieved, attaining 84.0% response rate.

The Data was analysed using descriptive statistics to determine the findings. SPSS-20.0 was used to find the mean ratings which subsequently used to compare with theoretical mean ratings of 4.0 to determine the notion of Islam on fashion.

4. Results

This section of the paper presents the result and analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires distributed. Presented in Table 1 shows the background information of the respondents

Table 1: Background Information of Respondents

Background Information	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age		
Below 25years	0	0.0
26-35years	4	9.5
36-45years	12	28.6
51years and above	26	61.9
Total	42	100.0
Educational level		
No formal education	0	0.0
Diploma	3	7.1
First degree	12	28.6
Masters	21	50.0
PhD	6	14.3
Total	42	100.0
Years of position held		
Less than 5years	3	7.1
6-10years	8	19.0
11-15years	22	52.4
15years above	9	21.4
Total	42	100.0

In terms of the general information of the selected respondents, all 42 leaders (Imams) or sheiks of traditional Muslims responded to the questionnaire. Out of the 42 respondents who answered the questions, none of them were below 25years, 4(9.5%) respondents were between the ages

of 26-35 years, 12(28.6%) respondents were between the ages of 36-45 years and 26(61.9%) respondents were between the age group of 51years and above.

With regards to the educational levels of respondents, none of the respondents had no formal education, 5(11.9%) of the respondents were diploma holders; 12(28.6%) were first degree holders, 21(50.0%) were Master degree holders, while 6(14.3%) were PhD holders.

Concerning the years the respondents became leaders (Imams) or sheiks of traditional Muslims, 3(7.1%) respondents were less than 5year, 8(19.0%) respondents fall between 6-10years, 22(52.4%) respondents said they were regarded leaders (Imams) or sheiks of traditional Muslims between 11 - 15years, and the remaining 9(21.4%) respondents said that they have held this position for more than 15years,

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Table 2 presents the responses of the respondents on the notion of Islam on fashion. The following approach was used in explaining the results using an average mean score: 1-2.0 = Strongly disagree, 2.1-2.9=Disagree, 3.0-3.5=Agree and 3.6-4.0=Strongly agree.

Table 2: Response on the notion of Islam on the adoption of fashion

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Remarks
Islam embrace fashion	4.13	0.64	1 st	Agree
Clothing is purposely worn to cover the body and to beautify the appearance of the wearer	3.93	1.1	2 nd	Agree
The part of the body from the naval to the knees should be covered	3.67	1.113	3 rd	Agree
It should not be clothing that is specific to non-Muslim or represent sect or group.	3.6	1.056	4 th	Agree
Dressing in conformity to the moral standard of community accepted by Islam	3.53	0.915	5 th	Agree
Men adoption of fashion should not resemble clothing worn by women	3.4	1.056	6 th	Agree
Man is not permitted to wear garment made of silk or jewelry made of gold but are permitted by women	2.87	1.302	7 th	Disagree

Source: Author Field Survey, 2017

From Table 2, it became obvious that Islam embrace fashion ($x=4.13$, $SD=.640$), requiring Muslims to wear clothing that cover their body and to beautify the appearance ($x=3.93$, $SD=1.100$), the part of the body from the naval to the knees should to be covered ($x=3.67$, $SD=1.113$), clothing should not be that is specific to non-Muslims ($x=3.60$, $SD=1.056$), dressing should be in conformity to the moral standard of community accepted by Islam ($x=3.53$, $SD=.915$) and men adoption of fashion should not resemble clothing worn by women ($x=3.40$, $SD=1.056$), hence these statements were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th respectively.

Conversely, the respondents disagreed that man is not permitted to wear garment made of silk or jewelry made of gold but are permitted by women with a mean score of 2.87 and was rated 7th in the ranking order. It is imperative to note that, the above findings are openly consistent with the study done by Mohammed et al. (2011) as captured in the review of literature. There is therefore the need to understand the concept of Islam in fashion in order to help know how to conceal the private parts and also know the proper way of Islamic dressing.

5. Discussion

Relatively, the findings of this study have been more of reaffirmation of what was reviewed in the literature. Most responses revealed that Islam embrace fashion. Quran is in support of clothing and adornment, learning fashion as Muslim would help to know how to conceal the private parts and also know the proper way of Islamic dressing. Not only that, but will also educate Muslims especially the youth on selection of appropriate fabric for clothing and the purpose of wearing garment (Mohammed, et al., 2011).

Moreover, the reviewing that clothing is purposely worn to cover the body and to beautify the appearance of the wearer, and the part of the body from the naval to the knees should be covered concurs with the study by Qardawi (1995) who emphasized that Islam makes it *haram* for women to wear clothes which fail to cover the body and which are transparent, revealing what is underneath. It is likewise *haram* to wear tightly fitting clothes which delineate the parts of the body, especially those parts which are sexually attractive.

The findings on the issue that dressing that conforms to the moral standard of the community is accepted by Islam agree with Mohammed et al. (2011) that Muslims were admonished to dress modestly in garment that did not reveal the body silhouette and extremities. Head covering were also expected. However, dress form varies at different periods and regions as does the interpretation of modest dress and adherence to Muslim dress code. From the Islamic point of view, clothing has two purposes: to cover the body and to beautify the appearance.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study revealed the concept of fashion in Islam. The study discovered that Islam embraces fashion. Moreover, the clothing worn by the Muslims should cover the body to beautify the appearance, the part of the body from the naval to the knees should be covered. It further appeared that dressing should be in conformity to the moral standard of community accepted by Islam, men adoption of fashion should not resemble clothing worn by women and clothing worn should not be specific to non-Muslim or represent sect or group.

It was recommended that education on the Islamic faith; believing in God or in the doctrines or teachings of the religion in the history of Islam, faith is important and also consider as the fundamentals that builds a person's doctrine to the fullest through seminars in schools and recreational

centres as well as through the print, video and audio media are necessary to eliminate or reduce possible risks that are attached to modern trend of fashion in Ghana.

Finally, Islam communities should advice Muslim who actually goes against by displaying fashion in a way that causes harm to oneself or to others, as it totally goes against the objectives of Shari`ah.

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