



FACTORS AFFECTING MUSLIM WOMEN'S  
INTENTION TO WEAR *HIJAB*: A STUDY FROM  
MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE

BY

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## ABSTRACT

The main focus of the research is to know the factors that affect Muslim women's intention to wear a *Hijab* in Malaysia by using the Theory of Planned Behaviors (TPB). *Hijab* is considered as an Islamic culture that requires all Muslim women to wear it. The growth of awareness among women to wear the *Hijab* has driven the production of *Hijab* by marketers because of the increasing demand in Malaysia. Yet it become of the Muslimah fashion attire nowadays. In order to identify the factors that affect Muslim women's intention to wear a *Hijab*, data were collected from 300 respondents randomly which comprise Muslim women from both West and East Malaysia. TPB was used as the conceptual framework and the relationship variables identified are attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, religiosity and culture. The data collected were tested using multiple regression analysis in SPSS. The findings show that all the variables are significant and can be accepted and supported. It shows that culture was the main factor influencing Muslim women to wear a *Hijab*. The result also showed that the theoretical framework used in this study is successful in achieving the research objectives. Besides, the research is also useful for practitioners and marketing managers especially those involved in the *Hijab* industry. Researchers and academicians also will reap the benefit through the findings highlighted and can understand better the intention of Muslim women in wearing a *Hijab* and its implication in Islamic practices

## خلاصة البحث

ركز هذا البحث بشكل رئيسي على معرفة العوامل التي تؤثر على دوافع النساء المسلمات لارتداء الحجاب في ماليزيا، وذلك باستخدام نظرية السلوك المخطط. يعتبر الحجاب ثقافة إسلامية يتوجب على جميع المسلمات ارتداؤها، وأدى انتشار الوعي بين النساء لارتداء الحجاب إلى قيام التجار بإنتاج الحجاب بسبب الطلب المتزايد عليه في ماليزيا. وفقد أصبح الحجاب جزءا من سرعات الموضة الإسلامية في الوقت الحاضر. من أجل تحديد العوامل التي تؤثر على دوافع المسلمات لارتداء الحجاب، تم جمع بيانات من 300 مشاركة بشكل عشوائي والتي تضمنت نساء مسلمات من كل من غربي وشرقي ماليزيا. تم استخدام نظرية السلوك المخطط كإطار مفاهيمي، وتضمنت متغيرات العلاقات التي تم تحديدها كلا من: المواقف، والأعراف غير الموضوعية، والتحكم السلوكي المُدرَك، والتدين، والثقافة. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها باستخدام تحليل الانحدار المتعدد ببرنامج إس بي إس إس للإحصاء. أظهرت النتائج أن جميع المتغيرات كانت مهمة وبالإمكان قبولها ودعمها. أظهرت النتائج أيضا أن الثقافة هو العامل الرئيسي الذي يؤثر على النساء المسلمات في ارتداء الحجاب، كما أظهرت أيضا أن الإطار النظري المستخدم في هذه الدراسة كان ناجحا في تحقيق أهداف البحث. هذا البحث مفيد للممارسين، ومديري التسويق، وخصوصاً أولئك المشاركين في تجارة الحجاب، كما سيستفيد الباحثون والأكاديميون من النتائج الموضحة وسيساعدهم على فهم نوايا النساء المسلمات في ارتداء الحجاب وتأثيره في الممارسات الإسلامية.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

*Hijab*, also known as veil, is worn by Muslim women all over the world to adhere to the Islamic religious order and as an enforcement of Islamic values based on the holy *Quran*. *Hijab* is also viewed as a way to safeguard women and protect their honour (Hassim, 2014). *Hijab* has emerged as a cultural symbol for female modesty despite such veiling practice being stereotyped as a symbol of the backwardness of Muslim women (Hassim, 2017). There was also a hashtag #muslim-*hijab* campaign to increase the awareness of wearing *hijab* and to be confident in it. The demand for headscarves or *hijab* has increased as more Muslim women are willingly covering their heads. In response, many international retailers, such as H&M, DKNY, and Dolce & Gabbana have introduced clothing lines designed for Middle-Eastern and Muslim clients. This has elevated the status of *hijab* to meet the needs of their customers in many ways (Hassim, 2017a).

There are many *hijab* entrepreneurs, such as Dian Pelangi from Indonesia, who is one of the leading designers of modest-fashion. Dian Pelangi was listed as one of the top 500 influential designers by a UK-based magazine (Hassim, 2017a).

*Hijab* is popular in Malaysia, where, according to the world population review, 60% of the population are Muslims. Most Muslim women in Malaysia wear *hijab*, and the demand for modest fashion has been escalating rapidly. The high demand for *hijab* and the relatively low capital required to establish *hijab*-business have resulted in many new sellers joining the market.

Some *hijab*-entrepreneurs has successfully established a flourishing business. ‘Fareeda,’ for instance, which is a leading *hijab* brand, recorded revenue of RM30 Million (USD8 Million) in 2013 (Hassim, 2017a). Fareeda's owners have established a fashion empire and become an iconic example in the industry. There are other well-known influential brands in *hijab* market, such as Naelofar and dUckscarves which were founded by Neelofa Mohd Noor and Vivy Yusof, respectively.

*Hijab* is used as a fashion accessory and has become a booming industry. However, *hijab* is not only a fashion, but also a religious statement. Nora and Minarti (2016) showed that religiosity is a key factor that influences consumers’ intention to wear *hijab* in Indonesia.

This study uses the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1985). It comprises attitude, subjective norm, and behavioural control. Moreover, this study includes an additional two variables, religion and culture, to examine what are the factors that influence intention to wear *hijab*. The TPB is a popular socio-psychological model that helps in understanding and predicting human behaviour (Ajzen, 2015).

According to this theory, human action is guided by three considerations. First, the belief, which is a product of the behaviour and the evaluation itself. Second, the belief in others’ expectation or motivation to comply with expectation. Third, the belief that may encourage or discourage the performance of behaviour and the power of the factors (Ajzen, 2002).

A study by Wibowo (2017) showed that attitude has a positive effect on the intention of wearing *hijab* in Indonesia. This has been supported by many other empirical studies concerning the uses of Islam-related products. Meanwhile, subjective norm is a person’s perception towards something that has been influenced by social

pressure that has been faced before by this person and is related to his or her behaviour (Ajzen, 2015).

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As a Muslim, we believe that using veil or *hijab* is a religious obligation, as mentioned in the Quran:

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): this is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested (33: 59)- Surah An-Nur

However, Hassim (2017) argued that, in this modern era, *hijab* is not a necessity, especially in Malaysia, which is considered as a moderate Islamic country, as it is a multiracial country. In recent years, *hijab* has become a symbol of fashion and modesty for Muslim women and has also become a new market for non-Muslims entrepreneurs, given the increasing demand for *hijab*. *Hijab* industry is growing in both Muslim-majority and -minority countries. That is because *hijab*, nowadays, is not only a part of religious attire but also a fashion item. However, not all Muslim women wear *hijab* for fashion-related reasons. In fact, some women may wear *hijab* because they are surrounded by an environment that forces them to wear it. Thus, in this current study, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, religion, and, culture are selected as factors that affect Muslim consumers' intentions to wear *hijab* (Nora & Minarti, 2016).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, and based on reachable literature, no research has been conducted to uncover the factors influencing *hijab*-wearing intention in Malaysia using the model of the TPB. Previous studies discussed several factors that influence Muslim women to wear *hijab* in different countries. Latiff and Alam (2013) discussed the role of media in influencing Muslim women to wear *Hijab* in Malaysia.

A study by Lateh and Mudor (2014) discussed the attitude of Muslim students towards wearing *Hijab* in Songkhla University. Besides, Faraz (2008) discussed the Iranian government policy regarding *Hijab*. Lateh and Mudor (2014) measured the religiosity and its effect on the intention to wear *Hijab* in Indonesia. The study by Mossière (2012) found that *hijab* phenomenon in Malaysia has shaped the societal structure through the convergence of Islam and Malay-Muslim culture.

It can be concluded that wearing *hijab*, as a phenomenon, may influence the intention of Muslim women to wear *Hijab* in Malaysia. however, there is no study investigated the Malaysian Muslim women's Intention to wear *hijab* using the TPB with an extension of adding two important factors, i.e. religiosity and culture.

In fact, there are a few surveys on the Muslims' perception regarding using *hijab* and fashion. According to the literature, religion, lifestyle, and attitude are the most important factors that influence Malaysian Muslim women's intention to wear *hijab*.

Furthermore, this study will help marketers to identify the marketing strategies that are market-specific and focused on the Malaysian *hijab* industry. Thus, in this study, it is important to know whether religion really influences consumers to choose and make decisions to purchase *hijab*.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING**

In 1980, Ajzen and Fishbein had extended the theory of reasoned action and created another theory called the TPB. The theory demonstrates the influence of information and motivation on behaviour. In this study, the researcher uses the TPB.

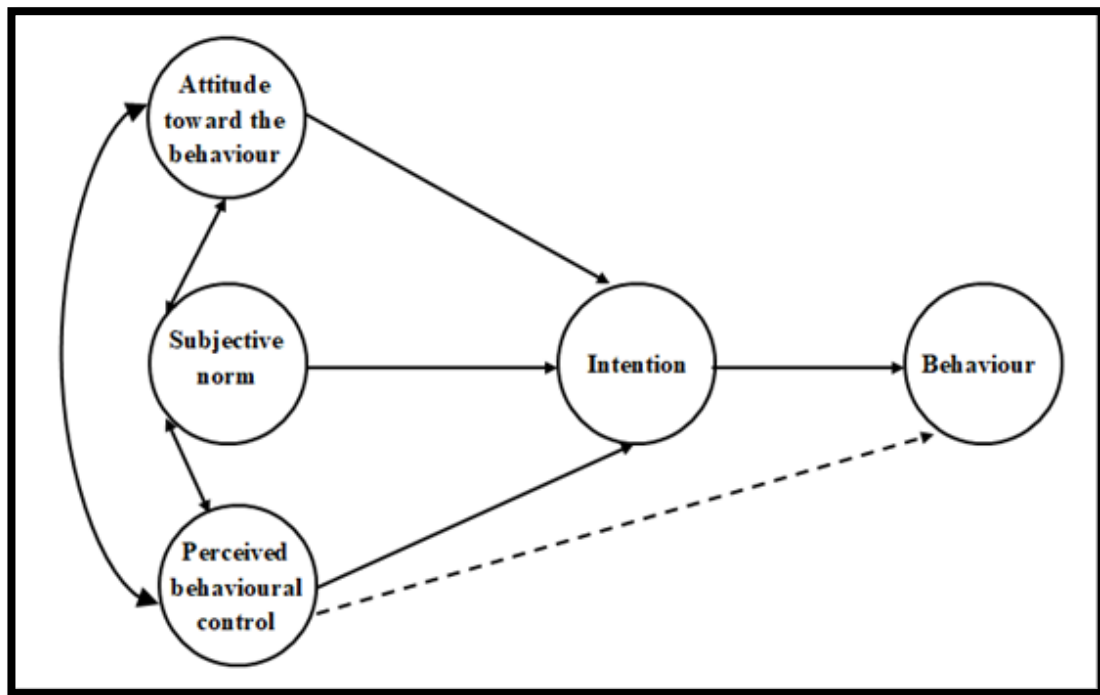


Figure 1.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

As for the TPB model, Ajzen supplemented the notion of perceived behavioural control, which, in his opinion, has an influence on a person's intention to perform a behaviour. According to Ajzen, attitude towards behaviour involves the individual's evaluation of the advantages of the behaviour. That is to say, it has something to do with the prediction of the results of carrying out the behaviour. The more motivating it is to perform a certain behaviour, the greater the possibility of performing it. Finally, perceived behavioural control relates to the approval or disapproval from most people on certain behaviour. The ideas from the peers of the people or those who are important to them may have much impact on their decision on whether to engage in an activity or not.

The TPB describes that behaviour is influenced by behavioural intention, which is influenced by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. However, the current study modifies the theory to focus on consumers' intention by which



attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are proposed to predict consumers' intention.

For this correct study, the extension of the theory should be fitting for Muslim women and *Hijab*-wearing intention, in which religiosity and culture would be included as predictors with the expectation to provide a greater variance. The literature related to the effect of religion and culture on intention is discussed in Chapter two of this research.

The term intention is defined as the antecedents that stimulate and drive consumers to purchase products and services (Hawkins, 2010). One of the most common approaches that helps marketers to predict consumers' behavior is through studying consumers' intentions (Blackwell, 2006). Therefore, purchase intention usually serves as an alternative proxy of the consumers' purchase behaviour.

In this research, the extended TPB is used to explore the factors that have an impact on Muslim women's intention to wear *Hijab* in Malaysia. As suggested by the author's supervisor, this study does not investigate the behaviour of Muslim women; this is because behaviour is a post-purchase action, whereas the objectives of the study are confined to understanding the intention of Muslim women to wear *Hijab*.

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study are divided into two parts, which are the general objective and the specific objectives:

### **1.4.1 General Objective:**

This study aims to identify the factors that influence Muslim women's intention to wear *hijab* in Malaysia. The study employs the TPB to identify those factors.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives:**

This study aims for

1. Examining the effect of attitude on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *Hijab*.
2. Examining the effect of subjective norms on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *Hijab*.
3. Examining the effect of perceived behavioural control on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *Hijab*.
4. Examining the effect of religiosity on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *Hijab*.
5. Examining the effect of culture on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *Hijab*.

### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the effect of attitude on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *hijab*?
2. What is the effect of subjective norm on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *hijab*?
3. What is the effect of perceived behavioural control on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *hijab*?
4. What is the effect of religiosity on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *hijab*?
5. What is the effect of culture on *Muslimah's* intention to wear *hijab*?

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study has several imperative theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study employs the TPB, where attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, religiosity, and culture are the proposed independent variables proposed to influence Muslim women's intention to wear *hijab* in Malaysia. The study, thus, examines the effects of additional two variables, religiosity, and culture, on Muslim women's intention to wear *hijab* in Malaysia, within the frame of the TPB. The results

of this study, thus, may provide an important theoretical extension for the TPB in the context of Islam-related product.

Practically, from a managerial point of view, the current study may help researchers, wholesalers, retailers, and marketers to track and target their customers based on who they are. In this regard, it is good to know the factors that drive consumers' intention to purchase *hijab*, as well as the Muslim consumers' perception and preference of different types of *hijab*. It is important to find in-depth information on factors that influence customer's intention, which would help the marketers to have a better understanding of consumers' intention and behaviour (Kotler, 2006).

If the manufacturers produce *hijab* without knowing the actual reason driving customers to buy it, they will not meet consumer's requirement and the business will face the risk of producing something that is not desired by the consumers. It is also important to note that most female consumers in Malaysia are Muslims and wear *hijab*. Besides, according to the Global Islamic Economy Report (Gier, 2016), Muslim women spent US\$44 billion in 2015 on modest fashion. This study may help marketing managers in creating effective strategies, in the marketplace, related to the market demand, market segmentation, and promotional programs (Tsiotsou, 2006). Besides, a study showed that purchase intention relates to customers' willingness to buy and use a specific brand, and to their extensive attention towards this brand (Borzooei & Asgari, 2013).

## **1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to find out the factors that influence Muslim women's intention to wear *hijab* in Malaysia. The study targets Muslim women who live in Malaysia as the main respondents, specifically Muslim women from West and East Malaysia.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

For better and clearer understanding of the topic, this subsection presents definitions of the key terms used in this study.

### **1.8.1 Hijab**

*Hijab* is often deemed as a symbol of modesty, virtue, and respect in Islam. *Hijab* is a garment worn by Muslim females to cover the *awrah* (the intimate parts of the human body) (Afifi Lateh, 2014). *Hijab*, or veil, is a headscarf worn by Muslim women, which conceals the hair and neck and usually has a face veil that covers the face except for the eyes (Zulkifli Abd. Latiff, 2013).

### **1.8.2 Muslim Women**

Muslim women are women who follow and believe in Islam and practice the Islamic way of life.

### **1.8.3 Intention**

The intention represents a person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan or decision to perform a certain behaviour. Generally, the stronger the intention is, the more likely the behaviour will be performed (Ajzen, 1991).

### **1.8.4 Attitude**

Attitude refers to “the degree to which a person has positive or negative feelings towards the behaviour of interest. It entails a consideration of the outcomes of performing the behaviour” (Ajzen, 1991).

### **1.8.5 Subjective Norm**

Subjective norm refers to “the belief about whether significant others think he or she will perform the behaviour. It relates to a person’s perception of the social environment surrounding the behaviour” (Ajzen, 1991).

### **1.8.6 Perceived Behavioural Control**

Perceived Behavioural Control refers to “the individual’s perception of the extent to which performance of the behaviour is easy or difficult,” it reflects past experience with the performance of the behaviour and anticipated obstacles that could inhibit behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

### **1.8.7 Religion**

It is a belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. Religion is an important value for someone’s spiritual well-being. It creates a a faith that plays an important role in helping people to cope with their problems and follow the right path of Islam (Hassim et al., 2016).

### **1.8.8 Culture**

Culture includes ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. Hofsted (1997) defined culture as a collection of acquired behaviours of a group of people that make up their custom which is transferred over generations.

## **1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This Chapter presents the introduction and the background of this current study. The first section explains the background of the study related to the intention of Muslim

women to wear *hijab*. The researcher investigates the term *hijab* from a broader perspective before looking at it from the Malaysian perspective. The next section discusses the research problem that explains the basic problem in this area, which motivates the researcher to conduct this study. Then the objectives of the study are stated followed by the key research questions. The next section presents the significance of the study followed by a summary of Chapter One. In the next Chapter, a comprehensive literature review is presented along with conceptual framework, and hypotheses.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this Chapter, the researcher discusses Muslim women's intention to wear *hijab* and several variables that affect this intention. The Chapter shed the lights on the independent variables used in this research; these are attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, religiosity, and culture. These variables were selected based on a comprehensive review of the related literature.

#### **2.2 MUSLIM AND *HIJAB***

*Hijab* is often deemed as a symbol of modesty, virtue, and respect. Some people believe that *hijab* became an unnecessary piece of cloth. However, according to another view on *hijab*, people hold remarkably similar views on the importance of female modesty (Siraj, 2011). There are various levels of modest dressing. At one end of the spectrum, modest dressing means wearing *hijab*, while on the other end, it involves dressing 'appropriately' and not wearing something provocative (Siraj, 2011). In this regard, the West often sees *hijab* as a head covering and that it is not complicated to practice it. The term *hijab*, however, means more as it also constitutes women's behaviour/attitude. Some studies found that a vital feature of *hijab* is promoting modest behaviour (Siraj, 2011). A study by Anwar (2014) stated that there are few advantages of wearing *hijab* in this modern era; particularly, it boosts women's confidence in social participation, which means that women are no longer perceived as a sexual commodity. Nowadays, wearing *hijab* is no longer frowned upon, as it shows how Muslim women can practise

their religion while being modern. It can also prevent women from the lustful gazes of men. It is believed that women are made to be attractive and every inch of their body is attractive in the eyes of men. Hence, women can bring *fitnah* to this world. The entire body of a woman oozes sexuality and the styles, shapes, and colours of female clothing have the potential to encourage male sexual arousal (Siraj, 2011). As stated in *hadith*: *I have not left behind me any fitnah (temptation) more harmful to men than women. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5096; Muslim, 2740.*

Modesty in Islam is related to shyness; it plays an important role in the relationship between God and His servants. All Prophets and Messengers have encouraged modesty. The Prophet stated that "Indeed from the teachings of the first prophets which have reached you is, If you do not have shyness, then do as you please" (Al-Bukhari).

A well-known scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Nasiruddeen al-Albaani, states the conditions of *hijab*, where it should cover the entire body except for the hands and face, loose enough not to show the outline of the body, free from perfume incense, not drawing attention, not resembling the clothes of men or non-Muslim women, and not any garment of fame or vanity (Anwar, 2014).

Currently, there are about 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide; Muslims spread all over the world including non-Arabic countries, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey (Hassim, 2017b). In Islam, female modesty can be interpreted as a method of differentiating humans from animals. The concept of covering "*awrah*" refers to the use of proper and respectful garments to cover woman's body according to the concept of modesty in Islam, as stated in Hadith that is narrated by al-Azhab and Bukhari (Hassim et al., 2015). Muslims believe that modesty can prevent a person from behaving badly towards others and discourage others from misbehaving. Modesty is also a