

# Impact of Fashion Consciousness on Hijabistas' Buying Behavior

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## Abstract

The basic purpose of this research is to establish a methodology for studying and understanding contributing factors towards fashion consciousness and its impact on hijab buying behavior of hijabistas present in Universities of Lahore. This population was represented by 100 respondents taken from top five universities of Lahore. These respondents were asked to fill a questionnaire and return. The data collected was statistically analyzed by using Pearson's correlation technique and linear regression analysis which supported the hypotheses and generated evidence in favor of the hypotheses. It is clearly evident from the results that way of dressing, sources of fashion information, fashion motivation and uniqueness of fashion are the determinants of fashion consciousness of hijabistas. Fashion consciousness positively impacts hijabistas hijab buying behavior as evident by the significance of the impact.

**Keywords:** Fashion Consciousness, Hijab Fashion Consumption, Fashion Uniqueness, Dressing Style, Motivation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The word "hijab" refers to a piece of cloth worn on head to cover hair and neck by a woman particularly guided by her culture and religion to seclude themselves from the men of outside their families. It is specifically considered as an Islamic symbol of a Muslim woman's decency (Siraj, 2011). It is considered to be a declaration of privacy and modesty in Islam. It originated from the word "hajaba" in Arabic which means "to veil" (El Guindi, 1999). It has been said in the Quran and further elaborated by hadith that wearing a hijab that covers a woman's hair, neck and ears and a loose cloth over their whole body (except hands, feet and face) is a religious obligation for Muslim women.

The term "hijabistas" has been coined by many authors but according to Bloomaert and Varis (2015), "hijabista" is a woman who wears dresses in a fashionable manner or who designs stylish fashionable attires along with complying with her religious obligation of hijab. The significance of hijab in Islam is evident from many Quran verses and hadith. The purpose of hijab is to avoid from any sort of attraction towards the opposite genders. It is a symbol of decency. It limits the interaction of the genders. (Al-Albani,2002). Hijab is also a way of protecting women from physical or sexual harms as well as it makes people judge her based on her values and morals instead of her physical appearance. It also refers to being disconnected from this world and more connected to Allah.

Fashion consciousness is defined a person's interest in latest fashion and style inclinations. (Nam et al.,2007) Fashion conscious consumer have knowledge about fashion and strive to adopt latest style to their apparel. (Guttman and Mills, 1992).

Out of 1.6 billion Muslims in the world, there are more women than men. And almost more than half of Muslim women wear hijab or prefer to wear hijab in public. Recently, a survey was conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research conducted in seven Muslim-majority countries (Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) to find out the opinion of Muslims about how a Muslim woman should dress for going out in public. Saudi Arabia scored the highest of 69% for a conservative form of hijab. After Saudi Arabia, Pakistani people expressed their preference to be this conservative form of hijab. Lebanon and Turkey presented their preference to be without hijab.

With the greater outreach of social media and widespread of awareness in education of Muslim women, the hijab culture has been transformed into a fashion and style oriented mega trend. Muslim women especially younger ones tend to look for a new trendy hijab and attire with different color schemes based on aesthetic sense. This trend of fulfilling the religious obligation along with adopting new and stylish trends in hijabs has been flourishing at a fast pace which has raised many questions as well as research problems to find out the contributing factors of these trends. (Hassan and Harun 2016).

Looking at Muslim women of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is observed that they are more sensitive about their identity especially their social image which leads to new patterns of fashion consumption. Hijabistas are becoming more culturally hybrid as it is observed that tight fitted clothes and jeans with a headscarf is being worn by many Muslim women. This leads to the impact of both the cultures on Muslim female consumer decision making styles in case of attires.

In Pakistan, this hijab culture has been spreading at a fast rate with increasing number of hijabistas who are fashion consciousness and take decisions by keeping in mind their fashion knowledge and latest hijab fashion

trends.

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

As hijab was a way of depicting modesty and decency, it was also a form of conservative apparel. With the passage of time Muslim women are becoming more fashion conscious and style oriented, they've also adopted this consciousness to their hijab consumption. Similar is the case with Pakistani young hijabi women, as they're becoming more aware of latest fashion and style trends, their buying behaviors have evolved and are being more impacted by fashion consciousness and mindfulness.

### **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

- To identify the contributing factors towards fashion consciousness and their impact on buying behavior of hijabistas.
- To find out the influence of fashion consciousness on hijabistas buying behavior

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the contributing factors towards fashion consciousness and their impact on buying behavior of hijabistas?
2. What is the influence of fashion consciousness on hijabistas buying behavior?

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE:**

#### **1.4.1 Practical significance:**

This research would be able to generate a composite and verifiable result about the trends of hijab fashion among young Pakistani women and how fashion consciousness is impacting them so that apparel and attire companies may design a new range of hijab relevant to the preferences of young hijabistas of Pakistan. This can prove to be an opportunity recognition for many apparel companies as they will be able to see this segment of the market more clearly and gain an insight on hijabista buying behaviors and patterns.

#### **1.4.2 Theoretical significance:**

This research will be able to explain how hijab is evolving into an even stronger symbol of identification for Muslim women and how they are preferring to modify it according to their fashion needs and preferences. It will further elaborate the concept of fashion consciousness as well as its various elements. It will also explain how Pakistani Muslim hijabistas are following trends of style in their hijab choice. It will make addition to the literature giving a spectral view of the fashion and style conscious hijabista generation and their hijab buying behaviors.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **2.1 FASHION CONSCIOUSNESS:**

Fashion is a way or manner of depicting one's social character and individualism. (Cardoso, Costa and Novais, 2010). Fashion conscious consumer is a person who is extremely interested in all the things concerning fashion and style (O'Cass, Lee, and Siahtiri 2013). So, fashion consciousness refers to the mark of a person's immersion towards style and fashion. Various studies have suggested that the important term of fashion consciousness explains consumers who are concerned and sentient about their social image and physical allure as elucidated by Wan et al. (2007). Fashion conscious consumers behave in a certain way as according to Wan et al. (2007) they give additional consideration to new and prevailing styles, regularly buy clothes of recent trends and relish spending on them.

Fashion enables a person to exhibit their social and cultural identity and fashion stems from culture so it uses direct visual conveying through meanings and symbols. (Krats and Reimer, 1998). According to Hassan (2016), Muslim consumers who are fashion conscious may like to recognize themselves with symbolic Muslim identity markers as an extended version of their Muslim image and will show higher tendency to buy fashionable and stylish hijab. Muslim fashion conscious women may communicate their social, cultural and religious identity through hijab fashion.

**H1:** Fashion consciousness has a positive relationship with hijab buying behavior.

#### **2.1.1 Way of dressing**

An individual's dressing style is a marker of his/her personality (Hassan, 2016). An individual's interest in clothing or the way of dressing is demonstrated by their way of dressing (Wan et al., 2007). The interpretation of styles may vary from consumer to consumer owing to their uniqueness as an individual (Hassan, 2016). Dressing style and fashion consciousness are related. (Wan et al., 2007). Apparel choice and their complementary behaviors for a person's features and style exhibits their self-image according to Piacentini and Mailer (2004). The way of dressing may act as a tool of bringing betterment to self-concept (Hassan, 2016). Muslim women's who are concerned about their style tend to be more fashion conscious.

**H2:** Way of dressing and fashion consciousness are positively related.

### **2.1.2 Sources of fashion information:**

Customers tend to lessen risk and uncertainty in buying decisions by always looking for knowledge and information about products and services according to Cox and Rich (1964). Consumers make additions to their knowledge about products through sources of information like advertisements, store displays, peers, family and friends, various media etc. (Hassan, 2016). According to Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995), personal information sources are friends, parents, siblings and sales people while Cox and Rich (1964) classified information sources into three groups i.e. market dominated sources, neutral sources and personal sources.

Fashion conscious consumers are always looking for new information about latest style and trends. By recognizing fashion information sources consumers enhance their knowledge of new wear trends. (Nam et al., 2007). Some of the consumers become obsessed with fashion and as a result become fashion conscious (Hassan, 2016). Significant sources of fashion information for new style trends are catalogues, social gettogethers, store displays, fashion magazines and friends. (Nam et al., 2007). Fashion conscious consumers require information from mass media while the consumers who are not fashion conscious do not depend upon them. (Ibrahim, Ghazali and Zakaria, 2011). Hassan (2016) concluded that consumers who have more fashion knowledge sources are more fashion conscious.

**H3:** Sources of fashion information and fashion consciousness is positively related.

### **2.1.3 Fashion Motivation:**

The motive behind underlying actions is called motivation (Guay et al., 2010). Many methods from examining motivation identify the behaviors guided by cognition, and the non-cognitive aspects, or both. (Hassan, 2016). Hassan (2016) explains that motivation controls behavior characterized by keenness and willingness. While studying consumer behavior, Mullen and Johnson (1990) observed that motivation becomes the reason or motive behind the want or yearning for a product. Bohdanowicz and Clamp (1994) elucidated motivation as a source of reasons for buying of a product.

Important motivations for adult's clothing buying can be conformism and acknowledgement (Chen-Yu and Seock, 2002). Hassan (2016) identifies that fashion-conscious consumers are motivated by fashion. According to Khare, Parveen and Mishra (2012) fashionable attire helps in bringing betterment to one's identity and social image in a social group and also depicts good choice and status and this drives motivation among consumers.

**H4:** A positive relationship exists between fashion motivation and fashion consciousness.

### **2.1.4 Uniqueness of Fashion:**

In consumer behavior, uniqueness means the potential of a customer to prefer and gain unique products (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001). As demonstrated by need for uniqueness theory, people have a need to maintain a separate and unique identity (Fromkin, 1970). Motivation behind this uniqueness may be shown in ways of a consumer's attire acquisition which helps them develop their exclusive personal individuality as well as a separate social status (Tepper and Hoyle, 1996). Modern Muslim women have become innovative in their dressing styles through understanding the idea of dressing in Islam (Wilson, 2013). Fashion conscious users are claimed to be uniqueness seekers. (Hassan, 2016). Modern Muslim women seek uniqueness in their fashion which makes them more fashion conscious.

**H5:** Uniqueness of fashion and fashion consciousness are directly proportional.

## **2.2 HIJAB BUYING BEHAVIOR**

Consumer's buying behavior is the way a user purchases and gets rid of products and services for the purpose of satisfying a need or want (Kotler and Keller, 2011). Consumers apart from buying a product for its functional attributes, also make the buying decision based on its symbolic representation and image displayed by having it (Hassan, 2016). When female Muslim consumers shop for hijab, they exhibit various behaviors based on the symbolic representation of it and the impact it will have on their social image. They seem to look for a hijab that conveys their values and their intended fashion and style statements. Modern Muslim women of the present era, exhibit conscious behaviors regarding their social status and self-perception while buying hijabs (Hassan, 2016). As modern Muslim women want to gain acceptance of the fast-moving society they tend to look for such style orientation in hijab (Hassim, 2014). Muslim young women are becoming more aware of latest fashion trends and that impacts their hijab buying behavior.

## **2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FASHION CONSCIOUSNESS AND HIJAB BUYING BEHAVIOR**

Fashion conscious Muslim women possess and maintain newest apparel styles which is reflected in their hijab buying behavior (Hassan, 2016). According to Hassim (2014), the trend of hijab fashion has been spreading at a fast pace and this has become the reason of a stylish modern image of Hijabista Muslim women. Hijabista women set goals to look chic and trendy along with choosing a suitable modest fashion to maintain the image as a Muslim woman according to Hassan (2016). Fashion consciousness positively impacts hijab buying behavior. Fashion conscious women tend to seek uniqueness in their hijab fashion. Similarly, fashion motivation has a

positive relationship as motivation acts the force behind product purchasing. The image of a Muslim woman is represented by hijab fashion so Muslim women set their preferences for such fashion which conforms to their self-image along with displaying their socially preferred image to others (Sirgy, 1982). Way of dressing and sources of fashion information have positive impact on the fashion consciousness of hijabista women. Fashion consciousness being impacted by these four factors, positively impacts hijab buying behavior.

## 2.4 THEORETICAL MODEL

In the light of the above discussed theory, a theoretical model can be developed.

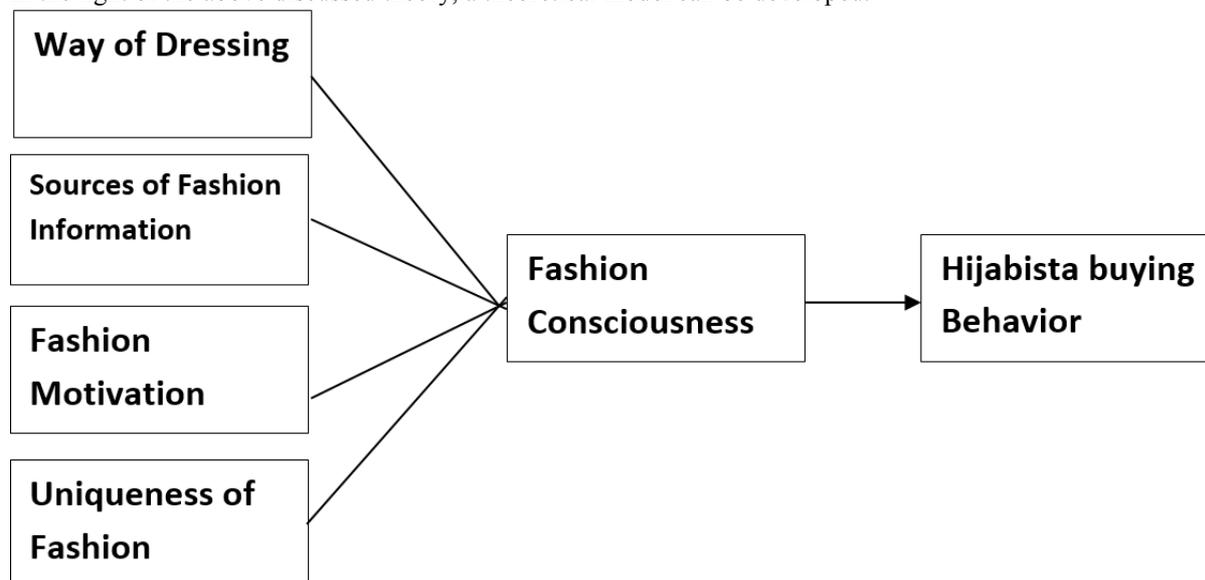


Figure 1: Research model

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study was chosen to be hijabista students in top five universities of Lahore. The sample size was determined to be 100 respondents using convenient sampling method.

### 3.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The research made use of quota sampling for data collection and selected 20 respondents from each university for distribution of respondents in an even manner.

### 3.3 QUESTIONNAIRE

There are six constructs in the questionnaire taken from previously written literature on fashion. First construct namely dressing style has 4 questions adopted from Wan et al. (2007). Second and third construct namely sources of information and motivation have 6 and 7 questions respectively taken from Nam et al. (2007). Fourth construct namely uniqueness of fashion has 7 questions taken from Jin and Son (2014). Fifth construct namely fashion consciousness has 4 questions adopted from O’Cass et al. (2013). Last construct “hijab buying behavior” has 4 questions adopted from Lertwannawit and Mandhachitara (2012). A 1-5 likert scale was used measuring responses from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

## 4. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS:

Table 4.1: Age group of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18-23	58	58.0
24-29	26	26.0
30-35	16	16.0
Total	100	100.0

The majority of the respondents were from 18-23 years’ age group. 26 respondents were between the age of 24-29. A total of 19 respondents were aged 30-35 years.

#### 4.1 EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS

**Table 4.2: Education of respondents**

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate	57	57.0
Graduate	38	38.0
Post Graduate	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

This table shows that 57 out of 100 respondents were undergraduates. 38 were graduates and only 5 were post graduates.

**Table 4.3: Correlation Analysis**

	Dressing Style	Sources of Fashion Information	Fashion Motivation	Fashion Uniqueness	Fashion Consciousness	Hijab Buying behavior
<i>Dressing Style</i>	1	.462**	.570**	.525**	.450**	.596**
<i>Sources of Fashion Information</i>	.462**	1	.492**	.648**	.491**	.521**
<i>Fashion Motivation</i>	.570**	.492**	1	.462**	.559**	.642**
<i>Fashion Uniqueness</i>	.525**	.648**	.462**	1	.536**	.457**
<i>Fashion Consciousness</i>	.450**	.491**	.559**	.536**	1	.603**
<i>Hijab buying behavior</i>	.596**	.521**	.642**	.457**	.603**	1

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Pearson Correlation analysis is used to analyze correlation among variables. Table 4.3 gives all the results of correlation analysis. It shows that correlation between dressing style and sources of fashion information is 0.462\*\* which means they have a positive relationship. Similarly, correlation value of dressing style and fashion motivation is 0.570\*\* showing positive relationship between them. 0.525\*\* is the value of correlation between dressing style and fashion uniqueness showing positive relationship. Dressing style and fashion consciousness have a positive relationship as evident by a correlation value of 0.450\*\*. Hijab Buying behavior has a positive relationship with dressing style as shown by correlation value of 0.596\*\*. Sources of fashion information and fashion motivation exhibit positive relationship as they have a correlation value of 0.492\*\*. Likewise, sources of fashion information and fashion consciousness show correlation of 0.491\*\* meaning a positive relationship. Correspondingly, 0.521\*\* is the correlation value shown by sources of fashion information and hijab buying behavior meaning a positive relationship. Congruently, fashion motivation and fashion uniqueness have 0.462\*\* value of correlation showing a positive relationship. 0.559\*\* shows the positive relationship and correlation of fashion motivation and fashion consciousness. Correlation value of 0.642\*\* is shown by fashion motivation and hijab buying behavior meaning a positive relationship. Fashion uniqueness and fashion consciousness are positively related and show a correlation value of 0.536\*\*. Similarly, fashion uniqueness and hijab buying behavior show positive relationship as shown by their correlation value which is 0.457\*\*. Finally, fashion consciousness and hijab buying behavior have a positive relationship between them as evident by the correlation value of 0.603\*\*.

**Table 4.4: Regression Analysis**

Hypothesis	Beta Value ( $\beta$ )	Standard Error (Std. Error)	t-value	p-value	Significant/ Insignificant
H1	.603	.065	7.474	.000	Significant
H2	.450	.087	4.983	.000	Significant
H3	.491	.114	5.580	.000	Significant
H4	.559	.087	6.666	.000	Significant
H5	.536	.094	6.284	.000	Significant

Regression Analysis, Model Summary and ANOVA was used to check the cause and effect relationships among variables. Table 4.4 shows the  $\beta$  value of our first hypothesis to be 0.603 which means that one unit change in fashion consciousness causes 0.603 unit of change in the hijab buying behavior (dependent variable). This table also shows that the t-value is 7.474 which is greater than 2.00 and p-value is 0.000 which is less than .05. As these results suggest it can be said that fashion consciousness and hijab buying behavior are significantly and positively related. Hence, null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Similarly, the statistical results show that H2, H3, H4 and H5 are all accepted as their  $\beta$  value show positive relationships of way of dressing, sources of fashion information, fashion motivation and uniqueness of fashion with fashion consciousness. The level of significance shows significant positive relationships. All the t-values are greater than 2.00 which also generates evidence for acceptance of alternate hypotheses and rejection of null hypotheses.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Hijabista women of ages 18-35 were found to be more fashion conscious while exhibiting hijab buying behavior. This study has yielded results which indicate that way of dressing, sources of fashion information, motivation of fashion and uniqueness of fashion are the contributing factors of fashion consciousness which eventually impact the hijab buying behavior of hijabistas. Muslim women are more sensitive and proactive about keeping their collection of attires and hijabs up to dated according to the latest fashion and style trends.

This research was able to generate results that support that the way of dressing has a positive contribution to fashion consciousness of hijabista consumers. Muslim women were found to be enjoying dressing up in trendy and fashionable clothes along with conforming to their religious values and obligations. This can be observed that hijabistas have adopted this way of Islamizing many fashion trends in form of hijab fashion.

It has also been indicated by the findings of this study that fashion consciousness becomes even more conspicuous when the consumer of hijab fashion is more aware of latest fashion trends and style symbols. According to Hassan (2016), there exist some sources of fashion information which provide valuable fashion knowledge to consumers and increase their fashion consciousness which in turn leads to conspicuous hijab buying behavior of hijabistas. Hijabista dedicate their time in search for fashion information from various sources gaining latest style trends, related news, related suggestions and advices, inspiration, unique ideas and concepts and location of their desired product shops. Therefore, fashion consciousness increases with the higher availability and utilization of fashion information sources as hijabistas want to make sure their fashion need fulfillment. These information sources can be fashion magazines, fashion exhibitions, internet and social media, catalogues and store displays.

Fashion motivation positively influences fashion consciousness. As many authors and researchers explain that fashion becomes a motive and reason behind a consumer's buying behavior acting as a force behind their action i.e. motivation. This research has yielded results in favor of this theory. Fashion is not the only motive behind this behavior, congruency to personal values and belief systems, accordance and conformity to societal norms, personal sense of gratification, self-perception, personal views and opinion representation, symbolic religious and societal representation, general inclusion and acceptance of friends, family and colleagues and requirements of special events and ceremonies also act as reasons behind hijab buying behaviors of hijabistas.

Another important revelation as suggested by this study was that fashion conscious hijabistas seek more uniqueness in products especially hijab than the non-conscious consumers. That is why this research studied the impact of uniqueness of fashion on fashion consciousness of the consumer and showed positive results i.e. in favor of the theory. Many hijabista women were found to be choosing unique and different hijab styles and fashion over the common trends. They wanted to possess products different from others and to express their individualistically variant characteristics. As Hassan (2016), concluded that Muslim women desire and tend to exhibit fashion leadership and deny fashion followership.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from above discussion that hijab fashion is a new trend that the modern Muslim women tend to be following keeping their individualism maintained. The more fashion conscious the hijabista are becoming, the more variations are being observed in their hijab buying behavior exhibited by them. This fashion consciousness and its contributing factors determine the hijab buying behavior of hijabistas. Pakistan is a Muslim majority country with more than 50% of the population being women. This market segment of hijabista seems to be growing in Pakistan with each passing day and it is important to observe, investigate and inquire more about this untapped market segment. Hijabista are becoming more style and fashion oriented in their apparel and hijab choice which may lead to greater opportunities for designers, apparel companies, retailers and manufacturers. This study gives a better understanding of this growing segment of the market for practitioners to recognize opportunity and avail it.

## 7. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this research have many theoretical and practical implications. These results have opened doors for many other important discussions and arguments which will yield further evidence to generate theories about hijab fashion, fashion consciousness and hijab buying behavior. This study also contributes to the literature about Muslim consumer lifestyles and the untapped market of Islamic fashion. This study has also identified various contributors to fashion consciousness of hijabistas and their hijab buying behavior opening a new field for

researchers to look in and investigate various factors of it. Previous studies were not performed in context to hijabistas of Pakistan so this study has enlightened this segment of Pakistani market.

This study has generated many managerial implications of great significance for the practitioners. Designers, manufacturers, retailers and marketers may find this research useful for information about the hijabista segment of the market. Modern Muslim women are more fashion conscious and tend to consume fashionable apparels especially hijab. This study generates evidence to support this theory and lays foundations for practitioners to design relevant strategies and tap this segment of the market. It will help practitioners to identify needs, wants, preferences and desires of hijabistas so that they may develop and design hijab and related products accordingly. Marketing, choice of media, advertising, value added services, store location, store ambiance, pricing, branding, retailing, distribution, delivery and online services and all such decisions may be taken in accordance with these findings. Other factors like seasonal variations, variety/novelty, regional variations, sizes, colors, themes, aesthetics, patterns may be designed in congruence with these findings.

## 8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is limited to the students of top 5 universities of Lahore and geographical differences exist and age groups of 18-35 years. The number of respondents was only 100 which may not as well have much generalizability for a greater population. There are no moderators and mediators in this research. This research cannot claim to be without any biasness. Future researches may include religious beliefs and values. The impacting factors on fashion consciousness mentioned here are not claimed to be the only factors contributing to fashion consciousness. Other factors may exist that maybe included in other researches. Hijab fashion is a new trend and other researches may use other data collection techniques. Future researches may be based upon all these limitations.

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