

Issues and Factors Influencing Shariah-Compliant Fashion Choices Among Gen Z: A Narrative Review

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Abstract: The global modest fashion industry is expanding rapidly yet faces a core tension between contemporary style trends and Islamic principles of modesty. The intersection of self-expression through fashion, adherence to Islamic legal principles (Shariah), and the pervasive influence of global digital culture presents a multifaceted challenge for young Muslims, particularly Generation Z. Despite growing scholarly interest, existing research remains fragmented and sometimes contradictory, leaving little clarity on how these forces interact. This lack of clarity limits consumers' ability to navigate conflicting pressures and hinders industry stakeholders from producing designs and marketing strategies that are both religiously authentic and culturally relevant. Addressing this gap is essential to ensure that Shariah-compliant fashion reflects genuine Islamic values while resonating with the aesthetic and lifestyle preferences of younger generations. To meet this need, this study adopts a narrative review method, synthesising literature published between 2014 and 2025 to provide an account of the key factors influencing Shariah-compliant fashion choices among Gen Z Muslims. Four key factors emerged (religiosity, fashion consciousness, social media influencers, and online consumer reviews), highlighting the interplay between faith, identity, and digital culture. The findings provide insights for fashion brands, marketers, and policymakers to develop authentic and culturally sensitive strategies that align with Shariah principles while meeting Gen Z expectations. Future research should test these factors empirically using quantitative models.

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1. Introduction

Islam is a comprehensive religion that covers all aspects of life, including clothing, which serves both practical and spiritual purposes. Central to Islamic dress codes is the requirement of covering the *aurah*—the parts of the body that must be concealed from non-*mahram* (those of the opposite gender with whom marriage is permissible in Islam) individuals (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018). For men, this generally extends from the navel to the knee, while for women, it encompasses the entire body except the face and palms, as indicated in a hadith reported in Sunan Abu Daud (4104).

“O Asma', when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it does not suit her that she displays her parts of body except this and this, and he pointed to his face and hands.”
(Sunan Abu Daud (4104) and al-Baihaqi (3218))

The Qur'an highlights the dual function of clothing: to cover nakedness and serve as adornment, while emphasising that the “clothing of righteousness” (*taqwa*) is superior (Surah Al-A'raf 7:26).

“O children of Adam! We have provided for you clothing to cover your nakedness and as an adornment. However, the best clothing is righteousness. This is one of Allah's bounties, so perhaps you will be mindful.” (Surah Al-A'raf verse 26)

In Surah Al-Ahzab (33:59), believing women are instructed to draw their cloaks over their bodies to protect their dignity and avoid harassment. These guidelines reflect Islam's broader emphasis on modesty, humility, and dignity in appearance.

“O Prophet! Ask your wives, daughters, and believing women to draw their cloaks over their bodies. In this way it is more likely that they will be recognized 'as virtuous' and not be harassed. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 59).

Beyond basic coverage, Shariah-compliant clothing must also meet additional requirements: garments should not be excessively tight, transparent, or imitate the attire of the opposite gender or followers of other religions (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018). Despite these clear principles, the rise of globalization and the influence of western cultural trends have created tensions for Muslim consumers. As Gen Z Muslims—the first fully digital-native generation—navigate fashion in a globalized market, they face competing pressures between personal expression, online trend adoption, and religious adherence (Atika & Rafi'i, 2025).

The modest fashion industry has rapidly expanded, incorporating new styles, colours, and cuts to attract a diverse Muslim consumer base (Zabeen *et al.*, 2017). While this growth reflects increasing acceptance of Shariah-compliant fashion worldwide, it also generates

conflict when trends depart from Islamic guidelines. For example, the Indonesian Ulama Council issued a fatwa against the “jilboob” style, which pairs a headscarf with tight-fitting clothing that reveals body contours, sparking debates over authenticity and adherence to religious values (Ahmad, 2019). Similar issues are observed globally, especially among Muslim youth whose fashion choices are highly visible on social media platforms (Amiruddin, 2024).

This tension is further shaped by cultural and technological forces. Western fashion norms, which prioritize self-expression, frequently clash with Shariah principles of modesty, creating identity dilemmas for young Muslims (Zamri & Osman, 2022). Social media intensifies these pressures by accelerating the adoption of global trends, as shown by Manaf and Zin (2024) in their study of Malaysian university students, who reported feeling compelled to follow online trends even when these conflicted with religious expectations. Misinterpretations of Shariah-compliant fashion also contribute to the problem, where garments technically “cover” but are tight, decorative, or otherwise compromise the principles of modesty (Aris *et al.*, 2018).

Despite these challenges, the modest fashion market continues to grow, valued at over USD 254 billion globally (Dinar Standard, 2024). With Gen Z representing a significant share of Muslim consumers, understanding the factors that shape their clothing choices is critical both academically and commercially. Existing studies often examine elements such as religiosity, fashion consciousness, social media influencers, or online reviews in isolation, limiting understanding of how these forces interact.

Accordingly, this review aims to synthesise existing research to identify the key factors influencing Gen Z Muslims’ adoption of Shariah-compliant fashion, with particular focus on religiosity, fashion consciousness, social media influencers, and online consumer reviews. By integrating these perspectives, the review seeks to clarify current knowledge and highlight areas of tension. It also provides insights for both scholars and practitioners in the evolving modest fashion industry.

2. Methodology

This narrative review synthesises existing literature on factors influencing Shariah-compliant fashion choices, drawing from academic sources published between 2014 and 2025. The research process involved an extensive search of scholarly databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Articles were selected if they addressed themes directly related to Shariah-compliant clothing or and Muslim fashion that could indirectly inform

understanding of consumer choices. The selection process prioritized studies that explored factors influencing Muslim consumers' fashion choices. Where literature directly focused on Shariah-compliant fashion was scarce, related studies from general consumer behaviour, online retail, and mainstream fashion research were included, provided they offered theoretical or empirical insights relevant to the topic.

Unlike systematic reviews, which apply rigid inclusion and exclusion criteria and follow a strict, replicable search protocol, this narrative review adopted a more flexible and interpretive approach (Sukhera, 2022). This flexibility was necessary given the emerging and under-researched nature of Shariah-compliant fashion studies and the diversity of available qualitative data. The review aimed to build a broad and nuanced understanding of the multifaceted factors shaping consumer behaviour, rather than to quantitatively evaluate the strength of evidence. This allowed for exploring new insights and alternative perspectives within this evolving field.

3. Factors Influencing Shariah-Compliant Fashion Among Gen Z

This section discussed the factors that shape Shariah-compliant fashion choices among Muslims globally, as synthesised from previous literature. The following factors are particularly influential for Gen Z Muslims, who are navigating their identity at the complex intersection of religion, digital culture, and global consumerism. Specifically, the discussion covers the impact of religiosity, the influence of social media influencers, the role of online consumer reviews, and the concept of fashion consciousness among Muslim consumers.

3.1 Religiosity

Religiosity reflects an individual's commitment to their faith and how it manifests in their attitudes and behaviours. Religiosity itself is defined by various indicators, such as awareness of religious significance, engagement with religious texts, participation in religious institutions, adherence to daily prayers, enjoyment from religious community, decision-making guided by religious principles, consistent faith-strengthening activities, a sense of responsibility towards others' rights, and feelings of guilt when deviating from religious tenets (Farrag & Hassan, 2015; Kusumawati *et al.*, 2019).

Religiosity significantly influences the choices made by Muslims, though academic studies reveal varied findings. Some research shows a strong correlation between religiosity and consumer choices. Religiosity and family background are consistently identified as strong influences on modest clothing consumption among Muslim women, with studies in the UK,

Pakistan, Malaysia, and Egypt showing that higher religious commitment often translates into positive attitudes, intentions, and preferences for Shariah-compliant clothing or Halal-endorsed products (Ashraf *et al.*, 2023; Khan *et al.*, 2017; Abd Rahman *et al.*, 2015; Zaki & Elseidi, 2024). This suggests that religious commitment can directly translate into consumer behaviours like brand or store preference for Islamic products. These studies suggest that for many, a strong religious identity acts as a powerful motivator for consuming products that align with their faith.

However, the relationship is not always straightforward as some studies show a more complex relationship. Research in Morocco indicates that women's clothing does not necessarily reflect their level of piety, while studies in Indonesia suggest that religiosity does not directly drive store patronage intentions (Bachleda *et al.*, 2014; Kusumawati *et al.*, 2019). Among younger consumers, higher religiosity has sometimes been linked to reduced fashion engagement, as seen in India where it negatively correlated with novelty-fashion and brand consciousness, and in Egypt where more religious youth expressed less interest in fashion trends (Islam & Chandrasekaran, 2019; Farrag & Hassan, 2015).

These literatures reveals that religiosity's influence on clothing choices is complex. Overall, while religiosity frequently emerges as a strong motivator for Shariah-compliant products and services consumption, the evidence also highlights its nuanced and context-dependent role, suggesting that the relationship between faith and fashion choices cannot be understood as universally positive or uniform across all Muslim consumers. For Gen Z Muslims, religiosity frequently coexists with a desire for personal expression, making their clothing decisions a negotiation between faith commitments and contemporary style preferences. This negotiation becomes even more visible when considering fashion consciousness, a factor that directly reflects an individual's interest in trends, style adoption, and social presentation.

3.2 Fashion-Consciousness

Fashion consciousness is said to be equivalent to fashion involvement as it involves the individual's desire and adoption of the latest styles to maintain their social network status. In the context of consumer behaviour, "fashion involvement" refers to the degree of importance a consumer attaches to fashion, their interest in fashion trends, and their willingness to invest time and resources in fashion-related activities. It is closely linked to one's fashion knowledge and attentiveness in styling their clothing (Hassan & Ara, 2021).

Fashion plays a significant role in shaping social identity, as it allows individuals to express themselves and align with particular social groups or subcultures through distinct fashion trends or styles (Gjoni, 2025). This alignment is often motivated by the desire to conform to certain clothing choices and gain recognition within one's social group. For Muslim women, however, fashion choices are shaped not only by social identity but also by religious and cultural norms. Since it is not socially acceptable for practicing Muslim women to wear provocative or revealing clothing, modesty and the covering of the *aurah* become defining characteristics. To reconcile both religious identity and societal approval, many Muslim women adopt attire that is modest yet expressive, giving rise to the intersection of fashion consciousness and Shariah-compliant clothing.

In this context, fashion consciousness among Muslim women does not simply imply following global trends but rather engaging with fashion in ways that balance modesty with style. Studies show a notable correlation between fashion consciousness and the intention to purchase modest fashion items (Shaari *et al.*, 2021). This suggests that even within Shariah-compliant boundaries, Muslim consumers actively keep up with fashion developments and incorporate them into their clothing choices. The desire for individuality, particularly among Gen Z Muslim women, also plays a crucial role. Hassan & Ara (2021) demonstrate that individuality positively influences *hijab* (headscarf) fashion awareness in Malaysia, reflecting how fashion consciousness for young Muslims today doubles as both personal branding and faith expression. Similarly, Zukhrufani and Ratnasari (2022) found that fashion consciousness significantly enhances Indonesian Muslim women's satisfaction with Muslim fashion products, as they seek innovative Shariah-compliant designs that merge contemporary aesthetics with religious requirements. Together, these findings highlight how fashion consciousness motivates Muslim women to remain fashionable while simultaneously upholding religious values.

At the same time, fashion consciousness does not manifest uniformly across all groups. For Muslims who prioritize religious values, it inspires stylish yet Shariah-compliant self-expression, whereas for others it may orient them toward global fashion trends that are less aligned with Shariah principles. Findings from Indonesia reinforce these insights. Edastami *et al.* (2019) conclude that fashion consciousness negatively influences *hijab* fashion consumption, suggesting a tension between trend adoption and religious modesty. Nevertheless, evidence from Malaysia suggests that fashion-conscious Muslim women often own the latest wardrobe trends and display creativity in their *hijab* styling, thereby combining

uniqueness with religious observance (Hassan & Harun, 2016). They also found that Malaysian consumers' fashion knowledge is shaped by fashion magazines, catalogues, events, and increasingly, social media, underscoring the influence of media in shaping modest fashion awareness. This further reinforces the point that fashion consciousness is not merely about trend-following but about integrating personal motivation, religious observance, and aesthetic preference.

Overall, fashion consciousness plays a vital role in shaping Shariah-compliant clothing choices, particularly for Gen Z Muslim women, although its impact may vary across different consumer groups. While much of the literature has focused on *hijab* and women's modest fashion, this review emphasizes broader Shariah-compliant fashion contexts, showing that fashion consciousness operates at the intersection of faith, identity, and style.

3.3 Social Media Influencers

In today's digital environment, fashion consciousness rarely develops in isolation. For many Gen Z Muslims, exposure to trends, styling ideas, and even Shariah-compliant interpretations of global fashions is mediated by social media platforms. This makes social media influencers—both mainstream and faith-oriented—key agents in shaping not only what is considered fashionable, but also how modesty is interpreted and practiced in everyday dress. Social media influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and behaviours within the dynamic online environment. By early 2024, the number of social media users reached a significant milestone of 5.04 billion, representing 62.3% of the global population. This marks a 5.6% growth in the past year, translating to 266 million new users in 2023, or an average of 8.4 new users every second (Datareportal, 2024). Given the soaring number of social media users, social media can significantly impact one's lifestyle, including fashion, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

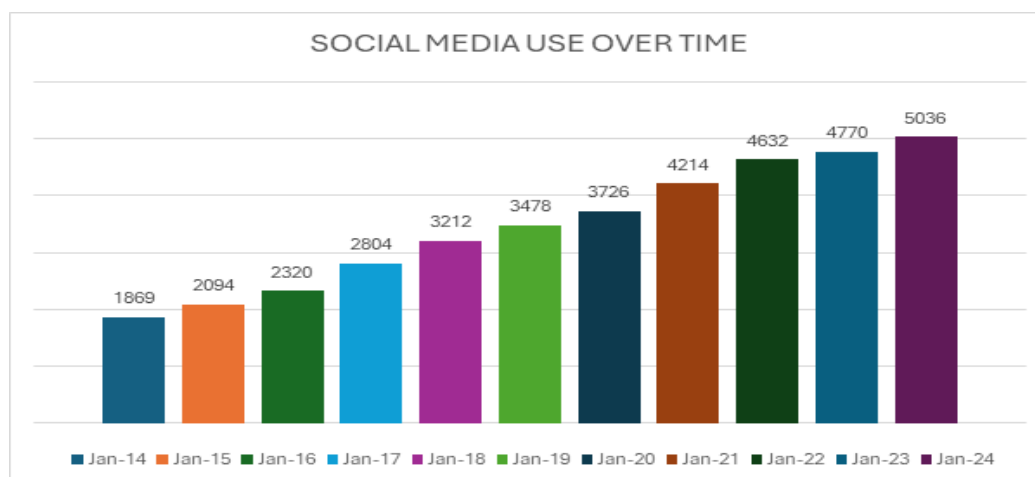


Figure 1. Social media use over time (Datareportal, 2024)

When mentioning social media, the word “influencer” is commonly related to it because nowadays, many people from anywhere in the world are interested in becoming an influencer. As Muslim influencers, Islam can significantly affect their profession as there are specific boundaries that must be observed as a practicing Muslim (sunandesignstg, 2023). These boundaries involve ensuring content adheres to Islamic values, such as promoting modesty, avoiding overtly revealing displays, and maintaining respect for religious tenets in their presentations. A multitude of Muslim fashion influencers utilize their social media platform to explore into their inventiveness regarding fashion trends.

Specifically in terms of appearance, fashion enthusiasts are interested in emulating the trend that these social media influences promote in their social media account. Young Muslims nowadays have the advantage of easily keeping up with the newest fashion trends and exploring different styles due to the convergence of social media influencers and the convenient accessibility of social media platforms. Although some Muslim scholars argue that certain forms of modest dress do not fully conform to Shariah requirements, many within the Muslim community continue to accept and accommodate these styles (Shaari, 2023). Businesses worldwide are leveraging the significant power of social media influencers as an effective marketing strategy to promote their brands (Yaacob *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, social media influencers have the ability to sway their followers' fashion preferences. With the widespread popularity and acceptance of social media influencers, businesses can now promote their products through platforms like TikTok and Instagram (Khamis *et al.*, 2017). This demonstrates that social media and influencers may significantly affect the dress choices of Muslims.

According to a study, almost all participants aged between 17 and 35 stated that they follow the outfit combinations on social media (Karakavak & Ozboluk, 2022). Although this particular study focuses on *hijab* fashion, its implications extend beyond *hijab* itself, since the garment is an integral element of Shariah-compliant clothing. This suggests that social media platforms have become central spaces where young Muslims negotiate and construct their understandings of modest fashion. Additionally, a study has revealed that social media influencers have emerged as influential figures in Muslim digital culture, particularly among young Muslims as they are akin to modern religious leaders, as they successfully provide religious content that is both captivating and pertinent to this demographic (Zaid *et al.*, 2022). For instance, influencers often popularize new styles of *hijab*, promote brands that offer modest yet trendy clothing, or display how to integrate Shariah-compliant garments into everyday outfits, thereby directly shaping followers' Shariah-compliant fashion choices. The finding may not specifically be focused on Shariah-compliant clothing, but the context can be related to this article which serves as evidence that social media influencers do have prominent impact on Muslims' lifestyle. Thus, for Gen Z, these influencers are more than just advertisers; they are crucial cultural translators. They make Shariah-compliant principles accessible and relevant within the fast-paced, trend-driven digital ecosystems where this generation lives.

3.4 Online Consumer Review (OCR)

While influencers can spark interest and set aspirational standards, purchasing decisions often require further validation. For fashion-conscious Muslim consumers, particularly those concerned with Shariah compliance, online reviews offer peer-driven insights into both style and religious appropriateness. These reviews can affirm, challenge, or refine perceptions initially shaped by influencer content, making them a vital stage in the decision-making process.

Sousa Santos (2021) defines electronic Word of Mouth (eWoM) as the act of potential, current, or past consumers expressing favourable or negative opinions about a company or its products, where these opinions are shared with a wide audience through the Internet. In order to generate eWoM, online consumer review (OCR) systems are one of the most powerful channels (Sousa Santos, 2021; Duan *et al.*, 2008). An online consumer review is a publicly open platform for individuals to share and search for reviews about products and services. The perceived value of the review or information can be improved by delivering

those reviews through an efficient OCR system. Consequently, consumers' intention can be influenced by favourable reviews when purchasing any products because it can raise the perceived value of the product or service being evaluated (Huang *et al.*, 2015). This reliance on peer-to-peer feedback aligns perfectly with Gen Z's well-documented scepticism towards corporate advertising (Yahya & Mammadzada, 2024) and their high level of trust in authentic, user-generated content.

According to a study, the purchase intention of visitors to the Blibli website in Indonesia was significantly influenced by online customer reviews (Rahayu *et al.*, 2021). This shows that consumers tend to read the reviews written by previous buyers on online shopping platforms to maximize their satisfaction when purchasing any products, including Shariah-compliant clothing. For this segment, reviews about the modesty of fit, material quality (e.g., opacity, breathability), and how the garment adheres to Islamic principles are particularly important. In addition, there were also findings from a study by Park *et al.* (2007) stating that the efficacy of OCR has a favourable impact on consumers' inclination to make purchases, and this inclination rises in tandem with the quantity of evaluations. In other words, the value of a product can increase when the number of reviews is high as people may want to purchase the product because many other people also purchased that.

Similarly, the findings from a study by Yaacob *et al.* (2021) found out that during the COVID-19 epidemic, the use of OCR has a strong and meaningful influence on people's intention to purchase fashion garments. This means that OCRs hold a vital role as a highly influential communication platform in this digital era, and it can easily influence Shariah-compliant clothing choices among Muslims. OCRs can be one of the factors that influence Shariah-compliant clothing choices among Muslims Gen Z, and its influence is getting bigger in this digital era where online purchase is becoming very common among people all around the world. Moreover, reviews containing visual content are especially persuasive, as they demonstrate how garments meet modesty expectations in real contexts. However, the effectiveness of online reviews depends on their perceived authenticity, valence, and volume, highlighting their role as a context-dependent but powerful influence on modest fashion adoption among Gen Z. Figure 2 presents an overview of the relationships between the factors influencing Shariah-compliant fashion choices among Gen Z.

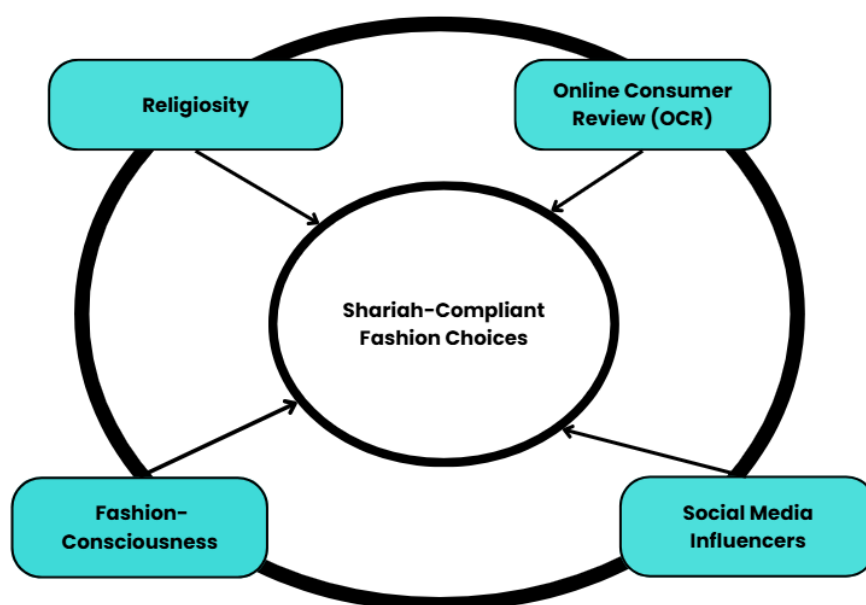


Figure 2. Overview of relationship between factors influencing Shariah Compliant Fashion Choice among Gen-Z.

5. Conclusion

This review reveals that Gen Z Muslims' Shariah-compliant clothing choices are shaped by the interplay of religiosity, social media influencers, fashion consciousness, and online consumer reviews. Religiosity emerged with diverse findings, showing both positive and negative correlations, while social media influencers were consistently found to be significant trendsetters, and fashion consciousness played a vital role in motivating stylistic adherence to Shariah principles. Online consumer reviews also proved to be a powerful tool influencing purchasing decisions. Together, these factors illustrate that Shariah-compliant fashion consumption is not solely a matter of religious adherence but also reflects identity, lifestyle, and digital engagement.

For industry practitioners, the findings suggest that authenticity, cultural sensitivity, and respect for Shariah values should guide marketing and product strategies targeting Gen Z. By acknowledging Shariah-compliant apparel as both a marker of faith and a form of self-expression, fashion enterprises can better meet the expectations of this growing consumer segment. Specifically, the findings suggest that fashion brands and marketers should leverage influencer partnerships and authentic peer-generated content to engage Gen Z consumers while ensuring that products remain Shariah-compliant. Policymakers and educators can promote digital literacy initiatives that empower young Muslims to navigate online fashion content critically.

As this is a review of existing studies, future research should empirically test the relationships among the four identified factors (religiosity, fashion consciousness, social media influencers, and online consumer reviews) to determine their influence on Shariah-compliant fashion purchase intention. For example, structural equation modelling (SEM) could be employed to assess how these factors collectively influence Shariah-compliant fashion purchase intentions. Future research should investigate how evolving interpretations of modesty and digital platforms continue to reshape Shariah-compliant fashion across different cultural context.

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