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## **Does media influence fashion consciousness of Muslim women consumers: evidences from the United Arab Emirates**

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**Abstract:** This paper focuses on finding and testing the selected constructs that influence the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study chose pertinent constructs such as cultural, social, personal and media variables and intended to find the impact of the same over target respondents, i.e., women consumers (UAE nationals) from Islamic religion. The results revealed that: 1) all the selected variables were found to have significant impact over fashion consciousness of women consumers; 2) media variables were found to have higher influence over fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion, followed by cultural and social variables. The implications of the outcomes were discussed.

**Keywords:** fashion consciousness; media variables; social variables; personal variables; women consumers; Islamic religion; construct analysis modelling; United Arab Emirates; UAE.

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## 1 Introduction

Fashion and women could be called as synonymous as women show more interest towards learning and adapting to fashion than men do (Nasser and Nasser, 2013). Several studies were conducted for years with reference to gauging the interest of men and women towards learning and adapting fashion. O'Connor et al. (1997) investigated the influence of fashion consciousness as a social influence on lifestyle behaviour among young Irish adults. The study primarily focused on identifying the role of fashion consciousness in impacting lifestyle. Wan et al. (2001) examined the relationship between the fashion consciousness of consumers with several constructs including demographics and consuming culture. The study made an attempt to bridge the disconnected linkage with related to demographics and psychological measures. Nam

et al. (2013) conducted a study to find the fashion conscious behaviours of mature consumers towards apparels. The study identified the reasons behind such fashion conscious behaviour, the sources of buying apparels, budget allocated for purchase and so on. Lee (2009) examined the reasons affect the attitudes of college students towards buying fashion counterfeits, with reference to past purchase experience, personality traits such as fashion consciousness, public self-consciousness and ethical obligation. The study found that the past purchase experience affected the purchase of fashion counterfeits.

Workman and Lee (2011) investigated the fashion consciousness and vanity between men and women. Reed (2011) presented a case of modernisation among women folks from Middle Eastern countries and its impact on society. Paul (2017) conducted a study in India to find out the factors that influence young consumers to shop at large malls and found young consumers prefer to do shopping at large malls due to the availability of the latest brands with discounted prices. Paul (2018) explored the possibilities of measuring the masstige index and found that a higher mean score led to top of mind of awareness of target consumers looking at masstige products. The study explored three major variables, mass prestige, brand knowledge and perceived quality among others. The aforesaid studies discussed the fashion consciousness, and the how the variables influence such aspects with reference to men and women from different countries. Numerous studies discussed the influence of cultural, social, and personal variables over fashion consciousness such as cultural variables (Durmaz et al., 2011; Vel et al., 2011; Tarrant and Jolles, 2012; Farrag and Hassan, 2015; Paul et al., 2016; Khraim, 2018), social variables (Zeb et al., 2011; Ibrahim et al., 2011; Maurya and Sharma, 2014; Leung et al., 2015; Sakkthivel, 2017), and personal variables (Rathnayake, 2011; Vel et al., 2011; Hume and Mills, 2013; Wu et al., 2015; Briliana and Mursito, 2017). With reference to identifying the studies on media influence, there were few studies attempted to identify the impact of media over fashion consciousness (Kim and Ko, 2010; Mohr, 2013; Wolny and Mueller, 2013; Chalhoub White Paper, 2014; Maurya and Sharma, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2015; Paul, 2015; Shephard et al., 2016; Park, 2017; Maity et al., 2018; Martin-Consuegra et al., 2019). However, not much detailed research works have documented the impact of the selected constructs over fashion consciousness of women belonging to Islamic religion from Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, the researchers decided to conduct a study to find the fashion consciousness of women from the UAE, a part of Middle Eastern countries.

The women in Middle Eastern countries have witnessed a change in their outlooks and become modernised (Reed, 2011). It is imperative to understand the variables that influence the fashion consciousness of these women. Hence, the researchers decided to choose the following constructs such as cultural, social, and personal factors in order to find the impact of the same on fashion consciousness of women (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). A pilot study has been conducted as a precursor to the selected study that revealed that women have more fashion consciousness than that of men. A pre-study interview was conducted among the target respondents to ascertain new constructs pertinent to the place of study, i.e., UAE and found that media variables emerged as vital constructs including commercial and new age media, i.e., social media and internet. It is imperative to find the women consumers of UAE were highly accessible to such media which act as an impetus to gaining and enhancing fashion consciousness. The outcomes of the pre-study interview motivated the researchers to embark on a study, keeping media

variables a primary problem along with pertinent constructs included such as cultural, social and personal variables (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008) in order to identify the variables/constructs influence achieving such fashion consciousness. Moreover, not many studies have been conducted that documented the fashion consciousness of women from this part of the world. Therefore, the researchers intend to conduct a study to investigate the variables that influence fashion consciousness of women from UAE. For that, the researchers chose cultural, social and personal variables (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008) along with media variables in order to test the impact of the same in influencing fashion consciousness of women. The study would be expected to provide a direction to academia and practicing managers with regard to assessing women consumer purchase intentions in Middle Eastern countries. Needless to say, it intends to provide a significant contribution to the existing literature.

## **2 Impact variables on fashion consciousness of women consumers from Islamic religion**

### *2.1 Impact of cultural variables on fashion consciousness of women consumers from Islamic religion*

Durmaz et al. (2011) in their study have investigated the impact of culture on consumers buying behaviour and concluded that culture remains to be an important factor of a person's desire or determination. Vel et al. (2011) analysed that there is a cultural shift due to the influence of western life styles in UAE. The UAE life style is changing and women consumers are more knowledgeable about what products best suit their image. Tarrant and Jolles (2012) have written that Muslim women's fashion choices range from contemporary western style to full coverage and everything in between to cover or not to cover and to what degree depends largely on regional culture and family values. Emarati working women wear abayas (*a dress which covers the entire body of a woman from head to toe; it is required for a woman belonging to Islamic religion according to social and cultural directives*) not only because of religious compulsion but because of cultural customs. They wear abayas with pride, individuality and desire to fit in Emarati society. O'Cass et al. (2013) in their research titled 'Can Islam and status consumption live together in the house of fashion clothing?' examined the role of religiosity in Muslim consumers. In light of this gap in the literature, the present study attempts to investigate the extent to which Generation Y Muslim consumers' religious commitment affects the degree to which they are status conscious, and in turn its effect on the degree to which they are fashion conscious, hold favourable perceptions about and are willing to pay a premium price for status-laden fashion clothing brands. Building on this underlying framework, the study finds religiosity negatively moderates the relationship between fashion consciousness and religious sentiments. This study also indicates there is an inverse relationship between consumption and religiosity.

Paul et al. (2016) conducted a study to determine the factors influencing consumers to shop over large stores when compared to smaller stores and found several variables influence such behaviour including social desirability. Farrag and Hassan (2015) focused on the interaction between religion, culture and fashion. Fashion is window to a social world bound by rules, customs, conventions and culture. Further it was also studied that

Muslim consumers' religious commitments affect the degree to which they are fashion conscious. In the light of these findings, marketers in the fashion domain are required to pay more attention to religious and cultural dimensions. Khraim (2018) found that women in UAE are as value conscious concerning fashion as western women, but the influence of religion, culture and traditions is also given importance. Piuchan et al. (2018) examined the influence of socio-cultural impact on Hong Kong residents due to rising influx of mainland Chinese tourists. The results revealed that socio-cultural positively impact education and infrastructure, and negatively impact culture, shopping, dining, transportation etc. Sun et al. (2019) investigated the impact of cultural values over hotel employees in using hotel technology at individual level of technology acceptance and technology readiness. The study found that cultural values did impact technology acceptance of hotel employees under less masculine cultural environment. The above studies provided a much needed direction to decide and design a pertinent hypothesis related to cultural variables and to test the same over impacting fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion.

H1 There is a positive impact of cultural variables (religion, tradition, customs, social class) on fashion consciousness of women consumers.

## *2.2 Impact of social variables on fashion consciousness of women consumers from Islamic religion*

Self-concept, reference groups, brand attitude and status branding have been found to have enormous effect on female consumers' fashion choice. Moreover, consumer's purchases are strongly influenced by cultural, social and psychological characteristics. Also it was found that choice of fashion is motivated by peer groups and role models which tend to be the symbolisers of status (Zeb et al., 2011). Ibrahim et al. (2011) found that fashion consciousness of females was influenced by media, parents, peer groups etc. Maurya and Sharma (2014) examined the factors affecting the fashion consciousness of both males and females and found that female buying is least affected by peer groups and society. Social media is an important trigger in creating fashion awareness and style consciousness. Education and socioeconomic status were important in developing fashion consciousness. Leung et al. (2015) investigated the psychological and social factors influencing the fashion markets. Additionally, self-monitoring and self-concept also have a huge role in creating fashion consciousness among consumers. Sakkthivel (2017) intended to test the influence of peer and reference groups over the frequency of women's shopping behaviour and found the same elicit a higher influence over frequency of shopping. Iran et al. (2019) conducted inter-societal study between Iran and Germany to identify the collaborative fashion consumption and found attitude, social norms, and perceived behavioural control acted as relevant predictors to adopt into collaborative fashion consumption. The aforesaid literature provided a much required cue to identify and set a suitable hypothesis related to social variables and to test the same over influencing fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion.

H2 There is a positive impact of social variables (influence of reference/peer groups, siblings, role model) on fashion consciousness of women consumers.

### *2.3 Impact of personal variables on fashion consciousness of women consumers from Islamic religion*

Rathnayake (2011) explained that fashion consciousness to a greater level is created by education and occupation. It was further highlighted that western fashions and western influence have a fair amount of impact on fashion consciousness. Vel et al. (2011) found that Arab consumers are motivated to purchase luxurious products to display their wealth and fulfil their egoistic needs. Using brands and being fashionable is one of the important ways to flaunt their wealth. Hume and Mills (2013) concluded that fashion is strongly related to self-image and self-esteem. Wu et al. (2015) found that luxury was one of the fast growing sectors of marketing in general. Quality and reputation are highly critical in choosing a brand. Class and elegance are also important while selecting and buying a luxury product. Impressing family, fashion and following celebrities are also important reasons while purchasing luxury products. Briliana and Mursito (2017) explored the perceptions of luxury in fashion and concluded that fashion even in the intimate apparels is considered as luxury purchases. The study further suggested personal purchases were strongly related to self-image and intimacy goals. Sakkthivel and Ramu (2018) studied the gender influence over technology adoption model towards using smart phones. The study revealed that both male and female users had negative perception towards perceived usefulness and male users had positive perception towards perceived ease of use. The above research works offered pertinent intent to find and design appropriate hypotheses with reference to personal variables and to test the impact of the same over fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion.

H3 There is a positive impact of personal variables (age, life cycle, lifestyle, occupation, economic status, place of living) on fashion consciousness of women consumers.

### *2.4 Impact of media variables on fashion consciousness of women consumers from Islamic religion*

Kim and Ko (2010) investigated the effectiveness of social media on purchase intentions and customer relationships. Customers trust was further strengthened via interactions with other users as well as brands on social media sites. Social media activities have a positive contribution to creating and formulating brand consciousness in consumers. Personal and mass media are likely to influence an individual's fashion orientation and choice. Consumers have an enduring and a prospective involvement with those product categories that are related to their personality and self-concept. Given the strong impact of social media, the shopping of the latest luxury fashion has become convenient (Mohr, 2013). Wolny and Mueller (2013) demonstrated that high fashion involvement motivated consumers are engaged more frequently in fashion related eWOM than those who are not motivated by high fashion consciousness. Chalhoub White Paper (2014) of Chalhoub group in his white paper has mentioned that self-expression, social media, western influences, influencer network, regular access to network are some of the factors influencing fashion consciousness of females. Sakkthivel (2014) was involved in a study to identify the influence of different advertising tools over consumer behaviour with reference to creating awareness, providing information and enhancing knowledge and found that outdoor advertising focused on creating awareness, while store advertisements

focused on providing information and enhancing knowledge. Maurya and Sharma (2014) mentioned that consumers are influenced by actors, actresses and celebrities of what they wear and what they do not wear. Fashion is considered to be an important part of social acceptance and confidence. Ahmad et al. (2015) investigated the impact of social media on the fashion industry and in their study they concluded that social media bloggers and blogging also proves to be a powerful tool to acquire a brand. Both consumers and designers have embraced the tool of social media to create a hype and buzz among consumers' style. Bloggers, fashion media, digital brand architects and fashion shows have enormous impact on choice of fashion. Paul (2015) explored the possibilities of building a new model for brand building through masstige marketing among women consumers using a marketing mix such as product, price, promotion, and place. The study found that the promotion variables have a significant influence over women consumers with reference to recalling masstige brands. Shephard et al. (2016) suggested that the media influence positively influences fashion consciousness. According to this study media has a great impact in creating consumers' perception of image awareness. Park (2017) found that the fashion consumer is changing. Social networks and social channels are affecting buying decisions. New digital media has changed the fashion consumer in a phenomenal way as social networking platforms like Facebook, twitter, etc., provide a lot of information about fashion choices and consumers value this information. Maity et al. (2018) examined the influence of media richness over consumer information search and choice and found that higher the media richness led to decrease cost of information search and increase in number of options available to consumers to make choices. The study also revealed that higher the media richness led to stimulus-based information, whereas consumers tend rely on memory-based information whilst media richness was low. Martin-Consuegra et al. (2019) investigated the relationship among brand involvement, customer brand interaction and behavioural intentions in a social media context for luxury brands. The results revealed that social media had a positive impact over brand involvement, customer brand interaction and behavioural intentions towards buying luxury brands. The aforesaid studies provided a much needed direction to identify and set a suitable hypothesis related to media variables and test the influence of the same on fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion.

H4 There is a positive impact of media variables (commercial media, social media, internet, mobile promotion) on fashion consciousness of women consumers.

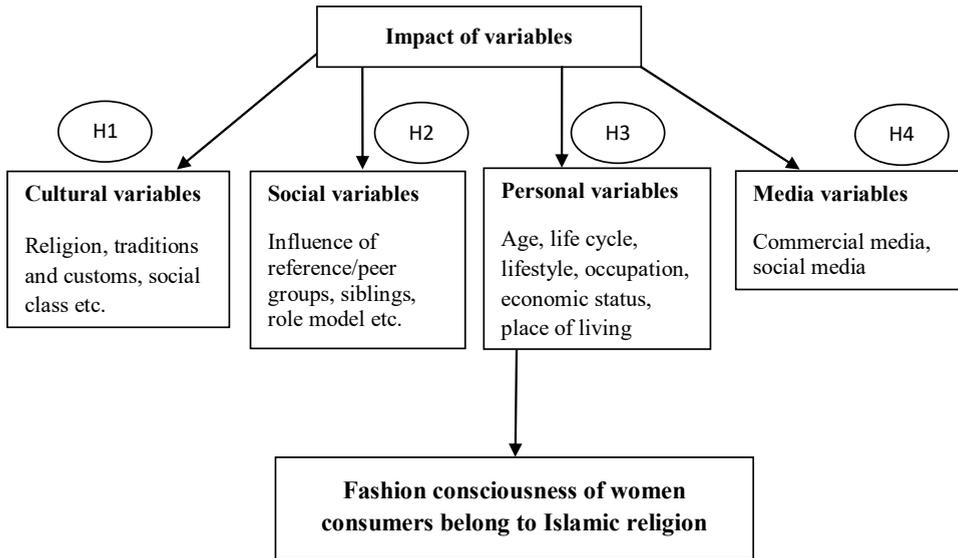
### **3 Conceptual motivation of the study**

Figure 1 describes the formulation of a research model or conceptual motivation proposed to be identified through the problem defined for the study.

The conceptual model had been proposed to find the influence of the selected variables over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion residing in UAE. The authors selected the pertinent variables such as cultural, social, personal (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008) and media variables (*identified through focus group interview conducted among the selected respondents, i.e., women consumers*). The study focused on women consumers belonging to Islamic religion (*primarily UAE nationals*) and intended to identify the variables that impact fashion consciousness of such a group of consumers. The selected respondents (*women*

consumers – UAE nationals) are known to heavily spend on fashionable products such as clothing, cosmetics, fashion accessories etc. (Khraim, 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to study such group of consumers and the variables that impact their fashion consciousness. Detailed explanation of construct development is given in Table 1.

**Figure 1** Conceptual motivation of the proposed model



### 3.1 Operationalisation of constructs

The study intended to find the influence of selected variables such as cultural, social, personal, exogenous variables, etc., over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion residing in UAE. The selected variables represented different aspects such as religion, culture and traditions, society (*cultural variables*), influence of peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role model (*social variables*), age, lifestyle, life cycle, occupation, place of living, economic status (*personal variables*), commercial media, and social media (*media variables*). The validity of the construct, i.e., fashion consciousness of women consumers (UAE nationals) belongs to Islamic religion has duly been tested through a set of statements completed by the respondents. The selected variables had been tested to identify the impact of the same on the chosen construct (*fashion consciousness of women consumers*).

### 3.2 Construct development

The authors selected the major constructs such as cultural variables, social variables, personal variables (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008) and media variables [*included through focus group interviews conducted among selected respondents, i.e., Muslim women consumers (UAE nationals)*] and intended to test the impact of such variables over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion. The Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis had been done to validate the selected

constructs (Sakkthivel, 2014). Table 1 denoted the variables used to development of constructs and reliability analysis on the variables selected for the study.

**Table 1** Description of reliability statistics (Cronbach’s alpha) of the constructs selected for the study

<i>Cultural variables</i> <i>VSI (3)</i>	<i>Social variables</i> <i>VSI (3)</i>	<i>Personal variables</i> <i>VSI (3)</i>	<i>Media variables</i> <i>VSI (3)</i>
Religion, culture and traditions, society	Peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role model	Age, life cycle, life style, occupation, economic status, place of living	Commercial media, social media
0.734	0.809	0.869	0.881

Notes: VS = variable segment. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of variables.

Table 1 denoted the reliability statistics (Cronbach’s) of the constructs selected for the study. The results clearly indicated the conformity of the variables selected for the study.

#### 4 Methodology

The study used the descriptive research design as it explored and intended to identify the influence of the selected variables, i.e., cultural, social, personal and exogenous variables over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion with reference to the UAE. The study was conducted among the women consumers belonging to Islamic religion (UAE nationals). It represented different demographic profiles such as age, marital status, literacy, occupation, employment status, income, place of living and so on. The respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study, and asked to participate in the interview. The trained women investigators (*due to cultural and social restrictions for male investigators to interact with women respondents in the place of study*) were used to personally interview the selected respondents and obtained the required information.

The quota sampling technique had been used to collect primary data from the target respondents based on the occupation age, marital status, literacy, occupation, employment status, income, family size and place of living. The primary data had been collected from 217 respondents and finally 200 (N = 200) respondents had been selected for the analysis and the rest of the responses were left out due to the inadequacy of the data. The sample size was relatively small due to interest and willingness of the respondents towards the selected theme of the study. However, the smaller size was made up through the selection of the respondents who had requisite knowledge and contribution towards the selected theme. A structured questionnaire had been used to collect the response from the target respondents. The questionnaire consists of 42 statements related to the several constructs selected for the study, i.e., cultural, social, personal, (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008), exogenous variables etc. The media variables were added to identify the role and influence of media (*including new age media such as social media, mobile promotion etc.*) over the fashion consciousness of women consumers. Such variables were identified through a pre study interview with a selected group of target respondents (*women consumers belonging to Islamic group*) in order to identify the pertinent variables suitable for the place of study. The statements focused on cultural variables included religion, culture and traditions, society and so on. Social

variables included influence of peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role model, etc., personal variables included age, life cycle, life style, occupation, economic status, place of living, etc., and finally media variables included commercial media, new age media, etc., in order to find the influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion. A seven-point Likert scale (completely agree, somewhat agree, just agree, neutral, just disagree, somewhat disagree, completely disagree) had been constructed in order to identify the impact of the selected constructs over the fashion consciousness of women consumers. The variables had been developed as hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4 with reference to validating the same through using selected statistical tools. One sample T-test, construct analysis modelling had been used to identify the impact of the selected constructs on the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion (Manickam and Sriram, 2013). The construct analysis modelling (Sakkthivel, 2014) had been used to identify the high and low impact variables that influence the fashion consciousness of women consumers. Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis had been conducted to test the validity of overall collection instrument which produced 0.901 and attitude scale secured 0.912 which proved very high reliability.

**Table 2** Demographic profile of the respondents

<i>Demographic variables</i>	<i>Profile</i>
Age	Below 20: 27%; 21–30: 45%; 31–40: 13%; 41–50: 7%; above 50: 9%
Marital status	Married: 46%; single: 54%
Employment status	Employed: 81%; unemployed: 19%
Occupation	Student: 14%; govt: 35%; private: 21%; business: 28%; homemaker: 3%;
Monthly income (AED or equivalent)	> 10,000: 6.5%; 10,001–15,000: 23.5%; 15,001–20,000: 34.5%; < 20,000: 35.5%
Education	Primary: 5%; secondary: 0.5%; diploma: 32%; bachelor: 51.5%; masters: 11%; PhD: 0%
Family	Joint: 66%; separated: 34%
Place of residence	Town: 31%; city: 66%; village: 4%

## 5 Analyses and discussions

### 5.1 *Identify the cultural variables that impact the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion (testing of hypothesis – H1)*

One sample t-test (two-tailed, 99% confidence interval at 199 df) had been conducted to identify the impact of cultural variables such as religion, culture and traditions, society, etc., on the fashion consciousness of women consumers, and found the following variables have positive influence such as, strict directives of religion influencing my fashion consciousness ( $p < 0.01$ ), influence of family values and tribal traditions ( $p < 0.01$ ), social customs ( $p < 0.01$ ) etc. The following variables were found to be non-significant such as being fashionable is important to the religion ( $p > 0.01$ ) etc. It is evident from the above analysis that women consumers deny the influence of religion

over being fashion consciousness and rest of the variables were found to have a positive influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers. It is vital to state that cultural variables were found to have a positive influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers as women consumers belonging to Islamic religion were vying for appreciation and respect from social circles. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand that the variables tested under H1 had been proved (Table 3).

**Table 3** One sample t-test on cultural variables

	<i>One-sample test</i>					
	<i>Test value = 4</i>					
	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (two-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean difference</i>	<i>99% confidence interval of the difference</i>	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	
Religion influences my interest towards being fashionable	4.996	199	0.000	0.54500	0.2613	0.8287
Being fashionable or having fashion conscious is important to my religion	-1.097	199	0.274	-0.13000	-0.4381	0.1781
My religion has strict directives that influence my interest towards fashion (religion)	6.075	199	0.000	0.77000	0.4404	1.0996
My family values influence my interest towards being fashionable	8.836	199	0.000	1.09500	0.7727	1.4173
My tribal traditions influence my fashion consciousness	4.543	199	0.000	0.61000	0.2608	0.9592
My cultural values influence me to show myself as a fashionable person (culture and traditions)	8.639	199	0.000	1.03000	0.7199	1.3401
I buy the products/services that are latest in fashion as it is important to our social customs	6.608	199	0.000	0.76000	0.4609	1.0591
I want to be fashion conscious because it gets me appreciation from our society	2.443	199	0.015	0.33000	-0.0213	0.6813
I want to be fashionable because it gets me respect from our society (society)	3.416	199	0.001	0.44500	0.1062	0.7838

*5.2 Identify the social variables that impact the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion (testing of hypothesis – H2)*

One sample t-test (two-tailed, 99% confidence interval at 199 df) had been conducted to identify the impact of social variables such as influence peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role, etc., on the fashion consciousness of women consumers, and found out all the following variables belonging to peer and reference, role model, etc., elicit a positive influence over fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion ( $p < 0.01$ ). It is identified that the sibling influence was found to have no

significant influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers specifically the influence of elder brother/younger brother/sister ( $p > 0.01$ ). However, the elder sister was found to elicit positive influence ( $p < 0.01$ ). It is also found that women consumers are influenced by a role model from their own family, celebrities such as singers/actors, etc., ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, it is evident from the analyses that all the social variables found to have a positive influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion except the sibling influence. It is important to note that the influence of peer and reference groups and role model play a vital role in influencing the fashion consciousness of women consumers from UAE. Hence, it is evident that most of the variables tested under H2 had been proved (Table 4).

**Table 4** One sample t-test on social variables

	<i>One-sample test</i>					
	<i>Test value = 4</i>					
	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (two-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean difference</i>	<i>99% confidence interval of the difference</i>	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	
My friends influence my interest towards being fashionable	10.809	199	0.000	1.23000	0.9340	1.5260
My relatives/family members influence my fashion consciousness	7.981	199	0.000	1.09000	0.7348	1.4452
My boss/manager/elders from my family influence my interest towards being fashionable (peer and reference groups)	6.025	199	0.000	0.81500	0.4632	1.1668
My elder brother influences my interest towards being fashionable	0.818	199	0.414	0.13000	-0.2832	0.5432
My elder sister influences my purchase of products/services of latest fashion	5.355	199	0.000	0.68500	0.3523	1.0177
My younger brother/sister influences my fashion consciousness (sibling influence)	1.156	199	0.249	0.17000	-0.2124	0.5524
I am influenced by my favourite singer to be more fashionable	5.033	199	0.000	0.67500	0.3262	1.0238
I am influenced by my favourite actor to being fashionable	-7.268	199	0.000	-1.00500	-1.3646	-0.6454
I am influenced by a highly fashionable person from my family/relative to become fashion consciousness (role model)	-5.946	199	0.000	-0.95500	-1.3727	-0.5373

### 5.3 Identify the personal variables that impact the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion (testing of hypothesis – H3)

One sample t-test (two-tailed, 99% confidence interval at 199 df) had been conducted to identify the impact of personal variables such as age, life cycle, life style, occupation, economic status, place of living, etc., on the fashion consciousness of women consumers, and found that all the following variables belonging to age, life cycle, occupation, economic status, place of living, etc., elicit a positive impact over the consciousness of women consumers ( $p < 0.01$ ), whereas the variables belonging to life style were found to have no significant impact ( $p > 0.01$ ). Therefore, it is pertinent to infer that most of the personal variables were found to have a significant impact over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in UAE, except life style. Hence, it is vital to understand that most of variables tested under H3 had been proved (Table 5).

**Table 5** One sample t-test on personal variables

	<i>One-sample test</i>					
	<i>Test value = 4</i>					
	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (two-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean difference</i>	<i>99% confidence interval of the difference</i>	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	
I am young, so I would to be more fashionable	5.033	199	0.000	0.67500	0.3262	1.0238
I am middle aged, so I want to have fashion consciousness	-7.268	199	0.000	-1.00500	-1.3646	-0.6454
I am old, so I would like to look as a fashionable person (age)	-5.946	199	0.000	-0.95500	-1.3727	-0.5373
I am single, so I would like to buy products/services of latest fashion	2.480	199	0.014	0.38500	-0.0188	0.7888
I am married, so I would like to have fashion consciousness	-2.457	199	0.015	-0.38500	-0.7926	0.0226
I am married and having many kids, so I would like to look as a fashionable person (life cycle)	-5.576	199	0.000	-0.88000	-1.2904	-0.4696
I like simple life style, so I want be having fashion consciousness	2.589	199	0.010	0.38000	-0.0017	0.7617
I would like to show off my fashion consciousness through buying products/services of latest available fashion	2.177	199	0.031	0.30000	-0.0584	0.6584
I like lavish life style, so I want to show myself as a highly fashionable person (life style)	0.000	199	1.000	0.00000	-0.3733	0.3733
I work for a company/bank, so I would like to show myself as a fashionable person	1.311	199	0.191	0.21500	-0.2114	0.6414

**Table 5** One sample t-test on personal variables (continued)

	<i>One-sample test</i>					
	<i>Test value = 4</i>					
	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (two-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean difference</i>	<i>99% confidence interval of the difference</i>	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	
I work in government, so I would like to have fashion consciousness	-4.153	199	0.000	-0.69500	-1.1302	-0.2598
I work in school/college, so I would like to buy products/services of latest fashion (occupation)	-5.244	199	0.000	-0.79500	-1.1893	-0.4007
I would like to have fashion consciousness though I have small income	-6.680	199	0.000	-1.00500	-1.3963	-0.6137
I would like to show myself as a fashionable person though I have medium income	-3.619	199	0.000	-0.60000	-1.0312	-0.1688
I would like to shown myself as a highly fashionable person because I have high income (economic status)	-2.541	199	0.012	-0.39000	-0.7892	0.0092
Living in a big city makes me more fashionable	7.846	199	0.000	1.00500	0.6719	1.3381
Though I live in a town, I want to have fashion consciousness	-6.236	199	0.000	-0.87000	-1.2328	-0.5072
Though I live in a village, I would like to shown myself as a fashionable person (place of living)	-10.559	199	0.000	-1.44500	-1.8009	-1.0891

#### 5.4 *Identify the media variables that impact the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion (testing of hypothesis – H4)*

One sample t-test (two-tailed, 99% confidence interval at 199 df) had been conducted to identify the impact of media variables such as commercial media (electronic media, print media, store advertisements) and new age media (internet, social media, SMS promotions) on the fashion consciousness of women consumers, and found that all the selected variables elicit a positive influence. It is pertinent to understand that women consumers are highly motivated by new age and commercial media to gain fashion consciousness. Hence, it is imperative to know that media variables were found to have a significant influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in UAE, and all the variables tested under H4 had been proved (Table 6).

**Table 6** One sample t-test on media variables

	<i>One-sample test</i>						
	<i>Test value = 4</i>						
	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (two-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean difference</i>	<i>99% confidence interval of the difference</i>		
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>		
Watching more television advertisements makes me more fashionable	2.439	199	0.016	0.35000	-0.0232	0.7232	
Watching more advertisements from magazines/news papers makes me having fashion consciousness	3.411	199	0.001	0.47000	0.1116	0.8284	
Watching more store advertisements from retail stores/hyper markets/shopping malls makes me being highly fashionable (commercial media)	6.272	199	0.000	0.88500	0.5180	1.2520	
The internet makes me more fashionable	12.281	199	0.000	1.37500	1.0838	1.6662	
The social media (face book etc.) makes me becoming a more fashionable person	12.989	199	0.000	1.29500	1.0357	1.5543	
SMS promotions through my mobile phone makes me having fashion consciousness (new age media)	5.316	199	0.000	0.73500	0.3754	1.0946	

5.5 *Construct analysis modelling to identify the high and low impact variables (cultural, social, personal and exogenous) on the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in UAE*

$$f(FCi) = \left[ \sum C_j / C_n \right] \left[ \sum_{i=1}^n S_i / n \right]$$

$f(FCi)$  fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in UAE

$S_i$  agreement level score of the respondents towards the impacting variables over fashion consciousness of women consumers

$C_j$  sum of constructs score

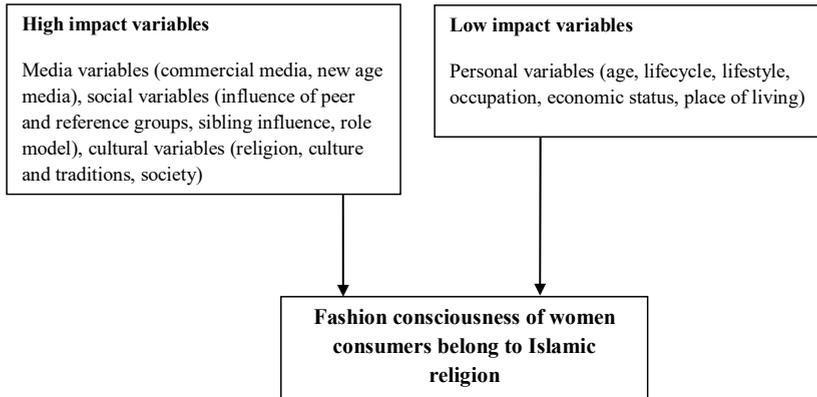
$C_n$  no. of constructs taken.

The above modelling produced the following results of the variables that have high to low impact over fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in UAE (high to low value). 'i' denotes the agreement level score, 'j' denotes the

sum of constructs/variables score, and 'n' denotes the number of respondents and number of constructs taken for the study and analysis. The construct analysis has been developed to identify the influence of the selected constructs/variables on the respondents. The variables asked through questions summed up and divided by number of respondents responded to such questions which revealed a mean value for each variable. Those scores arrived from the variables in terms of mean values that would be interpreted accordingly from the highest to the lowest value. The values would be provided ranks as 1, 2, 3 ... n. The highest score denotes the highest impact variables over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion and so on. The sum of the mean values of the selected variables has been divided by the number of variables selected for the study, and the mean value arrived will be considered midpoint. The mean value of the variables above the midpoint (4.23) will be considered high impact variables and vice versa.

The above modelling revealed that new age media secured (5.13) – 1st rank, followed by peer and reference groups which secured (5.04) – 2nd rank, culture and traditions (4.91) – 3rd rank, commercial media (4.57) – 4th rank, society (4.51) – 5th rank, role model (4.41) – 6th rank, sibling influence (4.4) – 7th rank, religion (4.35) – 8th rank, life style (4.23) – 9th rank, life cycle (3.71) – 10th rank, occupation (3.58) – 11th rank, age (3.57) – 12th rank, place of living (3.56) – 13th rank, and economic status (3.34) secured the last position, i.e., 14th rank. It is evident that new age media, peer and reference groups, culture and traditions, commercial media, etc., were found to have better impact over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion. Further analysis had been conducted to identify the high and low impact variables influencing the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion. It is identified that new age media, peer and reference groups, religion, culture and traditions, commercial media, society, role model, sibling influence, etc., elicit high impact, whereas, life style, life cycle, age, occupation, place of living, economic status, etc., elicit low influence over fashion consciousness of women consumers (Figure 2). In order to understand the high and low impact of constructs selected for the study such as cultural, social, personal and media, construct analysis modelling had been applied. The outcomes revealed that media variables secured the 1st rank (4.85), social variables secured 2nd rank (4.62), cultural variables – 3rd rank (4.60), and finally personal variables secured 4th rank (3.660). In order to identify the high and low impact construct over the fashion consciousness of women consumers, all the values of constructs had been summed up and divided by the total number of constructs selected for the study which revealed the midpoint (4.43). The mean value of the variables above the midpoint (4.43) will be considered high impact variables and vice versa. Therefore, it is found that media, cultural, social variables found to elicit high impact over fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion, whereas personal variables found to elicit a low impact. Therefore, it is understood that the respondents are highly influenced by media variables (commercial media and new age media), social variables (influence of peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role model), cultural variables (religion, culture and traditions, society), etc., and that there was low impact from personal variables (age, lifecycle, lifestyle, occupation, economic status, place of living). Hence, it is imperative to infer that the women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in UAE are highly influenced by media, social and cultural variables to gain and have fashion consciousness.

**Figure 2** Modelling of high to low impact variables over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion



## 6 Conclusions and implications of the study

The study had been attempted to identify the variables that influence the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion in UAE. The study selected several constructs such as cultural (religion, culture and traditions, society), social (influence of peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role model), personal (age, lifestyle, life cycle, occupation, economic status, place of living) media (commercial media, new age media) variables, etc., and tested the impact of the same over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion. The study was conducted among the women consumers (UAE nationals) belonging to Islamic religion representing different demographic profiles such as age, marital status, occupation, literacy, income etc. The study revealed all the selected variables were found to have a positive influence (through t-test) over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion and the outcomes are consistent with the hypotheses set for the study, i.e., H1, H2, H3 and H4. The above results revealed the positive influence of all the selected constructs over the fashion consciousness of women consumers. However, in order to find the high and impact variables, the construct analysis modelling had been used.

Whilst assessing the high and low impact variables, it is identified that media, social and cultural variables elicit a high influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion, whereas personal variables were found to elicit a low impact. The results are consistent with earlier studies conducted such as cultural variables (Durmaz et al., 2011; Vel et al., 2011; Tarrant and Jolles, 2012; Farrag and Hassan, 2015; Khraim, 2018), social variables (Zeb et al., 2011; Ibrahim et al., 2011; Maurya and Sharma, 2014; Leung et al., 2015; Paul et al., 2016; Sakkthivel, 2017), personal variables (Rathnayake, 2011; Vel et al., 2011; Hume and Mills, 2013; Wu et al., 2015; Briliana and Mursito, 2017), and media variables (Kim and Ko, 2010; Mohr, 2013; Wolny and Mueller, 2013; Chalhoub White Paper, 2014; Maurya and Sharma, 2014; Sakkthivel, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2015; Paul, 2015; Shephard et al., 2016; Park, 2017; Maity et al., 2018; Martin-Consuegra et al., 2019). It is found that media variables

(commercial media, new age media) elicit a higher impact over the fashion consciousness of women consumers. It is also evident that social variables (influence of peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role model) and cultural variables (religion, culture and traditions, society) have a higher influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging to Islamic religion. It is imperative to notice that personal (age, life style, life cycle, occupation, income, economic status) variables elicit a low influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers belonging Islamic religion in UAE.

Therefore, media variables especially new age media such as social media, internet evince a higher influence over the fashion consciousness of women consumers (UAE nationals) belonging to Islamic religion. It portrays the access and availability of such media to women consumers belongs to Islamic religion, thus impacting their interest and decision making process towards fashion oriented products. It is imperative to infer that media provides communication among Muslim women consumers who communicate among their peer groups through internet and social media. Apart from internet and social media, Muslim women consumers are influenced by television commercials, print advertisements such as newspapers, fashion magazines, and store advertisements on fashion products. Considering the impact of media over fashion consciousness of Muslim women consumers, new age media, i.e., internet, social media and mobile promotions play a pivotal role, and followed by commercial media such as television commercials, advertisements from newspapers/magazines and store advertisements. It is pertinent to understand the impact of two types of media over fashion consciousness, new age media found to have more influence. Therefore, it provides much needed cue to practicing managers to devising marketing strategies inculcating new age media into their marketing communication strategies to reach target consumers especially Muslim women consumers. The results revealed supports the influence of new age media which would be considered as a personal media reaching target consumers. Hence, in order to reach Muslim women consumers, new or personal media would be considered as a potential marketing communication. It is also pertinent to state the influence of social (influence of peer and reference groups, sibling influence, role model) and cultural (religion, culture and traditions, society) variables over the fashion consciousness of Muslim women consumers. It is evident from the study that Muslim women consumers prefer new age media to envisage their fashion consciousness with in the ambit of society and culture. The overall outcomes would provide a much needed direction to the practicing managers who would immensely benefit from the outcomes of the study with reference to designing effective marketing strategies, for achieving higher revenues, profits and customer life time value. The outcomes of the study would provide a much needed cue to industry and academia, thus, significantly contributing to the existing literature. Given the results, the practicing managers may work an effective strategic plan to suit to the target consumers, in order to reach and influence them to buy different products that are acceptable to culture, society and family.

## **7 Limitations of the study**

The study underwent several hurdles during the pre-study stage such as cultural and social restrictions in approaching the target respondents (women consumers, i.e., UAE nationals belonging to Islamic religion) to conduct the pre-study interview to obtain necessary insights to develop a pertinent problem of the study. However, such

respondents were found and effectively contributed to the problem definition of the study and pertinent data to identify the determined outcomes for the defined problem. In fact, the data collection was to be done through in-depth interview, however, due to cultural and social restrictions, the survey method had to be used which provided expected outcomes. The study could not ascertain the subliminal factors influencing fashion consciousness due to unwillingness of target respondents to reveal such information due to cultural restrictions.

## **8 Scope of further research**

The researchers defined a pertinent problem, identified suitable major constructs such as cultural, social, personal, etc., and found a new construct through the pre interview study such as media variables including commercial media and new age media and tested the validity of the selected constructs through testing of hypotheses. Since the study focused on women consumers belonging to a specific religion, further research could be focused on including a heterogeneous group of women consumers, or selecting a specific age group of women consumers or identifying the subliminal factors influencing fashion consciousness.

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**Annexure***Collection tool*

Please state your agreement on the following factors influence you to have interest towards fashion (7 – completely agree; 6 – somewhat agree; 5 – just agree; 4 – no comments; 3 – just disagree; 2 – somewhat disagree; 1 – completely disagree).

<i>S. no.</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
1	Religion influences my interest towards being fashionable							
2	Being fashionable or having fashion conscious is important to my religion							
3	My religion has strict directives that influence my interest towards fashion (religion)							
4	My family values influence my interest towards being fashionable							
5	My tribal traditions influence my fashion consciousness							
6	My cultural values influence me to show myself as a fashionable person (culture and traditions)							
7	I buy the products/services that are latest in fashion as it is important to our social customs							
8	I want to be fashion conscious because it gets me appreciation from our society							
9	I want to be fashionable because it gets me respect from our society (society)							
10	My friends influence my interest towards being fashionable							
11	My relatives/family members influence my fashion consciousness							
12	My boss/manager/elders from my family influence my interest towards being fashionable (peer and reference groups)							
13	My elder brother influences my interest towards being fashionable							
14	My elder sister influences my purchase of products/services of latest fashion							
15	My younger brother/sister influences my fashion consciousness (sibling influence)							
16	I am influenced by my favourite singer to be more fashionable							
17	I am influenced by my favourite actor to being fashionable							
18	I am influenced by a highly fashionable person from my family/relative to become fashion consciousness (role model)							
19	I am young, so I would to be more fashionable							
20	I am middle aged, so I want to have fashion consciousness							

- 21 I am old, so I would like to look as a fashionable person (age)
  - 22 I am single, so I would like to buy products/services of latest fashion
  - 23 I am married, so I would like to have fashion consciousness
  - 24 I am married and having many kids, so I would like to look as a fashionable person (life cycle)
  - 25 I like simple life style, so I want be having fashion consciousness
  - 26 I would like to show off my fashion consciousness through buying products/services of latest available fashion
  - 27 I like lavish life style, so I want to show myself as a highly fashionable person (life style)
  - 28 I work for a company/bank, so I would like to show myself as a fashionable person
  - 29 I work in government, so I would like to have fashion consciousness
  - 30 I work in school/college, so I would like to buy products/services of latest fashion (occupation)
  - 31 I would like to have fashion consciousness though I have small income
  - 32 I would like to show myself as a fashionable person though I have medium income
  - 33 I would like to shown myself as a highly fashionable person because I have high income (economic status)
  - 34 Living in a big city makes me more fashionable
  - 35 Though I live in a town, I want to have fashion consciousness
  - 36 Though I live in a village, I would like to shown myself as a fashionable person (place of living)
  - 37 Watching more television advertisements makes me more fashionable
  - 38 Watching more advertisements from magazines/news papers makes me having fashion consciousness
  - 39 Watching more store advertisements from retail stores/hyper markets/shopping malls makes me being highly fashionable (commercial media)
  - 40 The internet makes me more fashionable
  - 41 The social media (face book, etc.) makes me becoming a more fashionable person
  - 42 SMS promotions through my mobile phone makes me having fashion consciousness (new age media)
-