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Jilbab: The Interplay of Ideology, Dress Code, and Consumerism

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ABSTRACT

The jilbab, transcending its status as a symbol of religious observance for Muslim women, is now a complex global phenomenon fraught with contested meanings and practices. This research aims to analyze how contemporary jilbab practices and representations are dynamically negotiated at the crucial intersection of ideological forces (religious and political), the logic of dress semiotics as a sign system, and the penetration of global consumer culture. Using a qualitative approach relying on Barthesian semiotic analysis alongside thematic and content analysis of textual and visual data (literature, media, documentation), this study unpacks the interaction of these three dimensions. Findings indicate that the jilbab functions as a visual text with non-singular meanings; diverse styles communicate different and often ambiguous semiotic significations, which are continuously constructed and contested within the ideological arena through struggles over religious interpretation, identity politics, and feminist discourses. Furthermore, it was found that intensive commodification processes through the fashion industry and media have integrated the jilbab into the logic of consumer culture, creating tensions between values of piety, aesthetic expression, and consumptive desire. It is concluded that a holistic understanding of the contemporary jilbab necessitates an interdisciplinary analysis that moves beyond simplistic dichotomies, recognizing the jilbab as a dynamic site of Muslimah identity negotiation amidst the complex interplay of ideology, the dress sign system, and global market hegemony.

Keywords: Consumer Culture; Dress Semiotics; Ideology; Identity Negotiation; Jilbab.

INTRODUCTION

The jilbab, as a visual manifestation of religious observance mandated for Muslim women in the Qur'an, has transcended its theological boundaries to become a global phenomenon fraught with complexity and contestation. Its presence in the public sphere, particularly in non-Muslim Western countries like France, Denmark, and Germany, consistently sparks criticism and even bans, often linked to collective memories of terrorist events as well as socio-political anxieties concerning identity politics, migration flows from West Asia and Africa, and demographic dynamics (Hancock & Mobillion, 2019; Febriani, 2022; Hoffman & Rosenberg, 2023; Sanusi, 2024). These external dynamics inevitably intersect with fundamental debates regarding secularism versus religious expression, issues of racism and xenophobia, the principle of individualism, economic considerations, and discourses on the female body and sexuality (Scott, 2007; Navarro-Granados & Llorent-Bedmar, 2022; Bornioli et al., 2023). This complexity indicates that the jilbab can no longer be understood merely as a personal religious symbol but has become an arena for contested meaning influenced by diverse global forces.

Nevertheless, the debate surrounding the jilbab occurs not only in the external realm between the Islamic world and the West but also resonates strongly within Muslim-majority countries themselves (Ghasemi, 2015; Zubair & Zubair, 2017; Glapka, 2018). This internal contestation centres on the diversity of interpretations of sacred Qur'anic texts regarding the obligation and boundaries of aurat (modest covering) (Pane, 2021; Susanti & Fahyuni, 2021), intertwining with issues of masculinity dialectics and social control over women (Fargues, 2005; Alamgir, 2014), as well as

resistance posed by feminist movements that challenge patriarchal interpretations and advocate for gender equality (Khoja-Moolji, 2015; Masruri, 2021; Hussain, 2024). These Islamic feminist movements seek to reassert women's agency and their presence in the public sphere, challenging interpretations that domesticate and place women in subordinate positions. Thus, the jilbab discourse within the Muslim world reflects a tension between the authority of religious interpretation, established social structures, and evolving aspirations for gender equality (Abdullah, 2006).

In the context of Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population, the jilbab issue occupies a unique and often ambiguous position. Although historically, the adoption of the jilbab was primarily a matter of personal choice and cultural awareness—spread through trade routes, diplomacy, marriage, and da'wah (Islamic propagation), starting among royalty and extending to the broader community—without significant external mandates, the contemporary regulatory landscape shows different dynamics. The implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh through Qanun Number 11 of 2002, for example, regulates Islamic dress codes, although without explicitly mandating specific jilbab or face veil models, and even includes requirements for modest dress for non-Muslims enforced by the Wilayatul Hisbah or Islamic Vice Police (Maulida, 2020). Regulations on jilbab use in Aceh's government institutions have also undergone continuous refinements, indicating efforts to formalize local dress codes that intersect with national regulations (Zamzami & Hardiyanto, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2024).

Furthermore, regulations and debates concerning jilbab use in Indonesia's public sphere extend across various sectors, including educational institutions from primary to high school levels, other government bodies, and even the sports arena (Munawaroh et al., 2016; Damayanti & Rahayu, 2017; Hamzeh, 2017; Fitriyaleh, 2019; Wulandari & Fitriani, 2021; Meilani & Fatmawati, 2022; Pasrin et al., 2022). This phenomenon is often closely linked to specific socio-cultural conditions and ongoing public discourse and is frequently mobilized within populist policy frameworks that attract both support and opposition (Nuraeni & Gumilar, 2021). Implementing jilbab rules, whether mandatory or advisory, sparks mass discourse concerning the boundaries between individual rights, social norms, and state or institutional authority. The presence of the jilbab in these public spaces establishes it as a significant social and political identity marker and a field for value contestation continuously negotiated within Indonesia's pluralistic society.

It is important to note that the practice of female head covering has historical precedents extending far beyond the Islamic context, serving as a complex social marker in various ancient civilizations (Heath, 2008). In Assyrian law in Mesopotamia, for instance, head coverings were explicitly used to differentiate social status among noblewomen, concubines, and servants while also signifying marital status, exclusivity, and privacy (Adrian, 2011). Meanwhile, in ancient Greek society, its use

was intertwined with views of female subordination, the mythology surrounding menstruation as a source of “impurity” and vulnerability to malevolent entities, and the need to maintain separate public spheres for men and women as a manifestation of obedience (Guindi, 1999; O’Brien, 2016). Christian traditions also record various contexts for head covering use as symbols of sanctity, mourning, or the preservation of honour (James & Simantob, 2021), indicating layers of meaning and potential cultural intersections. Moreover, this historical contextualization is crucial for understanding how head coverings already existed in pre-Islamic Arabia as heat protection before becoming an obligation for Muslim women as stipulated in the Q.S. Al-Ahzab [33]: 59.

In its development, particularly within the contemporary Indonesian context, the jilbab is understood not only through the lens of religious obligation, the interpretation of which varies among scholars, but has also transformed into a complex sign system and a field for identity expression and consumer behaviour (Grace, 2004; Hamzah & Abidin, 2021). The evolution from the simple headscarf to diverse jilbab styles—ranging from those representing “strict” piety, such as long, dark models or the face veil, to fashionable styles paired with modern attire—creates a broad spectrum of semiotic meanings (Sukendro et al., 2016). These stylistic differences are often associated with specific religious or social group affiliations and serve as markers of personal identity negotiated between piety, modernity, and fashion trends. This phenomenon is amplified by the influence of globalization and commodification through mass and social media, which not only present the jilbab as a lifestyle but also construct concepts of modern Muslimah beauty and identity (Lury, 1996; Abdullah, 2001; Budiman, 2002; Hardyanti, 2019). Consequently, the current meaning and practice of the jilbab exist within a dynamic tension between the demands of religious ideology, the need for self-expression through dress codes, and the powerful pull of global consumer culture and behaviour. Thus, this research aims to unravel this complexity, exploring how the jilbab is negotiated and represented among these three poles of influence.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach as the primary framework to unpack the complexity of meaning, practice, and representation surrounding the jilbab within the contemporary socio-cultural constellation (Neuman, 2003). This approach was chosen for its relevance in exploring phenomena rich in interpretation, symbolism, and social dynamics, aligning with the research objective to understand the negotiation of the jilbab among the realms of ideology, dress codes, and consumer behaviour. This study relies on in-depth semiotic analysis alongside content and thematic analysis of diverse textual and visual data sources to generate a rich descriptive-interpretive understanding of the subject matter.

Primary and secondary data sources for this research focus on representations and discourses concerning the various forms of the jilbab, face veil, and headscarf. The data include relevant reference literature comprising academic publications (books and journal articles), historical texts, and religious materials for interpreting jilbab use. Additionally, this research utilizes documentation as excerpts from diverse media, such as news articles, fashion magazines, advertising content, representations in films or television programs, and posts on digital media platforms that feature or discuss the jilbab. Visual documentation, including photographs and images from these sources, also forms an integral part of the data for semiotic analysis. Data source selection was conducted purposively based on their relevance to exploring the themes of ideology, dress practices (as a sign system), and manifestations of consumer behaviour related to the jilbab.

Data collection employed two primary techniques: library research and media/digital observation. Library research was conducted systematically to identify and gather academic literature and other relevant texts. This process involved searching scientific databases such as ScienceDirect and Web of Science, using the Publish or Perish application to track related publications, and using keywords relevant to the research topic. Meanwhile, media/digital observation was performed by systematically monitoring and collecting textual and visual content from selected print, electronic, and digital platforms that represented or discussed the jilbab during specific periods or key events to capture contemporary discourse dynamics and representations.

All collected data were subsequently analyzed using a series of complementary interpretive techniques. Semiotic analysis, explicitly referencing the framework of [Barthes \(1977\)](#), was applied to deconstruct the jilbab as a sign system. This analysis focused on identifying signifiers and signifieds, meaning at the denotative (literal/descriptive) and connotative (associative/cultural) levels, and the deconstruction of 'myths' attached to various jilbab styles or representations in mass media and advertising ([Barthes, 1972, 1983](#)). This analysis encompassed textual ('written clothing') and visual ('image clothing') representations. Simultaneously, thematic and content analysis were used to identify, code, and analyze recurring patterns and themes within the textual data related to aspects of ideology (arguments, justifications, contestations), dress codes (implicit/explicit norms), and consumer behaviour (marketing strategies, trends, lifestyles). The final stage involved analytical synthesis, where findings from the semiotic and thematic/content analyses were critically integrated to construct a holistic understanding of how the jilbab is negotiated and interpreted at the intersection of ideology, dress codes, and the logic of consumerism, thereby comprehensively addressing the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Jilbab as Visual Text: The Semiotics of Style and Meaning in Dress Practice

Understanding the jilbab in the contemporary socio-cultural context demands a reading beyond its mere function as aurat (parts of the body to be covered according to Islamic teachings); it must be approached as a visual text rich in meaning, operating within a complex sign system, as analyzed through Barthes' semiotic framework. Each variation in style, colour choice, material, or manner of wearing is not merely an arbitrary aesthetic preference but a signifier referring to a series of signifieds or specific concepts within the societal consciousness. The constructed meaning exists not only at the denotative or literal level (e.g., cloth covering the head) but is richer at the connotative level, where cultural, social, and ideological associations are attached to the dress practice. The historical evolution in Indonesia itself, from the use of the simple headscarf to the emergence of diverse jilbab and face veil models (Sukendro et al., 2016), signifies ongoing semiotic dynamics where new forms emerge, bringing potential new meanings within social interaction.

One of the most popular manifestations in contemporary Muslimah dress practice is the instant jilbab, a signifier of ease and practicality in an era of high mobility. Denotatively, the instant jilbab is a ready-to-wear headscarf requiring no complex arrangement. However, at the connotative level, its meaning diversifies depending on specific variations. Shorter instant jilbabs, often covering only the neck or chest, appearing in bright colours, and paired with casual attire like jeans or colourful skirts, can connote modernity, dynamism, and an effort to balance religious observance with an urban lifestyle. Nevertheless, simple modifications with accessories like pins allow for style personalization.



Figure 1. Instant Jilbab Modification

Conversely, instant jilbabs designed with broader coverage, extending to the hips or even knees, typically dominated by dark colours like brown or black, and often paired with simple, unpatterned overalls, carry different connotations. This style often represents simplicity, more conservative adherence to religious teachings, and withdrawal from the public gaze. Within the spectrum of more extensive covering practices, there is also the use of the face veil, which covers most of the face except for the eyes or sometimes leaves only a slit for vision. Semiotically, the face veil is a potent signifier, denoting the covering of the face, but connotatively, it is often associated with very literal religious interpretations regarding aurat boundaries, a strict separation between private and public spaces, or even, in some societal perceptions, linked to specific ideological groups, leading to negative stigma such as the label “ninja clothing.” The presence of the face veil in the visual sphere, as documented in various representations ([Guindi, 1999](#); [Shirazi, 2001](#)), marks the furthest extent in the spectrum of aurat covering while simultaneously triggering the most diverse and often controversial interpretations.



Figure 2. Face Veil (Guindi, 1999; Shirazi, 2001)

On another part of the spectrum lies the modest and straightforward jilbab style, historically often referred to in Indonesia as the headscarf. This model, typically using a rectangular cloth folded into a triangle, pinned under the chin, with the remainder wrapped or left hanging, offers high semiotic flexibility. Its signifier is the simplicity of form, yet this simple jilbab accommodates the creative use of fabric colours. This style can be interpreted as a compromise between the obligation to cover the aurat and personal expression, adapting to diverse social environments. Its frequent pairing with colourful everyday wear (t-shirts, blouses,

jackets, jeans, bright skirts) signifies an effort to integrate Islamic identity into modern life without necessarily adopting the most conservative styles, making it a popular choice among students, university students, or workers.

Finally, there is the intricate and decorative jilbab style, whose presence signifies a functional shift from merely covering the aurat to becoming a significant element of fashion and a status marker, particularly for formal events. Its signifiers include complex draping often requiring assistance, the implied use of more luxurious materials, and the presence of additional embellishments like flowers, layered fabrics, or jewellery accessories (bracelets, necklaces). This style represents high aesthetic consciousness, celebrating memorable moments, marking a particular social class, and affirming the jilbab as an integral part of the global fashion industry. Its popularity, driven by modelling trends and lifestyle demands, demonstrates how this religious dress practice is not immune to the logic of aesthetics and the market, where the meaning of piety is renegotiated through a visual presentation prioritizing beauty and formal complexity. The analysis of these various styles confirms that the jilbab functions as a dynamic visual text where meaning is continuously constructed, negotiated, and even contested in everyday social practice.

B. The Ideological Arena: Religious Interpretation, Identity Politics, and the Construction of Jilbab Meaning

The primary ideological foundation for the practice of wearing the jilbab in Islam stems from the Qur'an, particularly through verses urging believing women to draw their head coverings and outer garments over themselves (e.g., Q.S. Al-Ahzab [33]: 59), as well as verses discussing clothing as aurat covering, protection, and adornment (e.g., Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 26). However, these sacred texts, like most religious scriptures, are open to a diversity of interpretations, which becomes the starting point for various ideological contestations. Fundamental differences often lie in the definition of the aurat concept itself—the boundaries of which body parts must be covered—as well as in the legal status of the command: whether it is an absolute obligation (*wajib*) or a personal choice (*ikhtiyari*) based on individual conscience (Grace, 2004). This interpretive plurality provides space for developing diverse jilbab-related ideologies, ranging from the most conservative to the more liberal, each seeking to claim interpretive legitimacy. Other verses, such as those regulating the lowering of gazes for men and women and guarding modesty (Q.S. An-Nur [24]: 30-31) or even concerning the hijab as a metaphysical barrier (Q.S. Al-Isra [17]: 45), are also drawn into the discourse to reinforce or oppose specific ideological constructions regarding the jilbab.

The concept of aurat in this discourse transcends mere anatomical definitions of genital organs; it encompasses a broader understanding of body parts related to self-esteem, modesty, and norms of social interaction, particularly with the opposite

sex. This understanding of aurat is culturally contextual, where the boundaries of what is considered necessary to cover can vary across societies—such as the extreme example where even a woman’s gaze might be considered part of the aurat in specific Egyptian contexts. This contextual nature and inherent ambiguity in defining aurat form the basis for establishing social norms regarding appropriate dress, distinguishing between what is considered haram (forbidden) and halal (permissible), appropriate and inappropriate, good and evil within a community. Thus, ideological debates about the jilbab often reflect broader struggles over how women’s bodies should be regulated, perceived, and positioned within the social order based on prevailing interpretations of religious and cultural norms.

In contemporary social and political dynamics, the jilbab functions not only as a marker of individual piety but also plays a significant role as a symbol of collective identity and a tool in identity politics. Wearing the jilbab can manifest various psychological and social motivations ([Geertz, 1973](#)): as a cathartic release valve, as fostering a fighting spirit in confronting pressure, as cementing group solidarity, or as a form of defence articulation when communal identity feels threatened. The strengthening of global Islamic identity sentiments, fueled partly by various geopolitical conflicts (such as the ongoing Palestine-Israel crisis, the impact of the WTC events, and wars in the Muslim world) as well as internal conflicts in Indonesia (Aceh, Poso, Ambon, and others), indirectly reinforces the significance of the jilbab as a visible marker of Islamic identity ([Yulikhah, 2016](#)). Consequently, choosing to wear or not wear the jilbab is often framed as a personal decision and a political statement regarding one’s identity position within the broader social landscape.

The ideological arena of the jilbab also becomes a field of fierce contestation between dominant patriarchal interpretations and feminist resistance emerging from within Islamic traditions. Muslim feminist movements critically question and challenge interpretations of sacred texts that tend to place women in subordinate positions and limit their agency, including through the regulation of bodies and clothing ([Khoja-Moolji, 2015](#); [Masruri, 2021](#); [Hussain, 2024](#)). They advocate for women’s right to interpret their religion, assert female presence and agency in the public sphere, and promote gender equality, which sometimes implies more flexible views or even rejection of the jilbab obligation as the sole form of female piety. On the other hand, the jilbab discourse also intertwines with the dialectics of masculinity ([Fargues, 2005](#); [Alamgir, 2014](#)), where control over women’s clothing can be one way of asserting male authority within social structures. Furthermore, in the diverse Indonesian context, religious and social group affiliations tangibly influence the practice and ideological meaning of the jilbab; dress styles or views on the jilbab among members of organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, the Darul Islam group, to Islamic student organizations can

exhibit variations reflecting differences in interpretive schools (mazhab), political orientations, or the cultural traditions of each group.

Ultimately, it is important to recognize that the ideology surrounding the jilbab does not continuously operate purely rationally but is often coloured by psychological and emotional dimensions. As [Geertz \(1973\)](#) cautioned, ideology can undergo ‘deformation’—distorted, obscured, or falsified—by personal sentiments such as hatred towards other groups, anxiety about social change, fear of losing identity, or even the desire to control. It can explain why the discourse on the jilbab is often so heated and why social perceptions of wearers or non-wearers can easily slide into stereotypes or prejudice, both positive and negative (e.g., assuming particular jilbab wearers are inherently more pious or, conversely, associating jilbab wearers with extremism post-WTC). Thus, the Jilbab exists within a complex and dynamic ‘ideological arena,’ where meaning is constructed not only through the interpretation of sacred texts and group affiliation but also through the play of identity politics, gender resistance, and perceptual biases influenced by socio-political contexts and collective psychological conditions.

C. Jilbab in the Global Market: Commodification, Fashion, and the Hegemony of Consumer Culture

Alongside ideological contestation and the sign systems within dress practices, the jilbab in the contemporary landscape cannot be detached from the powerful influence of market logic and global consumer culture. A significant process of commodification has occurred, whereby the jilbab transforms from a primarily religious and cultural symbol into a product that is bought, sold, marketed, and consumed like any other fashion item. This process intertwines with broader social changes, including the increased participation of Muslim women in public and economic spheres, which the market subsequently responded to as an opportunity. This phenomenon is visible in the history of the jilbab trend in Indonesia, starting from campus movements in the 1990s, then rapidly developing into a fashion industry centred in cities like Bandung, eventually spreading throughout the archipelago and even penetrating international markets. This commodification signifies the entry of religious dress practices into the mechanisms of the global capitalist economy ([Sucipto, 2021](#)).

Mass media and the fashion industry are central in accelerating commodification and shaping public perception of the jilbab. Various media platforms, from magazines and television to films and social media, actively popularize specific jilbab styles, associating them with images of modernity, success, and cosmopolitan lifestyles ([Zain et al., 2023](#)). Initiatives like the Islamic Fashion Festival (IFF) even explicitly aim to make Muslim attire, including the jilbab, part of universal global fashion trends, offering alternatives to the hegemony of Western fashion capitals (London, New York, Paris) while simultaneously

consolidating its position as a promising industry. The representation of the jilbab by public figures—ranging from female politicians like Marisa Haque to the wives of state officials—as well as appearances by actresses in Ramadan sinetron (soap operas) or Islamic-themed films, serve as style references and contribute to constructing the meaning of the jilbab in the audience's mind (including the potential emergence of female public officials as style icons).



Figure 3. Women in Public Office

Within the framework of consumer culture, the commodified jilbab is understood not only based on its use value (as head covering) or its religious value but also—and often primarily—based on the symbolic value attached to it (Hardyanti, 2019). Lury (1996) analysed that consumed objects possess a ‘social life’ and inherent appeal that can influence consumer behaviour and habits. In this context, the jilbab becomes an object of consumption that can signify social status, aesthetic taste, affiliation with specific lifestyle groups, or degree of modernity for its wearer. This fashion object seemingly holds the ‘authority’ to bestow appearance, even influence beliefs or direct everyday practices, reflecting the power of objects in shaping social reality. Analysis of jilbab promotion in media, such as television, also shows how it is consumed as a commodity possessing use value, exchange value, and sign value, which are continuously interpreted and decoded by audiences in their daily routines (Budiman, 2002).

Marketing strategies via advertising play a key role in stimulating consumer desire for jilbab and Muslim fashion products. Advertisements display products and actively construct and disseminate fantasies about lifestyles, identities, and the concept of 'beauty with jilbab' idealized according to market logic. The portrayal of women in these advertisements can significantly influence social norms regarding dress styles, making them more diverse yet often more standardized according to market trends. This phenomenon can lead to complex social consequences; on the one hand, advertising offers choices for expression for Muslim women, but on the other hand, it can trigger anxiety or discomfort, especially among women keenly interested in fashion but constrained by economic conditions. The gap between desire stimulated by advertising and purchasing power can encourage problematic symbolic consumption, where owning certain brands or styles becomes more important than other substances (Abdullah, 2001).

At a broader level, the penetration of the market and consumer culture into religious practices like wearing the jilbab can manifest the hegemony of consumer culture (Budiman, 2002). Through the repetition and normalization of the image of the jilbab as an attractive fashion commodity across various media channels, a process of hegemony occurs—both conscious and unconscious—that can slowly shift or at least renegotiate previously dominant ideological or spiritual meanings. The emergence and rapid growth of the Muslim fashion industry are concrete evidence of this process; this industry exists to meet market demands created by consumptive desires while actively shaping those tastes and needs. Thus, the contemporary jilbab exists not only within the arena of ideological debate or as a practice of semiotic signification but has also become deeply integrated into the logic of the global market, where identity and piety themselves also become commodities that can be consumed and displayed.

D. Contemporary Jilbab Dynamics: Identity Negotiation at the Intersection of Ideology, Dress Semiotics, and Consumerism

The analysis of the jilbab as a visual text, an arena of ideological struggle, and a commodity in the global market collectively confirms that understanding this phenomenon requires a shift away from simplistic dichotomous readings. The contemporary jilbab can no longer be adequately understood solely as a symbol of pure piety detached from social dynamics, nor conversely, merely as a fashion product detached from its ideological roots. Rather, as has been elaborated, current jilbab practices and representations inherently exist and are negotiated at the complex intersection of at least three primary forces: (1) the encompassing religious and political ideology, (2) the sign system or semiotics of dress governing visual meaning and wearing practices as a 'dress code,' and (3) the logic of consumer culture and market mechanisms that increasingly permeate it. These forces do not

operate in isolation but rather intertwine influence and frequently conflict with one another in shaping the reality of the jilbab today.

Facing this complex intersection, Muslim women emerge not as passive recipients of prescribed meanings but as active agents engaged in continuous identity negotiation. They consciously or unconsciously select, combine, and reinterpret various elements—religious teachings, cultural norms, global fashion trends, personal aspirations, and professional demands—in their everyday jilbab practices. A specific choice of jilbab style, such as pairing a fashionable headscarf with professional work attire, can simultaneously represent an effort to balance adherence to religious teachings (the ideological dimension), the selection of a particular aesthetic deemed appropriate and modern (the dress semiotics dimension), and participation in Muslim fashion trends and markets (the consumerism dimension). This negotiation process yields an extraordinary diversity of Muslimah identity expressions, ranging from those who choose literal adherence to conservative interpretations to those who creatively blend religious symbolism with cosmopolitan urban lifestyles, demonstrating that there is no single way to ‘be’ a jilbab-wearing Muslimah in the contemporary era.

The interaction among these three poles of influence inevitably gives rise to various inherent tensions and contradictions within the contemporary jilbab phenomenon. On the one hand, the religious, ideological impetus often emphasises values of simplicity, modesty, and withdrawal from excessive public attention. However, on the other hand, the logic of consumer culture promotes desires for novelty, differentiation through brands and styles, public visibility through fashion, and even conspicuous consumption in the form of luxury or branded jilbabs. Tension also arises between the jilbab’s function as a marker of communal solidarity or religious group identity (as analyzed through Geertz’s framework) and its function within consumer society as a tool for displaying individuality, social status, and unique personal taste. It is this contradiction of values that often triggers ethical debates and social judgment regarding the ‘correct way to wear the jilbab,’ where an individual’s piety might be problematically assessed based on clothing brands or the alignment of their style with the latest trends, blurring the line between religious expression and consumptive performance.

Representing the jilbab in mass media and digital spaces is crucial in mediating and shaping these identity negotiation processes and value tension. As semiotic and content analyses indicate, media not only reflects reality but also actively constructs ideal images of how one ‘should’ be a jilbab-wearing Muslimah in the modern era; often, the image presented is one who successfully reconciles piety, professional success, and full participation in global consumer culture. These representations can simplify the complexity of negotiation, promote certain (Barthesian) ‘myths’ about the jilbab and its wearers, and contribute to

perpetuating the hegemony of market discourse (Budiman, 2002). This mediated public discourse then influences how the jilbab is understood and evaluated in society, setting parameters for what is considered 'appropriate,' 'modern,' 'fashionable,' or conversely, 'outdated' or 'extreme' jilbab practice.

Therefore, the contemporary jilbab is best understood not as a symbol with a singular, stable meaning but as a dynamic arena for continuous meaning-making and identity negotiation. The meaning and practice of the jilbab are continually reshaped at the juncture of embraced ideological beliefs, the visual language of dress (semiotics), and the powerful influence of the global market system and consumer culture (consumerism). Understanding the complex dynamics at this intersection is key to moving beyond often polarized debates and appreciating the diverse ways Muslim women embody and express their identities through a piece of head covering in an ever-changing world. Analyzing the interplay among the three poles—ideology, dress codes (semiotics), and consumer behaviour—is crucial for holistically capturing the complexity of the jilbab phenomenon.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the jilbab phenomenon in contemporary Indonesian and global socio-cultural contexts cannot be understood monolithically or through a single lens. The meaning, practice, and representation of the jilbab are dynamically constructed and negotiated at the crucial intersection of three primary forces: the impetus of ideology, both stemming from religious text interpretations and identity politics contestations; the logic of dress semiotics as a visual sign system communicating meaning through style, form, and context of use; and the penetration of global consumer culture driving commodification, fashion trends, and desire formation through market and media mechanisms. These three poles of influence do not operate independently but rather intertwine, overlap, and sometimes clash, producing the complex and ambiguous reality of the jilbab today.

The dynamic interaction among these three forces manifests in diverse practices and prominent debates. Ideological interpretations regarding obligation, aurat boundaries, or the value of piety are often negotiated and expressed through specific choices of dress style, the meaning of which is also shaped by semiotic conventions within society. Simultaneously, these style choices are increasingly influenced by trends popularized by the fashion industry and mass media, operating based on market logic and consumerism. It gives rise to inherent tensions, for instance, between the ideologically encouraged value of simplicity and the consumerist drive to follow the latest modes or use specific brands as status markers, which in turn triggers diverse social judgments and ethical debates regarding the authenticity of religious expression within the framework of consumerism.

Amidst this complexity and the pull of various forces, Muslim women are not merely passive objects receiving meaning wholesale but are active subjects continuously engaged in identity negotiation. They utilize the jilbab as a symbolic medium to articulate their positions within a fluid socio-cultural landscape, balancing adherence to ideological beliefs, self-expression through dress aesthetics, social or professional role demands, and participation in modern lifestyles offered by consumer culture. This negotiation process generates an exceedingly diverse spectrum of Muslimah identities, transcending rigid categorizations between traditional and modern or pious and secular.

Therefore, this research confirms that a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary jilbab requires a holistic and interdisciplinary analytical approach capable of capturing the interconnections among the realm of ideology, the practice of visual semiotics in dress, and the socio-economic dynamics of consumer culture. Examining the jilbab from only one perspective—theological, political, semiotic, or economic—yields a partial understanding, failing to grasp the complexity of meaning and identity negotiation in real life. The primary contribution of this study lies in its effort to synthesize these various analytical lenses to offer a more nuanced reading of one of the most significant and debated religious and cultural symbols in this era of globalization.

Based on the findings and discussion, several suggestions are proposed for future research and broader reflection. *First*, more in-depth ethnographic studies are needed to directly explore how Muslim women from diverse socio-economic and geographic backgrounds experience and interpret the process of identity negotiation through the jilbab in their daily lives. *Second*, comparative analyses between countries or among Muslim communities with different socio-political contexts could provide richer insights into the varying interactions between ideology, dress semiotics, and consumerism in shaping the jilbab phenomenon. *Third*, longitudinal research tracking changes in style trends, media discourse, and wearing practices over time could help understand the dynamic evolution of this symbol's meaning.

Furthermore, considering the central role of digital media, future research could specifically analyze how platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok shape and disseminate jilbab trends and discourses among younger generations. Additionally, studies on resistance to the commodification of the jilbab or efforts to reclaim its spiritual meaning from market hegemony constitute an important research area. More broadly, the findings of this research imply the importance of media and critical cultural literacy in society to understand the complexity of jilbab representations and avoid stereotypes. Constructive dialogue among groups with differing ideological views is also needed to reduce prejudice and foster mutual understanding, along with critical reflection on how public policy can respect freedom of expression without falling into excessive regulation or commercial exploitation that trivializes meaning.

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