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MORALITY BEFORE KNOWLEDGE

Commodification of religion and islamic cultural industry through social media

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ABSTRACT

Background: WEF (World Economic Forum) data in 2022 shows an increase in the number of hijab users in Indonesia by 5.7%. It seems that easily accessible social media is one of the factors influencing the growth of the fashion industry. because anyone can see, create and even spread ideas, concepts and works with various purposes. **Methods:** This study employs a qualitative approach with content analysis of social media platforms, interviews with Muslim celebrities, and literature reviews on the commodification of religion and fashion trends. Data collection focuses on identifying the motives behind hijab fashion promotion and its impact on public perception. **Findings:** The Islamic cultural industry creates opportunities for the commodification of religion, particularly through the fashion industry in Indonesia. Muslim celebrities use social media to influence hijab fashion trends, which carry both positive and negative meanings. Social media serves as a platform for interaction, inspiration, and sharing experiences, making hijab fashion more modern and increasingly secular. **Conclusions:** The study finds that social media plays a crucial role in shaping hijab fashion trends in Indonesia, driven by the dual motives of Muslim celebrities—ranging from attraction and inspiration to existential expression. This phenomenon reflects the commodification of religion, where hijab fashion is increasingly modernized and secularized, blurring traditional religious boundaries and reinforcing consumer-driven identities. **Novelty/Originality of This Study:** The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of the dual motives of Muslim celebrities in shaping hijab fashion trends through social media, highlighting the commodification of religion and the evolving modern-secular interpretation of hijab.

KEYWORDS: commodification of religion; culture; fashion; social media.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a majority of Muslims, based on data issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs/*Kementerian Dalam Negeri* (KEMENDAGRI) as of December 31, 2021 reaching 273.32 million and occupying the first position of seven other religions such as Christianity with 20 million followers, Catholicism with 8 million followers, Hinduism with 4 million followers, Buddhism with 2 million followers, Faith Stream with 126 thousand followers and finally Confucianism with 73 thousand followers (Bayu, 2021). Based on this data, Islam has increased by 44 million from the previous year which amounted to 229.6 million people, and this will continue to increase every year both domestically and abroad. This is certainly predictable considering that there are 2.2 billion Muslims in the world or 23.4 percent of the entire population (Matsuki, 2020) and this can make Indonesia the

largest Muslim Fashion that can be looked at by various parts of the world such as in the Hijab Trend.

In the Indonesian dictionary, Hijab is interpreted as a curtain, cover, barrier and others (Shahab, 2013), as a curtain or veil in scientific vocabulary (Felix, 2013) while according to *Islam* itself Hijab (*Arabic:* حِجَاب) means barrier and can also be said to be a protector of women from the eyes of men (Ramadana, 2022). Socioculturally, hijab has penetrated into a number of fields such as law, politics, social, health, education and art. However, the acceptance of hijab is considered not only about orders and obligations, but also as a form of combination of clothes and public trends. The large number of hijabers communities, hijab bazaars or performances carried out by designers and the media is one of the factors in the development of the hijab trend.

According to WEF (World Economic Forum) data in 2022 there will be an increase in hijab users by 5.7% (Rahayu, 2022) and 20 million Muslim women are wearing hijab, of course this development affects existing fashion trends, the ease of access in reaching the media today makes anyone can see, make and even spread things very quickly, such as for example in the use of social media.

As part of social media, Instagram is an image-based platform that has facilities for its users to share photos and short videos online. Instagram users in Indonesia itself reached the fourth position in the world which reached 56 million or 20.97 percent of the population, with the United States as the first rank with 110 million Instagram users (Cuponation, 2019) are also the top three of the existing and most popular social media after Youtube and Whatsapp, as evidenced by data reviewed from wearesocial.net in January 2021 Indonesian people use Instagram is 17 hours per month with a percentage of 86.65% of the population.

The increase in hijab style trends through social media that has many followers, especially the designation *"celebgram"* seems to be considered influential in the development of the country's fashion industry and this opens up opportunities for fashion trend commodities and hijab trends in Indonesia. There are seven celebrity accounts that inspire Indonesian hijabers, namely *@gitasav, @megaiskanti, @kiaraleswara, @nisacookie, @helminursifah, @dwihandahanda and @bellattamimi.*

Commodification comes from the words commodity and modification, in the book *Kapita Selekta,* the study of fine arts, design, media and culture it is stated that commodities are goods or services that have a selling value or economy, while modification is a change in function or form. It is concluded that commodification is a change in value or function from goods or services to commodities (Banindro, 2018). Commodification was also created due to cultural development (Banindro, 2018). The commodification meant by the author is to be in contact with the field of communication. According to Mosco (1996) the form of commodification in communication is divided into 4 forms such as, 1) content commodification, 2) audience commodification, 3) Cybernetic commodity, 4) labor commodification (Mosco, 2009). The hijab trend is one of the ways Islam *is* made a commodity, hijab has developed a lot following the era and style as well as the social class of its users with a variety of patterns and forms that are interpreted as fashion. This is considered a non-verbal communication, where hijab/clothes can represent what message the user wants to convey (Cangara & Risnayanti, 2011).

This commodification also has a positive and negative impact on the value or view of the hijab itself in society. Data studied by Thomson Reuters in the Islamic Development Report 2019 says that the Islamic economic market will grow to reach a value of 3,007 billion USD in 2023 and based on this presentation, the author suspects that the trend of 5-year Hijab on social media has recently grown rapidly, inseparable from the "sweetness of the cake" of the Islamic economic market which is growing rapidly and adding to the variety of hijab orders in Indonesia (Youtube in Mandja Ivan Gunawan). Ivan Gunawan as a designer also seems to be included in the country's Muslim fashion industry. Ivan Gunawan created Mandja Hijab with the aim that hijab is a culture that wants to be disseminated (Desianti, 2017).

Today, the hijab is not an ancient and maternal thing. All groups, ages and professions have used hijab with all the hijab trends that have been created. Starting from 2011, the hijab trend began to grow rapidly due to various phenomena such as the rapid advancement of the internet which makes users easily access everything in it. Whether the use of hijab as an attribute of Islam is constructed or deconstructed, because it is undeniable that the current hijab has given birth to a promising business commodity due to the increase in its users.

2. Methods

In this study, the author uses a type/approach of research in the form of Library Research. According to Mardalis, literature studies are a study that is used to collect information and data with the help of various kinds of materials in libraries such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, and so on (Mirzaqon & Budi, 2017). Literature studies can also study various reference books and similar previous research results that are useful to get a theoretical foundation regarding the problem to be researched (Sarwono, 2022). Meanwhile, according to other experts, literature studies are theoretical studies, references and other scientific literature related to culture, values and norms that develop in the social situation being studied. The steps in literature research are as follows (Kuhlthau et al., 2007; Sugiyono, 2012); topic selection, information exploration, determining the focus of research, collecting data sources, preparing data presentation, and preparing reports.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Fashion as an Islamic cultural industry

Cultural studies, according to Lawrence Grossberg, arise when culture becomes seemingly central and explicitly becomes ambiguous (Grossberg, 2010). The study of fashion is an ever-evolving study, but the discipline is primarily involved with fashion as a theory in which trends and objects and images become associated with cultural conditions. Susan Kaiser's Fashion and Culture Studies bridges theory and practice, examining fashion from both studies, namely culture and fashion. Kaiser discusses the ongoing interaction between fashion studies and cultural studies. Fashion plays a role in "popular culture" with fashion being one of the main visual components to keep up with the constant tide of change in popular culture and society, hyper-visibility around the fashion industry area, including fashion bloggers, creating new reasons to observe women's bodies, especially women of color (Duffy & Hund, 2015; Kaiser, 2012; Sandlin & Maudlin, 2012).

The study of fashion and modern media such as social media plays a big role in how Islam is portrayed in online media especially the fashion industry, how certain images are interpreted by both Muslims and non-Muslims so that they can be categorized as 'popular'. The work of Hebdige and Roland Barthes, provides an understanding of how certain styles become popular through signs and meanings. The various styles of Muslim women's fashion displayed on Instagram social media accounts and how the 'hijabista' personalities of the account owners have become a subculture in the fashion industry if examined based on the opinions of Hebdige and Roland Barthes (Hebdige, 1979; Mirza, 2024; Williams & Kamaludeen, 2017).

Banu Gökariksel & Ellen McLarney describe the Islamic cultural industry, starting with how it works in the context of consumer capitalism, and how Muslim women become consumers in neoliberal Western markets. Muslim identity is increasingly constructed through consumption practices that lead to transregional, and transnational (Gökariksel & McLarney, 2010; Gökariksel & Secor, 2010). "Muslim networks" and these networks have led to the emergence of markets that specifically target Muslim women and create Islamic cultural industries (Nisa, 2023).

Advertising and promotion based on the ideas of the twenty-first century is referred to as modernity framed with traditional Islamic cultural values. Gökariksel and McLarney's thinking attempts to describe how the image, practice, and ideals of Muslim Femininity are produced, disseminated, and consumed in online media devices, such as Instagram. Reina Lewis, through the book "Modest Fashion", describes that personal and political and economic have implications for contemporary dress practices among Muslim women, which include class differences such as price, style and taste. Not only are Muslim women feeling the impact as consumers, but they are also designers, manufacturers and marketers. Lewis's idea of modesty is a direct relation to class, and not just sexuality. Exploring "simple clothing" as a market opportunity, Lewis explained, that Muslim women not only blend fashion and faith, but also modesty and class. The practice of dressing that has a 'taste' of change across races, generations and classes, which brings the Islamic cultural industry towards certain Islamic marketing branding according to certain consumer tastes (Lewis, 2013).

3.2 Islamic branding and fashion

In the realm of the Islamic fashion industry, Islam as a concept in various forms of hijab and this is an area of discussion that is still relevant to discuss. Although scientific discourse on Islam and hijab has indications leading to the visual communication of marketing of Islamic fashion brands. A brief overview of Islamic principles in the area of online media. Islam has a clear command to be Islamic in the rules of dress, behavior and behavior in accordance with *Q.S al-Ahzab* verse 59.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّبِىُّ قُل لِّأَزْوَٰجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَآءِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِن جَلَٰبِيبِهِنَّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰٓ أَن يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

Meaning: *"O Prophet, say to your wives, your daughters and the wives of believers: "Let them stretch out their hijab all over their bodies". This is so that they are easier to know, therefore they are not disturbed and Allah is the Forgiving and the Most Merciful (Q.S. al-Ahzab [33]: 59).*

Islamic fashion brands, as a subcategory of Islamic brands. A fashion brand can be considered an Islamic fashion brand if it meets one of the criteria, namely in accordance with Sharia, clothing originating from Islamic countries or targeting Muslim consumers (Salam et al., 2018). Here, perceptively it can be said that if an Islamic fashion brand is defined using only one or two of these three criteria, there will be many brands that can be interpreted as 'Islamic fashion brands'. For example, if a fashion brand is defined as Islamic based on Muslim consumers as their target market, then established Western brands such as Dolce and Gabana and Donna Karan New York (DKNY) will fit the criteria and be labeled as Islamic fashion brands. These brands have made headlines in recent years due to their ongoing efforts to market their products to Muslim fashion consumers (Meyer & Couch, 2010). Muslims are expected to dress in Islamic dress and Muslims are asked to demean their views on the opposite sex. Islam's commandments on dress and behavior apply equally to men and women. The scope of Islamic dress is based on the concept of aurah, in the form of body parts that must be covered. The aurat for men is from the navel to the knees, while women are expected to dress covering the entire body except for the face and hands (Boulanouar, 2006). Therefore, Islamic clothing or hijab for women is not limited to the hijab, but also includes full body covering (Lewis, 2007).

Female Muslims or Muslim women, there is a difference in the definition of aurah according to the opinion of scholars, whether the face is included in the aurah or not (Hasmad, 2021). In other words, Muslim scholars differ on the necessity of wearing the veil for women. One group of scholars argues that the veil should be mandatory in public places (Desai, 2006). Others consider the veil to be an option, as they argue that the concept of the veil comes from local custom rather than Islamic commandment (Dar Alifta, 2022). The veil is also seen as a cultural artifact in the historical record of Islamic society. To that extent,

associate the practice of the veil with the seclusion of women – an idea that Arab Muslims derived from other cultures as Islam spread in its early years, around the seventh and eighth centuries AD. Despite the difference in the obligation to wear the veil, Muslim scholars agree that covering the head and not showing jewelry for Muslim women is Islamic clothing for Muslim women.

Here it is important to point out that in addition to carrying out Islamic commandments, Islamic dress and hijab have social and political connotations. In different scenarios, modest dress and hijab are likened to expressions of inner piety and personal inclination towards Islam. Among Muslim women who have recently converted to Islam in the UK, the use of the hijab is marked by the use of the hijab as the most significant form of change in their lives that serves as a distinctive signal of their new life to the society around them (Harris, 2010). In the political context, Kılıçbay & Binark (2002) note that the hijab is a symbol of political identity in Turkey (Gokarisel & Secor, 2010). The surge in use of Tesettürlü – the Turkish phrase for Islamic clothing or veil-based clothing – has been likened to the rise of political Islam in Turkish society. In the midst of the diversity of meanings of Islamic clothing, Islamic fashion also follows contemporary trends in the global fashion industry. In the realm of marketing, the Muslim fashion industry is in line with global fashion trends, such as organizing fashion weeks and fashion shows, such as London Modest Fashion Week which is intended for Muslim women.

In terms of design and dresses, Islamic fashion has made strides to become more trendy. Some Turkish businessmen have asserted that Islamic fashion does not have to mean Tesettürlü or modesty, on the contrary, Tesettürlü becomes trendy and widely accepted by consumers (Gokarisel, 2010). This statement echoes the activities of Western fashion brands that focus on abayas, styled extensively to appeal to Middle Eastern Muslim fashion consumers (Meyer & Couch. 2010). This turns out to hint at a correlation between Islamic Branding, and Islamic orders and how marketing communication is also seen if you look at the images displayed on the accounts of celebrities such as *@gitasav, @megaiskanti* wrapped in their daily activities on social media.

In particular, the various interpretations of the Islamic command lie in two problems: avoiding human photography and the veil. Conservative scholars banned human photography and encouraged veils for women (Henning & Baker, 2021). In contrast, moderate and liberal scholars allow human photography and consider the veil unnecessary in their interpretation. Different interpretations can be expected to flow into brand practices and consumer preferences. Despite these diverse opinions, the common underlying theme is that vulgar (explicit) appearances that encourage sexual desire of the opposite sex in any form are not allowed in either photography or video (Salam et al., 2018).

A social study examining Muslim consumers from six different countries illustrates this diversity of Muslim consumers in Islamic concepts. Respondents were asked about what dress rules are acceptable for women, and the findings revealed mixed opinions. There is strong support for full veiled clothing in Saudi Arabia, contrary to the widespread acceptance of no hijab in Lebanon and Turkey (Moaddel, 2013). This illustrates a clear difference among Muslim consumers in the acceptance of the meaning of women's clothing. This acceptability is based on religious and socio-cultural factors. Amidst the diversity of simple dress meanings, Islamic fashion has also evolved by following contemporary trends in the global fashion industry. In marketing, the Muslim fashion industry aligns itself with global trends, such as organizing fashion weeks and fashion shows. In terms of design, Islamic fashion continues to innovate, making Muslim attire more trendy and fashionable. Findings from Istiani (2015) reveal that Muslim celebrities, especially celebgrams, have contributed significantly to this development. Initially, they viewed hijab fashion as a positive representation of hijab no longer seen as old-fashioned but stylish and modern. However, over time, the hijab trend on social media sparked debate because it was seen as reducing the sacred value of the hijab itself. Hijab fashion on social media tends to highlight the secular and materialistic lifestyle of modern Muslim women rather than the religious essence of covering the aurat.

Muslim celebrities use social media as a means of communication to share hijab fashion content based on three main motives: appreciation, inspiration, and existence. The appreciation motive stems from their belief that social media is an easy, practical, and effective communication platform with broad outreach, making it an ideal tool for disseminating information. Meanwhile, the inspiration motive reflects the desire of Muslim celebrities to inspire others by showing that wearing the hijab can be fashionable and in line with current trends, thus breaking the perception that Muslim attire is outdated or unsuitable for young people. Through social media, they carry out syi'ar or da'wah by showing that Muslim women's clothing can follow popular culture while remaining unique and stylish. This is also supported by their professional background in the hijab industry, such as being models, fashion designers, writers, and entrepreneurs, which encourages them to stay updated with the latest hijab trends and consistently create creative content in line with the development of Indonesia's hijab fashion.

The existence motive drives Muslim celebrities to actively present themselves through hijab fashion content as a form of self-actualization and to showcase their uniqueness by blending Islamic fashion with global trends and personal hijab styles. They aim to create content that is relatable not only for those who wear the hijab but also for those who do not. This continuous effort to maintain their presence on social media reflects their desire to be widely recognized, especially in Indonesia. Their creativity in managing social media accounts—ranging from selecting themes, locations, makeup, clothing, to accessories—makes their content unique and distinct from others. By consistently producing contemporary hijab fashion content, they build their popularity and contribute to the growing awareness of Muslim fashion trends in Indonesia.

3.3 Hijab and religious commodification on social media

As the largest Islamic religion in Indonesia, Hijab is certainly an identity that can be accepted by most Muslims in various social environments. In the socio-cultural context, the hijab is well penetrated in social, cultural, artistic, educational, health, legal, political and other conditions. The presence of hijab has entered spaces that support visual culture, including through content on social media such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, the hijab trend is present to color the hijab style of Indonesians through various accounts of celebrities who bring both positive and negative impacts. These contents include instructions on how to wear a stylish, unique, modern, distinctive, and so on. The magnitude of the reaction of the Indonesian people to the content in Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and so on, then paved the way for the commercialization of hijab which was then called "commodification".

Commodification is change in value or function of goods or services into commodities (Banindro, 2018). Commodification is also created due to cultural development (Agger, 2012). The interaction between the market and religion has led to the commodification of religion as well. According to Pattana Kitiarsa The process by which religion takes the form of a commodity and signifies a "shift in piety at the individual and collective level from obligation to consumption" is known as "commodification of religion". It can be concluded that religious commodification examines the role of religion in influencing the development and expansion of commercial culture, consumer behavior, and market dynamics. It involves turning religious beliefs into products that are viable for human consumption. Once commercialized, religion will turn into a commodity (Rachmawati, 2021).

The commodification of religion is also driven by advances in technology, information, urbanization and economic growth which affects the way people express their faith. Unlike the previous era, this commodification allows Muslims to express their faith through various items that bear the name of Islam. For example, in everyday life, we observe how people read prayer books, wear Muslim clothes, watch movies or read Islamic books, save money in Islamic banks *(Sharia)*, perform *Umrah*, go to Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ), and buy toothpaste labeled Islamic.

The commercialization of religion is an interactive relationship between religion and the market. These relationships can then identify the religions involved in the consumer market and culture. On the other hand, the commercialization of religion deals with the involvement of religion in the growth and development of commercial culture, consumption, and market processes. The commercialization of religion is a complex historical and cultural construct, but its commercial nature remains very real. They are reproduced in a specific cultural context and then need a cultural framework to emphasize their symbolic socio-economic significance. Commercialization is a process that actually creates and contains channels for the local and global market economy and the postmodern religious boom. Commercialization does not seek to create new forms of religion and movements that are contrary to previous religious beliefs and practices, but rather commercialization commodifies religion, transforming religious spiritual activities into commodities that are worthy of public consumption.

However, as time goes by and commercialization changes, especially religion and religious values continue to follow the trend of globalization such as the use of hijab in modern times. Business is increasing, various brands of Muslim clothing and their hijab in various forms have entered economic life. Bloggers, Celebgrams, and YouTubers also do not want to be left behind by displaying a variety of photos, images and videos that are aired on their respective accounts along with various accessories with backgrounds constructed in such a way. The development of hijab continues to change from time to time. Therefore, Islam is not only considered a theoretical or doctrinal religion as contained only in the Qur'an and al-Hadith, but must also be seen as a historical, social, cultural, economic and political phenomenon (Rozaki, 2013).

In its development, the meaning of hijab or hijab has undergone significant changes in meaning. The complex hijab phenomenon is not only a religious identity, but also a cultural identity, especially the culture of modern society today (Farhan & Islamiyah, 2019). Muslim fashion industry has also increased, with the presence of various hijab brands that can be inspired by various content from social media accounts of Bloggers, Celebgrams and YouTubers. The content creator does not want to be left behind and airs a variety of content that it hopes can anesthetize its followers through images, photos and videos. The commercialization of religion makes Muslims express their beliefs through various goods called Islam. The rise of Islamic commercialization has led to public consumption that Islamic products are also related to individual identities. The consumption of Islamic products is often a sign of high status in society. Commercialization of hijab through the online media become one of the links developed as one of the attractions so that hijab is used to perpetuate Muslim fashion industry.

This effect is a series that cannot be separated from the development of Instagram, YouTube and TikTok content, such as trendy hijab that popularizes certain hijab brands through commercial messages from celebrities, YouTubers (*Endorsement*). The content reflects the market trend of Indonesia's middle class. Where this middle class dominates the consumptive culture. Due to the many styles of hijab that appeal to this community, many shops, markets, supermarkets, websites *e-commerce* such as Shopee, Lazada, Instagram, and so on. selling its products. If in the past it was only dominated by simple square colors and shapes, now hijab has changed according to fashion, brand, shape, motif, type of fabric, and so on. This change is slowly showing positive results, marked by an increasing demand for hijab in the community. Now in Indonesia it is very easy to see Muslim women wearing hijab. Hijab is not a barrier to activities; all private and government agencies allow the use of hijab.

Hijab as an obligation to cover women's aurat in relation to *fashion industry* seems to have degenerated into a class certificate (Rachmawati, 2021). The fashion of a hijab that is glamorous and tied to the neck, does not cover the chest and even is open is displayed by dancing, making the hijab increasingly strong following the fashion industry in the online media. This hijab culture is irrelevant to the teachings of Islam itself if you want to show your social class by buying hijab by buying halal products. The commercialization of Islam

in the hijab should be more towards strengthening religious values and the hijab as an identity for Muslim women.

4. Conclusion

The increase in the trend of hijab style through social media which has many followers, especially the name "celebgram" seems to have an effect on the development of Indonesian fashion industry and this opens up opportunities for fashion trend commodities and hijab trends in Indonesia. Muslim celebrities understand hijab fashion in Indonesia as a positive trend and a negative trend with alternating meanings. Muslim celebrities have a dual motive in using social media as a means of communication related to hijab fashion which consists of attraction motifs, inspirational motifs and existential motifs. Social media facilitates the interaction and inspiration of Muslim women in all matters related to the beauty of Muslim women by covering the aurah and also sharing experiences about Islam. The meaning of hijab fashion has become more modern and tends to be secular. Muslim fashion celebrities as *trendsetter* Hijab must set a good example according to Islamic religious rules in wearing hijab, not only because of the increase in the fashion industry. By utilizing social media, hijab as a religious commodity in the fashion industry seems to be able to be communicated as a cultural product.

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Not available.

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Not available.

Conflict of Interest
The author declares no conflict of interest.

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