

The Development of Hijab in the 21st Century

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Introduction

The "hijab" is one of the most important clothing products for Muslim women. It refers to a part of clothes that mainly covers the wearer's head, which is one of the central elements in the wardrobe of Muslim women. The word "hijab" means generally "fence" or "curtain" in an Arabic word. However, it has also a meaning which is women should cover their heads in public in Islam. The main reason for wearing hijab to Muslim women is that the veil is an expression of religious and cultural beliefs (Hannan, 2010).

The population of hijab wearer is increasing in the Western region due to a large number of immigrants who live in this area. Therefore, some the apparel companies developed hijab collection in their brands. For example, in 2016, Dolce & Cabana presented new and current hijab collection line for Muslim women in their runway show. In 2017 Nike also launched a special hijab collection for Muslim women athletes. These current hijab designs introduced by the several luxury brands are associated with a combination of Muslim traditions and fashion trends to satisfy the current target customer. With these trends, the purposes of this study are to examine and evaluate the current hijabs and create a new hijab collection according to the wearer's need and preference. For this study, the seven steps design model suggested by Watkins (2008) were selected and modified. The modified design steps for this study are consists of five steps: (a) research, (b) definition, (c) idea generation, (d) design development, and (e) evaluation.

Design Process

Research: In this stage, the goal was to discover the importance and current trends of hijab through the literature review and pre-focus group interview. Based on the literature review, the researcher found the background information about hijab, the reason for wearing the hijab, and the problem with the current hijab designs. Six women with at least 12 years' experience wearing the hijab participated in the pre-focus group interview.

Definition: The data collected from the pre-focus group interview was analyzed to develop the design criteria. The results indicated the several important related to hijab; wearing the hijab is totally the wearer's choice; there is no rules and requirement for wearing the hijab. The current hijab was also evaluated in terms of wrapping style, fabrics, colors, quality, and hijab brands/price.

Idea Generation: Six hijab, two for special occasions and four for daily use, were designed based on the results of the pre-focus group interview. The wrapping styles included two Saudi, one Tunisian, one Pakistani, one Afghanistani, and one Iraqi style because all participants preferred different wrapping styles. All six hijabs had different sizes depending on the wrapping style in order to create an appropriately draped shape. Five hijabs used the knitted fabrics, which is comfortable and stretchable,

otherwise, one hijab for special occasions used a woven fabric, which is non-stretch fabric. For sensitive wearers, three hijabs utilized only 100% cotton fabric; the others used polyester blends. To satisfy participants' color preferences, each hijab design included solid color options, but not only one color.

Design Development: The researcher developed the patterns by using the flat pattern technique. To find the correct size, muslin mock-ups were made and tested with different wrapping styles because the hijabs require different width and length of hijab to create a nice appearance for each the wrapping style. Three different sizes were finalized based on muslin mock-up: 74 by 31.5 inches for Saudi, Tunisian, and Afghanistani wrapping styles, 77 by 31 inches for the Pakistani wrapping style, and 74 by 24 inches for the Iraqi wrapping style. In addition, two hijabs for special occasions applied the EFb1 (*ASTM D 6193-16*, p. 532) in *Annual book of ASTM standards (2016)* to provide a more elegant and cleaner edge. For daily hijabs, three different edge constructions were applied: three-threaded wide serge, three-threaded narrow serge, and three-threaded rolled. The first two are often used in current hijabs whereas the last one was a new construction technique applied in hijab design.



Figure 1. Six new hijab designs

Evaluation: The researcher evaluated the six new hijabs through the post-focus group interview. The results revealed that everyone was more satisfied with knitted hijabs (Styles A, C, D, E, and F) than the woven hijab (Style B). For special occasion hijabs (Styles A and B), participants preferred more high-quality fabrics, such as silk and chiffon, even if they needed to pay more. They preferred the pearls decoration (Style A) more than the trim decoration (Style B). They also recommended replacing the pearls to the edges of the hijab. All participants were satisfied with the four everyday hijab styles. They especially liked the new construction technique (i.e., three-threaded rolled serge edge; Style F). They preferred dark colors (Styles B, C, D, E, and F) than light color (Style A). However, they were satisfied with the color options available because each participant had different tastes and preferences. Overall, all participants selected Style F as their most preferred hijab among the six hijab designs due to the new edge construction, knitted fabric, and color, followed by Styles A, D, E, C, and B.

Discussion

This study contributes to our knowledge of the preferences of Muslim women in regard to hijab fashion. The findings indicate that the wearers of hijab are conscious of the wearability of the headscarf as well as the appearance. Further, the researcher used the actual voices of hijab wearers to identify their preferences and needs rather than a market-based analysis. This work should be considered preliminary in terms of investigating the needs and wants of Muslim women.

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