International Journal of Environmental Sciences
ISSN: 2229-7359
Vol. 11 No. 23s, 2025
https://www.theaspd.com/ijes.php

Navigating Modesty and Fashion: A Comparative Study of Hijab Fashion Consciousness Among Iranian and Ghanaian Hijabistas

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Abstract
This study explores how fashion knowledge, uniqueness, dressing style, and motivation affect hijab fashion consciousness among Muslim women in Iran and Ghana. By exploring these influences, the research highlights how cultural and religious contexts impact hijab fashion consumption across these two distinct markets. The current study utilized a quantitative research approach, leveraging Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine data collected from 349 female participants in Iran and Ghana. A cross-country comparison was undertaken using a multi-group analysis, which explored the impact of multiple factors on fashion consciousness in the two countries. Moreover, the study identifies fashion uniqueness and motivation as key drivers of fashion consciousness, with cultural differences shaping their influence. In Ghana, fashion motivation plays a stronger role in shaping fashion consciousness. In contrast, in Iran, fashion uniqueness has a more significant impact on fashion consciousness, reflecting each country's distinct cultural and religious contexts. The findings offer strategic insights for fashion brands, designers, marketers, and policymakers targeting the global Muslim fashion segment. Marketing strategies should be culturally relevant, emphasizing contemporary trends in Ghana while aligning with modesty-focused branding in Iran. Furthermore, this study offers a unique cross-cultural examination of hijab fashion consciousness, enhancing the sparse literature on Islamic fashion. Comparing Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas enhances the understanding of how religious and cultural factors determine fashion engagement in emerging Muslim fashion markets.

Keywords*: Hijab fashion, Fashion consciousness, Islamic marketing, Cross-cultural consumer behavior*

INTRODUCTION

The hijab transcends mere religious or cultural symbolism but is a powerful symbol of faith, cultural identity, and personal expression for Muslim women worldwide (El-Bassiouny, 2018; Hassan & Harun, 2016; Karakavak & Özbölük, 2023). Hijab fashion has evolved from its traditional role into a dynamic sector that addresses religious adherence and contemporary aesthetic inclinations (El-Bassiouny, 2018; Shin et al., 2023). This dual function of the hijab underscores the hijab's role not only as an expression of modesty but also as a means of cultural participation, particularly in societies where fashion is a vital element of self-identity. This evolution has led to the rise of the hijabista, which refers to Muslim women who engage in fashion while adhering to Islamic dress codes and regulations (Alanadoly & Salem, 2022). The growing influence of social media, digital influencers, and global fashion trends has expedited the mainstreaming of modest fashion, positioning hijab fashion as a key segment within the global clothing industry (Hassan & Harun, 2016; Poulis et al., 2024).

The consumption of hijab fashion is a complex and culturally nuanced phenomenon that varies significantly across different geographical and societal contexts (Ajala, 2018; Karakavak & Özbölük, 2023). While hijab is the universal symbolic representation of modesty in the Muslim world, how it is interpreted and incorporated into daily life can differ markedly between countries (Shadid & Van Koningsveld, 2005; Susilawati et al., 2021). These factors are rooted in religious beliefs and shaped by

social, cultural, and economic contexts (Alanadoly & Salem, 2022; Workman & Lee, 2011). For example, the rise of the "hijabista" phenomenon, where women blend fashionable outfits with Shariah-compliant dress codes, reflects a growing trend where fashion consciousness is intertwined with religious observance (Alanadoly & Salem, 2022; Williams & Kamaludeen, 2017). This trend is particularly evident in regions where Muslim women have greater autonomy and access to education, allowing them to navigate their identities in ways that are both faithful to their beliefs and reflective of their personal style preferences. Despite the growing commercial importance of hijab fashion, a gap persists in comprehending how cultural and religious factors shape the fashion consciousness of Muslim women in many different nations. Although many studies have investigated the motives for donning modest fashion (Karakavak & Özbölük, 2023), there is a paucity of research comparing hijab fashion consumption across culturally diverse Muslim populations. Iran and Ghana present a compelling comparison. For example, Iran, a predominantly Muslim country with state-imposed dress regulations, mandates modesty as both a legal and cultural standard (Nabiloo, 2024). In contrast, Ghana, with a minority Muslim demographic, showcases a more varied and adaptable fashion environment where hijab adoption is influenced by individual preference and communal factors (Prempeh, 2022). The different environments create distinctive consumer behaviors, demanding an analysis of how fashion knowledge, unique clothing style, and motivation shape hijab fashion consciousness in each context.

Understanding hijab fashion consciousness is particularly essential in an Islamic marketing context, as the brands and designers' endeavor to balance religious values with modern consumer preferences. By examining the complexities of hijab fashion, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the various factors that impact the clothing choices of Muslim women, amidst the rising global popularity of hijab-inspired attire (Hassan & Harun, 2016; Karakavak & Özbölük, 2023). As the hijab continues to evolve as both a religious symbol and a fashion statement, studying these influences will help to comprehend better how Muslim women navigate their fashion choices in a way that is both culturally and religiously resonant (Hassan & Harun, 2016). Fashion consciousness, indicative of an individual's awareness and engagement with fashion trends (Poulis et al., 2024), significantly influences purchase behaviors. Muslim women's fashion consciousness is shaped by their religious identity, cultural standards, and exposure to international fashion trends (Arab, 2022; Williams & Kamaludeen, 2017).

This study investigates the relationship between fashion consciousness and hijab fashion consumption among Iranian and Ghanaian women who wear hijab. Using a quantitative approach, this research uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to uncover the key factors influencing hijab fashion consciousness in two distinct cultural settings. The research further includes a multi-group analysis to assess the impact of fashion-related factors in Iran and Ghana. The outcomes of this study will inform and support the development of culturally sensitive marketing initiatives, product designs, and policies that resonate with Muslim consumers in various cultural environments, ultimately benefiting fashion manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers. Moreover, the research enhances the debate on Islamic fashion consumption by elucidating how cultural diversity shapes the development of the modest fashion industry.

HYPOTHESES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fashion consciousness is a concept that reflects a person's deep engagement with fashion-related matters. According to Talaat (2022), a fashion-conscious individual is highly involved in all aspects of fashion. It describes a person's knowledge of current fashion, their skill in selecting and styling clothing that aligns with the latest trends, and their sensitivity to emerging fashion influences (Talaat, 2022). As noted by Chang (2019), fashion-conscious individuals tend to be particularly attentive to their appearance and physical attractiveness. While being fashion-conscious does not necessarily imply a high level of fashion expertise or creativity, it does indicate a personal commitment to looking stylish and put-together (Hayat et al., 2022; Talaat, 2022).

Fashion-conscious individuals are typically attuned to the latest trends, frequently updating their wardrobes, and they derive enjoyment from shopping. They are highly attuned to the visual elements and fashion trends presented in advertisements, which can shape their style preferences (Talaat, 2022). In the context of hijab fashion, Muslim women express their fashion consciousness by adopting various creative styles when wearing the hijab. These women's familiarity with hijab fashion allowed them to cultivate a distinctive sense of style that signaled their Muslim affiliation.

According to social identity theory, people tend to classify themselves as members of specific social groups

and internalize the norms, values, and characteristics of those groups (Arshad et al., 2022; Hornsey, 2008). For Muslim women, Islam serves as a crucial identity marker, distinguishing them from non-Muslims (Fernández-Reino et al., 2022). By embracing fashion trends that reflect the faith, a Muslim woman can convey and reinforce her spiritual identity.

Fashion serves as a powerful medium for self-expression, enabling individuals to visually convey their personality, values, and identity (Suh, 2020). The fashion choices individuals make can reveal their identity, aspirations, and social connections. As a result, Muslim consumers who are interested in fashion may seek to express their Muslim identity through their clothing, and accessories and to identify with the cultural and visual representations that are associated with their faith. This identification is likely to drive their consumption of hijab fashion. Therefore, fashion consciousness is hypothesized to significantly influence hijab fashion consumption among Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas.

H1: Fashion consciousness significantly influences hijab fashion consumption among Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas.

Buyers pursue knowledge to alleviate concerns and vagueness related to their buying choices (Kim & Lennon, 2010; Yadav et al., 2024). Fashion knowledge can be acquired through various channels, including personal connections such as friends, family, and respected individuals, known as references (Hassan & Harun, 2016). Information resources can be broadly divided into personal and impersonal categories, with examples such as friends and mass media, respectively (Karimian et al., 2022). Consumers often combine these sources to enhance the overall benefit of their information search, as reference groups provide only partial information.

Fashion consumers learn about emerging clothing trends through the identification and use of diverse information channels (Gunawan et al., 2022). Certain buyers, particularly individuals with a strong interest in fashion dedicate considerable time and resources to gather related information, which can foster a deep connection to fashion trends. According to Ocktavia et al. (2024), individuals with a strong interest in fashion utilize mass media as an information source more frequently than those with less interest. Ann et al. (2022) further specified that older female consumers primarily obtain fashion information from sources such as catalogs, social events, store displays, fashion periodicals, and personal acquaintances.

From this perspective, it appears that a positive connection exists between the scope of information sources and fashion consciousness. Stated differently, individuals who have access to a wider array of fashion knowledge are more apt to demonstrate a heightened fashion consciousness. Based on this understanding, the hypothesis is that fashion knowledge significantly influences fashion consciousness among Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas.

H2: Fashion knowledge significantly influences consciousness among Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas.

Uniqueness in fashion refers to consumers' inclination to acquire distinctive items that set them apart (Ocktavia et al., 2024). This desire for individuality motivates them to seek exclusive goods, services, and experiences (Calderón Urbina et al., 2021). This desire is often expressed publicly through self-presentation behaviors (Cho et al., 2022). When individuals feel that their sense of uniqueness is lacking, they are more likely to shop for distinctive clothing to fulfill their need for uniqueness (Yudha et al., 2024). The desire for individuality is especially crucial for high-involvement goods like apparel, given their visibility and role in conveying one's identity (Ocktavia et al., 2024). As a result, an individual's desire for uniqueness is a direct driver of their unique fashion style.

In addition, it has been shown that fashion consumer groups display diverse levels of awareness regarding changing aesthetic trends, and they sometimes utilize these trends to differentiate themselves (Cesareo et al., 2023). Further, Zhang et al. (2023) established a link between the pursuit of uniqueness and a greater propensity for fashion innovation. Within the hijab fashion industry, the creation of a unique and recognizable style is common among designers and retailers. The abundance of hijab styles and patterns has built a strong and loyal community around this fashion trend. As Muslim women gain a deeper understanding of Islamic dress, they have become more adventurous in how they dress, experimenting with mixing and matching different elements (Akanni & Adam, 2023). As a result of the focus on creative and unique ideas, hijab fashion now stands out as more fashionable and distinctive. Fashion-conscious individuals, in particular, are drawn to high levels of uniqueness in fashion, using their fashion choices to differentiate themselves. These choices are often seen as original, novel, and rarely adopted by the rest (Ocktavia et al., 2024; Yudha et al., 2024), enhancing their self-image.

H3: Fashion uniqueness significantly influences consciousness among Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas.
Consumers' dressing style often reflects their personalities, expressing their interest in clothing and their approach to dressing (Karakavak & Özbölük, 2023). Shared fashion choices can lead to the formation of "style tribes," where individuals express a common identity through their clothing and associated beliefs. Entities like designers, brands, and retailers often shape style tribes by establishing distinct aesthetics that gain consumer traction (Kamarulzaman & Shaari, 2023). Individual consumers, due to their unique perspectives, often develop personal interpretations of fashion styles, which are then expressed through their clothing choices.
Hassan and Harun (2016) demonstrated that fashion consciousness is related to individual dressing style, implying a connection between clothing selection and self-concept (Kamarulzaman & Shaari, 2023; Sholihan & Elizabeth, 2023). Clothing choices significantly influence an individual's perception of themselves. As such, those with a strong focus on personal style tend to exhibit heightened fashion awareness.
H4: Dressing style significantly influences consciousness among Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas.
Motivation is the underlying reason behind a particular behavior (Bandhu et al., 2024). Gredler describes motivation as "the force that determines individual inclination to act or refrain from action." It is characterized by the close integration of belief systems, perceptions, values, interests, and actions (Boryshkevych & Yakubiv, 2023). Consequently, the investigation of motivation has encompassed varied methodologies, with some focusing on cognitive behaviors. For instance, strategic planning and self-evaluation. And others on non-cognitive elements, like personal beliefs and attitudes, or a combined perspective. Behavior is influenced by motivation, which is marked by a state of readiness and a willingness to act voluntarily. In the realm of consumer behavior, motivation is a key factor that stimulates the desire or needs for a product (Liang et al., 2022). Furthermore, motivation provides consumers with a range of reasons to make a purchase, which ultimately drives their decision-making process (Rayi & Aras, 2021).
Numerous factors have been found to contribute to consumers' clothing purchasing decisions (Diedericks et al., 2024; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013). Early studies emphasized that clothing purchases are often driven by the need for protection against various environmental factors, including physical, social, and psychological elements, which play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior (Lundblad & Davies, 2016; Ngo et al., 2024). According to Shan et al. (2022), clothing plays a vital role in projecting a desired self-image and reflecting one's lifestyle. Through clothing choices, individuals convey aspects of personality, values, and beliefs to others, as apparel serves as a medium for nonverbal communication, transmitting symbolic and expressive messages that reveal one's identity (Karakavak & Özbölük, 2023). Atika et al. (2024) discovered that adolescents' clothing purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by their desire to conform to social norms and gain recognition from their peers, underscoring the role of social pressures in shaping their fashion choices. Social norms play a crucial role in fashion, as individuals tend to prioritize peer acceptance and social validation when making fashion decisions, demonstrating the powerful influence of social pressures on personal style and fashion preferences (Sung & Yan, 2020). More recently, Khelladi et al. (2024) revealed that mature consumers' purchasing decisions for fashionable clothing are driven by two primary motivations. Which are the pursuit of personal pleasure and enjoyment, as well as the practical need for clothing that is suitable for specific occasions or seasons. The current study posits that fashion-conscious consumers have a high level of motivation to engage with fashion, primarily because buying trendy clothing allows them to express their personal style, elevate their social standing, and demonstrate their refined taste within their social circle (Khare et al., 2012; Shetty & Kotian, 2023).
H5: Fashion motivation significantly influences consciousness among Iranian and Ghanaian hijabistas.

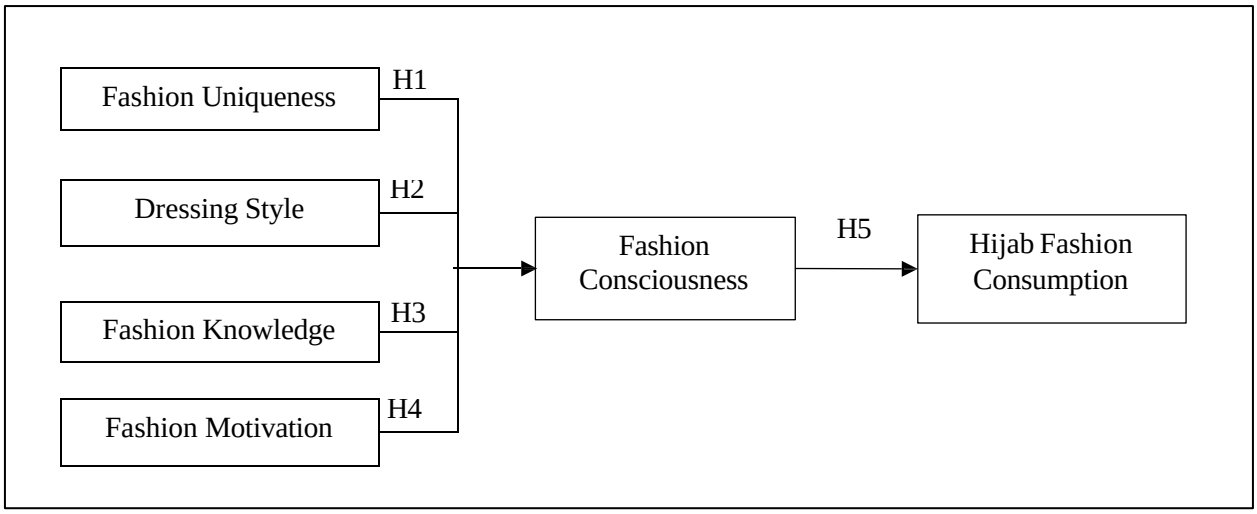


Figure 1: The Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology and Measurement

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), quantitative research is a systematic investigation of social or human problems that tests a theory of measurable variables using statistical analysis to validate its predictions. Therefore, this study utilizes a quantitative methodology. The instrument used in this study was developed by adapting and refining items from previous fashion research studies. Specifically, constructs related to dressing style were drawn from Hassan and Harun (2016), which were adapted from Wan et al. (2001). The items measuring sources of information and motivation were also derived from Hassan and Harun (2016), which were adapted from Nam et al. (2007). The instrument also included items related to fashion uniqueness, as identified Jin and Son (2014), and fashion consciousness as conceptualized by O'Cass et al. (2013). Furthermore, the hijab fashion consumption items were adapted from Hassan and Harun (2016), who built upon the foundational work of Lertwannawit and Mandhachitara (2012). Incorporating established measures into the study design enhances the validity and reliability of the findings, while also permitting meaningful comparisons with previous research in the field (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002). The study's instrument was refined through a pilot test to ensure its clarity, relevance, and effectiveness in measuring the constructs of interest.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

Hossan et al. (2023) define sampling as the process of picking a portion of individuals from a broader population to be included in a study. This selection process ensures that the chosen individuals accurately represent the broader group from which they were drawn. The study included a target population of females with a genuine interest in fashion and hijab, who are the primary consumers and stakeholders in the hijab fashion industry.

This study targeted female professionals from different organizations and female students from esteemed universities, including Tehran University, Tehran, Iran, and the Islamic University College, Ghana (IUCG). These individuals were chosen because they are likely to deeply understand the cultural, social, and economic factors influencing hijab fashion trends.

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, a method where individuals are chosen based on predefined characteristics relevant to the research (Sharma, 2017). This approach was deemed suitable because it allows for identifying and recruiting participants who are information-rich and knowledgeable about the research topic. By selecting participants based on their demographics, interests, and experiences, the study aimed to collect high-quality data that is relevant, reliable, and generalizable to the target population.

Following data collection, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed for analysis. This statistical method is appropriate for investigating intricate relationships among variables and assessing proposed hypotheses (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2019).

Data Analysis

The study utilized PLS-SEM, a method often favored for its predictive power, which aligns with the relatively underdeveloped theoretical framework in hijab fashion research. By facilitating a three-stage process comprising model specification, measurement model evaluation, and structural model evaluation, PLS-SEM allows researchers to investigate intricate research models, confirm results, and develop a deeper insight into the connections among variables (Hair et al., 2014). In addition, various statistical tools were used for data analysis, including tables, bar graphs, and pie charts. The analysis was performed utilizing Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel software. Furthermore, numerical codes were assigned to the closed-ended questions, varying scales based on the responses. The reliability of the collected data was assessed with Cronbach's coefficient.

This study utilized the PLS-SEM method for analyzing its conceptual framework. A predictive modeling strategy grounded in variance, PLS-SEM is especially well-suited for the evaluation of complicated models involving many variables (Shmueli et al., 2019). It integrates multiple regression and principal component analyses to evaluate structural equation models. This method was particularly suitable given the complexity and multitude of manifest variables and relationships within the proposed model (Hair et al., 2017).

SmartPLS software (version 4.1.0.0) assessed the measurement and structural models (Ringle et al., 2020). The measurement model examined the relationships linking unobservable constructs to their measured variables. To evaluate the conceptual framework and associated hypotheses, the study utilized a structural model to analyze the anticipated pathways between independent and dependent variables. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of this study. PLS algorithm and bootstrapping techniques were utilized to estimate the models and derive path coefficients, p-values, and R2 values (Sarstedt et al., 2017). These outputs offered valuable insights into the model's predictive power and the relationships among key variables. Overall, PLS-SEM proved to be a robust and appropriate method for testing the hypotheses and uncovering the underlying mechanisms of entrepreneurial intent.

Group analysis can be applied in both covariance-based structural equation modeling (CBSEM) and Partial Least Squares (PLS) methods (Chin, 1998; Sarstedt et al., 2016). This method simultaneously compares path coefficients of different groups' data (Sarstedt et al., 2011; Sarstedt et al., 2016). Using a categorical moderator, the collected data was technically divided into two distinct groups to examine two separate models. The path coefficients derived from these different data sets are typically distinct. Consequently, conducting a multi-group analysis enables the testing of null hypotheses (Henseler et al., 2016; Sarstedt et al., 2011). Multi-group analysis was employed within this framework to investigate potential significant differences among the coefficients. This study grouped participants based on their nationality, specifically Iranian and Ghanaian.

The SmartPLS software was used to analyze a path model incorporating latent variables and to carry out the multi-group analysis (MGA) (Hair et al., 2021; Richter et al., 2016). PLS-SEM is a robust multivariate statistical method that facilitates the simultaneous evaluation of both measurement and structural elements within a conceptual model, making it well-suited for MGA, particularly when employing nonparametric techniques (Hair et al., 2014; Ringle et al., 2015). Sample sizes of 221 and 410 supported the analysis for the two groups, which were deemed sufficient based on established PLS-SEM guidelines. Determining the appropriate sample size is crucial for achieving reliable results. General guidelines suggest a minimum of approximately 100 samples (Reinartz et al., 2009), while other criteria such as the "ten times rule" (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2011) and statistical power (Hair et al., 2017) can also inform sample size decisions. However, when the path coefficient with the minimum absolute magnitude is not known, more specific estimates are required, with a sample size of at least 160 (based on the inverse square root method) or 146 (based on the gamma exponential method) recommended to achieve reliable results (Cheah et al., 2020).

Two nonparametric approaches were applied for the MGA: Henseler's MGA (Henseler et al., 2009) and the permutation test (Chin & Dibbern, 2010). Additionally, to ensure the validity of comparisons across groups, measurement invariance was confirmed using the MICOM (Measurement Invariance of Composite Models) approach, a developed technique tailored for PLS-SEM (Henseler et al., 2016). This comprehensive methodology underscores the study's rigorous approach to model estimation and group comparison.

Findings

Respondents' Profiles

The sample for this study included only female respondents, as Muslim women predominantly wear the hijab. Out of the total 349 participants, all 349 (100%) were female. The sample demographics were highly homogeneous, indicating that the study successfully targeted the intended demographic, allowing for an in-depth examination of the factors influencing hijab fashion consciousness among hijabistas in Iran and Ghana.

Age Distribution of Respondents

The sample exhibited a range of ages among the respondents. The age distribution was characterized by a significant presence of young adults, with most respondents falling within the 20 to 34-year age range. Of the 349 participants, 34 individuals (9.8%) were 19 or younger, making them the youngest group. The largest segments were young adults, with 65 respondents (18.6%) aged 20-24 years and 84 respondents (24.1%) aged 25-29 years. Middle-aged adults were also well-represented, with 75 participants (21.5%) aged 30-34 and 39 participants (11.2%) aged 35-39. There were fewer respondents in the older age groups, with 21 individuals (6%) aged 40-44 years, 12 individuals (3.4%) aged 45-49 years, and 19 individuals (5.4%) aged 50 years or older.

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age	Responses	Percentage
19 and below	34	9.8
20 – 24 years	65	18.6
25 – 29 years	84	24.1
30 – 34 years	75	21.5
35 – 39 years	39	11.2
40 – 44 years	21	6.0
45 – 49 years	12	3.4
50 years and above	19	5.4
Total	349	100.0

Nationality Distribution of Respondents

The sample showed a diverse range of nationalities among respondents. Participants were Ghanaians, making up 44.69 % of the sample, followed by Iranians at 46.13%. The remaining 9.2% included individuals from Pakistan, Nigeria, Indonesia, and other countries. This diversity, with a focus on Ghanaians and Iranians, enhances the study's cross-cultural relevance while also reflecting the study's geographical context. The inclusion of various nationalities adds valuable perspectives, contributing to a more comprehensive analysis.

Table 2: Nationality Distribution

Nationality	Responses	Percentage
Ghanaian	156	44.69
Iranian	161	46.13
Other	32	9.16
Total	349	100

Model Assessment

Measurement Model Comparison Across Groups

Table 2 presents reliability and validity metrics for six constructs related to fashion behavior: fashion knowledge (FK), fashion uniqueness (FU), dressing style (DS), fashion motivation (FM), fashion consciousness (FC), and hijab fashion consumption (HFC). According to the guidelines, the loading values should be ≥ 0.5, the average variance extracted (AVE) should be ≥ 0.5, and the composite reliability (CR) should be ≥ 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021; Ramayah et al., 2018). As illustrated in Table 3, for each group

of results, the majority of indicator loadings on their corresponding latent variables exceeded 0.7. Composite reliability, assessed through rho_c, also shows high values above 0.88, confirming the constructs' reliability. The AVE value for each construct exceeded the recommended 0.5 level, suggesting that the variance explained by the constructs is substantially greater than the error variance, thus demonstrating strong convergent validity. Taken together, these indicators confirm the reliability and validity of the constructs in assessing the targeted fashion-related behaviors.

Table 3: Assessment of Measurement Model

Construct/Measurement Items	**Loading**			**CR (Rho_c)**			**AVE**		
	Full	Ghana Group	Irana Group	Full	Ghana Group	Iran Group	Full	Ghana Group	Iran Group
Fashion Knowledge (FK)				0.922	0.931	0.902	0.663	0.692	0.606
FK1	0.836	0.857	0.779						
FK2	0.803	0.818	0.769						
FK3	0.802	0.838	0.709						
FK5	0.832	0.849	0.810						
FK6	0.805	0.824	0.783						
FK7	0.807	0.805	0.816						
Fashion Uniqueness (FU)				0.899	0.904	0.890	0.641	0.654	0.618
FU1	0.800	0.792	0.816						
FU3	0.796	0.807	0.775						
FU4	0.767	0.774	0.753						
FU5	0.810	0.829	0.774						
FU7	0.830	0.839	0.810						
Dressing Style (DS)				0.909	0.911	0.909	0.770	0.775	0.770
DS2	0.929	0.937	0.917						
DS3	0.897	0.908	0.873						
DS4	0.802	0.789	0.840						
Fashion Motivation (FM)				0.922	0.919	0.926	0.663	0.655	0.676
FM1	0.759	0.756	0.762						
FM2	0.814	0.818	0.805						

FM3	0.862	0.855	0.874						
FM4	0.798	0.772	0.841						
FM5	0.828	0.812	0.855						
FM7	0.820	0.837	0.792						
Fashion Consciousness (FC)				0.903	0.901	0.909	0.757	0.752	0.769
FC2	0.893	0.888	0.902						
FC3	0.857	0.851	0.872						
FC4	0.860	0.862	0.857						
Hijab Fashion Consumption (HFC)				0.929	0.931	0.926	0.766	0.771	0.758
HFC1	0.880	0.880	0.881						
HFC2	0.857	0.858	0.853						
HFC3	0.881	0.890	0.866						
HFC4	0.885	0.885	0.883						

Discriminant Validity

As noted by Chin (2010) and Hair et al. (2017), discriminant validity concerns the ability to distinguish one latent variable from other constructs in a model. According to Henseler et al. (2015) and Voorhees et al. (2016), the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio has emerged as an effective standard to assess the discriminant validity. Earlier research by Henseler et al. (2015) recommended two possible HTMT thresholds, 0.85 and 0.95, for confirming discriminant validity. In this study, the threshold of 0.95 is applied to evaluate the discriminant validity. The HTMT values presented in Table 4 for all analyzed groups are below the 0.95 criterion, thus confirming discriminant validity.

Assessment of Invariance Measurement Across Groups

When utilizing SEM, particularly PLS-SEM, it is essential to confirm measurement invariance before conducting MGA to compare path coefficients across different groups, such as Ghana and Iran contexts. This necessity is highlighted by experts like Hair et al. (2014), Henseler et al. (2016), and Sarstedt et al. (2011); Sarstedt et al. (2017). Traditional techniques for evaluating measurement invariance in SEM predominantly rely on common factor models. However, PLS-SEM differs as it functions as a composite model, where latent variable scores are generated through a composite algorithm, rendering these conventional methods less suitable.

To address this challenge, Henseler et al. (2016) developed the Measurement Invariance of Composites (MICOM) approach, tailored specifically for PLS-SEM as a composite-based method. The approach is adopted in this study to ensure that measurement models are comparable across groups. The MICOM has three separate stages:

(a) Configural Invariance Assessment: Verifying that the model structure is consistent across all groups.

(b) Compositional Invariance Assessment: Confirming that composite scores are formed similarly across groups.

(c) Assessment of Equal Means and Variances: Evaluating whether the means and variances of the composites are equivalent across groups.

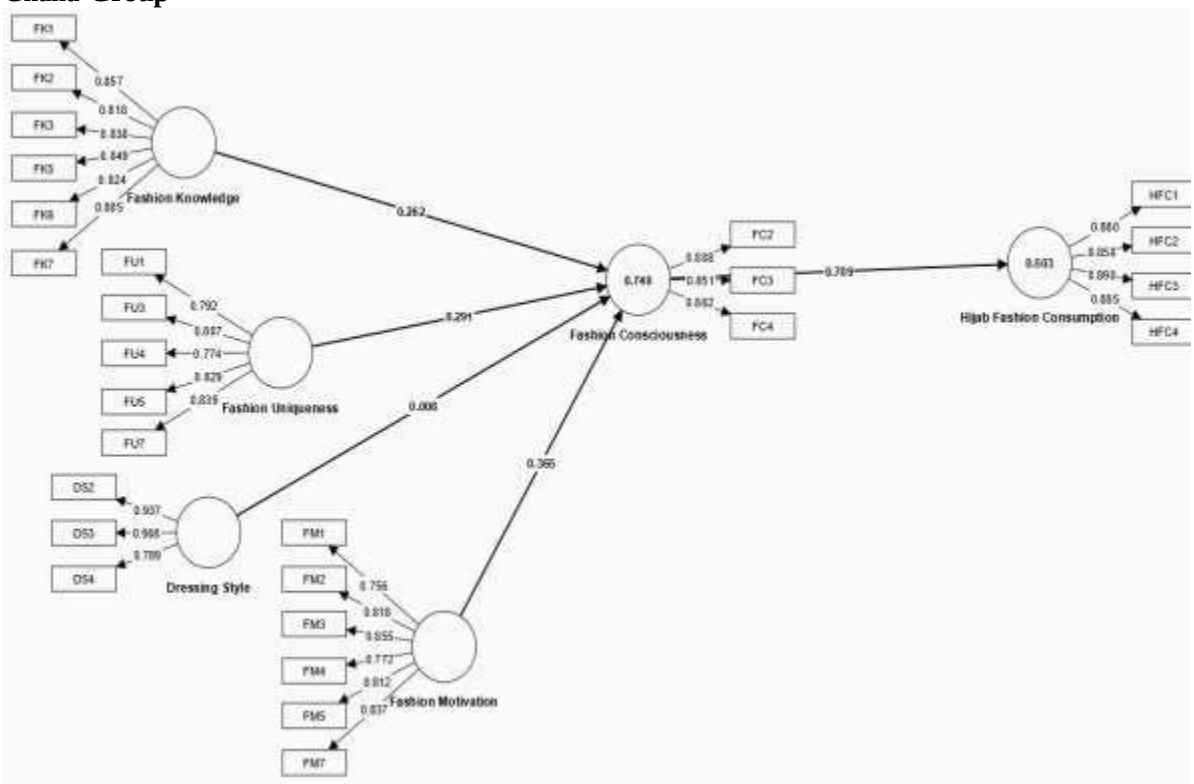
Full measurement invariance was successfully demonstrated for all groups using the MICOM approach (as reported in Table 5). This step is vital for the reliable interpretation of PLS-SEM results across Ghana and Iran, as it provides the necessary foundation for accurately comparing group-specific differences through MGA.

Analysis of the Structural Model and Multi-group Comparisons

During the second phase of the analysis, the structural models developed for all groups (full, Ghana, and Iran) were evaluated. To perform this evaluation, the researchers computed the R2 value for the endogenous constructs, which serves as a measure of how effectively the model explains the variance in the data, a method supported by Hair et al. (2014). Table 6 exhibits the R2 and adjusted R2 values for two constructs (fashion consciousness and hijab fashion consumption) across three groups: the full sample, Ghana, and Iran. These metrics indicate the explanatory power of the model that varies by construct and group. According to Hair et al. (2014), R2 values can be interpreted as indicating substantial (0.75), moderate (0.50), or weak (0.25) levels of explanatory power. For fashion consciousness, the model shows moderate to substantial explanatory power in the full sample (R2 = 0.699, adjusted R2 = 0.696), substantial explanatory power in Ghana (R2 = 0.740, adjusted R2 = 0.735), and moderate to substantial explanatory power in Iran (R2 = 0.659, adjusted R2 = 0.649). In contrast, for hijab fashion consumption, the explanatory power is lower. The R^2 values exhibit weak to moderate in the full sample (R2 = 0.411, adjusted R2 = 0.409), moderate in Ghana (R2 = 0.503, adjusted R2 = 0.501), and relatively small in Iran (R2 = 0.268, adjusted R2 = 0.263). The results reveal that the model effectively explains fashion consciousness, with the strongest results in the Ghana group for both constructs.

The assessment of the structural model and MGA, as shown in Table 7, followed the approach outlined by Henseler et al. (2009). Table 7 displays the findings of the hypothesis testing, which was conducted using a bootstrap re-sampling approach with 10,000 re-samples (Becker et al., 2022; Ramayah et al., 2018). The study revealed a significant relationship between fashion uniqueness and fashion consciousness, with the Iranian group showing a stronger positive association (a difference of -0.321) compared to the Ghanaian group. Conversely, fashion motivation demonstrated a stronger influence on fashion consciousness among the Ghanaian participants compared to their Iranian counterparts, with a difference of 0.295 in the observed effect. Significant differences were observed between the Ghanaian and Iranian groups regarding H3 and H5. Fashion uniqueness exerted a greater impact on fashion consciousness in Iran (difference: -0.321), whereas fashion motivation had a stronger effect in Ghana (difference: 0.295). Contrary, the results of this study reveal that there are no significant differences among H1, H2, and H4. The MGA confirms that the differences in the results are not significant for these hypotheses (H1, H2, and H4). In contrast, the MGA reveals significant differences for H3 and H5. Figure 2 illustrates the model assessment for the Ghana and Iran groups, providing a visual representation of the findings.

Ghana Group



Iran Group

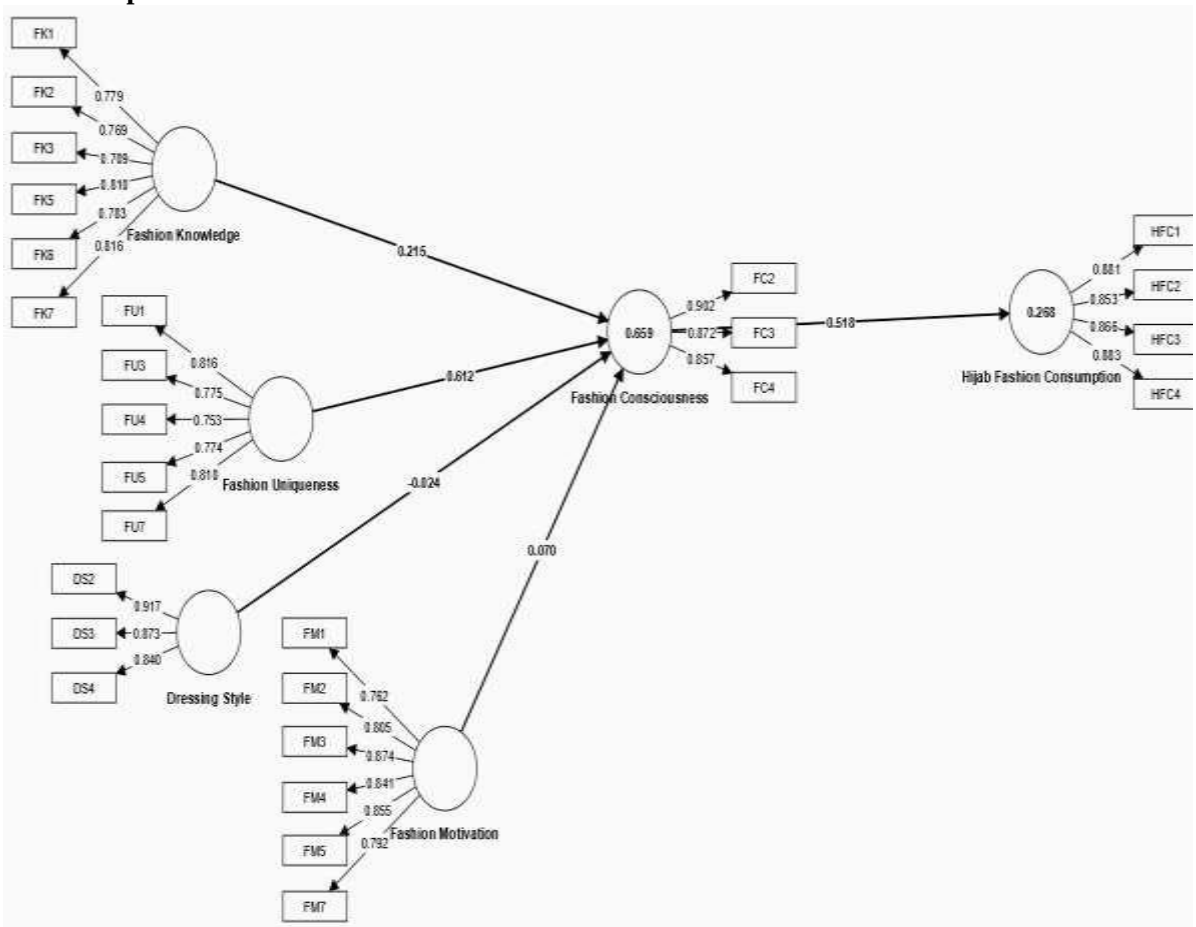


Figure 2: Results of Model Assessment between Ghana and Iran Groups

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

Constructs	DS (Full)	FC (Full)	FK (Full)	FM (Full)	FU (Full)	HFC (Full)	DS (Ghana)	FC (Ghana)	FK (Ghana)	FM (Ghana)	FU (Ghana)	HFC (Ghana)	DS (Iran)	FC (Iran)	FK (Iran)	FM (Iran)	FU (Iran)	HFC (Iran)
DS																		
FC	**0.066**						**0.073**						**0.056**					
FK	0.078	**0.837**					0.094	**0.912**					0.091	**0.689**				
FM	0.055	0.870	**0.803**				0.081	0.942	**0.901**				0.081	0.748	**0.617**			
FU	0.079	0.936	0.840	**0.907**			0.109	0.941	0.920	**0.928**			0.100	0.927	0.653	**0.876**		
HFC	0.098	0.738	0.848	0.719	**0.713**		0.098	0.818	0.895	0.800	**0.793**		0.112	0.592	0.745	0.576	**0.544**	

Table 5: Results of Invariance Measurement

Constructs	Configural invariance (Same algorithm for all groups)	Compositional invariance (Correlation = 1)		Partial measurement invariance established	Equal mean value		Equal variance		Full measurement invariance established
		C = 1	Confidence Interval (CIs)		Differences	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differences	Confidence Interval (CIs)	
DS	Yes	0.997	[0.199, 1.000]	Yes	-0.073	[-0.217, 0.208]	0.080	[-0.248, 0.273]	Yes
FC	Yes	1.000	[0.999, 1.000]	Yes	-0.014	[-0.218, 0.211]	0.099	[-0.347, 0.376]	Yes
FK	Yes	0.999	[0.998, 1.000]	Yes	-0.108	[-0.213, 0.208]	0.338	[-0.317, 0.341]	Yes
FM	Yes	1.000	[0.999, 1.000]	Yes	-0.005	[-0.208, 0.216]	0.034	[-0.340, 0.385]	Yes

FU	Yes	1.000	[0.999, 1.000]	Yes	-0.056	[-0.216, 0.205]	0.273	[-0.373, 0.404]	Yes
HFC	Yes	1.000	[0.999, 1.000]	Yes	-0.092	[-0.206, 0.215]	0.194	[-0.319, 0.364]	Yes

Table 6: R-Square (R^2) and R^2 Adjusted

Construct	R^2 (Full)	R^2 Adjusted (Full)	R^2 (Ghana)	R^2 Adjusted (Ghana)	R^2 (Iran)	R^2 Adjusted (Iran)
FC	0.699	0.696	0.740	0.735	0.659	0.649
HFC	0.411	0.409	0.503	0.501	0.268	0.263

Table 7: Results of Structural Path

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (Full)	Path Coefficient (Ghana)	Path Coefficient (Iran)	CIs [Bias corrected] (Full	CIs [Bias corrected] (Ghana)	CIs [Bias corrected] (Iran)	Path Coefficient Differences (Ghana vs. Iran)	P-Value Henseler's MGA	Supported
H1	FC → HFC	0.641	0.709	0.518	[0.536, 0.722]	[0.617, 0.778]	[0.302, 0.683]	0.191	0.054	No
H2	FK → FC	0.233	0.262	0.215	[0.123, 0.348]	[0.134, 0.417]	[0.047, 0.387]	0.048	0.668	No
H3	FU → FC	0.425*	0.291*	0.612*	[0.301, 0.548]	[0.145, 0.423]	[0.410, 0.817]	-0.321	0.011*	Yes
H4	DS → FC	-0.003	0.008	-0.024	[-0.059, 0.061]	[-0.057, 0.089]	[-0.129, 0.094]	0.032	0.640	No
H5	FM → FC	0.251*	0.365*	0.070*	[0.125, 0.376]	[0.206, 0.515]	[-0.139, 0.264]	0.295	0.021*	Yes

*Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

DISCUSSION

The study's results shed light on how hijabistas from Iran and Ghana differ culturally in their hijab fashion consciousness. In both cultural settings, the multi-group study shows that fashion-related variables have different impacts on fashion consciousness and consumption of hijab fashion.

No notable difference was observed between Ghana and Iran concerning the relationship between dressing style and fashion consciousness ($\Delta = 0.032$, $p = 0.640$). This indicates that in both nations, the influence of one's clothing style on one's awareness of fashion is rather constant. Prior studies confirm that dressing style is a key factor of fashion consciousness since it represents one's social identity and personality (Hassan & Harun, 2016; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; Wan et al., 2001). Given the similarities between Iran and Ghana regarding the significance of personal style, it stands to reason that fashion brands targeting both countries could benefit by advertising modest yet fashionable clothing.

Furthermore, the results reveal that fashion consciousness and the consumption of hijab fashion do not differ significantly between Iran and Ghana ($\Delta = 0.191$, $p = 0.054$). As noted in earlier findings, individuals with a keen sense of fashion are more likely to participate in fashion-related activities and buy up-to-date clothing (Hassan & Harun, 2016; Poulis et al., 2024). The lack of significant difference suggests that the link between fashion consciousness and hijab fashion consumption may be more universal, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. Although Iran and Ghana possess distinct fashion environments, the similar levels of fashion consciousness and hijab fashion consumption within them could be linked to the fact that fashion-conscious individuals in both countries are motivated by comparable desires for self-expression and identity development (Prempeh, 2022). Despite Iran's more stringent dress codes, the study's results indicate that fashion-conscious Iranians are likely adapting their hijab fashion consumption to express their style within legal limits, mirroring the behavior observed in Ghana (Nabiloo, 2024).

Moreover, the analysis revealed a non-significant difference ($\Delta = 0.048$, $p = 0.668$) between fashion knowledge and fashion consciousness in both Ghana and Iran. This finding suggests that fashion knowledge similarly influences fashion consciousness in both countries. Aligned with prior literature, our results highlight the significant impact of certain fashion information sources on the understanding of hijab fashion (Hassan & Harun, 2016). In line with existing research, greater exposure to knowledge sources is positively correlated with a higher degree of fashion consciousness (Ocktavia et al., 2024). This implies that individuals in Ghana and Iran who are more knowledgeable about fashion tend to show comparable levels of fashion consciousness, despite their different cultural origins. The similarity in the correlation of fashion knowledge with fashion consciousness highlights the potential for universal factors to influence fashion awareness. It emphasizes the significant role of fashion knowledge in shaping fashion consciousness across different cultural contexts.

Interestingly, the MGA reveals a significant difference ($\Delta = 0.295$, $p = 0.021$) between fashion motivation and fashion consciousness among Ghanaians and Iranians. The study indicates that fashion motivation substantially impacts fashion consciousness in Ghana compared to Iran. Ghanaian consumers who are highly motivated by fashion tend to exhibit a greater fashion consciousness. Individuals in Ghana may be more inclined to express their identity and creativity through fashion, possibly due to the country's more liberal and varied fashion environment. Consistent with earlier work, this study suggests that self-expression, social recognition, and personal identity are key factors in determining an individual's fashion consciousness (Ocktavia et al., 2024). The positive correlation between these motivations and fashion consciousness, suggests that individuals who leverage fashion as a means of conveying their identity or improving their social position tend to demonstrate a heightened awareness and interest in the latest fashion styles (Hassan & Harun, 2016). The contrasting relationship between fashion motivation and fashion consciousness observed in Ghana and Iran underscores the necessity of accounting for cultural and environmental influences when examining the complex dynamics of fashion consciousness.

Also, the analysis reveals a significant difference ($\Delta = -0.321$, $p = 0.011$) in the relationship between fashion uniqueness and fashion consciousness between Iran and Ghana. It reveals that fashion uniqueness influences

fashion consciousness more in Iran than in Ghana. Specifically, the results indicate that fashion uniqueness has a more pronounced effect on fashion consciousness in Iran compared to Ghana. The finding echoes earlier investigations that have established a connection between heightened fashion consciousness among Muslim women and their adoption of unique hijab fashion consumption practices, suggesting a positive relationship between these two factors (Hassan & Harun, 2016). Cultural differences likely explain the varying connection between fashion uniqueness and fashion consciousness in the two countries. In Ghana, social and religious norms may discourage uniqueness in fashion, leading to a narrow impact on fashion consciousness among individuals who value individuality. In contrast, Iranian consumers may be more likely to embrace uniqueness in fashion consciousness. It appears that cultural background is a key factor in determining the association between fashion uniqueness and fashion awareness. Iranian consumers are potentially more open to expressing their individuality through fashion.

The findings from the MGA comparing Ghana and Iran provide valuable insights into the cultural and behavioral differences influencing fashion consciousness and hijab fashion consumption. Dressing style and fashion knowledge similarly affect fashion consciousness in both countries. Similarly, the relationship between fashion consciousness and hijab fashion consumption is consistent across Ghana and Iran, indicating that these constructs are interconnected similarly across cultural contexts. However, the MGA also reveals significant cultural variations in the impact of other factors on fashion consciousness. For example, fashion motivation is found to play a more substantial role in shaping fashion consciousness in Ghana, suggesting that the fashion culture in Ghana is more liberal and expressive, allowing individuals to express their style and creativity freely. In contrast, the findings reveal that fashion uniqueness has a more pronounced influence on fashion consciousness in Iran, suggesting that Iranian consumers may prioritize unique and creative fashion expressions to express their individuality within the boundaries of their social and religious norms. This suggests that cultural context appears to be a significant determinant of the elements affecting fashion consciousness, as varying cultural norms and values emphasize distinct aspects of fashion.

Practical Significance

The analysis of the provided data and questionnaire suggests the following practical applications for Iranian and Ghanaian Hijabistas, concerning the connection between fashion-related factors and fashion consciousness:

1. Dressing Style and Fashion Consciousness:

Since there is no notable difference between Iran and Ghana in how dressing style influences fashion consciousness, fashion brands can apply similar strategies in both countries. Campaigns highlighting stylish and modest dressing could appeal equally to both Iranian and Ghanaian markets, suggesting that global or regional marketing approaches may be effective.

2. Fashion Consciousness and Hijab Fashion Consumption:

The similarity in the relationship between fashion consciousness and hijab fashion consumption in Ghana and Iran presents an opportunity for fashion brands to develop a unified marketing strategy that appeals to fashion-conscious consumers across both countries. By highlighting the latest hijab fashion trends and styles, marketers can create a sense of excitement and urgency around new collections and products while emphasizing the importance of modest fashion and cultural sensitivity.

3. Fashion Knowledge and Fashion Consciousness:

The lack of significant difference in how fashion knowledge impacts fashion consciousness in both countries suggests that educational and informational content on fashion (e.g., through magazines, online platforms, or fashion fairs) can be equally effective in enhancing fashion consciousness among Hijabistas in both Iran and Ghana. Brands should consider investing in informative content that appeals universally to Hijabistas across these regions.

4. Fashion Motivation and Fashion Consciousness:

The stronger impact of fashion motivation on fashion consciousness in Ghana suggests that motivational factors such as personal enjoyment, special occasions, and fitting in with peers are more influential in Ghana. Therefore, marketing strategies in Ghana should focus on the emotional and social aspects of fashion, encouraging Hijabistas to express their individuality and enjoy fashion as part of their lifestyle. In Iran, where the impact is less pronounced, brands might consider highlighting the practical or cultural significance of Hijab fashion alongside motivations like personal expression.

5. Fashion Uniqueness and Fashion Consciousness:

The significant influence of fashion uniqueness on fashion consciousness in Iran, as opposed to Ghana, suggests that Iranian Hijabistas place a higher value on uniqueness as a key aspect of positive fashion consciousness. In contrast, Ghanaian consumers may not prioritize uniqueness to the same extent and, instead, may associate fashion consciousness with other attributes such as quality, tradition, and modesty. This implies that marketing strategies emphasizing exclusivity and unique fashion items may not resonate with Ghanaian consumers and could potentially detract from overall fashion consciousness. In Iran, however, the positive impact of uniqueness on fashion consciousness presents an opportunity for brands to successfully market exclusive, custom-made, or limited-edition fashion items that cater to the desire for individuality and fashion leadership. By emphasizing their products' unique features and craftsmanship, brands can appeal to Iranian consumers who value standing out from the crowd and being more stylish. In contrast, brands targeting the Ghanaian market may need to focus on highlighting the quality, durability, and modesty of their products rather than their uniqueness or exclusivity.

These insights help tailor marketing strategies, product development, and communication approaches in each country, ensuring that the cultural and motivational differences between Iranian and Ghanaian Hijabistas are respected and effectively addressed.

CONCLUSION

This research offers a comparative analysis of the factors shaping hijab fashion consciousness among Muslim women in Iran and Ghana, two countries with distinct cultural identities. By employing the MGA, the research uncovers significant cultural differences in how fashion motivation and uniqueness impact hijab fashion consumption in these two contexts.

The findings reveal that some factors, such as dressing style and fashion knowledge on fashion consciousness and fashion consciousness on hijab fashion consumption, exhibit similar influences across both countries. Meanwhile, fashion motivation and uniqueness demonstrate significant disparities in fashion consciousness. In particular, fashion motivation exerts a greater influence on fashion consciousness within Ghana compared to Iran. Meanwhile, fashion uniqueness significantly influences hijab fashion consumption in Iran compared to Ghana. It could be argued that Ghanaian women's fashion choices are more aligned with trend adoption, whereas Iranian women frequently utilize hijab fashion to communicate their individuality and distinctiveness within their cultural context. Furthermore, the findings imply that marketers and fashion designers targeting these markets should consider each country's distinct preferences and values. For instance, fashion campaigns in Ghana may focus on showcasing the latest fashion trends, while in Iran, emphasizing the unique and exclusive aspects of hijab fashion products may resonate more with consumers.

These insights highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity in the global fashion industry, especially in markets involving religious attire such as the hijab. Fashion brands, designers, and policymakers must tailor their strategies to reflect each market's unique cultural and religious dynamics. The emotional and social dimensions of fashion appear to be more influential in shaping fashion consciousness in Ghana, as evidenced by the strong impact of fashion motivation. Conversely, in Iran, uniqueness significantly influences fashion consciousness, suggesting that Iranian Hijabistas value individuality and fashion leadership.

The study provides a more profound understanding of how culture and religion intersect with fashion, offering valuable direction for fashion stakeholders engaging Muslim consumers in different cultural settings.

Recognizing and valuing these cultural specificities enables brands to better fulfill the demands of their Muslim female market and forge more robust connections across the globe.

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