

## Consumptive Behavior of Muslim University Students Toward Sharia Fashion Products

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### Article Info:

Article history: Accepted, 18/01/2026, | Revision, 29/01/2026, | Published, 28/02/2026, | Vol (4), Issue (1), (Feb, 2026)  
e-ISSN 2987- 6036 | p-ISSN 2988-0319 | doi: <https://doi.org/10.61233/zijec.v4i1.121>

### Abstract:

The development of sharia fashion in Indonesia not only reflects the growing religious awareness among Muslims but also reveals new dynamics in the consumption patterns of the younger generation, particularly university students. Amid the rising popularity of Islamic lifestyles and the strong influence of digital media, the consumption of sharia fashion has the potential to shift from need-based practices toward consumptive behavior imbued with symbolic meanings. This study aims to analyze the consumptive behavior of Muslim university students toward sharia fashion products and to identify the factors influencing such behavior from religious, social, psychological, and media-related perspectives. Employing a qualitative approach with a phenomenological strategy, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving Muslim students who actively consume sharia fashion products. The findings indicate that sharia fashion is perceived ambivalently as both a form of religious compliance and an expression of identity and modern lifestyle. Consumption decisions are shaped by the interaction of religious values, emotional impulses, social pressures, and exposure to social media and influencers, which in many cases trigger impulsive consumptive behavior. This study contributes to the literature on Muslim consumer behavior by offering a phenomenological understanding of the negotiation between religious values and contemporary consumer culture, as well as providing implications for strengthening Islamic consumption ethics literacy among university students.

### Keywords:

*Consumptive Behavior; Muslim University Students; Sharia Fashion Products.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Global shifts in consumption dynamics indicate that consumer behavior is no longer driven solely by functional needs but is increasingly shaped by psychosocial, cultural, and identity-related factors, particularly within religious communities such as Muslims. The rapid growth of sharia fashion or Islamic fashion in countries with large Muslim populations most notably Indonesia has positioned modest fashion as a significant component of the creative industry and digital economy. Cross-national studies reveal that Muslim fashion consumption is associated not only with religious compliance but also with self-expression, social image, and modern lifestyle trends disseminated through digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, resulting in complex consumption patterns among Muslim youth (Zahro, 2025).

Despite this growth, a substantial gap persists between the normative ideals of Islamic consumption which emphasize moderation, rational needs, and the avoidance of extravagance and the actual consumption practices of younger generations, particularly Muslim university students. Empirical studies demonstrate that fashion trends, lifestyle orientation, and varying levels of religious literacy significantly influence purchasing decisions for Muslim fashion products, often in ways that diverge from ethical consumption principles in Islamic economic thought. Quantitative evidence from several Indonesian cities shows that fashion trends and lifestyle exert a stronger influence on purchase decisions than sharia literacy or religiosity, underscoring the academic urgency of examining the relationship between religious values and consumptive behavior within broader consumer behavior frameworks.

Within consumer behavior research, theoretical models such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and ethical consumption frameworks are frequently employed to explain how attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioral control, and religious values shape purchase intentions and actions. These approaches are particularly relevant for analyzing Muslim students' consumptive behavior toward sharia fashion, as consumption decisions emerge from the interaction between internal values such as religiosity and understanding of Islamic principles and external influences, including social media exposure, fashion trends, and peer pressure. Complementarily, phenomenological approaches in qualitative research emphasize subjective experiences and meaning-making processes, enabling deeper insight into identity narratives and value conflicts that are often overlooked by purely quantitative analyses.

Against this backdrop, this article aims to identify and analyze the factors influencing Muslim university students' consumptive behavior toward sharia fashion products, encompassing religious, social, psychological, and media-related dimensions. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study explores students' lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations in consuming sharia fashion, as well as how they interpret religious values and lifestyle aspirations in shaping their consumption practices. The research question guiding this inquiry focuses on identifying the determinants that drive consumptive behavior among Muslim students in the context of sharia fashion.

The scholarly contribution of this article lies in advancing a nuanced conceptual understanding of the relationship between religious identity and consumptive behavior within the domain of sharia fashion, while addressing an empirical gap in Muslim consumer behavior literature. Although prior studies have examined Muslim fashion purchasing decisions from the perspectives of religiosity and trends (Yunus, 2025; Wahyudin et al., 2025; Hasna & Susilowati, 2025; Hana et al., 2023), phenomenological investigations that foreground students' lived experiences remain limited (Rahman et al., 2022). By synthesizing existing theoretical and empirical insights, this study demonstrates that Muslim consumptive behavior in sharia fashion is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the interplay of religious values, cultural identity, media influence, and lifestyle orientation, thereby providing a holistic theoretical foundation for subsequent methodological analysis.

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## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological strategy, which was chosen to explore in depth the subjective experiences, personal meanings, and social constructions of Muslim students in their consumptive behavior towards sharia fashion products. The phenomenological approach is relevant because it allows researchers to understand how individuals interpret religious values, self-identity, and the influence of social and media environments in their daily consumption practices, without reducing these experiences to mere measurable variables. Phenomenological qualitative research is widely used in consumer behavior studies and religious studies because it is able to capture the complexity of meaning and the dynamics of values that are contextual and layered (Sundler et al., 2019; however, in contemporary practice, it is still widely referred to in studies over the past five years as the main methodological reference). In the context of this study, the main data source is primary data obtained through in-depth interviews with active Muslim students who consume sharia fashion products, while secondary data is used as a supplement, including scientific journal articles, open-access academic books, and social media and marketplace documentation relevant to the phenomenon of sharia fashion. This approach is in line with contemporary qualitative research practices that emphasize triangulation of data sources to increase the depth and credibility of findings (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Hennink et al., 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Primary data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews focusing on the experiences, motivations, perceptions, and ethical reflections of Muslim students regarding the consumption of sharia fashion, as well as non-participant observation and documentation to capture the social context and visual representations that influence consumption behavior. Research subjects were selected using purposive sampling with the following inclusion criteria: (1) Muslim students actively enrolled in Islamic or general higher education institutions; (2) having experience purchasing and using sharia fashion products; and (3) having knowledge of or exposure to Muslim fashion trends, either through their social environment or digital media. Exclusion criteria included students who had never consumed sharia fashion products or were unwilling to provide reflective narratives of their experiences. The unit of analysis in this study was individual students as subjects who had direct experience with the phenomenon under study. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which includes the processes of transcription, initial coding, theme identification, theme review, and reflective interpretation of meaning, as recommended in current qualitative analysis practices for phenomenological research and consumer behavior studies (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017; Knafllic, 2020). This analytical approach allows researchers to synthesize patterns of meaning that emerge from empirical data in a systematic and coherent manner, as an analytical basis for understanding the consumptive behavior of Muslim students in the context of sharia fashion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The results of qualitative data analysis obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation show that Muslim students' understanding of the concept of sharia fashion forms the first theme, namely the interpretation of sharia fashion as a combination of religious compliance and

self-identity expression. The majority of informants defined sharia fashion as clothing that covers the aurat, is not transparent, and is not tight, in line with the basic principles of dress in Islam. However, at the same time, sharia fashion is also interpreted as a means to appear modern, neat, and confident in social spaces.

Finding	Core Meaning	Key Indicators from Data	Theoretical & Empirical Alignment
<b>1. Meaning of Sharia Fashion</b>	Sharia fashion is understood as a synthesis of religious compliance and self-identity expression	Covers <i>aurat</i> , non-transparent, non-tight clothing; simultaneously perceived as modern, neat, and confidence-enhancing in social spaces	Sharia fashion functions not only as a normative religious practice but also as a symbol of contemporary Muslim identity negotiating modern aesthetics and social expectations (Brydges & Lewis, 2019; Sandıkcı & Ger, 2022; Wilson, 2021)
<b>2. Religious and Psychosocial Motivation</b>	Consumption is driven by multidimensional motives combining religiosity and psychosocial needs	Fashion consumption viewed as worship, piety representation, and religious consistency; reinforced by desires for social acceptance, positive self-image, and self-confidence	Muslim consumption behavior reflects interaction between religiosity and social-emotional needs rather than a single motivational source (Souiden & Rani, 2019; Jafari & Sandıkcı, 2020; Abd Rahman et al., 2022)
<b>3. Social and Digital Media Influence</b>	Preferences and purchase decisions are shaped within a connected social-digital ecosystem	Instagram, TikTok, and digital marketplaces as primary trend references; influence of Muslim influencers, hijrah public figures, peers, and religious communities	Confirms the strong role of social media and influencer marketing in shaping Muslim fashion consumption (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Ariffin et al., 2021)
<b>4. Consumptive Behavior Patterns</b>	Tension between functional needs and symbolic desires	Impulsive purchases triggered by discounts, flash sales, and seasonal trends; high-frequency buying of hijabs and accessories	Indicates symbolic and impulsive consumption, where social and aesthetic meanings outweigh utilitarian considerations (Belk, 2020; Septianto et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2021)
<b>5. Reflective Ethical Negotiation</b>	Ongoing negotiation between consumptive tendencies and Islamic ethical values	Spending control, monthly planning, purchase limitation, and resale of clothing ( <i>preloved</i> ) practices	Demonstrates ethical reflexivity and internalization of Islamic moderation values amid modern consumption pressures (Zaman et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2021; Wilson & Liu, 2022)

These findings show that sharia fashion is not understood solely as a normative religious practice, but also as a symbol of contemporary Muslim identity that negotiates with modern aesthetics and social demands, as also found in studies on identity and Muslim fashion consumption among the younger generation.

The second finding that emerged was religious and psychosocial motivations in choosing sharia fashion products. The data showed that some informants viewed the consumption of sharia fashion as part of worship, a representation of piety, and a form of consistency of religious identity in the public sphere. On the other hand, psychosocial motivations such as the desire to be accepted in the community, build a positive self-image, and increase self-confidence also played a strong role in purchasing decisions. These findings indicate that consumption motivations are multidimensional and not singular, in line with previous research findings that reveal that religiosity often interacts with social and emotional needs in shaping Muslim consumption behavior.

The third finding relates to the influence of the social environment and digital media on consumption preferences and decisions. All informants acknowledged that social media—particularly Instagram, TikTok, and digital marketplace features—were the main references for following sharia fashion trends. Exposure to content from Muslim influencers, public figures who had converted to Islam, and visual advertisements featuring Islamic lifestyles contributed to the formation of certain tastes and standards of dress. In addition to digital media, peers and religious communities also function as social agents that reinforce consumption preferences. These findings indicate that Muslim students' consumption decisions are shaped within an interconnected social-digital ecosystem, as reported in studies on the role of social media and influencer marketing in Muslim fashion consumption.

The fourth finding reveals a pattern of consumptive behavior characterized by tension between needs and desires. Most informants admitted that purchases of sharia-compliant fashion products were often triggered by impulsive urges, such as discounts, flash sales, and seasonal trends, rather than purely functional needs. The relatively high frequency of purchases for small items such as hijabs and accessories indicates a tendency toward symbolic consumption, where social and aesthetic meanings are more dominant than considerations of utility. This pattern is consistent with research findings on symbolic and impulsive consumption in the context of fashion and lifestyle among young Muslims.

The fifth finding is the reflective efforts of Muslim students in balancing consumption with Islamic values. Although consumptive behavior appears, some informants show religious awareness to control spending through limiting the amount of purchases, planning monthly needs, and the practice of reselling clothes (preloved). This practice reflects ethical reflection and efforts to internalize the value of simplicity in Islam amid the pressures of modern consumption. This finding shows that the consumption behavior of Muslim students is not entirely passive or hedonistic, but involves a process of continuous value negotiation, as also noted in studies on consumption ethics and religious reflexivity in contemporary Muslim societies.

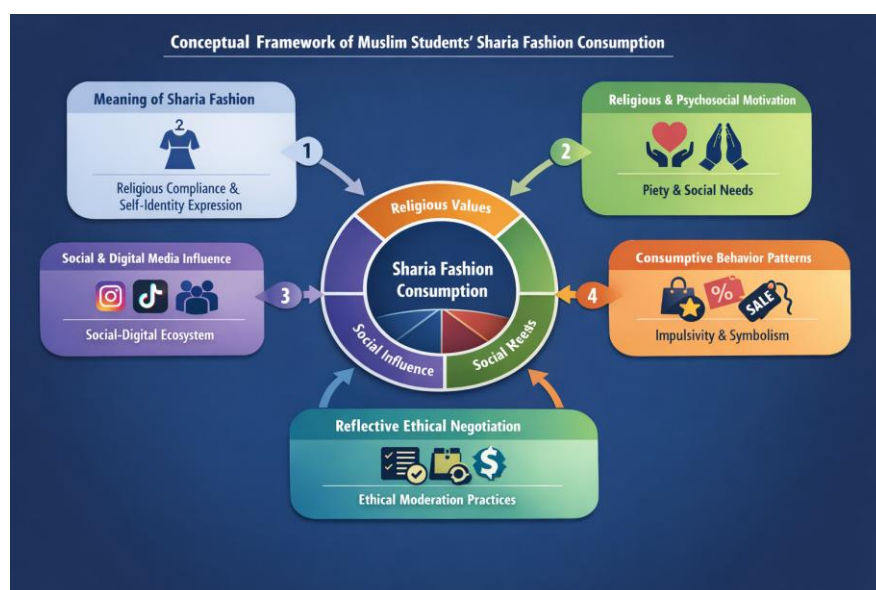


Figure 1. The findings illustrate that Muslim students' consumption of sharia fashion

## Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Muslim students' consumptive behavior towards sharia fashion products is influenced by a combination of religious, psychosocial, and structural factors, thus answering the objectives and research questions that focus on identifying the factors that shape this behavior. The results show that students do not act solely as rational consumers based on needs, but rather as social subjects who negotiate religious values with demands for identity, social existence, and exposure to digital media. This pattern shows that sharia fashion consumption lies on a spectrum between normative compliance and symbolic consumption practices, as also identified in recent studies on Muslim consumption in the era of the creative economy and lifestyle digitalization (Sandıkcı & Ger, 2022; Wilson & Liu, 2022; Hassan et al., 2021).

Within the theoretical framework of consumer behavior and Islamic economics, these findings can be interpreted as a manifestation of the tension between the principles of Islamic consumption ethics—which emphasize moderation, need-based consumption, and avoidance of *israf*—and the dynamics of modern consumer culture, which is laden with symbols, images, and emotions. Conceptually, the behavior of Muslim students in this study reflects mechanisms that are in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior, in which attitudes toward sharia fashion, subjective norms from the social environment, and perceptions of control influenced by the media and digital promotions shape consumption intentions and actions. The integration of consumer behavior theory with the Islamic consumption perspective reinforces the argument that religiosity does not work linearly, but rather interacts with social and psychological factors in shaping actual consumption practices (Ajzen, 2020; Jafari & Sandıkcı, 2020; Abd Rahman et al., 2022).

Compared to previous studies, the findings of this study are in line with research showing that religiosity plays an important but not always dominant role in determining Muslim fashion consumption behavior. Several quantitative studies report that lifestyle and trends have a stronger influence than religiosity on sharia fashion purchasing decisions, especially among younger age groups (Hana et al., 2023; Hasna & Susilowati, 2025). However, this study complements these findings by showing that, qualitatively, students still place religious values as a moral justification for their consumption, even though their practices are often influenced by impulsive urges and social pressure. These findings also confirm the results of other phenomenological studies that highlight the process of negotiating Muslim identity between piety and modernity (Souiden & Rani, 2019; Zaman et al., 2020).

On the other hand, there are differences with several studies that emphasize religiosity as a strong controlling factor on consumptive behavior. This study shows that religiosity is reflective and situational, not a single determinant that automatically suppresses excessive consumption. This reinforces the argument that the symbolization of religion in products and marketing can weaken the ethical function of religiosity by shifting it into a lifestyle identity. This phenomenon is consistent with criticism in the literature about the commodification of Islamic values in the modest fashion industry, where sharia labels have the potential to become a legitimization of symbolic consumption rather than ethical guidance (Brydges & Lewis, 2019; Ariffin et al., 2021; Septianto et al., 2021).

The main scientific contribution of this article lies in enriching the literature on Muslim consumption behavior through a phenomenological approach that places student experiences at the center of analysis. Unlike quantitative research that emphasizes the relationship between variables, this article shows how religious meaning, social identity, and emotional drives are intertwined in the practice of sharia fashion consumption. Thus, this research contributes to the development of a more contextual and empirical theory of Islamic consumption, while expanding the discourse on Islamic consumerism in the realm of popular culture and the creative economy (Wilson, 2021; Sandıkcı & Ger, 2022; Wilson & Liu, 2022).

However, this study has limitations that must be acknowledged proportionally. First, the focus on Muslim students as research subjects limits the generalization of findings to other Muslim consumer groups with different ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. Second, the phenomenological qualitative approach emphasizes depth of meaning, so it is not intended to measure the level of influence of certain factors quantitatively. Third, the local social and cultural context in which the research was conducted also shaped the findings, so the interpretation of the results needs to take into account the specificity of that context (Hennink et al., 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The implications of this study are relevant for the development of academic studies and practices. For future researchers, these findings open up opportunities for further studies using mixed methods designs to integrate depth of meaning with empirical measurements of inter-variable relationships. For practitioners in the Islamic fashion industry, the results of this study emphasize the importance of a more ethical and educational marketing approach, not merely exploiting religious symbols, but also promoting an understanding of the values of simplicity and sustainability. For educational institutions and policymakers, this research shows the urgency of strengthening Islamic consumption literacy among students as part of character education and Islamic economics (Hassan et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2020).

Conceptually, this discussion confirms that Muslim students' consumptive behavior towards sharia fashion is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a religious–non-religious dichotomy. The findings of this study show that students are in a process of continuous negotiation of values between Islamic ethical ideals and the realities of modern consumer culture. By placing this phenomenon in critical dialogue with consumer behavior theory and contemporary Islamic consumption literature, this article strengthens the conceptual basis for methodological and ethical analysis in further studies on Muslim consumerism in the digital age.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that Muslim students' consumptive behavior towards sharia fashion products is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be understood simply as a reflection of religious compliance alone. The findings reveal that students' consumption decisions are shaped by the interaction between religious understanding, the need for social identity, psychological drives, and the strong influence of digital media and the social environment. Sharia fashion is interpreted as a religious practice, a symbol of identity, and part of a modern lifestyle, so that the resulting consumption behavior is often in tension between the principle of simplicity in Islam and the drive for symbolic consumption

that is emotional and contextual in nature.

In terms of contribution, this article enriches the study of Muslim consumption behavior by presenting a phenomenological understanding of how Muslim students negotiate religious values and contemporary consumption culture in their daily practices. Theoretically, this study emphasizes the importance of an integrative approach between consumer behavior theory and Islamic consumption ethics to explain actual consumption practices among young Muslims. Conceptually, this article expands the discourse on Islamic consumerism by showing that religiosity functions reflectively and situationally, rather than as a single deterministic controller, thus opening up more contextual and critical analysis of the meaning of sharia-labeled consumption.

The implications of this study emphasize the need to strengthen Islamic values and consumption ethics literacy among students as part of character education and sharia economic awareness. Further research is recommended to develop more diverse methodological designs, such as quantitative or mixed methods approaches, and to expand the subject of study to different age groups and social backgrounds in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of sharia fashion consumption in contemporary Muslim society.

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