

## MUSLIMAH'S CLOTHING BRAND, IDENTITY, AND MYTHS IN BARTHES SEMIOTIC STUDY

*Sri Rijati Wardiani*

Department of Literature and Cultural Studies,  
Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Padjadjaran University  
Email: [sri.rijati@unpad.ac.id](mailto:sri.rijati@unpad.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

*This study discusses the phenomenon of the proliferation of Muslimah clothing products along with the wave of 'Hijrah' movement in Indonesia. Muslimah clothing is displayed with a variety of brands which are related to certain classes and identities. Muslimah clothing also contains myths in the context of Barthes. The purpose of this study is to reveal the relationships between these variables. The study employed a qualitative description method with Barthes's semiotic theory through the stages of denotation and connotation analysis. The results of the study indicate the relationship between brand and consumer identity. Muslimah clothing is a marker (acoustic image), and as the symbols (concepts) are "clothing and accessories used by Muslim women." The relationship (sign) between markers and symbols, in this case, is a religious relationship.*

*Penelitian ini mendiskusikan fenomena maraknya produk busana muslimah seiring dengan gelombang gerakan 'hijrah' di Indonesia. Busana muslimah ditampilkan dengan beragam brand yang bila dikaji terkait dengan kelas dan identitas tertentu. Di dalam busana muslimah juga terkandung mitos dalam konteks Barthes. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengungkap relasi di antara variabel-variabel tersebut. Kajian menggunakan metode deskripsi-kualitatif dengan teori semiotika Barthes melalui tahapan analisis denotasi dan konotasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan keterkaitan antara brand dan identitas konsumen. Busana muslimah adalah penanda (gambaran akustik), sedangkan yang menjadi petanda (konsep) adalah 'busana dan kelengkapannya yang digunakan oleh*

*perempuan beragama Islam'. Hubungan (tanda) di antara penanda dan petanda dalam hal ini adalah relasi keagamaan.*

**Keywords:** *Barthes semiotics; brand; identity; Muslim fashion; myth*

## Introduction

Stillman (in Maftuhin, 2011: 157) explains that the issue of headscarves in Indonesia is different compared to those in the Middle East. In Indonesia, the debate is among those who want to wear and who do not want to wear a headscarf. Meanwhile, in the Arab world, the debate is among those wishing to defend and wanting to take it off.

Yuswohady (in Istiqomah, 2016: 4) describes that the world of Indonesian Muslims, especially those of the middle class, has indeed experienced many fairly fundamental shifts, especially in recent years. The increasing religiosity of the people as indicated by the phenomenon of *Hijrah* is not only displayed with the incessant rituals of religious worship but also in the consumption products activities. One product that is related to religious ideology, in this case, is clothing specifically for Muslim women.

Various naming terms for *Muslimah* clothing also appear such as headscarves (*jilbab*), robe (*gamis*), veil (*kerudung*), *hijab*, or *khimar*. In essence, all of that serves to close the female genitalia, and above all are to show one's piety, as instructed by Allah SWT through Surah Al-Ahzab: 59 and An-Nuur: 31. So firmly the verses reminded especially for Muslim women to obey the Islamic Shari'a, one of which is to guard themselves through clothes that are by religious rules. Muslim women will be easily recognized and will not be disturbed. Socially, *Muslimah* clothing is also a character that differentiates from other people and unites them with each other. There are several conditions for dressing a Muslim. It is covering the entire body except those that may be revealed, not in the form of fancy jewelry, not thin, not tight or showing curve. Furthermore, *Muslimah* should not use fragrances that can attract the attention of many people (especially men), not resembling men's clothing, and do not resemble those of unbelievers (such as Western fashion styles, etc.). Besides, it should not from a famous brand of expensive clothing, because it can cause arrogance (Hamidah & Syadzali, 2016: 117).

With this impression of closure, it does not mean that Islam does not know both inner and outer beauty. As long as it is within the permitted limits, *Muslimah* clothing can be made in various models, colors, and matching

accessories. Appearing religious does not mean having to leave the impression of modern and *stylish* (Rollick, 2017). With *hijab*, women can still look fashionable. That's where designers and sellers of *Muslimah* clothing as industrial agents play a role in acting. Their works are distributed and marketed starting from small scale such as kiosks selling clothes, shops, or Muslim fashion boutiques, to large scale such as festivals or wear exhibition of Muslims held regularly. Creations and innovations accompany this movement with the emergence of the *youtube syar'i phenomenon*, Islamic songs, hijab tutorials, halal labels, the fashion community, and others.

With the number of Indonesian Muslim communities of around 209 million (Data, 2016), the *Muslimah* clothing business is undeniably up-and-coming for producers who continue to make breakthroughs to be able to sell their products. In line with this, image and brand are essential to continuously be built in situations of intense competition at the commercial level. The development of *Muslimah* clothing is assumed to be a myth which, in the context of Barthes's semiotics, shows the existence of cultural construction. To explore this, in this study, the development of *Muslimah* clothing in Indonesia will first be examined, then the tension between the brand and the identity of *Muslimah* clothing will be discussed. In the end, the myth of *Muslimah* clothing is examined through Barthes's semiotic theory (1957).

Barthes (1957) is a structuralist, uses the sign theory of Ferdinand de Saussure as the main foundation of his study. In *Mythologies*, the levels of markers and symbols are presented, and Barthes's ideas are about connotations and *meta-language*. He also analyzed cultural data as a symptom of bourgeois society at that time in semiotics. He conveyed his thoughts about myths, which he said were a communication system, something that gave a message. Myths are not objects, concepts, or ideas. Myth is a means of significance, a form. Barthes also emphasized that myth is a speech (*parole*) that conveys a message, and it is not limited to what is stated orally, but can also be written text, photos, films, pictures, and so on. Thus each object can be a myth, even though the material and form are different. All objects are given arbitrary meaning. In myths, according to Barthes (1957: 187), there is a tridimensional scheme consisting of markers (*signifiant*), symbols (*signifié*) dan sign (*signe*), but all three are in a particular situation.

Barthes develops two levels of signification that allow for the production of meanings which are also multilevel, namely the level of connotation and denotation (Muzakki, 2007). Denotation is the level of signification that

explains the relationship between a marker and a symbol, or between a sign and its reference to reality, which produces definite meaning. The meaning of denotation, in this case, is the meaning of what appears, for example, photo A means the real face of A. Conversely, the connotation is the level of signification that explains the relationship between a marker and a symbol, in which the operation of meaning is indirect and uncertain. For example, the flower sign connotes love. So, denotation is the most obvious meaning of the sign, while connotation is a term that indicates the significance of the second stage.

Furthermore, Barthes uses the term sense (meaning) to the sign of the first system, the form (*forme*) for the marker on the second system, the concept for the marker of the second system and signification for sign on the second system. Significance according to Barthes, (1957: 194) is the right term, because the myth has a dual function of showing and informing. Myth makes sense. What is called Barthes' significance is the myth itself. Signification is an association between form and concept, as well as a sign for de Saussure, a relationship between a marker and a symbol.

Barthes uses the development of the sign theory as an attempt to explain how the life of French society at that time was dominated by connotations. The connotation, in this case, is the development of aspects of the sign (meaning or content) by the sign user according to his point of view. If you have mastered the community, the connotation will become a myth. Barthes also describes how everyday events are considered 'reasonable' and 'normal', although they are just myths. The connotation received to become a steady existence is called a myth by sign users. For Barthes, myth is a system of communication (Zaimar, 2014: 19), who conveys a message that is not always verbal but in another form or a mixture of verbal and nonverbal. Furthermore, Zaimar quoted Barthes's opinion that myth is a value, which does not require truth as a sanction. Therefore, the concept of myth does not always remain the truth. Myths can change, be reconstructed, or even disappear.

Furthermore, Barthes states that in understanding myths, the reader or interpreter can associate myths with ideology. In this case, it is necessary to understand the function of myth as a form of communication, namely to convey specific ideas. Myths are sometimes deformations of familiar meanings. This deformation occurs because myths change meaning to another meaning. Myth will change experience to be a natural, general, and considered typical or normal (in Zaimar, 2014).

Myths arise because there are markers captured by the reader and carried by the bearer of the myth. It can be said that from a myth an ideology will imply. The spread of ideology can succeed or fail (Barthes, 1957). The ideology implied by the presence of myths was spread through myths. Zoest (1993) states that there is an engagement of ideology to culture. Anyone who studies culture, also deals with ideology. Anyone who studies ideology must pay attention to the culture. Ideology can determine a group's vision or view of reality. Thus the spread of ideas and thoughts can be done through signs. In this case, it is assumed that the presence of a brand in the consumption of *Muslimah* clothing is a sign traced to its meaning.

Barthes (1983) attempts to distinguish three types of clothing, namely (1) image clothing, displayed as photography or images; (2) written clothing, described in writing or transformed into language; and (3) real clothing, worn on the human body, clothing as objects. Through the semiotic approach, clothing as a cultural product understood as image clothing and real clothing, which functions as signs in the production process and construction of meaning.

Some previous studies on *Muslimah* clothing have been carried out. Regarding the procedures and manners of a Muslim woman in dressing according to Islamic law, it was concluded that *Muslimah* clothing must cover the genitals and be able to keep the wearer from the negative effects (Fauzi, 2016). In her historical study of headscarves as *Muslimah* clothing ethics, Wijayanti (2017) argued that the use of headscarves is not a *Khilafah* matter, because the scholars of the interpretation (*tafsir*) expert from the past until now have agreed to it as an obligation for Muslim women. The order is based on the arguments, both from the Qur'an and the hadith and *qarinah* (instructions) that are very strong. Other research was conducted by Febrina (2014) by analyzing the *hijabers* community in the city of Bengkulu. The results of this study indicate that headscarves for the *hijabers* community have three meanings, namely religious meaning, cultural meaning, and social meaning. The motives for the use of headscarves from this community include the motives of *da'wah* (headscarves become symbols of *da'wah* for other Muslim women), economic motives (*hijab* becomes a promising business area and can provide financial benefits), and fashionable motifs (headscarves can be displayed in line with the times. It was revealed that previous studies on *Muslimah* clothing had not involved brand, identity, or myth variables in Roland Barthes's semiotic perspective, and therefore there was a new value inherent in this research.

## Method

The method used for this research is qualitative description, to describe and interpret objects as they are. It requires the strength of an in-depth and detailed analysis that is widespread and holistic. Thus, the power of reason is the only source of analytical ability in the entire research process (Arikunto, 2010: 5). Data collection techniques used are non-interaction techniques, which include recording documents and archives (content analysis), note-taking techniques, and library research techniques. Library research techniques are carried out by searching, collecting, reading, and studying articles or reports related to the object of research (Satoto, 1992: 118).

## Results And Discussion

### Development of Muslimah Clothing in Indonesia

The Islamic revolution movement in Iran in 1970s, one of which obliged women to wear headscarves, had a significant influence on the world. *Muslimah* clothing users become more open, including in Indonesia. Globalization of Islam occurs along with the openness and development of mass media. The followers of Indonesian Islam finally felt they were members of an international Muslim community (Brenner, 1996: 678). During these years, President Suharto included Indonesia in the capitalist world and consumerism. Thus, the development of the use of *Muslimah* clothing (and Muslim women) in Indonesia is inseparable from the political and economic situation.

In Indonesia, Ida Royani is considered a pioneer of the development of *Muslimah* clothing (Janti, 2018). After deciding to stop singing in 1978, Ida pursued the *Muslimah* clothing world by selling it at Sarinah Thamrin in the early 1980s. At that time *Muslimah* clothing was not yet a common choice of clothing. Ida uses lots of bright colors, even though at that time, *Muslimah* clothing tended to be white or black. For Ida, the important is the clothes she made covered her genital, not tight, and not transparent. After Ida Royani, other designers sprang up like Anne Rufaidah and Ida Leman. Anne Rufaidah in 1985 had exported her design to Saudi Arabia. The designs are well-known to foreign countries through various fashion shows, such as in Malaysia, Algeria, Dubai, and India.

The popularity of *Muslimah* clothing increased in the 1990s. The increase occurred due to the acceptance of Islamic identity by the New Order regime. After “breaking the partnership” with LB Moerdani, Suharto approached

the Islamic community. This condition is explained by Amrullah in Janti (2018), that the number of study groups in the 1990s increase. These groups are often led by celebrity mubalighah who are undoubtedly fashionable. Besides Ida himself, there was an artist Neno Warisman, who decided to wear a headscarf in the 1990s. Among men, there are *kiai* Abdullah Gymnastiar, Jefry al-Buchori, or Ahmad al-Hasby who are Muslim fashion icons. They are an essential factor that attracts people to use Muslim fashion, especially with fashionable characters.

Ida Royani then not only made *Muslimah* clothing, *mukena*, *koko* clothes, but also Muslim children clothes as a variant of Muslim fashion business products. When the headscarves and Muslim clothing market was crowded, many people jumped into it. *Brands* like Zoya, Rabbani, Elzatta, even famous *brand* as Dolce and Gabbana, DKNY, or Zara had sprung up. They offer not only a variety of hijab models but also the impression of luxury and status through their image in the community. The progress of fashion, the presence of Muslim fashion icons, and the increase in the Muslim fashion business provide choices for consumers. But on the other hand, according to Sushartami (2012), the development of *Muslimah* clothing in urban Indonesia in the 1990s tarnished the intention to veil and make them victims of consumerism only.

Along with the development of the times, various names have emerged referring to the cover of the head and body of Muslim woman. Differences in terms also have an impact on identity attached as an impact of the stereotype formation. At the same time, *Muslimah* clothing manufacturers are competing to carry their respective brands.

### **The Tension between *Muslimah* Clothing Brand and Identity**

A brand is something attached to the customer's thoughts and actions, as well as a link between the customer and the product or company (Sunnyoto, 2012). Based on the definition, the brand is an identity (can be a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a whole combination) of an item or service that can distinguish between one product and another product. Competition in the business of producing and distributing *Muslimah* clothing is indeed very strict in Indonesia. Every company must use various strategies to maintain and win consumers. Therefore, the brand becomes very important because it has a significant effect on customer loyalty. Likewise in the context of *Muslimah* clothing, it is assumed that there is a close link between the brand and consumer identity.

In the presentation of the study results, Rollick (2017) ranks ten well-known hijab brands in Indonesia. The first, Rabbani, based in Bandung, now has outlets spread throughout all cities in Indonesia. Rabbani also has an online mall so that customers can be served quickly, practically, and efficiently. The number one headscarf company in Indonesia collaborates a brand ambassadors consisting of several top artists such as Fatin Shidqia and Ustad Solmed. In addition to adult and children's headscarves, other Rabbani flagship products are Muslim clothing for men and women.

The other brand is Zoya; the most creative company because their product advertisements are very diverse and appear in online and offline media. The Zoya flagship products include headscarves, bergo, long skirts, scarves, and Muslim clothes. Zoya headscarves are famous for being light. Also, the shape and color are easily matched with any clothing or accessories. Zoya is also renowned for its beautiful and attractive motifs. This Muslim fashion company started marketing its products since 2005. Zoya successfully collaborates brand ambassadors consisting of famous artists such as Laudya Cynthia Bella, Lula Kamal, and Soraya Larasati. Even though it is one of the best hijab brands in Indonesia, various Zoya products are offered at relatively affordable prices.

The third brand, Shafira is one of the most senior hijab brands in Indonesia. The company was pioneered by Feny Mustafa, with its products widely known since 25 years ago. With a pretty good track record, it is only natural that Shafira products once dominated the Indonesian Muslim fashion market. In addition to the hijab, several other well-known products are formal and casual Muslim clothes. Shafira is identical to a simple model but looks very elegant and wears right.

Elzatta is the fourth brand that also controls the Muslim clothing market in Indonesia. This Bandung-based company uses the pioneer's real name, Elidawati, which is then combined with Zatta, the child's name. Elzatta, which was only established in 2012, initially only had seventeen employees, before finally growing rapidly with a total of 500 people, even now Elzatta has an official outlet of no less than 60. One of the most preferred products is the hijab which is famous for being soft and comfortable. Elzatta headscarves are indeed made from high-quality materials that are said to be imported directly from Turkey. Although still not as many as hijab products, Elzatta also released other products, namely Muslim clothing and various hijab accessories.

Meccanism is a brand created by Zaskia Adya Mecca, which after reducing activities in the acting world, pursue the world of fashion business, especially



hijab products. The industry with the Meccanism brand was also managed by her sister, Tasya Nur Medina by sharing roles. Zaskia is a designer and concept designer, while Tasya acts as an operational director. Their younger brother, Haykal, also took part as finance director. Not only the hijab, Meccanism also produces various Muslim clothing, *ciput*, inner, outer, to pants and skirts. According to some customers, Meccanism products are offered at affordable prices and are readily available both online or directly to official outlets at Jalan Benda Raya, Kemang Region, Jakarta.

The next brand, Shasmira, began to be famous since 2005. With high enough experiences, Shasmira has now become a popular brand among Indonesian *hijabers*. Not only the hijab, Shasmira is also famous for its robes, tunics, Muslim clothing, *kebaya*, blouses and t-shirts. Shasmira itself is famous for being very comfortable when worn. Besides, several variants of the hijab can be chosen including the Paris veil, pashmina hijab, instant veil, rectangular veil, and much more. Shasmira also has other brands, namely Hezna and Rozaq. Hezna is a Muslimah clothing product for girls and Rozaq specifically for teenage boys.

The Jenahara brand is owned by the artist's son Ida Royani, taken from the name of the child, namely Nanida Jenahara Nasution. Jenahara's great work is famous for its characteristic minimalist and asymmetrical style. Almost all of its products tend to be more suitable for attending formal events.

The hijab brand which is also popular today is Ria Miranda, a brand taken from the name of its owner, Indria Miranda. Ria Miranda is said to have a big influence on the development of hijab clothing in Indonesia. Soft hijabs with pastel colors are the hallmark of the product. This brand also focuses on feminine and contemporary Muslimah clothing products. The hijabers love these Ria Miranda quality hijab products.

Dian Pelangi is a brand pioneered by young Dian Wahyu Utami who is popular among Indonesian Muslim women. One product boomed some time ago was *Kerudung Dian Pelangi* (KDP). As the name suggests, the trademark of Dian Pelangi products is dominated by bright colors. Dian Pelangi's headscarves have distinctive fashion accents, such as *batik*, jumpsuits, and *songket*. But this product is not sold online and is only marketed through official boutiques in big cities in Indonesia.

The next brand, Kami Idea, was formed by three friends Afina Candarini, Nadya Karina, and Istafiana Candarini. *Kami Idea* product itself was introduced in 2009. When it was first formed, the brand only focused on hijab accessories

products. But now it also produces headscarves, dresses, top, and bottom by carrying a wearable, comfortable, bold, and stylish hijab concept. Various hijabs and other products from *Kami Idea* can be found in some e-commerce fashion or can directly go to the official outlets in the Kemang area, Jakarta.

The diversity of *Muslimah* clothing products has an impact on the different names for each item used, and the user's identity as explained by Sari (2017: 74). The identity is social and cultural, talking about similarities and differences (Barker, 2005: 221). Certain brands will also give a distinct identity, for example, Rabbani users are mostly disciple and students because the price is affordable and the shop is easily found in big cities.

According to Sari (2017: 74), the term *jilbab*, *hijab*, and *khimar* can form different Muslim identities. Although it can be considered egalitarian in the context of the marker of religious identity, namely Islam, in fact, *jilbab*, *hijab*, and *khimar* carry different ideas. Sari (2017: 74) argued that the three terms had significant differences, but under the umbrella of 'hijab' it means the cover, veil, curtain, separator, and headscarf. The 'veil' referred to in the ten brands above applies more to a standard hijab or veil, meaning a colorful rectangular (*pashmina*) fabric, having a specific model, and stylish.

The geographical conditions and climate of Indonesia does not allow Muslim women to wear clothes with thick materials and dark colors. Therefore, modifications to fabric material, models, and distinctive Arabic colors became a necessity. Except *khimar* which has the impression of standing alone because of the influence of the user's identity. Quoting Al Asymawi, Sari (2017: 74) also stated that *khimar* (large hijab with material that is not too thin) is a *kudung* cloth (*khumur*) that covers the neck and chest from behind and from the front (including covering the collarbone). *Khimar* is indeed more protruding to cover the chest and waist, so its use is limited to some circles. The use of a very wide veil model resembling *mukena* is used by the *Tarbiyah Salafi*. There were respondents in the study who stated that *khimar* was generally sewn by the users. Stereotypes also work to form a dichotomy between Muslim women based on differences in *Muslimah* clothing: users of "ordinary headscarves" and wearers of *khimar* (Budiastuti in Sari, 2017: 75).

This fashionhijabers or *Muslimah* clothing phenomenon is of course a reality of popular culture. Along with the rise of industrialization, hijab no longer serves as a symbol and practice of religiosity but has shifted towards popular commodities. Therefore, agree with Barker (2009), Sari (2017: 74) said

that the value produced was relative. As popular culture, there are new forms which are the result of the crossing or fusion of previously inherent values.

The existence of the hijab in contemporary society has produced contradictions, especially among trend hijabers and *syar'i* hijabs. Hijab *syar'i* among them has blend criteria between 'khimar', '*jilbab* (headscarf)', and also *tabarruj*' (Siauw, 2013). Wearing a khimar or a veil means that the woman must cover with the veil to her chest, and not reveal the jewelry except for the mahram. The headscarf is stretching the veil that is not transparent throughout the body. Quoting Haj et al. (1998), Haromaini (2013: 598) explained that the headscarf was also interpreted as a Muslim dress that became one style, namely clothing that covered his entire body, starting from the top of her head to her feet together without using again a veil, while *Tabarruj* was preening to intentionally show the beauty. The combination of these three clothes is called *hijab syar'i* (Siauw, 2013). Hijab *syar'i* also includes several rules, among others, the cloth used must not be transparent and tight, must cover the genitals except the face and palms, do not resemble men, not *shuhrah* clothing (which makes it famous), do not wear excessive fragrance, and does not resemble the clothes of other religions. The term *hijab syar'i* can be said to be contrary to the current trend of hijabers which put forward a stylish hijab method.

### **Barthes Semiotic Study against *Muslimah* Clothing Myths**

In everyday life, Muslim clothing in Indonesia has been considered as normal, natural, widely used, including by primary and secondary school children as a school uniform. *Muslimah* clothing is used by Muslim women because there is no obligation for followers of other religions to wear *hijab* or headscarves. Because of its acceptable existence, *Muslimah* clothing has become a sign that has to do with the underlying background. From denotative reviews, *Muslimah* clothing is a form of communication that conveys a distinctive feature of the ideology it carries. This ideology is the order and rules of dress for Muslim women contained in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

In the study of Barthes semiotics, in principle, *Muslimah* clothing is a marker (acoustic picture), while the symbol (concept) is "clothing and accessories used by Muslim women". The relationship (sign) between markers and symbols, in this case, is a religious relationship, which Barthes calls ideology. In its development, the use of *Muslimah* clothing appeared in various forms, to be consumed and associated with the wearer's culture, with identity, as well as the brand.

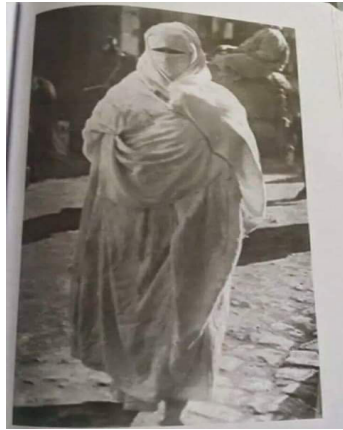


Figure 1 Simple Muslimah Clothing  
Source: <https://twitter.com/fikaceyka>

In figure 1 clothing above, at the first level, it appears that forms, colors, textures, and models, are presented as a Muslim women's clothing with a background in Middle Eastern culture. This clothing is marked by a thick layer of fabric covering the entire surface of the body, starting from the hair to the feet, so that what remains is only the eyes and the form of the soles of the feet. The fabric is not flashy, white, sometimes black, or dark in color. There is no jewelry in her appearance. The body shape is not clearly visible, whether fat or thin, black or white. It is also unknown whether this woman is smiling or sad, whether she is happy with her clothes or not. There was no expression on her face. The process of meaning at the first level produces a first order signification. This denotation means the meaning of the object or image portrayed as it is.

The second level (second order signification) relates the signs from the first level to the broader concepts, meanings, and cultural themes. In this case, the impressions captured include closed, not attractive, not arousing passion lust. Simplicity and innocence are also strong connotations for the appearance of *Muslimah* clothing. All the criteria from the first level meet the demands of the criteria believed by the adherents, namely to cover all female genitals. As a consequence, all men who are not Muslim do not have the right to see, even to touches them. This type of clothing is not categorized as a trend or brand. This clothing is related to the ideology of its adherents and about Barthes's myth, this clothing attaches to the culture that surrounds it, namely Arab and Middle Eastern culture with its ideological beliefs. It means that the myths emerging from these fashion marks are believed uniformly by

those who believe in this ideology. Another meaning of *Muslimah* clothing is that in Islam, women are respected creatures, should not be treated arbitrarily, and so on.



Figure 2 Muslimah Clothing with traditional motifs

Source: <http://www.hijabusanamuslim.com/2015/10/model-baju-busana-muslim-tradisional.html>

The four examples of *Muslimah* clothing in figure 2 represent a culture, combining plain tops with traditional fabric patterns. At the first level, there are four denotative women wearing *Muslimah* clothing with two pieces consisting of a veil fused with a top shirt, and a long skirt/underskirt from a patterned fabric. The fabric colors of the tops and veils are bright but natural (brown, coffee, marron, and beige) with a minimalist veil model, revealing the form of the head and shoulders. The four of them use a large pretty jewelry necklace, made from metal that represents ethnic and cultural elements. The models' faces are open (not using a veil), their backs and palms are also open. An ordinary expression, not smiling. The pieces of clothes are not tight but don't look heavy in layers.

At the second level, the evolving impressions of the image include 'adult', 'fashionable', 'beautiful', and 'expensive'. The touch of culture in ethnic material and style represents the aesthetic side. From the description of the sign that appears, another thing carried by ideology is aesthetic. With the signs raised, the supporting vocabulary forms a connotative idea that *Muslimah* clothing must not only cover the body without form but also aesthetically valuable so that it has an attraction. The attraction is reflected in the appearance of the fashion sign above.

These four women based on physical signs and body poses ascertained the models, which may not use *Muslimah* clothing in their daily lives. Their appearance above is a professional demand as seen from the style they show on

the catwalk. They can be a representation of Indonesian Muslim women, as shown by the typical Southeast Asian face with brown skin, an average height of 160-165 cm, and adequate makeup. It means, ordinary Indonesian women, in the sense of not models, can dress like them. The color of the fabric used is the color of mature women over 40 years. Types and models of clothing like usually used for formal events or events attending party invitations. *Muslimah* clothing displayed in fashions like this is generally made by famous designers. Although the model used still fulfills the religious rules that are intended, namely to cover the whole body, loose, and not transparent, it is seen in the four appearances of clothing above; there is a modernization effort in the form of supplementation of local content as a sign of Indonesian culture.

The tendency of the fashion style as above as one of the distinctiveness of certain *Muslimah* clothing brands is mostly followed by those who live in big cities on occasion of certain events. The appearance of *Muslimah* clothing styles with the markers above is considered as an acceptable one. In this case, the myth of *Muslimah* clothing shifts from beliefs or values or ideas carried in figure 1. The rise in the use of fashion styles as shown in figure 2 that women always knowing, will stick to their minds and attract their interest in consuming them, until forming new myths. Clothing like the figures above will be recognized as real because of the spread of trends from specific brands, which are then followed and accepted as real.



Figure 3 Muslimah Clothing for Young Girl

Source: <https://gamismodelbaru.com/baju-muslim-remaja-950/>

In figure 3, denotative models of teenage women wearing three pieces of *Muslimah* clothing that are the same but different in color, turquoise, orange, and fanta red, and veil in cream. This dress consists of tops, trousers, and

outer colored the same. The model uses accessories that match the clothes, ranging from glasses, belts, and shoes with shades of cream. The style is shown also shows joy with smiles and particular body language. Veils are arranged and adapted to trends favored by Muslim women of their age, stylish, and seem light.

At the second level of analysis, the connotative impressions seen include 'young', 'cheerful', 'interesting', and 'relaxed'. In contrast to figure 1 which is especially memorable 'closed', and figure 2 which tends to be 'adult', this image represents the connotation of youth and practicality. This shows that the ideology that carried out is freedom which still interprets the basic ideology in Islamic law, which is closing the genitals. Manufacturers that carry the brand with style above try to attract consumer interest by providing colorful choices. The dress became a myth among teenagers as an acceptable value for *Muslimah* clothing. The fashion style is one alternative in interpreting the ideology they believe in, namely Islamic and stylish.

Users of this *Muslimah* clothing type also do not hesitate to mix and match their appearance with accessories appropriate to add value to their beauty. Even though it looks young and striking in color, this model's clothes still fulfill religious rules, which cover the whole body, loose, and not transparent. Fashion signs that might be a polemic are the use of trousers because they are considered to resemble men's clothing, and with model narrows to the bottom which shows the shape of the legs/body part of the user. The representation of sincerity and simplicity that appears in figure 1 disappears completely in figure 3, because of the assumption that striking colors illustrate the character wants to be noticed and wants to appear different.

Unlike the previous times, *Muslimah* clothing in Indonesia today is increasingly in demand because of the diversity of choices available. In the past, young women were reluctant to dress Islamic because they were afraid of being considered fanatics, had an unattractive appearance, and became difficult to move or get jobs, now all these stereotypes began to disappear. Hijab which is the basic principle of *Muslimah* clothing to cover the genitals, can now be made in various colors and shapes that are flexible, sweet, and not monotonous. In the following fashion marks, you can watch fashion styles as another representation of a particular brand.



Figure 4 Muslimah Clothing with 'Si.Se.Sa' Brand Sprinkled with Swarovski

Source: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/gaya-hidup/20160211124327-277-110318/kreasi-busana-syari-dengan-bubuhan-swarovski-sisesa>

If in figure 1 *Muslimah* clothing has a simple connotation, this is not the case with the production of boutique Si.Se.Sa as seen in figure 4. The work of populer designer Merry Pramono was allegedly causing noise because the price was very expensive, starting from Rp. 500 thousand to Rp. 1.5 million (Priherdityo, 2016). Si.Se.Sa. *Brand* abbreviation from Merry's three daughters names, Siriz, Senaz, and Sansa. Since its launch in 2013, Merry has only been able to hold a single show of the brand which was attended by many Muslim socialites. At the event, the label of the world jewelry company, Swarovski, also participated. The fancy items are then pinned on several parts with little striking but add value to the *khimar*. Merry guaranteed that Swarovski would not escape even though the veil was washed up to 99 times. He confirmed that his work was not cheap, but people would not try to buy if they did not have money.

In the first phase of the study, visually, the clothing clearly shows *syar'i* which means fulfilling religious rules, namely closing the genitals, pastel colors that are not conspicuous, and not glazed, and do not form curves. Merry also admitted she no longer produces trousers. In line with the *syar'i* criteria carried by this clothing brand, the material side of the fabric connotatively refers to the identity of the wearer. In general, Si.Se.Sa uses anti-wrinkle chiffon, scuba, or neoprene. The design used is also different from *khimar* in general, there is a neat border decoration, crystal trinkets in the head, or folds of cloth that function to add beauty. All these advantages are intended for women from the upper middle class who is affrod to get it. Display of Si.Se.Sa products which is *syar'i* but being a representation of certain classes has caused a distinction between 'cheap *Muslimah* clothing' and 'expensive *Muslimah* clothing'. Repeated



connotations of this kind then form a myth. The community can capture the mark offered by this brand as *Muslimah* clothing that is also acceptable, even though it is high value. The idea of the existence of class discourse in *Muslimah* clothing like this, is not only a sign of self-identity but also to build a collective identity of users of the Si.Se.Sa brand as a member of the upper middle class society. This is in line with the opinion of Gerke quoted by Pambudy (2000) that the production of collective identity is carried out through the lifestyle and membership of a group of classes expressed through the presentation of a particular lifestyle. Thus, the brand has a differentiating power as a guarantee of its quality for the buyer.

As a popular culture product, Muslim clothing can also be systemically categorized based on its functions, such as for work, exercise, vacation, or marriage, even divided into clothing for certain seasons such as winter, spring, summer or autumn. This product diversification must have been constructed by investors. As if Muslim women really need all kinds of clothes and must have them. Veil models, pashmina, or turbans with shapes, materials, and colors that are excessive and complicated in their use also appear on the market. Embroidery, lace, beads and gemstones are also not representations of the conventions or Shari'a of a Muslim dress, as is the use of headscarves that use *cepol* and shaped like a camel hump below.



Figure 5 Headscarf with a Cepol on top

Source: <https://ayanguyang.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/begini-seharusnya-hijaber/>

Muslim women who wear headscarves in any form are indeed considered to have implemented the Shari'a, because people value their efforts and awareness in proceeding to wear closed clothing. However, in its development, what is very rapid is that more and more things are violated and misguided. This misunderstanding occurs and is caused by persistent consumption on the

basis of myth. Brands participate in shaping the creation of myths. According to Hamidah & Syadzali (2016), now the hijab function is not merely a cover of genitals but instead becomes merely a mode that clearly violates religious rules, as indicated by the phenomenon of *Jilboobs* which makes women show the shape of their breasts.



Figure 6 Jilboobs

Source: <https://katarik.com/2014/08/09/istilah-jilboobs-penghinaan-bagi-perempuan-berjilbab/>

What is meant by *jilboobs* is the use of short headscarves, tight tops, leggings, transparent clothes, and often without underwear. Hair and neck are closed, but the chest, waist, hips, and legs are clearly visible of its curves. Muslimah fashion models like this certainly contradict the convention and are not in accordance with its function as a sign of piety.

Some Muslim women are also trapped in the flow of consumptive culture by following trends and brands without control because of the desire to idolize their appearance, with the aim of maintaining their existence and identity as part of the upper middle class. They may just want to get recognition for their appearance and not essentially as one of the characteristics of piety. In this case, the brand has become a sign that refers to identity.

The results of Barthes's semiotic study of *Muslimah* clothing show that the connotations which are constantly considered true will become a myth that develops in society. Clothing that was originally believed to be a clothing of piety, is currently (unfortunately) considered to be no more than a fashion as the movement of the fashion, brand, and growing trends to get Muslim identity. As if all the closed one, all the hijab, is correct and has fulfilled the rules of religion, so that a critical view of the myth of *Muslimah* clothing is no longer considered.

## Conclusion

Talking about the phenomenon of *Muslimah* clothing in relation to brand and identity means talking about individual tastes. But in a consumptive society, the existence of a dress phenomenon is closely related to the development of a trend that also relates to various brands circulating in the community and having special fans. Fanaticism or the use of a brand-oriented model that fosters the Muslim fashion industry. Brand is used as a benchmark in terms of aesthetics, let alone having fans who take part in spreading it in general society. Trend development based on various brands then forms a value belief that the most popular is the “right”. Thus in this case, the brand can create myths, provide the value of “truth” that is believed by a community group. Though truth is essentially only the truth that comes from the Righteous.

In societies with diverse cultures, viewed from Barthes’s semiotics, the myth of dressing Muslim women is related to tastes, cultural contexts, and basic ideologies behind them. A brief review of the representation of *Muslimah* clothing above shows the existence of a first-level interpretation that is denotative and secondly connotative, which cannot be released from one another. The relationship (sign) between markers and symbols in this case is a religious relationship. The application of sign science to cultural objects dressed in Muslim women in the context of a brand, is also related to the identity of the wearer. The phenomenon of myths can be used to deconstruct things that are not true and criticize things that are considered normal and common in daily life.

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