



# INSANIYAT

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# INSANIYAT

## Journal of Islam and Humanities



### The New Look of Abaya as the National Identity of the United Arab Emirates

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#### Abstract

*This research discusses the new looks of abaya which is being part of the national identity of the United Arab Emirates. Even more widely, abaya has been accepted as an Arab culture by fashion lovers all over the world. The government boosted the preservation of abaya that already has become a lifestyle of Arab women by assigning this robe as the national dress. This research uses the qualitative method by using fashion theory by Douglas who said that anxiety is a source of fashion changes. This study shows that fashion changes due to anxiety to bring a change or replace it with a new one. In the United Arab Emirates, the changes of fashion happened because the citizens wanted to set abaya to be a timeless culture. The new looks of abaya bring out the question: How did the government and individuals protect abaya from fashion changes in the United Arab Emirates? The result of this study is in line with Douglas's concept about fashion: that fashion is created not only to validate or display dominant and accepted categories of identity but also to point out cultural anxiety that fashion or abaya changes because of anxiety to bring a change or replace it with a new one if it is not in accordance with the events occurring in the UAE. The changes that have already been done by UAE people not only bring to the "new" UAE but also preserve culture and history of UAE.*

**Keyword:** *Abaya, Identity, Fashion Changes, Culture*

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## Introduction

Clothes have existed since the pre-historic era. The ice age is one of the evidence of the first dress discovery in the world. The first dress which was founded by the researcher was the one with simple tunic for protecting the body from extreme weather in that era (Bingham, 2005). Clothing and fashion change to follow human development from time to time. According to Nugroho, clothing is an instrument to trace religion, culture, social class, and education level in the past. (Kompas, 17 October 2016).

Fashion changes not only on design but also on the function and value of clothing. What we wear, including clothes, has become self-identity, group identity, and also the national identity of a nation. This phenomenon was going on since the old civilization in Ancient Egypt that had been adopted from Syria. *Schenti* is one of the type of clothing which was an ancient Egyptian aristocratic outfit, worn by wrapping the cloth to the waist with a tight or by using a belt. (Pendergast, Pendergast, & Hermsen, 2013)

Every civilization has different lifestyle and fashion is affected by this change. This



is the reason why fashion has various styles and modes like now. Every civilization gives their influences in fashion. Every race and every country have a different national identity, for example, *Baju Kurung* from Malay, *Saree* from India, and Abaya from the Arabian Gulf States. Some of the countries determine their identity or national identity by their cultural heritage or something precious from the past. For example, in Asia and Arab Countries, the government makes the heritage as its national identity as a way to protect and to inform people from around the world how rich the country is. This becomes one of the government strategies to increase economic value and tourism in their country.

“Arab” is a common word and everyone knows that this country or this race has some characteristics. Most people recognize this race by the religion. Islam becomes the major religion and this religion has a regulation about what they have to wear in everyday life. The dress that Arabian commonly wears is the same as that of worn in all of the area of Arab countries. There are two different kinds of dress in Arab countries worn by men and women. (Condra, 2013) One of the most common dress that they wear is abaya. Abaya is one of cultural heritage that Arab has and this dress had been discovered before Islam came. The Arab national dress is a symbol of pride and identity that has been designed with the dual intent of providing comfort and adhering to religious beliefs. (“Emirati National Dress and Fashion – Uae Culture,” n.d.) Almost all of Arab countries generally wear abaya as a costume in daily activities. Arabian styles depend on a lot of causes such as, geography, climate, economy, and even something that happened in the past. (“at09.pdf,” n.d.)

No one knows when abaya came and became a dress in Arab land. Researchers stated various arguments about the discovery of abaya, so it can be concluded that abaya had already come to Arab before Islam came. Kalfon said that in Pre-Islamic era, there was a dress similar to abaya worn by Bedouin Arabs. (Stillman&Stillman, 2000) Another argument comes from al-Qasimi who said that abaya was a traditional dress from East Saudi Arabia and had been found for hundred years ago. (Al-Qasimi, 2012)

The development of abaya is connected with economic growth in the UAE. The UAE is the fastest economic growing country of other Arab countries. In 1970s, the price of oil was in the lowest level. Therefore, in that year the national income was in the lower level. The government realized that they should not only rely on the oil sector. This country was panic and finally decided to develop other sectors in advancing the country (Mohamedi, 2013). The economic development in many sectors has made UAE stable and become one of the progressive countries in the world as well as contended with Europe and America. (U.S.News/Y&R/Wharton, 2018) This development makes other countries interested to invest in this country. In this modern era, the UAE is the most expatriates-populated country of the indigenous population and it becomes one of the government’s concerns to make a great variety of regulation to limit the number of expatriates and local citizen who live in the UAE.

Developing a ‘competitive knowledge economy’ is one of the pillars of National Agenda in line with Vision 2021. Thus, the government is focusing on how to use economic, tourism and commercial capital for more than two billion people. To achieve this, the Government has set 12 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They are: (“Economy - The Official Portal of the UAE Government,” n.d.)

1. Non-oil real GDP growth
2. Gross National Income (GNI) per capita
3. Net Inflow of Foreign Direct Investment as a percentage of GDP
4. Global Competitiveness Index
5. Share of UAE nationals in the workforce
6. Ease of Doing Business Index
7. Emiratisation Rate in the private sector

8. SME's contribution to non-oil GDP
9. Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index (GEDI)
10. Global Innovation Index
11. Share of 'knowledge workers' in the labour force
12. Research and development expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

The UAE's progressive development in the non-oil sector has up and down. Based on report progress in the UAE by 2017 to 2018, the revenue of this country has significantly increased in its largest revenues from construction, transportation, and tourism (Al-fakir, 2018). All the progress have been predicted by the leaders of the country who in 2008 made abaya as the national identity of the UAE as anticipation of losing their Arab culture in the future. (Al-Qasimi, 2012) Non-oil activities, on the other hand, show mostly positive growth. Electricity, gas, water and waste management activities achieved the highest annual growth rate of 9.4%, followed by human health and social services activities by 6.3%. Administrative services and support services increased by 5.5%, while manufacturing activity grew by 4.8%. Arts, entertainment, promotion and other services activities grew by 3.8%, education activity grew by 2.9%, and growth rate in the transport and storage sector reached 2.5%. ("UAE maintains positive economic growth," n.d.) The growth of non-oil industry sector makes the business opportunity of fashion business especially in abaya industry become more advanced. This is the reason why abaya as the national identity is so popular in the fashion world.

These changes have also impacted on local citizens of the UAE in Dubai who are around 2 million population, and this number continues to rise. The citizens – meaning UAE nationals – are community of minority in Dubai and in the other six Emirates of UAE. The majority of people are migrants from all over the world. (Mohammad, 2017) The National Day celebration, which is primarily a commemoration of the Sheikh Zayed's vision of the prosperous UAE, is widely celebrated by the whole population and in every Emirate. "National Day's importance comes from the future promised 42 years ago and now you can see the promise is delivered every day to all who live on this land," said Al Marzooqi. At first glance from the outside perspective, it might seem that the rapid growth and the path towards successful development suggests a risk of losing or transforming the national identity. However, Emirati citizens remain proud of their country. ("Emirati Voices," n.d.) This celebration reminds the citizen about their country. Once in a year they celebrate it by wearing their national dress which are abaya for women and dishdash for men. Some of high class people wear luxury abaya (with diamond, or swaroski around their abaya) to classify their identity in society.

## Method

The method used in this research is descriptive-analytic, and based on the background of this research, it tries to reveal whether abaya with its new look can still be accepted in the UAE and still remains the national identity of the nation or whether it is rejected by the UAE government because of opposing the Arab culture that has been rooted in the UAE. This research uses fashion change theory by Douglas. According to Douglas, fashion is created not only to validate or display dominant and accepted categories of identity but also to point out cultural anxiety, where people and their experiences no longer fit neatly into the accepted categorization system. (Annette Lynch, & Mitchell Strauss, 2007) This study will test the data by providing interpretations related to abaya issues as fashion and how fashion, which is in this case "abaya, is seen by the world? This research uses historical method that follows the procedures of heuristic, resources critics, interpretation, and the last, historiography. The first step is heuristic. The data and the information related to abaya and UAE people identity are collected from the local government website and Instagram, and other related websites such as online fashion magazine, and also journal articles. The next step is checking the truth of resources by analyzing them. Then the connectivity between modern abaya as the national dress in the UAE and traditional abaya in the past is found.

## Result and Discussion

The UAE government estimates that the total area of the UAE is 83,600 square kilometers; excluding the three islands in the Strait of Hormuz, the area is 77,700 square kilometers (slightly smaller than the state of Maine). Abu Dhabi has an area of 67,350 square kilometers. (Country & Emirates, 2007) It shares land borders with Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Abu Dhabi City is the permanent capital of the nation. The inland area is mostly desert with a few oases, and the barren Hajar Mountains run through the country. The UAE has a dry climate with very high temperatures and humidity in the summer. (S Ulayman N Ajm K Halaf, n.d.)

The UAE was founded by the Rulers of the six Trucial States: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Quwain and Fujairah. They decided to establish the United Arab Emirates in a meeting held in Dubai on 18th July 1971. The establishment of an independent, sovereign state was formally proclaimed on December 2, 1971. A few months later, Ras Al Khaimah joined the federation on February 10, 1972. In 1966, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder of the UAE, became the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and while working on developing the emirate, building schools, hospitals and roads, his political sense and his futuristic vision turned to form a unity with the neighboring emirates of the Arabian Gulf. ("UAE history," n.d.) Since its establishment in 1971, the UAE has been powering ahead with bold ambitions for the future, pushing its boundaries into space exploration and nuclear energy. ("Know the key milestones in UAE history | GulfNews.com," 2015)

Islam arrived in the UAE after the opening of Mecca. The Prophet Mohammed's delegation arrived in the UAE in A.D. 630 and introduced Islam. The Islamic civilization flourished in the Gulf region during the Umayyad Caliphate (A.D. 661 to 750) and Abbasid Caliphate (A.D. 750 to 1258). ("Electricity - The Official Portal of the UAE Government," 2018) since Islam had spread in UAE, the official religion of this country was Islam and all aspects of life within it was based on Islamic teaching.

At that time Islam became part of UAE and all of Islam rules were followed by this country including the way Muslim people wear clothes. That is why abaya also became one of traditional dress in the past.

### a. Abaya journey to the United Arab Emirates

The origin of the appearance of abaya cannot be separated from the origin of the appearance of clothes in the past million years ago. Ice Age is the beginning when human wore clothes to protect their bodies from cold weather. Allegedly the clothes worn were simple tunic, trousers, strings, skirts, belts, and cloaks. (PENDERGAST et al., 2013) Although abaya finally came as a substitute of tunic from the past and after Islam came, this dress was more identical with Islamic clothes for covering "aura". As years passed and Muslim women started accepting fashion as a way of being at their best, new ways of wearing this cloak came into fashion known as 'abaya'. (Magazine, 2013)

Abaya as a fashion has robe shapes and dark color, and it is identical with the Arab and Islamic nation. However, many people think that these clothes come from the Arab and Islamic teachings. Furthermore, robe explored the clothing called abaya. Modern abaya or abaya that people commonly wear now has a long process of journey of a garment in ancient times. Clothes were perceived to be an integral part of local history and an example of the people's connection to the "authentic" local life of the past, and society accepts these representations. Many GCC nationals believe that the current conception of national dress represents their local heritage. (Almutawa, 2016)

Some scholar said that, they could not mention when and where the abaya was found and worn. However, they were convinced that abaya came from a culture of dress that had existed before Islam came in the Arab world. (Shimek, 2012) Abaya in some Arab countries used to be the clothes by men but later as a dress for women. The definition of abaya as a garment has changed over time. Abaya as a traditional clothing has a sense as a dress that



protects the privacy, security of a woman, and the honor of her family. (Lindholm, 2014) More specifically the traditional abaya for women in Arabian Gulf is an important symbol of Islamic and national identity for people in that area. (Shimek, 2012) Haifa al-Anjari, a faculty member and professor assistant of fashion design at the College of Fashion and Design Dubai, said the abaya had come a long way from its utilitarian origins as a means of modesty and protection from the weather. (Pennington, 2017)

Speaking about abaya, it is identical with the clothes used by the encounters in the Arab Gulf Countries because the majority of local citizen in this region wear abaya, both modern abaya and traditional abaya. The most famous country that has used abaya is the UAE.

Abaya is relevant to the teachings of Islam because these clothes are in accordance with what is ordered by the Quran which states that clothing should cover the chest like the following verse: "O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, to cover themselves with a loose garment. ("The abaya - where black is always the new black \_ International Traveler," n.d.) Furthermore, there are so many surah which tell about covering the body. For example, surah 2:187, 7:26, 27:22-23, 25:47, and for specific dress about women clothes in surah 24:31, 33:59.

It also underlies the UAE to make abaya as a woman's everyday outfit there. The first coming of abaya in the UAE began with a plain black abaya with the *burqa'* (a gold covering of the eyebrows and lips), *cadar*, or *niqab*, to showcase an Emirati identity they believe to be rooted in the region's pre-oil history. (Khalid et al., 2016) This tradition was continuously used until oil is discovered and alters all aspects of life in the UAE.

Abaya from pre-oil era was made from either cotton or wool, and in a rarely special occasion abaya was made from silk. These abayas often included embroidery around the front openings and down the front edges using gold wrapped (*zari*) thread. (Lindholm, 2014) For special occasion UAE woman wear *jalabiya*. The *jalabiya* is made from high quality shiny fabrics such as 'Al Mzarray', a fabric that is made of 'Zary', which are golden or silver shiny threads. And for wedding day, the bride wears Abu Tairah' or 'Abu Al Tyoo'. It is a colourful fabric that has flowers with leaves shaped like the wings of a bird imprinted on it. Traditionally the bride's dress is a loose *jalabiya* stitched from 'Abu Al Tyoor' and beautifully embroidered with silver or golden threads along the neckline. (Issa, 2009)

Arab countries, including UAE, in 1950-1980 changed their fashion into European and American styles. For example, school and work attire were changed into uniform and some of the women wore them without hijab. Abaya was abandoned that year. This is because the UAE economic growth was climbing up because at this time the oil price soared. In 1970 there were concerns about the secularization of the west in Egypt. This incident has an effect on UAE in 1990 where women in UAE back wore abaya as an expression of their religiosity. (Lindholm, 2014) Since its come back, abaya seemed to be the latest fashion trend in the UAE. Traditional Abaya began to be driven away in the major cities of UAE, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. In that year the feature of abaya had significant differences from the traditional abaya. It was a closed gown, worn over another set of completely concealed clothing. It was usually a lightweight, silky cloth of polyester or nylon and it rested upon the shoulders rather than the head. (Lindholm, 2014)

A lot of people began to invest in UAE because of their oil resources. The more local UAE people made contacts with other cultures, the more easily local people were influenced by outside culture. Thus, this became one of the UAE government's concern. Then the government took an action to anticipate incident happening in 1970 by making a new regulation. In 2008 the government said that the year was the year of national identity. It was one of the forms of businesses to spread Islamic spirit of nationalism done through conference. The government considered that clothing was the true characteristic or true identity of the nation to face the modern world (Al-Qasimi, 2012) With this speech indirectly abaya has become the national identity of the UAE.

## **b. Abaya as Fashion Culture for the United Arab Emirates Modern Women**

Abaya as a fashion is increasingly recognized as a result of globalization taking place in the UAE. A large number of UAE population consists of foreigners, and only the national women are required to wear traditional clothes, while it is optional for men. Conventional Muslim women wear veils as a symbol of religious identity and chaste. (Hyun-joo, Hye-yeon, Sul-a, & Jin-soo, 2011) Abaya as a fashion is an adaptation of a plain abaya traditional dress and it has become fashionable in accordance with the desire of the wearer. (Shimek, 2012) This is also caused by local residents who continue their education abroad in the field of fashion. This indirectly affects the tastes of the designers when designing the abaya. Abayas are often seen as a symbol of a woman's devotion to her culture and her faith. Even in the 21st Century, abayas have retained their status as a garment of cultured elegance. The modern abaya is designed to be functional and fashionable, without compromising on traditional values. ("6 BEST PLACES TO BUY ABAYAS IN DUBAI," 2017) There are different ways of dressing for local and expatriate women. Outside the home, Arab women dress according to religious custom i.e. they must cover most of the body, from head to foot. But foreign women can wear western clothes but should always dress conservatively. (On & Employment, n.d.) When Emirati women are travelling abroad, they respect cultural differences and prefer not to attract too much attention by their traditional wear. Thus, during in overseas, they typically wear European clothing. Since the Emirati show their respect towards other cultures, they expect other people to do the same when they are visiting the UAE. There have even been talks about the implementation of certain public dress codes and there are numerous signs in shopping centers indicating what not to wear. These guidelines have not yet been obligatory, but they intend to maintain a certain level of respectability in public places and protect the national identity of the country from the outside influences. ("UAE Traditional Clothing – Past and Present," n.d.) From this statement we can see that Emirati women wear abaya not only as a fashion but also as their national identity and Arabism.

Emirati women have a desire to make changes, integration, and self-expression to stay up to date. This causes abaya as a religious outfit changes to be a dress that symbolizes style, beauty, and charm. (Pennington, 2017) Now, in the UAE we can see that abaya has various colors like cream, gray, soft blur, ivory and others nude colors, and it is one of the favorite colors for young generation. Although abaya has a lot of colors, black remains the choice of the majority of UAE women. In an interview conducted by abaya researcher, Lezley George writes that although most felt that if a woman wished to wear a colored abaya this was her decision, many recounted tales of colleagues who were advised not to wear colors to work, and some agreed that this was a good move. (Ghazal, 2016)

Emirati women also wear branded luxurious goods. This is found from a study done by a business school that wrote, the UAE position ranked in the third place with luxurious shopping after Hong Kong and London. (Church, 2011) Rapid economic growth requires the lifestyle of UAE to be more luxurious. They do it by wearing different kinds of outfit under the abaya and satisfy their appetite for new fashion trends. Increasing influx of people in UAE from Europe, America and South Asia have given plethora of options to women for dressing under abaya. Today, Emirati women can wear jeans and skirts or any other clothing of their choice under their abaya without upsetting the traditional cultural norms of the society. ("What women in UAE wear under the Abaya," 2013)

This change also serves as a trick for the UAE to promote their country as a global financial success that involves, to a lesser extent, exhibiting the country's traditions and exclusive origins. The exotism is most noticeably performed through Emirati Women's embodiment on cultural tradition through abaya and *sheyla*. These outfits are typically worn in official images of Emirati women, but this dress code is not enforced. While most Emirati men most often switch between Western dress and their *khonduras*, women are rarely portrayed in anything outside of their national dress (Schedneck, 2013)

Some of UAE designers have taken international places like, Rami Al Ali who is one of the leading icons in the fashion designers of UAE. Ali's designs are sought after celebrities and socialites have adorned the likes of Natasha Bedingfield, Vanessa Mae, Ivana Trump, Youssra, and Googooosh, amongst many others. Then, Reema is one of the top fashion

designers of UAE. There are also Zeina Sultani, Nadine Konso, Melika Dahlouk, and many more. ("Top 10 fashion designers of UAE," n.d.)

Over the last three decades, Al-Motahajiba has become one of the most well known fashion brands among Arab women. The brand is famous for its ability to marry traditional Gulf styles with modern trends in fashion. Al-Motahajiba offers a wide selection of fashionable indoor and outdoor clothing for Arab women. ("6 BEST PLACES TO BUY ABAYAS IN DUBAI," 2017)

Today's abaya has evolved to mean more than a piece of clothing covering other garments. Detaching itself from the earlier attributes, the symbolism or the concept of functionality, abaya has acquired a standing of its own, thus becoming a fundamental fashion piece, and an added value to an overall outfit (Lodi, 2018). Now the identity is visible from the amount of consumption they spend on visible goods. Abaya is the main symbol for women groups to show who they are.

### c. Modern Abaya Vs Traditional Abaya

Abaya with its new look or abaya as fashion seems to attract the eyes of the world to see the new form of the Arab world that is known as the majority of Muslims and with clothing that is all black and covers the whole body. Now, abaya designers are making new breakthroughs by designing and selling it and even some of them wear it in public places. This will automatically attract the public eye to see what is happening in the Arab world.

The traditional abaya is not only used by Arab women, but it now becomes more widespread. Arab influence came since Islam visited the country such as in Asia continent. The majority of this country has an Arab Village or Arab ancestry and this is the beginning of Arab influences. One of the aspects of Arabism in this region is seen through the clothing. Some even actually follow what the Arab people wear like *Khandura*, *Cadar*, *Dishdash*, and including abaya.

Time has changes and abaya changes too. Abaya is not only about covering the body but also as modern outfit to show who is the wearer. The UAE's economic development makes this country gain attention from a lot of specializations. Fashion becomes one of them. UAE abayas are adopted by several countries in the world. The designers from UAE are also trying to open international market and abaya as their identity also becomes one of their design that they bring into international market.

Abaya in UAE is no longer a traditional dress that is used as a symbol of Islam and a symbol of nationalism of the Arabian Gulf (Shimek, 2012), but now abaya has become a fashion display to defining social class and as a national identity. The modern abaya has different looks that makes it suitable with international market. Now, abaya has already become more famous than before because they have appeared in fashion week runway.

According to one of UAE's residents, "The traditional attire for women is an out-of-the-box black outfit that women wear over their clothes and a piece of cloth that covers the hair. Old women wear abaya and ladies also wear colourful abaya –what is worn by a mother (42 years old) is different from that of worn by young ladies. And old woman wears burqa which covers part of her face. (Kotsi& Balakrishnan, 2017)Although the basic color of abaya remains black, but there are another trend in which luxurious abaya is commonly used for special occasions. At home, Arab women, particularly younger women, often adopt western dress, and there are no restrictions on dressing for foreign women in private places. (On & Employment, n.d.)

The existence of modern abaya cannot be separated from the traditionalist opposition which says that traditional abaya is part of timeless history and culture that is immortal and timeless. According to the traditionalists, they said that better dressed means we wear in more Islamic way. Meanwhile, modernists argued that the symbol of religion is not from what they wear but from what they do (Shimek, 2012)This contradiction does not make modern abaya stop to thrive and as time goes by, modern abaya is increasingly more and more until it is available in the international market.

The key success of abaya to be like now is due to the role of Sheikha Fatima who has given an opportunity for UAE women to get equality with man especially in education. Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak is the wife of the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE. She is a pioneer in supporting the efforts exerted towards women empowerment and rights. An ardent supporter and upholder of women empowerment, Sheikha Fatima believes that women empowerment is vital to the advancement of society. Therefore, she always pursues the causes of women locally, regionally and internationally. This approach embraced by the political leadership of the State has vastly contributed to the status of the UAE female citizens today across all fields of practice. ("Biography of," 2004)

Sheikha Fatima believes that education is an overarching priority for development and advancement of women. Therefore, she always encourages women to seek knowledge and education and follows up closely with female schools. Sheikha Fatima strongly believes that women are able to contribute to all fields of development and base on all successes achieved in various fields. In addition, she has introduced future initiatives and plans to support women in the economic field and to provide them with all supporting services to enable them to match between their work and family obligations. (Url et al., 1997) Without her respect to women, it is impossible that the UAE can stand as a stable country in the Arab Gulf.

The UAE abaya trends have got frills and laces along with embroidery and pecko around the edges of the *shayla*. The sleeves have got lovely ribbons and laces which dangle around when the hand moves. Also, abaya with golden thread is very famous in the UAE since Emirati women like shiny stuffs. Furthermore, most abayas also have their shiny stones over them which is like an Arab princess. (Magazine, 2013) This has already been seen from the custom of the Arabs who prefer luxurious goods since the 2 AD (Vel, 2011) Many sources explain that inside the abaya is Arab woman.

The enormous influence of globalization brings modern abaya as a highly profitable market both for the Arab countries themselves and for areas with large Muslim populations. Fashion performances now have some designers who dare to design the Arabian outfit that is abaya.

The UAE is targeted to be a fashion center in the Arabian Gulf region, and this is because only about 20% of the population are nationals, the other 80% of the population are all foreigners. (Hyun-joo et al., 2011) Based on one of the abaya brands in the UAE, they said "Cross-cultural appeal: about 20 per cent of our customers are non-Arabs. We would definitely wear a loose abaya for our daily routine - (Barrett, 2011)

Dr. Ramadan said that the UAE was the largest country in Saudi Arabia according to Thomson Reuters, and the Islamic fashion market was expected to be worth US \$ 484 billion (Dh1.04 trillion) by 2019. "The UAE market is specifically chosen for this study as it has been planned to become the center of Islamic fashion," said Dr. Ramadan. (Pennington, 2017) Many UAE designers bring their local products to the International but many non UAE designers design abaya.

Abaya has managed to grab the eyes of the world because it appears in the fashion show attended by all the greatest designers from all around the world who bring their best design. Vivi Zubaedi managed to penetrate New York fashion week 2018 with unique abaya with Indonesian blended fabric and occasionally she blends Indonesian motifs. Previously abaya was also featured in London Fashion Week and some other Fashion Week to attract the world.

Vivi exhibited a collection of batik-made abaya, dark blue velvet, hijab with pearls, and she combined it with a hit baseball-style hat in America. Media in America rated that Vivi's abaya was different from most other Muslim clothes. ABS-CBN even mentioned that Vivi's design was decorated with luxury. (Juniman, 2018) Vivi said in an interview by Arab News that she already had a lot of clients in United States. ("Abayas only\_ NY show spotlights rise of modest fashion," 2018) While in London Fashion Week, abaya was designed by Malaysian designers who attracted the attention of visitors. In addition, there was also the

first abaya designer from India Murcyleen Peerzada and this designer concerned in this great event (HAIDARI, 2018) Dubai Fashion and Arab Fashion also attract the eyes of the world. This signifies that abaya as a fashion is not only accepted by UAE women but also accepted by all eyes of the world who see this.

Now abaya is not just an Arabian outfit. Abaya has now become an inspiration for all the world's designers because the market of abaya is increasingly widespread. Changes in modern abaya have a huge impact on the fashion world. The element of charism in abaya was able to unite other cultural elements. Moreover, instead of abaya, the UAE as a country has been much inspiring other Arab countries to follow globalization but keep holding the culture.

If the UAE continues to maintain the culture that they have, then it will be the potential opportunity in the future to attract the world eyes by consistently preserving the cultural heritage. In this case is abaya even with additional modern touch. In the future, if the UAE stands for preserving their abaya, later the UAE can be the center of abaya fashion in the world and this is one of the strategies to boost the economic development from bussines sector. If the policy of the government changes in the future, the UAE will have the same fate with Saudi. Saudi lost their identity after making the new rules about dressing in the country. Saudi Crown Princes said that "This, however, does not particularly specify a black abaya or a black head cover. The decision is entirely left for women to decide what type of decent and respectful attire they choose to wear" ("Saudi crown prince says abaya not necessary \_ GulfNews," 2018) This has left the Saudis in danger of losing their identity because now women in Saudi are free to wear any clothes. Reem al-Mutwali in an interview in Gulf News stated, "Abaya is very important for the sake of national identity and heritage, that all Emiratis understand their dress. People should become more aware of the elements that compose that dress, so that it will stay as part of their culture, rather than just leaving it on the shelves to just be used on special occasions as had happened in other countries" (Zaatari, 2015).

## Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that abaya has been transformed into more modern form than ever and remains acceptable among the people although it makes contradictions. The design has changed, for example around the waist which is more fitted to body, so the body looks more curved. Also, in some parts of abaya there are motifs which have different colors but the base color is black. This is because abaya still holds their traditional color. No matter how much the accessories or design on abaya the color is black. Abaya as fashion now becomes a tool for the UAE government to raise the economy through the fashion business sector. That is because the UAE wants to be more independent without relying on the oil sector.

According to Douglas, fashion is created not only to validate or display dominant and accepted categories of identity but also to point out cultural anxiety that fashion or abaya changes because of anxiety to bring a change or replace it with a new one if it is not in accordance with the events occurring in the UAE. The changes already done by UAE people not only bring to the "new" UAE but also preserve culture and history of the UAE. Emirati women modify abaya becoming more stylish and suitable in millenial era because they think that abaya is timeless clothing and it also becomes a self value for the wearer. This issue does not only occur in the UAE but also in all countries that have an identity. The study of fashion as an identity should be strengthened because this has been a way for every country to be able to show and protect their cultural identity for now and future.

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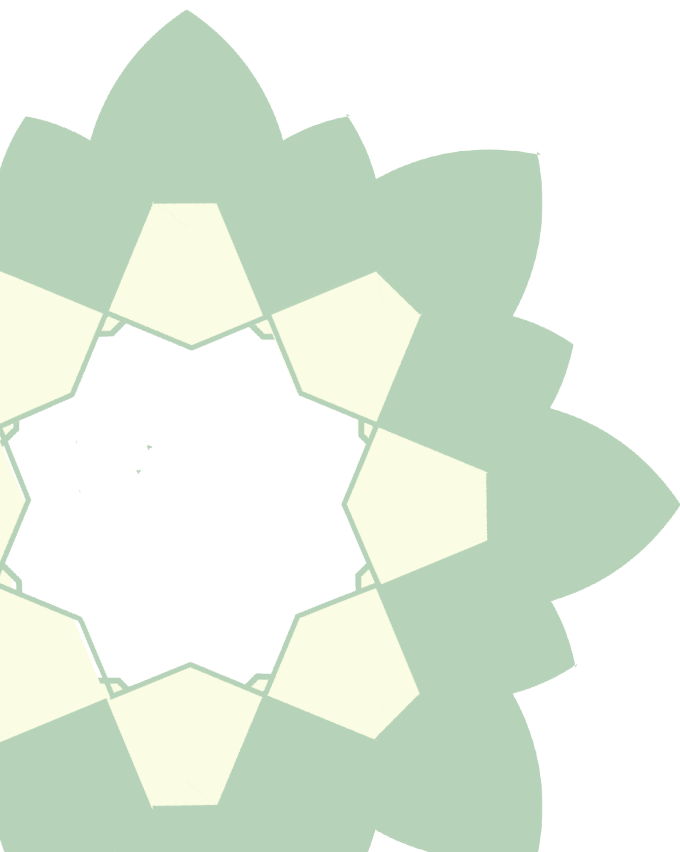
### Guidelines

1. It has not been published elsewhere.
2. The paper is research findings, conceptual idea, science development on a certain field, and theory application study.
3. The Manuscript typed with Microsoft Word, Font Times New Roman size 12, spacing 1 on A4 size paper with a margin of 3.5 cm from the left edge, 3 cm from the right edge, 3 cm from the top and bottom edges. The length of 15-20 manuscript pages including a list of references. Writer (s) must follow the journal template that can be downloaded at Insaniyat Open Journal System <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/insaniyat>
4. The article should be written in Arabic or English.
5. Article contains title; writer's name, author affiliation (department, faculty, university / or institution), complete address of the affiliation and Author's corresponding email.
6. Abstract is written for about 250 words. It pervaded research objectives, methodology, discussion and result, and conclusion with maximum 5 keywords that represent the research core.
7. The article consists of **Introduction** (background of study, research problem, research purposes, significance of the research and theoretical basis). **Method** (explaining the chronological research). **Discussion and Result** (containing analysis and result of the research), and **Conclusion**.
8. Citation and reference must follow APA style (American Psychological Association) sixth edition.
9. The references should used min 40% from primary source (International Journal).
10. The references used should be under 10 years (from now).
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Letters: ʾ, b, t, th, j, h, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, s,d, t,z, ʿ, gh, f, q, l, m, n, h, w, y. Short vowels: a, i, u. long vowels: ā, ī, ū. Diphthongs: aw, ay. Tā marbūtā: t. Article: al-.  
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