

Reconceptualising the *Tudung*: Malay Women, Social Media and Modern Lifestyles

Fauziyah Hanim Abdul Ree
Md Azalanshah Md Syed*
Azizah Hamzah
University of Malaya, Malaysia

*Corresponding email: azalan@um.edu.my

Abstract

This qualitative research examines the reconceptualisation of tudung as modern lifestyle among Malay women in contemporary Malaysia. With the emergence of social media, the image of tudung has been reinvented from mundane subject to be more colourful and stylish and emerge as modern popular culture in the Malay society. The popularity of tudung has created criticism among the religious authorities over the structured meaning of tudung as a symbol of female modesty. The reconceptualisation of tudung in this context refers to the tudung representation as Malay women engage with modernity. The process reflects the complex relationship as they negotiate within the existing traditional Malay structure and religious requirement.

Keywords: *Tudung, Malay Women, Identity, Lifestyle, Social Media*

Mentakrif semula Pemakaian Tudung: Wanita Melayu, Media Sosial dan Gaya Hidup Moden

Abstrak

Kajian kualitatif ini meneliti semula konsep tudung sebagai gaya hidup moden dalam kalangan wanita Melayu dalam konteks semasa di Malaysia. Dengan kemunculan media sosial, imej tudung dalam masyarakat Melayu telah dimurnikan semula dari suatu subjek yang bersifat rutin kepada suatu bentuk budaya popular moden yang mempunyai keindahan dan gaya. Populariti tudung telah membentuk suatu kritikan dalam kalangan pihak berkuasa agama terhadap makna tudung yang lebih membawa pengertian terhadap makna kesederhanaan wanita. Penelitian semula tudung dalam konteks ini merujuk kepada pemaparannya sejajar dengan penglibatan wanita Melayu dengan kemodenan. Proses ini memberi gambaran hubungan yang rumit lantaran mereka menyesuaikan dalam kerangka struktur tradisional Melayu dan Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Tudung, Wanita Melayu, Identiti, Gaya Hidup, Media Sosial.*

Introduction

This study is about reconceptualising the *tudung* as modern lifestyle among Malay women in contemporary Malaysia. *Tudung* is a piece of cloth worn like a scarf around the head and is commonly used by the majority of Malay women to cover their hair and head partly due to tradition, religious and historical factors. However, the latest global media phenomenon has changed the world view and appreciation of the *tudung* leading to numerous interest and discussion at various levels of authorities. At the same time, the latest influence of social media had constructed a new pattern of consumption and popularity on *tudung*. As a result, *tudung* became a subject of supply and demand particularly through social media by *tudung* entrepreneurs and *tudung* customers. While this new development has intercepted the original meaning in

tudung and resulted in its sanctity as a symbol of female modesty became debatable, its popularity has become a subject of mixed opinions among people in authority including religious groups, feminist critiques of human rights and politicians when discussing the issue of morality in Malay society. This phenomenon can be seen from the public discourse in various local media airing criticisms from among members of the public and religious authorities who had linked *tudung* to un-Islamic behaviour among Malay women who wear *tudung*. This study is carried out in order to understand how *tudung* become a subject of interplay in the representation of modern lifestyle among Malay women while at the same time remains as a symbol of modesty.

In the past, the presentation of *tudung* is very straightforward due to limited choice in colour as well as in styles. With the help of the new platform particularly social media, the image of *tudung* has changed from mundane object into fashion accessory to complement the modern women outlook (Hochel, 2013). This new improvement has turned *tudung* into a popular consumer culture in Malay society. According to the latest report by the local newspapers there were almost 8.48 million Muslim women in Malaysia. This statistics classified Muslim women mainly from the age of 15 to 49 years old as active and potential consumers who have adapted with the current trend of fashionable *tudung* as part of their everyday life (The Malay Mail, 2016). Nowadays, the popularity of *tudung* as Muslim women head gear can be easily identified through the increasing number of online *tudung* outlets such as Naelofa Hijab, Fareeda Tudung, SA Elegance, JelitaSARA, and Ariani (Utusan Malaysia, 2016; Malay Mail Online, 2015; Sinar Harian, 2015, Berita Harian, 2014) that emerged in the social media promoting varieties of *tudung* images and styles.

In addition to spurring the demand for *tudung*, social media had become a popular platform among Malay women to seek latest design and patent that are commonly rebranded and popularised by local celebrities (Malay Mail Online 2015; Sinar Online, 2015, Berita Harian, 2014). This transformation has increased the popularity of *tudung* thus increasing its demand. This signal has attracted *tudung* designers to use social media as the hosting sites to promote assorted models of *tudung* that focused

on various themes such as pragmatic, modest, trendy and attractive in order to complement with the Malay women modern lifestyle. Examples can be seen from the myriad of fashion shows and testimony from fashion critics in various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube (BBC, 2016; Othman 2013). The development has turned social media as a favourite medium among the local *tudung* entrepreneurs to effectively conduct online sales and launching of promotional activities in order to capture the target consumers. The multi-layer functionality and wider coverage provided by this platform encouraged many *tudung* entrepreneurs to use social media to expand their business networking or to seek collaboration and partnership with other *tudung* entrepreneurs, fashion celebrities and enterprising consumers.

This new development has transformed *tudung* from the image of backwardness and monotony into a fashion icon idolised by Malay women across ages and social status (Malay Mail Online, 2015). From the global perspective, it can be said that social media has helped not just to introduce *tudung* into the international market but also in establishing sales and businesses. As a result, *tudung* has been identified with various labels such as “a symbol of modesty, a woman’s crown, a tool of oppression, a sign of fanaticism” (Kane, 2016). The popularity of *tudung* through social media and the lucrative business prospect has attracted global fashion brands such as H&M, Dolce & Gabbana, and DKNY to invest in the *tudung* business. This new development helped to elevate the image of *tudung* from purely for religious consumption to become a blending of “fashion and faith”. With this new improvised image wearing *tudung* is also sought after by non-Muslim women as fashion accessories thus expanding the concept of *tudung* broader in women fashion. Needless to say, social media is responsible for this transformation and in popularising *tudung* as a popular consumer culture.

The huge demand for fashionable *tudung* designs and styles has caused some members of the public to feel uneasy over the changing structure in the Malay women new “self-presentation” image. For example, religious authority argues that Islamic modesty has been deemed into commodities as a result of commercialisation (Sinar Harian, 2016). This situation has resulted in public criticism claiming material and personal gain had

overridden Malay women's responsibility and objective in spreading the message of Islam among their Muslim counterparts through the wearing of *tudung* (Sinar Harian, 2016; Malay Mail Online, 2015; The Malaysian Insider, 2015; Free Malaysia Today, 2016). At the same time, the inclination of Malay women towards Middle Eastern fashion led to social activists such as Marina Mahathir to label this type of trend as the new colonisation by the Arab culture (Free Malaysia Today, 2016), as she lamented on how Malay women is slowly slipping away from their Malay identities.

Significantly, the incident of three young *tudung*-wearing Malay girls being "wooded, courted and hugged" by their idolised K-POP Band on stage has drawn *tudung* to another contradiction which brought the issue of moral and modesty back into fore (Malay Mail Online, 2015). This controversy has opened up another realm of criticism toward Malay women and their engagement with the projection of Malaysian modernity. This study intends to show how *tudung* is reconceptualised during the on-going contestation by the various agencies under the context of Malaysian modernity.

***Tudung*: Popularity and Criticism of Women's Modernity**

History has shown that the struggle for modernity among the Malay women often become the subject of contestation between the two Malay political parties namely PAS and UMNO due to similarity in cultural practices and political struggle (Zainah, 1987, Shamsul, 1997, Fauzi, 1998, Abdillah, 2014; Harpers, 1999). The dilemma has resulted in Malay women identity becoming embedded in archaic tradition in order to meet with the aspire version of the Malay patriarchal society (Nagata, 1995). For example, the Islamic resurgence in the 70s has re-established home as a new site for Malay women to participate in Malaysian modernity project which is in line with the teaching of Islam where nurturing and enlightening a family is a central role for women. Mouser (2007: 169) in his study stresses this circumstance as ideal gender constructions of "an image that is socially accepted, honoured and respected". While Nagata (1995), on the other hand, reaffirmed that this context acts as an important input among politicians during the Islamic resurgence period

in shaping and developing the Malay women identity. Furthermore, she sees this factor as a reason for the internalisation of *tudung* among Malay women (Nagata, 1995: 104).

This can be seen in the establishment of strong alliances between the *da'wah* movements with PAS (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia) in fighting for the formation of Islamic state (Zainah, 1987). The direct impact can be seen with the emergence of the girls with *tudung*, the *da'wah* girls and their clothing style projecting *tudung* as a representation of female modesty and righteousness (Fauzi, 1998; Zainah, 1987). Simultaneously, the National Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced by the government to modernise and to restructure the national policy and to change the economic mode from an agrarian to an industrialised nation (Ong, 2010, Crouch, 1992). The introduction of industrial policy in the 1970s has created huge demand for massive labour and can be seen in the migration of young Malay girls from rural areas into big cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Johore Bahru to seek employment in transnational electronic factories. According to Ong (2010), Zainah (1987, 2001) and Kessler (1992), the massive exodus has restructured the rural-urban population composition. According to Crouch (1992:29) based on the 1974 electoral boundaries, urban constituency was three times bigger than the smallest rural constituency, but by 1982, it has increased to five times.

In the new urbanised environment, majority of the young rural Malay girls began to change their traditional rural lifestyle in order to comply with their new urbanised environment. However, this new transformation has put many of them in dilemma as many of them were caught between conforming to the traditional family upbringing and their own desire to be modern and fashionable (Ong, 2010). Taking the factory girl's conflict as a juncture to counter their political rivalry, UMNO, as one of the components in the ruling party began utilising the media as a discourse to propagate a moderate representation of Islam. This is done by neutralising the image of *tudung* presented earlier by the *da'wah* girls and to re-present the image of Malay women in accordance to the government's moderate ethos (Zainah, 1987). Naturally, this attempt contradicts the values propagated by the Islamic resurgence movement. For example, while

the *da'wah* girls associate *tudung* as a means for Malay women to be engaged with modernity by going back to tradition, family and religion; a moderate Malay woman associate the wearing and the styling of *tudung* with tradition and religion yet fashionable, and modern. Effects from these contradictions resulted in the emergence two conflicting concepts of *tudung* leading to another complex relationship between two groups of Malay women and their fluid concept of being modern.

At the same time, while engaging with modernity, Malay women are also expected to conform to the *adat* (custom) and tradition of Malay society including the unwritten rules of social norms. Nagata (1995: 104) asserts that the issue on *tudung* and modesty has juxtaposed Malay women choices between following the Western concept of modernisation and the Malay custom of *adat*. Stivens (2003) observes that women's "rights" in Malaysia has always been contested within the political arena. As a result, their choices continued to be seen as "slippery and elusive". However, Croteau et. al. (2012) argues that individual actions and beliefs are not just based on the social structure rules and resources but also upon availability of alternative options and opportunities. Nevertheless, coming from a patriarchal society, Malay women in Malaysia are often constrained by the "power-relation" conflict in terms of everyday life's choices. Zainah (2001) in her argument espoused that the concept of moral and modesty in relation to Malay women representation and clothing needs to be redefined in accordance to the present era of globalised and progressive modern lifestyle.

The unrelenting contestation revealed the fluid nature in the current state of Malaysian modernity. With the advent of social media, this negotiation becomes more complex when the dissemination of images and the designs of *tudung* become more global and dynamic thus generating diverse concept and interpretations. This study intends to locate the meaning of *tudung* as it becomes a subject of interplay during the process of engaging with modernity and urban lifestyle among Malay women while at the same time remains as a symbol of women modesty.

Methodology

These findings are based on one-to-one in-depth interviews using unstructured questions including transcription and recording in order to obtain information. The informant in this study comprised seven *tudung* entrepreneurs and seven *tudung* consumers from various educational and social background. These informants were purposely chosen within the demarcated zone of Klang Valley areas covering places like Taman Tun Dr Ismail (Kuala Lumpur), Bangi and Shah Alam (Selangor). These areas represent the centre for Muslim fashion with high density of Malay population and has always been regarded as trendsetter areas for fashion including *tudung*.

Findings

Tudung and Maintaining the Malay Moral Values

The researchers began by asking the informants if wearing *tudung* can be classified as identity of Malay women with good moral values. Findings shows there exist a diversion in perceptions among these informants based on their cultural beliefs and practices. For example, while all the informants had associated the wearing of *baju kurung* and *tudung* as an indication of good moral among Malay women; however, when asked to classify good moral among Malay women who wear *tudung*, results showed some mixed views indicating Malay women are still saturated with the dominant ideological discourses of tradition and religion although their views toward moral values are more fluid.

For this study the researchers had used the issue involving *tudung* clad young Malay girls who had been hugged by K-POP singers on stage as an example to prompt informants to comment about moral values of Malay women who wear *tudung*. This issue was made viral on social media and had resulted in enormous criticisms from netizens who began to associate this issue with Islam and morality. To the Malay community, the issue has transgressed the traditional image of Malay women who were perceived to be chastely, respectful and honourable. As a result, this incident has been regarded as tantamount to de-structuring the Malay women representations.

For example, C5 has associated *tudung* to Malay women representation based on the state version of modernity in order to meet the patriarchal aspired representation:

...as Malay who wear *tudung* and being caught in public acting in such a way is totally embarrassing not just to the family but to the Malay community in general.

(C5, female age 31, 20 Jan 2017)

Consumer C3, on the other hand, had used the version popularised by the *dakwah* girl during the Islamic resurgence era as another representation of modern Malay women:

Tudung act as *haya* that helps to protect female modesty.... when a girl wears *tudung*, she will be perceived differently compared to her peers who do not wear *tudung*... therefore, the responsibility is upon her to shun or avoid anything that will bring shame to her family and community.

(C3, female age 57, 27 Dec 2017)

These findings showed C5, and C3 had internalised these values by associating the transgression by these *tudung* clad young Malay girls as bringing shame to their family and to the Malay community. One of the elements used to internalise these values is to reconstruct ideal identity that will create a distinction in gender in order to demarcate and re-alienate quality and state of mind through coercive social habits. Adler (1935) sees the reconstruction of “ideal image” within a patriarchal society as “fictitious invention of the male sex” while Glasgow (1913) sees the “de-construction of traditional views of women” as inherent which is acquired as women willingly conform to the new identity. In this context, the researchers argue that there exists a coercive social habit in the society which functions to ensure that Malay women will continue to align themselves to the prescribed femininity image. This is done at several levels in order to alienate certain characteristics. Corresponding to this patriarchal is in the comment made by E1, showing how Malay women clothing had been turned into a public debate:

...this incident will make all Malay women who wear *tudung*
become a laughing stock of other races...

(E1, male, age 40, 12 Jan 2017)

At the same time, media is used to harness these values through public discourse using stigmatisation, subjugation and ostracization as can be seen from the viral incident made towards these young *tudung*-donning Malay girls and their idolised K-POP artists. The rationale is that the acceptance of this idea will shift the responsibility to uphold moral value to Malay women who wear *tudung*; hence the burden lies on these women to prove their innocence although in these circumstances they were the victims. This perception reflects the expectation of Malay society upon all Malay women who wear *tudung* regardless of their social religious background.

This perception exists because Malay society is known to steadfastly hold on to the Malay *adat* in their daily interaction and practices. In the olden days, this *adat* acts as a bulwark to guide the community in order to live in an organised manner through unity, cooperation and respect (Kessler, 1992). Furthermore, the concept of *adat* has been ingrained in the Malay society, any social changes will involve deliberating on its unwritten rules. Within the Malay society, the issue of daughter chasteness is very important when reflecting the dignity of her family, therefore any transgression of this principle will bring shame and disgrace. Generally, as a result of this act, the family will be ostracised and marginalised by the society and this is regarded as a big punishment in any traditional Malay family.

However, the second group of informants see the viral issue as a time to highlight on high morality. They expressed their concern by suggesting more communication and interaction through counselling. For example, C1, agreed that values from family and home as important foundation in disseminating exemplary behaviour and good moral especially among the younger generation. She asserted that to wear or not to wear *tudung* and how each *tudung* is worn or styled should not be used as a yardstick when evaluating Malay women's morality:

I think the issue here is on how well these individuals understand about Islam and how will they align this understanding to their representation... this incident has nothing to do with the wearing of *tudung*.

(C1, age 37, Jan 2, 2017)

At the same time, advent in technology has enabled information to become more accessible thus enabling wider platform for discussion and exchange of knowledge and ideas leading to more people becoming more open minded and more sociable. This development is reflected by the third group who are more acceptable to the mistake as they considered the transgression by these young girls as a learning process. This group demanded to look at *tudung* and moral not from Malay *adat* perspective but as a separate issue. For example, according to C2, although it is wrong to do that especially among non-*mahram*, however, she relented that these girls were young in age. In addition, she pointed out that this thing is common and being young these girls are more prone to follow their heart. However, she asserted that what is important is to be able to disperse with good advice to these young people so that they will be able to use their mistake as part of the process of growing up. She reiterated it is better to learn from the mistake we made than to be gullible all through our lives. Her rationale is, this realisation will help to guide them in the future on the proper conduct that all Muslim women must be aware of.

The youngest informant in this study, C6, pointed out that the issue on moral, has to be looked at from the individual's overall personality in order to avoid judgemental interpretations as she said:

However, I admit that the environment where we were brought up plays a crucial role in moulding our characters. For example, I have some Malay friends who are free hair, but demonstrated such exemplary character that even the non-Muslim were impressed. Therefore, I hope netizen will stop associating personality with *tudung* because it just doesn't jive anymore.

(C6, female age 20, 12 Jan 2017)

Supporting C6 opinion is E3, who mentioned how majority of the Malays seem too obsessed with the word “*haram*” thereby had missed the part of looking at Islam as a religion which is always evolving in meeting the needs of its believers. Generally, majority of the informants from this group claimed the incident involving the K-POP artists and the *tudung* clad Malay girls as isolated as they pointed to the beauty of Islam which gives opportunity for believers to seek atonement.

From the philosophical views, these informants feel that the issue of morality is to be analysed by taking into consideration of individual’s socio, cultural and religious background. In conclusion, while several informants see the Malay *adat* as a guide to good moral, others had expanded this scope by pointing out that *tudung* alone is insufficient to determine the morality of its wearers. Based from this argument, these informants claim that *tudung* is an identity of a Muslim women and should not be used as indication to judge Malay women morality. A reason given by these informants suggest that moral issue should be analysed by looking from individual’s deed instead of whether she wear *tudung* or not. Based on this finding, these informants had reconceptualised *tudung* as a dress code for Muslim women

Tudung and Re-Definition of being Modern

Using the present era as context, the researchers had prompted the informants to envisage the concept of modern in relation to preferred lifestyle. *Tudung* consumer C1, had linked modern to popularity as a result of widespread acceptance by the masses. She had singled out technology development as the process which is instrumental in bringing about changes and in influencing Malay women's perceptions as she said:

...modern *tudung* refers to *tudung* that comply with Syariah requirement... at the same time this *tudung* must be fashionable like the *tudung* which are popularised by celebrities and those that have been promoted by various forms of media including social media.

(C1, female, age 37, 3 Jan 2017)

From C1 point of view, social media is not just a powerful tool that can shape user's thinking but most importantly this medium is capable of influencing users to take action as can be seen by the number of likes among social media followers:

...modern *tudung* are *tudung* which appeared frequently on social media and have many followers.

Another informant C7, identified popularity as the keyword associated with modern; however, unlike C1, she had associated consumer taste and preferences as the prime mover that shaped modern *tudung*:

...this *tudung* design must cover my *aurat* and worn by many...
Usually we can see this type of *tudung* promoted by celebrities – this type of *tudung* are very popular and highly in demand among fashionable *tudung* wearers.

(C7, female, age 61, 7 Jan 2017)

At this juncture, modern in this context is referred to the style and design of *tudung* being promoted by celebrities over television, magazines, newspapers, books, billboard, fashion show and social media. The word popular in this context refers to element that can appeal and influence a wider group of audiences to *tudung* as the most sought-after object in modern fashion. However, the quest to be fashionable and modern among these women is often criticised by the media even to the extent of levelling these women as obsessive compulsion who placed their priorities wrongly as a result of being obsessed with fashion. Examples can be seen in the comment made by C7 that shows how this ideology has accepted and entrenched deeply in Malay women identity.

...modern Malay women are people obsessed about following the latest trend in *tudung* fashion. These people are considered as sophisticated and vogue and are fashion trendsetters among their friends. Traditional Malay women do not follow the latest *tudung* trend but are more inclined to associate their personality to feminine qualities like courteous, compassionate, accommodating...

(C7, female, age 61, 7 Jan 2017)

Another form of contestation to the popular demand of *tudung* promoted by celebrities can be seen by the product marketed by E3, a lifestyle tudung entrepreneur who run her own niche market of *tudung* for modern living. According to E3, tudung is part of the clothing to protect Muslim modesty; therefore, care must be taken to ensure the *tudung* will be able to comply with the *syariah* requirement from all aspects including its length, thickness of material, design and style. This in return will serve to protect a woman's *aurat* and her dignity. In order to proof her point, E3 had steadfastly run her tudung business with this concept in mind. This way, she claimed, enable her customers to make a link between her principle and her personality by observing the design of her *tudung* and the type of *tudung* she wears. She claimed as an entrepreneur, she is not just selling for the sake of selling and making profit. Instead, she pointed out that she is also using her business platform as another form of doing *dakwah* where she hopes to be able to add value not just to herself but most importantly to her customers as she said:

...*tudung* represents my lifestyle as a Muslim who is looking for "*baraqah*" from God, therefore the choice I made from the length of the *tudung*, the thickness of the material up to the choice of colour in order to avoid attracting attention...must be towards *syariah* compliant.

(E3, female, age 27, 18 Jan 2017).

However, for C1, in addition to *syariah* compliance her choice of *tudung* must also complement with her lifestyle as a career professional:

I like *tudung bawah* because it is easy to take care of, easy to design and suitable for all occasions. These factors are important because as a lecturer my presentation is important in order to gain respect from my students. Moreover, this type of *tudung* is considered fashionable since we can see many people wearing it in various styles. Most importantly the design is *syariah* compliant therefore it satisfies my personal needs and my religious obligation.

(C1, female, age 37, 3 Jan 2017)

Echoing this thought is C4, who has factored lifestyle and taste as important element whenever she plans to replenish her *tudung* collections. According to C4, in order to be updated with the latest *tudung* design in the market, she will use several platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and fashion magazines to get information. She claimed that the abundance of *tudung* design in the market has enabled her to maintain her needs to be fashionable without compromising her religious beliefs. She also asserted that this factor is important because her presentation at the corporate level is not only being judged based on skills but also self-presentation.

While being fashionable is linked to investing additional cost, however, according to C4, the competition in the *tudung* business has enabled people like her to reap its reward. She pointed out that as consumer; *tudung* wearers must broaden their option before making any commitment. Therefore, there are several ways to reduce unnecessary expenses on *tudung* including hunting for low prices through several package deals such as bundle sale stock clearance. Another way is to compare the price from one store to another and using bargaining skill.

Likewise, for C2, despite a different daily routine, the same concept has also been applied when choosing a *tudung* to complement her everyday life consumption. As a fulltime housewife, C2 focuses more on ability to protect her modesty every time she is doing household chores. According to C2, the morning routine will start with sending off her children to different schools and a kindergarten and the task requires her to be present in front of other parents and nannies.

As a result, she has to ensure her dressing including her *tudung* is presentable in order to protect her *aurat*. In Islam, *aurat* refers to body parts that must be covered with garment. Although the interpretation of *aurat* tends to vary from one individual to another; however, in Malaysia, majority of Malay women wear *tudung* as part of their desire to fulfil their Muslim faith as indicated by C2:

...as a housewife I am always multitasking between running the house and meeting the needs of my school going children. Therefore, the choice of *tudung* must be fashionable yet easy to wear, no ironing needed and enable me to fulfil my Muslim faith.
(C2, female, age 44, 5 Jan 2017)

These finding supports the claim made by *tudung* entrepreneur E4, who pointed out that *tudung* fashion is not fixed anymore but is evolving in line with the needs of each *tudung* wearers. According to *tudung* entrepreneur E4, several factors were identified as instrumental in raising the demand for certain design of *tudung* including being modelled by popular personalities and celebrities:

Previously *tudung* was designed in accordance to *tudung* wearer's age, but nowadays it is up to the customer to choose the *tudung* design in order to accommodate to the preferred lifestyles...
(E4, male, age 47, 22 Jan 2017)

Based on this development, it can safely be agreed upon that Malay women preferred lifestyles that can be considered as the basis in the reconceptualising of the *tudung* as a product of popular culture for modern lifestyles. In this context the concept of popular has become fluid and subjective. For example, according to E4, another factor that influenced the choice of *tudung* is the way each *tudung* wearer perceived their preferred lifestyle. This kind of perception has made the selection of *tudung* to become subjective because consumer tastes and lifestyles are not just context-bound but are also influenced by individual's value and belief.

For example, both C1's and C7's definition of modern differed,. However, both had agreed to the concept of modern to be linked to *syariah* compliant and popularised by celebrities. Supporting this demand is C3, who states that *tudung* functions as *haya* to protect the female *aurat*. Since almost all Malays are Muslims, therefore the wearing of *tudung* must prioritise the objective of fulfilling one's faith as a Muslim because this is the main essence of becoming a true Muslimat:

...almost all Malays are Muslim, therefore whatever their preferences and lifestyle are, the style and the design in the tudung must adhere to *syariah* requirement.

(C3, female, age 57, 27 Dec 2017)

At the same time, development in communication technology particularly social media has helped to create such transformation which is responsible in propelling the *tudung* market to a new height. This platform plays important role in the development of a new trend among the younger generation in uploading *tudung* tutorial online as a means of sharing ideas or to provide supports to other online users who seek their advice. The trend of uploading *tudung* images on social media has given *tudung* wearers more options to choose, this can be seen from the abundance of *tudung* styles and designs that has become available in the local market. The impact can be seen in the new transformation as *tudung* is modified and restyled by end users. Being media savvy, they have reified the conventional image of modern in *tudung* which was earlier being associated with celebrities to the wearer's personality and talents. As a result, the concept of "the latest *tudung* style and design" can be anything from traditional to modern which can fulfil the *tudung* wearer's requirement. The fluidity in the new image of *tudung* helped to remove the way *tudung* was earlier being stereotyped.

Conclusion

In summary, the *tudung* discourse has reflected the intertwine relationship between Malay women's choice of fashion and the society where she belongs to. Despite the differences in opinion, all the informants in this study are united on several issues including adhering to *tudung* with *syariah* compliance and in confronting viral issues on social media. Needless to say, globalisation and new media technology not only helped to provide more options in terms of *tudung* representation but also enhanced user understanding on issues like moral and religious aspects which can be seen from the online sharing platforms including social media and interactive public forum. However, these informants had some differences in the way they utilised the social media platform. For example, the older generation prefers to use social media to browse

through online shops but will not perform online shopping nor upload any images, On the contrary, the younger informants are the *tudung* netizens. This group is more techno-savvy and had moved from fashion followers to fashion trendsetters and is set to become the game changer in the *tudung* business. This group is not just financially better off but are more educated and enterprising compared to any generation preceding them. This generation has been defined more by their sociological exposure rather than their biological background. As a closing statement, this study wishes to bring back the argument brought by Croteau et. al. (2012) who postulates that individual actions and beliefs are not just based on the social structure rules and resources but also upon availability of alternative options and opportunities.

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