

Abaya and its Aesthetic Fashion Role in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Abaya is considered an essential cover gown for Saudi women whenever they need to leave the house. Abaya is a reflection of Saudi women culture and identity which has existed throughout the history of Saudi Arabia. However, Abaya varies substantially in its design, color, embroidery style and even the way it is worn in different parts of the country. In recent years, Abaya has transcended its traditional purpose as a cover for women to play an observable role in fashion and elegance of Saudi women.

This paper aims at shedding some light on the following:

- Comparison between traditional and modern Abaya in Saudi Arabia.
- Factors that influenced the development of the Abaya in its current form
- The effect of women's Abaya on fashion in Saudi society

The research followed the analytical descriptive method utilizing the physical research sample of the abayas in Saudi Arabia, the human sample of women in the city of Saudi Arabia and the owners of shops specializing in the sale of abayas. Methods and tools used to collect the scientific material consisted of a questionnaire for the owners of shops specialized in the sale of abayas as well as another questionnaire for women in Saudi Arabia. The study showed the many changes between the traditional Abaya and the current one in terms of design, type of material, occasions for wearing the Abaya and the style in which the Abaya is worn with all its decorations. There is also a relationship between environmental, social and economic factors and the development

of the Abaya. In addition, the paper also highlights the effect of Abaya on the development of fashion in Saudi society.

Keywords: Abaya, Saudi Arabia, Fashion, Traditional, Society, Decorated Abaya, Colorful Abaya, industry, Modern technology

Article Classification. Research paper

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1. Introduction.

Nations all over the world are recognized for their scientific and economic advancements as well as their preservation of their distinctive culture. Clothes are one of the most transparent features of cultural identity that falls into the definition of national heritage (تاوشیخت، 2014).

Abaya is considered the fundamental out-ware of Saudi woman therefore it reflects her identity and culture. *Abaya* differs in detail; color, embroidery and wearing style from one region in Saudi Arabia to the other extending as an out-ware throughout the Saudi history up until modern day Saudi Arabia. *Abaya* went through many phases in which Black color was the dominant throughout most of the its history. The wearing style of *Abaya* has changed as well, from wearing *Abaya* to the middle of the torso to wearing *Abaya* as a cloak with long sleeves and decorating ribbons. However, such new designs shifted *abayas*' role from being a cover garment to being a piece of clothing with different sizes and designs. Thus, causing religious authorities to fight back and enforce the adoption of traditional cover-like *abayas*. The adoption of these newer styles of *abayas* was first carried out by expatriates along with few Saudi women (علي، 1994 - الرشيد، 2008).

Abaya developed in its design and color according to fashion trends for women to feel distinguished and accepted (Al-Qasimi,2010). Fashion is the ongoing change in form and taste which gives the opportunity for invention, innovation and competition. It resembles elegance while being closely related to the economic, political and religious aspects of society(إبراهيم، 2000) .

Abaya is considered as an identifier for local, ethnic and religious identity but at the same time it adopts international fashion designs while preserving its Islamic and

local identity. An Abaya in Emirates, for example is designed by renowned international designers and is made of premium fabrics (B o u v i e r, 2018).

Nowadays, Abaya is not being limited to covering women body, but it is an important element of fashion and style. Very few researches shedding light on the role of Abaya and its fashion role has been executed. The study in hand aims to recognize the role that Abaya fashion plays in Saudi Arabia and the factors leading to its shape development.

2. The literature review.

Traditional Costumes is Clothing styles that are passed on within the group of the groups have no beginning and no designer. Reflect customs and traditions of the community they belong to. It also reflects the patterns and evolution of life (Al-Ajaji & Al-Bassam,2012).

The Change in the form of clothing in any culture is due to changes in the values of the community and concerns the concepts of many cultural institutions in the context of the evolution of society. Cultural progress has had the greatest impact on changing the clothing patterns of Saudi women in general. Fashion is used to describe the form of clothing used by people, and reflects the pattern of ideological trends adopted by the members of the society; as such, fashion continues to be common for a few months or years until replaced by another and made obsolete , So fashion and the extent of the community's involvement is subject to the behavior of people in accepting or rejecting it. In this cultural context, Indian women wear the saree and Arabic women, the Abaya. This is a habit that has been passed on from generation to generation. Fashion is basically a business. It exists to serve women all over the world, and every woman has to choose from it to suit the conditions of her environment and society. One of the factors that has helped to change the trends and spread of these clothing trends is the increase in the foreign labor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from diverse communities involving both Arab and non-Arab cultures. Although this has also led to friction between the different cultures, it has also led to changes in many

of the trends in the society as well as the means of transport and communication which are important factors in the proliferation of fashion. Consequently, the spread of new fashions has helped precipitate the economic boom in Saudi Arabia, its luxury and prosperity and the scientific and technological development that has characterized the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Saudi culture(Arbein,1996).

The traditional costumes in Saudi Arabia are original, have been distinctively rich from ancient times to the present, and can be distinguished by the general advantage of elegance. Changes in this history of fashion must be considered in terms of the changes that have taken place in society due to the economic openness to the outside world, which in turn has led to the cultural evolution, social development and technical progress that has prevailed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This has resulted in changes in the patterns of community life, particularly a recognition of the impact of the individual on Western civilization. This influence has impacted the traditional patterns of clothing, many of which have disappeared although the few which remain are maintained by some members of society. The Abaya is considered one of the traditional styles of clothing that has continued to be worn by Saudi women in all regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with some variations in design, color, decoration and ways of wearing them (فرغلي ومحمد، 2017) .

Abaya is defined as a long loose gown with a rectangular shape that is open at the front. It is considered an out-ware being worn by all over Saudi Arabia since the country was established. In the central region of Saudi Arabia, Abaya is made of two vertical section that meet in the middle extending the whole height of body or, sometimes, longer especially in the back. This Abaya is made of black silk threads in the form of *qaytan*: thin twined threads circulated around the woman's head and along the two lines of the front opening and the shoulders. *qaytan* is sometimes used around the wrist as well or replaced with yarns. The

woman wears over her basic clothes, when going out, a dress dedicated to the public arena. This is called the “market althoob” and is often a thick cloth, either black or dark green, so as not to show one’s face to strangers. The woman raises the sleeves of the dress over her head and covers her face with a Sheela, and then wears the Abaya as well over the head, leaving it to fall down to cover all of her body (Al-Bassam, 1985).

Abaya’s function used to be covering the woman’s body and its details as Alharbi (2013، الحربي) mentions. Alharbi adds that Abaya is worn for many reasons including hiding gray hair, jealousy, luxury and plainness appearance. Alahsa region was famous for manufacturing wool abayas. This industry went through three stages of development: the first stage witnessed the manufacturing of rough wool. The second stage developed into soft wool and the third stage witnessed the introduction of machines where different fabrics were made including silk.

Black baize fabric was used for the bride’s Abaya which was called *dafa*. This Abaya was also used by younger girls when they go to school. However, this type of Abaya is limited to Alqassem region nowadays. Reasons for wearing Abaya in the past are for covering woman’s body, wedding gown worn over the bride’s dress on the night of her wedding, prayer gown or a winter clothing(Al-Bassam, 1985). .

In the eastern region Abaya is decorated on the edges and the front with qaytan, golden amayal or black braisim. Fish-like embroidery is used for special occasions such as weddings and this type of Abaya is called um samaka. This Abaya was also used as a casual ware. The Abaya was traditionally made of locally woven wool and of the finest fabrics of Marina and Mahogany. It was also made of other materials such as thick silk, known as ink and crepe which rendered a distinctive texture developed in the fabrication of the fabric itself and provided fabrics of black color. Because of the rectangular shape of the Abaya, it requires the implementation of cloth width and not length; stitching on the Abaya follows the length of the shoulders and arms line with two small openings

in the upper corners, allowing hands to pass. The Gulf women used the Abaya only in public since the Ottoman influence did not secure widespread impact in the region, as in other Arab countries, because the region did not exist under Ottoman rule.

The woman in the eastern region were also familiar with the traditional red dress, which is used by women in the area of Qatif and nearby villages in public, and the mummur, which is another kind of robe coming out of the villages and made of light fabrics such as wooded voile. It is similar to the Iranian sash and not worn with the village Abaya but only in travel. In the eastern region of ancient times, the Bhaknak was the headgear of girls from childhood to adulthood, and after marriage, the cloak replaced it. The woman in the eastern region were also familiar with the traditional red dress, which is used by women in the area of Qatif and nearby villages in public, and the mummur, which is another kind of robe coming out of the villages and made of light fabrics such as wooded voile. It is similar to the Iranian sash and not worn with the village Abaya but only in travel. In the eastern region of ancient times, the Bhaknak was the headgear of girls from childhood to adulthood, and after marriage, the Abaya replaced it (2005، البسام).

In the northern region, in the suburbs, women wear black or brown Abaya made of wool. The bride wears Abaya called marshada made of soft wool decorated with golden embroidery. The front side usually has dangling balls covered with golden embroidery. This Abaya is usually presented as a gift to the bride together with her dowry (Al-Ajaji,2005). Lastly, in the western region Abaya took many forms. The robes worn in public are defined according to the age and the appropriate wear and origin of the women, namely Malaya and Burqa, Malaya, Turkish Mask, Bisha, Turkish Dikka, Shami, Jameh, Cap, Baltu. With the appearance of Abaya and scarves in the Hijaz area in the seventh decade, these traditional garments disappeared gradually; the use of the burqa and Malaya in particular became optional for elderly women and limited to special occasions because of the difficulty of wearing them. In the eighth decade, the

burqa and Malaya disappeared completely. Although older women continued to wear the Turkish garb, the women who used to wear the cloak turned to wearing the Abaya which was the first notably new fashion to appear. It was made of thick fabric. Then the natural silk was used to make the Abaya with the transparent natural silk scarves. Other types of abayas, made of black rayon as well as bellows, appeared at the end of the 14th century. Another type of camouflage clothing appeared in the use of a cap and followed the usual dress pattern. The models varied rapidly and were renewed every four months, while the Abaya in all its variations continued to be worn (البسام وفدا، 1994).

3. Aims and objectives.

- Compare the changes between the traditional Abaya and the current Abaya in Saudi Arabia.
- Factors that influenced the development of the Abaya in its current form.
- The effect of women's Abaya on fashion in Saudi society.

3.1 Questions of the study.

- What is the difference between traditional Abaya and current Abaya?
- What changes have occurred to Abaya throughout time?
- What factors have affected the development of Abaya?
- What effects has Abaya had on fashion in the Saudi society?

4. Methodology.

The research followed the analytical descriptive method utilizing the physical research sample of the abayas in Saudi Arabia, the human sample of women in the city of Saudi Arabia and the owners of shops specializing in the sale of abayas. A variety of methods and tools to collect scientific data for the study. Thus, to ensure that the

obtained information and data was complete and precise, the following tools were included:

- The research sample consists of 1078 participants of different ages from all over Saudi Arabia. Table number (1) shows the characteristics of the consumers' sample.
- The second questionnaire was addressed to the workers in the field of designing and manufacturing abayas and there were 45 participants
- Observation.

To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the Assessment, it was evaluated by a group of experts , and the preparation of scientific measurements, as well as experimenting on a limited number of the sample of the study to ascertain the clarity of the questions, interview some of the sample from which the information was collected by the questionnaire to make it again, the answers were identical, and this achieves stability.. It was also tested on a set number of the study sample to ensure the clarity of the questions. A few participants from the sample were asked to fill out the questionnaire for a second time. The responses were similar which verifies the reliability of this tool.

The data of the study was tested and analysed using the following statistical methods: The use of frequency tables, percentages, , the mean and standard deviation Graphics to summarize and display the information.

5. Results.

5.1 In order to answer the research questions, the study was directed toward two samples: one is the woman consumers in Saudi Arabia and the other is the workers in manufacturing and designing Abaya.

5.1.1 First The Characteristics of the Study Sample.

5.1.1.1 The first sample (consumers) was categorized according to age, social status, level of education, occupation and income.

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – less than 25 years.	118	10.9
25 – less than 35 years.	234	21.7
35 – less than 45 years.	400	37.1
45 – less than 55 years.	254	23.6
55 years and older	72	6.7
Total	1078	100
social status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	851	78.9
Not married.	227	21.1
Total	1078	100
Level of education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High school diploma	191	17.7
Parchment	607	56.3
Graduate studies	230	21.3
Other	50	4.6
Total	1078	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sophomore	107	9.9
An employee	611	56.7
Housewife	285	26.4
Other	75	7
Total	1078	100
Income level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5000 SR or less	251	23.3
More than 5000 – 10000 SR	225	20.9
More than 10000-15000 SR	310	28.8
More than 15000 SR	292	27.1
Total	1078	100

Table 1. The first sample (consumers) was categorized according to age, social status, level of education, occupation and income.

Table (1) Shows that

37.1% of the respondents were 35-45 years of age, 23.6% were 45 to 55 years old, 21.7% were 25 to 35 years of age, 10.9% were 18 to less From 25 years, and 6.7% of those aged 55 years and older. 78.9% of the respondents were married, and 21.1% were unmarried. 56.3% of the sample had a university education level, 21.3% of them had higher education level, 17.7% had secondary education, and 4.6% had an educational level. 56.7% of the respondents were employed, 26.4% were housewives, 9.9% were female students, and 7% were employed by others. 28.8% of the respondents have income level of more than 10,000 to 15000 riyals, 27.1% of them have a income level of more than 15000 riyals, 23.3% have incomes of 5000 riyals or less, 20.9% have income levels of more than 5,000 to 10,000 Real.

5.1.1.2 The second sample (workers) was categorized according to the number of responses of the gender.

Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Involved in designing and selling gowns	Employer	4	8.9
	seller	34	75.5
	Designer	7	15.6
	Total	45	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	4	8.9
	Female	41	91.1
	Total	45	100

Table 2. The second sample (workers) was categorized according to the number of responses of the gender.

Table (2) Shows that

75.5% of respondents were sellers, 15.6% were determined, and 8.9% were employers. 91.1% of the respondents were female, and 8.9% were male.

5.1.2 Second Comparison modern Abaya in Saudi.

5.1.2.1 The first sample was further categorized according to the design, occasion, style, availability, quantity and type of Abaya. Every occasion has a certain Abaya. Abaya for work, leisure or going out and shopping. Abaya worn for the whole day at the work place, worn when around other women or the Abaya worn for everyday life and its type.

Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The design.	Ready abayas	676	62.7
	Tailored ones	311	28.8
	Brand name Abaya	34	3.2
	Abaya designed by a popular designer	31	2.9
	Other	26	2.4
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
abayas occasion available in the market	Yes	80	7.4
	Yes but abayas in the market are good after some upgrade	140	13
	Somewhat agree	381	35.3
	No	477	44.2
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
abayas quantity	one only Abaya	64	5.9
	4-2 abayas	756	70.1

	More that 5 abayas	258	23.9
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Every occasion has a certain Abaya. Abaya for work, leisure or going out and shopping	Yes	721	66.9
	No	357	33.1
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abaya worn for the whole day at work and study place	Yes	74	6.9
	No	900	83.5
	Most of the time.	32	3
	Sometimes	72	6.7
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abaya worn for the whole day at the occasion	Yes	14.	1.3
	Sometimes	186	17.3
	Most of the time.	16	1.5
	No	862	80
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The reason why Abaya is worn at work or in social occasions	For fashion	10	1.9
	To cover and hide the basic clothing	81	15.2
	Save money and time buying clothes	38	7.1
	Everybody does it	78	14.7

	For the beauty of the Abaya	44	8.3
	Save time	89	16.7
	To hide body flaws	18	3.4
	For comfort	164	30.8
	Other	10	1.9
	Total	532	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The sample prefer Abaya for everyday life (such as work, study, market)	Plain	905	84
	Colorful	23	2.1
	Decorated	36	3.3
	Different fabrics	76	7.1
	Other	38	3.5
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The sample prefer Abaya for social occasions	Plain	595	55.2
	Colorful	44	4.1
	Decorated	247	22.9
	Different fabrics	152	14.1
	Other	40	3.7
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The Abaya type	On the head	311	28.8
	head and shoulder	114	10.6
	Shoulder	636	59
	Other	17	1.6
	Total	1078	100

Table3. The first sample was further categorized according to the design, occasion, style, availability, quantity and type of Abaya. Every occasion has a certain Abaya.

Abaya for work, leisure or going out and shopping. Abaya worn for the whole day at the work place, worn when around other women or the Abaya worn for everyday life and its type.

Table (3) Shows that

62.7% of the sample prefer ready abayas while 28.8% like tailored ones. 3.2 buy brand name Abaya and 2.9% buy Abaya designed by a popular designer while 2.4 chose other. The percentage of 44.2 of the sample don't like the abayas available in the market. 35.3% relatively like the abayas in the market. 13% think abayas in the market are good after some upgrades while the remaining 7.4% say that the abayas in the market are good. The percentage of 70.1% of the sample have 4-2 abayas, 23.9 % have more than 5 abayas. 5.9% have one only. 66.9 % of the sample have work Abaya, shopping Abaya, everyday life Abaya, and 33.1% do not have such distinction. 83.5% of the sample don't wear Abaya while at work or school. 6.9% wear them during work or school. 6.7% sometimes wear Abaya during this work or school time and 3% of them wear Abaya most of the time when they are at work or school. 80% don't wear Abaya while attending social occasions. 17.3% wear them sometimes. 1.5% wear them most of the time and 1.3% wear them all the time. The highest percentage for the reason why Abaya is worn at work or in social occasions is for comfort with 30.8 %. Fashion and other reasons were 1.9%. 84% percent of the sample prefer plain Abaya for everyday life. 7.1% prefer various different fabrics for everyday life. 3.5% said that they prefer other and 3.3% prefer decorated Abaya while 2.1% prefer colorful Abaya for everyday life. 55.2% of the sample prefer plain Abaya for social occasions. 22.9% prefer decorated ones. 14.1% like different fabrics and 4.1% prefer colorful Abaya while 3.7% like other. 59% of the sample prefer Abaya worn over the shoulders. 28% prefer Abaya worn over the head and 10.6% percent prefer head and shoulders Abaya while 1.6% chose other.

5.1.2.2 The distribution of the Second Sample Consisting of the Workers in the Field of Abaya Design According the Sale of Traditional V.S Contemporary Abaya.

Statement		The degree of turnout				Average	Standard deviation	Arrangement
		Too big	Large	Medium	Few			
Sales of new style fashionable Abaya	F	21	18	5	1	3.31	0.763	1
	%	46.7	40	11.1	2.2			
Sales of decorated abayas	F	9	14.	21	1	2.69	0.821	5
	%	20	31.1	46.7	2.2			
Sales of colorful abayas	F	18	11	13	3	2.98	0.988	3
	%	40	24.4	28.9	6.7			
Sales of different fabrics abayas	F	15	17	11	2	3	0.879	2
	%	33.3	37.8	24.4	4.4			
Sales of odd design Abaya	F	15	9	14.	7	2.71	1.10	4
	%	33.3	20	31.1	15.6			
Sales of head worn abayas	F	5	2	12.	26	1.69	0.996	6
	%	11.1	4.4	26.7	57.8			

Arithmetic mean = 2.72, standard deviation = 0.487

Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The Abaya type	Decorated Abaya	28	62.2
	Colorful Abaya	10	22.2
	plain Abaya	7	15.6
	Total	45	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	shoulder worn plain Abaya.	28	43.1

Statement	The degree of turnout				Average	Standard deviation	Arrangement
	Too big	Large	Medium	Few			
classic styles	shoulder worn Abaya with pockets		29		44.6		
	head worn Abaya.		8		12.3		
	Total		65		100		

Table 4. The distribution of the Second Sample Consisting of the Workers in the Field of Abaya Design According the Sale of Traditional V.S Contemporary Abaya.

Table (4) Shows that

Sales of new style fashionable Abaya averaged 3.31 which is a high percentage. Sales of decorated abayas averaged 2.69 which is relatively high. Sales of colorful abayas averaged 2.98 which is relatively high. Sales of different fabrics abayas averaged 3 which is relatively high. Sales of odd design abayas averaged 2.71 which is relatively high. Sales of head worn abayas averaged 1.69 which is low. The general average for this category is 2.72 which is relatively high.

62.2 believe that highest sales were for decorated Abaya. 22.2% believe that colorful Abaya was highest in sales. 15.6% believe that plain Abaya was the highest in sales. 44.6 % of the classic style that continues throughout the year is shoulder worn Abaya with pockets. 43.1% of the classic style that continues throughout the year is shoulder worn plain Abaya. 12.3% of the classic style that continues throughout the year is head worn Abaya.

5.1.3. Third. Factors that influenced the development of the Abaya in its current form.

The Distribution of the First and Second Sample according to the Reasons for Wearing Abaya, its Development and Effects.

Table 5. The Distribution of the First and Second Sample according to the Reasons for Wearing Abaya, its Development and Effects.

Table (5) Shows that

Statement	Ans	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
Why wear Abaya.	style.	7		0.6	
	the reason of covering the body.	869		80.6	
	covering and style	160		14.8	
	Other.	42		3.9	
	Total	1078		100	
Statement	Ans	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
Factors that led to the development of Abaya	Modern technology	133	First sample	6.5	First sample
		12.	Second sample	14.1	Second sample
	Social change	663	First sample	32.2	First sample
		14.	Second sample	16.5	Second sample
	Economic circumstances	179	First sample	8.7	First sample
		7	Second sample	8.2	Second sample
	The fashion industry	344	First sample	16.7	First sample
		23	Second sample	27.1	Second sample
	The introduction of new fabrics	387	First sample	18.8	First sample
		18	Second sample	21.2	Second sample
	The involvement of designers	356	First sample	17.3	First sample
		11	Second sample	12.9	Second sample
	Total	2062	First sample	100	First sample
		85	Second sample	100	Second sample

80.6% of the first sample wear Abaya for the reason of covering the body. 14.8% said they wear Abaya for covering and style. 3.9% wear Abaya for other reasons and 0.6% wear Abaya for style.

As for factors that led to the development of Abaya, 32.2% of the first sample said it is a result of social change. 18.8 % said it is because of the introduction of new fabrics. 17.3% believe it is because of the involvement of designers. 16.7% chose the development in fashion industry as a whole. 8.7% said it is because of economic reasons and finally 6.5% said it is because of modern technology. On the other hand, the second sample chose the fashion industry as the main factor with 27.1% followed by 21.2% for the introduction of new fabrics. Social change was 16.5%, designer's involvement was 12.9% and economic factor was 8.2%.

5.1.4. Fourthly. The effect of women's Abaya on fashion in Saudi society.

5.1.4.1 The distribution of the first sample in regard to the reasons for changing Abaya, favorite style, the effects of Abaya on fashion in Saudi Arabia, Abaya and different seasons of the year, and the sticking style and form.

Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The reasons for changing Abaya.	Out of style.	50	4.6
	Damage to the Abaya	864	80.1
	They did not like their old Abaya anymore.	95	8.8
	Accommodate fashion trends	30	2.8
	Other	39	3.6
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Favorite Abaya style	Modern styles	184	17.1
	Traditional Abaya	495	45.9
	Suitable for fashion	83	7.7

	On the market	149	13.8
	Other	167	15.5
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abaya will contribute to the development of fashion in Saudi Arabia	Yes	199	18.5
	Kind of	582	54
	No	297	27.5
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Change Abaya according to season	Yes	200	18.5
	No	706	65.5
	Sometimes	172	16
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The Abaya detailing should be at a high standard	Yes	697	64.7
	No	195	18
	Sometimes	186	17.3
	Total	1078	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Changing styles of Abaya	Yes	136	12.6
	No	712	66
	Sometimes	230	21.4
	Total	1078	100

Table 6. The distribution of the first sample in regard to the reasons for changing Abaya, favorite style, the effects of Abaya on fashion in Saudi Arabia, Abaya and different seasons of the year, and the sticking style and form

Table (6) Shows that

80.1% of the sample said the reason for changing Abaya was wearing off or damage. 8.8% said they did not like their old Abaya anymore. 4.6% said the Abaya went out

of style. 3.6% chose other reasons and 2.8% chose the change into new Abaya was to accommodate fashion trends. 45.9 % of the sample prefer traditional Abaya. 17.1% prefer modern styles. 15.5 % prefer other styles. 13.7% prefer the styles already in the market. 45% believe Abaya will contribute to the development of fashion some extent, 27.5 % believe Abaya will not contribute to the development of fashion while 18.5% believe Abaya already did. 65.5% of the sample do not use different abayas for different seasons of the year. 18.5 % do change Abaya according to season. 16% change sometimes change Abaya according to season. 64.7% of the sample care that the Abaya detailing should be at a high standard. 18% do not care about that while 17.3% sometimes care about the detailing. 66% of the sample do not consider changing styles of Abaya. 21.4% sometimes follow the style change. 12.6% prefer to change Abaya according to style.

5.1.4.2 The distribution of the second sample in regard to Abaya design, inspiration, age range innovation and development of fashion.

Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abaya design in the store	Special designs in the store	26	41.9
	Ready	4	6.5
	Designs in the market	10	16.1
	Customer design	11	17.7
	New designs	11	17.7
	Total	62	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Source of inspiration available designs in the store	Fashion trends	24	53.3
	The environment	2	4.4
	The available market	5	11.1
	Customer taste	14.	31.1
	Total	45	100

Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The styles are updated	Weekly	2	4.4
	A monthly basis	30	66.7
	Every three months.	6	13.3
	Every six months.	6	13.3
	Annually	1	2.2
	Total	45	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The age range for the new styles and fashion trends	18-30 years old	42	93.3
	31 – 50 years old	3	6.7
	50-60 years old	-	-
	60 years and above	-	-
	Total	45	100
Statement	Ans	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Believe woman persistency to wear Abaya contributed to the fashion development in Saudi Arabia	Yes	45	88.9
	Kind of	5	11.1
	No	-	-
	Total	45	100

Table 7. The distribution of the second sample in regard to Abaya design, inspiration. age range innovation and development of fashion

Table (7) Shows that

41.9 % of Abaya design in the store is socially customer for the merchant. 17.7% is tailored to the customers' request. 17.7% is new styles. 16.1% is common in the market while 6.5% is already sold predesigned. 53.3% of the designs in the market follow fashion trends. 31.1% is customer taste. 11.1 % is available in the market and 4.4% is inspired by the environment.66.7% of the styles are updated on a monthly

basis. 13.3 % is updated every three months. 13.3% is updated every six months. 4.4% is updated weekly and 2.2% is updated annually. 93.3 % of the age range for the new styles and fashion trends was 18-30 years old. 6.7 % was for 31-50 years old. 88.9% believe woman persistency to wear Abaya contributed to the fashion development in Saudi Arabia. 11.1% agreed but to some extent.

5.2 Discussion.

It is clear from the statistics above the Abaya changes a lot in regard to style, fabrics, occasions of wearing Abaya, Abaya decoration, the way in which it is worn. Abaya is now worn over the head, the shoulder or both. Abaya can be plain, decorated, different fabrics and all this goes along what Ali (علي,1994) mentioned. Abaya is not limited for the purpose of covering woman anymore. It is now part of fashion trends that are noted limited by color or traditional design. Abaya now has different colors and styles. Designs vary extensively to cope with fashion trends. For example, 2016 witnessed abayas that had dangling ribbon-like decoration while 2017 Abaya gained pockets that are still popular to this day. Embroidery nowadays is more common in abayas along with different fabric options. Malls and shopping centers all over the country must have Abaya stores. Abaya designers have increased and Abaya marketing flourished all over social media platforms. Saudi and gulf country brands of Abaya have spread all over the region. Abaya is now distinguished for its creativity, different selections and is playing a role in fashion development in the Saudi Arabia. This is confirmed by this paper and Abaya is an inseparable part of society in the region. Ibn Sofian (بن سفيان,2017) states that the motivation for wearing Abaya for the new generation is not covering the body but for fashion. There is a relationship between social, economic and environmental factors on one hand and the development of Abaya on the other. The highest percentage was social factors and fashion industry in Saudi society followed by fabric choice, technology, economics and designers. Estita (استيتية,2010) mentioned that the Saudi society is distinguished by rapid change.

An opinion that was seconded by Albassam (البسام, 2005) who mentioned that tradition costumes are intertwined with economic, social and environmental changes. Some important recommendations are to support Abaya industry in Saudi Arabia and establishing a museum for Abaya and its development stages because Abaya resembles the distinguished identity of Saudi society.



Figure 1. Traditional Abaya.



Figure 2. Head worn Abaya.



Figure 3. head and shoulder Abaya.



Figure 4. shoulder worn Abaya.



Figure 5. shoulder worn Abaya with pockets and decorated Abaya with pockets



Figure 6. Decorated Abaya and Colorful Abaya.



Figure 7. Decorated Abaya for occasion.



Figure 8. Decorated Abaya.

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