

Determinations of system justification versus psychological reactance consumer behaviours in taboo markets

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Determinations of System Justification versus Psychological Reactance Consumer Behaviours in Taboo Markets

Abstract

Purpose- This research aims to understand the determinants of consumers' behaviour and motivations to buy taboo items online. Two theoretical lenses, theories of psychological reactance and system justification, are invoked to frame the role of online shopping in shaping consumer behaviour in taboo markets.

Design/methodology/approach- a Naturalistic Inquiry paradigm was used to test a sample of 34 Saudi women who were buying taboo products online.

Findings- The determinant of such behaviour is based on differences in understanding the ritual restrictions between people, their society, and their country. The four principal attitudes towards restrictions are justifying, accepting, rejecting, and reacting. These attitudes frame five motivations: satisfying the restriction, to be unique, but aligned with social norms; breaking social norms; aligning one's self-image to liberal societies; and joy in challenging legal restrictions. The motives for online shopping are justification/utilitarian, to accommodate other restrictions in going to local markets; and reactance hedonic, to break restrictions. These motivations create seven different patterns of online shopping behaviour.

Originality/Value- This research contributes to the literature by presenting an alternative perspective on online shopping motivations for taboo products. Furthermore, this research calls for a new socio-psychological theory for understanding the role of technology in influencing consumer behaviour in restrictive societies.

Keywords: Shopping; Online Shopping; Restrictive Society; Saudi Arabia; Qualitative Analysis

1. Introduction

Taboos, which combine the forbidden with attractiveness, have captivated human interest for decades (Bataille, 1962). A taboo refers to a prohibition of a particular behaviour or conversation (Sabri et al., 2010). Taboo markets are places which sell products that are socially or legally prohibited. Generally, taboo markets are not morally or socially accepted. Examples include trading in alcohol and other drugs, sex work, gambling, baby-selling, paid domestic labour, care work, human blood, organs, eggs, sperm, genetic material, viaticals, and pollution rights.

However, the fact remains that taboo products are widely bought and consumed (Sabri, 2017).

Marketers intentionally aim to de-stabilise and restabilise moralities to make their products accepted and sell more (Gollnhofer, 2015). Accordingly, researchers are criticised for taking up matters that are esoteric at best and distasteful at worst: the 'dark side' of consumer behaviour (Hirschman, 1991). Traditionally, it was believed that 'core social practices and cultural values, ideas, aspirations and identities are defined and oriented in relation to consumption' (Slater, 1997, p. 24). However, obsessive, addictive, and even compensatory consumption linger under the

1
2 umbrella of taboo. Consumption of these taboos is linked to the satisfaction of taboo desires
3 (Elliott, 2014) and its unique motivations, such as the expression of a sense of freedom or
4 excitement (Yalkin & Veer, 2018).
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8 The relationship between information technology and taboo markets is not new, but the advent of
9 today's technology gives a safe space in which to simulate and to practise the services sold in the
10 taboo markets. For instance, technology-mediated sexual interaction (TMSI) (i.e. the exchange of
11 sexual material via computer and Internet technologies (Courtice & Shaughnessy, 2017)) is
12 viewed as an online environment for sexual activism that takes place within its 'safe' space (Veer
13 & Golf-Papez, 2018). According to Veer & Golf-Papez (2018), this technology gives the
14 informants the opportunity to practise sex that is free from social judgments, awkwardness,
15 embarrassment and the troubles of initial sexual contact.
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23 Taboo markets are universal in the sense that the unacceptability of these products is global and
24 not specific to any particular context. In Finland, where the market is experiencing a phase of
25 drastic liberalisation, the market for sex toys still has an appreciable degree of ambivalence
26 towards the forces that structure it (Piha et al., 2018). In this liberal context, Piha et al. (2018)
27 found that consumers retain a felt need to manage such a sexual matter in privacy. For this reason,
28 online shopping, even in this context, is the primary enabling vehicle for selling these products.
29 Mostly in these cases, taboo markets are universally controversial and globally unaccepted.
30 However, some products can be taboo in a context where people in a particular country can easily
31 question whether the taboo is right or not. Here, technology could play a significant role in
32 questioning, accepting, rejecting or reacting to the definition of the taboo. This research aims to
33 investigate the role of online marketing in shaping consumer behaviour in country-specific taboo
34 markets.
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44 This research will ask how information technology and online shopping technologies, in
45 particular, may enable people to justify or react in other ways to socially and regulatory
46 restrictions on buying and using commodities. This research examines women's online shopping
47 behaviour in a restrictive, religious, and male-dominated society that insists on specific dress
48 codes. Gender, in this research, posits a layer of norms and operates as a pattern of social
49 arrangements (Connell, 2010), while religion posits behavioural expectations (Petriglieri, 2020).
50 Consumers' online shopping behaviour is the outcome of various normative pressures and
51 attitudes towards them (Arli et al., 2020). This research will develop a framework to define and set
52 a possible relationship between the determinants of the justifications of and reactions to the
53 restrictions, the motivations to use online shopping, and the consequent behaviour.
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Dismantling the context-based taboo market reveals that the taboo is operationalised in three pillars of restrictions: legal, social, and individual ones. Consumer restriction is defined in this research as a physical, social and psychological prohibition of buying and using certain products in a certain place. For instance, in Islamic countries, a woman need not cover her hair in the company of her female friends, but in a non-segregated community, where men and women are in the same place, she must cover her hair with a Hijab. Without this, in many Islamic communities, she may feel embarrassed and awkward. Similarly, wearing a short skirt or short sleeves is always socially unaccepted in many rural communities (whether for women only or non-segregated).

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Women over the centuries have grown used to living with these traditions can accept them because they never see women in other countries behaving differently. Thus, they have no chance to question these restrictions. But in the online shopping context, such traditions become questionable.

People's attitudes towards restrictions and the perceptions of their community (subjective norms) direct their behaviour and reflect their acceptance or rejection of such rules. Coping mechanisms in such a restrictive regime can be passive (mere acceptance) or active (contravening these stringent rules). Thus, in countries that enforce restrictions on freedom of choice, the reaction of the individual may be predicted by two theories: system justification theory (rationalising the restrictions) (Owuamalam & Spears, 2020) and psychological reactance theory (attempting to break the restrictions) (Brehm & Cole, 1966). The literature on consumer behaviour and motivations under restrictions covers a range of contexts (Bublitz et al., 2010; Moore & Fitzsimons, 2014; Pezzuti et al., 2015).

Restrictions could be imposed by the seller (Moore and Fitzsimon, 2014), the government (Pezzuti et al. 2015), society (Bublitz et al. 2010), or self-belief (Ji & Wood, 2007). Religious restrictions are unlike any of these, especially if they are enforced by state agents. The case for a religious state which presents itself as ruling in the name of God is different from any discussed in the previous literature. Saudi Arabia established religious police to enforce in public the practice of Islamic values such as gender segregation in workplaces and shops, ways of dressing in public, opening and closing times for shops (e.g., the specific times for prayer each day), what fashions may be sold in shops and how they may be sold. The risk of disobeying the state's religious orders could have a stronger influence on human behaviour than the risk in a secular state. Although it is not a topic that has yet been studied in the literature, the present research aims to gauge the role of technology in the behaviour of consumers living in a restrictive society that is controlled by a theocratic government. Through this understanding, the consumer behaviour in the environment of such a society can be better understood, modelled, and predicted. Accordingly, the research

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2 questions are: “What in a restrictive society determines psychological reactance and system
3 justification?” and “How do differences in the attitudes towards restrictions affect the online
4 shopping behaviour of a restrictive society?”
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8 This research offers three main contributions to knowledge.: first, a bundle of explanations about
9 the role of information technology in reshaping the dynamics of aspects of taboo marketing (Eid
10 and Trueman, 2002; Sabri & Obermiller, 2012; Veer & Golf-Papez, 2018; Yalkin & Veer, 2018).
11 This study is among the first studies dedicated by means of socio-psychological theory to
12 understanding the role in shopping motivation behaviour of the relationship between people and
13 their beliefs and a restrictive society with its prevailing beliefs . It is the first to use system
14 justification and psychological reactance to capture and investigate the motivation and
15 determinants of online shopping in a restrictive environment. This novel perspective may help
16 information technology specialists to understand consumer behaviour in a restrictive society and
17 trace people’s motivation to buy, more for socio-psychological reasons than to meet any physical
18 need.
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28 **1. Background**

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30 The laws and practices of Saudi Arabia, traditionally, are based on religion. Its original
31 establishment in 1744 was mainly for a religious purpose: to unite Arab tribes in the Arabian
32 Peninsula in order to promote the Wahabi interpretation of Islam. In 1940, not long after the full
33 establishment of the kingdom and unification of different states under one monarchy in 1932, the
34 religious police were instituted to enforce the application of the Wahabi perspective of Islam in
35 public. Following the precepts of Wahabism, Islamic values enforce the segregation of women and
36 men in all public places (e.g., shops, schools and the like, public transport, and restaurants). Their
37 function is also to ensure that women dress according to the “appropriate” code, covering not only
38 their hair but also their faces, and instead of coloured clothes, wear only black. In the offline
39 environment of shopping, stores must close at times of prayer. Since the 1940s, the strictness of
40 the rules and judgments has fluctuated in line with the political environment. In 1979, after the
41 Islamic revolution in Iran, the Saudi Arabian monarchy sensed a threat of the influence that the
42 Saudi regime might be exposed to from that country's Islamic expansion. Before this time, the
43 Saudi people were not strictly controlled in matters of dress, the cinema, and women’s role in
44 society. Afterward, however, religious power expanded to influence everyday Saudi life by
45 instilling an alternative religious ideology behind Iran's ideological stance. However, these
46 conditions changed again in 2016, as the Crown Prince Muhammed Bin Salman described on 24th
47 October 2017:
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“The awakening project (i.e., the rule of the religious police in restricting the freedom of the society) spread in the region after 1979, for many reasons. We were not like this before; we are only returning to what we were, to Islam that is open to all religions, traditions and peoples. And we will eradicate the remnants of extremism very soon, and I do not think that this constitutes a challenge, as we represent the tolerant, moderate, and correct values, and the truth is with us in everything we face.”¹

10 From 1979, then, the religious police had unrestricted power to shut down all cinemas and gender-
11 unsegregated fashion shows, extensive control over the content of magazines (i.e., how women
12 were dressed), and women’s ability to move anywhere out of doors in the absence of a male
13 guardian. In this period, women were forbidden to travel, drive, have a bank account, and choose
14 fashions different from the dress code of the religious police. They had to wear a Niqab, a
15 covering for the face, hair, and body. Women were also not allowed to vote in elections or wear
16 makeup. At the time of this research inquiry (2015), Saudi Arabia was the only country in the
17 world where women were forbidden to drive (Greenberg, 2014). As an example of the radical
18 difference between the market for fashion between Saudi and Western cultures, a law was passed
19 in June 2015 banning fashion shows of all kinds in Saudi Arabia (Variyar, 2015). The World
20 Economic Forum recently ranked Saudi Arabia 146th of 153 countries for gender equality (Crotti
21 et al., 2019). Before 2017, Saudi women faced restrictions unlike those in any other country. The
22 situation has changed through the initiatives of Crown Prince Muhammed Bin Salman. When the
23 present data were collected, however, the laws were enforced by the religious police.

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Despite the state-imposed restrictions on fashion, spending on women’s clothes in Saudi Arabia is
substantial (14% of all online purchases); the third most popular website in the country is a Saudi
one selling Western fashion (Richards, 2013). Online sales from the USA and UK to Saudi Arabia
in 2016 reached \$60 million (Bohnhoff, 2017) . This context of study offers a rich environment for
understanding the actions of the state in enforcing a level of religious policing that affects the
freedom of women to dress and choose for themselves what to wear. Online shopping may be a
vehicle by which these religious-state restrictions may be justified or reacted against by buying
online from Western countries. The present research offers a new perspective from which to
understand this unique location-based taboo market (i.e., it is forbidden in Saudi Arabia but
allowed everywhere else in the world) and define the motivations of its online shoppers in using
technology.

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¹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChAqsVBazMw&ab_channel=AIArabiya%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9

2. Literature Review

This section first critically examines the literature on the motivations for using online shopping. Then, because the existing literature pays little attention to restrictive environments, the second subsection considers theories which may assist our understanding of these motivations in such societies.

2.1. Motivations in shopping online

Utilitarian and hedonic motivations are the two main incentives for shopping online (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). Utilitarian shopping is described as task-related, rational, and determined by practical and objective considerations (for example, quality and convenience) (Picot-Coupey et al., 2021). Shopping can be described in terms of “shopping as work” (Babin et al., 1994). In other words, products are often purchased because they are needed, rather than out of enjoyment of shopping in itself (Scarpi et al., 2014). Babin et al. (1994) affirmed that such shopping is deliberate; decisions tend to be carefully evaluated and efficient. This perspective views the consumer as a “logical problem solver” (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Widespread internet access makes online shopping at any time easy and convenient. Hedonic shoppers, by contrast, seek pleasure in shopping (Eid, 2005; Scarpi, 2020). Enjoyment and expressive value can be felt and enjoyed when shopping by interacting with the situation, according to Arnold and Reynolds (2003). They identify several types of hedonic shopping motivation, including adventure (seeking difference or stimulation), gratification (shopping to mitigate stress), role (providing gifts or pleasure to others), value (the enjoyment of finding bargains and discounts), social (maintaining or enhancing relations) and idea shopping (getting to know new trends and products). Hedonic motivation also includes the feelings of freedom (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001) and the authority and status conferred by customised services and recommendations (To et al., 2007). While hedonic and utilitarian experiences can be derived from shopping, the results are likely to differ in line with the product purchased and the shopping channel used (Li et al., 2020). Fashion, in particular, is described as a high-hedonic product group because of its representative empirical and attractive content (Sebald & Jacob, 2020).

Both the hedonic and utilitarian motivations to shop online are found to affect shoppers’ behaviours. For instance, Chang, Chih, Liou, & Yang, (2016), from a sample of 866 Taiwanese e-shoppers, inferred that hedonic value and utilitarian value affected cognitive attitudes (i.e. cognitive trust and perceived risk) in turn affected perceived satisfaction and purchase intention. But the hedonic and utilitarian motivations are not based on the technological factors of the device or the platform; social pressure can play a significant role in positing the subjective definition of

1
2 the hedonic or utilitarian motivations. Wu, Huang, Chen, Davison, & Hua, (2018) studied 272
3 shoppers from a Chinese website and found that hedonic and utilitarian values fully mediate the
4 relationship between social value and purchase intention.
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8 However, social values and norms play a more significant role in defining the consumer
9 motivations in conservative markets than those in liberal markets. In emerging countries,
10 especially those under restrictive regimes such as Saudi Arabia, these hedonic and utilitarian
11 motivations may be questioned. Given the restrictions applied to Saudi women in public, shopping
12 offline presents many challenges that may encourage them to shop online. Indeed, their motivation
13 to shop online is expected to diverge from that of women in more liberal countries.
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19 **2.2. Motivations in taboo shopping online**

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21 The motivation to use technology in taboo markets posits another layer in understanding online
22 consumer behaviour in this context. It can be divided into the attempt to meet desires without
23 being noticed or to express oneself freely. In the 1920s, American Tobacco reimagined cigarettes
24 as ‘torches of freedom’ when it sought to counter the proscriptions on women’s smoking and thus
25 expand its markets (Amos & Haglund, 2000). Piha et al. (2018), in their study of sexual
26 therapists, sexual advisors, and clinical sexologists so as to understand the online shopping
27 behaviour of buying sex toys in Finland, found that increased sexual satisfaction and feelings of
28 excitement at destroying societal taboos appear to be the primary motivators of such purchase
29 intentions. Another study by Veer and Golf-Papez (2018) found that the primary motivator in
30 buying technology-mediated sexual encounters was expressing oneself online and satisfying one’s
31 desires freely and safely, without being observed by society. Online settings usually offer a safe
32 space for buying taboos without being embarrassed in so doing. The emancipatory nature of
33 perceived anonymity online permits shoppers to express themselves in a manner they feel they
34 cannot work in an offline setting (Mano, 2021).
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46 In the taboo markets, the rejection of these products is usually universal, which makes the
47 motivation mainly a desire to taste freedom or to buy a product and use it in secret. What if the
48 taboo product is defined by a certain geographic location (as Saudi Arabia is, being the only
49 country which so restricts the female fashion market and women’s behaviour in public, regarding
50 their clothing and shopping), while members of the Saudi community can see through online
51 stores that others with similar values and norms do not define these things as taboo and can buy
52 them?
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2.3. Theoretical Stances

The enforcement of conformity is the single most important means by which cultural factors affect consumer behaviour in any environment. Thus, socio-psychological theorists state that aspiring to conformity pushes people to echo the behaviour of their peer group, with corresponding societal norms. Conversely, there is potential for actively resisting cultural norms, particularly when individuals feel pressured to conform, causing more active resistance (Venkatesan, 1966). The personal need to adjust to conformity generally affects customers' attempts to create different consumption styles (Hemetsberger & Weinberger, 2012).

In countries where freedom of choice is restricted, individuals' reactions can be predicted by two theories: system justification theory (SJT), which deals with rationalising restrictions (Jost, 2020), and psychological reactance theory (PRT), referring to attempts by individuals to break restrictions (Laurin et al., 2012, 2013). System justification can be motivated partly by the epistemic need to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity; research consistent with this assertion associates the personal desire for law, structure, and termination with endorsing conservative, system-justifying attitudes. Open-mindedness and tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity are negatively associated with such attitudes (e.g. (Chirumbolo et al., 2004; Goren et al., 2009; Jost & Hunyady, 2003; Van Hiel et al., 2004). A growing number of studies link many of these same epistemic motives to religiosity (e.g. (Hogg, Adelman, & Blagg, 2010; Arli et al., 2020). Saroglou (2002) reviews dozens of studies carried out in a variety of cultural contexts and notes that the correlation between religiosity and constructs pertaining to uncertainty avoidance and motivating closed-mindedness is almost always positive and statistically significant. For instance, contrasted with less religious people, those who are more religious tend to be more assertive (Altemeyer, 2002; Pratt et al., 2006), to be less tolerant of inconsistency and ambiguity (Feather, 1964), to have a greater need for personal control (Hood Jr et al., 1996), and be relatively resistant to new experiences (Saroglou, 2002).

Conversely, PRT holds that individuals are driven to restore usurped liberties and resist attempts to coerce them (Torrance & Brehm, 2006; Wicklund, 2013). Thus, restricting freedom would be counterproductive. For example, some political attempts to reduce smoking have increased consumption because of the psychological reactance of smokers (Burton et al., 2015; Hoek, 2004). Psychological reactance theory holds that individuals will have an entirely contrary response to limitations on their freedom to that predicted by system justification theory (Laurin et al., 2013). PRT suggests that individuals are driven to replace defunct liberties and respond undesirably to attempts by others to coerce their freedom (Wicklund & Brehm, 1967). This strand of research suggests that restricting freedom will have counterproductive repercussions. In an innovative

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2 study, participants assessed a record as much more needed if they were told that they had no
3 option but to receive it as a gift or were required to choose another form instead (Brehm & Cole,
4 1966; Chartrand et al., 2007; Snibbe & Markus, 2005). Additional research found that when
5 consumers face stockouts, as a restriction on their freedom to choose, high reactance consumers
6 perceive these products as more desirable than those whose reactance is low (Moore &
7 Fitzsimons, 2014). According to PRT, people respond to their constraints by placing greater worth
8 on the object or behaviour concerned.

9
10 System justification and psychological reactance have not been used as theoretical lenses to
11 understand and investigate the motivation in (or determinants of) online shopping in restrictive
12 environments. This research aims to close these gaps and yield new insights for theory and
13 practice. Accordingly, qualitative interpretive research will be used to understand in depth the
14 relative and subjective definitions of taboos and restrictions so that the potential influence of these
15 idiosyncratic definitions can be traced in the attitudes, motivations, and behaviours of online
16 shopping behaviour.

27 28 29 **3. Methodology**

30 31 **3.1. Sampling**

32 This section covers four aspects of sampling. They are the sampling approach, sampling criteria,
33 ethical considerations of sampling s, and recruitment for and administration of sampling.

34
35 First, the sampling methodology adopted in this research is approached via grounded theory
36 (Straus & Corbin, 1990). In this, the size of the sample is not predetermined; it is based on theory
37 saturation. The cases are selected according to need so as to improve the saturation of the theory.
38 The recruitment process is continuous until the thesis is validated and verified so that new cases
39 have nothing fresh to contribute. The sampling process is summarised in Figure 1. The sample
40 grows to 34 because the last four respondents did not contribute anything much to the theory.

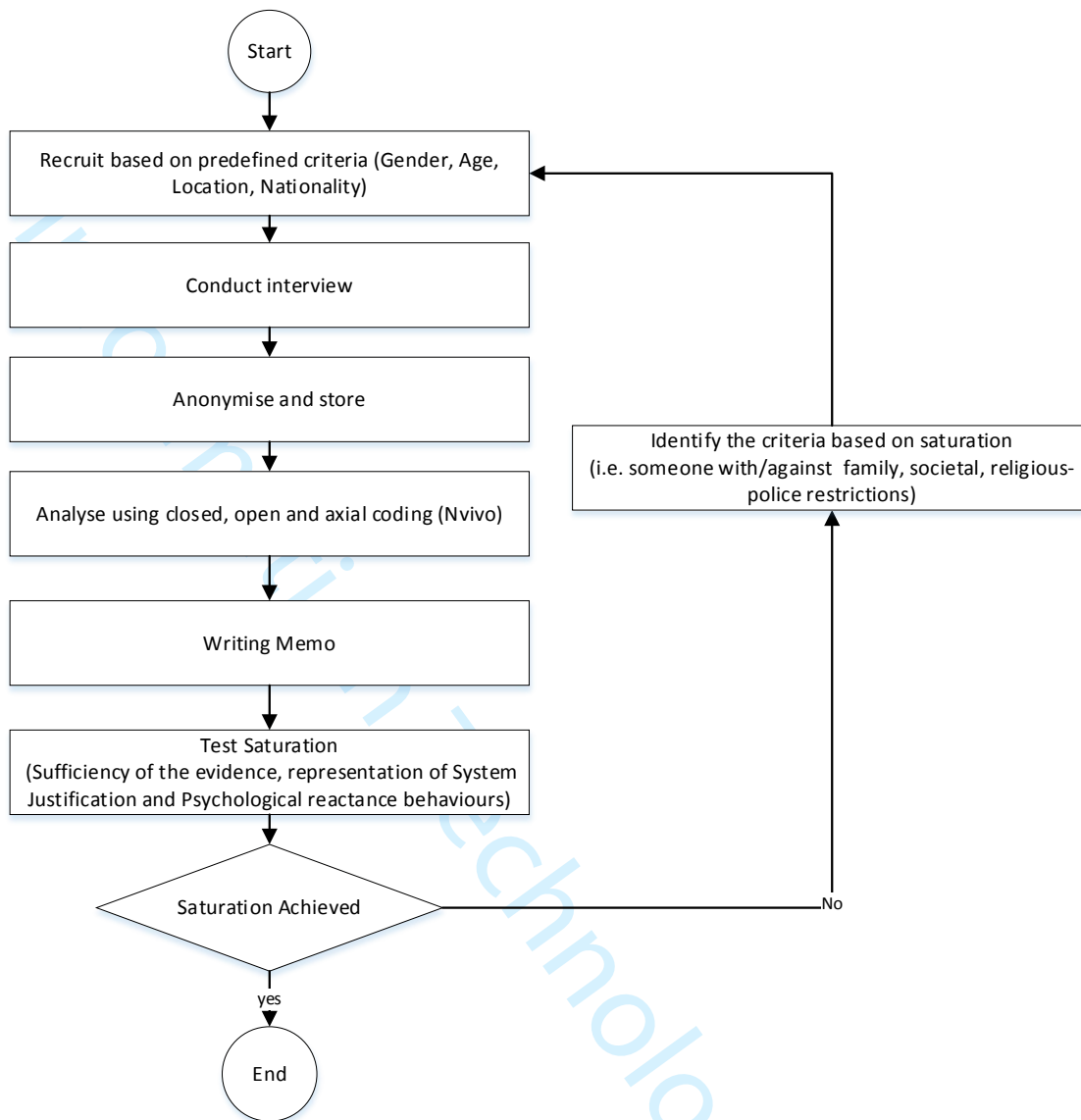


Figure 1: Sampling process

Second, the criteria for selection of the sample and its size were set by the iterative nature of the data collection and analysed by theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This research sample does not represent the Saudi population. The purpose was to recruit women from a restrictive society who had the means and ability to shop online for a qualitative investigation of their attitudes to online shopping. The population targeted in this research was Saudi women residents in Saudi Arabia who can buy fashion online without restrictions of a psychological nature (trust in online shopping; perceived difficulties in buying fashion online) or material nature (shipping or payment problems). Men were excluded because women face considerably more restrictions, specifically in the choice of clothing (Al-Rasheed, 2013). The age range (30-49) was selected to exclude both young and older adults. Older people are more inclined to justify the status quo (Laurin et al., 2009), while teenagers and young women may be effectively controlled by their families or unduly sensitive to peer pressure (imitating friends, celebrities, or fashion icons) in their fashion behaviour (Khare et al., 2012). All the recruits had the experience of online

1 shopping and bought clothes and other items online. None had any technical or trust issues with
2 online shopping; it is known that the propensity to trust (Liu & Tang, 2018) and perception of
3 difficulty (Kraft et al., 2005) in using online shopping can affect attitudes and motivation. To
4 ensure consistency and avoid the effects on attitude of living in remote or rural areas (Xu &
5 Paulins, 2005), all the interviews were conducted in Riyadh (the capital city of Saudi Arabia).

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11 The third aspect is the ethical consideration in the process. The third author obtained ethical
12 clearance from his academic institution (Number 152/2120). Ethical considerations were
13 considered carefully due to the sensitivity of the topic. All of the individuals who participated in
14 the interviews gave their informed consent to the interviewer before they provided any
15 information. The interviewer ensured that no underage or vulnerable individuals who could not
16 provide informed consent could participate in the interviews or research process (Keizer, 2017).
17 Finally, all the interviewees were assured of complete confidentiality for their personal and
18 identifiable data to ensure privacy was not breached. The interviewees were assured that their
19 answers would never be used against them, nor to identify them personally, so that they felt able to
20 provide information freely and without concerns over their privacy, confident that the research
21 would cause no harm to the participants (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). Finally, all the interviewees'
22 scripts were anonymized, and the other collaborating researchers did not have access to their
23 names.
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35 Fourth, the sampling recruitment process was based on snowball sampling based on the predefined
36 criteria and based on the need of the theory development process. Because of the nature of this
37 research project, the writers could not use public websites to recruit participants; rather, personal
38 networks were used, and respondents were asked to refer the project to others who might fit the
39 research needs. The second author, who lives in Saudi Arabia, approached women whom she
40 personally knew or who had been referred by other interviewees. Despite respondents being
41 assured of their anonymity, three women refused to complete the interview. One claimed that the
42 researcher worked for the government's intelligence system and left without completing her
43 interview. The other interviewees were eventually satisfied and conducted their interviews without
44 further demur, having been given confidence that the second researcher would not disclose their
45 identity.
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54 The interviews were conducted in Arabic and analysed in Arabic because all the researchers,
55 except the last one, are bi-lingual (Arabic and English). English was not used because the
56 interviews were held in Saudi Arabia, where the mother tongue is Arabic. The aim was for them to
57 express their opinions freely without language restrictions. Moreover, translation before the final
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reporting of the analytical results could have affected the quality of the analysis, since meaning typically alters to some extent in translation.

3.2. Interview Guide

The focus of the interview was to set the individual's subjective definition of the taboo product, the level of acceptance or rejection of the restrictions, and the consequences for her online shopping behaviour. As summarised in Table 2, the interview started with filter questions about demographics to grasp the context of each participant. The questions concerned age, marital status, educational background, and job. Then questions were asked on the fashion restrictions followed by others to aid the understanding of online shopping motivations and behaviours and hence avoid cognitive bias. One of the motivation questions dealt with shopping for fashion: "Why do you buy fashion online?" and the second was "Why did you choose these websites or stores?" The question about behaviour asked "Which websites and which stores do you buy from?" and "How often do you shop online compared with offline shopping?"

A taboo in this context is a social definition of prohibited products and behaviours. However, this research argues that behaviour is a function of the distance between the self and the social and legal restrictions. Thus, four questions were asked to assess what each restriction meant to the participant. They were "Do you experience personal/family/social/legal restrictions? The order of the questions was carefully arranged because exposing the respondent to legal or social restrictions leads to bias when they contemplate their personal restrictions. Thus, the questions began with some on personal restrictions (which the researcher could not know in advance), then moved on to family, social and legal restrictions (which are all familiar from law and custom). At the end of the questions about each pillar, the respondents were asked about the level of agreement with the restriction and why they had agreed or disagreed. The level of the agreement indicates the level of acceptance or justification of the restriction, while the level of disagreement indicates rejection of, or reaction against the restrictions. Additionally, the question on the agreement served as a measure of validity to help the researcher understand the mental differences for the participants about the pillars of fashion restriction. The last question was on fashion behaviour in general: "Which fashions can you buy and wear in public, with friends, and with family? Why?" This functioned as a validation for the first questions and to an extent as an aid to reflection after positioning themselves within the mental pillars of the restrictions.

Table 1: Interview guide

| Question | Rationale |
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| Do you buy fashion online? Why? From where? Which websites? Which stores? How often compared to offline shopping? | Fashion Online Shopping motivations and behaviour |

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| Why these websites in particular? | |
| Do you have limitations or restrictions when you buy fashion? What are they? | Definition of the interviewee's self-restrictions |
| Do your family set limitations or restrictions when you buy fashion? What are they? | Definition of family and societal restrictions |
| Do you think your family's restrictions are different from your self-restrictions? Could you explain the differences, please? | To validate the differences in the restrictions |
| How do you see these family restrictions? | Definition of family and societal restrictions |
| Do you think the family restrictions are different from what you have? could you explain? (if not aligned, what if you break these restrictions?) | To validate the differences in the restrictions |
| How do you see these societal fashion restrictions? are you with it, not very happy, and wish to change and why? | Definition of the societal and societal restrictions |
| Do you think the societal restrictions are different from what you have? could you explain? (if not aligned, what if you break these restrictions?) | To validate the differences in the restrictions |
| What are things not allowed by the religious police? | Definition of the societal and societal restrictions |
| How do you compare your buying and using fashion restrictions with those of your family, society, and the religious police? | Attitudes towards the restrictions |
| Which fashions can you buy and wear in public, with friends, and with family? Why? | Fashion behaviour and validating the first question |

3.3. Data analysis

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The data were analysed thematically using Nvivo (Maher et al., 2018). Closed coding searches for known phenomena, using theory as a sensitising tool; open coding seeks to understand new themes; and axial coding connects the data between codes (Reichertz, 2007). Here, closed coding was used to classify interviewees as reacting against or justifying restrictions. Acceptance of societal restrictions is a complex phenomenon. The sample needed to represent a variety of views on these restrictions. According to Kay et al. (2009), system justification behaviour and attitude are coded by statements defending and giving rationales for the societal and legal restrictions. Reactive behaviour is coded by statements that reflect anger over lost freedom or the feeling that one's freedom is being restricted (Knight et al., 2014). Any comment reflecting an attack on fashion restrictions was considered a sign of psychological reactance behaviour. Open coding was used to define the behaviour, and axial coding was used to associate the behaviour with the attitude.

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As summarised in Table 2, when the sampling process ended, five justifiers (i.e., justifying the restrictions), twelve acceptors (i.e., accepting the restrictions), twelve deniers (i.e., rejecting the restrictions), and five rebels (reacting against the restrictions) had emerged.

Table 2: Summary of codes

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| Code (Closed Coding) | Motivations to buy online (Open Coding) | Main Shopping Behaviour (Open Coding) |
|----------------------|---|--|
| 01 J -05J | Justifying | Buying local fashion online |
| 01 A - 02 A | To be unique | Buying Islamic clothes from Arabic (Islamic) websites and tailoring them |
| 03 A - 05 A | To be unique | Buying Islamic clothes from Arabic (Islamic) tailors' websites and wearing them at home (female only events) |

| Code (Closed Coding) | Motivations to buy online (Open Coding) | Main Shopping Behaviour (Open Coding) |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 06 A - 07 A | To be unique & To break social rules | Buying Islamic clothes from Arabic (Islamic) websites and wearing them at home (female only events) and in public Buying Western and Arabic Clothes to wear them in women events |
| 08 A - 09 A | To be unique & To break social rules | Buying Islamic clothes from Arabic (Islamic) websites and tailoring them Buying modest fashions from international websites and tailoring them Buying Western fashion and wearing them at events for women only |
| 10 A - 11 A | To break social rules & To attach the self-image to Western liberal society | Buying modest fashions from Western websites and tailoring them or wearing them in public (as long as they complied with legal rules) Buying Western clothes and wearing them at events for women only |
| 01 D - 05 D | To break social rules | Buying fashions from Arab Countries and wearing them in public Using a detachable Niqab and loose Hijab Buying Western clothes and wearing them at events for women only |
| 06 D - 10 D | To attach the self-image to Western liberal society | Buying modest fashions from Western websites and tailoring them Buying standard Western fashions and wearing them but covering the hair (Using a detachable Niqab and loose Hijab) Buying Western clothes and wearing them at events for women only |
| 11 D - 12 D | The joy of breaking restrictions and Aligning the self-image to Western liberal society | Buying Western clothes and wearing them in public |

(J)Justifiers (Self>Social> Legal), (A) Acceptors (Social→Self→Legal) ,
(R) Rebels (Legal>Self> Social) , (D) Denier (Social>Self>Legal)

3.4. Aspects of research quality

There are five research quality aspects used in this study, the first four of which pertain to trustworthiness (Guba, 1981). The final aspect is concerned with the applicability of this research in different contexts (i.e. 'generalisability'). Given that data are collected from people and understood by people. In recognition that human nature is inherently subjective in understanding and presenting ideas, the four aspects are reliability, validity, credibility, and reflexivity.

Reliability designates the degree to which participants can be relied upon to be truthful in telling their definitions of constraints, opinions, feelings, emotions, and attitudes (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Because of the sensitivity of this topic, it was essential to ensure a safe space for the respondents enabling them to speak honestly. It was believed that the participants might give false information and misrepresent what they believed in if they felt threatened, under observation, or shy about expressing their ideas forthrightly (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Accordingly, different measures were adopted to guarantee the integrity of the interview and a safe space where the participants could speak freely.

As summarised in Table 3, the second aspect was the validity, whether the participant's intended meaning had been correctly apprehended (Kirk & Miller, 1986). To be sure of this, during the interviews, the interviewer intermittently paraphrased the respondent's stated answers to check that the interviewer grasped the meaning that had been intended. After writing memos, the

interviewer called the interviewees to summarise the main points she had addressed in their interviews.

Credibility is the third aspect that was stressed in this research. It denotes the degree to which the transcribed records of its findings are correct and trustworthy, making no blunders in reporting annotations or scripts (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). To this end, all the interviews were stored temporarily for use in the research (except where specifically forbidden by participants) and transcribed to ensure integrity in reporting the findings. The final aspect was reflexivity, i.e., the level of trustworthiness in deriving this research framework and providing that the rationale for interpreting the data was the best fit for the intended purpose of understanding the determinants of the system justification and psychological reactance behaviours reflected in the participants' online shopping. Thus, using the literature, we evaluated different potential understandings of the salient evidence and derived from these the most meaningful interpretations of the participants' definitions of restrictions and their consequent behaviours. The applicability of the research is discussed under the heading of 'Limitations' because this aspect sets boundaries of the study and possible divergence from the results when applied in other contexts.

Table 3: Research quality measures

| Research Quality | Definition | Measure used |
|------------------|---|---|
| Reliability | Certainty that participants are telling the truth and their discourse is constant over time. | Asking the same question in different ways at different times. Allowing participants who refused to be recorded the chance to talk without recording. Meeting in private spaces (i.e. locked rooms (8 interviews), cafés with private areas (15 interviews), or at their home if they preferred (10 interviews). Showing a consent form to confirm that all the data gathered were confidential and would not be shared with anyone. Trying to help them feel relaxed |
| Validity | Certainty that the understanding of the researcher matches that of participants. | Paraphrasing the answers and checking their acceptability with the participant. Emails were sent to confirm the content of the interviews. |
| Credibility | Ensuring that everything written is correct, truthful and trustworthy. | Consistency of the report with few or no contradictions between findings by using a recorder and recording interviews, then checking the transcripts. |
| Reflexivity | Ensuring that the researcher's understanding is correct and her interpretations are the most suitable in the context. | Evaluating different possible understandings of the facts using the literature review and other rationales. |

4. Findings and Analysis

Four main themes emerge from this research which help to explain the variations in online shopping behaviour and motivation in this taboo market. The four themes are the definition of restriction, different attitudes towards restriction (justifying, accepting, rejecting, and reacting), motivations to buy online, and online shopping behaviours. The summary of codes and their definitions are in Table 4 and visualised in figure 2. The following section sets the definition of 'restriction' while the following sections detail certain attitudes towards the restrictions, explaining the effect on shopping behaviour.

Table 4: Definition of codes

| Code | Definition |
|---|--|
| Definition of Restriction | It is a perceived limitation of the freedom which comes when the personal values are less conservative than the social or state values |
| <i>Attitude towards restrictions</i> | It is an attitude of the person towards the limitation of the freedom to |
| 1. Justifying | <i>defend</i> and <i>rationalize</i> the importance of its existence. |
| 2. Accepting | <i>conform</i> it without resistance. |
| 3. Rejecting | <i>refuse</i> it without acting against the limitations, rather have a tendency to be different from others |
| 4. Reactance Against | <i>Aggressively restore</i> the perceived forgone freedom by taking counter-action against the restriction. |
| <i>Motivations to buy online</i> | The driver to shopping for fashion online is to |
| 1. Satisfying the self-restriction | <i>comply</i> with the enforced restrictions and see online shopping as a way of expressing religious belief (women should not go outdoors to shop in the market). |
| 2. To be unique but socially acceptable (fashionable) | <i>differentiate</i> oneself from one's peers while respecting social and state restrictions |
| 3. To be unique but infringing on social values | <i>differentiate</i> oneself from others by flouting social values but not daring to violate state rules |
| 4. To attach the self-image with other liberal societies | <i>mimic</i> liberal societies as a reflection of one's rejection of the restrictions. |
| 5. Joy of breaking the legal restriction | <i>have the pleasure</i> of violating state and social restrictions by breaking them in public. |
| <i>Shopping Behaviour</i> | It is the deliberate action to get |
| 1. Buying <i>Local Fashion</i> | Traditional clothes from local online websites |
| 2. Buying <i>Islamic</i> clothes from <i>Islamic liberal</i> countries and <i>tailoring</i> them to wear in <i>public</i> | Buying from Islamic countries which allow less conservative values, tailoring the purchases to be unique but still acceptable to society and the state |
| 3. Buying <i>Islamic</i> clothes from <i>Islamic liberal</i> countries to wear at <i>home</i> | Buying fashion items from Islamic countries without tailoring them to wear them at home, breaking the social taboos but not the state's. |
| 4. Buying <i>modest fashion</i> items from <i>Western</i> countries and <i>tailoring</i> them to wear at <i>home</i> | Buying western but modest fashion items and tailoring them to be distinctive while accommodating the social and state taboos in wearing them at home. |
| 5. Buying <i>modest fashion</i> from <i>Western</i> countries use at home | Buying Western but modest fashion items and wearing them at home to self-attach to liberal societies differentiate themselves and violate the social, but not state. |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 6. | Buying <i>Western non-modest clothes</i> and wearing them at home | Buying Western fashion items and wearing them at home intentionally obliterate the social taboos, but not the state. |
| 7. | Buying <i>Western – non-modest – clothes</i> and wearing them in <i>public</i> | Buying Western fashion items and wearing them in public to intentionally attack the social and state taboos |

4.1. Definition of restrictions

The level of perceiving the restriction as a “taboo” is to see it as one of the ‘cultural productions embedded socially and historically’ (Sabri et al., 2010, p. 62). In religious communities, Jafari & Süerdem (2012) group the definition of the restriction among the (re)interpretations of religious guidelines; while these are different, everyone refers a taboo back to relevant spiritual texts, as a transcendental set of guidelines. In the present research, this argument is evident since all Islamic fashion restrictions can be traced back to this text:

*And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only **that which is apparent** and to draw **their veils** all over **Juyubihinna** and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their women (i.e. their sisters in Islam), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigour, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.*

Chapter 24, Verse 31, the Light (Sorat El-Noor)

As shown in Table 5, the restrictions are divided into three main categories based on who interprets this verse. These are self-restrictions (i.e., the level of religiosity), social restrictions (i.e., subjective norms), and legal restrictions (i.e., those capable of enforcement by the religious police). A product becomes taboo in a society when a fashion item violates the socio-legal restriction. At the same time, behaviour is determined by the position of the self and family restrictions, instead of socio-legal ones.

Table 5: Definition of restrictions

| Concept | Definition | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| | | Dress code criteria according to the respondents |
| Self-restrictions | Individual interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith | <i>No fixed criteria</i> , but respondents all agree the <i>hijab</i> is required |
| legal restrictions | Interpretation of the sources made by the dominant scholars and supported by the formal and informal media | <i>Criterion</i> is the <i>Niqab</i> (in Saudi Arabia, a covering for the face, hair, and body) |
| Social restrictions | Interpretation of the sources by family members | Dependent on the family's education and background; <i>criteria are not fixed</i> |

The first pillar of the restriction is legal. The legal restriction is defined by respected scholars in the community and reflected as a norm by the legal authorities (i.e., the religious police, in this context). This restriction differs from country to country and from area to area, debating the meaning of the phrase “that which is apparent” in the Qur’anic verses and Hadith teachings. In Egypt, for example, argue that the woman should cover her body, apart from the face and hands, in loose, opaque clothing which reveals nothing and delineates nothing sexually attractive (Al-Qaradawi, 1995). In most parts of Egypt, women who do not cover their hair are considered shameful and not widely accepted. In Saudi Arabia, scholars (sometimes called Wahabism or Salafism) such as Ibn Othaimin interpret the covering to include ‘the palms of the hands, one eye, or both eyes, [except] for the necessity to see the way ... [and] outer dress like veils, gloves, head-covers, aprons, etc.’ (Al-Albani, 2002). This interpretation is enforced in Saudi Arabia through the formal and informal media and the religious police. If any woman violates this dress code, the religious police stop her and issue a reprimand. Legal restrictions, in this context, are embodied in the actions of the religious police, who patrol public areas and challenge those whom they consider inappropriately dressed based on the *state’s* interpretation of the Islamic sources.

The second pillar of restrictions is social restrictions, which are defined as society’s judgment and evaluation of behaviour, translated as the subjective norms of the society (Morris & Liu, 2015). In this religious and male-dominant context, women may never behave according to their own analyses. Merely talking about taboo topics is perceived as defiance (Yalkin & Veer, 2018). Moreover, ‘when market offerings conflict with religious control of non-market social institutions, believers are forced to re-evaluate what it means to be faithful’ (Mittelstaedt, 2002, p.13).

Accordingly, to operationalise society’s restrictions, the level of the family’s acceptance of female behaviour must be perceived. Family restrictions imposed by a woman’s parents, husband and siblings influence the accepted dress code and unacceptable fashion choices. Their rules may be similar to or different from those of the society. Still, the family in general translates general social restrictions as what should or should not be done to protect the family’s social status in the community (Edgell, 2005). The societal pressures in urban areas where the cultural identity is

lower are also different from those in rural areas where the cultural identity is higher. In Saudi tradition, the Niqab is an obligatory part of the inherited culture.

“I wear the Niqab as others do because of the society I am living in.” 05 A
I’m not forced to wear it. But I know they are intolerant of this behaviour, and I respect that. 07 D

The third pillar represents self-restriction. Self-restrictions set the limit for each woman’s freedom in line with *her own* interpretation of the Qur’an and the Hadith (the words of the Prophet Mohammed). Self-restriction can be operationalised as the level of a woman’s religiosity in terms of the greater strictness of the restrictions that she lays on herself as a matter of closeness to God (King & Crowther, 2004). Self-restrictions are mainly personal interpretations (or ones that follow scholarly interpretations) of what is obligatory and what is recommended in the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith. As summarised in Table 6, self-restrictions among the respondents were found to be neither fixed nor clear-cut, being based on scriptural interpretation. The legal, social, and personal interpretations interact with one another. They affect each other, being consistent in default, to create accepted norms in the society

My mother was the main reason for that. When I was young, she did not allow me to wear anything different from the Niqab. In time, it became taken for granted, and now I feel that my face is my own and not everyone is authorised to see it. 04 J

Table 6: Differences in the criteria for self-restrictions

| Self- Restriction | Evidence |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Niqab is essential | <i>“Nothing is called a Hijab (covering the hair only); these people misinterpret the Qur’anic phrase. It is the Niqab (covering the face), not the Hijab, that is a must.” 02 J</i> |
| Hijab is essential | <i>“The Hijab is a (religious) constraint. I do not wear it often. When I do wear it, I pretend that I am a good Muslim. By wearing it, I also represent Islam when I travel abroad. This is a great responsibility. Doing any wrong will be attributed to Islam and this is a great risk.” 09 D</i> |
| Neither Hijab nor Niqab is essential | <i>To be a Muslim, it’s not necessary to cover your hair, and it doesn’t mean that you will lose your rights in society. I can do anything I want. 04 R</i> |

4.2. Determination of the Psychological Reactance and System Justifications

Online shopping motivations and behaviours varied as a result of the differences in what was accepted under the above kinds of restrictions. When (self-interpreted) religious restrictions differed from those imposed by family and friends or the state, the woman’s behavioural response was to accept the restrictions or react against them. Her consequent behaviour was based on her attitude towards the enforcement of the limits. In other words, when the religious restrictions were matched with the legal ones, the attitude was to accept and thence to justify them.

4.2.1. Justifying the restrictions: Justifiers Behaviours.

When someone's self-restriction is higher than the social restrictions and both are higher than the socio-legal restrictions, buying online will appear as the justification and support of internal beliefs. In this study, five women demonstrated justificatory attitudes, motivations, and behaviours. This can be seen as one attitude (wholeheartedly embracing the social and legal restrictions), one motivation (utilitarian justifying motivation), and one behavior (buying local fashion online). The primary reason to buy is to satisfy the subject's self-restriction. In this case, online shopping is perceived as a "blessing" that can help people to fulfill their interpretations of the Islamic texts, which makes them feel "safe" and "satisfied" with their choice. In this case, a woman who has a justificatory attitude towards social restrictions will be most persuaded by the utilitarian motivation to shop online. Conservative women believe that they should not go to the market, or if they must visit them, they must be accompanied by a male. This belief is aligned to the fatwa² of an influential Saudi Islamic scholar, to the effect that visiting markets is not recommended for women. Although such interpretations are not accepted by everyone (Hussein 1953; Ahmed 1992), many religious women in Saudi Arabia accept them. This research found that when a woman or her family believes that women must be accompanied by a male – which is not a legal requirement – they shop online because it is consistent with their beliefs.

"Women should be accompanied by a male companion. It is forbidden to go to the market alone. Online shopping gives me the opportunity to buy without the feeling of sin or obliging a male relative to take me shopping" 02J

"Buying online is better and more convenient for me than traditional shopping. My family and I believe that I have to be accompanied when I go shopping. Finding someone to give me a lift to the market is not at all easy. Shopping online made me happier" 03J

² The Urban Dictionary defines a fatwa as "any religious decision made by a mufti (Islamic scholar who is an interpreter or expounder of Islamic law)."

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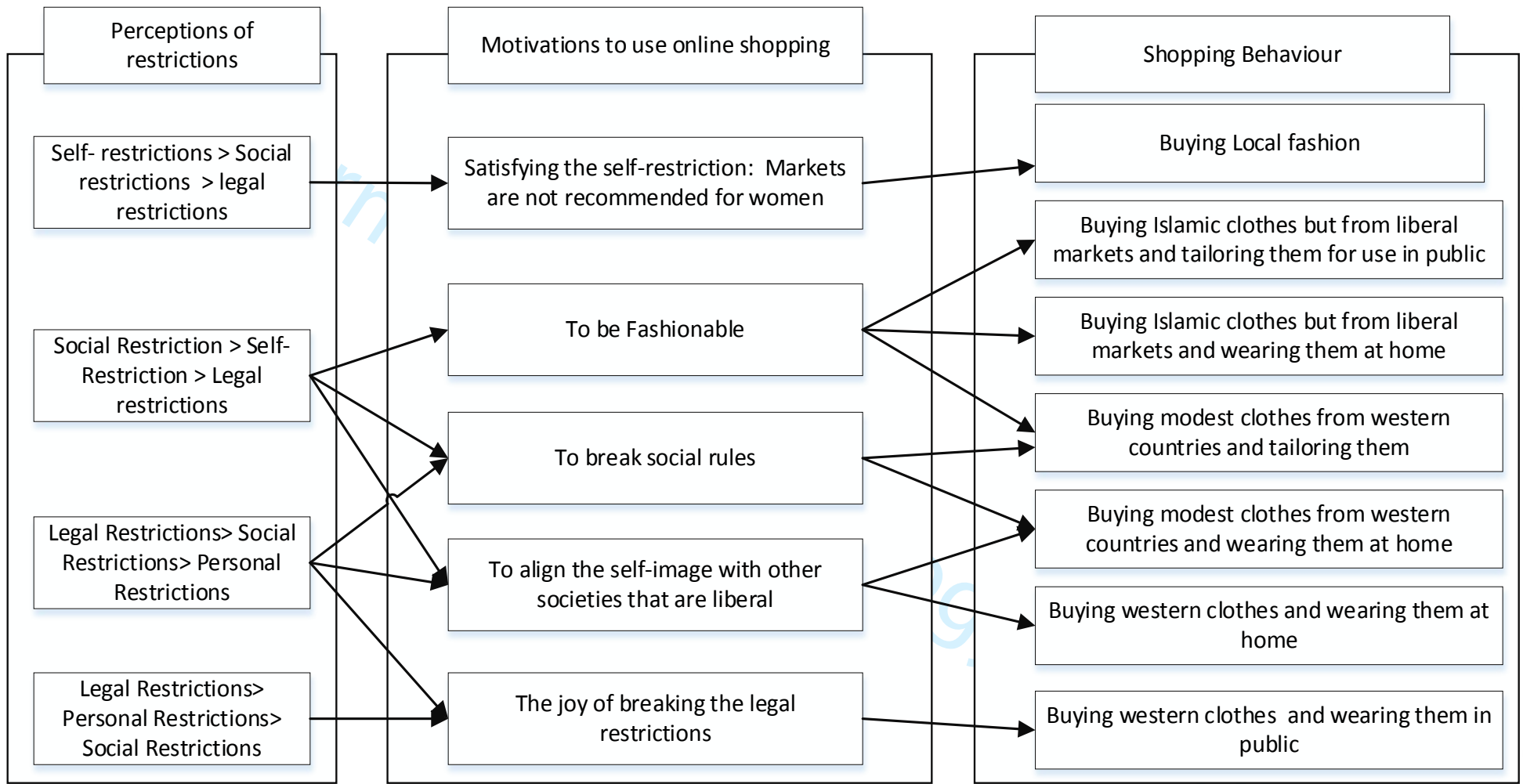


Figure 2: Research Framework

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Table 7: Examples of themes

| Perceptions of Restrictions | Evidence | Motivations to use online shopping | Shopping behaviour | Evidence |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Self > Social > Legal | <i>“the Niqab is a must, no question, not the Hijab ... The religious police are actually right. They are doing a very good job to protect our society.”</i> 01J | Justifying (i.e. Markets are not preferred for women) | Buying Saudi traditional Niqab online to avoid commuting to markets | <i>“I don’t like markets ... They’re not recommended from the Islamic point of view because women and men mingle in one place. Lots of Islamic violations happen. Women are not properly dressed and talk goes on between males and females. 01J “Now online shopping really makes life easier and fits more with my religious values (not going outside much and staying at home most of the time) . 05J</i> |
| Social > Self > Legal | <i>“I respect my father and mother’s traditions, when I go to (where I live). I wear the Niqab.”</i> 09 A | To be unique | buying or customising Islamic but non-Saudi fashion and wearing it in safe places or customising it to be socially safe. | <i>“I prefer online for buying fashions that are not available in the Saudi market [such as] T-shirts and trousers for our female meetings and parties.” 09A “Before, I used to follow Lebanese fashion magazines; now, I prefer the internet as long as it can fit my religious requirements. I buy the fashions that I can re-model later with my tailor to fit my requirements.” 01 A</i> |
| Social > Legal > Self | <i>“Uncovering the face is not forbidden. Religion eases our lives rather than making them difficult. However, our society makes it a must and it becomes more of a national tradition than a religious requirement. I comply with these requirements as a matter of respect, not because I believe in them”</i> 04 D | To break social rules (attach themselves to Western societies) | Buying modest fashion from Western markets or normal Western fashion but customising it to fit with minimum accepted legal requirements | <i>“Modest means long sleeves and skirts. They offer fantastic designs from international fashion designers.” 04MHA “I love buying my fashion from NY Dress as it has ‘modest’ options.” 05D “I don’t buy online from BHS Saudi Arabia. I buy from other European branches of BHS. I never buy from the Saudi shops.” 18D “I love to design my fashion. I don’t enjoy wearing traditional Saudi clothes. I love to be unique and no one else wears what I wear.” 10D</i> |
| Legal > Self > Social | <i>“I wear what I want to wear. these religious people are like dogs barking in the street”</i> 02 R <i>“My mother always says that I am a rebel, not like other girls who fear others ... I am a rebel. However, my rebellion is against what is wrong. I do what I believe in. I never do anything I do not believe in.”</i> 04R | To challenge the legal rules | Buying Western fashions and wearing them in public | <i>“I buy unique and different fashion items online. I hate these restrictions which are barbaric, imposed by the religious police here. These restrictions will be changed sooner or later”</i> 02 R <i>“I do not wear the Hijab and Niqab in public. I do not care much. The society has to change and accept others. It will!! It is a matter of time. We have to be positive and not passive in accepting restrictions”</i> 04 R |

4.2.2. Accepting restrictions: Acceptors

Among the respondents in this research 12 were acceptors demonstrating one attitude, three motivations and four behaviours. When social restrictions are higher than one's self-restriction and both are higher than the legal one, a woman will not be able to deviate far from the subjective norms set by her peers, family members, and neighbours. An average woman in a religious and male dominant society re-evaluates what it means to be a good Muslim and the related norms of gender. She presents a socially acceptable, exploratory self that seeks to understand, express and delve more deeply into accepting the restrictions (Yalkin & Veer, 2018).

However, the attractions of online shopping come to such women in two forms: "To be unique but aligned with social norms", and "to align the self-image with other societies that are liberal". Thus, women in this category buy online from Islamic liberal markets but wear the clothes among their friends (i.e. breaking the social rules but not in public), or buy clothes from the West but with the intention of customising and modifying them to fit their values or of wearing these clothes at home with friends to be distinctive. Women in this category are self-conflicted: they do not believe much in the restrictions, but everybody around them does believe in them. Online shopping is the gate to escape from this situation by buying online Western fashions, which must not be worn in public, but customising and wearing them whenever they can in free and safe circumstances (i.e. with friends who accept them). They approach online tailors to align the garments they have bought more closely with social norms, while still being distinct or even unique.

*I usually can't find the required level of modesty online, so I buy something that can be tailored, then **send it to the tailor to fix it.** 11 A*

*I go to international fashion websites. I select what appeals to me and can be **customized to fit the religious needs later.** I try to buy the best while respecting my religious values. 12A*

I contacted a good designer who I found on Instagram. I asked her to design fashionable clothes to fit my religious needs. She shows me designs and we choose one from them. Then she customises it and makes a new Islamic version for me. 10A

The self can be aligned with buyers in other markets that are liberal through buying online from international fashion suppliers who offer 'modest' designs or designs that can be tailored. The women in this group can search using keywords such as 'modest', 'long', 'decent' or 'long-sleeved'. Another preferred method was to find websites with a reputation for modesty, such as Turkish or Jewish-background websites.

*"I have some tricks to deal with international fashion. For example, Marks & Spencer always have modest options because it is a **Jewish oriented company.** Thus, most of what is offered can be aligned to our values, at least at female parties." 08 A*

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“I follow up Turkish websites; they always introduce what is new before any local shop. My sister and I always buy from them. As you know, Saudi Arabia is too hot to shop here easily. Thus, I love to buy from them.” 06 A

4.2.3. Rejecting restrictions: Deniers

This study found 12 respondents who were deniers. These women demonstrated one attitude, three motivations and six different behaviours. When the legal restriction is higher than the social and self-restrictions and the social restrictions are higher than the self-restriction, there is a tendency to reject the restrictions and use online shopping for hedonic motivations in terms of “breaking social rules”, “aligning the self-image to those in other societies that are liberal” and the “joy of breaking the legal restrictions”. The women falling into this category have a stigmatised self; this self is one valued as a contained space through imitating the fashion worn in liberal societies which presents the self to an in-group that bolsters the self rather than separating it from other selves (Crocker & Knight, 2005). The theme that is brought out here for the first time is the “joy of breaking legal restriction” though it is not a major element at this level of acceptance of restriction. However, it can be noted among women who are used to living far away from their families and working women.

“I wear whatever I like to wear. I am mature enough and I can do whatever I want...These clothes (referring to the Hijab and Niqab) are barbaric and they have to know they are traditions and not part of Islam (from her definition of the self-restriction). When I see the religious police coming towards me and they can do nothing, I sense victory” 04 D

“I respect my father and mother’s traditions, so when I go to (where I live) I wear the Niqab. But when I go back to Riyadh (the capital city), I take it off and I wear the fashions that I buy online from the UK or the USA as long as they are accepted as parts of a professional dress code” 06 D

4.2.4. Reaction against restrictions: Rebels

In this study 5 rebels described their motivation. They had one main attitude, one motivation and one behaviour. When the social and self-restrictions are much lower than the legal restrictions, there is a strong negative perception of the restriction as “tough”, “Islamist”, “terrorist” and “barbaric” .

I don’t believe the Niqab is a religious requirement. I feel it is a barbaric traditional requirement; there are different Qur’anic interpretations of the fashion-related verses. 03LA

Indeed, it seems that all the five women who fell into this category were buying their clothes only from Europe and the USA and always refer to people with a different outlook as “you” in a way that reflects their perception of being different with a different identity and different values. They always refer to “your” or “Saudi” values and beliefs. This can be a reaction to being stigmatised, because it is a way of differentiating one group from another but it is also a way of assigning attributes to the stigmatised and their subsequent separation and loss of status (Goffman, 1984). These women always separate these beliefs from themselves and they feel aggressive towards the religious police.

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3 Some describing them as “dogs barking in the street” and “intervening in private life”. Their
4 motivation to buy is hedonic, namely, “aligning the self-image with those in other societies that are
5 liberal” and “challenging restrictions”
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8 *“My family and I used to live in the USA. We see these restrictions as barbaric and they do not*
9 *make sense to me. Too much restriction makes me fed up. You know, I sometimes buy online*
10 *“provocative” fashion to challenge and to exasperate the religious police” 02 R*
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12 These women buy online directly from Western shops and wear the clothes as they are without
13 tailoring or modification. They buy non-modest fashion and they feel happy to challenge society in
14 doing this. They believing that this behaviour could change their society
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18 *“I am not the one who shall be changed. I buy and wear these fashion because I know that this*
19 *will change the society and they have to accept me as a human not as a salve” 05 J*
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21 **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

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23 This research makes three major contributions to knowledge; its definition of taboo markets, the role
24 of technology in reshaping the dynamics of this market, and the use of technology in this market to
25 predict consumer behaviours.
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29 Traditionally, “taboo products” are defined by each society; the political and social liberalisation
30 process of Western societies has destroyed certain taboos (Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006).
31 This research defined ‘taboo’ in a religious society, as the logic of the scholars dominating this
32 society in interpreting spiritual texts, which is endorsed and enforced by the legal system, and has
33 been normalised and integrated in society’s value system over time. This research argues that a taboo
34 product is operationalised as the interaction between the three pillars of restrictions. This supports the
35 finding by Piha et al. (2018) that consumer behaviour is a reaction to various societal, constructed
36 and individual pressures. However, this research adopts a different perspective in defining the
37 elements of pressure in a theocratic society, which focuses on the differences between the pillars of
38 the restrictions. The three pillars of restrictions are the government’s theocratic restrictions, society’s
39 restrictions, and self-interpreted religious restrictions. The first are the rules inspired by the
40 government’s understanding of the religious texts, while society’s restrictions are the perceptions of
41 the community concerning right and wrong actions, based on the society’s understandings of the
42 same scripts. The third restriction stems from the way in which individuals interpret the religious
43 texts. In other words, all restrictions have a similar source but may lead to different interpretations
44 and the level of differences in interpretation creates levels of religiosity shown in what women wear
45 and how they adopt different fashion styles. This implies that changes in the way that these religious
46 scripts are interpreted could revolutionise and radicalise the society’s values, norms, and behaviours.
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The literature on the taboo market focuses on whatever can be done out of sight. However, the present research focuses only on taboo fashions which are perceived externally and internally, and are easily visible to social and legal eyes for their judgement. Thus, the second contribution is defining the determinants of the behaviours in online taboo markets. In the literature, it is widely accepted that age, gender and religiosity could be strong predictors of behaviour under restrictions. This research found that the perceptions and differences in the three pillars of restrictions are the key determinants of attitudes, motivations and behaviours. When self-restriction is the highest, there will be a positive justificatory attitude towards restrictions, which leads to a utilitarian motivation to shop online in order to buy local Saudi fashions from local markets. When social restrictions are highest, there will be a negative attitude to social restriction but respect may colour the attitude due to the nature of this society. Thus, the hedonic motivation in this case will vary from “being unique”, “breaking social norms in as socially safe a way as possible”, and “aligning the self-image to that of Western societies”. Because the social norm is strong, all of these motivations will be reflected in socially safe zones. For instance, wanting to be unique will be reflected in buying Islamic fashion but not from Saudi Arabia, breaking social norms will be reflected by buying Arabic fashions that are not aligned with the legal system but wearing them to private female-only events. Aligning the self-image to Western fashion will be achieved through tailoring these fashions to fit in if possible with legal requirements or wearing them to private family events only. When the legal restriction is the highest, women may show strong reactance behaviour if their restrictions of their society are lower than the legal restrictions and their self-restriction. This will incite them to wear Western fashion in public, covered either by a detachable Niqab or a loose Hijab (i.e. a garment which they can take off when the religious police are not watching); or they can take it off and challenge the legal system; or they may even feel joy in challenging them.

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The third contribution is the role of technology in reframing the dynamics of this market. The literature judges the marketers and advertisers to be the main agents in the process by triggering the desires and emotions of freedom in potential customers (Veer & Golf-Papez, 2018). This research agrees with the assertion, but augments it by clearly showing that the equation has two parts. It is not only the advertiser who is the key driver here, but also the readiness of the clients to accept the advertising messages. In this research, we found that women whose personal values were higher than the societal and legal values tended to justify the current system; indeed, they may be offended by such “violating” messages. In any case, without information technology, women would have no access to the Western or Arab fashion markets, and would not perceive themselves as different or as susceptible to something that triggered their reactive behaviour. The internet was a critical vehicle for empowering women to behave in this way; it made them feel different (not needing to follow the

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2 herd) and enabled them to break social rules and rebel by buying clothes from abroad. Thus, for those
3 who reject such restrictions, virtual shopping can be seen as a vehicle of liberation and reaction and
4 also as a vehicle of alignment for those who believe in and justify the restrictions. Because of the
5 restrictions on Saudi women's movements, those who accept such restrictions argue that online
6 shopping is the best way to buy clothes.
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11 **5.1. Theoretical Implications**

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15 This research comes up with three main theoretical implications, regarding: the role of technology in
16 defining the restrictions and the taboo markets; the investigation of the relationship between the
17 ideology, technology and consumer behaviour; and congruity theory in relation to online shopping.
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22 First, this research uses socio-psychological theory to provide a novel perspective for understanding
23 the role of the relationship between the beliefs of the individual and those of the society on the
24 motivation for shopping behaviour in a restrictive society. Taboo markets are those defined by the
25 way in which others (i.e. societies and governments) define accepted and prohibited products (i.e.
26 other people's restrictions and definitions). The perception of restrictions, as in psychological
27 reactance theory, have been covered in social research for the sake of understanding the role of legal
28 restrictions on purchasing behaviour (Laurin et al., 2012). This research contributes to the literature
29 by offering a detailed perspective from which to understand why adverse reactions to restrictions
30 appear in some, while others may justify them. The new perspective developed in this research
31 seeks the reason for the variation in the differences in the perception of the restrictions, which is
32 derived from the relationship between the societal, personal, and family's beliefs and values. This
33 research borrows from the socio-political literature for concepts to apply to the taboo markets to
34 explain how this perception of the constellation of restrictions (societal, family, legal and personal)
35 influence each other to ultimately elicit different motivations to buy. The motivations may justify the
36 restrictions, accept them, reject them or react against them. These different motivations are reflected
37 in the respondents' buying/shopping behaviour.
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51 Second, this research sets the foundation for a new theory in understanding the role that technology
52 can play in consumer behaviours in the taboo markets of restrictive societies. Restrictions are not
53 necessarily concerned with what women wear but also how they behave and are perceived in society.
54 Questions can come to underline how these women must negotiate their experience of freedom –
55 freedom to shop, choose, pay, and wear the items they purchase. A new theory is required to
56 formulate and set the foundation for understanding the interaction and interplay between different
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3 actors in a society and how they may influence the values and restrictions on consumer behaviour. E-
4 Marketing should not be absent from the sociological changes in societies. Marketing science ought
5 to understand a society's behaviour and the underlying reasons for it. The interactions between
6 cultural identity, religiosity, and the perception of restrictions can be a clue to understanding the role
7 that IT can play in directing consumer motivation and behaviour, especially in restrictive societies.
8 Online shopping in the virtual stores in other Islamic countries can enable people to see others who
9 hold similar values (i.e., believe in the same religion) but observe different levels of restriction (i.e.
10 accepting the need to cover the hair but not the face, as in Egypt; or not covering the hair but being
11 modest, as in Tunisia) which encourage them to question their social and religious restrictions
12 because a change in their self-restriction is possible. One of the main factors determining the
13 motivation to justify restrictions is the perception that one has the "ability" to break them. Now that
14 women can buy online from anywhere in the world, society's power to buy may be reshaped. This
15 determines the designs that will be available in the market; it has implications for the family (i.e., that
16 males must accompany a woman out shopping, which affects her decision making) and for the law
17 (i.e., the country's acceptance of selling or prohibiting an item); everyone, in fact down to the woman
18 who can with a few clicks buy whatever she wants online. Online shopping will change the taboo
19 markets over time, because more and more women will change their behaviours and construct new
20 norms in the market.
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34 Third, besides the call to develop a new socio-psychological theory with which to understand the role
35 of technology in driving consumer behaviour in restrictive societies, there are other academic
36 implications. This research, supported by others (El-Bassiouny, 2015; Jafari & Sandikci, 2016),
37 offers evidence that ideology should be added to the list of factors to consider in consumer behaviour.
38 International markets are segmented within as well as between cultures and one must understand the
39 diversity of the drivers of consumer behaviour underlying this segmentation, in order to categorise
40 individual consumers not only according to their psychological and social needs and behaviours
41 (Wedel & Kamakura, 2012), but also by their ideologies. El-Bassiouny, (2015) believes the market to
42 be segmented by levels of religiosity; this research helps to segment a market not only by well-
43 known demographic, situational or behavioural factors (Hofacker, 2001), but also by the level of
44 cultural identity, in line with Sia et al., (2009). It does so by the extent of justification or reaction vis-
45 à-vis existing restrictions, since shopping online for fashion shows each segment behaving
46 differently. This clearly confirms Lusch and Vargo's results that highlight the fact that "value is
47 always uniquely and phenomenologically influenced by the beneficiary" and is also idiosyncratic,
48 experiential, contextual and meaning-laden (Lusch & Vargo, 2011).
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3 Fourth, this research opens the way to researching congruity theory (Tannenbaum & Osgood, 1955)
4 from a different perspective. In cultural studies, congruity is said to occur where the country of origin
5 of a brand is matched with the language of the brand name. An example would be Volkswagen, the
6 German name of a brand of cars built in Germany. Incongruity, where the language and country of
7 origin are different (Salciuviene et al., 2013), is found to have a positive impact on the intention to
8 purchase (Chao et al., 2005) and on the perception of quality (Miranda, 2020). This research suggests
9 that consumers showing a psychological reaction to restrictions will experience a greater impact of
10 incongruity on the intention to purchase and that this relationship is moderated by cultural identity.
11 Conversely, justification of the restrictions and high cultural identity are proposed to have a negative
12 impact on the incongruity between the brand name and the country of origin. All of these
13 propositions could be used to guide the direction of empirical quantitative research.
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22 **5.2. Practical Implications**

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24 Successful marketing ultimately depends on understanding consumers' behaviour, attitude and
25 perceptions so as to be able to satisfy their needs and wants (Chiu et al., 2014). This research has
26 produced evidence that ideology, and a woman's attitude to her country's prevailing attitudes should
27 be added to the list of factors to consider. Western companies offer fashions primarily for Western
28 women. Therefore, in Saudi Arabia, these designs suit only those who have a relatively low level of
29 cultural identity. Indeed, Saudi women do not buy fashions online merely to meet their physiological
30 needs but also as a way of representing themselves among other nationalities or of reflecting their
31 rejection of the restrictions currently imposed.
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39 The most important point here is who influences the way in which the women, the society, and the
40 government interpret the religious texts. Government plays a critical role in promoting certain
41 religious voices while belittling others. For instance, the Saudi media in the age of the previous king
42 heavily promoted the laws against women drivers, listening to music, and going to concerts. The
43 present king has promoted religious scholars who give the same actions legitimacy and acceptance.
44 The ideological outlook of Saudi Arabia is changing; now, for instance, the law has changed to allow
45 women to drive. Some women started to take "secret" driving lessons to be ready for this (Ensor,
46 2018), influenced by some social media and the official media. In this case a legal restriction has
47 been relaxed. But it is unclear whether it is still perceived as a religious and social restriction,
48 especially when some influential people who were given prominence in the previous reign are still
49 speaking against it. The new regime, it is also noticed, has curtailed the patrols of the religious police
50 on the streets (Murray, 2018). The Niqab is now unnecessary in legal institutions (Bashraheel, 2017).
51 However, those who influence the social media note that it can still be seen to prevail everywhere.
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In theory, nothing is clearly stated in the Qur'an about such matters. Professionals and leaders of the international fashion industry should understand the relationship between the religious influencers on the official media (as the voice of theocratic government), the religious influencers on the social media (as the voice of society), and the beliefs and views of the target segment vis-à-vis these influencers.

The designers of e-marketing should think about the implications for those who justify the system of over-revealing images of women and the suggestion of nudity, because they are offensive to conservative women and, by flouting the traditions of the community, will deter them from buying what is advertised. But it could have a stronger impact on women who are psychologically reacting against the system. Such images will discourage these women from returning to a website or even from continuing to browse and buy goods. Professional studies should reveal the level of psychological reaction against the system before advertisers decide how to design their promotional visual messages.

It is also important to distinguish between the level of religiosity and someone's cultural identity. Cultural identity is concerned with accepting the social values and terms which may not be the same as an individual's religious values as they interpret or embrace them. Such discrepancies between the two concepts can create implications in the understanding and perception of societal restrictions.

Last but not least, restrictions influence motivation. The marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) of a restricted product will be more effective if it addresses a desire to rebel (i.e. motivation founded on psychological reaction). Once the restrictions are removed, the marketing mix should be adjusted to reflect changes in the motivation to purchase.

5.3. Research Limitations

The main methodological limitation of the present research lies in its reliance on consumer interviews as its main source of data, and sole source of its primary data. In general, effective primary research aims to use multiple data sources in order to provide higher levels of reliability and validity, and to ensure that the claims of the respondents are actually reflected in their actions. However, in the case of the present research it was not possible to achieve this degree of reliability and validity, due to having a single source of data. This limitation was addressed, to a certain extent, by the use of secondary data reports to support the interviews, and by the triangulation between the literature, the interviews and the secondary data. However, the literature and secondary data were not directly focused on in the same way as the primary data; therefore, this triangulation may not ensure reliability.

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3 The main data source consists only of the opinions of individual women in Saudi Arabia, which may
4 be influenced by individual cultural, social and religious factors, and thus may not fully reflect the
5 actual behaviour of all the women in the country. This means that the data collected in this study are
6 a reflection of individual and group perceptions of female behaviour and online shopping which do
7 not necessarily reflect those of all the people in Saudi Arabia and their habitual shopping.
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11 Furthermore, this research targeted women aged between 30 and 40 years. Stafford, Turan, &
12 Raisinghani (2004) found that younger people were more inclined than older ones to shop online,
13 while Passyn, Diriker, & Settle (2016) report that respondents under 35 years of age had different
14 perceptions of online shopping from those aged 35 to 50 or over 50. Therefore, the applicability of
15 the present results to other age groups is questioned and further research would be required to extend
16 the findings to them.
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20 Carrying out the interviews themselves also presented some challenges. Some women, despite
21 agreeing to attend the interview and confirming the date, were unwilling to have their voices
22 recorded because they did not want their voices to be in the possession of anyone else. Some women
23 felt doubtful and fearful of taking part in an interview and the purposes of the research had to be
24 clarified to them. Some women stopped in the middle of the interview and completely withdrew after
25 responding in depth to the most frequently asked questions, in particular those relating to the effects
26 of adhering to religion and the impact of community opinion. Some women came to the meeting in
27 clothes of a type which differed from their usual apparel (i.e. wearing a Hijab although they did not
28 do so in normal circumstances), because they thought it might be offensive if they did not. It was not
29 very easy to find unveiled women to interview. In Saudi culture, it may be considered offensive to
30 look for unveiled women and much effort was expended on finding an adequate number of them.
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33 **5.4. Future research**

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35 There are three main avenues for future research. First, this research was limited to females and since
36 males tend to have stronger reactions than females do (Seemann et al., 2004), it is not clear how they
37 would behave with regard to their fashion shopping behaviour, so this could be examined in future
38 research. Age is also a critical factor in determining the level of reaction: the lower the age, the
39 stronger the reaction (Hong et al., 1994). Therefore, another study might target another age-group, for
40 example, that of 21- to 30-year-olds, where reactance is likely to be high and the interviewees have a
41 high level of power to buy what they want. Furthermore, ethnic groups differ in their behaviour in
42 reaction; for example, Caucasians are more reactant than African Americans, Asians or Hispanics
43 (Woller et al., 2007). Therefore, a replication of this study on other ethnicities, say, in Israel, Turkey
44 or Indonesia, might obtain interesting results. These countries have relatively strong cultural identity
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3 but varying levels of power distance. Indeed, power distance and reactance behaviour are in inverse
4 proportion to each other. Thus, it is important to undertake follow-up research in this area, in an
5 effort to determine whether the findings from the interview phase reported in this thesis can be
6 supported by other data. This might be done through longer-term strategies such as observations of
7 people's browsing and purchasing history; however, care will need to be taken when planning this
8 research, due to the privacy restrictions around women in restrictive societies.
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14 Second, it is imperative to admit the limitations of a qualitative study in making space for new
15 quantitative research. Qualitative research findings are not generalizable but offer a holistic and
16 relatively deep perspective while quantitative studies are generalisable but based purely on
17 associations. Thus, we suggest that future research might adopt cause and effect research designs via
18 experimental research. In particular, future experimental research in the area can consider measuring
19 both chronic and primed responses (Lim, 2015) and the use of sophisticated methods such as
20 neuroscientific techniques (Lim, 2018) in cost-effective experimental designs such as those informed
21 by data partitioning techniques (Lim et al., 2019).
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29 Third, these data were collected in 2015 before the succession of the present King. He has endorsed
30 the work of new religious scholars, as reflected in a new legal system with no religious police and the
31 loss of the Niqab as a legal requirement (Abdulaziz, 2019). Now the main question is whether the
32 fashion market will change. If it will, what are the factors that will contribute to it? Who will be
33 affected sooner (in terms of age, nature of work, nature of education, and travelling behaviour)? The
34 answer to these questions could help international fashion brands to penetrate this rich market.
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Dear Editor,

We appreciate and acknowledge the value of all comments received. We believe that these profound and opening-eyes comments helped us frame this paper to be like this. All the eight reviewers illuminated us with critical remarks over the two years, which were helpful and supportive. We acknowledge and thank them for all of their outstanding efforts to help us make the paper to be as it is now. Without their comments, we believe this manuscript would not be as convincing and consistent now. We are delighted to accept all the comments in this round. We hope the paper is ready now for publication.

Best Regards,
Authors

First Reviewer,

We are very grateful for your feedback during the last two iterations. We are delighted to know that you have accepted the paper for publication. We have to confess without your valuable comments, and the article would not be like this.

Second Reviewer,

Thank you for your constructive and helpful comments. We accept all of them, and we believe in their merits. We worked hard to address all of your excellent and opening-eyes feedbacks.

| Comment | Response |
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| Thank you for revising the paper. I appreciate that the core topic is research-worthy and that the findings from your study are relatively clear. Overall, I found the paper engaging and the topic worthy of further examination. I am very interested in how digital technology, i.e. online shopping, affects consumers' behaviours for taboo products. I take a developmental perspective for the review and hope it helps to clarify any possible issues. | We thank you for this recommendation. We took all of the comments to improve the paper forward |
| The paper does address a little-studies area from an interesting perspective; however, given the nascent and sensitive nature of the topic, a well-elaborated research context and a well-justified motivation is a necessity. I understand the author/s has taken the time and efforts to further build up the bits, but the current version does not provide an explicit and convincing ground to present the work. To be specific, the detailed context, in which the research was | <p>We agree with you! Because we are too much in the context, we did not observe this issue. Now, we added this paragraph in the introduction section to give a quick overview of the context.</p> <p>Religious restrictions are unlike any of these, especially if state agents enforce them. The case for a religious state which presents itself as ruling in the name of God is different from any discussed in the previous literature. Saudi Arabia established religious police to enforce in public the practice of</p> |

conducted and the data collection was undertaken, is largely missing from the narratives. There are some descriptions regarding the specific taboo targeted in the focal case, but they are provided in a sporadic manner, which is very difficult to follow, especially to the readers without prior knowledge. As a result, it has weakened the research motivation, as the contextual motive failed to resonate with readers. Further, despite the author/s' efforts on further strengthening the reasons for the research, the theoretical aspect is not convincingly linked to the context. This is particularly obvious when the author/s suggested "disobeying the religious orders has not been studied before in the literature" (L45/46, P3), as the linkage between such with SJT and PRT seems rather unclear. In sum, I would recommend the author/s to revisit the research context and motivation to properly justify the research.

The literature review is well structured as the author/s examined the online shopping motivation in general and then narrowed down to motivations in taboo shopping online. However, the research gap (L6-9, P6) was presented in an isolated manner as how this is particularly linked to the focal case, and in which specific aspect, the current work failed to shed light on? My concern is that the current research gap is a bit general to fully situate the research question.

I understand the sensitive nature the research topic locally, but just because of this, the process needs to be detailed to fully justify the research and its rigour.

Islamic values such as gender segregation in workplaces and shops, ways of dressing in public, opening and closing times for shops (e.g., the specific times for prayer each day), what fashions may be sold in shops and how they may be sold. The risk of disobeying the state's religious orders could have a more substantial influence on human behaviour than the risk in a secular state.

We also added a whole section called (Background) to portray the context for the reader and explain the state religious restrictions. Also, the roots of these religious restrictions and how this context is unique. This new section ends by this paraph
This context of study offers a rich environment for understanding the actions of the state in enforcing a level of religious policing that affects the freedom of women to dress and choose for themselves what to wear. Online shopping may be a vehicle by which this religious-state restrictions may be justified or it may be reacted against by buying online from Western countries. The present research offers a new perspective from which to understand this unique location-based taboo market (i.e. it is forbidden in Saudi Arabia but allowed everywhere else in the world) and define the motivations of its online shoppers in using technology.

We have re-written the sampling section. Also we added two paragraphs to detail the process and justify the rigorousness of the research. Second, the criteria for selection of the sample and its size were set by the iterative nature of the data collection and analysed by theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The sample does not represent the Saudi population. The purpose was to recruit women from a restrictive society who had the means and ability to shop online, for a qualitative investigation of their attitudes to online shopping. The population targeted in this research was Saudi women resident in Saudi Arabia, able to

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| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 | <p>buy fashion online without restrictions of a psychological nature (trust in online shopping; perceived difficulties in buying fashion online) or a material nature (shipping or payment problems). Men were excluded because women face considerably more restrictions, specifically in the choice of clothing (Al-Rasheed, 2013). The age range (30-49) was selected to exclude both young and old people. Older people are more inclined to justify the status quo (Laurin et al., 2009), while teenagers and young women may be effectively controlled by their families or unduly sensitive to peer pressure (imitating friends, celebrities or fashion icons) in their fashion behaviour (Khare et al., 2012). All the recruits had experience of online shopping and bought clothes and other items online. None had any technical or trust issue with online shopping; it is known that the propensity to trust (Liu & Tang, 2018) and perception of difficulty (Kraft et al., 2005) in using online shopping can affect attitudes and motivation. To ensure consistency and avoid the effects on attitude of living in remote or rural areas (Xu & Paulins, 2005), all the interviews were conducted in Riyadh (the capital city of Saudi Arabia).</p> <p>We also added this paragraph</p> <p>Fourth, the sampling recruitment process was based on snowball sampling. Because of the nature of this research project, the writers could not use public websites to recruit participants; rather, personal networks were used, and respondents were asked to refer the project to others who might fit the research needs. The second author, who lives in Saudi Arabia, approached women whom she personally knew or who had been referred by other interviewees. She gave them a consent form stating that the identity of the respondents would never be by any means disclosed. The researcher gave code names to these respondents before sharing the transcripts with the other researchers. Despite respondents being assured of their anonymity, three women refused to complete the interview. One claimed that the researcher was working for the government's intelligence system and left without completing her interview. The other interviewees were eventually satisfied and completed their interviews without further demur, having been given confidence that the second researcher would</p> |
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| | <p>not disclose their identity.</p> <p>The interviews were conducted in Arabic and analysed in Arabic because all the researchers, except the last one, are bi-lingual (Arabic and English). English was not used because the interviews were held in Saudi Arabia where the mother tongue is Arabic. The aim was for them to express their opinions freely without language restrictions. Moreover, translation before the final reporting of the analytical results could have affected the quality of the analysis since meaning typically alters to some extent in translation.</p> |
| <p>The illustrative coding summary is recommended to be added and presented in the Section of results, which will help readers to follow the storyline. Figure 2 is a bit descriptive in general, not necessarily reflecting the abstract connotations of the codes. More information is needed to provide the ground on which the four types of behaviours were formulated.</p> | <p>We added a new section and a new diagram to illustrate the coding summary (Table 4). Also, we now introduced the codes to make figure 2 easier to read and to follow.</p> |
| <p>Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: The paper identified both theoretical and practical implications.</p> | <p>We are pleased to know that the theoretical and practical implications are good.</p> |
| <p>Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc: There are numerous grammar mistakes and/or typos in the article, which needs a thorough proofreading.</p> | <p>We sent the paper to a professional native English speaker proof-reader</p> |

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