ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN A
RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIA

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EMAN AL-KHALIFAH

Management Sciences and Marketing

Alliance Manchester Business School
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Abstract

Saudi Arabia enforces certain restrictions on human freedom in general and on women in particular. From a fashion industry perspective, it imposes many restrictions on females’ freedom to buy fashion items. This research aims to understand how these restrictions affect Saudi women’s behaviour when shopping online for fashion. Two phases of research were conducted: first, 23 Saudi women were interviewed to clarify and understand the factors affecting their online fashion shopping in general, then 34 Saudi women were interviewed to understand the impact of these factors on their online shopping for fashion in the context of the various restrictions.

Three theories were used in order to understand their fashion shopping behaviour. System justification theory was applied to women who justified the restrictions, and psychological reactance theory to those who expressed their rejection of the restrictions. Cultural identity theory was applied to discover how living abroad affected the perceptions and attitudes of women in each group regarding online shopping.

A framework for online fashion shopping behaviour in a restrictive environment was developed to understand the motivations and approaches to buying fashion online both of those who justify and of those who react against the restrictions. Whereas the justifiers tend to seek to accommodate and rationalise the restrictions (mainly utilitarian motivations), those who use online shopping as a way of reacting against the restrictions do so in order to follow their fashion icons in the West and to distinguish themselves from others (mainly hedonic motivations).

The different motivations lead to different approaches to purchasing. Those who justified the restrictions bought mainly via social media (buying from Islamic e-shops, or customising—before or after purchase—goods from Western e-shops), while those who reacted against the restrictions bought mainly from Western e-shops offering modest fashions. Those with higher cultural identity scores were more likely to buy online from e-shops and social media, whereas those with low cultural identity who justified the restrictions bought from e-shops, social media and Western e-shops, but with a strong tendency to customise, before or after purchase. Finally, those with low cultural identity and high psychological reactance would buy directly from Western e-shops.
This research offers a new segmentation strategy for entering markets with restrictions (e.g. legal, religious or social), especially in fashion, which requires entrants to consider several new variables: level of belief in restrictions, religiousness of dress and justification of or reaction against such restrictions.
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TO

My Mother and Father

For all of the sacrifices that you’ve made on my behalf

Your prayer for me was what sustained me thus far
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The World Economic Forum recently ranked Saudi Arabia 129th of 136 countries for gender equality (Haussmann et al., 2010). A Human Rights Watch report entitled *Perpetual Minors* emphasizes the legal restrictions on the freedom of Saudi women to open bank accounts, study at university or travel abroad without the permission of a male guardian such as the husband or father (Deif, 2008). Saudi women are faced with restrictions unlike those in any other country of the world. Under laws enforced by the religious police, they may not vote in elections, wear makeup or have their hair uncovered in public, and Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world where women are forbidden to drive (Greenberg, 2014). In June, 2015, the Saudi Kingdom issued a new law banning fashion shows in Saudi Arabia (Baamer, 2015; Variyar, 2015).

As to public attitudes, some 77% of Saudi people believe that every woman should cover her face in public; this the largest percentage of people in any country who hold such a belief (Moaddel, 2013). Thus, three-quarters of Saudi citizens agree on specific dress restrictions, which constitute a subjective norm. The imposition of such a norm by the culture can be seen to reflect the degree to which a belief (i.e. in covering the female face in public) is a vital part of this community (Szilagyi, 2015). For instance, each Saudi woman, by definition, should hold strong beliefs in rationalising her country’s cultural norms (Lefdahl and Perrone, 2015). Nevertheless, one can be a part of a community but psychologically detached from it, i.e. not subscribing to a certain set of subjective norms (Szilagyi, 2015).

Saudi Arabia is 100% Muslim, very conservative and notable for the almost complete gender segregation in public, where Saudi women generally either wear a *hijab* (head covering) or cover their bodies completely in an *abaya* or *burqa*. People in the West tend to see women in Saudi Arabia as unhappy, exploited, lifeless and oppressed, while from the perspective of the Saudi community, women in the West seem to be abused, unprotected, superficial and lewd (Lefdahl and Perrone, 2015).
Saudi Arabia is one of the most conservative states in the Arab world, the careful guardian of Islam. Islamic studies are at the heart of all cultural programmes, with all males and females studying their religious rights, requirements and obligations. Islamic religious instruction treats men and women differently, in line with the distinct roles that they must accept in Saudi society: boys are conventionally educated about manly activities, girls about their requirements as mothers and housewives (Szilagyi, 2015).

Detachment from this culture can come from having travelled and lived abroad. Living abroad pushes people to think about and question their cultural values, their norms and their outlook regarding restrictions (Mao and Shen, 2015; Peng et al., 2014). Being exposed to other cultures may shake people’s cultural identity (that of being a member of a society and holding its norms (what ought to happen), values and world view. It may prompt them to think differently and divorce themselves from their social norms (Szilagyi, 2015). Once this happens, people may perceive the norms differently and this may lead them to reject restrictions on their behaviour.

When a restriction is imposed without a proper and convincing message, it can have unintended negative consequences for some people (Laurin et al., 2012), while others may see the restrictions as necessary for order, safety and survival. Likewise, restrictions imposed by governments, religious groups, or any social organisations (e.g. clubs or unions) on their members are greeted with different reactions. For instance, when Orthodox Jewish groups restrict their women from driving cars in London, it seems reasonable to the groups but not to the other English people around them (Robinson, 2015).

The attitude to restrictions and the perceptions of members of the community (subjective norms) direct their consequent behaviour, using any mechanism to reflect people’s acceptance or rejection of such rules. Mechanisms can be passive (mere acceptance) or active (acting in contravention or disobeying). In countries that enforce restrictions on freedom of choice, the reaction of the individual is predicted by two theories: system justification theory (rationalising the restriction) and psychological reactance theory (attempting to break the restriction)(Kay et al., 2008; Kay et al., 2009; Laurin et al., 2012). These can be useful for understanding the behaviour of societies which face restrictions.
With regard to cultural restrictions on clothing, online shopping can be a tool to rationalise or a window through which to react against such restrictions and break them by buying clothes online from other countries. No previous study has examined online shopping behaviour as reflecting cognitive dissonance regarding such restrictions.

1.2 Importance of the study

Online marketing has enjoyed considerable success in free Western markets such as those of the United States and the United Kingdom, but its success may be limited by restrictions imposed in countries such as Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is imperative to recognise how strategies devised for online shopping may be impacted by such limitations. On this note, (Foucault et al., 1991) had identified two approaches that countries can follow to enforce them: governance, which means monitoring behaviour, and governmentality, which means managing attitude and knowledge. (Fernandes and Mandel, 2014) identify the apparent efforts of political drivers as one of the major factors influencing the behaviour of consumers in a closed state. Such drivers have the ability to strongly influence individual behaviour, which may mean that consumers ignore variety and focus on narrower choices when considering purchases. Similarly, (Barari et al., 2011) state that societies which are strong in monitoring behaviour and utilise social inclination as a means to increase control are often dominated by this influence. For example, Iran has a restricted economy in which the government imposes its views by not allowing other opinion formers to operate openly (Milani, 2010). This moulds consumers’ attitudes and leads them to react in ways which conform to the government’s expectations.

This approach to controlling consumer behaviour prevails in many countries like Iran, but over time some governments have taken a softer paternalistic approach to exercising influence over consumers (Paternalism, 2006). This fatherly influence would be noticeable in liberal economies such as the UK and USA, where governments utilize it to monitor individual harmful behaviours such as smoking, alcohol consumption and poor nutrition (Paternalism, 2006). Other governments adopt a paternal approach to direct consumption in more socially acceptable ways, such as in China. (Lai et al., 2013) state that they often do this to “control purchasing intentions” and thus to maintain control over
the overall economy. Morozov (2011) argues that this approach is taken not only for social but also for political reasons. For example, the Russian government directly or indirectly monitors and blocks political websites to manage the direction of political debate. ‘Soft governance’ of consumers of this nature further unfolds in areas such as entertainment; for example, RuTube, which is the Russian version of YouTube, is owned by Gazprom, which itself is indirectly owned by the Russian state (Morozov, 2011). This system exercises governance over consumers through influence instead of control, which makes it easier for the state to match citizens’ behaviour to what it sees as appropriate ways of consuming goods and services.

The kinds of restriction outlined so far in this chapter indicate the potential influence that the restrictive culture and laws of Saudi Arabia can have on online shopping behaviour in the fashion industry. This industry is one of the most sensitive areas to be affected by Saudi restrictions. Controlling what women may wear, like any restriction imposed by the state (Kay et al., 2009), can be met with acceptance, justification or reactance. However, it is important to note that the literature also indicates that in recent years, foreign travel has introduced many Saudi citizens to alternative approaches to education, leisure or work, which has helped to make them more open-minded in their thinking and more willing to challenge the status quo (Al-Saggaf, 2004). According to (Peng et al., 2014), travelling and living abroad makes it easier for individuals to become more open-minded, because it exposes them to many different ideas without the lens of social judgement. In the case of Saudi Arabia, there is already some evidence that this is occurring and that exposure to an international environment is making people less prone to accept some of the internal situational factors that are specific to Saudi Arabia. For example, Aljazeera1 reported that living abroad has influenced some women to run a social media campaign in defiance of the country’s ban on women as car drivers, through the production and online sharing of videos of women driving.

At the same time, it is noted in the literature that attempts such as these to control and direct the actions of consumers also have the potential to trigger resistance amongst

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consumers. Thus, (Venkatesan, 1966) asserts that when individuals feel under pressure to comply with accepted norms, they become more likely to resist this pressure and attempt to rebel against the forces that would control them. According to (Wesson, 2009), this process of resistance can be set in motion by a range of factors, which can be absorbed without conscious awareness, most of the factors relating to the ability of individuals to access contrary information. An example of this comes from recent research in China, where (Zou et al., 2014) have demonstrated that when consumers access a greater range of choice, they are more likely to experience a sense of power, thus causing them to rebel against social and cultural norms and efforts to control their consumer behaviour. In the online shopping context, this indicates that exposure to online retail opportunities, in particular those which display norms contrasting with the norms imposed by restrictive societies, is likely to increase the level of preference for unique products offered online and for the environment of such products itself.

In Saudi Arabia, as women become more aware of the usefulness of the online channel as a means for communication and information searching, they become more likely to use this channel and thus their online shopping intentions increase (Al-maghrabi and Dennis, 2009). In particular, women in Saudi Arabia may find it difficult at first to go online and shop, but once they have some online experience, they are more likely to view the local cultural and legal restrictions on their activities as being less valid or fair, thus causing them to increase their tendency to shop online, as well as to carry out other interactions in the online space. This implies that whilst the overall culture in Saudi Arabia will tend to discourage online shopping, the negative determinants of specific factors, such as the restrictions placed on women, is proposed in this research to encourage them to go online.

1.3 Aim and objectives

This research aims to develop a framework for understanding women’s online fashion shopping behaviour in a culturally restrictive environment.

1.3.1 Research question

It thus addresses two research questions. The first research question is
“What are the factors that affect online fashion shopping behaviour in Saudi Arabia?”

Based on the understandings of the advantages and disadvantages of the online shopping in the eyes of Saudi women, the research question is narrowed down to spotlight the role of Saudi fashion restrictions on their online shopping behaviour. Thus, the second research question is

“How do women in a culturally restrictive environment behave in an online fashion shopping context?”

Each of the two empirical phases of the study considers a different aspect of this question, as detailed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.

To answer the research question and to fulfil its aim, the research as whole has five interrelated objectives, as follows.

**1.3.2 Research objectives**

1- To understand the factors that affect the behaviour of women shopping for fashion online in Saudi Arabia

2- To understand the main motivations for using the online context to shop for fashion

3- To understand how the attitudes to constraints affect online fashion shopping behaviour

4- To understand how cultural identity affects online fashion shopping behaviour

5- To identify Saudi women’s approaches to fashion shopping online.

**1.4 The Saudi Arabian context**

Although consumer behaviour in Saudi Arabia has evolved significantly over the past century, the evolution of online commerce and consumer patterns has yet to be adequately addressed in academia (Bhuian and Abdul-Muhammad, 2015). Through empirical research, (Assad, 2008) has established that fashion in Saudi Arabia is largely defined by external motivations and stimuli as socio-cultural values shift towards a Westernised interpretation of fashion-forward stylisation. While intrinsic constraints such as religion, culture and
individual value systems still delay the universal adoption of Western fashions, the status-relevant uptake of these new styles continues to attract a new generation of attentive Saudi consumers (Assad, 2008). One key dimension of this behavioural adaptation reflected by Assad (2008) is described by (Makki and Chang, 2014) in relation to the widespread uptake of new technologies and shopping platforms.

Technical problems are still an issue for some remote and rural areas of Saudi Arabia. Researchers such as (Al-Debei et al., 2015) have demonstrated how Saudi consumers continue to be extremely dissatisfied with the quality of their internet providers and the services they receive. Focusing on key challenges to the speed and quality of their internet connections, it is evident that network deficiencies and a fragmented service provision need to be remedied to improve the large scale participation of these residents. As a result, internet penetration in Saudi Arabia lags behind the region, yet the penetration rate of 60 per cent should not be underestimated (Gollapalli et al., 2015). The rate is expected to continue to grow in the years to come, due to changing demographics and the new lifestyles of the succeeding generations (EIU; ² EIU ³). Therefore, to avoid the complicating factor of technical issues, the focus of this study is on Riyadh, the capital city, whose inhabitants enjoy the most advanced network infrastructure and use of technologies.

Key gaps in fashion consumption behaviour described by (Assad, 2008) are tied to various social and cultural patterns. (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011) assert that it is the heterogeneous character of technologically favourable environments that largely contributes to the evolution of national culture and associated socio-cultural standards. (Makki and Chang, 2014) extend these findings, suggesting that the depth of control and flexibility afforded by online commerce allows consumers in once culturally constrained environments not only to adopt new styles, but to dramatically shift their consumer behaviours towards new dimensions of individuality. (Assad, 2008) describes an underlying element in collective conformity within the Saudi Arabian marketplace, a force that is slowly dissolving as heterogeneous influences start to challenge cultural

foundations and stimulate a marked revision of consumer preferences (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). While such changes reflect a change in systemic preferences, they do not indicate any universal commitment to adjusting and adapting to new standards. In fact, (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011) suggest that it is the underlying character of national culture that ultimately prescribes such activities and behaviours, as both are resistant to change and intrinsically constant, regardless of new interventions.

1.5 Thesis structure

After the present introductory chapter, a literature review (Chapter two) develops the theoretical framework of the research. Before introducing this framework, research concepts such as restrictions and online behaviour are defined, criticising the current literature that addresses this research topic or comes close to addressing the present research aims. The points addressed are fundamental for understanding the motivation or demotivation to shop for fashion online by addressing the differences between online and offline fashion shopping. Factors such as the availability of information at low cost are said to motivate women to buy fashion online, whereas they may be demotivated by the need to touch goods and enjoy the direct experience of buying fashion.

After surveying the literature to understand the online context as a variable, the individual and cultural factors are integrated in identity theories which explain how we perceive ourselves as people (personal identity), as a society (social identity) or as belonging to a culture (cultural identity). In all cases, how we perceive ourselves and how we do things or how we dress (subjective norms) can shape much of our behaviour. Indeed, culturally subjective norms (which become cultural restrictions) are shaped by defining these restrictions. The literature sets the context for understanding the restrictions that bind our way of thinking and govern our mentality as we perceive ourselves and react to different objectives from a marketing perspective. Concepts of halal, boycotting for religious reasons and fashion codes in Islamic society are all examples of this. Finally, the chapter spotlights these restrictions on cultural society and uses the literature to develop a theoretical framework for understanding people’s behaviour when their choices are restricted, followed by a set of research propositions to guide the course of the study.
The philosophical principles of the methodology adopted in this research are presented in Chapter three, exploring the reasons for using the interpretivist paradigm which posits the social construction of reality. An abductive approach is used to develop the theory based on theoretical and literature foundations (i.e. framework). The chapter explains that the empirical research was conducted in two phases: the in-depth interviewing of 23 women in the first phase and of 34 women in the second. The aim of the first phase was to clarify and understand the factors affecting online fashion shopping in general, while the second aimed to understand in depth how Saudi fashion restrictions affect online behaviour.

The data are thematically analysed and findings reported in three chapters to reflect the two phases of the research and the two main aspects of the second phase. Chapter four considers the contextual factors affecting online shopping behaviour in general, then Chapter five begins the reporting of the phase 2 findings by examining the different ways of responding to restrictions, by justifying or reacting against them, and finds that they do not necessarily affect the intensity of a woman’s online fashion shopping but heavily affect her motivation for fashion shopping online. Chapter six then addresses the relationships of exposure to life abroad and of cultural identity with online shopping behaviour. Based on these results, this third findings chapter concludes with the development of a framework for online fashion shopping behaviour in a cultural restrictive environment, which summarises and connects all of the conceptual findings of the study.

Chapter seven concludes the thesis by revisiting the research propositions and objectives, spotlighting the contributions of the study, examining the many practical implications in terms of targeting markets, developing marketing and promotional strategies to profit from a rich but so far undiscovered market such as Saudi Arabia. There is then a consideration of the limitations of the present research so that further research can be suggested to fill the remaining knowledge gaps.
Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Figure 1 outlines the structure and content of this chapter, which begins in section 2.2 by defining what is meant by ‘online shopping behaviour’. It is found to differ from offline shopping behaviour because of the search for information, level of trust in the transaction and exposure of the shopper to other cultures through the use of international websites. Then the research is narrowed down to the unique characteristics entailed in fashion online shopping behaviour, such as the need to touch clothes and try them for fit before buying.

Section 2.3 examines the factors affecting online shopping behaviour. Addressing the objective of identifying the factors affecting the behaviour of women shopping for fashion online, these factors are classified into individual and cultural factors. Individual factors are covered by psychological theories that explain the use, adoption and embracing of technology in general, based on perceptions, attitudes and subjective norms. The theories used in understanding online behaviour can be narrowed down to hedonic and utilitarian motivation.

Without doubt, culture is important in understanding fashion buying behaviour. Indeed, connecting the way in which a person perceives her/his country’s values and norms as restrictive or as valuable is believed to be based on the level to which they form her/his personal identity, which stems from her/his social, cultural and national identity. These values define the theories of identity and are the basis for judging the literature.

Saudi Arabia’s citizens face unique restrictions governing their fashion shopping behaviour. Thus, section 2.4 is devoted to analysing the literature related to the nature, origins, reasons and level of sensitivity of these restrictions. It includes critical reviews of some theories that are used in sociology and psychology to explain how people behave when they perceive that they are losing their freedom. System justification and psychological reactance theories are defined and discussed. These theories are then used in section 2.5 to develop a theoretical framework for the present study, whereby five key
concepts are linked by a series of propositions, to be used to guide the collection, analysis and interpretation of data on the behaviour of women shopping online for fashion.

Figure 1: Literature review chapter structure
2.2 Online shopping behaviour

2.2.1 Differences between consumer behaviour online and offline

This section focuses on the differences between consumer behaviour in the online and offline contexts. Although a great deal of past research was devoted to understanding consumers’ adoption of online channels, most of them have generally viewed online channels as isolated from offline ones, rather than as extensions of them (Yang et al., 2013). From a customer’s perspective, each channel is associated with certain strengths and weaknesses (Kollmann et al., 2012). Regarding fashion, the experience has been unchanged for more than three decades: women are eager for a new experience and are willing to pay more to visit offline shops where it can be obtained (Blázquez, 2014). What they expect from shopping offline is a favourably memorable experience (Lee et al., 2010). Although there are clear similarities between traditional offline shopping and online shopping, there are also differences. As shown in Figure 2, these lie in four main areas: information search, trust, hedonic perceptions and exposure to other cultures. These are now discussed in turn.

![Figure 2: Differences between online and offline shopping](image)

- **Online is better but can be overloading**
- **Offline context is perceived to be safer for new users**
- **Both can lead to hedonic perceptions, but by different means**
- **Online shopping exposes users to other countries' cultures and fashions**

Figure 2: Differences between online and offline shopping
2.2.1.1 Information search

Online contexts offer their patrons insightful perspectives, rich sources of data and low levels of effort and cost (Kollmann et al., 2012). The first step in consumer behaviour offline or online is an information search of shops and products (Chang and Wu, 2012). Online shopping has the advantage that products are clearly marked with sometimes useful and sometimes overwhelming amounts of information, guiding consumers in their subsequent decision making (Park et al., 2015). In general, the benefit to consumers of such an information search is that it reduces uncertainty about products (Lee and Cude, 2012).

2.2.1.2 Trust

Another difference between online and offline shopping is the level of consumer trust (Lin and Cao, 2015) that is required for online purchases. In the offline setting, trust is generally ensured by the physical location of the seller (Keijzer, 2015) and the fact that the seller deals with the buyer face-to-face (Hu et al., 2015). In an online market, trustworthy online retailers send signals to distinguish themselves from retailers who are untrustworthy in the eyes of customers (Wu et al., 2015). However, untrustworthy retailers can mimic the behaviour of trustworthy ones by sending similar signals without providing the services indicated by these (Hu et al., 2015; Lin and Cao, 2015).

Additionally, in resolving potential disputes with shops, it is important “to determine whether respondents who sought complaint resolution online were satisfied in the same manner as respondents who used conventional complaint mechanisms” and thus remained satisfied with online shopping even when things went wrong (Harris et al., 2013). Evidence in this area indicates that the consumers’ preferred shopping channel was in fact influenced by their preferred channel for resolving complaints (Keijzer, 2015), with some consumers preferring to complain online so as to benefit from anonymity and lack of confrontation (Harris et al., 2013). However, as with the fundamental purchase intention of the customer, when individuals became more used to a given channel, they became more comfortable with interacting on it (Lee and Cude, 2012) and with resolving any issues online, even if they preferred to use an offline channel (Lee and Cude, 2012). In addition, even specific online fears such as identity theft can be resolved by customer
experience (Yang et al., 2013). Specifically, as consumers become more used to transferring limited data to online retailers (Kollmann et al., 2012), they become more willing to transfer additional data (Scarpi et al., 2014). This implies that all major concerns around the differences between shopping online and offline can be mitigated, if not fully eliminated, by experience with the medium (Loureiro and Roschk, 2014).

Advertising in offline channels such as newspapers can reduce the risks of living in a virtual world, because consumers tend to rely on local and national non-profit newspapers to provide them with social and psychological protection (Keijzer, 2015). However, the online environment generally fails to provide this level of assurance (González-Benito et al., 2015). Trust is vitally important, particularly in interactions with foreign retailers (Hu et al., 2015), who are not under the same legal jurisdiction as the buyer (Lin and Cao, 2015).

However, in such situations, trust can be built in proportion to the volume of time spent online and the number of interactions with similar retailers in the past (Sur, 2015). This partly results from familiarity with the channel and the payment and delivery methods used, but depends also on increasing levels of familiarity with the online practices used by retailers and the potential indicators of deceptive practices and unethical behaviour by sellers (Riquelme and Román, 2014). As a result, factors such as trust and price sensitivity will tend to vary as customers gain more experience of online shopping, either personally or vicariously through friends, helping even the most risk-averse consumers to make online purchases across a range of markets and products (Xu et al., 2014).

2.2.1.3 Hedonic perceptions

Another important contributory factor in this area is customer experience (Yang et al., 2013) of the way in which retailers respond when problems arise (Kollmann et al., 2012). However, online patrons are detached from the physical location of the retailer (Lee and Cude, 2012). This leads to inherent constraints on such shopping experiences as taking hold of a product and closely examining its features (Loureiro and Roschk, 2014; Scarpi et al., 2014).

Hedonic motivation, both online and offline, is discussed in the literature. In both contexts, hedonism leads to repurchasing and loyalty. In the offline context, Keijzer
(2015) and Shim et al. (2015) note that shopping for fun can result in brand loyalty and in-store loyalty. Likewise, Yang, (2014) and Richard and Habibi (2015) attest that hedonism in the offline context leads to higher repurchase intention than utilitarianism does. In the online context, Chen and Hung (2015) report that shopping for fun leads to higher levels of re-patronage intention than shopping for need.

Recent research by Richard and Chebat (2015), Lim et al. (2014) and Darley et al. (2010) has attempted to systematise and model the relationship between online behaviours and outcomes for consumers (Loureiro and Roschk, 2014), highlighting a much more explicit prediction of both intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli. Indeed, the ability to touch a product and enjoy touching it is one of the vital factors persuading women to buy offline (Lee and Yang, 2013; Blázquez, 2014).

However, online outlets have a competing hedonic motivation. Graphic designs have been found to elicit positive emotions and loyalty (McCormick and Livett, 2012). Information design also influences loyalty (Eid, 2011) and is more seductive than graphic design (Keijzer, 2015). According to Loureiro and Roschk (2014), information design fosters positive emotions and loyalty, while graphic design does not. Nevertheless, in the offline context, Hu et al. (2015) found positive emotions to be predictive of loyalty among younger customers, Eid (2011) found that this was not so among older ones. In the online context the effect of graphic design on loyalty is stronger than in the offline context. The online context also has a more significant impact on younger customers (Loureiro and Roschk, 2014).

**2.2.1.4 Exposure to other cultures**

Similar factors affect the process of shopping for products. Kim et al. (2013) cite Jin and Kato (2007) as asserting that new approaches to trade give a chance for economic agents to define its costs and advantages relative to the status quo. Such comparisons motivate consumers to the various market segments and this can lead to the whole marketplace being restructured. In the case of online retailing (Yang et al., 2013), the internet provides substantial cost savings over offline retailing (Lee et al., 2010), but can make it harder for individuals (Keijzer, 2015) to assess the relative costs and benefits (Zeithaml, 1988), in particular with regard to subjective judgements such as quality (Hu et al., 2015). In an
offline shopping environment (Kollmann et al., 2012), consumers are able to examine products and compare them on the basis of their own specific cultural and personal norms (Lee and Cude, 2012), thus making informed choices.

However, in the online environment (Yang et al., 2013), the focus on saving costs and simplifying the search process can mean that individual decision criteria are overlooked in favour of the most common criteria used by all searchers (Karimi et al., 2015). This can bring about easier comparisons (Yang et al., 2013), but can make it hard for individuals to come to a decision if they are not the specific target of the decision and purchase systems (Scarpi et al., 2014). In the case of Saudi Arabia, this implies that consumers may find it harder to shop online for products (Al-Maghrabi and Dennis, 2011) such as fashion, if the online marketing approach is targeted at major Western customer groups, rather than appealing to local Saudi decision criteria.

2.2.2 Online fashion shopping behaviour

Shukor and Jamal (2015) state that consumers’ first choice in purchasing is determined by the type of good purchased and the reason for purchasing. On the other hand, Srinivasan (2015) identifies consumers’ mood as playing a major role in persuading them to purchase in the fashion arena. In particular, when shopping for ‘hedonic goods’, it was observed that consumers preferred to visit a store because of the impact on their mood of the social interaction, product evaluation and sensory stimulation (Nicholson et al., 2002). Srinivasan (2015) contends that this is true because many clothing shoppers continue to insist that nothing can replace the experience of shopping in a physical store, especially since they are largely influenced by what they see, feel and smell.

Nonetheless, McCormick and Livett (2012) argue that many consumers devote significant leisure time to browsing the web in search of clothes, which is ultimately a form of entertainment for them (Dhurup, 2014). Their intention to purchase through this medium is likely to be affected by the quality of pictures of clothing presented (Kerfoot et al., 2003). To deal with the issue of uncertainty, i.e. of not knowing exactly what is being purchased, many retailers use features that allow customers to imagine that they are touching the product (Yang and Young, 2009). Cho and Workman (2011) add that
customers often analyse a variety of factors when shopping online for clothing. These include how the purchased item will look on their body as well as with other garments.

Similarly, Shukor and Jamal (2015) state that two elements create very different experiences for the consumer in relation to viewing fashion online; these are functional product viewing and the retailer’s advice and information about the garments. Functional product viewing entails personalising the way in which customers view and interact with garments, which may have a more utilitarian effect, while aesthetic fashion information may have hedonic effects. On this note, McCormick and Livett (2012) state that in order to provide an online shopping experience that is pleasant and satisfying to consumers, online fashion retailers must create a balance between hedonic entertainment and practical utilitarianism.

However, this experience is not evident in online shopping. Yeung and Ang (2015) identify the absence of physical interaction and experiential information with the product as a major disadvantage of buying garments online. Similarly, Ayanso and Lertwachara (2015) suggest that a multisensory input is needed in the selection of fashionable garments; thus, the lack of direct contact with these items in the shopping process can result in consumers hardly enjoying the process and even perceiving the risk of buying as higher (Lim and Rashad, 2015). Nevertheless, digital technologies have aided this process and have innovated to the extent that consumers can now enjoy a multisensory input at virtual stores, since greater importance has been given to online retail over time (Yeung and Ang, 2015). Online stores also utilize atmospherics as much as the traditional retail stores do (Srinivasan, 2015). For example, advances in technology have made it possible for variables such as music, lights, colour, smell and touch to be evident in the experience (Yeung and Ang, 2015). Yoo and Lennon (2014) observe that these distinctive cues tend to influence shoppers’ responses to the online offer, which increases their pleasure and generates a positive influence on their purchase intention.

Given these similarities and the merging of the online and in-store shopping experiences, (Merle et al., 2012) suggest that consumers are better able to evaluate fashion. Yoo and Lennon (2014) add that this builds an exciting and interactive online knowledge for consumers. On this note, Srinivasan (2015) identifies various levels of interactivity,
ranging from enlarging pictures and mix-and-match technology to additional progressive communicating imaging technologies; for example, virtual appropriate places. Interactive technologies of this nature ought to have a different impact on the responses of consumers. Therefore, a greater level of interactivity will positively affect the customer’s knowledge (Yoo and Lennon, 2014) and contribute to increasing the perceived dangers (Lim and Yazdanifard, 2015). It will also generate a more powerful buying purpose than that made by passive data (Lin and Cao, 2015).

However, the need for touch (NFT) is still a problem for some. NFT denotes the desire to feel goods before buying them (González-Benito et al., 2015). It entails two aspects. These are autotelic and instrumental. Autotelic NFT refers to the subjective, psychological information that is manifested in the pleasurable emotions which result from touching. Instrumental NFT, on the other hand, is the need for goal-directed touch, which is limited to objective, tangible possessions of toughness, hotness, touch, or heaviness. Consumers with a high need for instrumental touch use it to answer questions during information search and the evaluation of products.

Not surprisingly, women recorded higher scores than males on the NFT scale in both autotelic and instrumental touch (Workman and Cho, 2013). Among women, no differences were identified in scores on the autotelic and instrumental aspects of the NFT scale. This suggests that women used touch for pleasure as well as for information about products. On the other hand, men scored higher on the instrumental than the autotelic aspect, suggesting that men use touch mainly to obtain information about products. In this regard, Workman and Cho (2013) found that NFT was negatively correlated to shopping online, especially for clothing, while (González-Benito et al., 2015) agree that internet purchases and NFT, specifically instrumental NFT, were negatively associated. Additionally, Chen and Hung (2015) found that one factor preventing consumers from buying from virtual stores was that they could not touch the product, which made them dissatisfied.

Finally, in their research, Reid and Ross (2015) reveal that products are highly likely to be returned when purchased online because of inadequate information in relation to some and retailer error.
2.3 Factors affecting online shopping for fashion

This section considers the factors which affect fashion shopping online. First, it addresses individual motivational factors, including demographic characteristics and risk tolerance. Second, it examines technological factors and reviews theories such as the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT). It concludes by listing relevant environmental factors including situational factors, the influence of religion and the influence of culture.

2.3.1 Individual factors

The ontological underpinnings of consumer behaviour are largely tied to a relatively narrow spectrum of conceptual and theoretical foundations. Researchers such as Ajzen, (1991) and Stanovich and West (2000) have attempted to tie behavioural practices in consumption to intrinsic, psychological dynamics and forces. Others including Engel and Light (1968), Howard and Sheth (1969) and Babin et al. (1994) incorporate external dimensions into the assessment of consumer behaviour, reflecting an input-output interpretation of varying choices impacted by the socio-cultural core of an individual’s sphere of identity. Seemingly, there are myriad explanations for the decision making process engaged in by consumers in making purchases; however, when synthesised into a model of force and function, it becomes possible to distil such complexity to its key theoretical elements. The following sections discuss a variety of leading theories in relation to consumer behaviour, focusing specifically on the apparel industry as a catalyst for purchasing decisions.

2.3.1.1 Impact of demographic factors on shopping behaviour

Demographic factors such as age and gender have been found to affect attitude, perceptions and behaviour towards/against online shopping.

2.3.1.1.1 Impact of age

Notwithstanding the above findings, Sorce et al. (2005) identify major differences in the online shopping approaches and behaviours of different age groups of consumers. Passyn et al. (2011) likewise establish that different age groups (under 35s vs. 35-50s vs. over 50s) have different views of shopping on the internet, whereby older consumers are less
likely than younger ones to be emotionally driven when purchasing online (Loureiro and Roschk, 2014) and shopping is a major concern for older groups, while exploratory and novelty-seeking behaviours tend to be more common among younger consumers (Rajendran, 2014).

2.3.1.1.2 Impact of income

Emotional shopping behaviour can be further explained by income and education (Lee et al., 2013). Several researchers such as Schulz et al., (2015) and Mahmood et al., (2004) have shown that online shopping is associated with an individual’s level of education and income. Further, the most affluent groups were likely to be more concerned about enjoying their shopping experience (Cullen et al., 2014). Logically, they demand the most fashionable online items, such as CDs, clothes, shoes and accessories, as their income increases (Bagdoniene and Zemblyte, 2015).

2.3.1.1.3 Impact of gender

Nwankwo et al. (2014) found that women are different from men when shopping online. That is, women expend a lot of their time and psychological energy whilst shopping and seek satisfying knowledge during the process (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Sarkar, 2015). Conversely, men are more goal-oriented and emphasize one-stop shopping and convenience (Das, 2014). With this typical behaviour, men were found to have a greater inclination to purchase goods because of a product’s functional characteristics, whereas women were more driven by the social and emotional relations of a product (Dittmar et al., 2004; Davis et al., 2014). Further, men are more likely to make repeat purchases when they find benefits from a certain purchase (Chen et al., 2015).

In addition to the above, Cho and Workman (2011) and Sarkar (2015) found that the genders differed in their choices of shopping channels. For example, female consumers were more likely than men to evaluate products were and services physically were. Hasan (2010) states that fewer women shop online because they are unable to interact socially through this channel. This implies that women are more likely than men to use bricks-and-mortar stores.
Similarly, gender is a noteworthy forecaster of the target to shop online (Li et al., 1999; Moshrefjavadi et al., 2012; Pascual-Miguel et al., 2015). A lengthy study showed that more men purchased online than women. One reason for this was men’s higher level of technology habituation, whereas females were fairly inert users (Pascual-Miguel et al., 2015). Chui et al. (2014) and Yang et al. (2014) interpret this to mean that men and women perceive different risks in online shopping. Consistently with this, Bosson and Michniewicz (2013) contend that women encounter more difficulty when shopping online than men do.

The two genders also differ in their emotional stimuli (Lee et al., 2013): women enjoy shopping more than men and they derive greater enjoyment from ordinary or traditional shopping channels such as shopping malls and outlet stores than online markets (Pascual-Miguel et al., 2015).

### 2.3.1.2 Psychological models (perceptions, attitudes and behavioural theories)

Psychological models of consumer behaviour evolved from general ones such as TRA to those specifically concerned with technology acceptance, such as UTAUT. The former aims to explain and predict behaviour (Sheppard et al., 1988), contending that attitudes to objects are the main drivers of behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). (Wärneryd, 1989) uses TRA to provide the conceptual underpinnings of a model of thrift and savings behaviour amongst consumers. By definition, (Wärneryd, 1989) asserts that saving involves “refraining from consumption during one period in favour of later possibilities for consumption” (anticipatory reward). Whilst the concept of saving, at face value, reflects a unique human condition (the willingness to delay gratification), the underlying psychological forces associated with uncertainty, provisioning and consumption are much more relevant to the current discussion. Some of the primary factors associated with saving behaviours are enjoyment, short-sightedness, generosity, miscalculation, ostentation and extravagance, which together constitute the motivational underpinnings of consumption (Wärneryd, 1989).

All analysis regarding saving and consumption behaviour leads to a singular end: the theory of reasoned action. (Wärneryd, 1989) argues that empirical research suggests an assumption of future uncertainty amongst consumers, whereby resource preservation is
motivated by the need to maintain constancy over the life-cycle term. (Hale et al., 2002) argue that TRA largely hinges upon the concept of volitional decision making, where in the “strongest predictor of volitional behaviour is one’s behaviour intention”. Such intentions evolve out of both individual and normative influences, or what (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2014) refer to as the ‘subjective norm’. Formulaically, behavioural intention is equal to the sum of one’s attitude to performing behaviour and one’s subjective norm (each of which are multiplied by empirically derived weights) (Hale et al., 2002).

Cautioning against the explicit nature of predictive behavioural research, Ajzen and Fishbein (2014) posit that attitudes are multidimensional, influenced by cognitive, affective and connotative components which constrain the ability to predict behaviour accurately. For this reason, the researchers extend the conceptual framework of reasoned action to include the condition of planned behaviour, or behavioural intention (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2014). This particular framework results in empirical outcomes that reveal a correlation between behavioural intentions and the items of normative beliefs or periods of impulse to fulfil (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2014).

Complementing TRA, the technology acceptance model (TAM) considers additional factors, such as recognition of comfort of use and helpfulness. Therefore, TAM is invoked to consider a system design feature that affects the perceptions of comfort of use and helpfulness and, in order, “use behaviour” (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). Its authors went on to research other factors affecting the adoption of information technology, such as job relevance and output quality (Venkatesh et al., 2003). However, none of these studies considered the impact of demographic factors such as age and gender in relation to use. Thus, UTAUT was devised to include the effects of gender and age on use in voluntary contexts such as mobile marketing (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Furthermore, Venkatesh et al (2013) take into consideration other factors identified by Arnold (Jones et al., 2006; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003), such as hedonic and utilitarian motivations.

2.3.1.3 Hedonic and utilitarian motivation

Behaviour in e-shopping can be explained by a version of TAM which incorporates hedonic motivations and perceived risk factors, clarifying the relationship between technology and psychology (Ingham et al., 2015). Indeed, hedonic and utilitarian
motivations are regarded as the main factors in predicting consumers’ shopping intentions (Blázquez, 2014), a view which is confirmed by the earlier adaptation of consumer values theory in order to explain patronage shopping behaviour (Keijzer, 2015; Childers et al., 2002).

2.3.1.3.1 Utilitarian consumers and motivation

Utilitarian shopping is described as task-related, rational and centred on practical and objective perspectives (for example, toughness, quality and convenience) (Griffin et al., 2000; Lim, 2014). This type of perspective is referred to as “shopping as work” (Babin et al., 1994). In other words, products are purchased because of the need for them rather than enjoyment of the shopping experience (Scarpi et al., 2014). Thus, Babin et al., (1994) affirm that with this approach, shopping is deliberately done and decisions are carefully evaluated and efficiently made. This perspective also treats the consumer as a “logical problem solver” (Sarkar, 2011). In other words, utilitarian patrons describe their shopping trips as “an errand”, or “work”, making “consumers … happy just to get through it all” (Babin et al., 1994).

2.3.1.3.2 Hedonic motivation

Research has shown that consumers adopting a hedonic approach to shopping are more enthusiastic about the enjoyment derived from the shopping experience, which ideally results in a pleasurable feeling (To and Sung, 2015; Compeau et al., 2015; Babin et al., 1994). In this way, amusement and expressive value can be felt and enjoyed by cooperating with a situation when shopping (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Further, several types of hedonic shopping motivation have been identified by (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). These include adventure shopping (seeking for difference, stimulation), gratification (shopping to relax stress), role (providing gifts or pleasure to others), value (enjoyment of finding bargains and discounts), social (maintaining or enhancing relations) and idea shopping (getting to know new trends and products).

Adventure shopping entails shopping for “motivation, adventure and the feeling of being in alternative world” (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). This may mean that adventure lovers use shopping as an excuse to explore the universe (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; To and Sung, 2015). On the other hand, satisfaction shopping reflects shoppers’ desire to elevate
their frame of mind by simply buying somewhat that interests them (Jamal et al., 2006; Oliver, 2014). This act usually relieves stress, lessens depression, or helps them forget their troubles (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).

The four remaining shopping influences depicted by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) are different from adventure and gratification shopping, which guarantee some sort of emotional reward from the process; instead, they result from a particular duty (Evanschitzky et al., 2014). That is, social shopping is more enjoyable when shopping with peers, groups and family; worth shopping is done with the intention to shop for good deals, the appearance of bargains, reductions or low prices; role shopping emphasizes the enthusiasm and internal joy that shoppers feel when finding perfect items for someone else; and finally, idea shopping relates to knowing about and being updated through the newest styles (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).

2.3.1.3.3 Hedonic and utilitarian motives in fashion

Even though hedonic and utilitarian experiences are derived from shopping, the results are likely to be different depending on various factors (Crowley et al., 1992). These may include the product purchased and the shopping channel used. In relation to the items purchased, fashion in particular is described as a high-hedonic product group, because of its representative, empirical and attractive goods (Crowley et al., 1992). However, to have an insightful understanding of shopping, the utilitarian aspect must be considered along with the hedonic (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Childers et al. (2002) affirm that having a hedonic setting is particularly vital for products with strong hedonic characteristics, such as fashion.

Value derived from shopping for fashion can be both hedonic and utilitarian (Babin et al., 1994). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) contend that the value derived from hedonic shopping is actually that which is conventional, such as the multisensory, imaginative and expressive facets of the fashion shopping experience. It is personal and unique and is described by adjectives such as ‘pleasurable’ and ‘enjoyable’ (Irani and Hanzaee, 2011; Vazifehdoost et al., 2014). Nevertheless, both hedonic and utilitarian dimensions are precarious and they are key to determining the intentions of consumers when shopping (Irani and Hanzaee, 2011; Haq et al., 2014; Foroughi et al., 2014).
2.3.1.4 Summary of psycho-technical factors

Based on a synthesis of the literature, to understand the behaviour of women when shopping online for fashion in Saudi Arabia, one should bear in mind three of its main implications. First, online shopping behaviour can be different from offline shopping behaviour because of the embeddedness of the technology used in online shopping. Technology entails perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards it (Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008). In other words, the “e” factor can pose some challenges that should be underlined in order to understand women’s online shopping behaviour in Saudi Arabia (Al-Maghrabi et al., 2011). Second, gender and age will affect intention to use and behaviour. Thus, studying women’s behaviour entails a special kind of understanding. Third, fashion is not like other products. The hedonic and utilitarian motivations to buy fashion items will be different from those that apply to buying stationery, for example.

2.3.2 Cultural factors

Soyez (2012) assert that over an extended period of time, research has focused on the impact national culture is likely to have on the behaviour of consumers. In this regard, consumer behaviour is as affected by the beliefs and norms that motivate people’s decisions when purchasing (Pillai et al., 2011).

Culture matters, as the title of an article by Craig et al. (2005) implies. Mazaheri et al. (2014) state that culture is the shape of rationality, sense and acting that is deep-rooted in public beliefs and societal bonds. In the same vein, Hofstede (1993) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind”. There is evidence that culture influences consumers’ attitudes to various channels and dimensions, especially in online shopping (Mazaheri et al., 2014).

Thus, it is evident that national cultural factors play a vital role in affecting consumer behaviour. As posited by Hofstede (2013), there are six main cultural dimensions that affect the behavioural pattern of an individual and consequently are likely to impact on their decisions regarding consumption and purchasing, as follows:

- **Power distance** indicates the extent to which people are prepared to accept and expect power inequality within their society
- **Individualism versus Collectivism** determines the extent to which individuals’
perceived self-interests or those of society drive their actions

- **Masculinity versus Femininity** indicates the importance of status as an indication of success
- **Uncertainty avoidance** provides an indication of the extent to which principles should take preference over practice
- **Long-term versus short term orientation** reflects the extent to which the individual is prepared to adapt to change for quick results or take a longer-term view to achieve the desired result
- **Indulgence versus restraint** relates to whether the individual is from a society that provides opportunities for promoting enjoyment or imposes strict social needs.

In view of Samuel Craig and Douglas (2006) that the proliferation of informational resources will lead to variations in national value systems and cultural foundations, there is reason to argue that Saudi Arabia may be adjusting to Westernisation through particular links at the core of its online commercial environment. Conversely, however, others consider the link between national value systems and personal identity to be a key determinant in the willingness of consumers to acquiesce in new trends and systemic influences (De Mooij and De Mooij, 2004; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011).

### 2.3.2.1 The impact of cultural dimensions on online shopping behaviour

Culture is reported to have influenced marketing in the Middle East, China and North America in terms of advertising (Mazaheri et al., 2014; Seock and Lin, 2011). Similarly, it has impacted consumer behaviour towards full trade locations (Lysonski and Durvasula, 2013), product selection (Ha and Stoel, 2012) and even the quality of retail service perceived by consumers (Raven and Welsh, 2004). Therefore, customers from North America, the Middle East and China are predictable in exhibiting noteworthy differences in the methods that they use, in addition to the ways in which these affect their appreciation of facility, tangibility and their approaches (Mazaheri et al., 2014). These effects are also manifested in American and Chinese values, with national cultural differences shown to affect not only buying choices, but also replies to data received from sources such as online customer evaluations (Lai et al., 2013).
2.3.2.1 Hedonic and utilitarian influences in culture
Research has revealed different impacts of feelings across cultures. Hsu (1983) uses “low emotionality” as a description of collectivism. High-context and collectivistic cultures emphasise group-defined social norms and responsibility somewhat more than “pleasure seeking” (Triandis, 1995). Thus, expressive characteristics are more evident in low-context and individualistic cultures (Schimmack et al., 2002). Moreover, Steenkamp and Mazaheri et al. (2011) propose that the influence of expressive knowledge in online shopping is greater in individualistic cultures. They establish evidence in relation to “pleasure” but none for “arousal”. Mazaheri et al. (2011) have also identified some non-invariant mechanical routes among Canadian and Chinese groups. In particular, the effect of expressive constructs on customer recognition of place conflicts varied.

Culture is also thought to be influential in consumers’ responses to atmospherics online and to great job indicators, for example the place descriptors on the screen that simplify shopping target achievement and which are vital to the decision making procedure of individual clients (Tan et al., 2015). Likewise, Mazaheri et al., (2011) establish a stronger connection among the information given online, a great job signal and affecting and conative variables for Canadian clients than for Chinese ones. Thus, it is theorised that the impact of online data on the three scopes of service reality is larger for the North American group than for the Chinese and Middle Eastern groups.

2.3.2.1.2 Risk
One of the most important factors identified as influencing consumers’ purchase decisions and overall behaviour in this situation is the level of risk. Perceived risk in this case often focuses on the potential for loss that can be incurred when pursuing a desired outcome from online shopping; examples are identity theft, failure to deliver ordered items, and the risk that items will not fit and that returning them will be expensive (Karimi et al., 2015). According to Zendehdel et al. (2015) and Huang et al. (2014) the perceptions of risk held by individual shoppers are strongly linked to cultural differences, as well as the level of exposure and expertise in online shopping.

At the same time, Chung (2015) indicate that consumers in collectivist cultures with high levels of risk avoidance are willing to make purchases online, despite the risks involved,
if the level of convenience is high enough. However, this relies on the existence of mechanisms through which consumers can seek redress in a convenient manner if they encounter losses (Kim et al., 2013).

2.3.2.2 Saudi culture and its impact on online shopping

Because Saudi Arabia, China (Garrette, 1994) and Israel (Enkin, 2015) are considered heavily affected by ideological restrictions especially in dress code, they are contrasted. For instance, the ultra-orthodox Jewish enforces their ladies to wear a particular dress code (Valins, 2003). Likewise, China, especially in rural areas, put restrictions on how the woman dress in the public (Finnane, 1996). According to Hofstede et al. (2015), as seen in Figure 3, Saudi Arabia has an extremely high power distance rating (95), an extremely low individualism rating (25) and mid-range masculinity (60) and uncertainty avoidance (80) ratings. From these results, several generalisations about the Saudi people can be made: (1) the society is collectively-oriented and is probably patriarchal in nature; (2) the citizens appreciate predictability and will be likely to resist behaviours exemplifying uncertainty; (3) there is a significant gap between power structures, resulting in hierarchical standards that impact on social functions.

![Figure 3: Saudi Arabia compared with Israel and China on the Hofstede Scale](http://geert-hofstede.com)
Of these four primary dimensions, there are two in particular which are directly related to the apparel industry and fashion consumption in general. Wilkins (2000) and Wilkins et al. (2014) reflect that a high power distance in a society is directly associated with the degree to which its members expect power to be unequally distributed and accept this inequality. As this score is so high in the current model, exceeding that of the remainder of the Middle East by nearly 10 points (Minkov and Hofstede, 2012; Obeidat et al., 2012), there is an expectation that Saudi citizens will not only appreciate fashion as a compulsory dynamic of their social power structure, but will reward class-based behaviours which attempt to mirror higher level commitments to luxury status symbols. Further, the link between a low degree of individuality and the connection between individual preferences and the collective is extremely important: (Hofstede, 1998) contends that this factor will determine responsiveness to social trends. For the fashion industry, therefore, the lack of individuality will ensure that Saudi consumers are pursuing a systemic, singular trend that largely reflects the collective value system. With a high power distance and a low level of individuality, class-based variations are likely to spread throughout this environment, impacting upon the decision-making preferences of consumers using both traditional and online methods.

In addition to these two primary cultural dimensions, Saudi Arabia also scores high on uncertainty avoidance, meaning how threatened people feel by uncertainty and ambiguity and how hard they try to avoid them (Hofstede, 1998). This implies strong risk aversion towards any change in styles in fashion in general, which is not accepted by the reference group (family, tribe and society), while the impact in online environments covers the issues of safety, security and privacy. As discussed by Yang et al. (2013), consumers in cultures which resist change are unlikely to place value on online shopping environments, for experiences slowly trickle down from the top segments of society to form a more consistent trend over time. On the basis of these determinations, it is suggested that Saudi Arabian proclivities towards online shopping will be constrained both by uncertainty factors (e.g. new trends, new styles, purchasing behaviour) and technological adoption (e.g. usage, systems, experience).

The assumption is further supported by the findings of the agency EIU, whose empirical research revealed that although internet penetration in Saudi Arabia has improved rapidly,
the growth of e-commerce is limited, constrained by the low rates of credit card use, fears of fraud and the high importance placed on shopping as a leisure activity pursued with family and friends (EIU)\textsuperscript{4}. This consumption behaviour reflects a form of indirect uncertainty avoidance, whereby the individual’s purchasing choice is affirmed by her core reference group. Consistent with the low level of individuality, it is important to consider that current Saudi shopping behaviour involving large shopping malls, supermarkets and hypermarkets is directly linked to socio-cultural constants and collective activity (EIU)\textsuperscript{5}.

The function of collectivism in Saudi society is an important determinant of consumer behaviour and preferences features which were reflected in the empirical findings of (Assad, 2008). Researchers in the past have suggested that in the case of collectivists, there is an intrinsic gap between consumer attitudes and shopping behaviour, whereby decision making is directly influenced by social preferences (Yankova and Ozuem, 2014). From a marketing perspective, collectivist societies anticipate and expect a high level of trust in the customer-vendor relationship, so it is likely that environments such as online commerce, in which such trust cannot be verified, will be resisted by the collective consumer (Yankova and Ozuem, 2014). A study conducted by Al-Nasser et al., (2014) supports this assumption, demonstrating a clear resistance by Saudi consumers of e-commerce practices. Although limited in its scope, a study by Garbarino and Strahilevitz, (2004) and supported by Sheikh et al. (2015) extends such research to include a gender variable in the assessment, reflecting that women are more likely to highlight security concerns when opting for online shopping.

It is evident from Hofstede (2013) cultural dimensions that in Saudi Arabia, masculinity and patriarchy are important determinants of socio-cultural values and relationships. In masculine cultures, the dominant values that are anticipated include achievement and success, reflecting the impetus towards the commercial initiatives at the core of such societies (Hofstede, 1993). These foundations are different from the misogynistic cultures


in which Pickton and Broderick (2005) recognise that society values caring for others and the quality of life. The masculinity index of Saudi Arabia is not significantly high, indicating that the power of influence on consumer choices is shifting to the females in the family. Although Saudi women commonly wear the required long black robe called the *abaya* and appear in public wearing headscarves, they generate nearly 45 per cent of the market’s value in apparel, because they buy many garments intended for private use or women-only situations and they are the main purchase decision makers in Saudi families (Al-Maghrabi et al., 2011) It is for this reason that Saudi women, as the primary consumption entities within these societies, are an important barometer of Saudi consumer behaviour and the future adoption of e-commerce.

A major risk associated with online shopping is that the purchase behaviour or methods used will not be acceptable under local cultural and religious norms; for example, some find the use of credit cards in transactions dubious. In particular, the impact of religious factors on consumer behaviour has been noted to be particularly strong in a country where certain religious bodies influence social attitudes and perceptions (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). In the case of the Islamic nations, numerous challenges surround online shopping, including the fact that the use of banking instruments such as credit or debit cards is often seen as publicly unacceptable and potentially legally suspect, under Sharia law (Elbeltagi, 2007). In addition, Saudi Arabia’s long tradition of segregating women from unrelated men, and the specific roles mandated to women in Saudi society, have implications for purchase behaviour (Wheeler, 2000). Specifically, Saudi women may find it harder to reconcile shopping online with conventions requiring them not to mix with unrelated men, in particular if there is an issue with an order and they need to contact a customer service department to rectify it.

Strictly religious Islamic nations also have legal issues around the use of e-business concepts. For example, Amin (2008) notes that whilst e-business is a permissible means of doing business in an Islamic nation, it must be modelled to ensure it is fully Sharia compliant, including ensuring deceit-free transactions and adhering to religious requirements such as freedom from *gharar* (lack of transparency). Unfortunately, much of this provision is absent from current e-commerce models, meaning that Arab countries are on the whole far from being able to realize fully the benefits of the internet (Aladwani,
2001). This issue is particularly pertinent nowadays, where the recent uprisings of the Arab Spring and ongoing religious tensions in the Middle East have led to a resurgence of strict Sharia law enforcement in many states, including Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia (Schank, 2013). The specific cultural interpretations underlying Saudi Arabian legal procedures mean that the rule of law is often subverted to group socialisation factors, with laws and legal interpretations potentially being determined more by clerics than by judges and officials (Alassaf, 2013). This can be seen to have created significant issues in Saudi Arabia, including a rise in the illegal use of amphetamines, which are forbidden in Islam; addicts find it difficult to reach out for help, due to the risks inherent in exposure and judgement (Baker, 2013).

In particular, there is evidence in the literature of conflict between ideas of modesty and vanity in the countries around the Arabian Gulf, with regard to the standard of dress expected of women in the region, which Sobh et al. (2012) describe as “intended to conceal their sexuality and promote public virtue”. As such, whilst the internet represents an opportunity for these women to purchase fashion items which may not be available in Saudi Arabia, the cultural expectations of the region may reduce their ability to wear them without being subject to negative social attitudes. However, it is also important to note that there is a strong trend in the region towards emphasising female sexuality, creating conflicting imperatives of modesty and vanity amongst many Arabian women (Sobh et al., 2012). This has led to a growing number of Muslim female consumers demanding Western luxury fashion brands and consuming them in a conspicuous manner, subject to the desire to appear ‘modestly sexy’, thus fulfilling their urge to consume but also maintaining some compliance with social norms (Al-Mutawa, 2013).

Given that Saudi Arabia has largely prioritised its social values around collectivism, the underlying features of individuality and identity are important determinants of the way in which commerce will evolve in the coming years. For example, Armstrong et al. (2014) argue that individuality exerts a strong influence on a person’s lifestyle, beliefs, values and interests; however, if such factors are intrinsically subverted by national culture as a dominant force, then the likelihood of their manifestation as distinctive outputs is minimal. Richins and Rudmin (1994) have attempted to correlate identity with hedonic satisfaction through shopping behaviour, a link which ultimately suggests that e-
commerce could provide Saudi citizens with an opportunity for revitalising individuality in spite of overarching collective influences. One particular mechanism for exerting such individuality is through the communication of status via the physical manifestation of goods (e.g. wearing specific clothing brands or styles). Richins and Rudmin (1994) posit that such practises ultimately result in a direct influence on online purchasing decisions, whereby materialism may ultimately define the scope and priorities underlying apparel choices.

Whilst individuality in Saudi Arabia may be directly tied to intrinsic values and consumer behaviour, Armstrong et al. (2014) suggests that self-image is an important conduit which facilitates the link between materialistic intentions and consumption outcomes. In fact, Keller and Kotler (2006) suggest that it is the unique personality traits exerted through the consumption process that are largely a reflection of identity within a collective society. For this reason, an analysis of Saudi behaviours within the e-commerce industry could reveal unique distinctions that may indicate a shift from a strong collective foundation towards a much more personal, individualised social climate. Darley et al. (2010) argue that there has been a clear lack of studies which have addressed this factor in the evolving Saudi culture, whilst Assad (2007) attribute such deficiencies to a general acceptance of the collectivist nature of the nation itself.

### 2.3.2.3 Female consumer behaviour

One of the most important challenges in e-commerce in Saudi Arabia is tied to the roles and relationships of female consumers in the foundation of this collective marketplace. In early research on female consumption, (Yavaş et al., 1994) argue that the robust nature of patriarchal dominion in this state, as well as a high degree of collective decision making, placed significant constraints on the decision making potential of Saudi women. Further, Saudi husbands were clearly influential in decision making on apparel, not only with reference to their own clothing, but to that of their wives as well (Yavaş et al., 1994). For marketers, this represents a problematic communication dynamic, due to male-dominated decision making, whereby open exchanges with Saudi females may not achieve the market saturation objectives that are desired. However, the Yavas study is
two decades old and it is thus unlikely that the outcomes would be the same in today’s marketplace.

A more recent analysis of Saudi women’s consumption behaviour was conducted by Aqeel (2012), focusing on luxury apparel shopping and consumer motivation. The findings of a general survey of female Saudi consumers, designed to evaluate what particular factors influenced purchasing intentions, were that over 80% of all women preferred luxury brands due to their quality, whilst just over 50% felt that these brands fulfilled their “need for uniqueness” (Aqeel, 2012). A tertiary category, emotional value, was the lowest performer in this model, suggesting that Saudi women are largely utilitarian shoppers and will base their apparel decisions on their perceptions of value in terms of the quality and differentiation underscoring a particular brand (Aqeel, 2012). These findings are a significant departure from the study by Yavaş et al. (1994) and begin to depict Saudi women as robust and critical decision makers, as opposed to subjugated women without the capacity for such choices.

Whilst academic studies such as Aqeel’s (2012) are extremely limited in this field of research, news articles and analyses are becoming more concerned with the clothing-related ‘plight’ of Saudi women. House, (2012), for example, recently reported on a Saudi woman who was confronted by the religious police (mutaween) in a Saudi shopping mall because she was wearing nail polish. Her stoicism and the subsequent online ‘buzz’ relating to this particular incident is indicative of changes amongst younger female members of Saudi society to establish their solidarity (House, 2012). In 2012 Magardie⁶ reported for the Guardian that in spite of pervasive trends requiring male supervision in Saudi lingerie and clothing shops, a move to include female attendants in these modesty-baring shops is quickly gaining purchase. The key challenge is that traditions and Saudi laws are largely based upon the socio-cultural heritage and governmental mandates that are not easy to reconcile or remove. One factor that is clear in the House (2012) analyses is that the online shopping environment provides a distinct opportunity for eliminating many of the public life concerns that are being expressed by Saudi women. It is the anonymous nature of online shopping and the ability of women to engage in these

⁶ http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/05/knickers-saudi-arabia-women
practises from within their own homes that is likely to be leveraged in order to stimulate larger scale participation in the expanding commercial environment.

2.3.3 Identity theories

Usborne and Sablonnière (2014) define personal identity as the inimitable blend of individual ethics, targets, approaches, behavioural styles and attributes that include each single. At the same time, collective identity denotes individuals’ beliefs regarding the membership of a social group (Taylor, 1997). Unlike individual identity, collective identity implies a clear association with a collection of persons external to the personality (Ashmore et al., 2004). It involves the psychological function of group membership and the behaviour based on associating oneself with this (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). A country such as Saudi Arabia which has a high level of collectivism (Al-Rasheed, 2013) is one where individual behaviour is more attached to group behaviour. Thus, collective identity would be more interesting than personal identity for research.

Collective identity can be seen as comprising social, cultural and national identity. Each kind of identity spotlights different levels of community and belonging. As seen in Figure 4, personal identity is developed on the basis of social identity, which develops from cultural and national identity. This section is divided into three subsections, dealing in turn with some theoretical approaches to the various levels depicted in the figure.

![Figure 4: Relationships between personal, cultural and national identity](image-url)
2.3.3.1 Social identity theory

Social identity theory deals with social rules, values and beliefs regarding group-related behaviours (e.g., fan clubs, professions, tribes) which may have developed through a self-categorization process (Hogg et al., 2010). Social categorization theories state that persons develop set targets to react in different ways to a matter connected to the collective (e.g., fighting for the status of a hero). Therefore, they keep a relationship which is optimistic and self-defining with the collective. Social identity theory implies that group memberships offer individuals emotional states of difference and self-esteem (Brown, 2000), while self-categorization theory (Turner and Reynolds, 2011; Turner et al., 1987) suggests that group memberships brings a person’s perceptions, behaviours and emotional state into line with contextually related groups.

2.3.3.2 Uncertain identity theory

Uncertain identity theory was devised to describe the details of being a member of a group (Hogg, 2007). It is made upon self-categorization theory and emphasizes that fitting into a group has a common uncertainty-reducing function (Usborne and Sablonnière, 2014). Saudi Arabia, as shown earlier, is perceived to have a high risk aversion index (Hofstede et al., 2015). This implies that citizens of Saudi Arabia could have a tendency to be members of groups, either religious or social, in order to reduce the perceived level of uncertainty.

2.3.3.3 Cultural identity theory

Cultural identity and national identity have a higher scope and level of analysis than the foregoing. Cultural identity concerns the extent to which people in a given culture perceive and identify with a set of focal fundamentals that set their culture apart from others (He and Wang, 2015). Therefore, the cultural identity construct differs from the general national identity construct, which is based on four founding elements (religion, history, custom and social structure) within the borders of a country (Keillor et al., 1996). While cultural identity emphasizes a connection with historical development and cultural heritage, national identity focuses on national territory, homeland, common legal rights and duties for all members (Smith, 1991). In light of the above, this research uses the concept of cultural identity because it postulates the incorporation of cultural legacy into
the individual’s self-concept and therefore differs from nationality and other categories such as race, birthplace and religion (Cleveland et al., 2009).

2.4 Consumer behaviour in restrictive environments

This chapter reviews the extant literature in order to determine the various factors which may influence the behaviour of Saudi women when shopping online for fashion goods. The focus of this section is on different kinds of restriction which may affect customers’ preferences and attitudes to online shopping. It aims to identify and synthesise the literature related to these factors, in turn contributing to a theoretical model and developing a number of propositions which can be used as guidance for determining how these factors link into the process of consumer decision-making online. As shown in Figure 5, this section will explain the cultural, social and religio-legal restrictions noted by the study.

![Figure 5: Restrictions to online shopping by Saudi women](image)

2.4.1 Social restrictions

According to TRA, behaviour is determined by a person’s attitude and subjective norms (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The normative component defines the influence of the social environment on behaviour, whereas the subjective norms are determined by normative beliefs (social restrictions), that is, someone’s perceived belief that a reference group or individual can determine whether or not s/he may behave in a certain way. Indeed, regarding the online shopping context, the habits in buying online can be predicted by the way in which others perceive the buyer, or expect what the buyer will do (Pahnila and Warsta, 2010).
2.4.2 Cultural and religious restrictions

Whilst culture is a vital factor in determining and influencing online shopping behaviour, it is important to recognise that in the Saudi context, religion plays a strong role in influencing consumer behaviour as a whole. The role of religion in consumer behaviour is also recognised in the literature, with Musgrove (2011) noting that retailers and brands often seek to use religious symbols or cues when communicating with consumers and that consumer perceptions of religious cues, of the characteristics of products and of marketing efforts influence consumer decisions. This is of critical importance, given the increased penetration of commercial systems, in particular online shopping systems, in nations and regions where religion has a specific impact on national and social norms. For example, the variety of religions in the Indian market has forced retailers to develop more diverse and customised websites in order to cope with the influence of religion on buyers’ behaviour. Further to this, Ilyas et al. (2011) show that religion has a strong influence on culture, which in turn influences consumer purchasing behaviour. This is demonstrated through a study of consumers in Pakistan, where the impact of religion on consumer behaviour is shown through its ability to impact on national culture.

2.4.2.1 Religio-cultural restrictions in other nations and consumer behaviour

Whilst the impact of religious beliefs on consumer behaviour is noted in the literature, it is also recognised that religio-cultural differences are usually not the most significant factors influencing variations in this behaviour Majić and Kuštrak (2013). This is supported by studies of online shopping preferences across nations with different religions, such as the US, Korea and Turkey, where national factors are shown to be more important than religious ones (Hwang et al., 2006). However, one area in which religion can have a significant impact on consumer behaviour is that of highly religious individuals (Petrescu, 2012). These individuals are not only members of a given religion, but are also highly committed to this religion and conduct their lives according to systems of symbols and values which are aligned with this religion (Petrescu, 2012). In this case, religious commitment can have a strong influence over consumer behaviour and this can create wide variations both within and across countries (Choi et al., 2013).
2.4.2.2 Secularisation of religion and shopping and consumer behaviour

This finding is of importance to the present study, given that research has shown an ongoing process of secularisation in most developed countries (Belk et al., 1989). As a result, religious views are increasingly being subsumed into modern consumerist societies and religious individuals are often quite as willing as non-religious individuals to consume. For this reason, the only true influence of religion on consumer purchase behaviour comes if a given religion has specific implications for consumerism and materialism, such as Buddhist ethics or Islamic beliefs concerning women (Pace, 2013). In such cases, the impact of these religious factors is usually strongly influenced by the specific cultural environment they are found in, with religious groups from one culture often displaying different behaviour from members of the same religion who are present in a different culture (Schneider et al., 2011). This indicates that any overt religious impacts in Saudi Arabia will tend to be relatively idiosyncratic and based on the social and cultural constructs of religion, not on the religion itself.

2.4.2.3 Islamic culture and consumer behaviour

However, other studies in this area indicate that Islam has some specific aspects and doctrines which can have a significant impact on consumer behaviour. Specifically, research has demonstrated that Islam has specific doctrines and discourses with regard to consumption and culture, in particular the culture of women’s relations with men, which can have a significant impact on the decisions and choices made by many consumers (Hirschmann, 2009). This impact has been demonstrated to be stronger, in many cases, for Muslims than for the adherents of other religions. For example, Lindridge (2010) investigated the behaviour of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs living in England and the influence of their religion on their consumption choices and consumer behaviour. The results demonstrate that Hindu and Sikh participants consumed products based on ethnic and individual factors, instead of their religious character, whilst the Muslim contributors bought goods that they felt affirmed their Muslim individuality (Lindridge, 2010). This in turn indicates that Islamic consumers are more likely than other religious groups to have their consumer behaviour and consumption decisions influenced by their religious adherence and beliefs, even if they are not consuming in an Islamic nation.
2.4.2.4 Religious observance and consumer behaviour

Indeed, there is evidence from the literature that religious factors can continue to have a restrictive influence on consumer behaviour even in societies which are notionally open and not politically or socially restrictive. For example, Abedin and Brettel (2011) demonstrate that Muslim students in Germany often adhered strongly to Islamic rules on the consumption of pork and alcohol, as well as on dress and other factors, with the level of religiosity professed by each student being strongly and positively associated with her/his consumption behaviour. Further evidence has shown that this behaviour is more significant when individuals live in religious states, where the presence of religious laws can create significant social impacts which may be harder to rebel against. For example, Farrag (2012) demonstrates that in Islamic countries such as Egypt, the presence of Sharia laws and guidance from Islamic scholars strongly influences consumer behaviour, as well as the behaviour of retailers towards the products they offer to groups such as women. This presents a clear opportunity for an area in which online shopping could be used to overcome the restrictions on consumption based on religion, with online shops less vulnerable to boycotts or other overt religious resistance in countries where religion can restrict women’s activities.

Studies of the consumption of fashion clothing have rarely focused on the role of religious restrictions, given the lack of such restrictions in the major Western consumer markets. However, a recent study by Phau et al. (2013) considers the role of religiosity in affecting fashion consumption decisions in Iran, a highly theocratic Islamic country. The study found that the degree of religious observance displayed by these individuals had a strong influence on their fashion consumption decisions, but it resulted largely from individual decisions rather than from state-imposed restrictions. This indicates that fashion consumption in restrictive Islamic states is still likely to be driven by individual religious factors, rather than overt religious restrictions. Other evidence in this area has focused on the specific role of Muslim requirements on the consumer behaviour of women. For example, Zwick and Chelariu (2006) examine the hijab, the traditional Islamic head-covering for women, often seen as a restrictive symbol imposed upon them. The study demonstrates how this has become something of a personal branding tool for Muslim women, helping them to build and communicate a personal image, based on the
contextual mobilization of the hijab. At the same time, this work indicates that men are likely to support the hijab as a cultural and traditional symbol, rather than a consumer symbol, thus demonstrating the potential for conflict in restrictive religious states where traditional views may be widespread (Zwick and Chelariu, 2006).

The process of online shopping allows consumers to look for information on products or services as well as to make purchases via direct communication with online retailers (Suki, 2013), thus potentially helping them to overcome any barriers to information search and purchases which may exist in their national environment. This part of the literature review considers studies of consumer shopping behaviour on the internet in predominantly Moslem countries and others with large Islamic or religious populations, in order to understand the role of Islam in influencing and/or restricting online shopping behaviour in practical cases. The first country to be considered is Malaysia, which is not formally a religious state but where approximately 65% of people are Muslims (Moschis and Ong, 2011). The secular status of Malaysia means that most studies of internet shopping there have focused on non-religious concepts, such as product characteristics, familiarity and promotional offers, as well as standard internet shopping factors such as trust and convenience (Suki, 2013). At the same time, there is evidence that religious observance does exert a strong influence on consumer behaviour for some older Muslims in Malaysia, in particular those who are part of a strong Islamic subculture; their consumer behaviour is much more strongly influenced by Islamic cultural norms and requirements (Moschis and Ong, 2011).

2.4.2.5 Pakistan

Pakistan has Islam as a state religion and Islam has a strong influence there, although there are no specific laws on Islamic dress or other overarching requirements (Tanvir et al., 2012). Studies in Pakistan have thus been more focused on the impact of Islamic observance and its cultural influence on consumer purchase behaviour. For example, a study by Ilyas et al. (2011) shows that the Islamic religion has a significant impact on Pakistani culture, which in turn has an impact on consumer behaviour. The study presents evidence that in a state where religion plays a strong role in the lives of most people, religious belief influences consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. However, other
studies have demonstrated that in some areas such as consumer purchase intentions towards foreign apparel brands, religion tends to play less of a role. In particular, Tanvir et al. (2012) found that in such cases Islam had a minimal impact on brand consciousness or requirements; individuals who shopped for foreign clothing and fashion brands were more concerned with their own appearance and self-image. This suggests that a similar relationship may occur in online shopping in Pakistan, where individuals who shop online may not be as concerned by Islamic requirements as by other factors, given the lack of legal enforcement of these requirements.

2.4.2.6 Iran

Iran is a strongly religious and theocratic nation, with the government not officially recognising the existence of any Iranians who do not follow a specific religion; over 99% of the population is reported to be Muslim (Etemadifar and Maghzi, 2011). As a result, most studies of consumer behaviour in Iran have tended to take for granted the impact of Islam and have focused instead on the influence of hedonic and utilitarian values and on the status of Iran as a developing nation (Nejati and Parakhodi Moghaddam, 2012). These studies have also been influenced by the religious nature of the country, which means that non-Islamic products are often hard to sell, and the existence of trade sanctions which reduce the potential for internet shopping to take root (Etemadifar and Maghzi, 2011). In this regard, Iran can be seen as one of the most restrictive of countries in which to consume, given the autocratic government, the strict enforcement of religious laws and the lack of external connections allowing internet shopping and other consumer activities to occur.

However, the literature has examined the internal markets of Iran, demonstrating that religion and religiosity can have an influence, in particular in the operation of the ‘grey market’. According to Kermani and Mollahosseini (2012), this exists to help consumers avoid restrictions on consumption and to obtain specific goods and services which may be restricted or even banned under the local religious requirements. This shows that people are willing to consume beyond the stipulations of strict Islamic laws, even in nations where it is potentially dangerous to do so. Foroughi et al. (2011) notes that Iranian tourists in Malaysia are very likely to engage in impulse buying and experience higher
levels of shopping enjoyment; they relish the ability to consume in an environment which is free from restrictions and open to new experiences. This demonstrates that there is likely to be a strong latent demand for online shopping in restrictive Islamic states. At the same time, there is also evidence from Iran that religious animosity is often higher, in particular towards goods from American and British companies, as local political and social attitudes are often polarised against the countries from which the goods came (Fakharmanesh and Ghanbarzade Miyandehi, 2013). International marketing efforts in such countries can thus be challenging, for, while consumers try to avoid the religious restrictions placed on them, they still impose these restrictions upon external companies and the goods they offer.

2.4.2.7 Other Islamic countries

The other Islamic countries to have been considered in the relevant literature in recent years are Syria and Indonesia. In the case of Syria, the country is similar to Malaysia, in that it is predominantly Muslim (almost 90% of its inhabitants) (Haber et al., 2013). Evidence in this case is similar to that of Malaysia, with the literature showing that attitudes to internet shopping and advertising are influenced by a range of non-religious factors; hence religion does not appear to be a factor of primary importance when understanding its consumption patterns (Nikhashemi et al., 2013). Similar results are found in Indonesia, which again has around 90% of Muslims in its population, however it is not an Islamic state (Arli and Tjiptono, 2014; Lu and Lu, 2010). Indonesia is a less developed country than many others considered in this area and thus there is no extant literature on internet shopping there. However, evidence from studies of consumers’ ethical concerns and associated behaviour indicates that their behaviour is influenced by gender, age, education and occupation, but not by religion (Arli and Tjiptono, 2014; Lu and Lu, 2010). This demonstrates that religion is likely to have a significant impact on consumer behaviour only in strongly Islamic states, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia.

2.4.2.8 Saudi Arabia

In light of the above findings, whilst the role of religion itself may not have an independent influence on consumer behaviour outside Saudi culture, its specific idiosyncrasies and the implications of these factors should be noted. In particular, a
specific Saudi interpretation of the Islamic religion is used to define the Saudi culture, state and law, even though Saudi Arabia is an avowedly Islamic state. This interpretation takes Islam beyond simply being a religious ideology towards a more comprehensive system which provides detailed prescriptions for individuals in the way that they should live their lives as Saudis (Alharbi, 2014). This has resulted not only in religious requirements such as prayer and fasting, but also in rigid political and economic doctrines, which affect the role of the state and the development of a legal system based on Islamic law (Sharshar, 1977). As a result, Saudi Arabia has created a theocratic and mercantile state, where the government uses Islamic doctrine to control trade, the economy and much of the behaviour of its citizens.

As noted above, this has resulted in the development of a specific national culture, with norms and social conventions which influence consumer behaviour. It has also led to the development of specific requirements, many of which are legally enforced. For example, whilst segregation of the sexes is a tradition which is often followed in Islam, in the case of Saudi Arabia it is legally enforced; it is illegal for adult female nationals to mix with unrelated men (Wheeler, 2000; Ember et al., 2014). This rule applies to the entire economy, including work, education, transportation, hospitals and the retail infrastructure. The rationale behind the rule is the perceived need for regulations to protect women’s chastity and their families’ honour (Alharbi, 2014). At the same time, while Saudi Arabia is highly segregated outside the family, within it all individuals are required to maintain strong ties, women often being controlled by their husbands. This in turn tends to create an environment in which women will struggle to exert some independence and autonomy, often being ruled by their husbands or families and required to behave and dress in certain ways.

Another important factor in Saudi Arabia is the power of the state, an absolute monarchy governed entirely by the House of Saud. The royal family is large, with a dozen or more surviving sons of the founder of the modern kingdom of Saudi Arabia and numerous grandsons, who hold the vast majority of positions and control most of the power in the Saudi government7. The country has managed to preserve this model of government

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through reliance on its vast oil wealth (Khatib, 2012). Its great wealth and strict control over the economy and society appear to have helped Saudi Arabia to avoid many of the potential negative impacts of the Arab Spring revolts in 2011. Mabon (2012) records that “the method of state-formation, mechanisms were defined to protect the stability of the regime, a framework meant to protect the regime from coups d’état”. The state thus has the ability to protect itself against wide scale social change, which also indicates that it plays a dominant role in the overall social framework that influences its consumers’ behaviour.

2.4.2.9 Religious animosity and boycotting

Another important factor in consumer behaviour is the extent to which cultural and religious animosity can influence consumer behaviour. In particular, Kalliny et al. (2015) state that cultural and religious variations affect consumers’ willingness to purchase regardless of beliefs regarding the quality of the product, with much of this intention influenced primarily by the level of religious animosity that consumers feel in the marketplace. Specifically, consumers will be more likely to be influenced by religious factors and restrictions when these factors are specifically associated with forms of religious animosity, such as a product or its provider being seen as blasphemous or anti-religious (Kalliny et al., 2015). This issue can also occur in a range of economic, cultural, social and political contexts, many of which are influenced by culture as well as religion, or by the two operating simultaneously. For example, Izberk-Bilgin (2008) examined the degree of resistance from consumers which emerged due to their animosity towards Starbucks’ perceived threat to the consumption of Turkish coffee in Turkey. This animosity was primarily driven by cultural, rather than religious, motivations, but acquired a religious bent when consumers began judging the promotion of a ‘godless’ corporation such as Starbucks as harmful to the cultural and religious identity of their own country (Izberk-Bilgin, 2008). This analysis demonstrates how religious animosity can also manifest itself as part of a general cultural animosity to a given brand or product and the company marketing it.
This animosity is often reflected in boycotts of products across large portions of the Islamic world. For example, the Economist (2004)\(^8\) reported on ongoing boycotts of Coca Cola and Pepsi by Islamic communities and nations which resented the importing of American products in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In this case, Islamic businessmen developed their own alternatives, such as Mecca Cola and Qibla Cola, designed to replace American brands, with their cultural and religious liabilities, while at the same time maintaining a similar Western brand image, which was strongly aligned with that of Coca Cola. As with general consumer behaviour and animosity, there is evidence from the literature that national and political factors can also influence the behaviour of consumers in this area. For example, Ahmed et al. (2013) demonstrate the ways in which animosity, religiosity and ethnocentrism interact to affect judgments about US products and the buying actions of customers in a rising Islamic nation like Malaysia. Their study found that levels of animosity and the propensity to boycott US products were higher in more conservative Islamic countries (e.g., Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia) than progressive ones like Malaysia. This provides further evidence that religious influences on online shopping behaviour can be mediated by political and cultural factors.

At the same time, it is important to note that there are some issues which can unite all Muslims in opposition to a brand and anything associated with it, in particular when a perception of disrespect or blasphemy towards their faith is involved. This can be seen in the case of the *Jyllands-Posten* controversy in 2005, when a Danish newspaper published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, in contravention of Islamic laws and social norms (Scully, 2014). This led to local protests, which escalated into global anger, after Danish imams spread details of the cartoons throughout the Islamic world. There followed a large scale boycott of all Danish producers in Islamic countries, including dairies and biscuit makers having no connection with the cartoons or their publisher (Scully, 2014). This shows how important religious issues can be to Moslems and the potential damage which can arise from violating them.

In an unrelated case, Disney was reportedly unconcerned by boycott threats in the late 1990s (Boje, 2000), following the company’s decision to depict Jerusalem, a holy Islamic

\(^8\) http://www.economist.com/node/3331086
site and disputed territory, as the capital of Israel in an exhibition celebrating the millennium. Whilst this decision was unlikely to have affected Disney’s global appeal and position, it had the potential to negatively affect the position of Disney distributors and retailers in the Middle East. Hence, regarding online shopping channels, it could be argued that retailers operating in the Middle East will be at risk of boycotts if the fashion labels which supply them, or indeed any company which can be linked to them in any way, are seen to be in violation of Islamic laws or customs.

2.4.2.10 Religion and loyalty

Religious factors can also affect levels of brand loyalty across a number of industries, in particular when issues such as religious conformity are involved. For example, Siala (2013) demonstrates how “the religiosity of Muslim consumers can infuse different dimension of faithfulness to an guarantor selling a religiously-conforming high-involvement indemnity service”. While this is a very specific example, there is evidence of “a positive connection among the exogenous religiosiy and religious centrism concepts and the endogenous attitudinal brand faithfulness, value tolerance and word-of-mouth concepts” (Siala, 2013). In other words, this study indicates that religion and religiosity can have significant impacts on consumer behaviour in the market for specific goods, in particular those reliant on word-of-mouth advertising and marketing. This issue can also emerge with regard to perceptions of ethical matters in marketing. Tsalikis and Lassar (2009) demonstrate that consumer sentiments towards ethical business practices are strongly influenced by religious views and religiosity. In particular, evidence from their study shows that religious values and norms in Muslim countries have a greater impact on ethical reputations and perceptions than individual norms and values; hence, where ethical issues are concerned the observation of Islamic preferences may be of great importance in ensuring effective outcomes.

2.4.2.11 Fatwas and consumer behaviour

There are other major factors which touch on the specific requirements of the Islamic religion. In particular, Muhamad and Mizerski (2013) study how customers’ religion might motivate their decision-making with relation to consuming products or brands which are illegal in the sense that they conflict with a religious declaration or *fatwa*. A
fatwa is a decree by a religious scholar which Muslims are obliged to follow. However, while Muhamad and Mizerski (2013) found that a fatwa would have a strong impact on a decision whether or not to smoke or what type of music to listen to, it was not shown to be relevant to buying or avoiding a specific brand.

2.4.2.12 Fashion restrictions

Restrictions on fashion are not related to Islamic culture only. Many communist, religious and even liberal countries oblige their citizens at times to wear clothes of a certain type. All these countries restrict people from exercising the freedom to wear what they choose. Restrictions are enforced for political, economic or social reasons. Economically, the USA put restrictions on fashion during World War II to cut fabrics without waste and save them for the war effort (Mower and Pedersen, 2014). The same applied to the UK in 1943, when certain design details were forbidden because they wasted valuable raw materials. Wartime austerity fashions were rationed by the use of clothing coupons (Clouting and Mason, 2015).

Recently, for political and social reasons, it has been reported that fashion police patrol in five countries: Saudi Arabia, Sudan, North Korea, France and Bhutan (Delaney, 2011). (Branigan, 2014) reports that North Korea deploys fashion police to identify those who violate the country’s unwritten laws (traditions) about what should be worn. Likewise, in Iran, wearing the chador is enforced and fashion designers must retain it. Moreover, women’s right to wear what they choose is limited in countries which call themselves liberal, such as France and the Netherlands, where women are forbidden to wear the niqab or the burqa (France-Presse, 2015).

2.4.3 Theories underpinning behaviour in restrictive environments

The enforcement of conformity is one of the single most important means by which cultural factors affect consumer behaviour in an online environment. This is demonstrated in the socio-psychological literature, which states that aspiring for conformity pushes persons to echo the behaviour of their peer group, which corresponds to social and cultural factors (Göbel et al., 2010). Similarly, the desire to conform can vary across cultures, as reflected in research. For instance, East Asians were found to have “a greater need for
conformity” and Westerners “a greater need for uniqueness” (Liang and He, 2012). This results in decisions to consume in national cultures being affected in two ways: by cultural standards and by cultural pressure to adapt to these standards. However, in every cultural setting, the scope exists for persons to adopt nonconforming behaviours, which might lead them to break group standards (Clark and Raman, 2004). This is expressed in a yearning for uniqueness, which results in persons developing their private choices, but still under the effect of the standards.

In contrast to the existence of non-conformity, the literature also demonstrates the potential for active resistance to cultural norms. According to Venkatesan (1966), this form of active resistance is most likely when individuals are placed under pressure to conform, causing more active resistance. In general, personal needs for determination as well as adjustment to conformity affect customers’ attempts to create different consumption styles (Hemetsberger and Weinberger, 2012). However, when the desire for autonomy is not respected by the cultural environment, individuals are more likely to display active resistance and engage in consumer behaviour which conforms with nothing. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the potential for resistance may be higher, due to the cultural pressure on individuals, women in particular, to conform. However, there is also evidence that individuals in a cultural setting are more prone to introspective information when making conformity assessments and thus their own social conditioning will tend to reduce their ability to rebel against a dominant cultural image (Pronin et al., 2007). This in turn implies that the dominant and repressive national culture in Saudi Arabia is likely to influence the consumer behaviour of Saudi women and this influence will spread to online channels, although this relationship has not been tested directly in the literature.

In countries that impose restrictions on the individual’s freedom of choice, the reaction of the individual is predicted by two theories: system justification theory (SJT), which deals with rationalising the restriction, and psychological reactance theory (PRT), referring to attempts to break the restriction (Kay et al., 2008; Kay et al., 2009; Laurin et al., 2012). From the literature discussed in the following paragraphs, it seems that women who rationalise the restrictions are not expected to use online shopping to buy socially unacceptable fashions for the sake of breaking the restrictions whenever they can (e.g. when travelling abroad). Nevertheless, if they did use it, they would be expected to do so
for its convenience, ease and speed. Therefore, SJT can be used to predict that they would use online shopping to buy locally produced goods that would be socially accepted. According to the logic of the theory, they would not be expected to use online shopping in pursuit of international brands.

In contrast, women who show reactance to restrictions are expected to use online shopping as a way to break the rules by buying what is not socially accepted whenever they can (with their friends, when travelling abroad and at private parties). Using representation theory, the breaking of rules is therefore proposed to be associated with buying international brands with a view to attaching one’s identity to the “free community”.

If there is a relationship between the level of religiosity and system justification behaviour, the SJT can be used in this case to understand the impact of the level of religious observance on fashion shopping behaviour online. Likewise, if high exposure to international fashion by travelling abroad leads to questioning of the restrictions, PRT will be helpful in understanding the behaviour of women who have frequent contact with the international environment.

2.4.3.1 System justification theory

Laurin et al. (2013) describe the rationalization of perceived restrictions as the range of psychological processes which is designed to make a particular restriction appear more appetizing to the person rationalising it. For instance, cognitive dissonance research has shown that persons move broadly towards preserving a view of their behaviour as being in alignment with their preferences, usually by refining the perceived need for a decision that has already been taken or an action that has already been performed (Joel Cooper, 2007). Similarly, SJT indicates that people are driven to expand the validity of the system in which they live (Jost et al., 2004) by recognising their status quo as “the way that things should be” (Kay et al., 2009). This study shows that limitations on liberties, or any new situations, will most likely be faced with rationalization.

Jost et al. (2004) suggest that people are often driven to rationalize and justify the rules and standards of their social organisms – even those that they would not select themselves
(Kay et al., 2009). The reasons for this may include regulating the need for assurance, law and justice. According to Kay et al. (2008), the drive to protect, encourage and validate the societal status quo can be established by numerous means. Although SJT can be useful for understanding the behaviour of restricted societies (e.g. by market, social, legal, or religio-legal restrictions), there is no previous research to indicate that this theory can be used to understand how online shopping can help to reconcile people with their current restrictions.

The clearest demonstration of this is the explicit confirmation of ideologies that serve to legitimize existing social, economic and political arrangements (Jost and Hunyady, 2003). To some degree, whether a given belief is to be deliberated, system justification depends upon social, economic and political context (Knowles et al., 2009). At the same time, the theory embraces the concept that there is a subgroup of belief systems that normally grants moral and intellectual validity to the status quo. Working instances of system-justifying belief systems in modern Western civilizations are “faith in a just world, the Protestant work ethic, fair market ideology, opposition to equality, right-wing authoritarianism, political conservatism and general (or diffuse) system justification” (Jost and Hunyady, 2005).

System justification can be said to be motivated in part by the epistemic need to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity; research consistent with this assertion associates the personal desire for law, structure and termination with the endorsement of conservative, system-justifying attitudes. Open-mindedness and tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity are, of course, negatively associated with such attitudes (e.g. (Chirumbolo et al., 2004; Goren et al., 2009; Jost and Hunyady, 2003; Jost et al., 2007; Kemmelmeier, 2007; Van Hiel et al., 2004).

A growing number of studies links many of these same epistemic motives to religiosity (e.g. (Hogg et al., 2010; McGregor et al., 2010; Van den Bos et al., 2006). 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 are almost always positive and statistically significant. For instance, compared with nonreligious or less religious people, those who are more
religious also tend to be more assertive (Altemeyer, 2002; Francis, 2001; Pancer et al., 1995), to be less tolerant of inconsistency and ambiguity (Budner, 1962; Feather, 1964), to have a stronger need for personal control (Hood Jr et al., 1996) and be relatively resistant to new experiences (Saroglou, 2002; Schwartz and Huismans, 1995). Saroglou, (2002) investigated the relationship between epistemic motivation and religious belief by distributing to 239 Belgian (primarily Catholic) students a questionnaire using a French translation of the Need for Cognitive Closure Scale (Kruglanski et al., 1993). This contains five facets or subscales, along with measures of “classic religiosity” (including belief in the importance of God, religion and religious ritual and the frequency of prayer) and religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 2004; Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 1992). Saroglou, (2002) found that the overall need for cognitive closure was positively and robustly correlated with both classic religiosity and religious fundamentalism, with three facets in particular (need for order, need for predictability and, to a lesser extent, closed-mindedness) driving the associations.

To sum up, according to studies in the Western cultures dominated by the Christian religion, religious people are less tolerant of new experiences, seek order and predictability and justify the existing laws and regulations because they seek stability. In other words, for a country such as Saudi Arabia where culture and religion are intermingled, the higher the cultural identity, the higher the justification behaviour expected. In other words, it is expected that highly religious women (with a high cultural identity) will be very reluctant to go online for the sake of a new experience. If they use online retailing, they will do so for its utilitarian functions only.

**2.4.3.2 Psychological reactance theory**

Psychological reactance theory holds that individuals will have an entirely contrary response to limitations on their freedom to that predicted by system justification theory (Brehm, 1966). PRT suggests that individuals are driven to replace defunct liberties and respond undesirably to attempts by others to coerce their freedom (Wicklund and Brehm, 1976). This strand of research suggest that restricting freedom will have counterproductive repercussions. In an innovative study, participants assessed a record as much more needed if they were told that they had no option to receive it as a gift and were
required to choose another record instead (Brehm, 1966; see also Chartrand et al., 2007; Snibbe and Markus, 2005).

According to PRT, people respond to the constraints enforced on them by placing greater worth on the object or behaviour concerned. For instance, women who perceive their freedom as being lost to fashion constraints are expected to react against the limitations. Knight et al. (2014) conclude that highly reactive people are anti-system rebels. This is consistent with the observation, nearly fifty years ago, by Brehm (1966) that the removal or threat of removal of the freedom to be involved in a given behaviour creates ‘psychological reactance’ in the person; a motivational state directed toward the reconstruction of the removed or threatened freedom.

It is also consistent with the finding of an experimental study by Lee et al. (2013) in online marketing that while personalization may enhance expediency and the intention to use personally recommended services, it can also weaken the intention to buy when users consider too much of their information to have been collected and used. According to reactance theory, when a reactant consumer receives a recommendation to purchase a certain product, she feels constrained from choosing other, seemingly more desirable products. This makes her likely to have a negative attitude to the recommended product. The outcome of this reactance is that consumers feel less confidence in the recommendation, a greater attraction towards the non-recommended product and an increased sense of confidence in their non-recommended decision (Kwon and Chung, 2010). However, none of the published literature, based on extensive surveys in journals used in ABS Journal ranking and ABDC Journal ranking, has been used to show how online shopping can reflect consumer reactance to current social, legal, or religio-legal restrictions.

2.5 Theoretical framework

Building on the system justification, psychological reactance and cultural identity theories, a theoretical framework can be developed, as shown in Figure 6. According to cultural identity theory, the more women are exposed to the international environment, the more likely they are to accept other cultures and the less intolerant they will be of new ideas. Travelling and living in new countries encourages people to try new things and
makes it more interesting to discover new ways. Consequently, the tendency to have a high level of cultural identity is lower and such people believe more strongly in a global culture than a monolithic or ethnocentric one. According to SJT, the stronger one’s belief in a social order and status quo, motivated by belief in one’s current system, the more likely one is to rationalise the current restrictions by using available mechanisms such as the internet to ease the purchasing process (since some religious interpretations stipulate that no kind of shopping market is good for women). However, as the results of system justification suggest, highly justifying people are more closed-minded and less interested in trying new things. Therefore, it is proposed that the stronger the cultural identity, the higher the likelihood that one will seek to justify present restrictions and the less interested one will be in trying online fashion.

Finally, based on PRT, when there is weak belief in culture (or a belief that that one is not like the cultural stereotype), there is a tendency to not accept its norms and values (restrictions) easily. This may lead to reactance to these restrictions, in particular if they are enforced by law or by the community. Therefore, online shopping could be seen as a mechanism to nullify these restrictions, behaving in a contrary way by buying Western fashions. Indeed, according to social representation theory (SRT), the purpose of buying Western fashions may also be to attach oneself to liberal societies unlike one’s own.

Figure 6: Theoretical framework
2.5.1 Impact of cultural identity on online shopping: social representation theory

SRT is another psychological theory that can aid in explaining the behaviour of Saudi women as fashion consumers. Social representation is defined as “the practice of constructing meaning through the use of signs and language” (O'Reilly, 2005). SRT was developed in the 1960s in France and used in social psychology studies. It can help marketers to understand cultures and images that affect consumers (Mitussis and Elliott, 1999). It is also considered an important theory of consumer behaviour, because it functions at an emotional level and is derived from analysing social interactions among a group of individuals. Mitussis and Elliott (1999) affirm that the creation of social representations so as to comprehend appeal and control, in particular, is a powerful marketing tool for understanding consumers’ insights and their views of the world. Such social representations are shared through practices.

This theory can be used to explain the conduct of Saudi women towards Western fashion and to show how they are engrossed by international fashion for the reasons noted above. That is, it addresses likeness to the rest of their group relative to desire, need and power. Further, when group members are faced by unaccustomed events or objects, they rely upon their group to “anchor” suitable elucidations (Guerin, 1995).

These factors affect the choice of garments by Saudi women, according to the theory of cultural identity, which corresponds to a group of qualities assigned to some populations, usually recognised as static, but which could change over time (Schlesinger, 2015). It explains why, when people believe intensely in the standards of their natural culture, they can perceive exposure to different cultures as intimidating, which can trigger reactance (Brehm, 1966). Kosmitzki (1996) avers that this can lead people to reject new cultures and settle for a sense of the superiority of their personal or family culture. Here, strong attachment to one’s home culture might also lead a person to experience the strain of being challenged by cultural differences between the home country and the new situation (Van Der Zee et al., 2004; Ward and Chang, 1997).

This leads us to the first proposition asserted by the framework:

**P1: Cultural identity negatively affects online shopping behaviour in Saudi Arabia.**
Both the theory of social identity (e.g., Turner et al., 1987) and the empirical evidence (e.g., Kosmitzki, 1996; McGuire et al., 1978) indicate that the influence of contrast makes cultural identity significant when persons come into a different cultural environment (e.g., when they visit a new country or take on an international assignment). Experiencing cultural differences encourages the internalization of home cultural norms and challenges existing beliefs, thus triggering self-reflection on cultural identity (Peng et al., 2014). Therefore, it is proposed that the original cultural identity of women who are exposed to international cultures will be diluted, making them more likely to shop online.

**P2: Exposure to international cultures reduces the cultural identity of Saudi women and therefore increases their propensity to shop online.**

2.5.2 Impact of system justification on online shopping behaviour

A community like Saudi Arabia, scoring 95 on the power distance index (Hofstede et al., 2015), is presumed to be oriented more to system justification, because this score implies that people obey a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Justifying the current constraints does not make it a matter of urgency for women to take the risk of buying online from international shops. They are presumed to be reluctant to buy online because standards of modesty may violate their cultural and social norms. Furthermore, there is no need to buy online, at least not Western fashions from international suppliers. Meanwhile, Saudi online shopping has not developed enough to satisfy the current Saudi market in terms of reliability, security, privacy and quality (Al-Mutawa, 2013). It is proposed that there are two related effects on online shopping, one direct and the other indirect:

**P3: System justification affects online shopping behaviour negatively.**

**P4: Cultural identity affects online shopping behaviour through system justification.**

2.5.3 Impact of psychological reactance on online shopping behaviour

The analysis of consumer behaviour in restrictive states indicates that any influence of the internet on consumer behaviour in a Middle Eastern setting will be strongly moderated by national, religious and cultural characteristics, in a restrictive national setting in particular. However, most of these restrictions will not be as significant as the individual
behaviours and preferences of the consumer, which are more likely to be influenced by exposure to the international channel and the self-identifying creation potential that it offers.

Therefore, it is proposed that women who have travelled abroad and do not believe in the list of social values in their country (Nwankwo et al., 2014) will criticise the social constraints in their society (i.e. their cultural identity weakens) and will try to break through them (Laurin et al., 2013); this is reflected in their buying international brands online. In contrast, people who have not travelled abroad are more likely to justify any system that they cannot escape from (Laurin et al., 2010), when they depend upon it (Kay et al., 2009), or when they feel threatened and held back by it (Kay et al., 2005).

**P5: Psychological reactance affects online shopping behaviour positively.**

**P6: Cultural identity affects online shopping behaviour through psychological reactance.**

### 2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature and proposed a theoretical framework for the study, incorporating a series of propositions. The next presents and justifies the methodology adopted to gather and analyse the data needed to fulfil the research aim.
3 Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology of a research study represents the strategies, approaches and processes by which data are collected and analysed in pursuit of its objectives (Saunders et al., 2011; Verd, 2004). The researcher must ensure that these strategies, approaches and processes have high levels of academic rigour, in order to produce reliable and valid conclusions. This chapter details how the present researcher planned to achieve this, by discussing the philosophy, approach and strategy followed, along with the data collection methods, sampling techniques and methods of analysis adopted. It ends by outlining the ethical considerations affecting the conduct of the study.

3.2 Research philosophy

The philosophy underlying a research study helps to define the nature of the knowledge to be developed during the research process (Lee et al., 2005; Lewis et al., 2007). A number of philosophies are available to cover the range of research situations and methodologies, but in general the choice can be seen to be between positivist and interpretivist perspectives, and these are the two considered in this research (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Collinson and Parcel, 2005). Positivism holds that the truth is best uncovered by scientific methods (Jankowicz, 2005). Its aim is to reveal the absolute truth behind a situation and the fundamental and universal rules which govern it, in order to build models and make predictions. In contrast, interpretivism is rooted in an effort to understand the differences between individual humans, and their social interactions with each other. This approach thus recognises that the research environment is usually highly complex and influenced by social and individual factors; it therefore aims to analyse the particular circumstances in order to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working in the background (Remenyi, 1998).

This research is interpretive, because the aim is to explore and to investigate (Bryman, 2012) the online shopping behaviour of women in Saudi Arabia. Unlike the traditional positivist research that comes to test propositions in an objective way (Singleton and
Straits, 2005), this research uses theory as a guide (Avison and Malaurent, 2014), not as something to test. Additionally, it adopts the methods of naturalistic inquiry (Walsham, 1995) because reality is defined in terms of a relativist ontology (Walsham, 2006), in which each respondent has her own beliefs and view of the world.

3.3 Research approach

The choice of philosophy strongly influences the research approach, which sums up the approaches used by the researcher when obtaining data. The primary methods are deduction and induction, each of which involves a different perspective on the production of data (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Deduction focuses on developing and testing specific theories and frameworks through the use of empirical observations. These observations are often quantitative, in order to provide more definitive insight into a given research situation (Collis et al., 2003; Saunders and Lewis, 2007). In contrast, induction focuses on making empirical observations of a situation from a more general and often qualitative perspective, with these observations then used to identify patterns and predict trends (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). A more recent approach, called abductive, mixes the deductive and inductive approaches by using theory and empirical evidence together to develop a new theory, according to (Dubois and Gadde, 2002), who characterise it as stressing the iterative interplay of theory with empirical observation.

This approach is particularly relevant to the study of the behaviour of women vis-à-vis internet shopping in Saudi Arabia, where system justification and psychological reactance theories were used as sensitizing tools for developing the questionnaire and analysing the findings. This research rests on the belief that these theories can help in understanding the women’s online shopping behaviour in the context of the restrictions upon them.

3.4 Research strategy

The term ‘research strategy’ refers to the overall processes through which the research philosophy and approach are implemented, in order to collect the data. The first phase was commenced to explore the factors to answer the first research question, as shown in Figure 7. Based on this exploration, which showed the restrictions are critical factors for the online shopping behaviour, the second research question emerged to find out how.
Thus, from literature, a conceptual framework developed to take a theoretical lens to design interview guide and the analytic framework used to answer the second question.

An in-depth interview research methodology was chosen to gather data from the respondents with their varied perspectives (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) and the research had two phases: an exploratory study followed by an in-depth investigation. In the first phase, 27 semi-structured interviews (of which only 23 were analyzed) were conducted to answer an exploratory research question about the factors that affect online fashion shopping behaviour in Saudi Arabia. As illustrated in Figure 7, the second phase was conducted to investigate in detail the impact of restrictive culture on this behaviour.

From the interview data gathered in the first phase, five themes emerged, as discussed in Chapter four. Of these, the restrictive environment, in terms of the impact of culture and beliefs on this environment, was investigated because there is a significant lack of studies covering this phenomenon. Thus, the second phase of the study addressed this knowledge gap. In order to investigate the phenomenon in detail, qualitative research, based on 34 in-depth interviews, was designed and carried out.

![Figure 7: Research strategy](image)

### 3.5 Data collection methods

#### 3.5.1 Phase 1: Exploratory identification of factors

The first exploratory phase of data collection, aiming to understand the factors affecting women’s online fashion shopping behaviour in Saudi Arabia, was in two stages, as shown in Figure 8. First, a focus group was convened in order to formulate an interview guide
for the second stage of the (First phase). Eight women participated in the focus group session, which took an hour and a half. The data gathered there allowed the researcher to formulate an interview guide for use in the second stage of phase one, reproduced in Appendix A1.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were then conducted with 23 educated Saudi women who varied in their online shopping behaviour. On average, each interview took an hour, covering topics such as barriers and motivators affecting the decision to shop online and the restrictions that they faced in online shopping.

**Figure 8: Phase 1 methodology**

### 3.5.2 Phase 2: In-depth investigation

The second phase of data collection comprised a series of in-depth, face-to-face interviews with female Saudi consumers to provide deeper and richer insights into their online shopping behaviours and the cultural factors driving these behaviours (Saunders and Lewis, 2007). These interviews were tailored to the specific Saudi cultural context and were guided by the six propositions outlined in Chapter 2, section 2.5. The interview guide is reproduced in Appendix A2. The interviewer ensured that during the course of each interview, the conversation focused on the unique aspects of Saudi culture and the major drivers of online shopping behaviour within it. The researcher sought strong, proactive interactions with the participants in order to obtain the insights necessary to meet the research objectives.

### 3.6 Population and samples

The participants for both phases of the study were recruited using both the convenience and snowball sampling techniques: since the researcher is from Saudi Arabia, some individuals whom she identified as fitting the criteria for selection were contacted
personally (convenience sampling) and were then asked to mention the research to others who might be interested in taking part in it (snowballing). The samples for the two phases were selected differently, as explained in the following subsections.

3.6.1 Phase 1 sample
As the first phase of the study was exploratory in nature, the participants were not selected according to specific criteria, but simply for convenience, so all 27 were Saudi women living in the capital city, Riyadh. Four respondents were excluded from analysis since they appeared to be trying to mislead the researchers because they did not feel safe in talking frankly about restrictions and regulations. In other words, they were not clear in what they want to say. Otherwise, the sample was random and based on snowballing without selecting any specific age group or geographic area.

3.6.2 Phase 2 sample
Unlike the first phase, defined criteria were applied to the selection of the sample for the second phase, because the aim here was to investigate the theoretical framework shown in Figure 6. This framework gives guidance on the impact on online shopping behaviour of religious adherence, exposure to international fashion and current cultural restrictions. The population targeted was Saudi women living in Saudi Arabia. It was believed that those who lived in many parts of the kingdom were likely to encounter difficulty with transportation and internet access, so to obviate such problems the sample was drawn exclusively from Riyadh, seen as the most advanced city in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, precisely because it is the capital city, unveiled, liberal and psychologically reactive women can more easily be found there; people from small towns and rural areas are more likely to exhibit system justification (Kay and Jost, 2003).

Men were excluded because women face many more restrictions than men do, in particular with regard to the free choice of clothing (Al-Rasheed, 2013). The age range was selected to exclude the very young and the very old. Older people are more inclined to justify the status quo (Kay et al., 2009), while very young women may be under the control of their families or very sensitive to peer pressure (imitating friends, celebrities or fashion icons) in teenage fashion behaviour (Stephen Parker et al., 2004; Khare et al., 2012). Therefore, only women in their 30s and 40s were selected, as representing mature
women who could decide and take action independently without being overly affected by celebrities or fashion icons (Summers, 1970) or prone to system justification.

The criteria for selection of the sample for this second phase and its size (34 participants) were set by the iterative nature of the data collection and analysis process. In other words, it was intended to have a balance between data coding and the recruiting of respondents. The aim was not for the sample to be representative of the target population or Saudi society. Therefore, the following selection criteria guided recruitment.

### 3.6.2.1 Religiousness of dress

Religious adherence was operationalised according to a respondent’s clothes; the strength of religious belief was taken to be reflected in a version of the Hijab Index, adapted from the work of Tolaymat and Moradi (2011) and Swami et al. (2014). This is further discussed in Chapter 5. Thus, wearing the niqab (the full face veil), which is preferred but not obligatory in Islam (Al-Hariri, 1987), was taken as an indication of strong religious adherence, while the hijab, which the Qur’an makes obligatory, was taken to indicate a wearer of moderate religious adherence. Finally, women wearing neither niqab nor hijab were understood not to adhere to religious rules of dress. This thesis adopts the term ‘religiousness of dress’ as shorthand for the extent of a woman’s religious adherence as reflected in her choice of head and face covering.

It was aimed to recruit roughly equal numbers of interviewees at each of the three levels of religiousness of dress. In the wider population, about three quarters of Saudi people believe the woman should wear the niqab and only 1% accept that women can be ‘unveiled’, i.e. have their heads uncovered in public (Moaddel, 2013). As noted above, however, the recruitment of participants was not intended to produce a representative sample of Saudi society. Since the aim of this research was to explore how different groups of women react to the legal and social norms, it was necessary to recruit a number of unveiled women to explore their perceptions of the restrictions and how they might use the internet as a mechanism to reflect their rejection of them. It was very difficult to recruit such women. Ten were recruited, but one of them stopped the interview and another refused to allow it to be recorded, fearing that the researcher might be from the
national security police. The final numbers of completed interviews were eight with unveiled women, nine with hijab wearers and seventeen with those wearing the full niqab.

3.6.2.2 Online shopping behaviour

In order to gather rich data, the second selection criterion for phase two interviewees was shopping behaviour, using a classification based on UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The rationale for this approach was to be able to contrast the motivations and demotivations for online shopping behaviour equally from the perspectives of both heavy and non-heavy online shoppers. Thus, although only about 13% of Saudi women shop online (Almousa and Brosdahl, 2013) 18 heavy and 16 non-heavy shoppers were interviewed, to provide a balance of views on why people do or do not buy online.

3.6.2.3 Exposure to international culture

To study cultural identity, the second selection criterion was the level of contact with the world beyond Saudi Arabia. Exposure to international travel was operationalised in terms of travelling behaviour and the length of time spent living abroad, using a measure adapted from (Maddux and Galinsky, 2009) (see Chapter 6). Although fewer than half of Saudi women have travelled abroad (Ghawy, 2014), this research required a rough balance of views, so fifteen women were recruited who had high exposure to international culture and nineteen who had low exposure, having never travelled abroad.

3.7 Research quality

The schedule for the research was to conduct one individual interview per day, spending up to two hours on it in order to ensure sufficient depth. Participants were given a gift voucher for their time, and breaks were held to ensure that the interviews did not seem over-long and wearisome for the participants (Saunders et al., 2011). To ensure that the respondents were honest and accurate in their answers, these were checked for narrative accuracy and for interpretive, descriptive, theoretical and evaluative validity. For the first of these, after a respondent offered an answer, the researcher summarised her words and confirmed with her that this was what she had meant to say. Although these checks could not necessarily eliminate all untruthful, inaccurate answers, they helped to reduce the risk of them. Theoretical validity was checked by continuous checking of the findings against
the literature to determine whether they were aligned with it and if not, for what reason. Furthermore, to assure the quality of questions comprising the interview guide for the second phase, this was revised by four academics. It was then tested on three Saudi women to ensure that they understood the questions and to see whether their responses could be used to construct the reality of this context.

3.8 Data analysis

The data analysis procedure used here was based on thematic analysis as derived from the literature (Alhojailan, 2012). Qualitative data, in particular interviews, are best analysed thematically. There are three coding approaches working together (Charmaz, 2006), as visualised in Figure 9. Pre-defined coding searches for something already known, using theory as a sensitising tool. Open coding seeks to understand new themes and finally, axial coding connects data between codes (Glaser and Strauss, 2009). Open and axial coding are used for discovering new patterns and developing the theory. The coding process was developed on the basis of the theoretical framework depicted in Figure 6 (Lee and Hubona, 2009). This analytical approach is aligned with the abductive approach of using theories and empirical data together to develop new theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002).

For the sake of using the theory to guide data collection and analysis, this research uses closed coding for classifying interviewees based on their reacting or justifying restrictions, intensity of shopping fashion online, the degree of cultural identity and the level of exposure to international environment. All of these codes are used in the analysis reported in Chapters 5 and 6, which deal with the second phase, while Chapter 4 reports the exploratory phase, which was not guided by theory.

For in-depth understanding, themes were used. Open coding was used to find the themes. Thus, manual coding was used first to identify themes when screening interview transcripts, then NVivo was used in an automated (selective) coding process. Themes were based on two criteria: the number of interviewees mentioning them and the amount of time that respondents devoted to them, reflecting their level of importance. Any theme repeated more than four times by respondents was selected to be used in analysis (Dubois and Gadde, 2002), based on the sample size of 34. Where a sample is classified according
to codes (e.g. high and low online shopping), each group is expected to number about half of the sample, i.e. 15-18 members, and four is a relatively significant proportion of this, being about 25% of 15.

For themes mentioned by fewer respondents, if three spotlighted a certain theme, it was considered for analysis only if they spent on average at least 10 minutes talking about it. The rationale is that the interviews averaged 60 minutes in duration and covered four main topics, which would thus occupy 15 minutes each on average. Ten minutes was considered significant in this context. If, however, only one or two interviewees mentioned a theme, it was not considered for analysis, even if they spent more than 10 minutes each talking about it.

Figure 9: Themes used in analysis
3.9 Ethical considerations

The primary research data collected in the course of this study were obtained from individuals who had no direct connection with the research, and may not have been familiar with the concepts being studied. As a result, the research did not need to follow the appropriate ethical norms and guidelines around the collection of primary data from external populations (Saunders and Lewis, 2007). However, the researcher needed to ensure that all of the individuals who participated in the interviews gave their informed consent to the interviewer before they provided any information. This required the interviewer to provide the individual respondents with enough information on the study’s purpose and on the data she intended to collect so that they could decide objectively whether to participate (Robson, 2002). The interviewer ensured that no underage or vulnerable individuals who were unable to give their informed consent were allowed to take part in the interviews or research process (Jankowicz, 2005). Finally, all interviewees were assured of full confidentiality for their personal and identifiable data, to ensure that privacy was not breached. The interviewees were assured that their answers would never be used against them, nor to identify them personally, so that they felt able to provide information freely and without concerns over their privacy, confident that the research would cause no harm to the participants (Jankowicz, 2005).

This chapter has outlined the methodology adopted in the study; the next gives further details of the conduct of phase one of the research and presents an analysis of the data gathered in that phase.
Chapter 4: Phase 1 analysis - Exploring online fashion shopping in Saudi Arabia

This chapter presents the findings of the content analysis conducted in the exploratory phase of the study. It offers additional details of the methods used and a systematized account of the findings in words and in numerical form, using extracts from the interview data and tables where appropriate. The presentation of the analytical process is vital in describing how the codes, thematic categories and themes emerged from the transcripts of the participants’ interviews. The chapter concludes with a summary, which lists the important themes requiring more examination and analysis in phase two, as reported in the following chapters (5 and 6).

4.1 Data collection, organisation and analysis

Twenty-three face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with women who had had some experience of purchasing online, to collect the data required for this exploratory study. The researcher audio-recorded all the interviews after obtaining consent from the participants. Before conducting each interview, the researcher collected demographic information from the participants and ensured that they met the criteria to participate in the study. In conducting the interviews, she used a guide questionnaire containing open-ended questions (Appendix A1).

In the analysis of the interview data, the researcher used content analysis. The audio-recorded interviews were first transcribed and translated. She maintained the confidentiality of the participants in the transcriptions by assigning specific numeric codes, from Participant #1 to Participant #23. After this, she began to compare the initial codes that had emerged in the course of the interviews with the codes and themes suggested in the transcriptions. As a qualitative exploration, the researcher sought the meaning of the data as they came up. This process ensured the richness of the textual data, which were then subjected to further analysis.

In order to sort and categorize the codes identified during the interviews and in reviewing the transcripts, the researcher prepared in advance a table of categories in which to arrange
the codes that corresponded to the research questions (Hedrick et al., 1993). To support the systematic sorting and analysis of these codes from the 23 transcripts, she used the NVivo qualitative software. The codes were then grouped to keep similar meanings and categories close to each other and themes were developed from the codes. The transcripts were finally reviewed to determine the frequency with which these themes occurred.

4.2 Findings

The formation of the thematic categories and themes was specified by the number of times that a specific code occurred across all 23 interview transcripts. This indicates that the total number of responses in any theme could not exceed 23 (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The rest of this section lists and discusses the thematic categories and their corresponding themes formulated from the coding process and analysis, which were then carried forward to phase two of the study.

Five thematic categories emerged from the content analysis: (a) factors affecting the patronage of online shopping, (b) frequent users of online shopping, (c) considerations of online shoppers in the selection of online retailers, (d) impacts of online retailers on the culture and beliefs of Saudi Arabian women and (e) drawbacks of online shopping. Each of these categories is supported by themes and material from the verbatim responses of the participants. Within these categories and themes, the behaviours of consumers of online retailing among Saudi Arabian women are descriptively presented.

4.2.1 Factors affecting the patronage of online shopping

In the first thematic category, factors affecting the patronage of online shopping, two thematic subcategories were identified: facilitating and hindering factors. The full list of factors, with frequencies of occurrence, is given in Table 1. Sixteen facilitating factors were identified, of which only the following nine were mentioned by at least half of the interview participants: (a) the convenience of online shopping, (b) education in the use of online shops, (c) popularity of Western products, (d) experience of good deals from online shops, (e) extent of experience as an online shopper, (f) options for review, (g) influence of family, (h) certainty about the products, (i) the financial independence of women. The following subsections deal with these in turn.
4.2.1.1 The convenience of online shopping

The first theme, the convenience of online shopping, relates to factors such as the inability of women to drive from their homes to shopping malls, the lack of time to shop, cultural preferences and the ability of the consumers to search for what would meet their needs. While most of the participants stated that they had engaged in online shopping, half of them ranked online shopping as their second favourite method. They revealed that if they had enough time to shop in malls, they opted to buy from traditional shops. Participant #15 explained this as follows: “Online shopping is convenient because it saves me time and is less exhausting, but if I have time I prefer traditional shops.”

The second and fifth most commonly occurring themes, education in online shopping increases the popularity of online shopping and experience of online retailers increases the likelihood of shopping, relate to the exposure of Saudi women to the internet and learning about it from their friends and relatives. The participants revealed that lack of education on online purchasing hinders shoppers from patronizing online retailers. Participant #8 said, “Some people don’t shop online because they don’t know how to ... If they did courses for online shopping in Saudi Arabia, I believe the level of online shopping would increase. When prospective shoppers are exposed to online shopping, they will more likely use online shops for their needs”. Participant #22 stated, “The more experience I get, the better my online experience will become. Now I know what to buy and from where.”

4.2.1.2 The popularity and/or credibility of Western products

The third theme relates to the patronage by Saudi Arabian women of Western rather than local products. This extended to Participant #8, who said “I would purchase something for a very high price if it was a Western brand although in reality the product was not that special. The idea of Western fashion is very appealing.” Saudi Arabian women, “... like to purchase Western products” (Participant #5); “I often buy a product because it is from a Western manufacturer” (Participant #9); and “buying Western products when at home is very convenient” (Participant #5).

The fourth theme, better deals/opportunities in online shopping, relates to the ability of online shoppers to compare products and prices and to review product performance.
Participant #4 said, “If you look properly you can find better deals online.” Participant #5 added, “There are so many opportunities available online.” She believed that she could browse as many websites as she wanted to.

4.2.1.3 Online shopping provides an option for review

The fifth theme suggests the chance given to online shoppers to review the products in light of various comments from consumers and descriptions by manufacturers. Participants indicated that online shops told them about the value of their products should they opt to purchase. Participant #8 described this as follows:

“In traditional shopping I have the advantage of touching a product and trying it on. Online, I know where to look and how to look. But traditional shopping is the first step that introduced me to the product. The second step is looking up the product online. I also think that lack of experience in online shopping could affect the success of an online transaction.”

The sixth theme, recommendations/influence of family and friends (men), relates to the shopping behaviour of Saudi Arabian women in relation to the influence of their culture and the power of men to influence where women shop. Accordingly, women with higher incomes are brand conscious and favour unique products that are either sold only outside Saudi Arabia or by online shops. Recommendations from friends for high-end products are socially preferred by Saudi women. Participant #18 said, “I do take advice and recommendations from my friends and family. My friends introduced me to the process of online shopping and since then I have started to use it.” Further, men who control their female relatives would rather they shopped online shopping than left their homes.

4.2.1.4 Buying well-known products

The seventh theme, buying well-known products, suggests that consumers of online products felt more secure in buying “products with strong brand names because the quality will be guaranteed” (Participant #19). Consumers in Saudi Arabia prefer products from Western manufacturers because of the perception that these products are more durable and fashionable.
4.2.1.5 The financial independence of women

The ninth theme, the independence of women increases the likelihood of their online shopping, suggests that women’s freedom to choose products is likely to generate further patronage of online suppliers. This theme also relates to the financial freedom of women to purchase on their own regardless of whether they face prohibitions against using products that are feared to be provocative. As women are construed to deviate from their culture and traditions when they shop for provocative clothing, this theme relates to the obstacles to online shopping, addressed in the next subsection.

4.2.1.6 Hindering factors

In fact, only one hindering factor was mentioned by more than half of interviewees: the effect of religion and culture on freedom. Twelve of the participants, mostly conservative in outlook, believed that their religion and culture influenced their decisions to purchase certain products. Participant #14 said, “Religion and culture could affect my decision to purchase clothes. Saudi Arabian women cannot buy very provocative clothes. I feel this is not compatible with our culture.”

The second negative theme, traditional shopping gives recreational time, relates the continuous patronage of traditional shopping malls to the popularity and use of online shops. Nine of the participants agreed that they enjoyed seeing products in their physical form. Participant #1 said, “I am a person who enjoys traditional shopping. I think it is entertaining and fun. I allocate time specifically for shopping.” According to these participants, if they had more time to shop, they would rather do so in traditional shopping malls.

Other factors said to discourage potential shoppers from online shopping included the safety of their credit card details, the time needed to return products, the high cost of shipping products and the difficulty of setting up an online account. Participant #5 had purchased a fake product via an online retail company and found that returning the product was expensive.
### Table 1: Thematic Category 1: Factors affecting the patronage of online shopping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic subcategories</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience of shopping without leaving the home</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about online shopping increases its popularity</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity/credibility of Western products</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better deals/opportunities in online shopping</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of the online retailer increases likelihood of shopping</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online shopping provides an option for review</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations/influence of family and friends (men)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying well-known products</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence of women increases likelihood of online shopping</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness to cultural beliefs/traditions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to purchase products that are not available in shopping centres</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western products are mostly sold via online</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of products measures social advantage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online offers recent fashion trends</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction felt with online delivery</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of stress as a result of allowing time for decision-making</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hindering factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and culture affect freedom</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional shopping gives recreational time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to cards that are safe and acceptable for online shopping</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time needed for returning products</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping costs in Saudi are high</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative experiences encountered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length and difficulty of setting up an account</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.2.2 Frequent users of online shopping**

The second thematic category, frequent users of online shopping, comprised four profiles of regular online shoppers (Table 2). These were (a) people with conservative beliefs, (b) wealthy women who have limited time for traditional shopping, (c) shoppers who have a positive online shopping experience and (d) preference among men for online shopping. Participant #17 mentioned that online shopping was widely supported by her family and was aligned with her personal preferences:
“I think my family supports my choice to shop online. I avoid problems of having to stay out till late. Now people are looking for products which are not from Saudi Arabia. Individuals want products that are unique even if the seller is not well known. People buy from sellers who sell on Instagram just because the products are from outside Saudi Arabia. If people get good service and good quality products then online shopping will continue to grow. I don’t believe the idea that online shopping in Saudi Arabia will not be successful.”

This account is supported by participant #23, who said, “My husband prefers online shopping. He doesn’t like me to go to traditional shops. This is normal in our culture. Aam [sic] doesn’t like a woman to go to malls.”

Table 2: Thematic Category 2: Frequent users of online shopping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic subcategories</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People with conservative beliefs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy women who see the convenience of online shopping</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoppers with a positive experience of online shopping</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men preferring their women to shop online</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Considerations of online shoppers in selecting online retailers

The third thematic category, considerations of online shoppers in the selection of online retailers, covers the preferences of online shoppers when selecting online retailers (Table 3). At the top of the list were (a) easy navigation of online systems and (b) entertainment experiences that the shoppers had in traditional shopping malls. Participant #18 said, “Easy to navigate websites are more attractive. If a website is very complex, I stop using it.” Participant #3 spoke of her ideal shop:

“I like shopping. It’s a way to relieve stress, a way to reward myself, a way to make me happier. Just the idea of me being around shops changes my mood and gives me motivation. I think this is the nature of women. Women like always to be up to date. There an old Hadith that says that on Fridays God has a market in Heaven. This shows that God knows that shopping is indeed important for human beings, especially women.”

Other factors, namely advertisements, risk-free payment and delivery of products, were not on the whole the elements that frequent online shoppers considered. Frequent shoppers were thought to be protected by current systems and policies that ensure the
safety of online purchasers against online fraud. Other participants mentioned that banks offered cards exclusively for online purchases, offering security features to combat any online scams.

Table 3: Thematic category 3: Considerations of shoppers in selecting online retailers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic subcategories</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Websites that are easy to navigate</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping experiences that improve mood; pleasure, entertainment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate advertisement and direct marketing influence decisions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-free payment methods</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-time delivery of products</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4 Impacts of online retailers on the culture and beliefs of Saudi Arabian women

The fourth thematic category, impacts of online retailers on the culture and beliefs of Saudi Arabian women, relates to the changes that online shops have introduced in the country (Table 4). The first theme was that online shops reinforce cultural changes. Most of the participants said that the culture of the country had changed over time and that the presence of online shops merely reinforced these cultural changes. Participant #17 said that women were now exposed to global products and the experience of other cultures, giving them a greater understanding of being open-minded:

“Saudi Arabian citizens now travel and go around the world. They are open to other cultures. However, I think if an individual is conservative by nature, he wouldn’t be affected by the revolution of Western apparel. I still believe that Saudi Arabian culture is changing. As women we copy each other; if a woman sees her friend shopping online she too will shop online.”

The second theme, that women can purchase discreetly online, relates to the opportunity that online shopping provides to women who are conservative and prefer to purchase personal products discreetly. Participant #13 said:

“There are some obstacles in our Saudi Arabian culture. I need to choose clothes that I can wear in public. I choose clothes according to the occasion or the place I want to wear them. Sometimes I can’t buy something although I like it because
I cannot wear it...Yes. For example, there is stuff such as underwear that I could not buy in traditional shops. Online shopping gives me more freedom.”

With online shopping, the manufacturers and retailers only reinforce and support the convenience of women who want to comply with their culture and traditional beliefs. Participant #11 said:

“I strongly believe that this point is true especially when it comes to lingerie. In Saudi when only men were allowed to work in lingerie shops, I never went and bought clothes from them. Online is better in this regard. It might be more difficult to buy lingerie online, but I prefer not to have contact with males.”

Table 4: Thematic Category 4: Impacts of online retailers in the culture and beliefs of Saudi Arabian women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic subcategories</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinforces cultural changes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women can purchase discreetly online (impact)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of transaction is convenient for those with cultural and traditional beliefs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of Western products or traditional and local products</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.5 Drawbacks of online shopping

The fifth category, drawbacks of online shopping, relates to the negative experiences that online shoppers had had with online purchases (Table 5). The participants indicated four themes: (a) the authenticity of products posted online, (b) security risks, (c) accuracy of sizes and quality per specifications, and (d) similar experiences with online and traditional shopping. Participant #14 said “pictures sometimes don’t show the material of the product.” Participant #19 also considered it “risky” to buy clothes online: “Unless I already know my size, I would not buy anything online. I also don’t buy brand names online because the authenticity of products online is problematic.”

Further, Participant #11 commented that the drawbacks of online shopping may be a result of the similar experiences that shoppers can generate from either traditional or online retailing. She indicated that online retail companies must provide an experience
that provides more fun, convenience and exceptional service than traditional shopping malls do.

Table 5: Thematic Category 5: Drawbacks of online shopping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Categories</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the product is not similar to that posted online (fake)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security risk associated with unknown retailers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of accurate sizes and quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot see the difference between online and traditional shopping</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Summary

This chapter has presented the results of the content analysis of 23 interviews conducted to explore the consumer behaviours of Saudi Arabian women shopping online. Three main thematic categories emerged from this first phase of the study: (a) factors affecting patronage of online shopping, (b) frequent users of online shopping and (c) the impact of the culture and beliefs of Saudi Arabian women on their online shopping behaviour. Two additional themes were (d) the impacts of online retailers on the culture and beliefs of Saudi Arabian women, and (e) the drawbacks of online shopping.

The next chapter begins the analysis of the data gathered in the phase two study, which is completed in Chapter 6.
5 Chapter 5: Phase 2 analysis, part 1 - Understanding women’s online shopping behaviour in a restrictive environment

5.1 Introduction

Based on the findings of the exploratory phase reported in the previous chapter, the restrictions in Saudi Arabia are found to have the potential to affect the online shopping behaviour of Saudi women. This chapter uses two theories to understand how they behave under these restrictions. System justification theory is used to understand the women who embrace and justify the restrictions, while psychological reactance theory is used to understand those who resent the restrictions.

Thus, this chapter starts by explaining how the 34 phase two interviewees were coded according both to how strongly they were expected to embrace the restrictions, judged by the religiousness of their dress, and to their exposure to other cultures. Next, behavioural coding is used to understand their behaviour or the attitude they took to the restrictions. Thus, section 5.3 presents the main themes addressed in this chapter: perceptions and attitudes to different restrictions, and discovering the factors that motivate Saudi women to buy fashion online. Indeed, their perceptions of the various restrictions and therefore their attitudes to them, as investigated at the end of the chapter, are assumed to determine their motivation and therefore their behaviour.

The women’s online shopping behaviour and its relation to cultural identity and to exposure to life abroad are considered in the continuation of the phase two analysis, in Chapter 6.

5.2 Coding interviewees

This research seeks to understand women’s behaviour in restricted environments; it is therefore necessary to understand their behaviour in light of theories that explain how different kinds of women (in terms of religiousness of dress) deal with the restrictions that are imposed on environments of different kinds. Thus, three codes are used to classify interviewees: their religiousness of dress is operationalised by the Hijab Index and their
behaviour towards restrictions is operationalised by psychological reactance and system justification. These codes were developed from the literature as tabulated in Table 6.

**Table 6: Coding of interviewees by Hijab Index, system justification and psychological reactance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hijab Index</td>
<td>(Tolaymat and Moradi, 2011; Swami et al., 2014)</td>
<td>High (Niqab) → 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium (Hijab) → 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low (Unveiled) → 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Justification</td>
<td>(Kay et al., 2009)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Reactance</td>
<td>(Knight et al., 2014)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The phase 2 interviewees are referred to in the remainder of this thesis by identifiers based on these codes. They were first each assigned a two-digit ID number, followed by a letter (H, M or L) indicating a high, medium or low rating on the Hijab Index, then a second letter denoting degree of exposure to the international environment (explained in the following chapter) and finally the first letter of the participant’s name.

For instance, the identifier 05HLL is interpreted as follows:

- 05 is the arbitrary ID number;
- H indicates high religiousness of dress / Hijab Index;
- L indicates low exposure to international environment (i.e. she has never travelled abroad);
- L means that her name as transcribed into the Roman alphabet begins with L.

**5.2.1 The Hijab Index**

Religiousness of dress, for the purposes of this thesis, is the extent of a woman’s adherence to the requirements of Islam regarding her clothing, and more specifically her headwear. It is indicated by the Hijab Index (Tolaymat and Moradi, 2011; Swami et al., 2014). Its dimensions are the frequency of wearing a typical style of veiling or headwear and the level of its conservativeness. Tolaymat and Moradi (2011), Swami et al., (2014) and others have ranked women’s religiousness of dress by asking questions such as: How often do you wear an Islamic headscarf (e.g., hijab, chador, burqa, etc.)? Similarly, this research asks ‘How frequently do you change the type of hijab that you wear when you travel abroad?’ The only difference in the question is the inclusion of ‘when you travel abroad’, to reflect whether women retain the same type of headwear when free of their country’s restrictions. In fact, this question also partly reflects the attitude to system
justification, since the relevant theory states that once a restriction is imposed on individuals, they tend to rationalise it, defend it and apply it (Laurin et al., 2013). Likewise, according to Kohlberg’s maturity values (Kohlberg, 1976; Kohlberg, 1969), the more orthodox believers in a system always embrace their own values and do not change them easily, no matter where they are.

Thus, as summarized in Table 7, this research identifies the type of hijab worn during each interview and supports this evidence by asking each interviewee whether she was happy to be wearing it and whether she changed it when travelling abroad. ‘High’ indicates wearing a niqab with no change, while ‘medium’ indicates wearing a niqab or hijab in the interview, but a hijab when travelling, and ‘low’ indicates no hijab, or wearing the hijab only in Saudi Arabia but changing it when abroad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hijab Index</th>
<th>Headwear worn</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Niqab</td>
<td>Prefers wearing niqab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Niqab or Hijab</td>
<td>Prefers wearing hijab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Unveiled or Hijab</td>
<td>Prefers being unveiled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Religiousness of dress / Hijab Index

As Table 6 shows, religiousness of dress was high for about half of the 34 interviewees, while about a quarter each were rated medium and low. As explained in Chapter 3, it should be noted that these proportions do not represent the situation in the wider Saudi population; according to a recent study, about three quarters of Saudi women believe that women should cover their faces in public, while only 3% consider it acceptable for a woman not to cover her hair (Moaddel, 2013). This unrepresentative sample is, however, appropriate for the purpose of exploring the study’s various themes and thoroughly analysing the views of women showing psychological reactance (i.e. who do not accept that they should cover their hair and may react negatively to any restrictions that limit this right, as they may perceive it), in contrast to the majority who believe that women should cover their faces.
Examples of interviewees’ relevant comments and the corresponding ratings on the Hijab Index are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Coding of religiousness of dress (Hijab Index)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Interview extracts regarding headwear</th>
<th>Hijab Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06HH</td>
<td>“I change it rarely. Once when I was in Singapore and I was at a formal conference, I wore a shayla instead of the niqab”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL</td>
<td>“I never change my niqab anywhere in the world.”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07HLN</td>
<td>“In general I like to wear a niqab that covers the eyes. However, when I travel abroad, I prefer to wear the traditional niqab that shows the eyes”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04HLN</td>
<td>“I do not think that I will change my type of hijab when I travel. Indeed, my husband does not accept our travelling abroad”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09HLD</td>
<td>“I never change my type of hijab when I travel abroad. When people tell me that you can face discrimination when you travel abroad, I believe that as long as I obey my God, he will protect me.”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11HLS</td>
<td>“I am committed to wearing my niqab anywhere in the world. And I am totally free to wear it or not. But I believe in it as a religious requirement”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12HH</td>
<td>“If the country accepts the niqab, then I do. In 2012, when I travelled to France, it is not allowed to wear it, so I took it off”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18MLS</td>
<td>“I wear it because it is modest and I am used to wearing it regardless of the place”</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24HHA</td>
<td>“I have travelled to most of the world with the same type of hijab. I hope that I will die wearing these clothes. I am afraid that if I change my type of hijab and die, I will face my God in another type of niqab”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10HLH</td>
<td>“Honestly, I wear the niqab as you see. I am committed to it and I do not change it”</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03LLA</td>
<td>“When I stay in Saudi Arabia, I wear the shayla. Just to show respect”</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20LHZ</td>
<td>This interviewee did not like to talk about what she wears in Saudi Arabia. However, she commented negatively on the religious police: “When the religious police talk, I feel they are like the dogs barking in the streets. I do not like to answer them but walk sadly away.”</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21LHB</td>
<td>“My fashion style is based on the place and time. Sometimes trousers, skirts. When I was in Lebanon, I wore the hijab. However, in Egypt, I took it off.”</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22LHN</td>
<td>“I am used to planning for events beforehand. If I find it is a Saudi event, I wear special clothes (a scarf). Otherwise, I wear what I want according to the situation.”</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23LHL</td>
<td>“Sometimes I cover my hair with a scarf, out of respect to the society and because I do not enjoy hearing comments from others.”</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08MHA</td>
<td>“I wear the niqab in Saudi Arabia. But abroad, I feel people do not like it. That is why I take it off there. I hope that Allah will forgive me for this behaviour.”</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.2 System justification behaviour

Jost et al. (2004) suggest that for different reasons which include regulating the need for certainty, order and fairness (Kay et al., 2008; Jost and Hunyady, 2005), persons are sometimes motivated to rationalize and justify the rules and standards of their social systems – even those standards and rules that they would not select themselves (Kay et al., 2009). The term ‘rationalization’ refers to a set of psychological activities, each of which is designed to make a specific target appear more palatable to the ‘rationalizer’ (Laurin et al., 2013). For example, reasoning dissonance research suggests that persons will broadly incline towards maintaining a vision of their behaviour as consistent with their preferences, usually by emphasising the necessity or desirability of a decision that has already been made or an action that has already been taken (Festinger, 1962).

According to Kay et al (2009), system justification behaviour and attitude are coded (as in Table 9) by responses to questions that ask the equivalent of whether “it is difficult to emigrate from Canada”. Thus, any sentence that discourages one from travelling abroad or shows unwillingness to do so is coded as a high system justification in the index. Furthermore, any statement that reflects a preference for the restrictions on fashion and/or defence of such restrictions is coded as a system justification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
<th>Hijab Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02LHD</td>
<td>“I wear the same clothes everywhere. I do not change.”</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hijab index: H = high, M = medium, L = low

Table 9: Examples of system justification coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04HLN</td>
<td>“Now the men have changed a lot. Unfortunately, they are not like before. Their masculinity has worsened. How can a man see his wife or his daughter going out wearing an immodest fashion? A man should stop her going out like that. Even in the house, he should prevent her from wearing hot fashions in front of her sons or her brothers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06HHM</td>
<td>“Unfortunately, nowadays Saudi women blindly imitate Western women in fashion. Nobody thinks about what she may wear and what not. Muslim women have a different fashion style from that for non-Muslims”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09HLD</td>
<td>“Everything has its pros and cons. However, the religious police protect us”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10HLH</td>
<td>“We are in a crazy era. Saudi women imitate Western women in everything. It is crazy. Nobody reflects whether this is right or wrong. They imitate every Western fashion, regardless of our religious values and principles”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01MHG</td>
<td>“I am totally with the religious police. We need them to protect our religious values on the streets”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The religious police are necessary for protecting women and the community. I believe these restrictions are not a real restriction, as you say. The control us for our protection. I believe in these restrictions as being necessary."

“I see the religious police like any other police in any other system. They set up the system, protect it and enforce its rules. They protect me everywhere I go. When I know the religious police can be found in a certain place, I feel safe and lead my life safely, as I know there is someone to protect me.”

5.2.3 Psychological reactance behaviour

In contrast to system justification theory, psychological reactance theory asserts that people respond negatively to restrictions on their freedom, because they are motivated to restore lost freedoms (Wicklund and Brehm, 1976). Thus, attempts at restricting freedom are likely to provoke resistance rather than compliance.

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). Examples of responses coded as indicating reactance are listed in Table 10. Any comment reflecting an attack on fashion restrictions was considered a sign of psychological reactance behaviour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02LHD</td>
<td>“I take off the niqab as soon as I can. I do not believe in it. It is an unnecessary constraint. Furthermore, it is a kind of intervention in my individual affairs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03LLA</td>
<td>“The niqab is not an Islamic requirement. I see it as a rural tradition from the past. I believe that it remains because of the differences in interpretation of the Holy Qur’an.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20LHZ</td>
<td>“I believe that there should be someone who should advise people in the street by smiling and talking gently to them. However, the religious police are very tough people. I feel as though they are barking at people in the streets.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22LHN</td>
<td>“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.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23LHL</td>
<td>“My family sometimes takes what people say into consideration. However, as far as I am concerned, I do not care what anybody says. I uncover my hair and do not fear any of them. However, sometimes I respect their feelings so that I cover my hair when I sit down with religious people. Otherwise, I uncover my hair.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fewer interviewees showed evidence of psychological reactance than of system justification: more than 60% of respondents exhibited justification of the restrictions, in comparison with about 40% who demonstrated psychological reactance. This factor was
not one of the selection criteria for respondents. Furthermore, there is no research to show the extent of either phenomenon in the Saudi community. However, the literature suggests that communities with high power distance, such as Saudi Arabia, demonstrate high levels of system justification (Brockner et al., 2001). Moreover, the higher the average age of the sample, the greater the tendency towards system justification and the less likely is reaction behaviour (Hong et al., 1994). Finally, communities with strong religious adherence show a strong tendency to justify the restrictions imposed on them (Jost et al., 2014). Finally, females always show less reactance towards restrictions than males (Woller et al., 2007). While all of this literature would indicate that the proportion of women displaying system justification would be higher in the general Saudi population than in our sample, the purposive case selection strategy, intended to include significant numbers of unveiled women, mean that as stated above, the sample was not expected to be representative of the population.

Having characterised the sample of participants, the next section begins the thematic analysis of the data gathered in the phase two interviews.

5.3 Thematic analysis

This section analyses the occurrence in the phase two interview data of two types of theme: predefined and emergent. The predefined theme was the women’s perceptions of and attitudes towards restrictions of three types, identified from the literature before the empirical work began. The interviewees were asked about them directly, as there were questions about all of these restrictions in the interview guide. The emergent theme was that of participants’ motivations to purchase online. Its inclusion in the analysis was based on open coding, in that although the interviewees were asked directly why they purchased online, identification of the specific motivations emerged from the open coding, by which only themes repeated sufficiently often are reported.

As set out in Table 11, the three predefined sub-themes were religious fashion restrictions, religio-legal restrictions (enforced by the religious police) and social restrictions (imposed by family and friends). All of these sub-themes appeared in data gathered from all interviewees, because the researcher purposely asked all of them about each restriction.
The table also shows that the emergent theme had two sub-themes: utilitarian and hedonic motivations to buy online. Although these designations of motivation resemble those used in Western studies, they are defined differently for the purposes of this research. For instance, the utilitarian motivation is mainly about the inability of Saudi women to travel to shops as well as the belief held by some that women should avoid going to markets at all. Table 11 shows that roughly equal numbers of women said that they would buy online for utilitarian and for hedonic reasons, but the data indicate that the frequency of references to these motivations was much higher among utilitarian respondents. For instance, while the difficulties of going to the market was a theme addressed by only four of the 18 women who shopped online, they spent on average about 10 minutes talking about how the internet overcame the problems of going to the market in terms of family restrictions (the need to be accompanied by a male) and the ban on women driving. In the same vein, only three women mentioned as a motivation the notion that “markets are not recommended for women”, but this was the only motivation for shopping online that these three gave and appeared to be critical for them. The various utilitarian and hedonic motivations are discussed in detail in sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 respectively.

Table 11: Themes and sub-themes of perception and motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of restrictions</td>
<td>Religious fashion restrictions</td>
<td>Different interpretations of religious restrictions Different criteria for what is accepted from religious perspectives</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religio-legal dress restrictions</td>
<td>The power of religio-legal police Alignment or misalignment of religious police with religio-police values</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social fashion restrictions</td>
<td>Alignment or misalignment of social restrictions</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to buy online</td>
<td>Utilitarian motivation</td>
<td>Difficulties of going to market alone Markets are not recommended for women Buying products not available in the Saudi market</td>
<td>4 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonic motivation</td>
<td>Idea shopping Value shopping Enjoyment shopping</td>
<td>5 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Theme 1: Perceptions of fashion restrictions

The way people conceive their social, gender and religious identity is reflected in their choices of clothing and allow them to situate themselves socially in regard to set codes of
behaviour (LeBlanc, 2000). When it comes to the perception of restrictions, social values are not the same as the level of religiousness (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). For instance, highly religious people perceive a veiled woman as much prettier than an unveiled one (Pasha-Zaidi, 2014). This suggests that there is a close relationship between social values and religiousness. The following subsections differentiate between restrictions according to the origin of the restriction (whether religious, cultural/social, or religio-legal).

Attitude to restrictions can be used to predict behaviour towards an object (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977), which can be to justify or to react against the restrictions (Laurin et al., 2013). As explained above, the theme of restrictions was predefined as comprising religious, religio-legal and social restrictions. Religious restrictions limit freedom in the name of one’s interpretation of the Qur’an (God’s Holy Book) and the Hadith (the words of the Prophet Mohammed). Religio-legal restrictions are those embodied in the enactments of the religious police, based on its interpretation of the Qur’an and the Hadith. Finally, social restrictions limit one’s freedom according to the way that society perceives one and what it may do, sometimes called the ‘subjective norms’ (Ajzen, 1991). All of these come together to build cultural restrictions (Figure 10).

5.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Religious fashion restrictions

Religious 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
Islamic fashion restrictions are summarised in one verse of the Qur’an:

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)

Although these are very clear and straightforward statements, scholars differ over the phrase “that which is apparent”. For instance, in Saudi Arabia and other communities which follow Saudi traditions, scholars (sometimes called Salafists) interpret this to mean, for instance, Ibn Othaimin refers to “the palms of the hands, one eye, or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veils, gloves, head-covers, aprons, etc.” (Al-Albani, 2002). Therefore, these scholars believe that a niqab is obligatory. This interpretation was followed by those participants who believed in it. Thus, 26HLM said: “Nothing is called a hijab; these people misinterpret the Qur’anic phrase. It is the niqab, not the hijab, that is a must.”

However, there are different interpretations of the Qur’anic verses and Hadith teachings. While some Saudi scholars believe the niqab to be compulsory, some believe that it is a matter of preference and others interpret it as not based on Islamic religious rules and not Islamic in origin at all (Al Tantawi, 1983). However, the hijab is quite different, for all scholars believe that it is necessary for women to wear it in public; they restrict what may be uncovered to the hands and face only.

The pronouncements of these scholars are followed in other Islamic countries, where it is understood that a woman should not publicly display any aspect of her sexuality (al-Sharawi, ). She should cover her body apart from the face and hands in loose, opaque clothing which reveals nothing and delineates nothing sexually attractive (Al-Qaradawi,
With these different interpretations, religious restrictions vary according to one’s preferred and convinced interpretation. Thus, some interviewees in the present research believed the hijab to be a religious requirement:

“Uncovering the face is not forbidden and we know it is accepted. 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.” 10HLH

“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. Also, by wearing it, I 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.” 03LLA

The same woman rejected the idea of the niqab as an Islamic requirement:

“I do not believe the niqab is a religious requirement. I feel it is a barbaric traditional requirement; there are different Qur’anic interpretations of fashion-related verses.” 03LLA

This illustrates that participants had different perceptions of the same restriction (e.g. of the niqab or the hijab), which lead to different behaviour in clothing selection in general and in online fashion shopping in particular as seen in the following sections.

5.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Religio-legal fashion restrictions

Since Saudi Arabia is clearly oriented to the more restrictive interpretations of veiling requirements, the religious police, which has more power and influence in society than the secular police on such points (Al-Rasheed, 2013), wants these to be seen as a series of rules which everybody should observe strictly. This leads to differences between the religious and religio-legal restrictions. The implication is that if a woman believes that the niqab is not a religious requirement and she is forced to wear one in Saudi Arabia, she would not be expected to be happy with the restrictions and therefore might react negatively to them. At the opposite extreme, those who align their religious beliefs with Saudi fatwas would be expected to justify the religio-legal system. Such women in our sample were accordingly motivated differently in their online behaviour from those who reacted to this system, as summarised in Table 12. Thus, system justification theory and psychological reactance theory are helpful for understanding their behaviour with regard to these restrictions.
5.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Social fashion restrictions

Social restrictions concern society as a whole, including the impact on a woman’s perception of herself, together with the perceptions of her father, mother, husband, and other relatives and friends, of what should be worn and what should not (Al-Mutawa, 2013). Although there are different items of Islamic clothing (e.g. the niqab, hijab and burqa) (Shirazi, 2001), it is clear that the use of all these Islamic garments is important as visual identifiers (Sheridan, 2006) because of their effect on interpersonal perceptions (Unkelbach et al., 2008). This includes the loose black outer gowns, such as the abaya, worn in Arabia, including Yemen (Moors, 2007), and in Iran (Balasescu, 2007). In Qatar and the UAE, for example, the wearing of such gowns and of face veils is not always motivated by religion (Al-Mutawa, 2013).

Some participants who tended to change their clothes once they realised that these could be seen as defining their religiousness did so merely for social reasons:

“I wear the niqab as others do because of the society I am living in.” 31MLW

“When I am in Saudi Arabia, I wear the hijab out of respect for society. However, abroad, when I want to go swimming, I wear a swimsuit.” 21LHB

“I wear the hijab to show respect for my society. I do not wear it, nor believe in it, as a religious requirement. There are many hijab-wearing women who make mistakes. Pretending to be a good Muslim by wearing the hijab does not make sense to me.” 23LHL

In some Gulf countries, veiling is no more that a social requirement that women are expected to conform to for the sake of custom, tradition and national pride; unlike in Saudi Arabia, it is not a legal requirement (Sobh et al., 2014).

In the oil-rich countries of the Gulf, the black abaya has a distinct local context and tends nowadays to be seen as a badge of wealth and status. In many countries including Iran, Yemen and India, the different designs and quality of fabrics in the chador, abaya or purdah tend to reflect the wealth of the wearer (Abaza, 2007). The equivalent dress to which Saudi men are expected to conform in public comprises the white gown (thawb) and chequered head covering (ghutra). The literature (Pasha-Zaidi, 2014) seems to argue that Muslim female consumers perceive overt sexuality to be degrading, while modesty
characterises “good respectable women from strong families” (Abu-Lughod, 1985). The interviewee quoted here did not see the niqab as a religious requirement, but wore it because of her mother’s teachings:

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.”

26HLM

The list of perceived restrictions drawn from the literature and the interviews is summarised in Table 12. There are three main kinds of restriction: social, religious and religio-legal. These affect the clothes that are socially acceptable, forbidden from a religious perspective, or not permitted in public from a religio-legal standpoint. The consequent behaviour is based on the attitude to the enforcement of the restrictions. For instance, as explained later, when the restriction is based on religio-legal grounds, it can be reacted against by women who have different religious restrictions (self-interpretation). However, when the religio-legal grounds are aligned with one’s interpretation of the Qur’an and Hadith, the consequent behaviour is to rationalise the restriction. Indeed, if the restriction is social (based on the way in which society expects one to behave), one has no motive to react against it, because it becomes one of one’s list of values. One’s online shopping behaviour is based on one’s behaviour in general.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social (the role of family)</th>
<th>Religio-legal</th>
<th>Interpretation of Islamic rituals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Society imposes strict rules on women to wear the niqab. ‘Uncovering the face is not forbidden and we know it is accepted. 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.’ 10HLH</td>
<td>Women must wear the niqab in public places in Saudi Arabia.</td>
<td>‘Nothing is called a hijab; these people misinterpret the Qur’anic phrase. It is the niqab, not the hijab that is a must.’ 19HLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘My mum 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’ 26HLM</td>
<td>One interpretation is that the niqab must/should be worn</td>
<td>‘I am not forced to wear it. But I know they are intolerant of this behaviour and I respect that.’ 20LHZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Before coming to the UK, I felt that my body was a source of shame. Thus, to hide it I used to wear a niqab over clothes a size too big. These are Saudi customs rather than anything halal.’ 28MLA</td>
<td>Interpretation that the hijab is compulsory</td>
<td>‘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. Also, by wearing it, I 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.’ 03LLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I wear the hijab to show respect for my society. I do not wear it, nor believe in it as a religious requirement. There are many hijab-wearing women who make mistakes. Pretending to be a good Muslim by wearing the hijab does not make sense to me.’ 23LHL</td>
<td>Interpretation that the niqab and hijab are not necessary</td>
<td>‘To be a Muslim it is not necessary to cover your hair and it does not mean that you will lose your rights in the society and I can do anything that I want. You can be a Muslim without covering your hair.’ 21LHB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 12: Clothing restrictions in Saudi Arabia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Niqab</th>
<th>Hijab</th>
<th>Unveiled/Uncovered hair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Society imposes strict rules on women to wear the niqab. ‘Uncovering the face is not forbidden and we know it is accepted. 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.’ 10HLH</td>
<td>Society imposes strict rules on women to wear the hijab</td>
<td>The family puts restrictions on its members to be unveiled or to be liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘My mum 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’ 26HLM</td>
<td>‘I wear the hijab to show respect for my society. I do not wear it, nor believe in it as a religious requirement. There are many hijab-wearing women who make mistakes. Pretending to be a good Muslim by wearing the hijab does not make sense to me.’ 23LHL</td>
<td>‘I do not wear the hijab. (sadly) I was forced to take it off (by my husband and his family). I do not claim that I have no responsibility for doing this. I am sure, if I insisted on wearing it, I could do so even if I faced difficulties. My soul pushes me for doing this bad thing.’ 03LLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Before coming to the UK, I felt that my body was a source of shame. Thus, to hide it I used to wear a niqab over clothes a size too big. These are Saudi customs rather than anything halal.’ 28MLA</td>
<td>‘When I am in Saudi Arabia, I wear the hijab out of respect for society. However, abroad, when I want to go swimming, I wear a swimsuit’ 21LHB</td>
<td>‘I like to take my mum’s point of view; my family and mum expect me to be unveiled. For me, my family is the main reference for deciding what is acceptable and what is not.’ 22LHN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 20LHZ | 03LLA | 21LHB |

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5.5 Theme 2: Motivations to buy online

Several studies have made it clear that there are two motivations for shopping online: utilitarian and hedonic (Chang and Chen, 2015). Women chose to shop online when it meets their needs and they enjoy doing so because it demands little effort and time. The present research offers a new lens through which to view their motivation, either justifying or reacting against the restrictions. Women who accepted the restrictions tended to use online shopping quite differently from those who psychologically reacted against them. As shown in Table 13, those who believed in the religious restrictions and justified them did not buy Western or non-Islamic fashions and would wear them only at meetings and parties for females, in such a way as to be accepted according to their interpretation of the religious point of view. While they had utilitarian motivations to buy online, their purchases were restricted to Islamic clothing from Moslem countries. Conversely, those who reacted against restrictions tended to have more hedonic motivations, such as pursuing an idea and value shopping. Thus, both the reactance and justification groups had both hedonic and utilitarian motivations for online shopping, but these differed markedly in strength, as Table 13 shows.

Table 13: Hedonic versus utilitarian motivation and reactance versus justification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological reactance</th>
<th>Hedonic motivations</th>
<th>Utilitarian motivations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System justification</td>
<td>More (to reflect their passion for fashions that are not easily available)</td>
<td>Less¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less¹</td>
<td>More (to accommodate the self-religious restrictions such as an intolerance for going to shops at all)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹For both system justification and psychological reactance are buying for utilitarian and hedonic motivations but one group has more tendency for a certain motivation than the other

The following subsections examine the utilitarian and hedonic motivations in turn, adding another perspective to suggest how these, combined with other psychological motivations, relate to the reactions against the dress code imposed on Saudi women.
5.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Utilitarian motivations

The opportunity to shop at home all day and every day offers great convenience (Hofacker, 2001). Since offline consumers usually try only a few shops before making a purchase (Newman and Staelin, 1972), online shopping has the benefits of gathering product information on a wide range of alternative products more cheaply, easily and quickly than by visiting real shops (Bakos, 1991).

“I used to waste a lot of time walking from here to there in the markets. Roads are congested. I used to spend ages looking for my size. Now online shopping really makes life easier than before. Now, I only buy online.” 04HLN

“It is really convenient for me. It saves a lot of time and effort. I used to spend half a day at least looking for what I wanted. Now life is easier.” 07HLN

“Besides, online is convenient and is better for me – it saves a lot of time, especially because I have three children. I do not have the time to shop as I used to.” 20LHZ

Beside the feeling that online shopping for fashion is convenient, other motivations for buying online emerged from the unique Saudi culture and laws that traditionally restrict the freedom of females to go shopping.

5.5.1.1 Difficulties of going to the market alone

Saudi law forbids women to drive cars or take taxis unaccompanied. According to the news agency reports, this law has its roots in Islamic tradition. A report published by CNN (2014)\(^9\) suggests that the country’s Islamic scholars accept that women may drive in Western countries but not in Saudi Arabia. It is worth mentioning that these fatwas apply only to Saudi Arabia, whereas neighbouring countries such as the UAE, Kuwait and Egypt do not accept these interpretations.

In order to buy offline, a woman has to ask her husband, brother or son to give her a lift to the local shops. Consequently, one of the reasons for buying online is the difficulty that Saudi women face when they want to go out to the shops, given the illegality of reaching them unaccompanied:

“Absolutely, the internet is better and more convenient to me than traditional shopping. Finding someone (husband or brother) to give me a lift to the market is not easy at all.” 19 HL H

“My family have always prevented me from shopping alone ... They require my husband or my teenage brother to go with me.” 17HLA

Even those who are against the constraints and describe them as laws from the “dark ages” have to adapt their behaviour to cope with them, since no other options exist.

“Not like when I was living in the UK, transportation was easy; I could go or drive anywhere easily. In Saudi Arabia, it is very difficult for me as a woman to buy things offline for myself. It is not even permissible to drive. You have to find someone to give you a lift to the shops. Many times I’ve begged any male of my family to give me a lift. Now with Amazon, I can go to millions of shops from home.” 08MHA

“...problems with transport in Riyadh... If you don’t have a personal driver you’re not allowed to take a taxi because it’s unsafe in Saudi Arabia.” 21LHB

5.5.1.2 Markets are not recommended for women

According to the current Islamic Saudi fatwa10 of Ibn Othaimin, one of the most influential Islamic scholars in Saudi Arabia (and other Saudi scholars such as Al-Fawzan and Al Albani), visiting markets is not recommended for women; Ibn Othaimin bases his judgment on such Qur’anic phrases as

“Remain in your houses and show not yourselves with the ostentation of the ignorance of yore; and be steadfast in prayer and give alms and obey God and His Apostle; God only wishes to take away from you the horror as people of His House and to purify you thoroughly.” Aya 33 surat Al-Ahzab

and

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other and because they spend (to support them) from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands) and guard in the husband’s absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband’s property, etc.) As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds,

---

10 According the Urban Dictionary, a fatwa is “is any religious decision made by a mufti (Islamic scholar who is an interpreter or expounder of Islamic law).”
(and last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful), but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great.” Translated by Khan, Surat An-Nissaa Aya 34

Although these interpretations by Saudi scholars are not accepted by others, such as the Egyptians Ghazali and Mohammed Abdo, who believe that women may work, shop and trade, many religious women in Saudi Arabia believe in the Saudi interpretations. This research has found that highly orthodox women believed that it would be wrong for them to visit markets. For example, a participant who until recently had lived in Europe for more than three years and preferred to buy everything except fashion online, believed that according to Islamic belief, visiting the market was not recommended. Therefore, she went there only when necessary:

“I do not like markets. ... They are 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. I do not like that.” 12HHM

The same phenomenon was referred to by another interviewee, although she was rated medium in her religiousness of dress:

“I love it [online shopping] more than TV. Indeed, many families do not approve of their women going out alone. Others do not approve of their women going shopping at all. I believe that online shopping would be helpful for all of them.” 31MLW

5.5.1.3 Buying products that are not available in the Saudi market

Saudi Islamic scholars such as El Menajed and Ibn Othaimin believe that it is forbidden to produce or sell short skirts or women’s trousers, because they may be used in unintended ways, such as wearing them in public. One of the fatwas of Ibn Taima, a historical figure and leading Islamic scholar, appears on the Saudi Kingdom’s official fatwa website:

Each garment that is most likely to be worn by istaan (sinfully) may not be sold or sewn if it is to be used for sin and injustice. This prohibition is the same as

11 http://islamqa.info/ar/102936
selling bread and meat to those who are known to drink wine, selling herbs to those who know that they will use them in alcohol and outrageously, as well as all that was originally thought permissible until it was learned that it would be used to help in sin.

Therefore, Saudi producers are not willing to produce a wide variety of products and the scarcity leads some women to buy products from countries outside Saudi Arabia, such as the UAE, Egypt, Turkey and Europe. Nevertheless, 13HMM, who adopted a highly religious style of dress and claimed never to change it, stated that she went online to buy styles that were not available in Saudi Arabia. Beyond question, these items were not to be worn in public, but at women-only meetings and parties; she said that she would buy these products online because the Saudi market did not stock them in great variety.

“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.” 13HMM

Other women were not used to buying online and not motivated to do so, for reasons discussed below. Nevertheless, they would occasionally go online, but only to buy products with special characteristics such as very large sizes, or meet particular needs such as scarcity in the market. What is clear from the quotations is that women had certain criteria for the selection of clothing from the internet, making the choice of online shopping because of the difficulty of finding what they wanted elsewhere (“my body is slight” or “I have thick bones”).

“As a veiled women, I buy well-fitting clothes since I cover them with a gown. I suffer from being tall because it’s hard to find suitable blouses, but I found one once in a GAP shop. And the website shows all the models before the shop stocks them, so I can follow them up. There are many Turkish websites for veiled women. ...all the fashionable clothes there are for veiled women. I got tired of going around all the shops except GAP. I can find large sizes such as XXL and I buy size XL although I’m thin, because I have broad shoulders. I buy the large size so as to have loose garments that don’t cling to my body. I found another shop called DKNY that sells long blouses but more expensive, so I waited till the sales and then bought one.” 28MLA

“In general, I do not like shopping online for fashion. However, sometimes I am forced to use it. My daughter has special needs with her leg. It is not easy to find suitable clothes for her. This is the reason and motivation for buying online.” 07HLN

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5.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Hedonic motivation

Chiu et al., (2014) cite Hirschman & Holbrook (1982) as defining hedonic value in terms of the value received from the involvement of several physiological senses, distinguished and emotive facets of the shopping experience. Six dimensions of hedonic shopping are the motivations to do with adventure, social status/interaction, gratification, idea, role and value, as identified by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) and derived from McGuire’s psychological motivations (McGuire, 1976). Chiu et al., (2014) consider another psychological motivation to be enjoyment, defined by Davis et al. (1992) as a type of intrinsic motivation that expresses the enjoyment and satisfaction derived from effect the behaviour such as the activities of shopping).

The phase 2 data provide evidence to support three kinds of psychological motivation: those to do with idea, enjoyment and value. Lines of demarcation, as tabulated in table 14, should be drawn here because idea and value perspectives vary with religiousness of dress and therefore the consequent behaviour (i.e. justifying or reacting). Idea and value, for those who believe in the religious restrictions and justify them, restrict the dress and online fashions to female-only meetings and parties. However, from the perspective of psychologically reacting to the restrictions, the idea and value motivations for the public wearing of fashion garments is found to be a way for a woman to attach herself to other, liberal, societies. Thus, such women have a stronger tendency to buy online from the West and not from Arabic or Islamic countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System justification</th>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>Find new designs from Arab and Islamic countries</td>
<td>Use Instagram to find designers who can customize clothes to reflect their accepted modesty level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological reactance</td>
<td>Online as a window to attach the user to other liberal societies. Buying from non-Arab and non-Islamic countries</td>
<td>To distinguish themselves from the rest of society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5.2.1 Idea shopping

Idea shopping refers to people’s need for structure, for order and for knowledge. Shoppers are seen to need informative guidance from outside in order to make sense of themselves (Parsons, 2002). In these terms, 93% of the respondents likely to be able to find, measure and worth new styles, labels, product launches and pre-launch data through online stocks. Women with a high religiousness of dress might buy these fashions but they either tailored them to suit their religious requirements or they would never wear them in public, but only at female-only gatherings.

“I very much love following the fashion. Before, I used to follow Lebanese fashion magazines; now, I love to follow fashion through the internet as long as it can fit my religious requirements. I buy fashions that I can re-model later with my tailor to suit my requirements.” 05HLL

“I am very interested in fashion trends. I used to spend hours following the Instagram fashion accounts to see what is new... I do not buy as much as I follow up. That is why I buy only for my female parties and meetings, from international websites such as Harrods.” 09HLD

Online shopping at the same time offers an opportunity to those who oppose Saudi fashion restrictions to escape from their society’s belief in restrictions to other, liberal, societies. In other words, representation theory explains that Gulf women buy international brands as a way of attaching themselves to other societies (Al-Mutawa, 2013). Likewise, there is evidence in the present research that highly psychologically reactant women faced by Saudi restrictions were very interested in international brands in general and that this window (online shops) helped them to keep in touch with these markets, in particular those women who had been extensively exposed to life abroad. This behaviour is associated with women who are perceived to be psychologically reactant to the restrictions, as illustrated above. It is often reflected in the use of the internet to buy “public fashion” from outside Saudi Arabia

“When abroad I buy online only. Even BHS, I do not buy online from BHS Saudi Arabia; I buy from any other European branches of BHS. I never buy from the Saudi shops” 30MHT
“I love both browsing and shopping online. It gives me interesting ideas about what the current international fashion lines are. Based on them, I decide what to buy online.” 21LHB

While 05HLL and 09HLD both used the internet to follow fashion, 09HLD used it for following international accounts (as a window through which to view fashion), whereas 30MHT used it to follow both Saudi and non-Saudi accounts (i.e. Arabic and Islamic ones).

Furthermore, 22LHN’s behaviour illustrates a psychological reaction (by means of this window) against the social constraints which she did not believe in:

“I believe there is a difference between religion and culture. Religion asks me to wear the hijab but not the niqab. I see the niqab as just as good. However, I do not believe in many fatwas that put restrictions on the types and fashions of clothes. Everyone who calls himself a scholar issues a fatwa. I do not believe that I will not go to paradise just because I do not believe in these people’s fatwas. I do what I believe in, not what they tell us.” 22LHN

5.5.2.2 Value shopping

Value shopping stems from the view that human beings strive competitively to achieve success and to win the admiration of others as well as their own self-esteem (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Women participating in the present study who rated highly on religiousness of dress may have shared this motivation. Unable to wear modern fashions in public, they would display them in female-only gatherings.

“I love to follow new fashion lines on international fashion websites. I am always the first to buy new fashion stuff from international websites. My female friends use me as a reference for the new fashions, because they always see me as a fashion icon at our female parties.” 15HHM

She designs her outfits using Instagram not only to be distinctive, even unique, but also to wear something other than traditional Saudi clothes:

“ I love to design my fashion. I do not enjoy wearing traditional Saudi clothes. I love to be unique and no one else wears what I wear.” 20LHZ

It is worth mentioning, and is discussed in more detail below, that Instagram is a tool used for both purposes: by those who justified and believed in the restrictions, who received
online designs from international websites and sent them to online tailors to make them modest, as well as by those who wanted to be unique. They used Instagram to design their own non-traditional garments, as detailed below.

5.5.2.3 Enjoyment shopping

The phase 2 interviews produced no evidence that the participants felt enjoyment when shopping online. However, three women said that they were motivated to use online shopping for the sake of happiness and fun, and all three were of low or medium religiousness of dress. None of the high scorers on this measure said anything about enjoyment in their use of the internet for this purpose.

“I really love online fashion. As far as I am concerned, it is for fun. More or less everything I buy is online… I think now, I would not know how to buy from an offline market. I have not gone to one for a long time.” 23LHL

“I love shopping online especially in my break time (at work) or when I feel stressed. I browse websites like House of Fraser and Selfridges most of the time, to see what is new.” 35LHK

“I keep waiting for the packages in high excitement. I spend a long time between my study sessions buying online.” 08MHA

5.6 The relation of religiousness of dress to online shopping behaviour

As set out in Chapter 2, section 2.5.1, research proposition P1 asserts that cultural identity affects online shopping behaviour. Thus, religiousness of dress would be related to behaviour in online fashion shopping. The theory behind this is that a woman who wears socially accepted fashion styles can easily find what she wants from the market. As explained below and as detailed in Table 15, system justification theory, supported by empirical evidence in this research, predicts that the higher the level of religiousness of dress and the higher the justification and acceptance of Islamic fashion, the lower the motivation to use online shopping. Conversely, the lower the cultural identity, the higher the expected psychological reactance behaviour and in turn the higher the motivation to shop online.

Therefore, on average, unlike the women of low religiousness of dress, who seemed to react psychologically against Islamic fashion constraints, those of high religiousness of
dress did not feel the need to buy clothing which they saw as misaligned with their Islamic beliefs, or to break with Islamic fashion traditions. However, online shopping can offer benefits other than merely buying unusual or unconventional fashion styles and these appeared to encourage some women of strong cultural identity to adopt online shopping habits. Such benefits include the ease of buying from virtual markets and the current difficulties that Saudi women face in physically reaching the markets (for instance, their being forbidden to drive). Indeed, those whose journey to the markets was easy or who saw shopping as an interesting pursuit in itself did not shop for fashion online. Finally, other reasons mentioned for buying from local Saudi online suppliers included trust in these virtual shops and the slow delivery of goods from international organisations.
### Table 15: Sample of factors motivating Saudi women to shop online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>SJ/PR</th>
<th>RD</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic (3)</td>
<td>More convenient than offline marketing</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>“I used to waste a lot of time walking from here to there in the markets. Roads are congested. I used to spend ages to find my size. Now online makes life really easier than before. Now, I only buy online” 04HLN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>“It is really convenient to me. It saves a lot of time and effort. Yet I used to spend half a day at least to find what I wanted. Now, life is easier” 07HLN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>“Absolutely, the internet is better and more convenient to me than the traditional shopping. In regard to finding someone (husband or brother) to give me a lift to the market, shopping is not easy.” 19HLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More convenient for finding Islamic clothes abroad</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>“I love it more than TV. Indeed, many families do not allow their women to go out alone. Others do not allow women to go shopping at all. I believe online shopping will be helpful for all of them” 31MLW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buying female meeting fashions that are not available in the market</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>“I prefer online to buy fashions that are not available in the Saudi market [such as] T-shirts and trousers for our female meetings and parties.” 13HHM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buying public clothes not available in Saudi Market</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>“I buy online only from abroad as I trust in them and find something new.” 30MHT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonic motivation &amp; organised staff</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>“I love online fashion a lot. As far as I am concerned, it is for fun. Roughly, everything I buy is online...I think now, I do not know how I live from an offline market. I have not gone to one for a long time.... I cannot buy anything that has been handled before. I love everything well organised. In offline shopping, I feel lost” 23LHL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonic motivation and relaxing</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>“I love shopping online specially in my break time (at work) or when I feel stressed. I used to browse websites like those of House of Fraser and Selfridges most of the time to see what is new” 35LHK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea</td>
<td>“I love to follow up new fashion lines in international fashion websites. I am always the first to buy new fashion stuff from international websites. My female friends use me as a reference for the new fashion because they always see me as a fashion icon at our female parties” 15HHM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic &amp; Utilitarian (2)</td>
<td>Convenient and offers opportunity for distinguishing herself</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>“I love to design my fashion. I love to be unique and no one wears what I wear. Besides, online is convenient and is better for me. It saves a lot of time, especially for a mother of three children. I do not have time to shop as I used” 20LHZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For buying international fashion</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>“I love both browsing and shopping online. It gives me interesting ideas of what the current international fashion lines are. Based on that, I decide what to buy online” 22LHN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:** O = Level of use of online shopping; SJ = System justification; PR = Psychological reactance; RD = religiousness of dress; E = Exposure to life abroad; H = High; M = Medium; L = Low.
5.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has begun the analysis of the phase 2 data, starting by detailing the coding of the interviewees according to religiousness of dress, system justification and psychological reactance. It then turned to the thematic analysis of the interview data, dealing with the women’s perceptions of restrictions and their motivation for shopping online. It ended by considering the relation of religiousness of dress to online shopping behaviour.

The next chapter continues and concludes the analysis of the phase 2 data, addressing in particular the participants’ attitudes to non-Islamic fashion and their approaches to online shopping in order to determine the effect of exposure to the international environment on online shopping behaviour.
Chapter 6: Phase 2 analysis, part 2 - The impact of exposure to life abroad on online shopping behaviour

The previous chapter spotlighted the relationship between participants’ attitudes to restrictions and their motivations to buy online. The literature indicates that travelling abroad can reduce system justification behaviour and increase psychological reactance behaviour (Peng et al., 2014). Therefore, on one hand, cultural identity theory is used in this chapter to understand how exposure to another culture may have affected these women’s attitudes to online shopping. On the other hand, exposure to the international environment, according to the literature, has a significant impact on the level of cultural tolerance. Low cultural tolerance may indicate an aversion to imitating other cultures and less responsiveness to promotional campaigns. Therefore, it is expected that a highly culturally intolerant woman would shop less online from Western sources online.

To sum up all the findings of Chapters 5 and 6, the final section of this chapter reports the development of a framework for online fashion shopping behaviour in a culturally restrictive environment, intended to help understanding of how the cultural identity of women in a culturally restrictive environment affects their use of online shopping to accommodate to or react against the cultural restrictions.

Thus, the chapter starts by coding interviewees based on cultural identity, exposure to international environment and online shopping behaviour. The thematic analysis which follows covers two main themes: attitude to non-Islamic objects (e.g. travelling, fashion) and Saudi women’s approaches to online shopping. The general expectation to be tested here is that these attitudinal factors will affect aspects of the approach to online shopping such as buying from international, Islamic or Saudi websites.

6.1 Coding interviewees

To understand how far women adhere to their cultural identity and how far it is reflected in their online shopping, cultural theory is used to understand the closeness of the link between identity and behaviour and its role in their choice of clothing. Therefore, the interviewees were coded by their exposure to life abroad, cultural identity and online shopping behaviour. All of these codes are adapted from sources in the literature. As
shown in Table 16, there were 15 women whose foreign exposure was high and 19 with low exposure. Consistently with this, cultural identity was high in the majority (23 women) and low in only half of this number. Roughly equal numbers of women scored high and low on the online shopping measure. These proportions, as with others discussed earlier, do not reflect the wider Saudi community but rather the criteria of selection for the study, which were intended to provide a range of views and behaviour in the areas of interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to life abroad</td>
<td>(Maddux and Galinsky, 2009)</td>
<td>High → 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low → 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural identity</td>
<td>Peng et al, 2014; Roberts et al., 1999</td>
<td>High → 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low → 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online shopping behaviour</td>
<td>(Venkatesh et al., 2012)</td>
<td>High → 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low → 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.1 Exposure to life abroad

The degree of exposure to international fashion was also used to classify the interviewees in this study and understand their behaviour. For instance, the more people have lived abroad, the higher their ability to question the implicit assumptions behind their country’s beliefs and, therefore, the higher their ability to innovate (Leung et al., 2008; Maddux and Galinsky, 2009; Leung and Chiu, 2010; Maddux et al., 2009).

As illustrated in Table 17, those who had never travelled abroad or had made only short visits were coded of low exposure. The literature suggests that the effects of simply travelling abroad are not like those of living abroad, since being resident requires one’s behaviour to adapt to the new environment (Kim et al., 2001). Therefore, the ability to criticise and be more creative is more likely to be higher for those who have lived abroad than for those who have merely been exposed to life abroad for a few days. Thus, as supported by the literature (Maddux and Galinsky, 2009), women who had lived abroad in order to study, to accompany their husbands, or to work were considered to have had high exposure.
Table 17: Examples of responses used to assess exposure to life abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
<th>RD</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01MLG</td>
<td>“To some extent I travel annually. But I do not travel abroad much. A few times”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03LLA</td>
<td>“Not really, I was brought up in Saudi Arabia. My journeys abroad were few”</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04HLN</td>
<td>“I travelled to Europe. This is a long time ago, more than 10 years. I spent 3 weeks or month”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL</td>
<td>“I have travelled to Dubai and Qatar. But never to the US or Europe”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07HLN</td>
<td>“Yes, I travelled to Malaysia and Dubai”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08MHA</td>
<td>“I travelled to UK and Malaysia. As I recall, the last time was about 2 years ago”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09HLD</td>
<td>“Yes, I have travelled to Lebanon twice”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10HLL</td>
<td>“I have travelled to Turkey and Malaysia but never to Europe”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11HLS</td>
<td>“I have travelled to Malaysia and the Gulf countries. But I have not travelled to any European countries yet”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13HLM</td>
<td>“My family and I travel to the Gulf countries and Turkey”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14HLH</td>
<td>“I have never travelled abroad. I travel only to Saudi cities”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16HLA</td>
<td>“I have never travelled abroad. Only Dubai and other Saudi cities”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17HLA</td>
<td>“No, No, never”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18MLS</td>
<td>“Sorry, I do not accept this culture of travelling abroad”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19HLH</td>
<td>“No, we are not interested in travelling”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26HLN</td>
<td>“I travel only to visit my mom in Jeddah (Saudi City)”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28MLA</td>
<td>“I only travel to Arabic Islamic countries like Egypt (to see my mom) and Syria”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29LR</td>
<td>“Yes, we travel every 3 years to Dubai”</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34MLA</td>
<td>“I am not interested in travelling”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31MLW</td>
<td>“Not much. Few travels”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32MLN</td>
<td>“Only Arabic countries, Lebanon, Jordan and Dubai. I have not visited any European countries yet.”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02LHD</td>
<td>‘Before marriage, I travelled to Egypt, USA, Italy. After my marriage, I visited the UK and the USA. My father in law was in the UK for medical treatment and I finished my master’s degree in the UK’</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06HHM</td>
<td>“I love to travel a lot. I have travelled recently to Turkey, Dubai and Singapore. My husband and I were living in the Netherlands because he was working there”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12HHM</td>
<td>“Geneva, Europe and Malaysia. I have lived for 7 month in France because my husband was working in the Saudi Embassy there”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15HHM</td>
<td>“I travelled to Turkey and France. I lived in the UK for a while because my husband was doing his PhD there.”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20LHZ</td>
<td>“I have lived for two years in the UK”</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21LHB</td>
<td>“I have travelled abroad a lot. I travelled to study and before and after my marriage. I travelled to the USA and Europe: Italy, Austria, Spain, the UK and after that we lived in Lebanon then Egypt. Lastly, my family and I lived in Hong Kong and Australia for a while.”</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22LHN</td>
<td>“I have lived for four years in the UK because I was doing my degree in Business Finance there.”</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24HHM</td>
<td>“My husband and I lived in the UK for five years; he was doing his PhD there”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25MHD</td>
<td>My husband and I used to live abroad (in the UK) for study and work.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35LHK</td>
<td>“Yes, I usually spend my vacations travelling. I did my Bachelors’ degree in dental studies in the USA”</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30MHT</td>
<td>“I travel a lot to Europe, the USA, France, Italy, UK and Switzerland. I was born in the USA and brought up there”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33MHD</td>
<td>“I have lived for one year in the Netherlands”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: RD = Religiousness of dress; E = Exposure to life abroad; H = High; M = Medium; L = Low
As visualised in Figure 11, slightly less than the half of the interviewees had lived abroad. Again, this proportion is not expected to reflect the wider Saudi population figures, as participants were selected to allow comparison and analysis rather than to represent a target population.

For visualising the results in the previous into a meaningful diagram, Figure 12 shows the existence of a correlation between exposure to life abroad and level religiousness of dress. Those women who had lived abroad were less likely to adopt a religious style of dress, while the group whose dress was highly conforming to religious norms consisted predominantly of women who had rarely or never travelled abroad. This can be interpreted, as detailed later, by the cultural identity theory, whereby the more the one is exposed to an international environment, the more one’s cultural identity is affected and therefore one’s behaviour and the fashions adopted are changed.
6.1.2 Cultural identity

Cultural identity is defined as the degree to which a individual classifies psychologically with his/her personal national culture (Kosmitzki, 1996; Sussman, 2000). To identify the strength of cultural identity among the interviewees, the work by (Peng et al., 2014) and the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure developed by (Roberts et al., 1999) were used. The themes based on Peng et al. (2014) and Roberts et al. (1999) should hold the meaning of one or more of the following:

1- ‘My cultural heritage is an important part of my identity.’
2- ‘I have a direct understanding of my cultural background and what it means to me.’
3- ‘I often consider about my cultural background.’
4- ‘I have a lot of fulfilment in my culture and its achievements.’
5- ‘When others with my cultural background are recognized for their accomplishments, I feel as though I have accomplished something too.’
6- ‘I share in the successes of others who have my cultural background’
Table 18: Interviewee coding by cultural identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Cultural identity quotations</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>RD</th>
<th>SJ/PR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01MHG</td>
<td><em>I love these styles very, very much. I have many jilbabs like this. I feel honoured to wear it. It reflects my country's traditions.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02LHD</td>
<td><em>I accept the abaya. It is not a big issue for me. But I do not like to restrict myself to a specific style or colour. All of these issues are cultural issues. I have these cultural beliefs. It often intervenes in my personal affairs to align my style to their precepts.</em></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03LLA</td>
<td><em>This way of thinking has turned our community into a jungle. All the spotlight is on women. You feel when you walk that everyone is staring at you. I know I should be covered but you (a male) should not look at me like that. I have these cultural values. This community finds it a big problem to interpret religious commands.</em></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04HLN</td>
<td><em>Our community has changed a lot because of the internet. Everything has changed from how a woman dresses to how she behaves in everyday life. However, this does not mean that we should ignore our ideology and our limits. I take what can be taken, but I must protect myself by wearing what is Islamic and socially accepted.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL</td>
<td><em>We have our own traditions and values. They are not words only but should be put into action.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06HHM</td>
<td><em>If we hold on to our traditions and values, we will be able to overcome all our social problems.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07HLN</td>
<td><em>Everyone is beginning to wear what she wants whether or not it is aligned with what is forbidden or what is socially accepted. This new generation has broken all rules and values in the name of freedom. The media is the main trigger for that. Even for myself, I cannot control my daughters as easily as before. I must be strict with them to protect them.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08MHA</td>
<td><em>Not really, we do not believe in these dark values. These ignorant traditions do not originate in Islam or Sharia. All that is an accumulation of ignorant traditions through history.</em></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09HLD</td>
<td><em>Saudi Arabia is full of beautiful heritage, values and norms.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10HLH</td>
<td><em>Honestly, people claim that someone who respects their culture is ignorant. However, I believe it is a holy matter from ancient times and I fully respect and believe in it. We are a pure Islamic country.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11HLS</td>
<td><em>I am fully convinced that our culture is the right thing. I use it to benchmark my behaviour.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12HHM</td>
<td><em>I feel that our values and culture are based on Islam.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14HLH</td>
<td><em>All those who surround me are conservative and modest. Culture and values are the main guide to me.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15HHM</td>
<td><em>I am from Riyadh. We do not wear these clothes, few women wear trousers and short skirts. I cannot say that this is a white community. When we advise these few women, we have found that they confess their guilt and intend to stop that [behaviour].</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16HLA</td>
<td><em>I do not care about societal values. I care only about my God, much more than society. [She is against the culture but is more Islamic-oriented]</em></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18MLS</td>
<td><em>Our cultural values come from religion.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19HLH</td>
<td><em>Culture, traditions and religions are holy things that should not be touched.</em></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20LHZ</td>
<td><em>Our community culture is really strict, always advising us to stop doing things not because they are wrong in themselves but because they may lead to wrong outcomes. Everything in our culture seems unacceptable. All of that makes people hate this culture.</em></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21LHB</td>
<td><em>We are conservative and we have always respected this (culture)</em></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23LHL</td>
<td><em>I take my decision based on what my God wants. I respect the culture but it does not mean anything</em></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because the study was conducted in Saudi Arabia and a significant number of respondents manifested a high level of religiousness of dress, is the researcher expected to find that a great many respondents would score highly on cultural identity. Indeed, more than two thirds of the women interviewed had high cultural identity and only a third had low cultural identity. However, scoring highly for religiousness of dress did not necessarily mean that an individual had high cultural identity. For instance, 29LLR did not wear the hijab and was firmly reactant against any law that would restrict her freedom in fashion, but she nevertheless stated that she believed her culture to be the best and that she loved it:

“I am used to wearing what is aligned with our culture and religious requirements. I’m very happy with that. Really it is a beautiful mix when you wear what Islam wants you to wear and what the society accepts. I feel proud of my country’s traditions and values. At the same time, you will find everyone around you approves what you do and is happy with your behaviour.” 29LLR

Conversely, there was evidence that a woman with high religiousness of dress could be in conflict the cultural norms because her standards were stricter than these. Thus, 16HLA
wore a niqab and was happy to do so, but perceived the community to be critical of her extreme religiousness of dress, as she habitually covered both her face and her eyes:

“I do not care about societal values. I care only about my God, much more than society.” 16HLA

Indeed, as supported by cultural identity theory and the potential effects of exposure to an international environment (Peng et al., 2014), cultural identity was found to be correlated negatively with exposure to life abroad. In other words, women who had lived abroad had less strong cultural identity than those who had not. In the same vein, women scoring lower on the cultural identity measure were more likely to react against the restrictions than those who scored highly (Figure 13). The percentages reported in Figure 13 are based on the codes in Table 18.

![Figure 13: System justification versus psychological reactance and cultural identity](image)

6.1.3 Online shopping behaviour

As discussed in Chapter 4, a number of factors will affect online fashion shopping behaviour. One of these is trust: women desert the internet when they feel concern and fear, or a lack of confidence in the seller or the site (Ingham et al., 2015). They are reluctant and fearful to shop online despite the ease of access and plentiful opportunities to use it. Table 19 lists some quotations that indicate the level of use made of the internet for shopping by the women interviewed in phase 2 of the study.
Following the UTAUT model (Venkatesh et al., 2012), online shopping behaviour is classified here into two categories: high and low use of online shopping. The ‘low’ category comprises women who had never tried to buy online or had done so only once and had had a negative experience. Such a negative experience accompanied by the intention to avoid online shopping in future was used as an indicator of low use. However, belonging to the high category does not necessarily mean being a heavy shopper; rather, it means that the interviewee had bought online and enjoyed doing so, although she may have had little experience of online shopping. It also means that she intended to use the internet for shopping again at some point.

Table 19: Interviewee coding by online shopping behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Online shopping quotations</th>
<th>Online shopping use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01MHG</td>
<td>I do not like online shopping especially for clothes because I love to touch them before buying. However, sometimes I feel the need to buy in this way if I want something unique and not available in the market.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02LHD</td>
<td>I rarely buy online. I have bought medicines and stationery, but never fashion online.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03LLA</td>
<td>I have never bought clothes from Saudi Arabia online. However, I used to buy fashion online only when I lived outside Saudi Arabia.</td>
<td>L/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04HLN</td>
<td>I buy fashion online a lot, from America and Europe.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL</td>
<td>I am still new to it. At present I am exploring it. My experience with it was really enjoyable and I am intending to repeat it over and over again.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06HHM</td>
<td>I do not trust online stores. The material may be different. I have never tried and I am not interested in trying.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07HLN</td>
<td>Yes, I buy a lot of fashion online.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08MHA</td>
<td>I have a passion for fashion. On my Instagram account, I have about 1200 accounts. 99% of these accounts are fashion accounts. In fact, I do not buy much from them. But I follow up, once I find what I love, I search online to find the cheapest price or best value.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09HLD</td>
<td>I love online shopping, looking out for the credibility and trustworthiness of the website. I have bought on line from Harrods shops in London in the belief that it will come as described on the website. It is a big brand and it will not sacrifice its name by sending poor quality stuff.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10HLH</td>
<td>I love to buy on line especially in the sale. I do not usually buy at other times because the price might be higher than at sale times.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11HLS</td>
<td>I have never purchased anything online. I just follow up. But I have not tried to do that yet.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12HHM</td>
<td>Yes, it is really interesting. It does not need a journey outside the home. It overcomes the problems of not being able to go out alone [without a male].</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13HLM</td>
<td>I love it. I usually buy from Amazon and eBay.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Online shopping quotations</td>
<td>Online shopping use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14HLH</td>
<td>I have never purchased anything online. However, I follow up different accounts on Instagram. [Why do you not try?] I am not familiar with the internet. I just watch the new local fashion trends.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15HHM</td>
<td>I love to buy online. In 2014, I got the latest fashion trends from New York Dress websites. It can deliver to my home in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16HLA</td>
<td>I do not like buying online. Online shopping is not my best friend!! I’d recommend seeing and touching before buying</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17HLA</td>
<td>I have never bought on line. I like to see and touch the fabric. People have told me the material on the website does not look like what you will receive. My friends have had negative experiences with it</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18MLS</td>
<td>I have never tried to buy on line. I do not trust these websites.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19HLH</td>
<td>Yes, It is an amazing experience. Riyadh is a really crowded city. It is not easy to find a male from your family to give you a lift to the shops. Instagram is really my best friend. Once I see something modest and conforming to my norms, I buy it without hesitation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20LHZ</td>
<td>It is a very interesting experience. I often do not have enough time to go to the markets. With my 3 daughters, it is really difficult to go shopping. Now, I can buy what I want while drinking coffee at my desk.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21LHB</td>
<td>I am always travelling. I do not need to buy on line. I can go any time to London or Paris to buy what I want based on what I see. It is really boring to buy on line.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22LHN</td>
<td>I follow up different blogs and Instagram accounts to give me ideas of what is new. Based on my online search, I buy what is the best from these accounts.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23LHL</td>
<td>Almost everything is bought on line</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24HHA</td>
<td>I cannot go out easily, as you know. I do not like the markets. You know that women should not go out much. The home is the best place for women. Online shopping comes to make my life easier and happier.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26LHM</td>
<td>I have never tried to buy on line. I have to touch and to see before buying</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28MLA</td>
<td>Look, when I was living in the UK, I used to buy on line. But once I settled in Saudi Arabia, I have never tried to repeat this experience. You know, you cannot trust these local websites easily. I am not sure that my products will be delivered to my home!!</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29LLR</td>
<td>I do not buy online when I am living in Saudi Arabia. I buy online only when I am living in the UK. I have no trust in the delivery here.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30MHT</td>
<td>You know I am really busy most of the time. Online shopping is perfect for me. I can buy any time. I love it.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31MLW</td>
<td>I love it. It is not easy for women in Saudi Arabia to go out alone. Many families do not accept that for their females. To shop on line is the best option for these women.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32MLN</td>
<td>In Saudi Arabia, I have never tried and I will not try ... My friends buy on line. But for me, I will never try.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33MHD</td>
<td>I do not shop on line by myself. Buy my daughters are clever at it. I love to sit down beside them and buy what they show me if it appeals to me.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35LHK</td>
<td>Yes, I love online shopping especially at stressful times.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interviewees were roughly equally divided between high and low online shoppers. It is important to note once more that this classification may not represent the proportions present in the wider Saudi community. According to recent research, only 31% of Saudis purchased products online and as few as 13% bought apparel on line (Almousa and Brosdahl, 2013). However, participants for the present research were purposively selected so that roughly half would score highly for online shopping and the other half low, so that the two groups could be compared and contrasted.

**6.2 Thematic analysis**

The themes and sub-themes analysed in this chapter are summarised in Table 20. The first theme is attitude to non-Islamic fashion, reflecting the impact of low exposure to life abroad and comprising six sub-themes: criticising travel abroad, strict upbringing, intolerance to non-Islamic cultures, lack of interest in Western promotional campaigns, aversion to imitating Western women and lack of interest in fashion. The most frequently occurring sub-theme was lack of interest in Western promotional campaigns, mentioned by 10 of the 17 of women with high religiousness of dress. Nine of the 17 referred to their aversion to imitating Western women, making this the second most important sub-theme. Although two of the other sub-themes were mentioned only four times each, they are considered for analysis because these four respondents spent, on average, about 10 of the 60-70 minutes of their interviews discussing these points.

The second theme, online shopping approach, comprises four sub-themes: using international fashion websites with modest designs, buying from local producers, customising and tailoring after purchase and modification and re-coordination of apparel before purchase. The most frequently occurring theme was customisation after purchase, mentioned by half of the 18 participants who scored high on use of online shopping. Six other respondents preferred to customise before buying; in other words, 15 of the 18 customised their online clothing purchases. Ten women reported buying online either from local or Islamic websites (those who were intolerant) or from international suppliers with modest options. Note that some of these ten women were also members of the group of 18 who customised their clothing before or after purchase.
### Table 20: Themes reported in Chapter six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to non-Islamic fashion</td>
<td>Criticising travel abroad</td>
<td>Avoid travelling because of (their) religious beliefs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Criticising those who travel abroad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strict upbringing</td>
<td>Strict upbringing increases cultural identity</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intolerance of non-Islamic cultures</td>
<td>Not accepting other cultures’ norms, values and fashion preferences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of interest in or hostility to Western</td>
<td>No interest in following new trends (e.g. in fashion) of other cultures or</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>promotional campaigns</td>
<td>nations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aversion to imitating western women</td>
<td>Avoiding imitating Western women in their fashion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of interest in fashion</td>
<td>No interest in following any fashion trends</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using international fashion websites with</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modest designs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buying from local producers/designers using</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customising and tailoring after purchase</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modification and re-coordination before</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>purchase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.2.1 Theme 1: Attitude to non-Islamic fashion items

The following subsections are structured as shown in figure 14. They first discuss the factors that affect cultural identity (strict upbringing and the belief that travelling is not recommended in Islam); then they show how cultural identity and a negative attitude to non-Muslim cultures are reflected in (1) aversion to imitating Western women and (2) avoiding looking at Western advertisements. With this negative attitude among women having low exposure to non-Muslim cultures, they criticize foreign travel and lack any interest in following non-Muslim fashions. Ultimately, they lose interest in online fashion, which is in general dominated by foreign fashion. Thus, Figure 14 illustrates the effects of low exposure to life abroad and high religiousness of dress, which tend to be a low tendency to be engaged with international fashion and less likelihood of shopping for fashion online. The second theme, the approach of those women who did have a tendency to buy online, is investigated in section 6.2.2.
6.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Criticizing travel abroad

The negative attitude to foreign culture starts and is leveraged by a negative attitude to travelling abroad. Foreign travel is criticised as forbidden for ideological reasons (Othman, 2006) of religion and culture, which stem from cultural intolerance and hatred of other cultures. People with this lack of desire, or less passion to travel and discover other countries and their cultures and traditions, are strongly affected by their identity and religion (Peng et al., 2014).

Although there are many benefits of shopping online for women’s fashions and motivations to do so, factors such as cultural intolerance can affect the attitude to Western e-shops and therefore online shopping behaviour. Cultural intolerance can even be a reason for avoiding travel to all Western countries, as illustrated in Table 21. Another factor may be the many interpretations by Saudi Islamic scholars of texts concerning travel beyond the Muslim world. These scholars recommend that Saudis should not travel to non-Muslim countries without urgent need, according to a fatwa from the main Saudi Islamic authority.\(^{13}\) They rule against travelling to Western countries in particular, in order to avoid changes in people’s behaviour (Peng et al., 2014). Furthermore, according to Saudi interpretations of Islamic rules, women are not allowed to travel alone and must be accompanied by at least one male relative Ibn Othaimin.\(^ {14}\) All of these factors may contribute to explaining the lack of desire among some highly religious women to travel

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\(^{14}\) http://www.ruqya.net/forum/showthread.php?t=2500
to Western countries. This view is reflected in the comments by the women with high religiousness of dress (and by one with medium religiousness of dress) and by those with low exposure to life abroad, as seen in Table.

Table 21: A sample of quotations showing a negative attitude to travelling abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticisms of travelling abroad</th>
<th>RD</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>CI</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>SJ/PR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“After marriage, I never thought of travelling abroad. I do not want my sons to see unpleasant scenes abroad. I want them to grow them up in a clean environment. I do not want them to see contradictions to their beliefs and views. Later, when they grow up and they know what is right and what is wrong, I will let them travel”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The first time for me to travel outside Saudi was to Qatar. Although it is an Islamic Arabic country, I was not happy at all. I was very disappointed. I saw ladies wearing revealing clothes in the street. All the restaurants have music. I was dissatisfied by it all. …I will never ever travel to Europe”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Our cultural identity is threatened. The internet and scholarships to non-Muslim countries threaten our identity. All of these people who are connected with the internet or who travel abroad bring us new ideas that affect our culture negatively. Moreover, these people look on us as ignorant and say they are living in a different age.”</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have never travelled abroad. I do not need to travel. Even my honeymoon. I do not want to travel and mix with other countries.”</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: RD = Religiousness of dress; E = Exposure to life abroad; CI = Cultural identity; O = Level of use of online shopping; SJ = System justification; PR = Psychological reactance; H = High; M = Medium; L = Low.

6.2.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Strict upbringing with regard to female dress

The level of cultural intolerance rises for women who have developed their cultural identity through strict upbringing (Kolinsky and Fernandes, 2014). Religious families tend to bring up their daughters strictly (Godina, 2014; Daneshpour, 1998). Strict upbringing of girls from childhood is an indicator of what these girls feel they must wear or avoid when adults, except by strict orders or through enticement (Sidani, 2005). This increases the keenness of some girls to choose what is compatible with their requirements and makes them choose carefully not only what they wear, but how and among whom (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). Saudi Arabia is a religious country and Islam is a way of life,
entailing strict orders from parents about what girls should wear. In addition, parents constantly monitor their daughters’ behaviour in order to avoid their being tempted to wear what they should not and encourage their alignment to Saudi norms (Albrecht et al., 2015; Sidani, 2005).

It may or may not be directly related to the use of online shopping, but what can be observed in women of this category is an unwillingness to shop online, despite the presence of elements which diminish their fears, noted above, such as experience, good computer proficiency and awareness of the conditions and obligations in the purchasing process.

### Table 22: Quotations showing how a strict upbringing affects the attitude to different kinds of clothes in adulthood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
<th>SJ/PR</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17HLA</td>
<td><em>I do not wear short skirts at female parties.</em> Why, is it forbidden? Not really, but I have done that since I was young. My mother taught me very strictly never to wear such clothes. I hated these strict orders. I was always dreaming to wear them. However, over time it has become part of my nature and I don’t wear them even after marriage and living away from my mother.*</td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29LLR</td>
<td><em>My mother was strict and decisive with me. However, my father was very merciful and kind. My mom always noticed, observed and followed me from waking to falling asleep. She noticed my clothes, fashions and even the way I ate. Indeed, her teachings still affect me although I have started to wear colourful clothes which were not accepted by my mom. Indeed, I do my best to keep my traditions and values. A big part of it is Islamic and I have to keep that in my heart.</em></td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26HLM</td>
<td><em>My mom has had a great impact on me especially when I was in my teens. She always forced me to wear my niqab and never wear the hijab. I have to wear very modest clothes. She kept telling me, ‘when you marry, wear what you want’. Now, even after marriage, I feel that I cannot easily abandon what I used to do. I love that now and feel happy to do that.</em></td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL</td>
<td><em>Wearing trousers at home with my brothers is not forbidden. However, due to my family restrictions on it, I do not wear those clothes now.</em></td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: SJ = System justification; PR = Psychological reactance; O = Level of use of online shopping; H = High; M = Medium; L = Low.

### 6.2.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Intolerance of non-Islamic cultures

Cultural identity affects the attitude to other cultures (Peng et al., 2014). Reed et al. (2012) specify that identity is any group label that a consumer self-affiliates with; this represents
a clear image of what someone in a particular category does, thinks, feels and looks like (Reed et al., 2012). Strict norms and traditions are an essential part of women’s identity in Saudi society (Lelfdahl and Perrone, 2015; Barazangi, 2008). Since strong cultural identity is reflected in the desire to distinguish oneself from other women in other communities (Othman, 2006), this national identity invites them to associate themselves with their sense of ethnocentricity (Peng et al., 2014).

The norms and traditions of Saudi Arabia include pathways for the entire life of a Saudi woman (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). It contains such events as marriage, divorce, inheritance and property, as well as family systems and certain ways of treating women, together with honour, shame and scandal (Yousuf and Lawton, 2012). This dominant set of values is threatened by the expansion of education, the technological and communications boom and the growth of the media (Schlesinger, 2015).

These have led to the mixing of norms and concepts with those of other cultures and thus to an indirect influence on women’s cultural identity (Othman, 2006; Albrecht et al., 2015). Nevertheless, highly religious Saudi women are found to want keenly to hold on to their cultural identity and are proud of their culture, notably their clothing, according to the literature (Albrecht et al., 2015). Considering that one’s appearance reflects the family, the environment and the level of religion (Rovine, 2009), such boundaries and restrictions on Saudi women’s clothes must be taken into account. Clothing reflects a cultural meaning and carries historical echoes in all countries; it reflects who we are (Arthur, 1999; Chattalas and Harper, 2007). In Saudi Arabia, women’s dress reflects religious and moral commitment and is sanctioned by religion and society (Albrecht et al., 2015; Al-Ghamdi, 2015; Yousuf and Lawton, 2012).

Lack of exposure to other cultures, including their fashions, increases the resistance to newly emerging ideas in one’s own community (Tarrant and Lyons, 2012; Peng et al., 2014). The data show that this applies to the online shopping behaviour of women in Saudi Arabia who have never travelled or lived outside their own country and have spent their childhood and youth in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). The comments quoted in Table 23 illustrate how Saudi women adhere to the obligations of religion and society in their purchasing decisions and in their way of thinking about and reacting to online
shopping services. They preserve the authority of parents and the community through strict upbringing and society’s criticism of clothing options (Sidani, 2005; Daneshpour, 1998).

Table 23: Sample of quotations that reflect negative attitudes to Western fashion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09HLD</td>
<td>Non-Muslims will not accept you if even you dress like them. I do not like to wear them [forbidden clothes]. I wear what my God wants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08MHA</td>
<td>I feel the fashion trends are created by people who want us to abandon our values and norms. I do not like that. Actually, international fashions sometimes, attract me. However, I often feel that they want to misdirect us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18MLS</td>
<td>International fashion is really a silly thing. I am not interested in this culture at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06HHM</td>
<td>Foreigners create the fashion and they criticise us for not following them. I hate this way of thinking. I am not interested in their fashion styles and I do not care what others say about me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12HHM</td>
<td>I am not interested in international fashions. I do not even like going to markets to see what is new.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Lack of interest in or hostility to Western promotional campaigns

Religion significantly affects consumers’ perceptions of how controversial products are advertised. Each person’s commitment to religious values and adherence to beliefs are also relevant to their appraisal of advertising (Farah and El Samad, 2014).

In the field of advertising and publicity, there are many fatwas on the use of images of women. The scholars concerned want to forbid people to look at such pictures and deprive them of contact with them on online sites, as well as prohibiting Muslims from working in advertising (Shyan et al., 2004). They justify this by condemning advertising as a great and dangerous evil; the presence of pictures of women in magazines and newspapers is detrimental to society and may have led many to outrageous conduct (Mutsikiwa and Basera, 2012).

“I see women’s fashion advertisements changing for the worse over time. It becomes more and more offensive. Now, you see women wearing only underwear! It is really offensive. It is very annoying to see these ads on TV. I do not like to watch these seductive media. It is even forbidden to watch such temptations.” 12HHM

Advertising is an important factor and helps bridge the distance to online shopping. There are sometimes sexually suggestive and indeed ‘shameless’ pictures (Mutsikiwa and
Basera, 2012) in advertisements not only for fashion products (Casidy and M. Almossawi, 2014), but also for perfume and make-up, and many interviewees said that they feared to look at them. This confirms the lack of acceptance of cultural difference (i.e. cultural intolerance). In their view, such images do not show respect for women, but insult them.

“Indeed, I see these ads as insulting to women. We were not born to use our bodies to sell a company’s products.” 09HLD

As Table 24 illustrates, highly religious people have an aversion to advertising which they call shameless and sexually exciting, or which call for finery and adornments (Casidy and M. Almossawi, 2014). It is argued that these advertisements of fashionable clothing are not suited to Saudi women (Albrecht et al., 2015)(Peng et al., 2014). Therefore, some people will close any website displaying such material so as not to commit sin (Farah and El Samad, 2014).

“Once when I was searching for a website, I saw fashion ads with revealing clothes. I closed the website immediately.” 07HLN

They will also not allow their children to look at these pages. Strong aversion to these images has been implanted in them (Casidy and M. Almossawi, 2014) and thus they see the advertisement through the lens of religion and not the eye alone (Shyan Fam et al., 2004). When they see such products online, in fact, they see them through two lenses: one of their culture, traditions and customs and the other of Saudi Islamic scholars’ interpretations of their texts (Hramiak, 2014). Indeed, the existence of the many choices on the internet passes the lens of culture but goes on to reduce the choices. Next, the lens of the eye reduces the choices further. Exposure to other cultures is a third lens, but this can dilate one’s vision.15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25MHM</td>
<td><em>I see women’s fashion advertisements changing for the worse over time. It is becoming more and more offensive. Now, you see women wearing only underwear! It is really offensive. It is very annoying to see these ads on TV. I do not like to watch these seductive media. It is even forbidden to watch such temptations.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15http://fatwa.islamweb.net/Fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=165249
“Once when I was searching for a website, I saw fashion ads with revealing clothes. I closed the website immediately…. The start of indecency is the eye. Thus, I keep myself away from watching such stuff. I do not want more sins.”

Do you watch TV, magazines or any media? “Very few”
Why? “I love to watch Islamic channels but only such as AlMajed. I have my own TV and watch it away from my family … I am not interested in watching movie or fashion channels. … I see the ads are really offensive. They do that for money and to damage our community and our daughters. At the end of the day, you may find your daughter wants to imitate them and wear clothes like theirs. I do not like that. I am truly against that.”

“I do not like ads. They are quite offensive.”

In general I am not interested in Western fashion ads on Amazon, eBay or other e-shops. Only when I see the red light for discounts, ha ha.”

“I do not love to watch ads especially for perfumes. They use sexual signs. I hate that so much. Most foreign ads are seductive and not suitable for us. The same for clothes. I am not really interested in these offensive ads”

“It (Western advertising) is really offensive. It hurts my eyes to look at them… I am afraid that it may affect my daughter and me. These scenes are etched on my daughter’s mind.”

6.2.1.5 Sub-theme 5: Aversion to imitating Western women

Since some interviewees had a negative attitude to Western fashion, nine women were averse to imitating Western women, for religious, social and psychological reasons. Previous studies emphasize that persons with a strong cultural identity might be psychologically relatively inflexible in adapting to new cultures (Peng et al., 2014; Tarrant and Lyons, 2012). They may be less able to engage in cultural code-switching, which involves moving away from familiar behaviour in their native culture in order to engage in behaviour appropriate to a remote culture (Molinsky, 2007). Women in this group feel forbidden to buy and wear Western clothes or imitate the West by revealing most of the female body (Othman, 2006). These behaviours underlie shopping in many ways and are guided by scholars through their interpretations of verses of the Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). Despite some variant interpretations, scholars agree with regard to women’s dress. The most important precept is to avoid clothing which might give rise to seduction (Secor, 2002). On this point, the scholars emphasize that women must choose not to imitate Western women and not to look for erotic apparel (Al-Ghamdi, 2015; Yousuf Danish and Lawton Smith, 2012).

In many extreme Islamic societies, cultural intolerance of other people’s religion and culture is underlined (Al-Ghamdi, 2015; Yousuf Danish and Lawton Smith, 2012). This intolerance is leveraged to the point where, as noted above, some scholars condemn travel
and living abroad except where necessary (Murtagh et al., 2012). This makes a society mono-cultural and in this way women in these societies must take some trouble to satisfy those around them. They refuse to consider Western fashion and thus lose interest in fashion altogether, because they respect the scholars’ interpretations and do not want to contravene their religion.

Therefore, instead of focusing on their own culture, individuals turn to consumer ethnocentrism, reflecting a tendency to reject everyone from another group, which is based on the belief that it is inappropriate, immoral or unpatriotic to buy products from other countries (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Sharma et al., 1995). These individuals also refuse to imitate Western women (Albrecht et al., 2015), under what is perceived to be a religious and cultural demand. This is also evident from their associating the demand with religious texts, as illustrated above in Table 24. Pride in their religion and culture moves them away from the culture of others in their dress (Peng et al., 2014) and makes imitation of the West and its women appear detestable.

Both cultural identity and consumer ethnocentrism tend to influence brand choice: such consumers prefer domestic to imported brands (Reed et al., 2012). Low exposure to Western countries weakens their desire to buy Western fashion, whereas living abroad helps people to know and to understand other cultures; they may even experience some foreign elements, thus easing cultural intolerance (He and Wang, 2015). This helps them open up to other cultures (Pecotich & Rosenthal, 2001; Sharma et al., 1995). Women who have not had this opportunity to travel and live abroad are controlled by the dominant culture of their country (He and Wang, 2015), concentrating on the norms and interpretations of religious concepts by local scholars and acting appropriately for their community.

This was evident from the fact that interviewees in the present study strongly condemned imitation of the West and criticized it, as shown in Table 25. This shows why ethnocentric reactions are called judgmental concerning persons who are unalike (Goldstein and Kim, 2006). They gain this reputation because they see that other cultures are different from theirs and as ethnocentric individuals they regularly misunderstand different cultures (Gudykunst and Kim, 1992) and are less effective in intercultural situations (Toale and
Ethnocentrism is illustrated clearly in the criticism below of other women who adopt fashion freely.

Table 25: Sample of quotations that reflect the aversion to imitation among women of high religiousness of dress and low exposure to life abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01MHG: <em>I feel following the fashion is a shame. When a woman reveals parts of her body in the name of prestige or belonging to the elite, I do not think it is acceptable for a Muslim woman, not even a Saudi one. When I go to a party, I look upward, feeling the fear of God. Sometimes, at a wedding party, I just go to congratulate them and then escape.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL: <em>I do not like to follow fashion because many of them [fashionable women] are too immodestly dressed. For me this crosses two red lines. It is blind imitation. It is very bad behaviour to imitate non-Muslims in what they wear. It is catastrophic.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14HLH: <em>I really love following fashion. However, it involves many things that make me ashamed to copy them. Sometimes, the fashion that is worn is not acceptable. My daughters watch and imitate me. I do not want to mislead them. I always feel the sinfulness of doing that. I hope my God will forgive me for that.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16HLA: <em>This is a kind of blind imitation. Just imitating celebrities. TV and the internet has affected people negatively and made them imitate without thinking. They do not imitate the fashion and dresses alone, but also body movements and gestures.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL: <em>Some fashions are not suitable for us. Sometimes, in female-only parties, I wear some less restricted fashions. This does not mean that all fashion is suitable. Many fashions trends I cannot follow or even accept. There are many red lines between us and some fashion models.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17HLA: <em>I do not like fashion at all. This does not mean I do not care what I wear. My clothes should be clean and neat. Fashion trends are sometimes aligned with my values. But I do not follow them.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33MHD: <em>It fits neither our culture nor our traditions. It is not aligned even with our religious values. Everything has its limits. If I wear what a non-Muslim wears, what is the difference between her and me? I feel this is very offensive behaviour by fashion designers when they come to Saudi Arabia and present their trends. It does not respect our values. Unfortunately, this is the problem of people who accept them and want to imitate fashions blindly.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34MLA: <em>I am not convinced by what is called fashion trends.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11HLS: <em>Unfortunately, the new generation has an attitude to blind imitations of Western countries. The Arabic and foreign media have had a great role in that. All of these actors are manipulating our culture and nobody directs our young people in the right way. ... These foreign media negatively affect our young people’s ideologies, behaviours and their lifestyles – tattoos, odd haircuts and other shameful behaviours which come from imitating the West.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.1.6 Sub-theme 6: Lack of interest in fashion

Given this aversion to the imitation of Western fashion and that Western fashion is dominant worldwide and is often interchangeable with the term ‘Western clothes’, seven women expressed no interest in fashion at all. This sentiment completely accounts for the
avoidance of fashion in general and the unwillingness to follow it, as shown in Table 26. Fear of being monitored and the harsh criticism of their society have helped to steer Muslim women away from the Western fashion scene (Albrecht et al., 2015) and indeed fashion of all kinds.

Table 26: Comments by women who were not interested in fashion at all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17HLA</td>
<td>Are you familiar with international fashion, brands, etc? “Unfortunately, I do not have any background in that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26HLM</td>
<td>“I do not wear what fashion trends dictate; rather, I wear what I like. I do not care what the fashion trend is. The same for my daughter, we do not follow any fashion trends.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33MHD</td>
<td>“I love only flowers. I buy anything with flowers. People are always criticising me because of that. Actually, I do not care about them. I love one design and am happy with that. I am not interested in finding other designs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18MLS</td>
<td>“I am not at all interested in fashion and following it. It’s a waste of time, effort and money.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of these respondents rejected all fashion and restricted herself to something which allowed her to feel free of sin; hence her decision to “buy anything with flowers” as a design. She was happy with this and would not change it, regardless of what people said about the design.

Likewise, another woman clearly stated that she did not want to commit sin by looking at women wearing fashionable clothes:

“I do not like fashion and the markets. I am afraid of committing a sin by looking at women dressing in such clothes. I do not feel comfortable with it.”

Are you interested in fashion?

“Not really, anything that covers me is acceptable. I am not interested in learning what is socially favoured and what is not.” 11HLS

But women wear clothes not only for need, but to gratify their sense of beauty (Goldman and Waymer, 2014). However, this group of women has moved away from a sense of beauty and replaced it with a feeling of guilt and frustration from the pressures of society (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). The same sense of guilt accompanies some women who care about fashion and fashion clothing (Albrecht et al., 2015). Although this has no direct relationship with shopping online, wearing these outfits does encourage online shopping (Kumar and Singh, 2014).
“I love following fashion a lot. However, it involves many things that make me ashamed to copy them. Sometimes, the fashion that is worn is not acceptable. My daughters watch and imitate me. I do not want to mislead them. I always feel the sinfulness of doing that. I hope my God will forgive me for that.”

As previously discussed, Saudi women in close correlation with their national culture and religion are proud of their culture and distance themselves from all others (Othman, 2006). Thus, many of them hate fashion which does not represent their culture and religion, rejecting any tradition or resemblance to the global fashion. Hence, they find it comfortable to use the internet and buy things other than fashionable clothes.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Saudi women’s approaches to online fashion shopping

There are many strategies for handling products after purchase to fit one’s personal needs (Rambo and Liu, 2011). Most of the women interviewed for the present study who rarely bought clothes online would, on those rare occasions, adopt certain techniques to align the fashions they had purchased with their personal and societal beliefs and values. As noted above, online shopping offers many advantages to users, although what is offered may conflict with societal and personal values. In other words, the aim of these techniques was to balance the impulse to buy fashion online with the need to satisfy one’s own and one’s community’s values and beliefs. As the literature shows (Rambo and Liu, 2011), consumers look for the services that emphasize product satisfaction (e.g. redesigning, repair/maintenance, customization, consultancy) to suit special customer needs, such as age or gender. Most of the respondents attributed the need to customize the product after purchase to social factors, emotional factors, or even lack of trust, as supported by the literature (Armstrong et al., 2014).

The approaches taken by Saudi women for these purposes were (1) buying directly from abroad what would fit without any change; (2) buying from local Islamic or Arab producers or designers; (3) customising the product after purchase, through either online or offline tailors; (4) sending the design before purchase to an online tailor, since e-tailors are available through social media networks (notably, Instagram). The following four subsections consider these approaches in turn.
6.2.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Using international fashion websites which offer modest designs

The first and easiest approach to overcome the problem of the mismatch between international designs and Islamic beliefs, as the literature supports (Gurbuz, 2014; Yousuf Danish and Lawton Smith, 2012), is to use international fashion suppliers who offer ‘modest’ designs.

“Modest means long sleeves and skirts. They offer fantastic designs from international fashion designers.” 08MHA

“I love buying my fashion from NY Dress as it has ‘modest’ options.” 15HHM

Therefore, some women with experience of online shopping chose modest clothes available from e-shops. This is one of the important ways of keeping women’s clothes fashionable and modest at the same time (Gurbuz, 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015). They were able to 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 & Spenser 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.” 13HLM

“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 easily. Thus, I love to buy from them.” 28MLA

6.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Buying from local producers/designers using social media

As sales of newspapers and magazines have recently declined dramatically (Pelet and Papadopoulou, 2013), publishers have turned to innovative digital channels, although revenue remains lower overall (Nylén, 2015). Growing social media use has revolutionised communication among individuals and groups at all levels, amplifying the power of consumer-to-consumer conversations by removing the limits on the number of people that any one person can easily and instantaneously communicate with (Azhar and Abeln, 2014). Instagram is a content community for the exchange of information in the
form of photographs and videos which anyone can share, rate or comment on (Azhar and Abeln, 2014).

In parallel with the above developments, smartphones have been widely adopted, creating a highly dynamic and interactive mobile environment, where vendors and customers can meet via social networks at all times and in all places (Pelet and Papadopoulou, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, there is evidence from the present interviewees that the social media are more popular than earlier modes of online shopping were.

I love shopping on Instagram a lot more than the traditional online shopping. Once I find what I like on it, I order it immediately. 19HLH

Many participants considered the social media to provide a window through which to follow the new trends and movements, either international or locally.

“Instagram makes life easier for us. I follow many accounts to know the new trends. I even love to buy from it. My friends refer me to good stuff from it.” 09HLD

“I am crazy about fashion. I have 1200 international accounts on Instagram, about 99% of them for fashion websites. I take the ideas and buy them if they fit my religious requirements or go to my tailor to design them from me after fitting them to my religious requirements.” 08MHA

I love to follow celebrities. I follow up what they purchase to know the trends. It is a better way to know which stuff is most appealing, instead of using the traditional websites. Once I see what appeals to me, I do my best to know where this celebrity bought her stuff from; then I buy it.” 31MLW

Indeed, this intensive following up leads in many situations to purchasing behaviour:

“I love following fashion trends through Instagram. I love to see the fashion trends in colours, designs and styles. Based on what I see, I decide what to buy.” 33MHD

Saudi women use Instagram very often and feel familiar with it. Due to the increase in loading photographs as reminders and for other purposes, such as celebrities and bloggers, in addition to fashion shopping, they are increasingly confident and at ease in sharing, rating, or freely commenting on photos or videos of all kinds. They feel associated with
them and imagine that they are dealing with the Instagram organisation itself, just as they deal directly with designers and sellers.

This research shows that although Saudi women admitted to some concerns over online shopping, they felt safer with social media shopping (e.g. via Instagram), because they had heard objective recommendations and online referrals. Shopping through social networking sites such as Instagram helps women (even religiously oriented ones) to overcome the lack of interest in Western fashion and still avoid all that is forbidden in dress.

“You know, Riyadh is a really congested city. Online shopping is the perfect solution for us. But it is not easy to buy from Amazon and eBay because of the delivery problems. But we can buy from local virtual shops online through Instagram. These e-shops are able to deliver whatever I purchase to my home easily and quickly.” 19HLH

6.2.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Customising and tailoring after purchase

Customising and tailoring purchased items is an approach open to those who want to feel that they are complying with religious values (Albrecht et al., 2015). A significant proportion of the Saudi women interviewed preferred after purchasing a dress to send it to a tailor who would make the garment modest and align it with their religious beliefs. Interviewees admitted, however, that this approach to obtaining modest fashions could be very difficult and tiring.

First, they must make an effort to choose clothes that could be adjusted, since some would be difficult to modify. Thus, while 07HLN agreed that it might be possible to modify short sleeves, “there is difficulty in adjusting short clothes, so I do not buy short dresses”.

After the selection stage, purchasers would think about how to modify the clothes, as the examples in Table 27 illustrate. Then they would buy the appropriate fabric and agree with the tailor on the modifications needed. These women explained that this approach was relatively expensive because of the added materials, time and effort.
Table 27: Sample of quotations on customising and tailoring after purchase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28MLA</td>
<td>I often customise after purchase. Sometimes, the item is a one to buy but it is short-sleeved or has a short skirt. Thus, I buy it and then send it to the tailor to customise it to fit what I want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33MHD</td>
<td>Customising a garment can be good if its hem is below the knee. Otherwise, customising it will make it bad. But if it is short sleeved, I see tailoring that is fine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34MLA</td>
<td>Usually, I cannot find online the required level of modesty. So I buy what can be tailored; then send it to the tailor to fix it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11HLS</td>
<td>Yes, in recent years, you cannot easily find what you want to buy. Clothes become more and more revealing. So I buy it and then customise it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26HLM</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05HLL</td>
<td>I go to international fashion websites. I select what appeals to me but can be customized to fit my religious needs later. I do my best to buy the best but still respect my religious values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06HHM</td>
<td>I tailor what I purchase. However, not all clothes can be altered easily, such as short-sleeved or sleeveless clothes, which are difficult to fit. I do not buy them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04HLN</td>
<td>I know a very clever tailor. I buy what I want. After that, she does a fantastic job to customise it to fit my religious requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Modification and re-coordination before purchase

Organizations are under increased pressure to innovate, leading them towards new, collective forms of collaboration in creativity (Imperatori and Bissola, 2011). This approach to creative collaboration provides a solution for Saudi women’s difficulties in fashion shopping. Since the increasing complication of problems needs collective solutions to generate novel outcomes (Imperatori and Bissola, 2011), women can select what the designers offer online or can ask a designer to change the design to comply with their values. Conservative women find it difficult to buy from international designers, but others will put some effort into modifying their designs by adding pieces after a garment is purchased.

It has lately even become common for Saudi women to design their own garments before purchase. Another approach is to have their clothes designed by professional designers or, as supported in the literature (Pelet and Papadopoulou, 2013), to contact a designer via Instagram to design garments especially for them.

“I contacted a good designer who I found on Instagram. She is a well-known designer. I asked her to design fashionable clothes to fit my religious needs. She..."
shows me the designs and we choose one from them. Then she customises it and makes a new Islamic version for me.” 14HLH

Table 28: Sample of quotations on customising designs before purchase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20LHZ</td>
<td>I love to wear my own designs. When I see a good design, I put my own touches on it and send the new design to my tailor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07HLN</td>
<td>I contracted a professional fashion designer to design my clothes specifically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15HHM</td>
<td>I contacted a good designer who I found on Instagram. She is a well-known designer. I asked her to design fashionable clothes to fit my religious needs. She shows the design and we choose one from them. Then she customizes it and makes a new Islamic version for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16HLA</td>
<td>Instead of buying then customizing it, I see it costs the same to design my fashion directly with a professional designer. The designer sends me designs and I select which one is the best. I love to put my own touches on it. Afterward, the designer finalizes the design and produces it for me. Why do I need to go to a designer? Simply, I love to buy fashion but it does not fit my religious requirements. That is why I go to a designer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth mentioning that this shows the function and the importance for online shopping of travelling abroad, where it can be seen that even religious women love Western fashions, whether or not these coincide with religion, and are heavy online shoppers. Such women buy modest clothes, make adjustments or contact designers.

Sometimes, however, designers provide styles that are far from being customized to fit them. In this case, those who can afford it take advice from social media friends and communicate directly with e-tailors on Instagram to design a special product for them. Instagram enables both parties, the designer and the client, to exchange images and designs and to chat directly so that agreement can be reached before the purchasing process.

“I contracted a professional fashion designer to design my clothes specifically.” 07HLN

This concludes the detailed analysis of the phase 2 interview data. There follows the presentation of a framework developed to answer the research question, which also serves to summarise the findings.
6.3 Developing a framework for online fashion shopping behaviour in a culturally restrictive environment

The research findings are summarised in Figure 15, which shows why a specific group of women in Saudi Arabia have a negative response to shopping online for fashion in general and to for Western fashion in particular, regardless of the benefits that are believed to result from it. It is clear that study participants who had high religiousness of dress and low exposure to life abroad felt a stronger affinity and respect for their own culture (cultural identity) than did their less religiously dressed peers and those who had lived abroad; at the same time, the former group displayed a tendency to reject other cultures. This tendency was characteristic of women who had had little exposure to non-Muslim cultures; they criticized foreign travel and thus had a negative attitude to everything related to alien lifestyles and to Western fashion in particular. Such a negative attitude to Western culture appears to have constituted a psychological barrier to accepting Western garments with the result that these women became uninterested in fashion. Their sense of cultural identity and negative attitude to non-Muslim cultures were reflected in the tendency to prefer not to imitate Western women and hence to avoid their online fashion stores. Thus, they avoided Western advertisements and hence were less affected by online marketing campaigns, leading to low interest in online representations of international non-Islamic fashion. Therefore, such women did not buy fashion online, at least from Western e-shops.

Figure 15 thus summarises the findings of the study in the form of a framework explaining women’s online fashion shopping behaviour in a culturally restrictive environment.
Figure 15: Framework for online fashion shopping behaviour in a culturally restrictive environment

Chapter 7, which follows, concludes the study with a detailed discussion of the findings, in terms of the research propositions and objectives, consideration of the contribution and limitations of the study, and some recommendations for future research.
Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This research was initiated to probe below the surface of women’s fashion behaviour in Saudi Arabia, a country different from any other because it is where Islam originated and claims to be governed today by Islamic rules. Unlike European countries, where one can buy and wear any fashion at any time without restriction, Saudi Arabia is governed by laws, values and beliefs about different clothing styles. This in turn affects women’s shopping behaviour in both online and offline contexts. The aim of this study has been to spotlight their behaviour in the online context. Online shopping is perceived to be the window enabling Saudi women to learn about other cultures and nations, which, according to this study, affects their perspectives on and attitudes to their own beliefs, together with their perceptions of the world and what they may wear. Saudi women who have lived abroad are contrasted with others who have never travelled, while women who accept and welcome Saudi Arabia’s fashion laws, culture and values are contrasted with those who do not. Analysis of the data has helped to answer the research question: “How do women in a culturally restrictive environment behave in an online fashion shopping context?”

This research has identified and investigated the factors that affect such women’s online shopping behaviour. This research is different from any other previous research in that it uses reactance and justification theories to understand the behaviour of women engaged in online shopping. Indeed, this research is the first to apply system justification and psychological reactance within marketing science to understand religio-cultural restrictions. It also spotlights the restrictive environment so as to understand its unique impact on behaviour.

The sections which follow cover, first, contributions to knowledge (7.2), then contradictions and confirmation with regard to the framework used to guide the research. These are presented in the section on revisiting propositions (7.3). Furthermore, before presenting the implications and generalisations (7.5), which are based on and logically derived from the findings, the summary of findings is presented in section (7.4). The
limitations of the research are explored next, and the thesis ends with some suggestions for future research, based on the findings and these limitations.

7.2 Contribution to knowledge

The above detailed analysis of the findings supports the view that it the present study contributes to knowledge in a number of areas. This section summarises in turn each of three main contributions.

1- Extending the definition of convenience motivation in order to include the avoidance of imposed restrictions

2- Being the first to borrow from sociology system justification theory and psychological reactance theory and use them in a marketing context to understand and explain consumer behaviour in an online context.

3- Being the first to use cultural identity in an online marketing context to understand how different levels of cultural identity lead to different behaviours online.

7.2.1 Extending the definition of convenience motivation

Whereas the Western definition of utilitarian motivation involves convenience (Jones et al., 2006), this research extends the utilitarian concept to comprehend overcoming restrictions. Although the literature states that buying from Western countries (e.g. France) or choosing products produced locally but carrying the names of Western companies (e.g. French names) is perceived to be motivated hedonically (Salciuviene et al., 2010), this research found that this statement is not absolutely true in all cases. It was found that those who justified the restrictions and had high cultural identity would purchase Western products only when necessary, such as to meet special needs (i.e. for utilitarian rather than hedonic reasons). Nevertheless, those who admired foreign cultures, especially those who had had high exposure to life abroad, would psychologically categorise Western products in terms of freedom and happiness, congruently with categorisation theory (Cohen and Basu, 1987). Consequently, it was found that women manifesting psychological reactance were more hedonically motivated than those who accepted and justified the restrictions.
7.2.2 Being the first to borrow system justification theory and psychological reactance theory

System Justification Theory and Psychological Reactance Theory are used extensively in the discipline of sociology to understand how individuals react to/justify restrictions on their behaviours. This research is the first to borrow such theories in order to understand women’s behaviour in a market dominated by extensive restrictions on the way in which they should and should not dress. Virtual shops can be seen as freedom vehicles for those who do not accept such restrictions and hence use virtual shops as mechanisms of reaction. At the same time, virtual shops are seen as an alignment vehicle for those who believe in and justify the restrictions. In other words, because of the obstacles preventing Saudi women from commuting to the markets when they please (e.g. they are not allowed to drive and outside their homes must be accompanied by a guardian), some of them, who believe in these restrictions, argue that online shops are the best way for woman to buy clothes. Thus, this research explained consumer behaviour, using system justification and psychological reactance theories, in an online context in general and in online fashion in particular in a restrictive legal and cultural environment.

7.2.3 Being the first to use cultural identity in understanding consumer behaviour in an online context

Justification behaviour or reactance behaviour is determined by the attitude to restriction. This research is the first to employ the cultural identity perspective for understanding why women engage in justification or reactance behaviour when they encounter fashion restrictions. Furthermore, it is the first to show how cultural identity can lead to different online shopping behaviours.

This research furthers understanding of how cultural identity and the factors affecting it can be used as a mechanism for reflecting the rejection of restrictions. The lens of cultural identity is used to understand how exposure to international trends affects women’s attitudes to Western fashion and advertisements, and therefore the behaviour adopted vis-à-vis buying online from Western fashion e-shops. This research also contributes by finding evidence that the stronger cultural identity is, the greater is the tendency to rationalise restrictions and laws. This finding is close to that of (Kaynak and Hartley,
Nevertheless, this research is the first to spotlight this phenomenon in the marketing context in general and online shopping in particular. Third, online shopping behavioural science is enriched in this study by understanding women’s shopping behaviour in an Islamic country (where there are limited opportunities to go shopping). Finally, this research contributes to the literature on fashion marketing in Islamic countries in general and Saudi Arabia in particular.

Furthermore, this research contributes to knowledge concerns another aspect of culture. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance, there is a tendency to reject new ideas and new things (Eisend et al., 2015) including, as this research has found, fashions that do not conform to cultural tradition. Indeed, as Hofstede (2011) explains, the more religious countries also tend to have higher uncertainty avoidance. Furthermore, collectivism is found to affect the perception of trust in the online context, manifested by a reliance on social media (Sia et al., 2009). The present study makes a similar finding but with the novel contribution that the motivation for using online shops is interwoven with the need for customising and tailoring. Thus, the propensity to rely on social media is greater than in a study set in Korea (Sia et al., 2009), because the need for customisation increases the perception of risk.

As can be extrapolated from previous arguments, this research interpreted consumer behaviour, from cultural identity perspective, in fashion online shopping environment.

### 7.3 Research propositions revisited

This section reconsiders the five propositions made in section 2.5 concerning the effects on online shopping behaviour of cultural identity, system justification, psychological reactance and exposure to life abroad. It offers a brief outline of the findings in the form of three new propositions based on the original five.

#### 7.3.1 Both system justification and psychological reactance affect online shopping

Supporting the argument in the literature that the level of belief in a restriction affects the attitude to justifying it (Laurin et al, 2013), this research shows that the women who believe in restrictions not only justify them but also defend them. As in Kohlberg’s
hierarchy of values, a higher level of belief in rules leads people not only to apply, accept and defend them but also to put higher importance and stricter rules on one’s behaviours (Kohlberg, 1969). Indeed, as illustrated in this research, some women who show high levels of religious observance (beliefs and practices) in their dress adopt stricter dress codes than those imposed by the religious police. This leads such women to use online shops so as to justify and rationalise the extent of the restrictions.

This research has found that women who justify the Saudi restrictions on dress may still buy online, but their motivations and approaches differ from those of women who psychologically react against these restrictions. The former are more utilitarian purchasers than the latter, because those who justify the restrictions align their behaviours with the restrictions; therefore, they use online shopping as a mechanism to accommodate themselves with the restrictions. There is no clear reason for buying unconventional fashions online, so their approach is mainly to buy from Islamic online suppliers. Alternatively, if they find something that they like on a Western website, they send it to a tailor to be customised so that it aligns with the restrictions that they accept.

Those who justify the restrictions also buy for hedonic reasons, but these too are different from those of psychologically reactant women. The women who justify laws are purchasing for ‘idea’ motivation, to discover new fashion trends in other Islamic countries, especially Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt. They also have ‘value’ motivation, as they can use online shops which are based on social media, contacting them online to have their products customised and designed according to their values. Such women, especially those who are familiar with the internet, enjoy designing their own unique fashions online without feeling the guilt of buying transgressive fashions.

As to the motivations and approaches to buying online of those who do not accept the restrictions and react against them psychologically, they are intending to do unusual things (relative to Saudi context); therefore, they are more hedonic. They enjoy buying online because it gives them more freedom and variety than what is available in local shops. This does not mean that they have no utilitarian motives. Indeed, they are also obliged to go online to overcome the physical restrictions on shopping freely. For them, online shopping gives them the physical freedom from the geographical restriction of not
being allowed to drive and the cultural freedom to buy whatever they wish without being blamed. When they buy online for hedonic reasons of idea and value, these are again different from those of the system justifiers. In ‘idea’ motivation, rather than following Arab and Islamic fashion icons, the psychologically reactant women are more likely to follow a Western fashion icon. As to value, this is mainly about distinguishing themselves from the society around them, whose restrictions they reject.

7.3.2 Saudi cultural identity negatively affects online shopping behaviour

Cultural identity has been found to affect online shopping in both positive and negative ways. When cultural identity is strong, the motivation for online shopping will be mainly utilitarian, to overcome the restrictions of going to the shops. Indeed, the attitude of those with high cultural identity is to justify the restrictions by aligning their behaviour with them. Therefore, in contrast to the argument in the literature that buying foreign brands increases the intention to purchase (Chao et al., 2005) because of enhanced hedonic motivation (Salciuviene et al., 2010), these women would shop online not for Western products but Islamic ones. Since Islamic online shops are perceived not to be trustworthy because of their newness, there is an orientation towards social media as a source of seeking trust. This finding is supported by the literature (Sia et al., 2009).

On the other hand, when cultural identity is weaker, the negative perception of the restrictions increases. This leads to the psychological reactance behaviour of buying more from international websites and avoiding buying from local shops. Indeed, the purchase motivation for this group of interviewees was found to be more hedonic than among those with strong cultural identity.

7.3.3 Exposure to life abroad reduces the strength of cultural identity of Saudi women and therefore increases their propensity to shop online

In the literature, travel abroad is found to affect tolerance of other cultures (Peng et al., 2014) and attitudes to other cultures (accept, believe, or follow versus reject, disbelieve, or avoid) (Al-Mutawa, 2013).

Travelling abroad affects how the travellers perceive their own country’s values, norms and beliefs. Thus, as found in this research, women who had lived abroad were found to
have lower cultural identity than who had rarely or never left Saudi Arabia. It cannot be claimed that all participants who had lived abroad had weaker cultural identity; on the contrary, two women reported having shopped online while living in the UK, purchasing clothes from Turkish websites, but when they returned to Saudi Arabia they stopped buying online.

Others who had weaker cultural identity as a result of travelling abroad were more likely to react against laws and restrictions. Therefore, they continued to buy online from international suppliers to maintain their attachment with the liberal cultures with which they had become familiar while abroad.

7.4 Research objectives revisited

The previous section began a detailed consideration of the findings by revisiting the research propositions. In order to explore more fully the contributions made by the present study to understanding the behaviour of women shopping online for fashion under cultural, legal and religious constraints, this section addresses in turn five questions based on the research objectives set out in section 1.3.2. The questions are presented on the basis of their relative importance and also presented in logical order of their importance. In other words, the first finding that is presented, defining how the attitudes toward the constraints affect online fashion shopping is the most important finding. Furthermore, it is the foundation for understanding the motivation of Saudi women to buy their clothes online. The third research question underlines the role of cultural identity in the perception of and attitude to fashion in Islamic and Western virtual shops and therefore to purchasing behaviour. Thus, based on the findings from the third question, the reasons for buying clothes online are clarified and summarised. The objectives are presented based on findings importance and logical sequence.

7.4.1 How do attitudes to the constraints affect online fashion shopping?

The foremost research question in this thesis asks how different attitudes toward dress restrictions lead to different online shopping behaviour. Therefore, it is important to distinguish three types of restriction or restrictive value potentially applying to the online shopping behaviour of the participants. These are religious restrictions (based on the
individual’s interpretation and her following of religious scholars), religio-legal restrictions (enforced by the religious police) and societal restrictions (enforced by the family, friends and community). Indeed, there is no evidence that any of interviewees saw Islam itself, based on her understanding, as representing restrictions to be reacted against. All 34 interviewees justified their religious restrictions in terms of their own interpretations. Conversely, the restrictions enforced externally by the religious police and by Saudi society were met with psychological reactance where they did not matched an individual’s own internal values, i.e. her interpretation of the religious restrictions.

Indeed, in countries which impose restrictions on the individual’s freedom of choice, the reaction of the individual may be predicted by two theories: system justification theory (rationalising the restriction) and psychological reactance theory (attempting to break the restriction) (Kay et al., 2008; Kay et al., 2009; Laurin et al., 2012). In Saudi Arabia, the power distance index is 90, which means that people accept a hierarchal order even when it cannot be justified (Hofstede, 2013). In this study, about two-thirds of the respondents showed evidence of system justification. This research thus contributes to knowledge by supporting the proposition of (Jost and Hunyady, 2003) that the power distance index can be a predictor of system justification behaviour.

The present study also contributes to the established literature on the motivation to buy online by proposing two additional psychological motivations: the motivation of justifying the restrictions by aligning one’s choices with the constraints (Knight et al., 2014; Laurin et al., 2013) and the motivation to psychologically react against the constraints by choosing the reverse of the intended action so as to restore one’s freedom (Brehm, 1966; Knight et al., 2014). Indeed, justifying the restriction makes people defend it psychologically by controlling their behaviour (Laurin et al., 2013; Laurin et al., 2010; Kay et al., 2005). This contribution is summarised in Table 29.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>What is known</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System justification</td>
<td>Accepting and rationalizing restrictions (Jost et al., 2004)</td>
<td>Using online shopping to align with restrictions originates from the interpretation of Islamic scholars (such as discouraging women from shopping altogether; Knight et al., 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological reactance</td>
<td>Less interested in trying new things (Jost and Hunyady, 2003; Kay et al., 2005)</td>
<td>the belief that markets are not good places to spend time in). However, there is a general tendency not to try this “thing”. Only those who are motivated by external factors to use it (e.g. the family) are addicted to it.</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
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</table>
|                         | High religiosity leading people to system justification (Jost et al., 2014)     | Buys online to overcome the restriction.  
|                         | Rejecting and reacting in reverse behaviour against the aim of the restriction (Brehm, 1966) | However, few women were found to be reactant to restrictions.  
|                         | Females are less likely to show reactance (Woller et al., 2007)                |                                                                                                                                 |
|                         | Higher age-ranges are less reactant (Hong et al., 1994)                       |                                                                                                                                 |
|                         | Power distance is negatively correlated with reactance (Brockner et al., 2001)  |                                                                                                                                 |

Accordingly, it was found that women who had shopped online when abroad also bought the Islamic fashions that they needed in Saudi Arabia online. In contrast, those who perceived the restrictions negatively were impelled by their psychological reactance, when they lived in Saudi Arabia, to buy online from abroad, even if they sometimes bought foreign fashion online and thus bought less from Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, it seems that women who rationalised the restrictions had less of a tendency to use online shopping to buy socially unacceptable fashions whenever they could (e.g. when travelling abroad) in order to defy the restrictions. Instead, they shopped online for the sake of convenience, ease and speed. Furthermore, they saw online shopping as aligned with their restrictions. For instance, some subscribed to the interpretation of certain scholars that it is not appropriate for women to spend time in markets. This research found that they were motivated to shop online so as not to spend time in local markets. Therefore, this theory can be used to predict that women who have strong social justification will be more likely than others who do not have such beliefs to go online to buy socially acceptable, locally produced goods. According to the logic of the theory, such people would not be likely to engage in online shopping in order to pursue international brands.
However, consonant with psychological reactance theory, women who reacted against the restrictions imposed on them were found to shop online whenever possible, such as when among friends, travelling abroad or at private parties, as a way of breaking the rules by buying goods considered socially less acceptable. Consequently, as representation theory holds, the breaking of rules is proposed as being associated with buying international brands for the sake of imitating Western people and thus attaching one’s identity to the ‘free community’.

Since there is a relationship between the level of religious adherence and system justification behaviour (Kay et al., 2008), the SJT is used in this case to understand the impact of the level of religiousness of dress on online fashion shopping behaviour. Thus, this research questioned whether religious adherence could affect women’s behaviour when fashion shopping online. The theory behind this is that a woman who wears socially accepted fashion styles can easily find what she wants in the market. The findings, interpreted by system justification theory, show that the higher the religiousness of dress and the stronger the justification of Islamic fashion restrictions, the weaker the motivation to shop online for international fashions in general. Likewise, the weaker the cultural identity, the stronger the psychological reactance behaviour, and therefore, as the findings suggest, the stronger the motivation to shop online.

Thus, on average, unlike the women of low religiousness of dress, who seemed to react psychologically against the fashion constraints of Islam, women of high religiousness of dress did not feel that they needed to try new things and to buy clothes misaligned with their Islamic beliefs, or to break with Islamic fashion traditions. However, if in response to external factors they were exposed to online shopping, then there is a high probability that they would become accustomed to using it, because it is aligned with their rules and restrictions against going to the market and other places where the sexes mingle.

Because the fashion culture in Saudi Arabia is wholly dissimilar to that of the West (Almejmaj et al., 2014), women who are not psychologically ready to buy other cultures’ fashions are neither involved nor interested in buying online. This is because local Saudi shops with an online facility are still too immature to convince women that they can to fulfil their customers’ expectations. This finding is close to the explanation offered by
7.4.2 Why do Saudi women shop for fashion online?
Based on the answer to the first sub question, this sub question probes below the surface to understand the various motivations for buying clothes online. Since Saudi Arabia is so different from other countries, it was expected that this research might find the motivating factors to be different from those mentioned in the literature. The research findings, supported by the literature (Okada, 2005; Chang and Chen, 2015; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003), tell us that Saudi women are motivated to buy clothes online for utilitarian reasons (Childers et al., 2002) (e.g. convenience) and hedonic reasons (e.g. enjoyment). However, some differences do emerge because of the existence of restrictions. Table 30 summarises the findings, which are elaborated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>What is known</th>
<th>What is not known</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian</td>
<td>‘Utilitarian’ in the Western definition refers to making the purchasing process easier (Scarpi et al., 2014) (Cheung et al., 2015; Anderson et al., 2014; Lim and Rashad Yazdanifard, 2015).</td>
<td>Does the restrictive environment create new aspects of utilitarian motivation?</td>
<td>Saudi women can use online shopping to overcome the restrictions of the community and the religious police, such as the prohibition against driving, the need to be accompanied by a male relative and the lack of transportation. Therefore, their utilitarian motivation is that it overcomes the obstacles of society’s restrictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Freedom defined as having no salesmen, no queues, no crowds and the chance to “show me what I want” (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001)</td>
<td>In the restrictive environment context, what can online shopping offer under the “freedom” concept?</td>
<td>The freedom concept is extended to include the ability to overcome restrictions by buying fashion online and as an enabler for buying what is not socially accepted in offline shops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>In individualistic countries, online</td>
<td>In the fashion sector, is the need</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia, which has low individualism, shares this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
shopping is used for differentiation (Moon et al., 2008) for differentiation limited to individualistic countries only? aspect. This can be interpreted as due to fashion’s having unique features, or to the study’s considering females only.

| Information search | Online shopping offers extensive and valuable knowledge which helps in purchasing decision-making (Park et al., 2015) | For a collectivist country, are company websites the main source of information for decision making? | Saudi women use social media and not websites for information. Instagram is the window through which to follow new fashions by following their celebrities and fashion icons. This is the case both for those with high religiousness of dress (the niqab) and for unveiled women; each has a fashion leader to follow through the virtual window of the internet. |

7.4.2.1 Utilitarian reasons

In contrasting the benefits of buying online with those of offline shopping, a significant number of authors (Bhatnagar, 2015; Lim and Rashad, 2015) have focused on convenience and utilitarian reasons (Cheung et al., 2015; Anderson et al., 2014; Lim and Rashad, 2015). ‘Utilitarian’ in the Western definition refers to making the purchasing process easier. But at the same time, Saudi women can use online shopping to overcome the restrictions of the community and religious police, such as the prohibition against driving, the need to be accompanied by a male relative and lack of transportation. Therefore, convenience does not mean the same to them as it would to a Westerner, but means rather a way of avoiding a restrictive environment as well as intrinsic convenience.

This research found other utilitarian motivations, such as access to unusual fashion styles, overcoming women’s legal prohibitions against driving from their homes to the shopping malls, lack of time to shop, cultural preferences, and their own limited ability to search for the products that they need, together with the current difficulties that Saudi women face in physically reaching the markets (such as their needing to be driven to them by a relative).
7.4.2.2 Freedom

Online shopping offers freedom of patronage defined as involving no salesmen, no queues, no crowds and the power to “show me what I want” (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001). The present study has expanded the concept of freedom offered by online shopping to consider the ability to break restrictions by using it as an enabler in buying what is not socially accepted in accessible offline shops.

Finally, this research has found that online behaviour has a mutual impact on culture. In the present study, online shopping is found to have reinforced cultural changes. By its function as an online window, Saudi women are now more exposed to global products and the experience of other cultures, which provides them with a deeper understanding of cultural tolerance.

7.4.2.3 Hedonic reasons

Regarding the hedonic motivation, there is no strong evidence that this age group of women is motivated to buy fashion for the enjoyment it might bring. This is congruent with the literature (Loureiro and Roschk, 2014) which says that older people are less affected by hedonic motivation. However, the present research has found that other hedonic motivations, such as idea and value shopping, are relevant to the age groups who use online shopping. This implies that they are not so much interested in the website graphics and colours as in obtaining something unique and differentiating themselves from their peers.

The finding of a differentiation motive is similar to that of (Moon et al., 2008), who conclude that unique sunglass fashions are purchased online in order to distinguish their wearers from others in countries where the individualism score is high. However, the present study found that this phenomenon is associated not only with countries of this kind but also with Saudi Arabia, where individualism is low. This may be interpreted to mean that sunglasses are different from fashion; besides, the sample studied by Moon et al. comprised both males and females, whereas the present study examined females only. It may be that women have a stronger tendency to distinguish themselves than men do.
Evanschitzky et al., (2014) argue that in a collectivistic culture, the hedonic motivation for shopping is associated not so much with self-oriented gratification as with an others-oriented role. However, while Saudi Arabia has a high collectivism index according to Hofstede et al (2015), the present study found a tendency to buy for gratification, value and ideas, but not for role. There was no case among the two groups of respondents of anyone shopping online for gifts (role-shopping). This may result from the shipping problems known to affect Saudi Arabia. On average, delivery takes more than a month, with the possibility that the purchased items will never arrive. Furthermore, buying clothes as gifts is not as easy as buying other standard products, because they require accurate knowledge of sizes, colours and preferences. In contrast with the west, it is taken for granted that the products will arrive and in a timely manner. There is a risk to online shopping in Saudi; therefore that also needs to be overcome. The shopper must have a stronger motivation, therefore to go online.

7.4.2.4 Information search

In contrasting online with offline shopping (Kollmann et al., 2012) and extending information search theory (Park et al., 2015), this research does not find the traditional online context (websites) to be a good enough source of information for online patrons to use before they buy products from a website. It has been found, however, that this source of information influenced online buying behaviour in three other ways. Supported by the verdict of (Park et al., 2015) that extensive and valuable knowledge can be found on line which helps in making the decision to buy something, the present research has found that a number of Saudi women used blogs and e-magazines in general and Instagram in particular as a window for learning about new fashion by following celebrities and their fashion icons. This was the case for those who adopted high religiousness of dress (the niqab) and unveiled women alike; each group had fashion leaders to follow through the virtual window of Instagram.

7.4.3 How does cultural identity affect online fashion shopping behaviour?

Because the attitude to fashion constraints affect online fashion shopping behaviour, it is helpful to investigate the underlying reasons for positive and negative attitudes to constraints. Cultural identity theory is proposed as a way of understanding the level of
belief in constraints. In other words, the higher the cultural identity, the stronger the tendency to justify the restrictions instead of reacting against them. This research supports this argument.

Clothing reflects cultural meanings and carries historical implications for all countries; it conveys who we are (Chattalas and Harper, 2007). In Saudi Arabia, then, women’s dress reflects religious and moral commitment and in any case is imposed by religion and society (Albrecht et al., 2015; Al-Ghamdi, 2015; Yousuf and Lawton, 2012). Norms and traditions are an essential part of women’s identity in Saudi society (Lefdahl and Perrone, 2015; Barazangi, 2008). It can be seen as part of a Saudi woman’s nature to differentiate herself from others (He and Wang, 2015), since strong cultural identity is reflected in her desire to distinguish herself from other women in other communities (Othman, 2006); this sense of national/cultural identity invites women to associate themselves with ethnocentricity (Peng et al., 2014). Furthermore, as supported by the literature, when advertisements contravene society’s values and norms, they can be perceived as offensive and rejected (Zeng et al., 2009). This research contributes by showing that the level of the perception of offensiveness is conditioned by the level of belief in one’s cultural identity and of exposure to other cultures.

Table 31: Contributions to knowledge regarding cultural identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>What is known</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>The stronger one’s cultural identity, motivated by low exposure to life abroad, the lower one’s acceptance of fashion from other cultures and the less one engages in online fashion shopping from Western websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The stronger the belief in one’s cultural identity, the weaker the tendency to accept other cultures (He and Wang, 2015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure to other cultures increases tolerance towards them (Peng et al., 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Older people are more culturally intolerant (Lian and Yen, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High religiosity is associated with cultural identity (Albrecht et al., 2015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_The stronger one’s cultural identity_, (1) the greater the tendency to prefer not to imitate Western women and hence avoid their online fashion stores; (2) the stronger the aversion to Western advertisements and therefore less one is affected by online marketing campaigns; and (3) the lower one’s interest in online fashion, which is dominated in general by foreign fashion.
Exposure to other cultures by living among them and thus, to some extent, accepting and perhaps adopting other cultural values (Crowne, 2013) leads to the mixing of native norms and concepts with those of these other cultures and thus indirectly influences women’s cultural identity (Othman, 2006; Albrecht et al., 2015). However, highly religious Saudi women are found to be eager to hold onto their cultural identity and proud of it, notably as regards clothing (Albrecht et al., 2015), for their appearance reflects the family, the environment and the level of religious adherence. Thus the boundaries and restrictions on Saudi women’s clothes powerfully influence these women’s choice.

Besides supporting the finding of Lian and Yen (2014) that older people are too risk intolerant to technology and constrained by traditional barriers to easily adopt online shopping, this research contributes to knowledge by considering a higher level of cultural identity and lack of exposure to other cultures as further barriers to online shopping in international markets, at least when it comes to fashion shopping. The present study has found that lack of exposure to other cultures, besides its impact on cultural identity, increases resistance to new and emerging ideas, including those on fashion, in the community (Tarrant and Lyons, 2012; Peng et al., 2014). Data were found to support the contention that online shopping is rare among those who have never lived outside Saudi Arabia and rarely travelled abroad, with the exception of those who have encountered interventions from relatives or friends, for instance, and have developed a passion for the internet. A cultural intolerance of Western fashion was found to apply to most others.

The findings reveal that women with a low exposure to life abroad adhered to the obligations of religion and society with regard to their shopping and purchasing decisions, consistent with the findings of (Reed and DeFillippi, 1990). The negative attitude of such women, who have been little exposed to non-Muslim cultures, makes them criticize travel abroad and have no or little interest in following fashion. Their cultural identity is reflected in (1) their tendency to prefer not to imitate Western women and hence avoid their online fashion stores; and (2) their avoidance of Western advertisements and therefore the weak effect that online marketing campaigns have on them. The outcome is their not being at all interested in online fashion, which is dominated in general by foreign designs and suppliers.
One of the factors found to leverage the impact of lack of exposure to life abroad, leading to cultural intolerance, is a strict upbringing. The authority of parents and the community, and society’s criticism of many clothing options is felt throughout childhood and youth (Sidani, 2005; Daneshpour, 1998), which affects the adult woman’s attitude to Western fashion. Such people were found to be less interested in shopping online, despite the presence of elements that break down fears, such as experience, good computer proficiency and awareness of the conditions and obligations of buying in this way.

7.4.4 What are Saudi women’s approaches to buying fashion online so as to align their values?

As technology acceptance models argue, positive attitudes leads to motivations and motivation leads to behaviour. This is one of the conclusions of the present research. This research cites evidence that different attitudes to constraints (which are developed on the basis of individual cultural identity) lead to different motivations (in terms of hedonic and utilitarian) which in turn lead to different behaviours, as revealed by this research sub question.

There are many ways of dealing with products after purchase so as to adapt them to personal needs (Rambo and Liu, 2011). Thus, most women who did not buy or rarely bought clothes online were found to use certain techniques to align what they had bought with their personal and societal beliefs and values. Online shopping offers many advantages to patrons, although what it offers may conflict with these values. The aim of the techniques adopted is to strike a balance between the urge to buy fashion online and the urge to satisfy the values and beliefs of the customer and her community. As the literature shows (Rambo and Liu, 2011), consumers look for the services that emphasize product satisfaction (e.g. redesigning, repair/maintenance, customisation, consultancy) to suit special customer needs such as those imposed by age or religious custom. Most of the reasons for customising a product after its online purchase are social, emotional, or even mistrust of the product itself.

The techniques used by Saudi women to balance their desire to remain fashionable, as a physiological demand, with alignment to the societal values that they accepted and believed in were (1) buying what fitted them directly from a foreign outlet without changing it; (2) having it customised by a tailor after purchase; (3) sending the design to
an online tailor (e.g. through social media networks, Instagram in particular); and (4) contacting the company in question to design something exclusively for them.

7.4.5 What are the factors that affect online fashion shopping behaviour?
The final research sub-question summarises and lists other factors that should be considered by e-marketers and the marketing departments of virtual stores about the critical factors for shopping among Saudi women fashion shoppers. This research has identified a number of factors affecting online shopping behaviour and discussed their consequences. The main motivating factors are trust, shipping delays, social factors and the need to touch possible purchases. Table 32 summarises the contribution to knowledge made by the present study regarding these factors and the following subsections discuss them in relation to the existing literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>What is known</th>
<th>What is not known</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Trust is a critical factor for online shopping. Brands can compensate for risks (González-Benito et al., 2015)</td>
<td>Does cultural identity have a role in selecting an approach?</td>
<td>If the customer psychologically accepts the other culture, she will buy online. If the customer does not accept the other culture, she relies heavily on online endorsements from her friends (using social media) to buy from online Islamic shops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>In developed countries, isolated and remote areas tend to use online retailers more in their shopping (Ren and Mei-Po Kwan, 2009)</td>
<td>Is this the case in a rich but still developing country?</td>
<td>Shipments are often not delivered quickly. However, customers still buy online even if the goods arrive three months later. In other words, delivery time is not a very critical factor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>The family affects one’s online shopping behaviour (Badgaiyan and</td>
<td>Can Saudi women shop independently?</td>
<td>This research contributes to knowledge by spotlighting the role of men in women’s decisions to buy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>What is known</td>
<td>What is not known</td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for touch</td>
<td>Fashion is heavily dominated by the need for touch (Blázquez, 2014)</td>
<td>Strategies by retailers are investment in branding and in promotions (González-Benito et al., 2015) and using multiple channels (Cho and Workman, 2011)</td>
<td>It can be critical for those who buy and consume products directly. What women can usually do is to accept other cultures and learn about brands. These may replace the need to touch prospective purchases. However, for those who cannot purchase clothes directly without trying them on for fit, touch is not the main factor; indeed, the critical factor at this point is tailoring to fit the norms and values accepted by the buyer.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

7.4.5.1 Trust

Consistent with other studies set in the West (Gefen et al., 2003), the Far East (Chen et al., 2015; Sekhon et al., 2010), the Middle East (Elbeltagi, 2007) and Saudi Arabia itself (Eid, 2011), the sense of trust was found to be a critical obstacle or encouragement to online shopping. However, the present research finds that a lack of trust applied only to Saudi websites and not to international ones. This finding is congruent with assertions in the literature that branding can replace the need for touch and compensate for possible risk (Hongyoun and Kim, 2009; González-Benito et al., 2015). Even for women with low cultural identity or high exposure to life abroad, as found in the literature (González-Benito et al., 2015), brands can be a substitute for touching the product and so reducing the perceived product risk. This is their chosen strategy; they do not mind buying a branded product as long as it is aligned with their values.
Social media (Instagram) were found to provide a way for Saudi women to reduce the perceived risks of online shopping. This extends the model by (Bai et al., 2015), which asserts that social support through social media reduces uncertainty among the buyers and sellers of a product, by showing that in countries with high risk avoidance, the reliance on social media may be higher than it is elsewhere. Congruent with Sia et al, (2009), high collectivist countries rely more on trust and tend to be guided by “peer customer endorsement” more than “portal affiliation”.

Therefore, strengthening the arguments of Sia et al. (2009), Bai et al. (2015) and (González-Benito et al., 2015), this research has found that women with high cultural intolerance were more focused on peer customer endorsements from their online friends, whereas women with high exposure to life abroad women relied more on brand names.

7.4.5.2 Shipping

Saudi Arabia has not yet developed a stable shipping system (Al Ghamdi et al., 2012). This has meant that notwithstanding the setting of the present study in Riyadh, a few of the interviewees recalled a miserable experience with online shipping. In contrast to the reports in the literature that shipping services in developed countries are reliable and that online shopping occurs more frequently in remote and isolated areas (Ren and Mei-Po Kwan, 2009), this research has found that women living in remote areas, even within the capital city, had a weaker tendency to buy online because they feared that the products might never reach them. Nevertheless, the problem of shipping was not found to be a critical reason for not buying online. Although some participants had had a bad experience with it, it did not deter them from continuing to use online outlets.

7.4.5.3 Social factors

The family is reported in the literature to affect online shopping behaviour (Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015; Afzal and Khan, 2015). This research contributes to knowledge by spotlighting the role of males in women’s decisions to buy on line. In Saudi Arabia, local regulations usually require any woman shopping offline to be accompanied by a male relative (Al Ghamdi et al., 2011). This study found that online shopping offers more freedom to buy by obviating this requirement.
Saudi women can purchase discreetly online; this refers to the opportunity that online shipping provides to conservative women who would rather buy personal products discreetly. Some studies (Wu et al., 2015) show that with online shopping, manufacturers and retailers only reinforce and support the convenience of women in order to comply with their culture and traditional beliefs.

This study goes on to suggest the preferences of online shoppers among online retailers. At the top of the list were those offering an easily navigable online system, with entertainment features such as the shoppers might encounter in traditional shopping malls. As reported in the literature (Farah and El Samad, 2014), other factors such as advertisements, risk-free payment and the secure delivery of products are not elements that frequent online shoppers particularly considered. For frequent shoppers, there are systems and policies currently implemented in Saudi Arabia that ensure the safety of purchasers against online fraud. Interviewees mentioned that their banks offered credit cards exclusively for online purchases, protected with security features to combat online scams.

7.4.5.4 The need for touch versus tailoring to fit values

The ambience of a retail setting affects consumers’ perceptions of products (Ward et al., 2007), but fashion is not like other products in that it needs to be touched and felt before one buys (Blázquez, 2014). The literature reports that the need for touch is a major factor driving people to buy fashion offline and not online (González-Benito et al., 2015; Chu and Lam, 2001). The same was found in the present research, but here the importance of this factor depended on cultural identity, exposure to life abroad and religiousness of dress. On one hand, women who had lived abroad were aware of brands and some would consume fashion products as soon as they were delivered (e.g. among such women as did not wear the niqab abroad, nor long skirts and long sleeves). Therefore, they would buy international brands online in the belief that this ensured high quality. However, for women who psychologically accepted other cultures but felt that the current fashion trends were not aligned with their norms (i.e. women with a higher religiousness of dress, calling for long sleeves and long skirts), customising was more important.
Indeed, this research has found that the need to customise a garment after purchase is critical for many, because of the need to make Western products fit Saudi norms and values. According to these findings, an online seller offering customisation services would be more important for many Saudi customers than simply a chance to touch a product. Fitting (both in size and with norms and values) was more critical for some than the opportunity to touch without the ability to customise. A significant number of buyers customised after purchase. Indeed, because of some retailers’ inability to customise products, customers would buy from them and send the purchase (either online or offline) to tailors; or they would contact e-tailors to whom they had been introduced by friends on Instagram and employ them to make items from scratch to comply with their values. This process was found to be riskier, because the customer could not be sure that the tailor would be able to produce the same quality as the brand; it would also be more expensive, because the cost of production would be much greater than that of a mass-produced brand item. However, for such women, their values and norms were more important than money and risk.

### 7.5 Implications and recommendations

Successful marketing ultimately depends on understanding consumers’ behaviour, attitude and perceptions so as to be able to satisfy their needs and wants (Chiu et al., 2014). This research has produced evidence that ideology should be added to this list of factors to be considered. International markets are segmented within cultures as well as between them and it is necessary to understand the diversity of drivers of consumer behaviour underlying this segmentation, in order to categorise individual consumers not only according to their psychological and social needs and behaviours (Wedel and Kamakura, 2012), but also by their ideologies. In a situation where the tourism market is believed to be segmented by levels of religiosity (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015), this research helps to segment the market not only by well-known demographic, situational, or behavioural factors (Dibb et al., 2005), but also by the level of cultural identity (Sia et al., 2009) and the extent of justification or reactance vis-à-vis the existing restrictions, since each segment behaves differently when it comes to online fashion shopping.
Western companies offer fashions primarily for Western women. Therefore, in Saudi Arabia, these designs suit only those who have a relatively low level of cultural identity. Indeed, Saudi women do not buy fashions online merely to meet their physiological needs but also as a way to represent themselves among other nationalities or to reflect their rejection of the restrictions currently imposed.

This study has found that Saudi women were making an effort to find a balance between being fashionable and maintaining modesty, by such techniques as modification after purchase. Design companies need to make clothes consistent with the traditions and customs in Saudi Arabia, where hemlines and sleeves are long and where fabrics are opaque and voluminous. Design options must be increased or selected for modest options and designers must be brought in from Arab and Islamic countries in order to approach Islamic taste more closely.

Saudi women, as the research has found, buy international brands, but those who have a strong cultural identity modify them before or after purchase, using either online or offline tailors. Therefore, they expend more money and effort than other women do, showing that they are willing to pay for an appearance which combines modesty and luxury. Beside the quality of the raw materials and modesty, customisation services before and after purchase are important issues and may be critical for the Saudi market.

Designers of e-marketing should avoid over-revealing images of women and nudity, because are offensive to conservative women and will, by flouting the traditions of the community, deter them from buying what is being advertised. Such images will discourage these women from returning to a website or even from continuing browsing and shopping.

Finally, the role of social networks such as Instagram is vital to the Saudi market. Saudi online retailing seems to be managed and controlled largely by social networks. Therefore, targeting an expert in this area would be worthwhile as a fashion marketing strategy. Without the ability to manage social media in favour of the fashion marketer, websites may seem weak, whereas greater investment in viral marketing might have better than expected results.
7.6 Limitations

The main methodological limitation of the present research lies in its reliance on consumer interviews as a main source of data, and the sole source of 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 (Patton, 2002). However, in the case of this research it was not possible to achieve this degree of reliability and validity, due to the single data source. 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 (Lewis et al., 2007).

The main data source consists only of the opinions of individual women in Saudi Arabia, which may be influenced by individual cultural, social and religious factors, and thus may not fully reflect the actual behaviour of all women in the country. This means that the data collected in this study are a reflection of individual and group perceptions of female behaviour and online shopping which do not necessarily reflect those of people in Saudi Arabia and their habitual shopping (Jankowicz, 2005).

Furthermore, this research targeted women aged between 30 and 40 years. (Stafford et al., 2004) found that younger people were more inclined than older ones to shop online, while (Passyn et al., 2011) report that respondents under 35 years of age had different perceptions of online shopping from those aged 35 to 50 or over 50. Therefore, the applicability of the present results to other age groups is questioned and further research would be required to extend the findings to them.

It was not very easy to find unveiled women to interview. In Saudi culture, it may be considered offensive to look for unveiled women and much effort was expended on finding an adequate number of them.

Carrying out the interviews themselves also presented some challenges. Some women, despite agreeing to attend the interview and confirming the date, were unwilling to have
their voices recorded because they did not want their voices to be in the possession of anyone else. Some women felt doubtful and fearful of taking part in an interview and I had to clarify the purposes of research to them. Some women stopped in the middle of the interview and completely withdrew after responding in depth to the most frequently asked questions, in particular those relating to the effects of adhering to religion and the impact of community opinion. Some women to the meeting in clothes of a type which differed from their usual apparel (i.e. wearing the hijab although they did not do so in normal circumstances), because they thought it might be offensive if they did not.

7.7 Future research

Most of the women interviewed in this research were inclined to justify the clothing restrictions under consideration. This is easy to understand, because Saudi Arabia has a high level (95) of power distance, which is associated negatively with reactance behaviour, according to Hofstede et al (2015), and because the intimate relation of culture with religion in the country makes people reluctant to criticise the restrictions. Future research could replicate the present approach but in a context where the restrictions concerned were not the result of such a link.

This research was limited to females and since males tend to have higher reactance than females (Seemann et al., 2004), it is not clear how they would behave with regard to their fashion shopping behaviour, so this could be examined in future research. Age is also a critical factor in determining the level of reactance: the lower the age, the greater the reactance (Hong et al., 1994). Therefore, another study might target another age-group, for example, that of 21 to 30 year-olds, where reactance is likely to be high and the interviewees have a high level of power to buy what they want. Furthermore, ethnic groups differ in their reactance behaviour; for example, Caucasians are more reactant than African Americans, Asians or Hispanics (Woller et al., 2007). Therefore, a replication of this study on other ethnicities, say, in Israel, Turkey or Indonesia, might obtain interesting results. These countries have relatively strong cultural identity but varying levels of power distance. Indeed, power distance and reactance behaviour are in inverse proportion to each other.
Thus, it is important to undertake follow-up research in this area, in an effort to determine whether the findings from the interview phase reported in this thesis can be supported by other data. This might be done through longer-term strategies such as observations of browsing and purchasing history; however, care will need to be taken when planning this research, due to the privacy restrictions around women in Saudi Arabia.

The social medium of Instagram was found to have a critical impact on online shopping behaviour. These media appear to affect women’s fashion selections, their models, preferences and decisions to buy. Furthermore, this research found that different women adopted the social media for the process of value co-creation (customising their clothes with designers). It would be interesting to learn what factors affect and motivate the Saudi women who are involved in value co-creation through Instagram.

This research is believed to shed light on cultural identity only and not on personal identity. Personal identity, unlike cultural and national identity, underlines the personal values, goals, attitudes, behavioural styles and characteristics that comprise each individual (Usborne and Sablonnière, 2014). Therefore, research to find how personal identity affects online shopping behaviour would also be valuable.

This research opens the way to researching congruity theory (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955) from a different perspective. In cultural studies, congruity is said to occur where the country of origin of a brand is matched with the language of the brand name. An example would be Volkswagen, the German name of a brand of cars built in Germany. Incongruity, where the language and country of origin are different (Salciuviene et al., 2010), is found to have a positive impact on intention to purchase (Chao et al., 2005) and on perception of quality (Häubl and Elrod, 1999). Based on this research, it is proposed that consumers showing psychological reactance to the restrictions will experience a greater impact of incongruity on the intention to purchase and that this relationship is moderated by cultural identity. Conversely, justification of the restrictions and high cultural identity are proposed to have a negative impact on the incongruity between the brand name and country of origin. All of these propositions could be used to guide the direction of empirical quantitative research.
8 References


Bryman, A. (2012), Social research methods, Oxford University Press, UK.


Hirschmann, N. J. (2009), The subject of liberty: Toward a feminist theory of freedom, Princeton University Press, US.


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Karimi, S., Papamichail, K. N. and Holland, C. P. (2015), “The effect of prior knowledge and decision-making style on the online purchase decision-making process: A


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## A.1 Interview Guide 1

### Preamble

Please can you confirm the following:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Which age group are you in:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18-24</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Can you indicate your level of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 - 10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 - 20,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20 - 25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Approximately how much do you spend on clothing per month or per annum?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section One (A)

Exposure to international fashion retailers, together with national culture and its inherent beliefs and values, positively impacts the online shopping for apparel by women in Saudi Arabia

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you consider that access to the products of Western fashion retailers online has had a positive or negative impact upon the decision of women in your country to purchase apparel from an online source rather than from traditional shops?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In general terms, what percentage of your apparel purchases would say you now do through online shopping?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What are the main types of apparel that online shopping has allowed you to purchase, which you would not previously have considered purchasing in shops, and can you explain the reason for this change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Is it your opinion that the purchase of Western apparel online has had a positive or negative impact upon your traditional values and beliefs and cultural heritage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Is it your view that women in your country should have the right to buy clothing of their choice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you intend to increase the level of apparel shopping online in the future?</td>
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</table>

### Section One (B)

Social Class, power of the state and the differential that exists between genders positively influences the online shopping behavioural pattern for apparel of Saudi Arabian women

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Would you say that the social standing of women has a positive impact upon their reasoning for apparel shopping online and, if so, can you explain why this is the case?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In what ways do you think that the social standing of a woman within your society provides them with an advantage when considering online shopping?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Is it your opinion that online shopping provides women of a certain class with a freedom of choice that is not available through traditional shopping?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you believe that all women, irrespective of their social class, should be entitled to have this freedom of choice in selecting their own apparel?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section One (C)
**Risk aversion, need for compliance with existing laws, privacy fears and the group socialisation negatively influence the online shopping for apparel in Saudi Arabia**

1. Do you believe that online shopping has reduced the risk of your contravening existing Saudi Arabian laws related to the exposure of your body in traditional public shops?

2. Would you say that the male members of your family are more comfortable with your purchasing apparel online and this being delivered direct to your home?

3. Would you say that the level of risk relating to the security of online purchasing has a significant impact upon your decision to purchase apparel online?

### Section Two
**The negative determinants of external situational factors positively affect the online shopping for apparel by women in Saudi Arabia**

1. How much has the restriction of the state influenced your decision to use online shopping to purchase apparel?

2. To what extent, if any, do you believe that the dominant role of men in Saudi Arabia has had upon your decision to change to online shopping for apparel?

3. Would you say that improvement in the wealth of women in your society has contributed most to a general increase in the level of online shopping for apparel in your country?

### Section Three
**The existing structure of the online marketing mix used by retailers will have a negative influence on online shopping for fashion apparel in Saudi Arabia**

1. Would you say that the prices of Western fashion promoted online deter you from increasing the amount of apparel that you would be likely to purchase through these outlets?

2. Does the content of the advertising have an adverse effect upon your decision to purchase apparel online and, if so, can you explain why?

3. How much influence would you say has the level of product choice had upon your decision to purchase apparel online?

4. From your experience of online shopping for apparel, would you say that this is likely to result in an increase or decrease in the amount of online shopping you do in the future?

### Section Four
**The extent to which the consumer has gained internet knowledge and online experience will positively contribute to his/her participation in online shopping in Saudi Arabia**

1. How comfortable and experienced are you at using the internet, particularly in regards to online shopping?

2. To what extent would you say your level of expertise has a negative effect on your online purchasing of apparel?

3. Are you likely to increase your online shopping as you become more comfortable with your experience of using the internet and online shopping sites?

### Section Five
**Utilitarian motives are positively related with online efficiency shopping, gift shopping, bargain search and ultimate purchasing behavioural patterns of consumers in Saudi Arabia**

1. Would you say that the design of a particular online fashion retailer’s website has a positive impact upon whether you decide to make a purchase?

2. Is the level of difficulty associated with completion of an online purchase, including making the payment, likely to deter you from completing the sale?
S

Section Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hedonic motives in online shopping are positively related with gratification, inspiration, socialisation, senses, gift shopping and the search for bargain, and ultimate purchasing behaviour patterns of consumers in Saudi Arabia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Has your level of satisfaction with the products you have purchased online had a positive effect upon the likelihood of you shopping online for apparel in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To what extent do you believe that you receive a better bargain by shopping online that you would if you made the purchase in a traditional store?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you feel that the purchases you have made online have a positive impact upon your social engagements with family and friends?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.2 Interview Guide 2

1. Warm-up questions

Demographic Questions
1- Age
2- Marital Status
3- Children
4- City

Religious adherence
1- Clothes type
2- Do you love your clothes type or not?

Exposure to international fashion
1- Have you travelled abroad?
2- How long have you been abroad?
3- Have you studied abroad?
4- Have you attended any international fashion exhibitions?
5- Have you bought fashion online while you were abroad?

Online fashion buying behaviour
1- How often have you bought fashion online in the last three months?
2- How often have you bought fashion in stores in the last three months?
3- How often do you buy other goods online?

2. Online experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience with Internet</td>
<td>1. How long do you spend online every day? (Heavy user, Light user)</td>
<td>1. To break the ice and to learn her experience with the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. When you are shopping online, do you fully understand all the</td>
<td>2. To see the degree of familiarity with online shopping (perceived ease of use)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>marketing terms and techniques used?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. How comfortable are you when carrying out transactions online?</td>
<td>4. Level of privacy and freedom in online shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have your own debit card to buy online?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to online shopping</td>
<td>Do you often use the Internet to look at fashion online? at the offerings of fashion retailers online?</td>
<td>To find out the connectedness with the online shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to international fashion</td>
<td>1. How often do you see adverts and marketing for international fashion retailers in your daily life?</td>
<td>1. Connectedness with international fashion (regardless of online or not)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Which fashion brands do you know?</td>
<td>2. The participant’s knowledge (level of commitment) concerning international fashion can be identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to buy</td>
<td>Do you see any barriers to stop you from buying fashion online? Or do you not enjoy it? Why?</td>
<td>To filter respondents. Respondents who disagree with online shopping behaviour and have not been exposed to international fashion will not go on to phase 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticising international advertisement</td>
<td>How do you perceive this advertisement? Is it aligned with your personal values as a woman / as a consumer / as a Saudi?</td>
<td>To find out how much the participants adopt/reject international values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online buying behaviour (Quantity &amp; Quality)</td>
<td>How likely are you to shop online for clothing and fashion?</td>
<td>To find out women’s shopping behaviour and to classify respondents into heavy buyer, normal buyer and hardly buyer. To validate the filter questions at the beginning of the questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to buy behaviour and buying behaviour</td>
<td>Do you usually buy clothes online after you have seen them advertised online?</td>
<td>To see to what extent the intention to buy has an impact on buying behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of online shopping behaviour</td>
<td>Could you explain to me from your experience (history) whether heavy use of the Internet (for instance, you see reputable advertisements on YouTube) leads you to buy online? You or your friends?</td>
<td>To find out how heavy use of the Internet could have an impact on the culture of buying online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to online behaviour</td>
<td>[Five YouTube videos are presented to respondent and she is asked to comment on each ad and explain whether she would buy the product or not (online or in shop) 1: Western fashion 2: Traditional Islamic fashion 3: Modern Islamic fashion 4: Islamic but not cultural fashion 5: Illegal Islamic fashion At the end of the five videos, the respondent is asked to allocate 100 points to each, reflecting the desire to buy]</td>
<td>To see the reaction of the respondents to each ad. To understand how the instant exposure to international fashion affects their purchasing behaviour. Additionally, the respondent's reactions to the different videos is observed and noted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Restrictive environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freedom</strong></td>
<td>1. Do you feel free enough in your fashion purchasing decisions?</td>
<td>To find out restrictions that may face women in fashion purchasing decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Do you believe you enjoy greater freedom when shopping and browsing</td>
<td>To find out how online shopping could remove these restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>online than in your daily life?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of male of dominance</strong></td>
<td>1. How does your father/husband/brother affect your fashion buying behaviour?</td>
<td>To find out how the male plays a role in the purchasing decisions of the female in both offline and online environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. And your online shopping behaviour?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious adherence (4)</strong></td>
<td>1. What Islamic requirements do you adhere to when shopping for clothing?</td>
<td>1,2,3 To find out the code of religion in the mentality of respondents. To validate the filter questions in terms of classifying the women into religious, moderate, and un-religious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Are there specific types of clothing that you feel are more or less acceptable under Islamic rules and expectations?</td>
<td>3 To find out whether others put her under pressure to wear particular types of clothes or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Do you enjoy your type of clothing or you forced to wear it by someone else? If yes, by whom?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious adherence in shopping behaviour</strong></td>
<td>How does the role of religion in your shopping behaviour affect your shopping online?</td>
<td>To find out if respondents perceive Islamic beliefs as affecting their online buying behaviour in a non-restrictive market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Do you see differences between culture, Islam, and Saudi rules regarding fashion?

2. Do you change your type of clothing when you travel to Europe? Why?

**Culture**
3. [Provide two relevant photos (at the same level of religious adherence) to the respondent and ask her which one she prefers (the traditional one or non-traditional one)]

4. Have you ever thought of wearing clothes non-traditional to Saudi culture? Like what? Could you tell me about it?

5. Do you feel under pressure to buy only certain types of clothing when shopping in Saudi Arabia?

6. Do you ever feel awkward or confused between your own desire for clothing and the expectations of society?

**Islam**
7. Do you believe Islam puts unfavourable restrictions on your lifestyle or your fashion style?

8. [Provide photos for women wearing clothes at the level lower than how the respondent dresses to find out whether she could imagine wearing it or not.]

**Saudi Rules**
9. Could you relate any incident about buying or intending to buy fashion products that are restricted by law? If so, would you be more likely to go online to buy products that are restricted by law? For example?

10. Do you feel that the laws and regulations of Saudi Arabia about fashion are fair for women? Could you suggest any modification to them?

**Male Dominance**
11. How would you describe the way your husband intervenes in your purchasing decisions?

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To understand any differences among the three concepts. For instance, a religious person may break Saudi rules in an online environment, but with a strong belief in culture she may not break the rules in a non-restrictive market (online environment)

2. To find out to what extent the respondent loves/hates her current culture, religion and national rules. Additionally, her degree of belief in what she does in the national environment.

3, 4 To identify any desire in the respondent to wear untraditional clothes at the same religious level.

5, 6 In the case of preferring non-traditional clothes, she will be asked to indicate what restrictions stop her from wearing such clothes.

7, 8 To find out the level (and factors that affect her current choice) to which the respondent disagrees with Islamic rules that she follows implicitly (through photos) and explicitly.

9. To find out her attitude toward buying illegal products online.

10. To explore the factors perceived as over restriction by the respondents.

11. To find out the attitude and the level of criticising the role of male dominance in shopping behaviour.
### A.3 Interviewee Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 Code</th>
<th>Religion Adherence</th>
<th>Exposure To International Culture Identity</th>
<th>Online Shopping</th>
<th>System Justification</th>
<th>Psychological Reactance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>H-M-L</td>
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<td>H-L</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
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<td>SJ</td>
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<td>02 LHD</td>
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<td>29 LLR</td>
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<td>10 Code</td>
<td>Religion Adherence</td>
<td>Exposure To International Culture Identity</td>
<td>Online Shopping</td>
<td>System Justification</td>
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**SJ and PR + H and L Online shopping**

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