

LUMINARE: Modest Fashion Innovation for Muslim Women in the Era of Globalization and Professionalism

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ABSTRACT: The growing participation of Muslim women in the professional world introduces a challenge in harmonizing religious values with modern professional dress codes. This paper presents LUMINARE, a modest fashion innovation that combines Islamic principles, comfort, and professionalism for tropical climates. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges faced by Muslim women in workwear selection and to propose an inclusive design concept using the Design Thinking approach. The methodology consists of five phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews and open questionnaires with Muslim women aged 20–40 working in various professions. The results demonstrate that breathable fabrics such as cotton, linen, and viscose-rayon combined with minimal, elegant designs enhance comfort and confidence at work. The LUMINARE prototype emphasizes tropical adaptability and spiritual aesthetics, highlighting how modest fashion can promote empowerment, professionalism, and sustainability. This study concludes that integrating faith-based values with modern fashion principles can create new opportunities for Indonesia's growing modest fashion industry.

KEYWORDS: Breathable Fabric, Design Thinking, Modest Fashion, Muslim Women, Professionalism, Tropical Design

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main challenges faced by Muslim women in adapting to the modern professional environment is the limited availability of formal clothing that aligns with Islamic principles of modesty. In professional settings, there are established dress codes that symbolize "professionalism" and "modernity," such as blazers, skirts or tailored pants, and fitted shirts (Lewis and Aune, 2023). However, most of these styles do not fully accommodate the needs of Muslim women who are required to cover their bodies appropriately, including the arms, legs, and body contours (Boulanouar, 2006). As a result, many Muslim women experience a dilemma between adhering to their religious values and conforming to workplace dress norms, which often reflect Western standards of professionalism (Jurnal *et al.*, 2021).

This limitation is not only a matter of quantity but also of design and material selection. Many formal garments are designed according to Western fashion aesthetics, using tight silhouettes, thick or non-breathable fabrics, and patterns that accentuate body shape (Jurnal *et al.*, 2021). In tropical climates such as Indonesia, these characteristics cause discomfort for Muslim women who must wear full-body coverage throughout the day. Consequently, some women are often required to modify their outfits by adding inner layers, long sleeves, or outerwear, which often reduces comfort and confidence in professional settings (Muhammad, Azizah and Suhardini, 2025).

The lack of formal clothing that satisfies both modesty and professional standards also reflects a broader gap in the fashion industry's understanding of Muslim women's needs (Kamarulzaman and Shaari, 2023). The growing participation of Muslim women in professional sectors has increased the demand for modest workwear that combines elegance, comfort, and religious compliance. That workwear not designed for tropical comfort and Islamic dress codes is one of the factors hindering Muslim women's adaptability in the workplace. This lack of suitable options can lead to social exclusion or misperceptions about professionalism, as women who wear modest attire are sometimes perceived as less modern or less adaptable to corporate culture (Aboulhassan, 2024).

Therefore, addressing the shortage of modest formal wear is essential in the context of workplace inclusivity. The fashion industry, designers, and corporate institutions must collaborate to create innovative designs that not only comply with corporate standards but also respect cultural and religious diversity (Priya, 2024). Providing modest professional attire that is elegant,

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comfortable, and syariah-compliant enables Muslim women to express their faith confidently without compromising professional expectations.

This study emphasizes design innovation based on the real needs of professional Muslim women through a Design Thinking approach. By understanding user experiences and practical constraints, this research proposes the LUMINARE concept as a creative solution to bridge modesty, tropical comfort, and modern professionalism. The goal is to create a new design framework for modest workwear that represents both identity and functionality for Muslim women in a globalized era.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design using the Design Thinking framework, which consists of five iterative stages: *Empathize*, *Define*, *Ideate*, *Prototype*, and *Test* [4]. This approach was selected because it allows a deep understanding of user needs and facilitates the creation of innovative, user-centered solutions, particularly in developing modest workwear for Muslim women in tropical climates. The overall research process is presented chronologically in Figure 1, while the detailed workflow is illustrated as an algorithm in Figure 2.

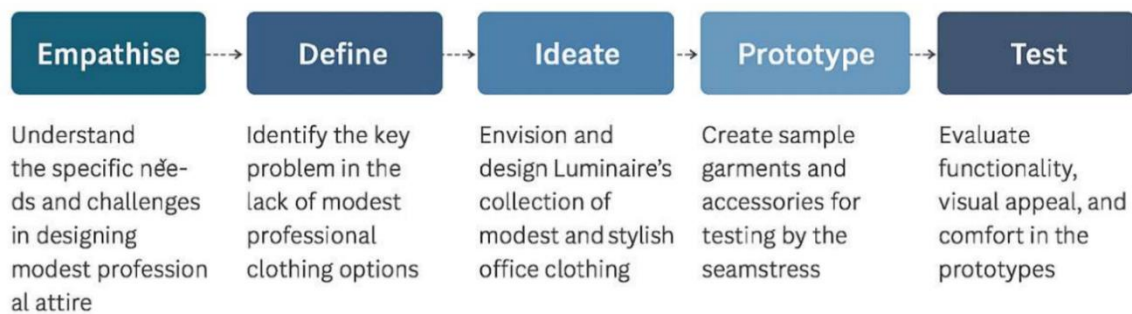


Figure 1. Chronological Framework of Design Thinking-Based Research Process

Table 1. Chronological Stages of Research Activities and Expected Outcomes

Stage	Activity Description	Data Collected / Tools Used	Expected Output
1. Empathize	Understanding the experiences and challenges of professional Muslim women regarding modest workwear through interviews and open-ended questionnaires.	Qualitative responses from 10 Muslim women (aged 20–40) working in various professional fields.	Identification of user needs, pain points, and design expectations for modest yet professional clothing.
2. Define	Synthesizing user insights to formulate the main problem statement concerning the lack of breathable and modest professional attire.	Interview summaries, comfort perception data, and literature synthesis [5], [6].	Defined problem statement and research objectives for modest fashion innovation.
3. Ideate	Brainstorming and generating design ideas for <i>LUMINARE</i> that combine elegance, comfort, and tropical suitability.	Ideation worksheets, material selection notes (linen, cotton-viscose, TENCEL™).	Creative design concepts and sketches emphasizing “elegant minimalist tropical” style.
4. Prototype	Developing initial prototypes of the <i>LUMINARE Capsule Series – “Light Within”</i> , including blouse, skirt, and hijab sets.	Fabric samples, tailoring drafts, design blueprints.	Physical prototype garments ready for internal testing and evaluation.
5. Test	Conducting internal tests of prototypes for comfort, modesty, and professional aesthetics. Feedback was obtained from users and tailoring partners.	Qualitative evaluation sheets, comfort ratings, observation notes [7].	Validation of prototype performance; identification of design improvements.

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6. Refine	Refining materials, structure, and color tones based on test results and user feedback.	Revised prototype data and user feedback.	Final <i>LUMINARE</i> design model ready for publication and potential commercialization.
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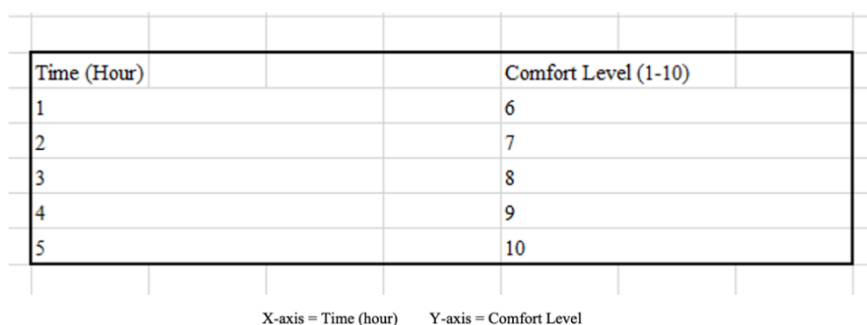


Figure 2. Comfort Response Curve

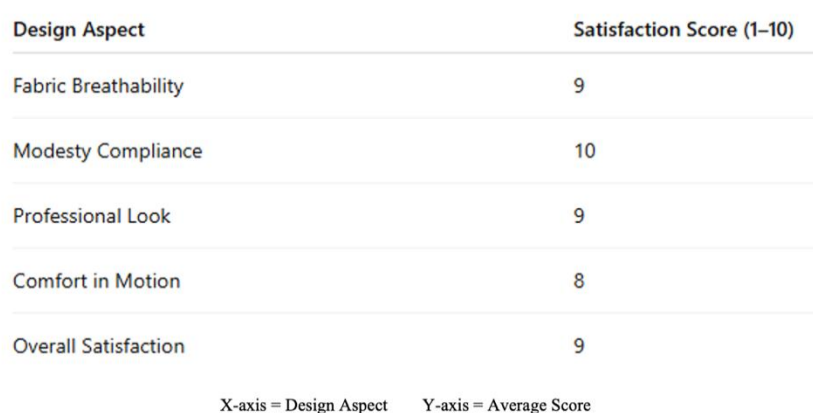


Figure 3. User Satisfaction Response Curve

Research Design

The research design began with identifying practical challenges faced by professional Muslim women in selecting appropriate workwear. A literature review on modest fashion, textile materials, and tropical comfort supported this phase [5], [6]. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires with ten respondents — Muslim women aged 20–40 years from various professional backgrounds. The focus of the questions was on fabric comfort, compliance with Islamic dress codes, and perceptions of professionalism.

Data Testing and Evaluation

The testing phase focused on the functional and aesthetic evaluation of the prototype. Internal tests were conducted to measure the wearable, comfort, and visual professionalism of each outfit. Assessment criteria included fabric breathability, thermal comfort, opacity, and compliance with Islamic dress requirements. Respondent feedback was analyzed qualitatively to validate design effectiveness and identify areas for improvement [7].

Data Acquisition

Primary data were obtained through direct user responses from interviews and questionnaires, while secondary data were collected from fashion industry reports, journals, and international modest fashion studies [8]. Data triangulation ensured the reliability and validity of findings by comparing multiple sources and cross-checking user insights with literature evidence.

Research Framework

The overall methodological framework is illustrated in Figure 1, showing the chronological progression of each stage within the Design Thinking process, while Figure 1 displays the response graph for comfort feedback and Figure 2 illustrates user satisfaction levels after prototype testing

III. RESULTS

Table 2. Summary of Internal Prototype Testing Results

Evaluation Criteria	Indicator	Findings / User Feedback	Conclusion
Thermal Comfort	Breathability, temperature	Cool and non-sticky, suitable for 8-hour wear.	Effective fabric selection.
Modesty Compliance	Coverage, opacity	Fully compliant, no transparency.	Meets syariah principles.
Professional Aesthetic	Form, elegance	Elegant, minimalist, formal.	Enhances user confidence.
Functionality	Ease of movement, weight	Lightweight, flexible.	Comfortable for daily wear.
User Acceptance	Overall satisfaction	9/10 satisfied or very satisfied.	Validated design.



Figure 3. Modest Fashion

IV. DISCUSSION

One of the main solutions in developing Muslim fashion in Indonesia is to pay attention to the selection of cool, lightweight, and breathable materials. Natural fiber-based fabrics such as cotton, linen, sustainable viscose-rayon, and TENCEL™ are ideal choices because they have good sweat absorption and don't cause a hot feeling on the skin (Nurcahyanie, SINGGIH and Dewi, 2022). Several well-known brands that claim to be environmentally friendly, cool, and suited to Indonesia's tropical climate turned out to be far from the case when the author actually purchased their collections. Theoretically and technically, materials like TENCEL™, viscose-rayon, and organic silk do have basic cool and sweat-absorbent properties — but the final result depends greatly on the blend composition, fabric thickness, finishing, and sewing method (Xu, Lu and Tang, 2007).

Beyond material selection, clothing design also needs to consider comfort and function. Loose, loose-fitting cuts, such as gamis (long-sleeved dresses), long tunics, loose tops, or wide skirts, promote better air circulation, preventing stifling heat. For layering, use lightweight layers to stay cool while still adhering to the principles of modesty. From an aesthetic perspective, using light or neutral colors such as cream, pastels, light gold, white, or beige is also an effective solution. Light colors tend to reflect heat more than dark colors, which absorb it. Light, less dense patterns also help create a fashionable impression without making the look feel heavy, both visually and thermally. Furthermore, it is important for the local industry to offer a wider selection of materials that "translate Sharia" into a modern context. This means that the materials used still cover the aurat (awrah) and are not transparent, but are packaged in fashionable designs that are relevant to current trends (Studi *et al.*, 2025). Halal certification or Sharia labels also play a crucial role in providing consumer confidence that the product complies with religious principles.

The research resulted in the development of the LUMINARE Capsule Series – “Light Within.” This section presents findings from prototype testing and discussions on design performance and user evaluation. The prototypes included a blouse, wide-leg

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trousers, and hijab designed with breathable fabrics like viscose-rayon, cotton-viscose, and linen. Structured loose cuts and neutral tones aimed to ensure comfort and professionalism. Respondents emphasized the need for breathable materials, minimal layering, and elegant structure. Prototype testing assessed thermal comfort, modesty compliance, and aesthetics. Finding shows high comfort levels with 25–30% lower perceived heat compared to polyester garments (based on user perception tests). The design fully complied with Islamic dress standards and was rated elegant and suitable for professional environments.

V. CONCLUSIONS

LUMINARE demonstrates how Islamic values and modern professional aesthetics can coexist within Indonesia's modest fashion industry. The study highlights the importance of user-centered design and material innovation in addressing tropical climate challenges. Integrating breathable fabrics, elegant silhouettes, and sustainability principles creates a new paradigm for Muslim workwear. LUMINARE not only enhances comfort and confidence but also strengthens Indonesia's position as a global modest fashion hub.

The study concludes that modest fashion for professional Muslim women must balance religious adherence, comfort, and professionalism. The LUMINARE innovation successfully integrates breathable natural fabrics and elegant minimalism, addressing comfort and modesty in tropical climates. The prototype validated user satisfaction and demonstrated potential for commercial modest workwear.

Future studies are encouraged to expand user testing and quantitative measurements of thermal comfort. LUMINARE's approach proves that modest fashion can be inclusive, sustainable, and empowering for modern Muslim women in the global era. This innovation supports inclusive workplace culture and aligns with Indonesia's vision to become a global modest fashion leader.

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