

## Chapter 9

# Luxury Consumption Behavior of Muslim Customers in a Culturally Distinct and an Affluent Market

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter explores the luxury consumption behavior of affluent Muslim consumers within a rich Islamic country. Hofstede (1983) cultural dimensions were used to make comparisons between materialistic and relational approaches impacting Quality of Life. Islamic ideologies of Comprehensiveness, Moderation, and Necessities were utilized in evaluation of consumption behavior of rich Muslims. In addition, impact of gender, education, and income on luxury consumption behavior were analyzed to afford a view associated with thinking and actions of affluent Muslim consumers. Hence, the fundamental objective of the chapter was to present, largely through relevant literature support and observations, the Islamic and social perspectives of consumption, Quality of Life orientations and their association with consumption, key demographics likely to play an important part in shaping and practice of luxury consumption amongst affluent Muslim consumers.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Culture is believed to be one of the most influential factor affecting consumer behavior (Souiden et al., 2011). Within a particular society culture, in its various forms and manifestations, effects the products people buy as well as the way they consume these products. By identifying and understanding cultural implications of consumer behavior, marketing decisions become more informed and hence more relevant to a particular market (Bainbridge, 2010). Consequently through analysis of cultural dimensions, products and services can be tailored towards the needs of the customer. However culture is dynamic and consumer behavior is ever evolving. This dual dynamism tends to create complexity and sophistication in terms of feelings, thinking and actions of the consumers within a market (Lim & Park, 2013). To add to this cultural complexity, all consumers within a society do not act or behave in a similar fashion even though general trends do exist.

State of Qatar is an emerging and a fast developing affluent economy. The GDP/Capita for 2013 was US \$ 102,100 (Source: CIA The World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>). Qatari consumer market is going through an exponential growth. Especially the luxury sector is booming due to abundance of petro dollar resulting in a substantial amount of disposable income. Despite of an existence of a buoyant luxury goods market, at large, Qatar is still a tribal and a religious society. Yes it is transforming but manages to hold onto a value set which is largely contingent with Islamic Ideology. Observations indicate that Qatar (a culturally distinct, fast changing and an affluent market) presents a contrast where traditionalism seems to exist along consumerism. There is a strong focus on conserving Islamic heritage, customs and history. A recent example of preserving and propagating Islamic history is the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha which is not only the biggest Islamic Art Museum in the world but also a very active institution holding regular events to promote Islamic culture and history. At the same time, Qatar is one of the most lucrative and attractive market for branded goods (Jamal et al., 2006).

In general, this chapter examines how cultural and social forces (including the religious component) are shaping and influencing the luxury consumption behavior of rich Muslims (i.e. Qataris) within the rapidly changing and fast developing Qatari market. The prime focus will be on the purchasing and consumption of luxury products and services which may include items such as expensive vehicles, designer watches, fashion clothing, branded perfumes and exquisite experiences such as dining in premium restaurants and five star vacations. In addition, the chapter aims to describe how different values, norms and ideologies are impacting the luxury

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