

# Chapter 3

## When Faithful Consumption Meets Modernism: A Review of Consumption Practices in Turkey

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### ABSTRACT

*Today's Islamic understanding cannot be explained by only rules determined by that religion. The interpretation of Islam is altering, leaving an open discussion of how much of the Islamic rules are interpreted and put into real life practice. This chapter aims to understand this dynamic behavior of consumers under the framework of Islam: how it alters consumption intentions and behavior. This altering process will intensely be observed with Turkish consumers, knowing that Turkey has a unique characteristic among the countries that practice Islam as the major religious belief. Thus, the authors make a review to emphasize different preference related issues from a wider perspective. They start by focusing on general consumption contexts followed by patterns including fashion, travel, food intake, finance, anti-consumption activities, and other special occasions, finalized by conclusions and future research directions.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Within the Muslim community, there is diversity in terms of culture, blending of the religion, politics and historical influences (Jafari & Scott, 2014) thus, individuals who identify themselves as Muslims tend to be different (Smolicz, 1981). Therefore as Jafari & Scott (2014) mentions, “The Muslim world embodies both a common set of religious beliefs as well as a complexity that rewards investigation and rejects any simple label or categorization” (p. 2). Thus, marketers can use the assistance of the dominant religion to determine the understanding the insights about social behavior (Kurt & Özgen, 2013).

As a population where the majority of the citizens are Muslims, Turkish individuals cannot be interpreted as one, since religion has blended with tradition with which historical culture provides. Although some researchers try to classify Turkish culture as one collectivistic culture (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994) Turkey is a unique case to interpret carefully not only because of the geographical importance but also the because of the unique interpretation of Islam. On the one hand, Turkey is a highly collectivistic culture where this culture has blend with Islamic traditions and a rich history of Turks, leading to a stereotypical representation of Turkish people. On the other hand, Turkey is moving forward with the ability to catch the recent advancements in globe rapidly and efficiently by using its power of being one of the youngest societies of all. This young society breaks the old school rules of connectivity and starts to act more as an individual. Thus, once stated as a collectivistic culture, researchers need to be careful as interpreting different mindsets of citizens living in different regions of the country, where a shift towards individualism can be observed in regions closer to west. We believe that this variety in the country for general mindsets of individuals may be merging with everyday consumption practices.

This chapter starts with background analyses of general Islamic consumption patterns and the role of Islam in Turkish everyday consumptionscape. To focus on specific consumer intentions and behaviors, we create subheads for a clearer observation. We continue with explaining consumption intentions by subheads of major areas such as food, travel, fashion, finance etc. to focus how Islam affects consumption within these contexts. We first begin focusing on highly favored consumption practices of general consumption ideas, food consumption, consuming before and during travel and textile consumption followed by finance, anti-consumption and special occasions. These subheads cover a wide variety of consumption practices that will help to observe and interpret the role of religion within each distinct category. We then continue our subheads by evaluating consumer practices that involve other kinds of consumption practices. We finish our chapter with conclusion remarks and directions for future research.

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