



## **My identity is much more than my dress and body; A study of the accounting profession and changing work “space”**

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### **Abstract**

Although, feminisation has been explored world-wide, it is yet not researched enough under the developing Islamic- Arab contexts, especially in the accounting profession. In Asian and Arab culture both, a women’s primary role is to take care of household, family and children. Together with this gendered norm, Women’s identity has been a subject of debate, especially in respect to their dress and body. Since Covid-19 changed the work ‘space’, it included more men to spend time doing house chores. Hence, it becomes important to understand women's experience in the accounting profession with respect to their dress and appearance and how covid impacted it. The research aims to adopt *Thirdspace* by Edward Soja to interpret the semi-structure interviews with females in the accounting profession. The data is gathered from females (Muslim or not), in the accounting profession in the UAE, to share their experiences in respect to dress, body and space. The data is then analysed using thematic analysis and draws on the Thirdspace theory to understand the lived experiences of women in the accounting profession in the UAE.

The aim of the study is to investigate the experiences of women in the accounting profession, working in the UAE (i.e., Muslim or not). In particular, the study will explore how these experiences impact women’s “choices” or “practices” in relation to their dress and appearance, including wearing or not wearing the *hijab* (head-scarf). The study will also investigate on how “work space” and the post-pandemic change in “work space”, impact women’s experience in the accounting profession. By addressing such issues, the study attempts to contribute to the limited literature related to women professionals, the post Covid-19 pandemic changes to workplace and to challenge stereotypes about the working women in Middle East. It will explore whether and how women’s bodies and dress are used to exemplify the type of work place and image that these institutions want to exert and how these “spaces” impact women’s identities and agency.

**Keywords:** accounting profession, women, dress, body, space

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