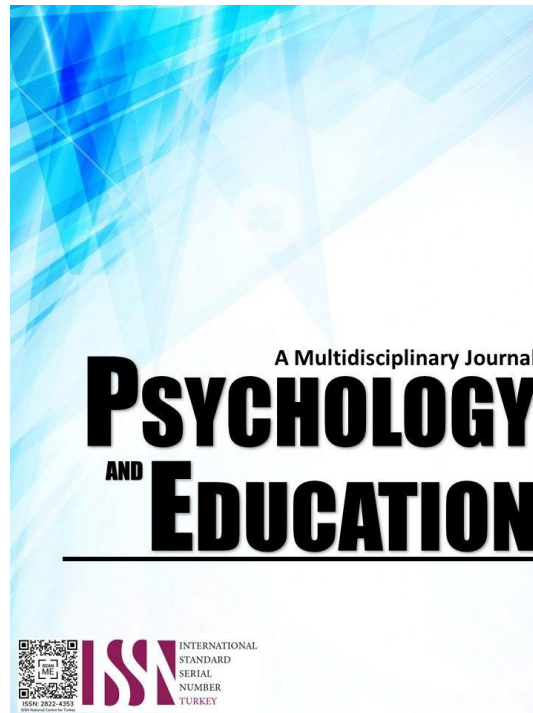


CONSTRUCTING A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF HIJAB



PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

Volume: 33

Issue 3

Pages: 391-400

Document ID: 2025PEMJ3165

DOI: 10.70838/pemj.330309

Manuscript Accepted: 01-22-2025

Constructing a New Understanding of Hijab

Najera R. Umpar ,* Loreto G. Camiloza

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

The veil wearing by Muslim women or known as hijab remains embedded in Islamic principles but is gradually changing from its conventional form. From traditionally plain black has transformed in different colors and design. This study focused to the evolution of understanding of hijab. In addition, it aimed to know how hijab and fashion come together to maintain the original meaning of hijab despite its new context. The study collected data from the 30 participants who are Filipino Maranao Muslim women. Fifteen Muslim women were wearing traditional hijab, specifically black and the other fifteen in non-traditional way. This study focused to the evolution of understanding of hijab. In addition, it aimed to know how hijab and fashion come together to maintain the original meaning of hijab despite its new context. The study collected data from the 30 participants who are Filipino Maranao Muslim women. Fifteen Muslim women were wearing traditional hijab, specifically black and the other fifteen in non-traditional way. This study utilized semi-structured interview to obtain data. This study had found hijab still signify as a Muslim identity and religious practice. Also, the fact that most of the Muslim women in this study continue to wear hijab despite being discriminated proved that the reasons of wearing hijab is still the religion. Furthermore, the study discovered that hijab and fashion coexist as long as it adhered to the Islamic principles. In brief, the sanctity of hijab remains.

Keywords: *hijab, traditional, nontraditional, fashionable hijab, Muslim women*

Introduction

Hijab is a requirement used by a Muslim woman in her everyday life. It is a piece of cloth which conceals the hair of a Muslim woman. In Islam, it is known to be a respect between opposite genders (Hyder, Parrington & Hussain, 2015 as cited in Ash, Tuffin & Kahu 2019). For this paper, the word hijab is used as this also pertains to "veil" known to be popularly used by Muslim women which pertains to head covering.

The practice of wearing hijab is always linked to the religious practices. However, as the fashion industry unfolds, hijab is changing from simple and plain traditional into a variety of shape, size, color, texture, and style (Puspitasari & Dohlar, 2017). This alteration of hijab is caused by various things such as technology and information progress, the popularity of religious proselytizing communities and the events of Muslim fashion fairs. Additionally, the realization of the changes of hijab was combined with fashion which looks more dynamic. According to Hassan and Harun (2016) and Genel and Karaosmanolu (2006), the introduction of Muslim attire in a fashionable way is now widely known in some countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey. These recent developments have changed the hijab into a new context. This Islamic fashion stemmed from the combination of the Islamic guidelines and fashion (Bhuiyan, 2018). It is also often used interchangeably with the three terms: modest wear, Muslimah fashion, and Sharia compliant (Aris, Ibrahim, & Ahmad, 2018).

Some of the global brands such as H&M, Zara, Uniqlo, Tommy Hilfiger and Dolce and Gabbana were successfully inspired to create Muslim clothing (Lewis, 2013 as cited in Ranathunga & Dewpura 2018). Moreover, it is gaining more coverage in mainstream media with the broader acknowledgement of hijab online. Other countries like Dubai, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur, hold a fashion highlighting the unique way of Muslim women clothing (Kelmachter, 2016 as cited by Bhuiyan 2018). Today, Islamic fashion market is growing and emerging into the global brands which tried to create a clothing that adheres to the Islamic guidelines (Bhuiyan, 2018). With this, many Muslims engaged to wear a fashionable clothing which can be seen in the report of Thomas Reuters (2018).

This study aimed to develop a nuanced understanding of hijab among young, professional Filipino Maranao Muslim women by examining the role and importance of hijab within Islamic religious culture, identifying the specific challenges encountered by those who choose to wear it, investigating the intersection of hijab and fashion, and analyzing the strategies employed by these women to navigate and maintain their religious identity through wearing hijab in the Philippines.

Research Questions

This study aimed to construct a new understanding of hijab among young Filipino Maranao Muslim women who were employed professionally. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the significance of Hijab in Islamic religious culture?
2. What are the challenges faced by Muslim women who wear hijab?
3. How do hijab and fashion coexist?
4. How do Muslim women maintain the religious identity of wearing hijab in the Philippines?

Literature Review

In Arabic, the term hijab refers to cover, but it does not specify what needs to be covered. Hijab does not have a universal meaning; thus, it has a different representation in various cultural contexts. To put in context, hijab is a way to determine the identity of a Muslim. According to the study of William and Vashi (2007), many born Muslim women created their sense of identity as a

Muslim by wearing hijab and this was based on their decision to distinguish their own identity as a Muslim. The study of Honohan and Rougier (2011) which revealed that Muslim women wear hijab to identify their identity as a Muslim. It also corroborated with existing literature that hijab is an identifier of identity (William & Vashi, 2007).

According to Gurbuz and GurbuzKucuksari (2009), Muslim women believed that wearing veil gives a sense of fulfillment for them as they obey a religious command based on the teaching of Islam. Thus, supporting Furseth's (2011 cited in Tariq-Munir 2014) findings revealed that it was a religious obligation for Muslim women to wear hijab. Similarly, the study carried out by Ali (2005) indicated that wearing hijab is an obligation instructed to a Muslim woman. Therefore, hijab also expresses a commitment to Islam as they believed that it is the religion that obliged them to wear it (Dunkel, Trisha, Davidson, & Qurashi as cited in Blakeman 2014).

In Islam, there is no hierarchy that resembles Christian priesthood, but there is an Imam or prayer leader and religious scholars called ulama. These ulama are known to be a guardian of faith. They are the one who possess authority to interpret the Quran and define the religious outlook of the community. Additionally, they established and safeguarded the beliefs of Islam, maintained the peace and unity in society and even on Islamic doctrine and law (Mubarak, 2014). The Islamic clergy ordained to the Muslim women to put hijab due to the illicit sexual relations that may instigate with men through socialization with women. They argued that the reason of wearing hijab is "to constrain such contact and guard the grace of women and her modesty from lustful eyes and covetous hands" (Al-Swailem 1995; Afshar 1985; Philips & Jones 1985; Siddiqi 1983 as cited in Barkowski & Read, 2003). And to legitimize this stance, the Imam emphasized various passages in the Quran that appeared to support this kind of belief and practice. The Imam has this instruction:

"Tell the believing women to lower their eyes, guard their private parts, and not display their charms except what is apparent outwardly, and cover their bosoms with their veils and not to show their finery except to their husbands or their fathers or fathers-in-law, their sons or step-sons, brothers, or their brothers' and sisters' sons, or their women attendants or captives, or male attendants who do not have any need (for women), or boys not yet aware of sex. They should not walk stamping their feet lest they make known what they hide or their ornaments, O believers, turn to God, every one of you, so that you may be successful" (24:31)

"O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters, and the women of the faithful, to draw their wraps a little over them. They will thus be recognized, and no harm will come to them. God is forgiving and kind (33:59)"

These passages seem to convey that even though the veil is not explicitly stated in Quran, the decision to adopt hijab has been religiously interpreted by the Imam as a religious practice. And it represented as commandment of God designating Muslim women to conceal their body through hijab. When Quran stated about covering for Muslim women, it signifies modesty. It appears as Muslim women are asked to use their existing cloth to cover their body. And this was supported by a previous research of Read and Barkowski (2000) that illustrated that many Muslim women drawn various religious injunction when asked about their motivations for wearing hijab.

There are alternative view to this idea that hijab was obligatory. According to Hochel (2013), many Islamic scholars asserted that wearing hijab is mandatory based on the Quranic verse such as:

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters and the believing women, that they should cast their garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested (Quran 33:59)"

In the study carried out by Al-Wazni, (2015) as cited in Sintang, Khambali, Sabdin, and Khair (2016) that some Muslim women wear hijab during early childhood before they fully learn to understand the religious explanation behind hijab. It was also reflected on the study conducted by Gurbuz and GurbuzKucuksari (2009) that some Muslim women started to realize the meaning of Islamic norm. They have started to wear veil by learning to understand basically the essence of hijab on Hadith and Quran. In this sense, they have made a conscious decision to wear veil.

In some societies, hijab is restricted to only women who are married; in others, Muslim women decided to put hijab after their puberty, which is a sign that they are now adults. Some start quite young. There is also an instance that a Muslim woman decides to stop putting hijab until a stage of menopause, while some continue to wear it during their whole life (William & Vashi, 2007).

Other findings also revealed that Muslim women are also wearing hijab in the presence of unrelated men or non-mahram, the word mahram means, a person who is related to her (Tariq- Munir, 2014). According to the Qur'an, socialization with non- mahram is impermissible under Islam, except if her mahram is around. Evidently, Qur'an mentioned about those mahram who can see the adornment of Islam such as Muslim women, her husband, father-in-law, son, husband's son and brothers (Ramli & Elatrash, 2017). There is also an instance where a Muslim woman may not need to cover if she is with her mahram. A study of Ruby (2006) which reported that Muslim women wear hijab as protection from unrelated men. Ibe-al-Jawzi (as cited in Roald, 2011) argued that women

can cause temptation.

Amr. Khaled (2012) as cited in Woldesemait, (2012) stated “therefore it is obligatory for the woman, since she is the source of attraction and influence.” In this sense, woman should cover as it can tempt men. Under Islam, human body is a cause of sin that should be concealed. This idea can be seen in one of the verses in Qur’an in the story of Adam and Eve (Khuri, 2001 cited in Siraj 2011). The whole body of woman is influenced with sexuality that may instigate sexual arousal of men although the Qur’an ordained not only women but also men to dress modestly (Siraj, 2011). Additionally, many scholars asserted that women are a prominent cause of fitnah due to illicit sexual relations which might result from men’s lack of ability to resist the women (Ahmed & Donnan, 2003). This is exemplified in the experience of a participant who described hijab as protection to lower the gaze of men.

Droogsma (2007 cited in Koura, 2016) explained that Muslim women may encounter challenges as they chose to visibly declare their identity by wearing hijab. Although they expressed gratefulness as they are easily identified a Muslim by wearing it, people tend to link this identity into a negative account. With the occurrence that happened on 9/11 and some terrorism incidents, Muslims have been globally identified as terrorists since there was usually an involvement of Muslims. According to Weinber (2013) as cited in Salem (2016) terrorism is defined as “the calculated use of violence or threat to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in pursuit of political, ideological, and religious ends.” Muslims are facing a great concern on the growing discrimination (Abbas, 2004), though they hate crimes (FBI as cited in Weichselbaumer, 2016). And it is due to their decision which visibly declared their identity as a Muslim by wearing hijab despite all the stigma labeled to Muslims (Kunst, 2012).

One of the causes of discrimination is stigma. Stigma refers to negative labels of an individual associated to other individuals or groups (Khan, 2016). Muslims are interpreted to have been associated as terrorists and fundamentalists experiencing prejudice and discrimination based on ascribed negative image. Muslim women are often seen as conformable to the Western society as their identity and they are stigmatized (Abu-Ali & Reisen, 1999). Other negative stereotypes on Muslim are manifested through the following words: “evil, terrorist, barbaric, wild, and backward” (Ghunmann & Jackson 2010 as cited in Weichselbaumer, 2016). And these ideas are prevalent and being portrayed by media analysis and social media commentaries in different western countries. Hence, the wrongdoings of Muslim extremists are seen to be represented by the entire Muslims (Gutoc, 2003).

The complexity of the identity of Muslim in Western society can be seen in a diverse religion where hijab appears to be a garment which places a distinction from Muslim women from others (Jasperse, Ward & Jose, 2011). In the West, Muslim is experiencing an issue in identity that is rooted from the conflict between Islam and the West (Abbas, 2007). The hijab has been recognized negatively specifically to violence (Haddad, 2007); thus, the identity of Muslim that appeared is negatively interpreted.

Allen and Nielsen (2002) suggested that the major factor to determine the vulnerability of discrimination is the visibility of identity of Muslim as they wear hijab. For them, this is an easy determinant to be recognized as a Muslim. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2003 cited in Koura 2016), after the September 11 incident, there is a high percentage of respondents who were reported to experience discrimination at the workplace against Muslims, including rejection from a job position. The prejudice that exists in society has placed the Muslim to be prone to discrimination (European Monitoring Centre on Racism & Xenophobia, 2006 as cited in Keogh, 2014).

According to Cemdori (2015) as cited in Fatema and Islam (2014) fashion has something to do with the fabrics, designs, and colors. Historically, hijab is only restricted to a main color which is black (Mahfoodh, 2008 as cited in Zabeen, Shams & Sultana 2017) and seen to be traditional. Many Muslim women wear color black not because it is obligatory but because it does not reveal anything underneath due to its black color (Osmandzikovic, 2013). In this sense, there is no fixed standard color of clothing that Muslim women must wear. It is recommended that Muslim women should wear hijab that would not attract the gaze of men, what is not considered to be tabarruj which refers to improper display of beauty and adornment (Wati & Saputra 2018). However, as time goes, Muslim clothing changes as it opens a new opportunity to the new context, a new variety of colors and a bigger market. The changes of hijab from the traditional black is changing into new colors, textiles, prints, and embellishment (Young, 2007).

The changes on hijab come with a variety of shape, color, pattern, and style. Muslim women are changing the conventional style (Indarti & Li-Hsun, 2016). Today, Muslim women use ornaments like brooch or pin along with Muslim attire (Sobh, Belk & Gressel, 2008). The accessories such as pin and brooch are described with functionality to keep the hijab in place when styling (Bazlin, Darren, Goh, Lee, Lee Lee & Teh, 2019). According to Bucar (2017), hijab is styled nowadays to frame the head and face in different ways while colors and textures express individual preferences. Hence, Muslim women are selecting these kinds of movement which conforms not only to the religious injunction, but also to the sense of fashion. Muslim women today who are styling their headscarves and pairing them with their outfit are known to be a hijabista. This is one of the examples in fashion industry as their clothing is prescribed also in Islam (Hassan & Harun, 2016).

“Paradoxical portmanteau” is how Hassim (2014) described as the combination of hijab and fashionista. Around 2012, Malaysia’s Hijabista magazine launched the first edition. As Hassim and Khalid (2015) note, the magazine of Muslim women had been focused on spirituality. However, Hijabista magazine promote hijabista phenomenon which features fashion trends from the fusion of the word hijab and fashion. For Hijabista, veil comes from different shapes and in myriad fabrics, colours and prints (Aly, 2014). Furthermore, editorials provided a more global perspective on hijab and supported the idea of supporting the Muslim clothing (Hassim, 2014).

However, in Islam, fashion is seen to be inharmonious as this phenomenon is associated in Western. From non-Islamic society, hijab is perceived to symbolize as an oppression to women. For instance, to those Muslim women wearing a long piece of garment that covers the head can be associated with terrorism. In France, the government prohibited the Muslim women in wearing their Muslim clothing like niqab around 2010. In August 2016, following the ban of niqab and burqa, the “Burkini” was also banned. Burkini is a combination of swimsuit and burqa. The Muslim clothing became more controversial when Muslim was associated with the mass murder that happened in Paris and Nice. But later on, the government decided to halt the ban due to the rights of the Muslim as citizens (Hickey, 2007).

Despite the rejection of hijab in some countries, the hijab fashion still thrives. Unlike the olden times, many young Muslim women today are expressing their identity as a Muslim by wearing hijab. In the fashion industry, some of the designers viewed their identity as a fashionable Muslim such as Hana Tajima. She is one of the widely known designers. She teamed up with one of the global brands such as UNIQLO Japan and made a fashionable clothing with the boundaries of religion. This collaboration was introduced around 2015 and concentrated in South East Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore (Yazid, 2016).

The hijab comes with various prints, dip eye fabrics and breathable materials. This is also suitable not just to Muslim women but every woman who prefers modest style. There is also called an Inner hijab made by the tech fabric of UNIQLO which is very convenient for everyday use. The designer has also come up with a few styling tips on how to best style the headscarves. The collection made a good feedback and it was expanded to Japan and Philippines, United States of America, and United Kingdom in the year 2016 (Yazid, 2016).

The growth of the Islamic culture industry which has a fusion of fashion and faith has encouraged Muslim women to be modest and fashionable. It also became popular with various types of hijab, inner clothes, accessories, and hijab tutorials in different YouTube videos instructing Muslim women about the latest styles, color and patterns which suit the tone of skin and face (Rahmawati, 2016). The above responses demonstrated that hijab today is being more stylish.

Different motifs of embroidery and design have been used as ornamentation. Design such as flora and fauna and geometrical shapes are also used (Ranathunga & Dewpura, 2018). The non-traditional hijab also is in different colors and style (Hamzehei, 2014). However, patterns of image of living creatures are forbidden since idolatry is not allowed on Islam. Printed animals are not permissible in Islam (Ranathunga & Dewpura, 2018).

Today, different hijab styles used by the Muslim women in their daily life such as the Shayla, a rectangular scarf that is wrapped around the head multiple times and pinned to an under scarf. But the pinning and wrapping is a bit complicated although it seems tidy and slender because it follows the contours of the head better than hijab which is usually a square of cloth folded into a triangle draped over the head and secured around the neck by tying or pinning it in place. Another head covering is known as Amina or princess style which comes with an under scarf and matching cover like a nun’s habit that simply frames the face and drapes down over the shoulders. Generally, this is made from knit fabric (Akouh, 2007). Some Muslim women also opted out the conventional hijab with a large fabric but instead used a combination of white turban decorated with flowers along with a pink neck cover, which has been known as the inner ninja, since the shape resembles a ninja’s balaclava. Khimar is also a hijab style which used a large piece of cloth that looks like a cape. Like the Amina style, it also frames the face and draping the arm of a woman (Lucas, 2014).

Other hijab designs and styles inspired from one of the leading example fashion industry, Hijabers Community are Kasual Inspiration are small and have a color of neutral and pastel color palette. The direction of this hijab style looked sideway from the face. It also has a layering effect using one kind of fabric or more. Another is the Formal inspiration that emphasizes simplicity and elegant image. The fabric used is satin and chiffon and it is not decorative. To add, there is also a special occasion inspiration which is more decorative. Through this kind of hijab style, Muslim women can cover their aurat and still be fashionable (Puspitasaria & Dolahrb, 2017).

Afaneh (2020) also mentioned the way hijab is wrapped such as classic hijab where the veil is framed around the face, making sure to keep the end of the fabric about twice as long as the other.

Other Muslim have a new way of wearing hijab nowadays such as the camel hump. It is described as a large bun under the hijab. According to Al-Balali (2006) as cited in Hassim (2014), women who wear hijab that have a camel hump are considered as naked and hell dwellers. In this sense, this modern wearing of hijab is impermissible as this may create an attraction

The camel style hijab is presumed as a form of style of hijab that covers the hair, but the shape causes to be like a hump of camel is an impermissible act (Kuriata, 2016).

Similarly, the study of Bazin et. Al (2019) found that some Muslim women refused turban style as it seems not appropriate. The religious aspect of hijab can be maintained by means of observing the Islamic guidelines on clothing – to cover aurat. The concept of aurat can be understood under Mustafa, Tasir, and Jusoh (2018) explained that aurat is referred to be source of humiliation. In sharia, aurat refers to body parts that should be concealed from the eyes of non-mahram or people who are not allowed to see them except their husband and family. In fiqh, aurat refers to the body parts which needs to be concealed. Therefore, it should be hidden to the public. This guideline ensures the religious aspect of hijab.

A study conducted by Fadilla and Munazza (2017) found out that despite the styling of hijab, veiled Muslim women still take into consideration the modesty requirement. According to Bhuiyan (2018), one of the requirements in the Islamic dress is to cover the parts

of the body, citing also the Quran verse 24:30 – 31, “to draw their head coverings over their chest”.

The study conducted by Ibrahim (2018) revealed that fashion may be permissible on Islam. Qur'an permits the freedom of clothing as long as the private parts should not be seen in public. In addition, adornment is also permitted which embracing fashion as one Muslim would learn how to cover the private parts. Hijab and fashion can be intertwined in a sense that dress code should be observed in religious principle.

The suggested clothing of Muslim women indicated in Quran is thick enough to cover the hidden parts such as head, neck, and shoulders. It is also a standard of clothing under Islam, a non-transparent clothing (Ramli & Elatrash, 2017). The exposure of aurat such as neck and hair may lead to fitnah. In the Quran, fitnah pertains to the sexual temptation to the gaze of men (Roald 2011 as cited in Khan 2016). Fitnah is an Arabic word which has a various meaning. It can be an enchantment. In a religious sense, it is viewed as a threat (Shehab, 1992).

Under the Islamic guideline on wearing hijab, the length of garment should be enough to hide the certain parts of the body. The very clear description of proper women clothing stated in Quran should be long and wide until it conceals the aurat (Ramli & Elatrash, 2017). In Qur'an, the style and design of garment that are prescribed to women are not mentioned which is an idea to open for various explanations. It also stated what is allowed and prohibited of a woman to wear. The clothing depends upon the length of the garment, volume and thickness of the fabric and the hijab. Although Qur'an does not restrict the fashion of the garment and style, it emphasizes that woman should not dress like a man and vice versa (Aris, Ibrahim, & Ahmad, 2018). Also, the Sunnah, teachings of prophet Muhammad, do not mention any of it. It means there is no contradiction between hijab and fashion as God does not impose one clothing on all people.

From the Islamic point of view, Islam allowed clothing and adornment. Clothing is served to cover the aurat and beautify the appearance (Ibrahim, 2018). Citing the Quran verse:

“O children of Adam! Verily, We have bestowed upon you clothing to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment to you...: (7:26)

Therefore, fashion is possible to Islam if it does not negate the guidelines on Islam (Dabbous, 2005). As fashion may conform to the Islamic code of clothing, fashion and hijab may blend. Wearing a fashionable hijab is necessary as long as it fulfilled the religious rule such as covering the awrat.

In the study conducted by Fatema and Islam (2014), fashionable Muslim woman may possibly be encouraged that the religious requirement must be achieved. Tarlo (2010 as cited in Rahmawati 2016) explained that Islamic fashion as wearing trendy clothes without having a conflict on religious norm relates to covering the aurat. It is also mentioned in the study of Aris, Ibrahim and Ahmad (2018) that there are various thing to take into account such as: knowing the Islamic teaching, cover the aurat, the length and volume of the fabric, thickness of the garment and the proper way to cover. Indeed, hijab and fashion can be mutually involved while following the Islamic guidelines.

According to Bazlin et. al (2019), the changes of hijab may be allowed; it can be in terms of adjustment of modesty. Muslim women are aware of the rules regarding hijab which allow them to incorporate new design and style. It is also noted that Islam never puts any certain style or design for Muslim to obey (Hassan, Zaman & Santosa, 2015).

The fashion perspective of Muslim women can be seen in the study conducted by Zabeen, Shams and Sultana (2017) which shows that religious commitment is still the reason of wearing Islamic attire despite the personal sense of fashion. Woldesemait (2012) argued that the religious aspect of hijab is not losing but producing in style to keep with the modernization. He argued that hijab is not static but dynamic by emphasizing the new styles of hijab with a combination of fashion and religious guidelines. The study of Hassan, Anas and Santosa (2015) revealed that the

Muslim women fully apprehended the proper attire of clothing modestly. It is found out that hijab wearers will most likely to follow the Islamic guideline while fashion is changing.

According to Fatema and Islam (2014), Islam required a modesty requirement on dress code-- the style and design are not included. Muslims use different clothings which reflects Muslim diversity. Many Muslim choose to dress various colors including blue, green, gray, and other traditional colors. However, this specific choice of color does not hold a meaning. There are colors and clothing styles which are also practiced in some local part of the world based on traditions. This is shown in the study of Ranathunga and Dewpura (2018) that concluded that Muslim women are bound by culture when considering their clothing.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, qualitative method was used because the study sought to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group or interaction (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1987) and it is suitable for gathering non-numerical data regarding people's feelings, experiences, and ways of life. This method involves immersion in the daily life of the setting chosen for the study; the researcher attempted to study the participants' world and through an ongoing interaction to uncover the informants' perception and meaning. With

regards to the researcher's positionality which pertained as an insider or outsider in relation to the participants, the identity of the researcher as a Muslim had allowed the construction of Muslim women in a new understanding of hijab. Being a Muslim meant that the researcher was not only aware of the customs regarding hijab, but also was able to understand this quest. The fact that the researcher wears the hijab, the researcher was able to relate on the experiences of the participants; however, the personal view of researcher was kept private in the process. It was also a privilege because the participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences with the researcher because they felt that the researcher could relate to some challenges they were facing.

Participants

Participant must be a Maranao Muslim woman.

Participant must be wearing hijab either in traditional or nontraditional. In this study, traditional hijab is defined as a plain and simple black headscarf that has no design whereas the nontraditional hijab describes a more vibrant and colorful appearance.

Participant must be a professional working in the Philippines.

Participant must be in the age between 18-25 years old.

Excluded in this research are the other tribes of Muslim such as Maguindanao and Tausog. Revert Muslims are those who are converted from being a Christian to Muslim are also excluded in this study.

The researcher used purposive and convenience sampling method in collecting the data. This process focus on selecting thirty (30) participants. Purposive method was utilized to focus on the participants' criteria, namely Muslim Maranao women who are young and working professionals within the age of 18-25 years old. As a result, the researcher were able to identified the participants. Each participant in the study wore the hijab either in a traditional or non traditional.

Instrument

The researchers formulated 10 questions that served as the interview guide throughout the whole interview; the guide questions aimed to answer the research questions of this study. These questions involved the significance of hijab in the culture, the challenges faced by the Muslim women who wear hijab, and the way to maintain the religious identity of wearing hijab. The interview guide questions were validated by the thesis adviser along with some experts in the field of anthropology. Semi-structured interview was used in this study to collect and obtain more relevant data and to elicit the participants' experiences in wearing the hijab. The interviews were recorded to secure the participants' confidentiality. The researcher found the process on how to transcribe conveniently. The transcriptions of the mentioned interviews served as bases for the data analysis.

Procedure

Before the actual interview, appointments were made. The date and time of the interview depended on the availability of the participants. The researcher assured that the interview was suited to the schedule of the participants by personally reaching out to them. Informed consent form was also prepared to assure the confidentiality of the participants' identities.

Data Analysis

The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a way "to identify, analyze and report pattern within the collected data" (Cristobal & De La Cruz, 2017). This was used because the experiences of Muslim women involved were varied. Therefore, thematic analysis allows flexibility to identify common themes across all the transcripts.

Ethical Considerations

Before conducting an interview, the participants are informed about the nature of study, purpose, expected duration of interview, potential risks and benefits etc. This means the researcher provide everything the participants need to know about the study. Upon getting the consent of the participant, the researcher emphasizes the voluntary participation; that the participants may decide not to respond in any particular question which may bring discomfort. The participants also may withdraw at any time without penalty. The study ensures the confidentiality, names of the participants are not included.

Results and Discussion

Drawing on the results of this study, this paper contributed to the body of knowledge on hijab. The findings unravel a new perspective about the understanding of hijab today. Since hijab is known to be a religious obligation, it is important to note on how hijab and fashion intertwined. Thus, this study also sought to know how Muslim women maintain the religious aspect of hijab while changing its new context. From the analysis of data, different themes emerged that helped in constructing a new understanding of hijab.

Theme 1: Muslim identity

This theme contributed to the understanding of hijab and its significance on culture. It explored on how hijab can give a sense of identity to a Muslim. This theme encompassed subtheme hijab as an identifier. This subtheme focused on how hijab help to identify

a Muslim from others in their community and help others to recognize them as a Muslim. It emphasized its mark of a Muslim identity, knowing that people would immediately recognize them as one.

Participant 1 stated:

"...ang dali na makilala ako na ah Muslim to kasi nakahijab..." (I can easily be recognized as a Muslim because I wear the hijab.)

Participant equated hijab with Muslim identity, in the sense that whenever a Muslim woman wears hijab, she is easily identified as a Muslim.

Theme 2: Obligation

The second theme had an obligatory subtheme. This theme described hijab as indication of the Muslims' commitment to their religion. The participants in this study recognized that wearing hijab is an obligation in Islam as it demonstrated a sense of religious commitment.

Participant 4 stated:

"Ang pagsusuot ng hijab ay obligatory, isa tong tungkulin nating mga girls. Way back nong bata pa ako hindi ako sanay maghijab nong mga nasa teenager nagstart ako maghijab which is mahirap kasi hindi ka sanay magsuot but unti-unti mong natututunan at isinaloob yung pagsusuot ng hijab. "

Here, the participant described her understanding that wearing hijab is obligatory. When she was a child, she was not used to wear hijab. But as she reached the teenage stage, she started to understand and learned the hijab. In this sense, it is an obligation which makes her to continue in wearing hijab.

Theme 3: Generalization

The next theme was generalization. It explored the experiences of the participants being discriminated against their Muslim identity. Due to this preconceived notion about Muslim, they tend to be generalized.

Participant 8 stated:

"One time sumakay kami ng sister ko sa jeep and then ayun sinasabi nila ayan na ayan na mga terorista".

Participants suffered negative experience as they generalized as a terrorist. To wear hijab is declaring an identity as a Muslim; however, hijab also produces a discrimination linked with Muslim and all the participants were aware of that. They feel overtly discriminated as people see them different because of their visible Muslim identity as they wear hijab.

Theme 4: Professional bias

Participant 12 stated

"One time nong nag apply ako ng work, don ko napansin sa interviews na bakit ganon parang hindi nila siniseryoso ang sagot ko kapag nakita nilang naka-hijab ako compare sa mga kasama ko na applicant nong time na un"

The statement reflects a personal experience of professional bias encountered during a job interview by the participant. The individual mentions that during their application process, they noticed a difference in how their responses were treated compared to other applicants, especially after the interviewers saw that they were wearing the hijab. They felt that the interviewers did not take their answers seriously, implying that their qualifications or responses were somehow undermined or doubted simply because they were wearing a hijab.

Theme 5: Revolutionary

This theme constructed a new understanding of hijab as it entails the changes Muslim do on the traditional context of hijab. It has a subtheme of style and design. It also highlighted the awareness of the participants in the new context of hijab.

Participant 2 stated:

"Nowadays, ang daming palamuti ng hijab, mge geometrical design, floral, printed hijab, ang dami eh!"

The above response demonstrated that hijab today is being more stylish. Different motifs of embroidery and design have been used as ornamentation. Design such as flora and fauna and geometrical shapes are also used.

Theme 6: Islamic guideline regarding hijab

The seventh theme was a significant theme for setting the scene in answering the research question of this study. Islamic guidelines regarding hijab emerged as a prevailing theme which appeared most of the time in the conducted interview. This included the covering the aurat. Therefore, this signified as an enriching aspect of maintaining the religious aspect of hijab while creating a new context.

Participant 3 stated:

"...as long as hindi mo naman naviolate yung purpose ng hijab na dapat ang awrat nakaconceal at tamang application ng pagsuot ng hijab, bakit hindi diba"

Participants believed that hijab can be in a new context as long as the religious aspect of hijab is there which is to cover aurat. In addition, understanding the aurat of a woman is emphasized by the participants.

Theme 7: Moderation

The last theme was moderation and had a subtheme of affirmation to rules regarding hijab. Hijab and fashion can be intertwined by affirming the rules on wearing hijab such as covering the aurat. Blending fashion on hijab means to follow the guidelines set on clothing of Islam. It is found out that participants were aware that modifying hijab into a fashion is accepted if this initiative meets the requirement in donning hijab.

Participant 15 stated:

"Nagiging okay siya as long as it does not expose the skin, fashionable hijab is still acceptable. Modesty can be achieved by covering oneself, by wearing hijab and not by displaying your body contour. I guessed, Islam is not concerned with the style, as long as you fulfill the requirement of hijab".

The statement of participant expresses that wearing a fashionable hijab is acceptable as long as it does not expose the skin. It emphasizes that modesty can be achieved by covering oneself appropriately, which includes wearing the hijab, rather than by showing the contours of the body. The speaker believes that Islam is not concerned with the style of the hijab as long as its requirements for modesty are fulfilled.

Conclusions

The study found that wearing hijab is a multifaceted experience for Muslim women, encompassing both religious devotion and personal identity expressed through fashion. This interplay between faith and style contributes to a modern understanding of hijab as a transdisciplinary concept. Muslim women are actively shaping new meanings around hijab, with a prominent theme being its role as a cultural identifier. By wearing hijab, Muslim women assert their religious and cultural identity, influencing how they are perceived by others. This act moves beyond symbolism, demonstrating the deeply intertwined nature of faith and daily life for Muslims. Embracing religious identity, including outward expressions like hijab, is integral to a Muslim woman's sense of self and wholeness.

References

- Afaneh, S. (2020 January 16). That's a wrap: Five easy hijab styles for any occasion. *The National News*.
- Ahmed, A. & Donnan, H. (2003). *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*. London: Routledge.
- Akoun, H. (2007). Building a new world of fashion: Islamic dress in the twenty first century. *Fashion theory*, 11(4). 403-421.
- Aly, Z. (2014). Meet the Hijabistas. *The Sydney MorningHerald*.
- Antora, S. (2017). The influence of visibility on mental health. CUNY Hunter College. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/hc_sas_etds/357
- Aris, A., Ibrahim, S., & Ahmad, H. (2018). The identity of 'Islamic fashion'. *International Journal of INTI*, 22, 8-14. https://jadinti.uitm.edu.my/images/Volume22_Dec2018/Asliza14.pdf
- Ash, E., Tuffin, K., & Kahu, E. (2019). Representing Islam: Experiences of women wearing hijab in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology (Online)*, 48(1), 114-121. <https://www.psychology.org.nz/journal-archive/Ash-114-121.pdf>
- Bardi, A., Jaspal, R., Polek, E., & Schwartz, S. H. (2014). Values and identity process theory: Theoretical integration and empirical interactions. In R. Jaspal & G. M. Breakwell (Eds.), *Identity process theory: Identity, social action and social change* (pp. 175–200). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139136983.013>
- Bartkowski, J. & Read, J. (2003). Veiled Submission: Gender, Power, and Identity among Evangelical and Muslim Women in the United States." *Qualitative Sociology*, 26(1), 71- 92.
- Bazlin, D. A. T., Darren, Y. W. T., Goh, C. G., Lee, J. A., Lee, P. Y., Lee, Z. D. & Teh, S. Y. (2019). Blending or adjusting modesty in styling fashionable hijab? A study among Malay women academicians at a private university in Perak. *International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences*. 2(8).
- Blakeman, H. (2014). *The Muslim Veil in America: A Symbol of Oppression or Empowerment* (Master's thesis). <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/>

- Bhuiyan, M. A. (2018). Islamic fashion in Southeast Asia: A descriptive research on webbased. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327136868_Islamic_Fashion_in_South-East_Asia_A_Descriptive_Research_on_web_based
- Bucar, E. (2017). Pious Fashion: How Muslim women dress. Harvard University Press. Cristobal, A. P., & De La Cruz-Cristobal, M. C. (2017). Practical research 1. C & E Publishing, Inc.
- Dabbous, Y. (2005, May 17). Muslim women combine tradition fashion; liberal Lebanese are embracing the veil without sacrificing their designer outfits. The Daily star.
- Fadilla, G., & Munazza, S. (2017). Is hijab a fashion statement? A study of Malaysian Muslim women. Journal of Islamic Marketing, 8(3), 275-287. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-07-2015-0072>
- Fatema, M. & Islam, A. (2014). A conceptual framework on the study of trends of Islamic fashion and clothing practices amongs young Muslim female in Bangladesh. Advances in Environmental Biology. 8(9).
- Genel, S., & Karaosmanolu, K. (2006). A new Islamic individualism in Turkey: Headscarved women in the city. Turkish Studies, 7(3), 478-483. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683840600925855>
- Gurbuz, M. E. & Gurbuz-Kucuksari G. (2009). Between Sacred Codes and Secular Consumer Society: The Practice of Headscarf Adoption among American College Girls. Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 29(3), 387-399.
- Hamzehei, P. (2014). Iranian women's experience of mandatory hijab: A case study of a campaign on facebook. (Master thesis). <https://www.diva-portal.org/>
- Hassan, H., Zaman, B. A., & Santosa, I. (2015). Tolerance of Islam: A Study on fashion among modern and professional Malay women in Malaysia. International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, 5(5), 454-460
- Hassan, H. S., & Harun, H. (2016). Factors influencing fashion consciousness in hijab fashion consumption among hijabistas. Journal of Islamic Marketing, 7(4), 476-494. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-04-2015-0043>
- Hassim, N. (2014). A comparative analysis on hijab wearing in Malaysian Muslim magazine. The journal of the South East Asia Research Center for communications and humanities. 6(1), 79-96.
- Hassim, N. & Khalid, N. L. (2015). Stailo & Siopan: Modesty and Malay-Muslim women. International conference on Trends in Social Science). 28-35. <https://doi.org/10.17758/ERPUB.ER815031>
- Hickey, K.A. (2007). The Burkini Buzz: Exploring French national identity discourse through social media (Undergraduate Theses). <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/>
- Honohan, I., & Rougier, N. (2011). The embodiment of tolerance in discourses and practice addressing cultural diversity in Irish schools. European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. <https://doi.org/10.2870/12345>
- Hochel, S. (2013). To veil or not to veil: Voices of Malaysian Muslim women. Intercultural Communication Studies, 22(2).
- Ibrahim, M. (2018). Concept of Islam in fashion. International Journal of Science and Research, 7(2).
- Khan, H. (2016). A qualitative exploration of the meanings, reasons and perceptions of the hijab among young Muslim hijab-wearing women in Greater Manchester. (Doctoral dissertation). Manchester Metropolitan University. <http://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/>
- Kelmachter, M. (2016, February 2015). Islamic-inspired fashion turns heads in Southeast Asia. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/melaniekelmachter/2016/02/01/islamic-inspired-fashion-turns-heads-in-southeast-asia/>
- Koura, F. (2016). Hijab in the Western workplace: Exploring Islamic psychotherapeutic approaches to discrimination. Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Science, 4(2), 38-47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678912345>
- Kuriata, Agnieszka. 2016. Hijab – Muslim Response to Globalization?. Człowiek i Społeczeństwo 151, 147–161.
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W., & Silverman, S. J. (1987). Proposal that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals. Sage Publications.
- Luces, K. (2014 Februari 1). Of style and modesty: The different kinds of hijab. Gma News Online.
- Mubarak, H. (2014). Intersections: modernity gender and quranic exegesis. (Dissertation). <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/>
- Mustafa Z., Tasir, S. F., & Mat Jusoh, N. A. (2018). The concept of aurah: Islamic dressing code and personal grooming according to fiqh law. e-Academia Journal, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.24191/e-aj.v7i2.4682>
- Potts, J. (2009). Lifting the veil on fashion filling the gaps between modesty and fashion apparels (Undergraduate thesis). The Ohio State University. <https://kb.osu.edu>

- Puspitasari, C., & Dolahrb, J. (2017). Hijab design and style in Indonesia, influenced by the Hijabers community (Master's thesis). Universiti Sains Malaysia. http://eprints.usm.my/40509/1/ART_27.pdf
- Rahmawati, A. (2016). Faith, Fashion and Femininity: Visual and Audience Analysis of Indonesian Muslim Fashion blogs (Disertation). <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/id/eprint/99707>
- Ramli, A. & Elatrash, R. J. (2017). A reflection on women attire in the Quran: A study on Ayat Al-Hijab. *Mazahib*, 16(2).
- Ranathunga, G. M., & Dewpura, D. A. (2018). An investigative study of modest fashion: The case of the Western and Central provinces of Sri Lanka. *World Scientific News*, 112, 115.
- Read, J. G., & Barkowski, J.P. (2000) To veil or not to veil? A case study of identity negotiation among Muslim women in Austin, Texas. *Gender & Society*, 14(3).
- Ruby, T. 2006. Listening to the voices of hijab. *Women's studies International Forum* 29,54-66
- Sintang, S., Khambali, K. M., Sabdin & Khair, N. S. (2016). Hijab and its' challenge for changing new lifestyle of new Muslim women. International conference on Research in Humanities, Sociology and Education. London, UK.
- Shehab, A. A. (1992) *Women, Islam and Modernity*. UMI Dissertation Publishing.
- Siraj, A. (2011). Meanings of modesty and the hijab amongst Muslim women in Glasgow, Scotland. *A Journal of Feminist geography*. 6. 716-731.
- Sowray, B. (2016, January 6). Muslim model Maria Idrissi on Dolce & Gabbana's new hijab and abaya collection. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/people/muslim-model-maria-idrissi-on-dolce-and-gabbana-new-hijab-and-abaya>
- Thomas Reuters. (2015). State of the global Islamic economy report 2015/16. <https://www.research.tr.com/state-global-islamic-economy-2015>
- Tariq-Munir, E. (2014). The dynamics of wearing hijab for muslim american women in the United States. (Master's Thesis). <https://repository.library.du.ac.bd>
- Williams, R. H., & Vashi, G. (2007). Hijab and American Muslim women: Creating the space for autonomous selves. *Sociology of Religion*, 3, 49-60. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/3.2.49>
- Woldesemait, M. (2012). The rhetoric of the modern hijab. Independent Study Project Collection. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/
- Yazid, M.G. (2016). Designing a modest sportwear to provide in daily sport activities for Muslim women wearing hijab. Institutional repositories Database.
- Zabeen, M., Shams, S. & Sultana, N. (2017). Growing popularity of Muslim attire: faith or fashion?. *International Journal of Science*. 7(9). 728-737.

Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Najera R. Umpar

NU Dasmarinas – Philippines

Loreto G. Camiloza

De La Salle University – Philippines