

# Dissertation

The content of this paper is a research topic that is conducted globally on the subject of Hijab or (Veil) as to the understanding of the reasons why women should wear or not wear the hijab. To get this research conducted there were some surveys, questionnaires and some original observations that made this analysis possible. In this research will be discussing the women in Islam, the media as on how they show and portray the hijab or veil and the Islam point of view about the hijab and the political aspects of it.

## Purposes of the research

The study aims to analyse the main negative ideas that the Western perspective to the reasons why Muslim communities are so fussed and divided to the idea of wearing the Hijab.

The research explains and conducts the concerns that effects the western societies regarding the main personal reasons why almost the majority of Muslim women wear the veil or hijab and others don't. I am hoping and aiming for my research to be relevant, significant and to help open my mind and others regarding these issues and main topics happing in our communities and world.

## METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Participation

The target age group for this research is related to hijabi whos in between the age of 16 and 60 because they are the current generation who deals and faces these type of issues on a daily basis. And that they have different views and opinions. In this age group, I may also include hijabi married women who also have their idea about the hijab as married women and how that changed after their marriage may have changed or influenced them and everything they have believed in about the veil.

### 2.2 Methods of data collection

For this research, I have decided to use two sets of data 1) an online questionnaire that included 22 questions about the hijab and being a hijabi. 2) went ahead and conducted open interviews and observations with the same candidates who participated in the questionnaire to gather more data to support this research. All this data gathered it was just enough to get this research going and complete.

After many edits, drafting and thinking of the questionnaire I finally managed to come up with a variety of questions that helped distribute to a final version to represent. My survey contained the opinions of the young and old hijabi whos has their ideas and thoughts when it comes to wearing the hijab, and it includes those who don't wear it. In my survey, I did not ask the candidates to provide their names or any personal details, and that is because I wanted to keep it announce as it's their human rights. I eventually managed to collect almost 20 responses in total, and it is enough data from this research to be conducted. I after then took all the replies of the questionnaire and entered it as a chart of reports to show and display each questions report.

## Introduction

Nowadays there are huge debates regarding the wearing of the hijab in public. As the coverings that been worn by the Muslim women has been increased and will be increasing the past few years as this has resulted in a lot of controversies including with those who agree with the idea and those who do not. (<https://jakartaglobe.id/features/jilbabs-hijabs-islamic-veil-increasingly-popular-indonesia/>).

The western world countries also among them the French who expects and thinks that the hijab would be marked and logged as the history of westernisation and its roots. Nevertheless, the hijab-wearing is spreading among the younger generation and the Muslim world. Hijab can be seen throughout the world, in particular in places with a high concentration of Muslims. The hijab was the focus of frequently fierce media debates and symbolised the clash of cultures supported by links between Islamic 'extremism' and terrorism in the 21st century. While the full coverage, known as the burqa, was compulsory in several Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran. In the interests of secularism, such traditional clothing and the much more common hijab have been banned in a hostile response to Muslim culture. In this case, Muslim women pictured like they are being forced and told by their religion and their family by the western media as victims of the hijab and that those hijabis are lacking the freedom of choice in their city. And that they marked as a threat to the western societies as they chose to adopt the hijab as it is part of the Muslim Islamic costume.

Muslim women are portrayed almost consistently as oppressed and veiled, a terrorist threat or exotic, sexualised beings. Today the Muslim world and its inhabitants are considered different, strangers and outsiders to the western societies and the world. This portrait and representation of Muslims are notable in the media as regards Muslim women 's coverage. Most of the observations of Muslim women who wear traditional Islamic clothes such as the hijab and their role in the press is usually limited to comments on such topics as the veil.

## Western culture

### The Western perception of the hijab

The Western media and feminists often depict hijab as a symbol of women's oppression and slavery. (<http://www.al-islam.org>). Lots of Western and Islamic feminists argue that the veil is a symbol of gender oppression and that women's Islamic veiling is an oppressive practice. Masih Alinejad, an Iranian feminist and activist who dedicated her entire life to fight for the women rights, says "The first thing that happened was the introduction of the compulsory hijab, and everything else came after that because it was the most visible and essential way of controlling the women. The revolution took our bodies hostage, and it is taking them, hostage, still." (<https://www.theguardian.com/global/2018/jun/03/the-wind-in-my-hair-one-womans-struggle-against-being-forced-to-wear-hijab>).

Feminists argue that Western women value the public presence and visibility. It is their fight for economic independence, sexual intercourse and political participation. In the West, famousness is the culmination of cultural legitimacy. The hijab is a challenge to freedom of unrestricted visibility and liberty and freedom of self -

expression. ( [www.theage.com](http://www.theage.com)).

Since the beginning of time and after a century of struggle for freedom of self-expression, including the rejection of the bra, some Western countries have called for hijab to be banned from school. They have, it seems, developed a somewhat limited understanding of what public visibility could mean for different women. In 2004 law France was known for it, and it is known by (act on the headscarf/veil) It reveals the difficulty of respecting conflicting ideas between different communities, mainly if one community is a minority, in this case, the Muslims of France. Under this law, female students in public schools and all other female hijabis who prohibited from wearing the hijab and all other openly religious symbols. France prevents women from wearing hijab in public schools because many feminists and legislators argue that women's veiling is an oppressive force, a force that silences women. (<https://www.dw.com/en/french-burqa-ban-violates-human-rights-rules-un-committee/a-46007469>). Most feminists see the hijab as a symbol of Islamic gender oppression, space where gender equality is alleged or claimed should be banned from public areas. Some law supporters believe that it fights gender oppression and gives balance and justice to women in the public system.

In Monia Mazigh Hijabs, feminism and hypocrisy in mainstream narratives of women's liberation article she states that "Even when Muslim women strongly and loudly voice their disagreement that they are not oppressed and that wearing the hijab or niqab is their own choice, they are not taken seriously, or they are not heard at all."

Again according to, veil critics focus on secular liberal assumptions about society and human nature and the veil should, therefore, be described as a symbol of oppression. Because it Covers up (hides) femininity in the sense of smothering is apparently linked to the essential male and female difference (which means that male is superior in every way by nature, and the female is lesser). It is linked to a particular view of the place of women (subjugated in the home); it is connected to an oppressive (patriarchal) notion of morality and female purity (due to Islam). Emphasis on morality, marriage and condemnation of premarital and extramarital sexual relationships; can be imposed; and is linked to a package of oppression faced by women in Islam, such as seclusion, polygamy, easy male divorce, unequal inheritance.

The argument of oppression

Although it is true that many women wear hijab, this does not apply to all women. And in some Middle East and North African countries, women are forced and persecuted and abused for failing to comply with the hijab. In Masih Alinejad book, *The Wind in my Hair*, Masih explains that "girls in her country are raised to "keep their heads low, to be as unobtrusive as possible, and to be meek"; and she couldn't be more different."

Now, some Islamic feminists argue that while the Quran statement on women

covering themselves was not intended to oppress women, the interpretation of these verses by Islamic societies oppresses women. Although the hijab is a symbol of oppression against women in Islam, many Islamic women do not agree with it. Assuredly under some Islamist rule, especially in some countries in North Africa, Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, women are subjugated and told to wear the hijab, but this is an exception to the female rule in an international context when it comes to veil practices.

Vida Movahed, a 31-year-old Iranian mother who "protested against the law, which required all women in Iran to wear a headscarf the law required all women above the age of puberty to cover their heads, although many tried to fight back through social movements. Since these latest protests began, according to the government, 29 women have been arrested for taking off their headscarves. Movahed was said to have been held for a month and released on bail.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/politics/irans-brave-women-fighting-right-ditch-hijabs/>

### The argument of liberation

It may be argued that the hijab liberates instead of oppresses. The oppressive force behind the veil is that members of the Islamic and Western authority merely take a woman's right to choose. The veil itself is a piece of fabric. We interpret hijab in our social sense and Religious properties. The Muslim girls in France lose their freedom to express their spirituality through Western discussion and the ban on hijab in public. This view on the veil disables and oppresses women continually by ending their freedom of spiritual expression.

The French headscarf law of 2004 prevents Islamic women from wearing the veil in places of education. The 2004 law aims to combat gender oppression and inequality in the system of public schools, But it actually diminishes women's freedoms rather than enhancing them as a residual effect. The Headscarf Law supports Oppressive Western speeches about veiled women and attempts to westernise French Muslim youths.

### Internal debate: Reasons for wearing the hijab and not wearing it

Islamic women's opinions differ in their choice whether to wear the veil or not. Some feminists, Muslims and non-Muslims, defend the veil as a sign of agency, cultural affiliation and distrust. Muslim women see veil bans as the creation or perpetuation of stereotypes that become more difficult to combat. " Western society tends to oversimplify these cultural stereotypes without looking at the women they believe are degraded. " <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/france-niqab-burqa-ban-muslim-women-veils-remove-what-like-a8230541.html>

### Reasons for wearing an Islamic hijab

The most basic debate about the hijab is about the hijab requirement. This is a question that many Muslim scholars are debating. First of all, it is essential to understand the power of the Quran to know why there is a problem. The Quran is

God's Word brought by Muhammad the Prophet (Peace be upon him) his last messenger. The Islam religion is the complete submission and obedience to Allah (God the Father) since the Quran is the Word of God, it also means the comprehensive introduction to the Quran and obedience. The first problem with the hijab requirement is whether the hijab is in the Quran or not. This argument has two sides: some who say veil is a requirement because it is in the Quran and others who say it is not because it is not part of the Quran. Dr Laureen Hamdan, at the University of Sharjah, an American professor who conducted interviews regarding the influence and the practice of hijab. Her Lectures strongly influenced Muslim youth, in particular, Muslim women's youth, on the subject of the veil. It is the school of thought which considers the hijab to be directly in the Qur'an and therefore a requirement for Muslim women. In one of her lectures on the veil, she tells her students that some people argue that this hijab is not compulsory and that it was not mentioned in the Quran. " These are the verses of the Quran which make the Hijab obligatory for Muslims.

In the Quran, Allah says "O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies. That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed. And – ALLAH – is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (33:59)". It explains to that women are told to cover their bodies in this verse. In order to be called modest women and not harassed.

According to many Muslims, the hijab has many uses and meanings. The symbolism of the veil is one of modesty and morality. According to Islam, the veil serves as a shield against the lustful gaze of men for a woman. Further, the veil also serves as a cover to preserve the woman's modesty and piety, as this is her leading role as stated in the Qur'an. It's not only her role in her faith but in society as well. The Quran also says that women are the main preservers of honour, piety, and modesty in the family. The hijab is, therefore, help in which the woman can fulfil this function as requested by Allah through the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). " Al-Hijab, " the hijab is also used to force men not to sexually objective women but to see them as a vessel of intelligence and superior moral values that the hijab strengthens the fact that " Islam " has made women's beauty higher value in the eyes of men by protecting this beauty from uncontrolled lusts and desires in the form of hijab, and commanding men instead to respect the inner beauty of her soul. The real value of women is therefore associated with the degree of their indulgence and their adherence to it. This is Islamic tradition and is essential for the hijab in Islam.

A study on hijab in the West also provides another theory which I believe can also be applied in the Middle East and South Africa because they are West-influenced countries. Nick Hopkins in his philosophy he suggests that hijab in the West is an identity issue, a physical symbol of the Muslim identity of a woman. This symbol also conveys a message of religiosity in a modernised society that promotes a secular way of life and disregards tradition. Hopkins also claims that the modern identity of Muslim women, including the wearing of a veil, is primarily the identity of resistance to values that individuals found foreign and imposed on them as such (Hijab, visibility and the performance of identity). In modern society, therefore, the hijab can be seen as a way to maintain a religious lifestyle while at the same time meeting the

demands of the contemporary world. Another reason to why women wear the hijab is because they find the veil to be an incentive. To add, " For me, the wear of the hijab indicates that as a woman I expect to be treated equally concerning my intellect and personality and my appearance is only relevant to the extent that I want it to be. "

Kalashe addresses in her article that current western assumptions by demonstrating through its research that some women wear hijab because they wear hijab:

For a variety of reasons,

- 1) Muslim women want to wear their hijab for covers. The hijab is worn by some women because they believe that God instructed women to wear it as a way to fulfil His modesty commandment.
- 2) For these women, hijab is a personal choice made after puberty that reflects their own devotion to God. In many cases, wearing a headscarf is often accompanied by loose, unrevealing clothing, also known as the hijab.
- 3) Some Muslim women are using this stereotype and wear the hijab to declare their Islamic identity and bear witness to their faith.
- 4) The majority of Muslim women wear hijab for religious reasons, other Arab or Muslim women choose to wear hijab as an expression of their cultural identity.
- 5) In many situations, hijab-wearing is also used to challenge Western feminist discourses that present women who wear hijab as oppressed or silenced.

Reasons for not wearing the Islamic tradition hijab

In the Quran, although it says that the cloak is drawn throughout their bodies, it doesn't tell the hair specifically. Furthermore, it does not specify how, to what extent and in what way women should be covered. There are many active alternative modern views to this idea that hijab is obligatory because it is in the Quran. More like the women who choose to wear hijab, for a variety of reasons, those who wish not to wear hijab do so. Although the principles of modesty are clearly outlined in Qu'ran, some Muslim women believe, The wear of the headscarf is perceived as a cultural interpretation of these scriptures. Sometimes these women believe that the values that wear the hijab can be achieved in other ways. Some women think that while the veil allowed women to enter public society without receiving attention in the past, in contemporary Western culture, the headscarf brings more attention to women and therefore contradicts its original purpose. Many genuinely believe that hijab and other external methods are inappropriately central to the practice of Islam and instead concentrate on their inner and spiritual relationship with God. Although some women may choose not to wear the hijab, most Muslim women agree that it is the choice of a woman whether she wears the hijab or not. Many Muslim and middle eastern women who choose not to wear the hijab are often steadfast supporters of a woman's right to veil. The veil was therefore only associated with the wives of the prophets and his daughters, not all Islamic women. This line of thinking does not deny that all believers expected modesty. In the presence of strange men, women should " guard their private parts... and cover their breasts "(Surah 24:31-32)". It

basically explains that specific parts of the body are called here, which women should guard and cover, including the private sections and the breast, but not the hair. Thus lots of women don't Always believe that hijab is compulsory for Muslim women, because the Quran does not mention it. According to veil critics, it relies on secular liberal assumptions about society and human nature and the veil should, therefore, be described as a symbol of oppression. Because it covers up femininity in the sense of smothering is apparently linked to the essential male-female difference (which means that male is superior by nature, the female is inferior); It is also related to a specific view of the place of women (oppressed at home); it is linked to an oppressive (gendered) notion of morality and feminine purity (because of Islam). Its emphasis on the purity, marriage and condemnation of sexual relations before and after marriage); could be imposed; and is related to a package deal of oppression that women face in Islam, such as seclusion, polygamy, easy male divorce, unfair rights to inheritance, etc.

### The Spirituality of the Hijab

However, some women have a profound spiritual and religious connection with the veil and are strongly opposed to it as a sign of oppression. Several Muslim women feel insecure without having to wear it because the hijab is deeply rooted in their religious values and tradition. As one of the most important reasons why women wear hijab is for spirituality. Also in this view, the veil is not just an item of clothing; or an icon of oppression, it is a tool for women's spirituality. Nardine says in her article What The Hijab Means To Me that "the hijab is not supposed to be about men. (Note: Not everything is about or for or because of men)". She states that the hijab certainly encourages modesty. It is often intended to keep your body sexually attractive to others. And, it's primarily a reminder of who they are. There is no ultimate answer why a woman chooses to wear a hijab, but her reasons are based on spirituality, a sense of control over her philosophical and religious beliefs and even her own parents ' role models. Hijab and Muslim women are nearly synonymous. But the question arises: what does the Quran say about the hijab? Not surprisingly, what many Muslims and non - Muslims think about it. The word hijab is not used as a clothing item in the Quran but as a spiritual tool. I hope to convey this idea of a "spiritual hijab " with some examples from The Quran. "When you recite the Quran, We put an invisible veil between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter. 17.45 p.m.)".

The verse of hijab in ayat al-hijab it refers to the verse 53 in Surah Al-Ahzab, which mentions in the house of the Prophet the barrier between men and women. Despite what most People assume, the hijab commandment does not refer to the Surah al-Nur verse, which mentions Muslim women 's rules of modest dress. This verse in Surah Al-Ahzab contains a compelling narrative, found in hadith books. This is an overview: It is clear that the verse says nothing about the dress of men and women. As for the rule on women's apparel when they leave the house, Surah An-Nur verse and the other Surah Al-Ahzab verses verses should be referred to. In those verses, Allah tells us about the separation of men and women in the house, and this can be done not only with clothes but also with walls and curtains. Such hijab—curtains and walls—can only be found indoors and not on the street. This is probably why when women leave the house, they told them to cover their bodies. Quite often, Allah gives us no reason for a commandment. Allah tells us to pray at Fajr two rakahs. Why two

rakahs, not three rakahs? Allah tells us not the cause. But here Allah tells us precisely why hijab is needed and why a barrier between men and women should exist. Allah gives us hijab's philosophy: This is cleaner and safer for your hearts and souls and minds. (19:17) The ultimate reason for the veil is, therefore, the purification of hearts. This is the hijab's reason.

## Conclusion

This study examines why the Muslim community is divided on the subject of the veil, and whether the dominant negative perception of hijab (as oppressive hijab) has nonetheless affected, the research submitted two hypotheses in an attempt to answer this question. Firstly, there is a divide in the practice of hijab in the Muslim community because there are different interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an in which Allah commands women to have their hair covered. Secondly, the dominant negative perception of the West causes some Muslim women to distrust wearing the veil and to abandon that together, as wearing the hijab could lead to more oppression against women, as depicted in the Western media. Third, despite constant pressure from the West, some Muslim women choose to wear hijab for reasons of spirituality. This hijab can be a border or a curtain in the house and it can be a modest dress, and it can also be our attitude, our actually thinking and our righteousness. External hijab is not effective unless it is accompanied by personal piety. Inner piety is always manifested in modest clothing and behaviour. Reverence is the most essential and efficient hijab in itself because it is sentimentality that gives legitimacy to modest dress. Piety is the invisible hijab to be carried by all Muslim men and women. Like the Quran in Surah Al-Araf says: And the clothing of devotion: the best clothes. (7:26). The hijab should be a sign of the religious convictions so that everyone knows what they are. It was also designed to protect women against men who can look at them with desire and pleasure. By covering the body, only the husband could see the beauty of his wife. It emphasised women's beauty and did not focus on their personality. " Tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty, not to show their beauty and ornamentation. Except what is usually required. " (Qur'an: 24.31).

I conclude that hijab is a highly complex purposeful action with various functions: it is a symbol of piety for both those who wear it and those who see it, an expression of modesty, a part of Muslim identity, liberation from the concepts of beauty in the mass media, and it can even be an argument against women's objectification. However, in addition to all these reasons, most women who observe hijab do so because they believe that Allah had them wear it. In conclusion, wearing Hijab is very popular with Muslim women, just like wearing Turban for Sheikh. Hijab might seem like a worn-out head coverHijab might seem like a worn-out head cover for many years by Muslim women, but it's significant for a Muslim woman. The women who wore the hijab saw it as a positive thing to control their own perception and to enjoy the status and respect it. It was also a way for some women to show obedience to their faith and to keep the male gaze under control. These women saw hijab as a source of empowerment rather than a marker of exclusion. In Islam, the headscarf has a role. It derives from the Qur'an its meaning. Quran is the command of God to the Muslims and the word taught by Allah to the Prophet Mohammad. To cover themselves, Muslim women wear headscarves. It is a kind of modesty and a way of covering women's beauty. The Hijab criteria are such that it protects a woman from harmful

elements in society and promotes healthy respect from all walks of life. This modesty, piety and morality prevail in a society in which Muslim men and women can wear the Hijab and follow their path. The Hijab myth was recently challenged as an instrument of oppression when women of all ages and backgrounds began to adopt the Hajib and defend their right to wear the Hijab. This was against the criticism of many political figures when they discredited the Hijab, but it showed that it is a tool of liberation, far from being a tool of oppression. The veil, instead of merely symbolising female submission, signifies the growing tension between multiculturalism and the enforcement of human rights, including religious freedom and freedom of expression in the West. The headscarf cannot be restricted merely to the submission of people, states or religion. This gender-centric conversation of the hijab must stop portraying these women as a collective with a single identity, but as persons with opinions and beliefs alongside their culture, history and ethnicity. It is by their voices that they should define how and why the headscarf is a symbol of submission, not just by the sounds of disengaged, radical Muslim men or Western secularists. Though the hijab once was " synonymous with cover, " it crosses social classes today. The meaning of the veil can also differ from woman to woman: while Others wore it out of' tradition,' others wear it, according to several commentators, as a sign of cultural identity or even a political-religious banner. Religious modesty is more profound than skin for Muslim women. The last point to make about whether the headscarf is a symbol of female submission is how women voluntarily choose to wear it perceive it. In spite of increasing stigma, fear and general opposition to hijab in the West, most women now regard headscarf as a source of liberation, not oppression, by submitting themselves to their own desires and freedom of expression through religious identification. Finally, A woman shown with hijab is considered Muslim, but the clothes are not only to be understood. This hijab holds other important values in a Muslim society. Hijab can be seen as a symbol of modesty. Wearing the hijab does not mean women are isolated in their homes. Hijab does not restrict the freedom of a woman to express her opinions and views, to be educated and to work. It symbolises no control, oppression or silence. If women stayed at home, Allah would not have ordered women to observe hijab. Islam doesn't have the exact type of clothes to wear, but there is a certain requirement. I mean the hijab it is an act of worship for Muslim women. Hijab clothing, however, has also become a powerful indicator of identity, and many non - Muslims see it as a political statement. Some communities interpret hijab as a sign of Islamic fundamentalism, immigrants ' refusal to integrate into mainstream society, or women's oppression. Therefore, I believe when Allah used the word " hijab " in the Quran, it generally means " barrier. " It can be a barrier of any kind: a wall, a curtain, a leaf, a cloud or something else. If we define the word hijab in its Quranic sense, the modest dress worn by women would be just one type.

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