



TESTING THE MUSLIM STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS WEARING HIJAB AT PRINCE OF SONGKLA UNIVERSITY PATTANI CAMPUS, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitude towards wearing Hijab of the Muslim students putting on a Hijab at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus. The participants were 367 Muslim women students of the first semester of academic year 2012. The findings showed that the interaction of attitude towards wearing Hijab between the students' hometown and students' group year was no statistically significant relationship and there was no statistical difference of the attitude generated by differences of their hometown. However, the students in different group years had various attitudes towards wearing Hijab with the statistical significance.

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Keywords: Hijab, Attitude, Muslim student, Islamic identity, Religious discrimination, Pattani Malay.

Contribution/ Originality

This study contributes the existing in a special area of three southern border provinces of Thailand which have unique in social and culture. The study is focusing on the attitude towards wearing Hijab of Muslim women students. Moreover, it also offers an interaction affecting of the attitude towards wearing Hijab.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hijab concept commonly concerns with Muslim women. Moreover, with the raising number of Muslim wearing Hijab today is not only a career woman but including students. However, the incidence of wearing Hijab may due to many reasons. The most important reason is belief of

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Muslim which mentioned in Al-Quran Surah An-Noor (24:31) advises women that *“And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers’ sons, or their sisters’ sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! So that you may be successful”* This covers the whole understanding of wearing Hijab among Muslim women.

Along the same line, the direct command is found in Surah Al-Ahzab (33:59) *“O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their over-garments; this will be more proper, that they may be known, and thus they will not be given trouble; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful”*. According to the statement in Al-Quran, it is interpreted as the God’s command assigning Muslim females conceal their body thoroughly from head to toes as can be seen from Abaya costume of Saudi-Arabia, Hador costume of Iran and Hijab or Headscarf. In Arabic language, Hijab means a barricade, but its literal meaning is a curtain. The word “Hijab” consists of two words: “sitr” and “hajaba” which means concealing with a curtain.

On the other hand, Hijab is a garment of Muslim females for covering the Awrah referring to the intimate parts of the human body according to Islam. For Muslim females, they can reveal only their face and palm. In other words, Hijab is for Muslim females who are full of faith towards Allah, self-confidence and respect to individual’s right. At the same time, Hijab illustrates Muslim females’ manner, morality and identity. However, the well-known explanation for Hijab is that it can protect females from the sin. According to Fatema Mernissi (1940-present), who is a Moroccan feminist writer and sociologist and becomes renowned because of *Behind the Veil* in 1976, she mentioned that Hijab is a symbol of faith in Islam which Muslim females use to express their identity and their gentleness to the world. A Muslim female with a Hijab is a representative of the Islamic identity or Muslimness. It is a part of ethnic identities which relates to the religious. The interactions of self-description and description by others generate ethnic identities while the ethnicity is delivered under specific historical situations. They are significant for implications (Ali, 2005). Besides, wearing a Hijab strengthens the Muslim females’ faith towards Allah. It makes them more confident in various situations, free and respectful (Jasperse, 2009). Wearing a Hijab is not a new culture for current society. It causes people around the world know more Muslims in terms of their way of life and Muslim females’ dressing. Nevertheless, there are some changes and reevaluation of Muslims’ point of view towards taking part in a society after the collapse of World Trade Center. It can be seen from the increase of wearing a Hijab.

In the same way, Thai people have understood and known more about the Islamic way of life and wearing Hijab of Muslim females (Klomkliang, 2012). An explicit example is Facebook social network. There is a campaign asking both Muslim and non-Muslim females wear a Hijab on the first of February as the day of World Hijab Day that founded by Khan (2013). Its objective is to encourage the females to experience wearing a Hijab and share the story through Facebook. This

year, February 1st 2014, is the second year of World Hijab Day. As supported by [Latiff and Alam \(2013\)](#) who study the role of media in influencing women wearing Hijab. Their results clearly stress that media is fully utilizing in influencing women wearing Hijab i.e. media commercializing Hijab fashion will encourage Muslim women wearing Hijab. However, they make a recommendation on Hijab fashion should not mislead Islamic concept.

Nowadays, the number of Muslim women wearing a Hijab are increasing ([Hanzaee and Chitsaz, 2011](#); [Latiff and Alam, 2013](#)). As such in Thailand, approximately 5 percent of Thai population is Muslim. Most of them are in three southern border provinces near Malaysia which are Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Their language is Pattani Malay. Therefore, learning management in those areas integrates the principle of Islam to the curriculum in the levels of kindergarten schools, primary schools and secondary schools. It can be seen from the increased number of Islamic private schools including the government schools where the Islamic study becomes a part of curriculum. It makes girls in those schools wear a Hijab since they were young.

Nevertheless, when they attend a university, their courses are for specific career purposes, there are not any Islamic subject courses in major or minor except the major of Islamic studies, but they regularly wear a Hijab especially at Price of Songkla University, Pattani campus. It is located in the area where the majority of population is Muslim and most of the Muslim women students wear a Hijab. Not only the students but also female official in the area can freely and widely wear a Hijab following the Islamic provision strictly.

At the present time, wearing a Hijab is applied for a beautiful and creative look, but it is still used for the purpose of covering parts of female's body; it is not abused for boasting her prosperity, attracting males and tempting purpose. Anyway, some Muslim women students wear a colorful and beautiful Hijab which make them ignore to wear it for covering throughout the parts of her body.

In contrast, it causes the problem and it is a poor example for the youths or juniors with unconsciousness and negative attitudes towards wearing a Hijab. In Thailand, there are cases of intern students or student teachers. They cannot wear a Hijab in their duty in some areas especially outside three southern border provinces of Thailand. This issue is also found in many other countries. It had been conducted for the research purpose to investigate its background, issue and solution. In addition, the issue on negatively attitude of wearing Hijab also occurring in many areas, for instance, [Zine \(2001\)](#) had studied about the Muslim students in Canada. [Tiba and Miranda \(2012\)](#) had researched about a Hijab in schools in the United States. After that, [Rougier \(2013\)](#) had investigated on wearing a Hijab of the students in Ireland. Furthermore, there have been researches about the attitudes towards a Hijab of the samples who wear a Hijab and do not wear a Hijab and the samples who meet and are familiar with the Muslim females with a Hijab. For example, [Jasperse \(2009\)](#) had researched the opinions of Islamic identity and perception of discrimination of Muslim females in New Zealand. [Awan et al. \(2011\)](#) had investigated the attitudes and experiences of the undergraduate students in Punjab state, Pakistan. Next, [El-Geledi and Bourhis \(2012\)](#) had studied the perception of the effects resulted from wearing a Hijab of the Arabic females from Canadians' point of view; meanwhile, the research of [Pasha-Zaidi et al. \(2014\)](#) had been examined about the perception of the effects resulted from wearing a Hijab and the

rate of employment among the South Asian Muslim females (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) living in the United States and the United of Arab Emirates.

As previous literatures mentioning the issue of attitude toward wearing Hijab, therefore, it is crucial to understand the attitude of Muslim women. Thus, the aim of this paper is to test the attitudes towards wearing Hijab of Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani. The study is also examined whether the attitudes will be suitable and correspond to the Islamic provisions. If the results are not similar to what is expected, there should be some encouragement to promote and foster a positive attitude based on the provisions of Islam. On the other hand, if the attitudes are not changed, there should be some movements to retain a positive attitude towards wearing a Hijab.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Population and Sample

The population of this study was 4,712 Muslim women students put on a Hijab at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus of the first semester of academic year 2012. The sample was 367 Muslim women students put on a Hijab which were 79 students from Islamic Studies College, 61 students from faculty of Science and Technology, 60 students from faculty of Education, 60 students from faculty of Humanities and Social Science, 60 students from faculty of Fine Arts, 44 students from faculty of Communication Science, and 3 students from faculty of Political Science. These proportions were computed from the sample size at the 95% level of confidence by the Taro Yamane's formula and considering the appropriate sample size for multi-factors analysis. The ratio between the questions and the sample size was 10:1. The technique of the sample selection was Stratified Random Sampling and in each stratum the samples were selected by Simple Random Sampling.

2.2. Research Instruments

The research instrument was the questionnaire consisting of 2 parts. The first section was about the general information like the students' group year and hometown. There were five multiple-choice items. On the other hand, there were fifteen questions about the level of attitude towards wearing Hijab of Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus in the second section of the questionnaire. Each question contains five-level rating scales: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The example of questionnaire items as:

- I think that I ideally wear a Hijab following the Islamic regulation.
- I am willing to wear a Hijab by myself.
- I am educated and indoctrinated by my family about wearing a Hijab making me wear Hijab ideally.

2.3. Procedures

1. Review the literatures and theories including Expectation Theory, Reference Group Theory and the Diffusion of Innovation. The related studies were also discussed in order to determine the

issue of the study. Then, the questionnaire was drafted following the research objectives. Its correctness, inclusion and completeness, and language use were considered.

2. Propose the drafted questionnaire to three Islamic and educational assessment experts to scrutinize its validity by selecting only the question with Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) at 0.50 or higher.

3. Pilot the improved questionnaire with the 50 Muslim women students put on a Hijab of Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus in order to analyze the reliability of the questionnaire by α Cronbach coefficient. The result of the coefficient was 0.90.

4. Collect the data from the target sample at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus. The length of the survey was during the 9th -15th of September, 2012.

2.4. Data Analysis

Since the study was aimed to examine the interaction of the attitude towards Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University Pattani campus, it had been considered into 2 contexts which were the students' hometown and the students' group year. For the context of hometown, the students were divided into 2 groups. The first group was the students who lived in three southern border provinces and another group was the students who lived outside three southern border provinces. In addition, the students were also separated into two groups by their year of the study. They were the groups of lowerclassmen and upperclassmen. After scrutinizing the correctness of the data, the researchers analyzed the data by using the statistical package program. It computed mean and standard deviation. Moreover, the level of attitude towards wearing Hijab of the Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus was interpreted in several ways. To illustrate, the score 4.51-5.00 (the highest level) means the students strongly agreed with the statement. The score 3.51-4.50 (the high level) means the students agreed with the statement. The score 2.51-3.50 (the medium level) means the students did neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The score 1.51-2.50 (the low level) means the students disagreed with the statement. Finally, the score 1.00-1.50 (the lowest level) means the students strongly disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, the interaction about the attitude towards wearing Hijab of the Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus was tested by two-way ANOVA analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

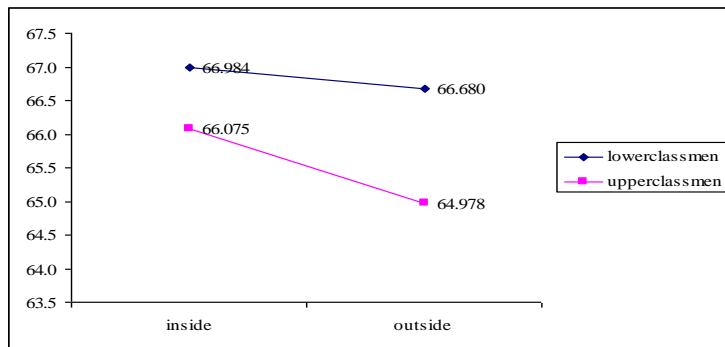
The study investigates the attitude towards wearing Hijab of Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus was analyzed into 2 contexts: the students' hometown and the students' group year. The samples could be classified to the group of the 272 students who lived in three southern border provinces and the group of the 95 students who lived outside three southern border provinces. For the students' group year classification, there were 242 lowerclassmen and 125 upperclassmen. The overall result of the samples' attitude level was found that they agreed with the statements in the questionnaire with the mean 4.434 and the standard deviation .753.

The analysis result of the attitude level mean towards wearing a Hijab of the Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus was classified by the students' hometown and the students' group year. The total score was 75. The result revealed that the group of samples who lived in three southern border provinces and were in the group of lowerclassmen received the highest mean at 66.984 and the standard deviation at 4.561. Secondly, the group of samples who lived outside three southern border provinces and were in the group of lowerclassmen received the mean and standard deviation which were equal to 66.680 and 3.478 respectively. For the samples living outside three southern border provinces and were in the group of upperclassmen, this group received the lowest mean score at 64.978 and its standard deviation was 6.232 as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table-1. The total mean and standard deviation of the attitude levels towards wearing Hijab of Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus

Class	Area		total
	inside (n=272)	outside (n=95)	
lowerclassmen (n=242)	66.984 (4.561)	66.680 (3.478)	66.922 (4.534)
upperclassmen (n=125)	66.075 (5.811)	64.978 (6.232)	65.680 (5.964)
Total	66.717 (4.968)	65.874 (5.022)	66.499 (4.988)

Figure-1. The total mean and standard deviation of the attitude levels towards wearing Hijab of Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus



The test result of normal distribution of the data by Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and the test of homogeneity of variance by Levene Test did not correspond to the assumptions of analysis of variance.

Table-2. Interaction of Muslim students' affects on attitude towards wearing the Hijabat the Prince of Songkla University Pattani campus

Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F
Area (inside/outside)	1	32.779	32.779	1.331
Class (lowerclassmen/upperclassmen)	1	113.806	113.806	4.620*
Area*Class	1	10.489	10.489	.426
Error	363	8942.361	24.635	
Total	366	9107.749		

* p < .05

However, they were still used because the sample size of the study was quite large. Furthermore, the result of the context interaction which affected the attitude towards wearing a Hijab of the Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus was analyzed by the method of two-way ANOVA as shown in Table 2.

The result of the interaction affecting the attitudes towards wearing a Hijab of the Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus between the context of students' hometown and students' group year did not show any statistically significant relationship at .05 level. It could be seen from $F=4.426$. Nonetheless, the result illustrated that there was statistically significant relationship between the groups of samples who were different in the group year and the different level of attitudes towards wearing a Hijab at .05 significance level. It could be seen from $F=4.620$. When the overall mean scores were considered, the group of lowerclassmen had the higher attitude level than the group of upperclassmen. The attitudes mean score of lowerclassmen group was equal to 66.922 while the attitudes mean score of the upperclassmen group was equal to 65.680. Besides, the sample group who had different hometown did not have different attitude level towards wearing a Hijab which was seen from $F=1.331$.

4. CONCLUSION

The study of the interaction affecting the attitude towards wearing Hijab of Muslim women students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus into two contexts: students' hometown and students' group year showed the level of the samples' attitudes. They agreed with most of the statements in the questionnaire especially the items of "giving importance to wearing a Hijab correctly following the Islamic provision and wearing a Hijab ideally following the Islamic regulation being scored by the samples in the highest level. For the investigation of the interaction between the contexts of the hometown and the students' group year affecting the attitudes towards wearing a Hijab, the study showed that there was no statistically significant relationship. In the same way, the students living in different areas of hometown would have no different levels of the attitudes towards wearing a Hijab whereas the students who had different years would have different attitude levels towards wearing a Hijab with statistical significance namely that the students in the lowerclassmen group had higher mean of the attitude level than the group of upperclassmen. These research results had corresponded to the [Jasperse \(2009\)](#). She investigated the samples of Muslim females in New Zealand about their life satisfaction. Then, she found that the birthplace of the samples did not affect it, but the education level of them related to their life satisfaction. Nevertheless, her study revealed that there were relationship between psychological Islamic identity and religious discrimination, and the relationship between behavioral Islamic identity and religious discrimination with statistical significance at level 0.05. For example, the samples perceiving the discrimination in high level and having the high scores of psychological Islamic identity would have the low scores of life satisfaction. On the other hand, the samples perceiving the high discrimination and having the high scores of behavioral Islamic identity would have the life satisfaction in medium level. Besides, there had been a research of [Rahgohaz et al. \(2012\)](#) relating to the years of the students. It showed that the third year university students in Iran had higher exploration dimension than the fourth year university students which was converse to

the result of commitment dimension. However, there was no difference resulted from these two groups of the students in context of family cohesion and flexibility on identity. It illustrated that the students gave different answers on only some issues of the study.

There were many hypotheses of different attitude levels caused from the contexts of hometown and students' group years. It was because of the influence of the society and the environment. To illustrate, the attitude levels of the samples living in three southern border provinces were higher than the attitude levels of the samples living outside three southern border provinces. It might be caused from the environment in those areas because if they did not live in three southern border provinces, they were not strict with wearing a Hijab. In general, there were some females not wearing a Hijab when they studied or worked. Additionally, some females wore a Hijab only in their community. For the attitude levels of the samples in lowerclassmen group, they were significantly higher than the attitude levels of the samples in the upperclassmen group. Its cause might be the society changed by the integration of the Islamic education in high schools to the students' everyday life strictly. There was no contact among males and females in both academic and extra-curriculum activities, but in the university there was not such a strict rule. The students were free. They could do an academic or extra-curriculum activity together without gender discrimination since they did not have to study a religious subject and they were uncontrolled by teachers as same as they studied in Islamic primary or high schools. It was possible that the attitude levels towards wearing a Hijab decreased because of the higher level of education. It was similar to the research result of [Awan et al. \(2011\)](#) which was about the attitudes and experiences of the undergraduate students in Punjab, Pakistan. The samples gave the reasons of wearing or not wearing a Hijab related to the influence of religious, society, family and personal affiliation. In addition, it corresponded to getting a job of South Asian females who wear a Hijab in the United States and the United Arab Emirates. This research was conducted by [Pasha-Zaidi et al. \(2014\)](#). It revealed that the females in the United States who did not wear a Hijab tended to be hired rather than the females who wore a Hijab with statistical significance; meanwhile, in the United Arab Emirates the percentage of the females who were hired or not hired were not different. These two researches were relevant to the country's society and environment. They were factors affecting the attitudes of the females wearing a Hijab or surrounding people and their colleagues as the research of [Cheloh et al. \(2014\)](#) which showed the attitude components of wearing a Hijab: value, traits, merit, belief, culture, society, body, and mind. They noted that why the value component was the first component to describe the attitude of wearing a Hijab instead the traits; merit, or belief components in which it may be possible that attitudes change with the modern world of the samples. Even though the attitude levels varied with the context of hometown and the students' group year, the samples still had positive attitudes towards wearing a Hijab which is one of Islamic provisions. As noted by [Ahlulbait Academy \(Thailand\) \(2012\)](#) that wearing the Hijab is a source of great good in following reasons; the God praised the enhancement of women's dignity through the Hijab, when a strange man looking at her. He will honor her because he saw her honor to them, demonstrated the equivalence of her as a Muslim woman wearing a Hijab. The God give her values equal to men, she has the right and freedom to including the role of Muslim women and the Hijab playing an important role as a reflection of women's role is not absurd, but also expresses the

direction and goals through her Hijab as a society communicate with her seriously. Nonetheless, teachers, parents and other relevant persons have to promote and educate children about positive attitudes towards wearing a Hijab following the God's command mentioning that there is a big reward for Muslim females who wear a Hijab as Al-Quran Surah Al-Bayyina (98:8) stating that *"their reward with their Lord is gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever; Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord"*.

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