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Hijab Behind the Scenes: Analysis of Qur'anic Interpretation in Traditional Arab Clothing

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Abstract

The hijab occupies a central place in traditional Arab clothing, carrying historical, religious, and social dimensions. Within Islam, it is closely linked to the principles of modesty and the construction of Muslim women's identity, though its practice and interpretation have evolved over time. This study explores Qur'anic interpretations of the hijab and traces its historical development while also examining the impact of social, political, and cultural contexts on its use. Employing a qualitative approach through a literature-based analysis of primary and secondary sources, the research highlights that the hijab functions not only as a religious symbol but also as a marker of cultural identity and, at times, as a form of resistance to Western hegemony. Diverse scholarly interpretations have given rise to variations in hijab practices across the Arab world and the broader Muslim community. Furthermore, ongoing debates in relation to feminism and women's rights demonstrate that the hijab remains a dynamic and contested discourse, continually reshaped by changing societal contexts.

Hijab; Traditional Arab Clothing; Interpretation of the Qur'an

Abstrak

Hijab menempati posisi sentral dalam busana tradisional Arab, dengan dimensi historis, religius, dan sosial yang melekat. Dalam Islam, hijab erat kaitannya dengan prinsip kesopanan serta konstruksi identitas perempuan Muslim, meskipun praktik dan interpretasinya terus mengalami perkembangan dari waktu ke waktu. Studi ini menelaah penafsiran Al-Qur'an mengenai hijab sekaligus menelusuri perkembangannya secara historis, serta mengkaji pengaruh konteks sosial, politik, dan budaya terhadap penggunaannya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui kajian literatur terhadap sumber primer dan sekunder, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa hijab berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai simbol religius, tetapi juga sebagai penanda identitas kultural dan, pada saat tertentu, sebagai bentuk resistensi terhadap hegemoni Barat. Keragaman penafsiran ulama telah melahirkan variasi praktik hijab di dunia Arab maupun komunitas Muslim global. Lebih jauh, perdebatan yang terus berlangsung terkait feminisme dan hak-hak perempuan menunjukkan bahwa hijab merupakan wacana dinamis dan diperdebatkan, yang senantiasa dibentuk ulang oleh perubahan konteks sosial.

Kata Kunci: Hijab; Busana Tradisional Arab; Tafsir Al-Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

Clothing is essentially neutral and does not carry any particular meaning. However, when viewed from a social, cultural, and religious perspective, clothing becomes an entity with complex layers of meaning (Arizka et al., 2025). In various civilizations, clothing does not merely serve to cover or protect the body, but also represents identity, social position, and reflects moral values. The Qur'an also mentions this, where when Adam and Eve faced their first challenge, it was related to how they covered themselves. This shows that the concept of clothing has existed since the

beginning of human life. In Islam, the hijab is worn as a symbol of ethics, modesty, and religious identity, without any connection to original sin or taboos such as menstruation.

The history of the hijab in the Arab world shows a long transformation of meaning, from pre-Islamic times when it served as a marker of social status, to the early days of Islam which emphasized modesty and religious identity. Its development was influenced by Persian and Byzantine cultures, political policies during the caliphate, colonialism, and the tide of modernization that triggered adaptations in the form and function of the hijab (Sofiyah, 2020). In the development of interpretation, classical scholars tended to emphasize the obligation of the hijab as a strict dress code, while contemporary interpretations view it contextually as a symbol of identity, modesty, and personal choice (Hasan et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of the hijab has also been in the global spotlight, both as a symbol of religious freedom and as an issue of political identity, for example in the debate over the legal ban on the niqab in Europe or the obligation to wear the hijab in Iran. This dynamic shows that the discussion of the hijab has interdisciplinary academic relevance, covering Islamic studies, cultural anthropology, gender studies, and contemporary politics. Furthermore, debates surrounding the hijab in the public sphere often reflect power relations between the state, society, and individuals, which in turn influence the formation of Muslim women's identities in various contexts. Thus, understanding the hijab is not only important for religious studies but also for examining the socio-historical dynamics that shape it.

Previous studies have discussed the hijab from social, cultural, and religious perspectives. Reghifa Khalimatus Syadiyah et al. highlight how hijab fashion in Indonesia has undergone a process of acculturation with local culture. In their study, the hijab is understood not only as a religious symbol, but also as a medium of cultural expression through the integration of traditional motifs such as batik into modern hijab designs. These findings show that the hijab has developed into a dynamic identity, reflecting the interaction between Islamic teachings and local traditions (Syadiyah et al., 2024).

Similarly, Maliki traces the development of hijab trends and fashions in Indonesia, which continue to undergo cycles of change, where traditional clothing is adapted to modern hijab trends, reflecting the ever-changing social adaptations among Muslim women. Maliki's description shows that the hijab is not a static entity, but is always influenced by fashion trends, social demands, and cultural expectations of society (Salamah et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Nikmatullah shifts his attention to the phenomenon of hijab use in the Arab world, emphasizing the reconstruction of the meaning of traditional Muslim clothing such as the *jalabiyyah* and *tajalbaba*.

This study shows that the interpretation of the Qur'an that underlies the practice of wearing the hijab in the Arab world is closely related to the local cultural and social context, so that understanding of the hijab cannot be separated from the long Arab tradition (Nikmatullah, U, 2024). Additionally, Fitri, through her research on Muslim fashion among students, explains that the use of the hijab in academic settings not only represents religious values but also negotiates the demands of contemporary fashion. This phenomenon shows that among the younger generation, the hijab is seen as a symbol of dual identity: both an affirmation of religiosity and a form of adaptation to modern lifestyles. From these various studies, it can be seen that the meaning of the

hijab has always undergone transformation in line with social, cultural, and temporal developments (Annisa Fitri et al., 2024).

Although these studies make an important contribution to understanding the hijab, most tend to focus on contemporary phenomena and ongoing socio-political contexts, both globally and locally. The historical and cultural aspects of the hijab, particularly in the context of traditional Arab clothing, have rarely received in-depth and comprehensive attention. In fact, tracing the history of the hijab's use since pre-Islamic times, the development of its meaning in the early Islamic period, to its transformation in the modern era can provide a more complete perspective on the dynamics of the hijab.

This historical-cultural approach is important because it can reveal layers of meaning that are not apparent in contemporary analysis alone, including social symbolism and values that have been passed down across generations. This is crucial because without understanding its historical roots, interpretations of the hijab risk being trapped in a partial and ahistorical reading, which can ignore the factors that shape the identity of Muslim women in the Arab world. This gap in research is important to fill because the hijab in the Arab world not only has religious significance, but also carries cultural symbolism, social status, and has even become a political instrument in various historical periods.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the meaning, symbolism, and evolution of the hijab in traditional Arab clothing through a historical approach combined with consideration of social, cultural, and political factors. In this way, the study is expected to provide a more comprehensive scientific contribution to understanding the transformation of the hijab, both from a historical perspective and its relevance to the context of today's Muslim society.

The objective of this study is to analyze in depth the meaning, symbolism, and evolution of the hijab in traditional Arab clothing from the pre-Islamic period to the modern era. This study is expected to contribute to the development of studies on the hijab by offering a historical-cultural perspective that complements previous studies that tended to focus on the contemporary context. In addition, this research also contributes to a broader understanding of the relationship between religious texts, clothing traditions, and the socio-cultural dynamics of Arab society. This article is organized into several sections.

The introduction outlines the background of the research, the importance of the topic, the literature review, the research gap, the differences between this research and previous studies, as well as its objectives and contributions. The results and discussion section discusses the history and evolution of the hijab in the Arab world, interpretations of Qur'anic verses related to the hijab, and an analysis of the social, cultural, and political factors that influence its changes. The conclusion section presents a summary of the research findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method, as it focuses on examining the evolution and interpretation of the Qur'an regarding the hijab in traditional Arab clothing through textual data. The primary data sources are verses from the Qur'an related to the hijab, such as QS. An-Nur [24]: 31 and QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 59, as well as classical interpretations

(Ibn Kathir, Ath-Thabari) and contemporary interpretations (Fazrur Rohman, Quraish Shihab, Amina Wadud).

Secondary sources include books, journal articles, proceedings, and previous studies discussing the hijab from historical, socio-cultural, political, and gender perspectives. Data was collected through a review of relevant literature selected based on its relevance, novelty, and contribution to the study of the hijab. The analysis was conducted using a historical and descriptive qualitative approach, tracing the development of the meaning of hijab from pre-Islamic times to the modern era, while also examining the various interpretations of scholars and the influence of social, political, and cultural factors that shaped the meaning of hijab in various historical periods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The history and evolution of the hijab in Arab culture

The word hijab comes from the Arabic word *hajaba*, which means cover (*as-sutrah*), prohibition of entry, separator, and boundary. Hijab does not mean clothing, because in the Qur'an, the term hijab refers more to a veil or barrier, not clothing (Sofiyah, 2020). Along with the development of Islamic teachings and the spread of understanding among Muslims regarding Sharia law, the term hijab has undergone a shift in meaning. Previously closer to the meaning of a veil or barrier, in the daily practices of Muslims, this term is increasingly used to refer to the dress code for Muslim women that is considered in accordance with Sharia law. In this sense, hijab is understood as the obligation to cover the *aurat* by wearing loose, non-transparent clothing that shows modesty and maintains dignity, so that a Muslim woman's appearance reflects the values of Islamic purity and ethics (Nariti & Setiyani, 2024).

However, when examining the Qur'an and hadith, the terms used to describe the concept of covering the *aurat* are not limited to the word hijab. The holy book and sunnah also mention the term *khimar*, which refers to a head covering that extends to cover the chest, and *jilbab*, which is loose outer clothing that can cover the entire body more completely. From this diversity of terms, a new understanding has emerged that hijab cannot be reduced to mere physical clothing. It is more accurately understood as a symbol of modesty, self-protection, and a distinctive identity inherent to Muslim women. In other words, the concept of hijab does not only concern the linguistic aspect that emphasizes the meaning of cover or barrier, but also has social and religious dimensions that are rich in value. This makes the hijab not just a technical rule in dressing, but a broader representation of morality, honor, and culture in Arab-Islamic civilization (Maulida et al., 2025).

Before the advent of Islam, Arab society during the *Jabilyyah* period had already known the use of cloth to cover the body and head, although its meaning was not yet associated with religious teachings. It was found that Arab society at that time wore coverings such as headscarves (*khimar*) and robes (*jubbah*), which served as protection from the desert climate and as symbols of social status, but did not yet have religious significance as developed in the Islamic period (Sodikin & Khoiri, 2023). For women from the aristocracy or respectable families, the use of head coverings or cloth on the body was seen as a symbol of honor and a sign of high social status. Conversely, women from the lower classes, especially slaves, were not allowed to wear them so that the difference between them and free women remained clear (Rohmaniyah et al., 2023).

This shows that the hijab in pre-Islamic times functioned more as a marker of social stratification than as a form of piety or obedience to God. In other words, the existence of the hijab in the Jahiliyyah period was more closely related to the cultural system and social structure of ancient Arab society than to the principles of Sharia law, which were only later introduced by Islam. In the early days of Islam, the hijab began to undergo a change in meaning from merely a marker of social status to a symbol of religion and Muslim ethics. The Qur'an mentions several terms related to the hijab, such as *khimar*, which refers to a head covering that covers the chest, and *jilbab*, which means loose clothing worn to cover the outer body (Zein et al., 2025).

Moreover, the hijab also functions as a new social identity that distinguishes the Muslim community from pre-Islamic traditions, so that it has not only practical value, but also symbolic value (Margareta et al., 2025). The hadith also mentions rules regarding the limits of modesty and proper dress, so that wearing the hijab is increasingly interpreted as an act of obedience to Allah, as well as a means of maintaining the dignity of oneself and one's family. Entering the period of Arab-Islamic civilization, especially since the establishment of great caliphates such as the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, the practice of wearing the hijab has gained a more complex and profound meaning. The hijab is no longer understood merely as a moral obligation or dress code, but also as a symbol of family honor and social identity that distinguishes certain classes.

During the Abbasid period, for example, the hijab was often associated with the lives of noblewomen and palace women who lived behind the harem, a special space separated by curtains or screens as a form of protection and social control (Maulida et al., 2025). For the general public, the hijab was worn simply, mainly as a form of religious obedience and to cover the aurat, but its practice differed among the elite, who emphasized its social status. This shows that during the classical period of Islam, the hijab developed not only as a spiritual expression but also as a cultural instrument rich in meaning, reflecting the relationship between religion, morality, and social structure in Arab-Islamic society.

Entering the colonial and modern eras, the hijab faced challenges. Some countries, such as Turkey and Egypt, implemented secularization that restricted the use of the hijab in public spaces. In Turkey, Atatürk banned the hijab for civil servants, while in Iran during the Reza Shah era, the hijab was completely banned (Ash Shidiqiyah & Arafah, 2022). However, since the late 20th century, the hijab has reemerged as a symbol of identity and piety, driven by the Islamization movement and the spirit of Muslim women to express their identity in the modern world.

In the contemporary era, the hijab is not only worn as a form of religious devotion, but has also become part of global fashion trends. The modest fashion industry has grown rapidly with innovations in hijab designs that are more comfortable and modern (Bullock, 2015). Social media has also contributed to the popularity of the hijab through Muslim influencers who showcase styles that remain in line with Islamic values while still being fashionable (Lestari et al., 2025). This phenomenon has spread, not only in Muslim countries but also in the West, as a symbol of identity in multicultural societies.

Additionally, various renowned fashion designers have begun incorporating modest fashion collections into their designs, reflecting the growing global demand for stylish Muslim women's clothing that remains consistent with principles of modesty. Some major fashion brands, such as Dolce & Gabbana, have launched hijab and abaya collections, signaling that the hijab has become

part of the global fashion industry. On the other hand, there are still challenges faced by women who wear the hijab, particularly in the workplace and education in some countries that implement discriminatory policies against hijab wearers.

In Indonesia, the hijab has evolved alongside acculturation with local culture. Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Persis played a role in introducing the hijab in the 20th century, although during the New Order era there were restrictions on its use in schools and government agencies (Arizka et al., 2025). Political factors also influenced the adoption of the hijab. In Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk banned the hijab in public spaces as part of a secularization project (1934), while in Iran, Shah Reza Pahlavi implemented a similar policy in 1936. However, after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the hijab became mandatory for all women (Ash Shidiqiyah & Arafah, 2022). Thus, the hijab is not only a religious expression but is also influenced by culture, politics, and social trends in various countries.

The hijab has undergone significant evolution from pre-Islamic times to the modern era. In the pre-Islamic period, women in the Arabian Peninsula wore various types of clothing depending on their social status and geographical conditions. Loose clothing with head coverings was commonly worn, but more as protection from heat and dust than as a religious symbol. These clothes reflected practical needs in dealing with the harsh desert climate, where head coverings and long robes helped protect the body from the scorching sun and dusty winds.

With the arrival of Islam, the concept of hijab underwent a change in meaning. Verses in the Qur'an that discuss women's clothing, such as QS. Al-Ahzab: 59 and QS. An-Nur: 31, emphasize the concept of modesty and protection for Muslim women. In QS. Al-Ahzab: 59, for example, Allah commands Muslim women to wear the jilbab so that they can be recognized and not harassed. Meanwhile, QS. An-Nur: 31 emphasizes the importance of covering the aurat and guarding one's gaze. These verses were then interpreted in various ways by scholars, resulting in diverse understandings of the hijab in different regions and historical periods.

Thus, the evolution of the hijab reflects not only social and cultural changes but also political and economic dynamics across the globe. From being merely functional clothing in the pre-Islamic era to becoming a symbol of identity and fashion in the modern era, the hijab continues to evolve along with the changing times and the social context that surrounds it. In the future, the hijab will likely continue to undergo innovation and adaptation, both in terms of design and meaning, in line with the increasingly dynamic development of global society.

Verses on the Hijab and Their Interpretation

The hijab in Islam is closely related to the values of modesty, identity, and obedience to religious teachings. The Qur'an contains a number of verses that form the basis for the commandment regarding the hijab. However, the interpretation of these verses varies, depending on the historical context, social conditions, and the approach used by scholars in understanding their meaning. There are several verses in the Qur'an that are often associated with the command to wear the hijab, including:

a) Surah An-Nur (24:31)

وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَعْضُضْنَ مِنْ اَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِيْنَ زِينَتَهُنَّ اِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلٰى جُيُوْبِهِنَّ

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except what is apparent thereof. And let them draw their veils over their bosoms..." (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019)

This verse is one of the main bases for the hijab commandment for Muslim women. Several important points in this verse include: The command to lower their gaze and guard their modesty, which indicates the importance of modesty in social interactions, and the prohibition of displaying adornments (except those that are normally visible). Scholars differ on which parts of the body are meant, but the majority agree that the face and hands may be exposed and that the command to cover the chest with a veil indicates that women must cover certain parts of their bodies so as not to attract unwanted attention.

Classical exegetes such as Ibn Kathir and Al-Thabari tend to understand the hijab as an obligation for Muslim women that must be strictly adhered to. They interpret the hijab as not only covering the head, but also wearing loose clothing that does not reveal the shape of the body. In classical interpretations, such as Ibn Kathir's Tafsir, this verse is understood as a strict command for women to cover their entire bodies, except for parts that are necessary for activities such as the face and hands. And to dress modestly and not reveal the shape of the body (Ibnu Katsir, 2017). Al-Thabari emphasizes that the hijab is a direct command from Allah to distinguish Muslim women from non-Muslim women or slaves at that time (Abu Ja'far Mumammad bin Jarir Ath-Thabari, 2009). This classical interpretation was greatly influenced by the social conditions of their time, where women's roles were more limited to the domestic sphere and strict dress codes were considered part of social order.

M. Quraish Shihab, through Tafsir Al-Misbah, emphasizes that hijab is not merely a matter of covering the body, but also relates to a manner of dress that does not provoke lust and upholds social ethics (Sassi, 2025). However, in some articles and journals related to Amina Wadud's more general feminist interpretation, such as those found in the *musawa* journal, El- adabi's 2023 article, and several theses, there is a discussion of the context of her feminist hermeneutics, which also includes an understanding of verses on modesty, including QS An-Nur 24:31, using a hermeneutic method of tawhid that emphasizes the socio-historical context and criticism of patriarchal interpretations (Islamy et al., 2024).

b) Surah Al-Ahzab (33:59)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

"O Prophet! Tell your wives, your daughters, and the wives of the believers to draw their cloaks around them. That will be better, so that they may be recognized and not be molested..." ((Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

This verse emphasizes the command for Muslim women to wear the hijab, which is a cloth that covers their bodies so that they can be distinguished from non-Muslim women or slaves at that time, and so that they are protected from harassment. Some scholars interpret this verse in the context of Arab society during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Kathir states that the meaning of the hijab in the above verse is *ar-rida* (a covering cloth) that is worn over the headscarf (Tsanía & Zaidanil Kamil, 2025). Explanation in Tafsir Ath-Thabari Allah SWT commanded Prophet Muhammad to convey to his wives, daughters, and Muslim women not to imitate the

clothing style of female slaves when going out to fulfill their needs. At that time, female slaves were known for the custom of uncovering their heads and faces.

Therefore, Allah commanded free Muslim women to cover their heads and faces with a hijab so as not to be mistaken for them and to avoid the impression of immorality. Scholars of tafsir then differed in their opinions regarding the meaning of "extending the veil": some interpreted it as covering the head and face while leaving one eye exposed, while others interpreted it as the obligation to cover the entire face (Toyyib, 2018). From the above description, it can be concluded that Ath- Thabari's view is in line with that of Ibn Kathir, namely that the entire body of a free Muslim woman is an aurat that must be covered. The aim is to distinguish them from female slaves and to prevent them from being viewed as immoral women, although there are differences of opinion as to whether the face must be completely covered or whether it is permissible to show one eye.

Some contemporary Muslim scholars and intellectuals have attempted to provide a more contextual interpretation of the verses on hijab. They argue that hijab should be understood in the context of modesty, social ethics, and religious freedom, rather than simply as a uniform dress code throughout the Muslim world. However, contemporary interpretations consider that the command in this verse emphasizes the function of the hijab as a form of social protection and a symbol of modesty, not just a dress code that must be strictly applied in every era and place. Fazlur Rahman argues that the command to wear the hijab in the Qur'an is more of a recommendation to maintain honor and avoid the exploitation of women in society.

Amina Wadud, a Muslim feminist, sees the hijab as part of the identity of Muslim women, but it should not be imposed as an obligation that reduces women's freedom. This modern approach emphasizes that the hijab is not merely a religious symbol, but also part of women's right to express their identity in accordance with their culture and social environment (Cahya Putri et al., 2025). In interpreting Surah Al-Ahzab verse 59, Quraish Shihab has a different view from some other exegetes. He disagrees with the interpretation that requires women to cover their entire bodies, but emphasizes that the most important thing is for women to wear clothes that are in accordance with the norms of honor in their environment. In this way, they will be spared from harmful harassment.

Quraish Shihab also asserts that this verse was originally addressed to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad and the female believers, with the aim of protecting them from humiliation and abuse. Before this verse was revealed, there was little difference between the way free women and slaves dressed, so men often harassed women, especially those who were thought to be slaves. Therefore, this verse was revealed so that Muslim women would be protected from such harassment (Nurmalia, 2020).

The interpretation of the hijab is greatly influenced by the social and cultural context within Muslim societies. Understanding of the hijab has evolved over time, influenced by cultural factors, political policies, and developments in religious thought. The hijab can be understood as a symbol of religious identity and piety, as well as an individual choice that reflects spiritual and social values (Tsania & Zaidanil Kamil, 2025).

One factor that influences the different interpretations of the hijab is cultural change. In more conservative societies, the hijab is often considered a social norm that Muslim women must follow,

even more than a religious obligation. This norm is reinforced by a social environment that emphasizes adherence to traditional values, where women who wear the hijab are considered more dignified and in line with prevailing standards of modesty. Conversely, in more open and pluralistic societies, the hijab is no longer seen as an absolute rule, but rather as an individual expression that depends on each person's understanding and choice. This phenomenon is clearly seen in Indonesia, where the hijab has evolved from a religious symbol to a part of a lifestyle that is widely accepted in various circles, including the Muslim fashion industry (Mulia N, 2019).

In addition to cultural factors, political policies in Muslim countries also influence the meaning of the hijab. In some countries, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, the hijab is legally required as a rule of modesty in public spaces. Conversely, countries such as France and Belgium enforce secularism policies that restrict or prohibit the hijab in educational and government institutions. These policies demonstrate the role of the state in regulating the representation of women and affirming Islamic identity in the legal system. Meanwhile, in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, the hijab is more of an individual choice, where women are free to decide whether to wear it or not. In Indonesia, although the hijab is becoming increasingly popular, there are no rules requiring it in public spaces. However, in some cases, there is still social pressure that makes women feel they must wear the hijab to meet the expectations of their environment (R, 2018).

The Islamic feminist movement also has a major influence on how the hijab is understood in the modern era. Many Muslim women choose to wear the hijab not as a form of social coercion or an absolute religious obligation, but as a symbol of identity and empowerment. In this context, the hijab is not merely a religious obligation, but a form of resistance against beauty standards that are often determined by Western hegemony. On the other hand, there are also feminist groups who argue that the hijab can be a tool of oppression if it is worn not out of personal choice, but because of social or political pressure. This debate has intensified with the advent of social media, which allows Muslim women from various backgrounds to share their experiences and views on the hijab (Tauhida et al., 2025).

Thus, the meaning of the hijab in Muslim society is not only influenced by religious teachings, but also by the ever-evolving social, cultural, and political dynamics. The differences in the interpretation of the hijab reflect the diverse experiences of Muslims in understanding their religious teachings, while also showing that the hijab is not only a religious symbol, but also part of a social construct that continues to change according to the times and place.

CONCLUSION

The hijab, which originally appeared in pre-Islamic Arab culture as a sign of social status, later developed into a symbol of religion, modesty, and Muslim female identity from the early days of Islam to the present day, showing that the hijab has always undergone a transformation of meaning in accordance with the context of its time. In its development, the hijab functions not only as a dress code based on Sharia law, but also as a cultural identity, political symbol, medium of personal expression, and even part of the global fashion industry. This evolution shows that the hijab is a dynamic discourse influenced by diverse interpretations of the Qur'an as well as social, cultural, and political factors. This study successfully confirms that the meaning of the hijab is not static, but has continued to change from the pre-Islamic period, the classical Islamic period, the colonial

era, to the contemporary era. Thus, historical-cultural studies of the hijab enrich interdisciplinary academic understanding, ranging from Islamic studies, cultural anthropology, gender, to modern politics.

However, this study has limitations because the analysis is still based on literature and does not include empirical data from direct interviews or observations of hijab-wearing communities in various countries. As a result, the conclusions are more conceptual and do not fully describe the diversity of personal experiences of women who wear the hijab. Therefore, further research is recommended to examine the subjective experiences of women in wearing the hijab through a qualitative approach, comparing hijab practices in various socio-political contexts across countries, and exploring the role of the media and the global fashion industry in shaping the meaning of the hijab in the contemporary era. In this way, the understanding of the hijab can be more comprehensive, in-depth, and contextual.

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