

Hijab Discourse in Indonesia: Unraveling the Narratives of Freedom, Religion, and Media Representation

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received February 11, 2023

Revised September 24, 2023

Accepted September 28, 2023

Keywords:

hijab discourse

Muslim women

media representation

critical discourse analysis

transnational media

This study delves into the intricate narratives surrounding the hijab in Indonesia, exploring the multifaceted perspectives presented by Deutsche Welle (DW) Indonesia, a transnational media entity. In Indonesia, a nation characterized by religious diversity, the hijab has become a focal point of discussions, particularly concerning its compulsory nature and implications for women's freedom and religious identity. The study critically analyzes DW's portrayal of hijab-wearing Indonesian Muslim women, highlighting the interplay between media representations, cultural identities, and societal perceptions. Employing Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, the research examines the subject-object positions within DW's coverage, unraveling the complexities of hijab discourse. Through examining DW Indonesia's coverage, the study reveals diverse perspectives, emphasizing the non-compulsory nature of hijab, the potential limitations it imposes on women, and the societal pressures associated with wearing it. However, the research underscores the need for a cautious interpretation of these narratives, recognizing the inherent complexities of individual choices, sociocultural backgrounds, and religious beliefs. The study also addresses the influence of global perceptions and Western biases, urging a critical approach to media representations. The research contributes to the scholarly discourse on media representations and critically examines the intersection between religion, freedom, and media influence in contemporary Indonesian society.

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 <https://doi.org/10.12928/channel.v11i2.468>



INTRODUCTION

Renowned for its religious diversity, Indonesia accommodates various faiths within its societal framework. Despite not mandating hijab, the traditional head covering for Muslim women, a significant portion of the Indonesian populace embraces this practice. The discourse around hijab gained international attention, particularly in the aftermath of an incident in Padang, Indonesia, where an educational institution mandated hijab, even for non-Muslim students, sparking debates on religious freedom and tolerance (Amali, 2021).

In the wake of this incident, media outlets exhibited diverse narrative framing approaches. *Republika.co.id*, a local media source, presented an alternative viewpoint by highlighting the non-Muslim student's lack of objection to wearing the hijab (Saubani, 2021). Conversely, media entities such as *Kumparan*, *Tribunnews*, and *The Jakarta*



Post provided distinct perspectives on the matter, each shaping the discourse in its unique way (Friastuti, 2021; Nuryanti, 2021; Aqil, 2021). Simultaneously, international media outlets, including Reuters, BBC, and Al-Jazeera, emphasized themes of freedom and human rights in their coverage, indicating the complex global dimensions of the issue at hand (Reuters, 2021; BBC, 2021; Washington & Hasibuan, 2021).

The discourse surrounding the hijab and its intersection with the lives of Muslim women has been a central focus of academic inquiry within the social and political studies field. However, the complexity and diverse meanings associated with the hijab often get oversimplified, particularly in the Western world, where it is frequently perceived as a symbol of submission and powerlessness, without considering the individual contexts of each woman (Mohanty, 1991). This reductionist perspective fails to acknowledge the intricacies of socio-cultural differences and the multifaceted nature of Muslim women's lives. Furthermore, Muslim women and their choice to wear the hijab have been portrayed as a threat to freedom and secular values, leading to polarizing debates that do not adequately represent the diverse experiences and viewpoints within the Muslim community (Scott, 2007).

The Padang incident brought attention to the violation of minority rights. It became a focal point for Western media, leading to extensive discussions about the hijab's role in the freedom of women and minorities. Prior to this, Deutsche Welle (DW), a transnational media platform, ignited public discourse with its coverage of the forced imposition of hijab on Indonesian children. However, DW faced criticisms for oversimplifying the intricate societal dynamics of Indonesia and the diverse experiences of hijab-wearing Muslim women.

DW's news story, titled "Children, Their World, and Hijab," trended on Twitter and attracted considerable attention from Islamic media in Indonesia (DW Indonesia, 2020). Media Islami.co, for instance, analyzed DW's framing of the hijab issue, contextualizing it within the Indonesian milieu (Risal, 2020). Simultaneously, fundamentalist Islamic media outlets such as Fajar (Mirsan, 2020) and Era Muslim (2020) presented contrasting viewpoints from Indonesian figures and netizens. This divergence in perspectives underscores the complexity of the issue.

Critically, the content presented by DW raises questions about its authenticity and accuracy. In transnational media, DW, a German entity, is seemingly unbound by geographical constraints, enabling it to portray Indonesian social phenomena. However, this freedom raises fundamental questions: Is DW's representation a response to the escalating religious conservatism post-reformation in Indonesia, or does it mirror a Western perspective that perceives the hijab as a tool of oppression?

This study delves into the nuanced portrayal of the hijab and Indonesian Muslim women by DW, aiming to dissect the underlying discourses. Drawing on Satiti's assertion that media shapes knowledge and truth (2017), this research unravels the intricacies of DW's narratives. Moreover, we echo Mohanty's concerns regarding the objectification of Muslim women and the hijab in Western media (Mohanty, 1991). Thus, our analysis emphasizes a cautious approach to interpreting DW Indonesia's content, considering the broader socio-cultural contexts and global perceptions surrounding the hijab.

The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks intensified global tensions against Islam, triggering widespread stereotypes and stigmatization of the Islamic community, particularly in Western countries (Tolia-Kelly, 2006; Ati, 2019). Media representations significantly perpetuated these stereotypes, reducing the diverse Islamic community into simplistic characters (Dyer, 1979). One of the focal points of this narrative was the hijab, the head covering worn by Muslim women. Post-9/11, debates surrounding the hijab permeated various spheres, including politics, security, and mass media, shaping perceptions, and reinforcing the notion that the hijab symbolized oppression and violence within Islam (Byng, 2010).

This discourse was catalyzed by statements from influential figures, such as former U.S. President George W. Bush, who asserted that removing the hijab could liberate Muslim women from perceived constraints (Bullock, 2002). Such viewpoints underscore the hijab as a potent symbol, often associated with oppression and violence within Islam, a perception deeply rooted in historical contexts, including colonial influences (Ahmed, 1992). This stigmatization has led to pervasive stereotypes, portraying hijab-wearing women as oppressed, uneducated, and submissive (Aquil, 2011; Keogh, 2014; Weigchelbaumer, 2016).

Prevailing stereotypes and cultural biases have profoundly influenced the notion surrounding Muslim women wearing hijab. Mohanty's analysis (2003) reveals how Western discourse portrays Muslim women in third-world countries as sexually submissive, uneducated, and victims, perpetuating the view of hijab-wearing women as symbols of repression and decline (Zine, 2002). As a powerful tool shaping societal perceptions, media often reinforces these stereotypes. Byerly and Ross (2008) emphasize the media's role in perpetuating dominant gender norms, depicting Muslim women as vulnerable victims needing aid from the West. This portrayal is echoed by Ryan (2011), who notes Western media's tendency to label veiled women as outsiders resisting integration. At the same time, Byng (2010) highlights media hegemony associating hijab with threats to Western national identity and global security.

Western media, including Australian outlets, perpetuated this narrative, associating hijab with threats to national identity, cultural security, and modernization (Hebbani & Willson, 2012; Bullock, 2002). Media, particularly in the Western context, subtly shapes societal perceptions of beauty standards, often portraying Muslim women in hijab as unattractive and oppressed while projecting Western women as liberated and appealing (Vintges, 2012). Although some media outlets present a more nuanced view of hijab and Muslim women (Soltani, 2015; Satiti, 2017), the prevailing narrative in Western media frames the hijab as a symbol of oppression, challenging Western democratic values (Navarro, 2010). Existing research underscores the limited and often negative portrayal of Muslim women in hijab, particularly within news media (Awan et al., 2010; Falah, 2005; Jiwani, 2005; Kassam, 2008; Sensoy, 2010; Shaheen, 2003; Watt, 2008).

In Indonesia, the visible rise of Islamic expressions, including hijab usage, in the post-reformation era marks a significant sociocultural shift indicative of Islamization (Ni'mah, 2021). This phenomenon, coupled with the emergence of Islamic political movements and conservative-leaning community organizations after the new order, exemplifies the growing influence of Islamic conservatism in Indonesian society (Pamungkas & Permana, 2020; Mudhoffir, 2021). Observers note that the continued widespread use of hijab is symptomatic of increasing Islamic conservatism, emphasizing the influence of religion-based conservatism in shaping societal norms, particularly concerning women (Azra, 2019; Dhewy, 2019).

Technological advancements, especially in communication, have been pivotal in this phenomenon (Salim et al., 2021). The dominance of media from developed countries further accentuates this influence (Sutanto et al., 2010), while the connectivity and interactivity facilitated by current technology enable media to reach a broader, global audience (Higbee & Lim, 2010). Transnational media, marked by multicultural messages and global production approaches, transcends geographic boundaries, challenging the stability of national cultural discourse (Higbee & Lim, 2010). However, this expansion has challenges, with the invasion of foreign media, especially from the West, presenting concerns about cultural hegemony and media capitalism (Muntadliroh, 2018). Despite the abundance of literature on hijab, Muslim women, and Western media, research explicitly exploring the depiction of hijab-wearing Muslim women in Asian countries, especially where Western media influence is strong, remains limited. This study aims to address this gap, employing Mills's critical discourse analysis to scrutinize how DW portrays hijab-wearing Indonesian Muslim women, shedding light on the intricate interplay between media representations, cultural identities, and societal perceptions.

METHOD

This study adopts a critical paradigm, viewing the world as an imbalanced system marked by domination, exploitation, oppression, and power dynamics (Johnstone, 2002). Employing a qualitative research approach, the analysis of this study is guided by Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, specifically focusing on feminist discourse, where the text's position is perceived as both subject and object (Ermayanti et al., 2020). The primary data source for this research comprises news articles from DW media, specifically those discussing hijab and Muslim women in Indonesia.

The data selection process was meticulous, aligning with the study's thematic focus encompassing hijab, Muslim women, and the Indonesian sociocultural context—the data collection period they have spanned from July to December 2021. Sara Mills' framework of subject-object and writer-reader positions was applied for the analysis. Mills contends that every actor within a text should be able to emerge as a subject, articulating their perceptions and opinions to depict the world (Pawito, 2007). However, actors are often relegated to the status of objects, with their experiences described by external entities. The reader's position, denoting the audience or listener, is crucial in shaping the text's interpretation and must be considered (Lumbantoruan & Hidayat, 2013). Additionally, the writer's position (i.e., the media) is central to constructing the reality presented in the text. Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis method delves into discerning the story's subject, the object, and the representation of both the reader and the writer within the text (Eriyanto, 2001).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Examining Hijab and Women from the Perspective of Transnational Media

The intricate relationship between hijab and women is a topic frequently explored in media discourse. Hijab-clad women are often ascribed various traits and conditions such as innocence, religious devotion, submissiveness, and vulnerability. Analysis of data from DW Indonesia reveals a nuanced portrayal. The discourse on hijab centers on its ambiguity in legal mandates, leading to polemics. The article emphasizes the contextual nature of hijab, citing expert opinions to argue against its obligatory nature. Testimonies from women who chose not to wear hijab are included to bolster this perspective. The discourse is further reinforced through loaded terms like "scary," "alienated," "shackled," and "exclusive." These narrative questions the compulsion of hijab, suggesting that women should not enforce it upon others due to its non-mandatory status.

Moreover, the hijab is depicted as potentially restricting the mobility of Muslim women. Articles suggest that by emphasizing modesty, hijab may gradually curtail women's freedom by emphasizing constant coverage of private parts. Women, within this discourse, are portrayed as constrained in their self-expression and mobility. The analysis also challenges the notion that hijab is the sole determinant of Muslim women's morality and obedience to God, contending that it is not the exclusive conduit of their spiritual connection.

Table 1. Data media news that discusses hijab and Muslim women in Indonesia

No.	News Title	Types of Data	Publication Date
1	Hijab, Obligation, or Not?	Writing Article	July 11, 2016
2	Colorful Hijab	Writing Article	July 19, 2016
3	Why Did I Take Off Hijab?	Writing Article	January 25, 2020
4	Why Did She Take Off Hijab?	Audiovisual Content	July 24, 2020
5	Children, Their World, and Hijab?	Audiovisual Content	September 25, 2020
6	'Hijab bullying' a concern at Indonesian schools	Audiovisual Content	August 10, 2022

In numerous instances, hijab is perceived as a cultural and social practice that becomes deeply ingrained over time, evolving into a perceived necessity. Consequently, it sets Muslim women apart, fostering a sense of exclusivity within specific groups. When mothers dress their children in hijab, it conveys from an early age that they belong to a distinct, exclusive category, inadvertently fostering a sense of discrimination against other groups. Furthermore, hijab and women are frequently intertwined with family dynamics, with familial relationships being a central focus of discussion in this context.

The family serves as the most immediate and influential institution shaping the practice of hijab among women, often encouraging its adoption from a young age, sometimes without a complete understanding of its essence. Furthermore, families may question the decisions of women who discontinue wearing hijab. Additionally, the social circle surrounding a woman, including her female friends, might transform if she stops wearing a hijab. The contents analyzed also highlight concerns regarding the potential development of rigid attitudes when interacting with individuals from diverse social groups.

Table 2. Depiction on Hijab and Women

News Title	Depiction on Hijab and Women
Hijab, Obligation, or Not?	This article states that the use of hijab is always based on context, which means that the use of hijab by women is no longer relevant today. The urgency of wearing the hijab existed at the time of the Prophet when women needed extra protection from unsafe social conditions. In addition, this article states that there are no definite verses or rules regarding women's use of hijab. Plus, the hijab is said to be a product of culture and social practice that inspired as an obligation over time. The hijab is described as an attribute that is not obligatory for women to wear even though they are Muslim. Hijab seems to limit women in their activities, and women who wear hijab should respect other women who do not wear hijab. One news quote that describes the hijab as restricting women is, <i>"If women must wear the hijab, the impact will be huge. The implication is that women cannot carry out any activities as human beings created by Allah."</i>
Colorful Hijab	This article contains motives for wearing hijab, which is not always for religious reasons but can also be due to following trends, fashions, and political tools. Then, the article states that the hijab cannot measure a woman's attitude, personality, or piety. Hijab seems defined as a cultural product that can be eroded over time. Women who wear hijab should not force other women to wear hijab, primarily pointing out that women who do not wear hijab are not more religious. Some sentences from the article that show the description above are, <i>"The use of hijab should not be forcing, but on one's own will, a theological reason, or just finding it convenient," "If it is true that the hijab is related to belief and awareness, so regulations which are obliging and prohibiting are unnecessary," "I personally really appreciate and respect if a Muslim woman wants to wear hijab as a form of her personal belief, without having to impose these personal standards on others."</i>
Why Did I Take Off Hijab?	This article contains stories of women who decided to take off their hijab. Their stories vary as well as reinforce depictions of the hijab and women. First, removing the hijab means that women can express themselves and find their identity. Second, women often wear hijab without knowing the essence of the hijab itself, and women are often scared, for example, going to hell, being punished by God, and so on, if they do not wear hijab. This article also states that hijab is not per Indonesian culture, so women are not required to wear it. Some sentences that lead to the description above include, <i>"This woman who works as a secretary decided to take off her hijab after wearing hijab for two years. Now she feels more confident and can express herself", "I feel like I could express my authentic self and always pretended to be an ideal figure in the eyes of others," "30 years of wearing hijab, now Nisa Alwis encourages women to dress according to culture Indonesia"</i> .

Why Did She Take Off Hijab?	This news contains the experience of Anggraeni, who decided to remove her hijab when she entered college. From this content, several descriptions can be drawn, including hijab makes women uncomfortable doing activities, hijab can limit women’s space and mobility, hijab is a form of coercion by closest ones such as family, hijab cannot be a standard of women’s piety or obedience to their religion. Anggraeni said in the news content, “Why did I take off the hijab? My head got a little hot, and I felt uncomfortable”, “Something was limiting me,” and “Even though I had taken off the hijab, she remained obedient in worship.”
Children, Their World, and Hijab?	This content tells the story of children who are asked to wear hijab by their parents. At the beginning of the video, two Muslim mothers who wear hijab say that they want their children to wear it so that it is not difficult to direct their children to wear it when they grow up. This content involves a psychologist and a Muslim feminist who also wrote the articles “The Hijab, Obligation or Not?” and “Colorful Hijabs.” Overall, the content wants to convey that hijab should not be forced on children who are unable to make decisions. The hijab is also described as being able to create an exclusive mindset and attitude. Sentences related to the depiction of the hijab and women include, “They use or wear something but do not understand the consequences. What worries me in junior high school and high school is the period of self-concept formation. The problem is that if he later hangs out with friends who have somewhat different views, he may experience confusion. Does he have certain restrictions on socializing?” “But my concern is more about bringing the child’s mindset to be exclusive because, from a young age, she is instilled to, for example, be different from the others in quotation marks.”
‘Hijab bullying’ a concern at Indonesian schools	This content addresses the issue of forcing schoolgirls to wear hijab, even those who are not Muslims. This content included an interview with a parent who filed a complaint to the school because her child was forced to wear a hijab. Besides, DW also interviewed a woman politician who said this could traumatize schoolgirls since people would say students would be accepted in God’s heaven if they did not wear hijab. A government official on the video agreed with the politician, different from the teacher who supported the regulation which demands girls to wear hijab. At the end of the video, it said the school eventually apologized for asking girls to wear hijab.

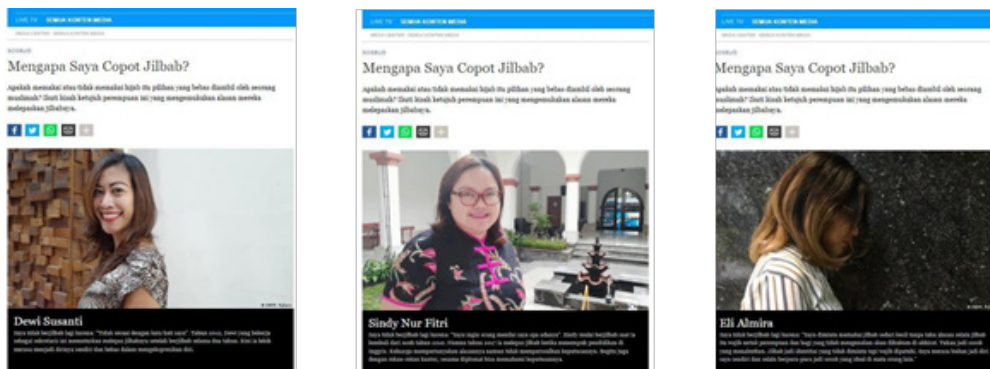


Fig. 1. Article page “Why Did I Take Off My Hijab”
Source: dw.com

Table 3. Subject-Object Position in News DW Indonesia

News Title	Subject	Object
Hijab, Obligation, or Not?	Writer’s opinion/Media (DW Indonesia)	Women who wear hijab
Colorful Hijab	Writer’s opinion/Media (DW Indonesia)	Women who wear hijab
Why Did I Take Off Hijab?	Journalist/Media (DW Indonesia)	Women who wear hijab
Why Did She Take Off Hijab?	Journalist/Media (DW Indonesia)	Women who wear hijab, women’s family, and women’s friends
Children, Their World, and Hijab?	Journalist/Media (DW Indonesia)	Children, the child’s family, and women who wear hijab
‘Hijab bullying’ a concern at Indonesian schools	Journalist/Media (DW Indonesia)	Women and girls who wear hijab in general

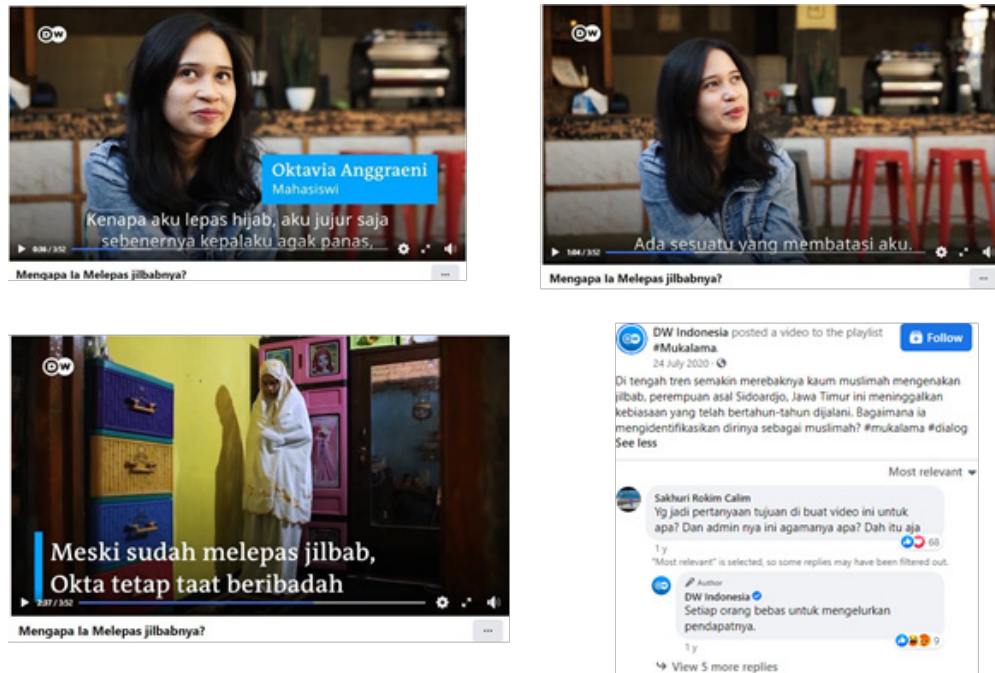


Fig. 2. DW Indonesia's News Content "Why Did She Take Off Her Hijab"
Source: Facebook DW Indonesia

The content presented by DW Indonesia regarding hijab and women appears to respond to the growing conservatism in Indonesia, reflecting the country's increasing intolerance towards minorities. This perspective is particularly evident in recent articles, which shed light on the challenges faced by women who choose not to wear hijab in Indonesia. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that DW, as a foreign media outlet, might still be influenced by its country of origin's ideology, shaping its news production. The language used in public discourse about women in the news demonstrates an ongoing negotiation and ideological contestation (Wirawanda et al., 2019).

DW Indonesia's discourse asserts that hijab is not obligatory and can hinder women's self-exploration. Similar dilemmas are faced by Muslim women in Germany, as reported by Al-Jazeera (Roth, 2021), where the hijab is viewed as a symbol of the oppression of Muslim women, leading to difficulties in securing employment. The fierce debate over hijab in Germany is compounded by rising Islamophobia, limiting Muslim women's access to safe spaces, jobs, and education (Walther & Taube, 2019; Basay, 2021). Critiques have been leveled at DW media for providing a platform to extreme right and ultranationalist groups, some exhibiting racist and Islamophobic tendencies (Risal, 2020). Reports from media outlets like TRT World and The Guardian have highlighted DW's alleged racism, lack of cultural sensitivity, and gender bias against women, often involving cases of bullying and sexual harassment (TRT World, 2020).

Operating in Indonesia as a transnational media entity, DW might retain Western biases concerning hijab and Islamic women that originated during the colonial period. Consequently, the opinions of writers, journalists, and DW Indonesia itself shape their news content, often objectifying women who wear headscarves, including children, their families, and friends. This objectification aligns with Mohanty's observation that Muslim women and their hijab are frequently utilized as objects by Western mass media, perpetuating the marginalization of the subjects involved (Mohanty, 1991; 2003). The portrayal of women in this manner fails to acknowledge their diverse experiences within different sociocultural contexts, contributing to their continued marginalization (Wirawanda et al., 2019).

B. Writer-Reader Position in Hijab and Women News

DW Indonesia selected informants encompassing a diverse group of women from commoners and experts to provide multifaceted perspectives. The informants, all women, came from various backgrounds and professions, reflecting a broad spectrum of experiences. Nong Darol Mahmada (2016a), identified as the Executive Director of Omah Munir and the Director of the Indonesian Human Rights Museum, served as a notable source, embodying a Muslim feminist perspective. Additionally, the sources included women with diverse activities and professions, such as students, office employees, diplomats, and mothers who had previously worn hijab, along with psychologist

Ika, who, like Mahmada (2016b), does not wear hijab. Notably, all individuals featured in DW's news content were women, with a predominant focus on those who had chosen to remove their hijab, each driven by unique and nuanced motivations. The homogeneity of the informants in terms of gender, albeit with diverse backgrounds, highlighted the specific focus of DW's coverage, primarily centered on the experiences of Muslim women related to hijab (Table 4).

Table 4. Writer's Position in News DW Indonesia

News Title	Writer
Hijab, Obligation, or Not?	The author includes experts' opinions to strengthen her opinion about women not having to wear the hijab, describes the history of hijab, and indirectly mentions that hijab can potentially limit women's activities.
Colorful Hijab	The author illustrates her opinion with the story of a public figure in Indonesia. Then, the author explains why the hijab is not obligatory for women and mentions that women who wear hijab should not force other women to wear hijab.
Why Did I Take Off Hijab?	Journalists interviewed women who decided to take off their hijab and explained why.
Why Did She Take Off Hijab?	Journalists included and interviewed a woman who took off her hijab when she entered college, presented why she chose to remove the hijab and mentioned that the woman still carried out religious orders even though she was no longer wearing the hijab.
Children, Their World, and Hijab?	Journalists included two families: a daughter and her mother, and a Muslim feminist and psychologist as a phenomenon observer. It said that the mothers of these children put their children in hijab so that when they grow up, they will still wear hijab. Respondents then said that this could create exclusive attitudes and mindsets in children.
'Hijab bullying' a concern at Indonesian schools	Journalists included some crucial figures in the interview processes, including a parent, a woman politician, a government official, and a teacher at the school. Most of them, except the teacher, disagreed with asking all schoolgirls to wear hijab, especially those non-Muslims (called 'hijab bullying.' The teacher said it is religiously mandatory for Muslim girls to wear hijab since they are young. At the end of the video, it was highlighted that the school apologized for making girls wear hijabs.

In the analysis of DW Indonesia's news text on hijab and women, the writer's and reader's positions are examined. Understanding the reader's perspective is vital as it illuminates the degree to which the subject (writer) shapes the object (reader) within the context of the discourse (Table 5).

Table 5. Reader's Position in News DW Indonesia

News Title	Reader
Hijab, Obligation, or Not?	Readers are directed to agree that women do not need to wear hijab. Readers are also directed to see that the hijab can control women.
Colorful Hijab	Readers are directed to realize that the reasons for wearing hijab vary, only a few times for religious reasons. Women who wear hijab are also described as not always being more pious than women who are not wearing hijab, and women who wear hijab tend to force other women to do the same thing (wearing hijab).
Why Did I Take Off Hijab?	Readers are directed to agree that it is okay not to wear hijab because, in many cases, women feel more accessible and more comfortable when they take off their hijab.
Why Did She Take Off Hijab?	Readers are directed to follow the informant's story to see an example of a woman who took off her hijab but could express herself and remains a devout Muslim.
Children, Their World, and Hijab?	Readers are directed to look at the fact that many children and girls in Indonesia are forced by their parents to wear the hijab, and children are forced to wear the headscarf without knowing its essence, causing the children to feel 'different' from other groups.
'Hijab bullying' a concern at Indonesian schools	There are two things that the readers or audiences should be aware of: Indonesia is getting more conservative and intolerant, and there is a tendency to simplify the complexity of hijab polemics in Indonesia. Readers are guided to look at the fact that many schoolgirls in Indonesia are being forced to wear hijab. Those cases can be seen as an increasing religious intolerance in Indonesian society.



Fig. 3 DW Indonesia’s News Content “Children, Their World, and Hijab”
Source: Twitter DW Indonesia



Fig. 4 DW Indonesia’s Reply on News Content “Children, Their World, and Hijab”
Source: Twitter DW Indonesia



Fig. 5 DW Indonesia’s News Content “‘Hijab Bullying’ a Concern at Indonesian Schools”
Source: Website DW Indonesia

CONCLUSION

The discourse surrounding hijab within the Indonesian context is a subject of nuanced debate, as depicted by DW Indonesia. According to their perspective, wearing a hijab is not compulsory for Indonesian Muslim women; it is a matter of personal choice. Enforcing hijab upon women is viewed as impinging upon their freedom. The platform contends that historical encouragement for young girls to wear hijab may not have always been grounded in a deep understanding of its essence. Importantly, DW Indonesia emphasizes that a woman's religious faith should not be judged based on attire; hijab does not determine one's virtue or good deeds.

However, it is critical to approach this perspective with discernment. Examining DW Indonesia's background reveals a potential hidden agenda embedded in its news content. This analysis cautions against accepting the presented message uncritically. Additionally, this discourse inadvertently objectifies women, oversimplifying the complexities of hijab practices and the diverse experiences of women with varying sociocultural backgrounds. Each woman's empowerment journey is unique, and motivations for wearing hijab are multifaceted.

Furthermore, the writer's position within these articles tends to lead readers towards a specific viewpoint: that hijab is not obligatory, hijab can impose restrictions on women, those who wear hijab might pressure others to do so, removing hijab can liberate women to express themselves, and parental imposition of hijab might foster an exclusive mindset among children. These articles may be responses to the surge in religious conservatism in Indonesian society. However, DW Indonesia's recurrent publication of articles following similar patterns raises concerns. This repetition tends to oversimplify complex issues related to women and hijab, reducing women to objects whose voices are mediated by external sources or other groups.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors express their sincere gratitude to the Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social, Law, and Political Science, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, for their invaluable support throughout the completion of this research.

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