

HIJAB AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG URBAN MUSLIM WOMEN: ROLE OF CONTINUITY AND CONSISTENCY OF PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

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The wearers of hijab often regard their dress as a mark of identity and a source of modesty. The present paper targets to finding relationship between practicing hijab and sexual harassment experiences among urban Pakistani women. It also explores the moderating effect of continuity and consistency of this practice. Three hundred and sixty five women from seven urban areas filled in the modified versions of Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire (SHEQ) and Social Desirability Scale (SDS-17). The participants were five dress groups: *niqab*-wearing, head scarfing, head covering, *dupatta*-carrying, and the modern-dressed. The first two groups were collectively called the hijab-wearing. The last three were inducted for comparison purpose. Results indicated that the *niqab*-wearing women were most protected from sexual harassment. For the *niqab*-wearing women, the low-consistency group with high continuity of their dress practice showed a decline in harassment, while for the headscarf women the high-consistency group displayed similar pattern. The paper emphasizes that *niqab* (face veil) has a healthy bearing on the social life of its wearers. It has been proposed that covering the head with a *dupatta* or chador may be a suitable alternative for the headscarfing group.

Keywords: Hijab; sexual harassment; Muslim women; continuity and consistency of practice, Pakistan

1. INTRODUCTION

Head covering has frequently been considered as one of the most significant identifiers of a Muslim woman. With the emergence of the Islamic movement in last two decades of the 20th century, head covering grew popular (El Guindi, 1999). It grew further common as the repercussion of 9/11. In nations having Muslims in minority, hijab has been identified as symbol of Muslim solidarity (Murshid, 2005). Subsequently, practicing hijab became more frequent in nations with Muslim majority (such as Pakistan) too, whereas a relatively small section of Pakistani women lived in *purdah* (seclusion) earlier and were not seen completely veiled.

Hijab conveys diverse symbolic meanings (Jørgensen, 2008). For Muslims hijab is a mark of modesty while for Europeans and some feminists it is a representation of the inferiority and oppression of women (Golnaraghi and Mills, 2013). On the other hand, Muslim women have different understanding of their outfit. For example, Droogsma (2007) found that American Muslim women recognize that hijab provides Muslim

identity, executes a behavioral control, defies sexual objectification and helps obtain more respect. Droogsma further elaborates that women feel that as they cannot control men's behavior, there is a need to change their own, in the hope of not inviting unwanted attention. Various other studies have linked hijab to similar factors (see, for instance, Franks, 2000; Jackson and Monk-Turner, 2015; Kopp, 2005). In Pakistan, the motivation to protect women from harassing elements have influenced the decisions on their movement, education, and work choices (Khan, 1999; Mumtaz, 1987; Papanek, 1971). We, in the present paper, ask the question if the present-day hijab provides Pakistani women the desired protection from harassment. We also have some associated questions, the detail of which will be provided in the next sections.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kopp (2005) saw that a Muslim woman considered herself precious and would keep her safe for her expected intimate relation with husband. Muslim women in Britain hold that hijab, besides few unwanted effects, affords sense of security, space, and scrutiny (Franks, 2000). Yemeni hijab-wearing women also associate modesty and respect with their dress (Jackson and Monk-Turner, 2015). The hijab-wearing women in Scotland interpret hijab as an embodiment of modesty and respect. Nonetheless, those who do not wear hijab also emphasize the importance of female modesty (Siraj, 2011), not essentially obtained through veiling (Fayyaz and Kamal, 2017).

Some earlier literature has informed us about the seclusion of women in Pakistani society. Khan (1999) said that Pakistani culture commands women to remain at home and only move outside once they are covered. Isolation of the sexes has mostly been followed at the public space (Papanek, 1971). Mumtaz (1987) asserts that any misbehavior on the part of a woman results in dishonor for her family. One of the essential reasons for *purdah* has been the aim to guard against the likelihood of a woman encountering a man. Educational institutions and some other public space have been kept so structured that boys and girls, specially of the same class, have minimum chance of interaction with each other. The present day *purdah* in the form of hijab has seemed to address these issues. It has provided ease of mobility as well as protection. For instance, Javed (2014) found that hijab affords women to guard themselves, as they were able to physically control what others saw of them. Thus they were protected from the male gaze. Feeling modest and free movement are other benefits. Protection from harassment is a salient function of hijab (Kousar, 2011). Kamal and Fayyaz (2016) established that hijab-wearing women espouse religious injunctions, protection, and psychological satisfaction as important factors of adopting hijab.

Keeping in view the importance of modesty and protection in the above cited literature, the present study looks to examining the relationship between practicing hijab and sexual harassment experiences. Most studies in the known literature have addressed this question in qualitative manner. This paper attempts to complement the earlier work by measuring harassment experiences through a quantitative survey. Further, to have a comparison, we also induct the women wearing other forms of dress. This may help in putting more confidence in the interpretations of the results. Hypotheses have been avoided due to the stigma associated with sexual harassment.

Certain scholars have observed that some women do not practice hijab for a longer period of time and also shift between hijab and other forms of attire across different situations. Franks (2000) saw that women not just start wearing veil at some stage of life, they also leave it suddenly. That is, sometimes they do not practice hijab continually. Women also shift to other dress whenever they find a situation in which they can exercise their free will (Khaddarposh, 2004). That is, sometimes they do not show consistency. We feel that these situational factors might have some indirect effect on hijab practice. To this purpose, we have defined such factors into two variables: Consistency (across situations) and continuity (over time) and thus design to explore their moderating effect on hijab practice. We also believe that the respondents can be sensitive to reporting sexual harassment experiences. So, socially desirable responses can occur. To control this, we obtained participants' scores on social desirability and thus assessed the effect of desirable responding on sexual harassment measure.

3. METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 365 women coming from various urban areas of Pakistan including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mansehra, Swabi, Lahore, Sialkot, and Karachi. They belonged to various educational institutions. Some of them were also from households. They were 19 to 42 years old ($M = 24.90$, $SD = 5.70$). As the study aimed to involve other dress forms besides hijab, the women selected for this project were practicing five

different kinds of dress overall. They were 1) *Niqab*-wearing (face veiling): They put on a face veil along with an *abaya* (a long, frequently black cloak/gown); 2) Head-scarfing: They take a headscarf, face open, along with an *abaya*; 3) Head covering: They use a headgear such as chador/*dupatta* (a relatively thin piece of cloth used to cover head) but don't wear *abaya*; 4) *Dupatta*-carrying: They typically carry some piece of cloth along their costume but do not cover the head with it and mostly wear common Pakistani dress such as long tunic and trousers; 5) Modern-dressed: These women do not carry a *dupatta* formally and may wear western dress. They may wear a piece of cloth such as muffler.

Some of the earlier studies have defined hijab in terms of *niqab*, while others have taken it in the form of headscarf. The present paper has included both these types of dress so that one of them may not be missed. In this way, we will be able to explore the differences between the two forms of hijab as well. The ratio of five dress groups in the sample was 21.9, 19.2, 23.3, 19.2, and 16.4 percent respectively. Other details of the sample are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample (in Percentages)

Characteristic	NW (n = 80)	HS (n = 70)	HC (n = 85)	DC (n = 70)	MD (n = 60)	Total
Education completed						
Grade 10 to 12	26.6	5.7	14.2	7.2	5.0	12.4
Bachelors	46.8	51.4	35.3	49.3	68.3	49.0
Masters or higher	26.6	42.9	50.4	43.4	26.7	38.6
Occupation						
Unemployed / Student	56.0	58.5	54.8	59.1	70.2	59.1
Employed	32.0	30.8	39.3	31.8	28.1	32.8
Housewife	12.0	10.8	6.0	9.1	1.8	8.1
Marital status						
Unmarried	60.3	62.1	67.9	67.2	76.4	66.3
Married	26.9	25.8	27.4	22.4	14.5	24.0
Engaged	12.8	12.1	4.8	10.4	9.1	9.7

Note: NW = *Niqab*-wearing; HS = Headscarfing; HC = Headcovering; DC = *Dupatta*-carrying; MD = Modern dressed

Measures

Demographic sheet. Demographic information including form of dress worn by the participants, their age, occupation, education, and marital status were inquired. They were also asked about how frequently they wear their dress (to assess consistency) and that for how long they have been practicing it (to measure continuity).

Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire (SHEQ). SHEQ (Iqbal and Kamal, 2001) is an instrument to measure harassment experiences at workplace. It follows the three-factor model of Gelfand et al. (1995) for working women. We modified the SHEQ so that it can be appropriately administered with the general population of women targeted in this study. Details are given in the section on procedures.

SHEQ has 35 positively worded items having 4-point Likert scale. Response options range from Never to Often. The instrument includes three sub-scales. They are Gender Harassment, Unwanted Sexual Attention, and Sexual Coercion. Gender Harassment involves those behaviors that attempt to degrade and show hostile attitude to women. Such acts do not aim for sexual cooperation. Sexist remarks and stories are examples. This subscale has seven items (example item: *Any man admired your face or hair*). Unwanted Sexual Attention involves verbal and nonverbal acts ranging from physical touching and recurrent appeals of dating to forcing a sexual assault. This subscale includes 21 items (example item: *Any man appreciated your figure*). Sexual Coercion includes such behaviors that associate work-related paybacks with sexual cooperation. Like refusing to have sex leads to either negative consequences or threats for negative consequences. This subscale has seven items (example item: *Any man promised promotion in job or some other benefit so that you consent to his immoral demands*). The internal consistency coefficients for these subscales are .70, .92, and .80 respectively, whereas the same for the full scale is .94.

Social Desirability Scale (SDS-17). The version of SDS-17 used in present study includes 16 items only as one statement displaying negative item-total correlation was dropped (Stöber, 2001). Items are to be responded as True or False. Few examples of the items are: *I always accept others' opinions, even when they don't agree with my own and I occasionally speak badly of others behind their back*. Score ranges from 0 to 16. Few items are negatively phrased (item no. 1, 5, 6, 10, 14, and 16). For Convergent validity, moderate to high correlation coefficients with other instruments of social desirability have been reported. To assess discriminant validity, correlating the scores of SDS-17 with extraversion, neuroticism, psychotism, and openness to experience resulted in non-significant coefficients, while some covariance of SDS scores with agreeableness and conscientiousness was also found (Stöber, 2001). This instrument was translated into Urdu for use in the present study.

Procedures

Certain words and phrases were added to the SHEQ for modification of the measure. For instance, the phrase 'educational institution, etc.' was added in the items 26 and 32. Three words 'email/sms/mms' were added with the original 'love letter' in item 22. The original authors approved the modified version. For translating it into Urdu, SDS-17 was given to eight bilingual experts. Five experts were minimum M.Phil. in Psychology and three were English language teachers with minimum five-year experience in teaching. Only five translations were returned. To review and finalize the translation committee approach was implemented. This committee having two PhDs and the principal investigator finalized the new Urdu version in two meetings. Six bilinguals were inducted for back translation. Procedures and the criteria for back translation was the same as was for the forward translation. The original authors approved the forward and back translations.

Data were collected at educational institutions including university campuses, neighborhoods and through social networks from seven cities of Pakistan in around three months. Participants in institutions were reached with due permission of concerning authorities. The sensitive nature of this work demands following ethical guidelines in true spirit. In this regard, we did not use deception and thoroughly briefed our potential respondents about the purpose of the study and established rapport with them. We had their consent before administration of questionnaires. We assured anonymity and confidentiality of data. We helped them ask questions freely and get aware of their participating rights such as refusal to participate, withdrawal of data, and to know about research progress. During this process, sometimes it seemed quite hard to convince authorities and participants. They were reluctant to reveal their private information due to the sensitivity of the subject and questioning on sexual harassment. They either refused to respond or gave back unfilled forms after having kept them for a short period of time. However, such responses occurred when the questionnaire forms were distributed through social contacts or when the administrator/data collector was not present on spot. This observation helps us realize that the researcher standing on the data collection situation may foster a trust among the participants. Besides the said situations, the overall response during whole process was a good, cooperative attitude. The final response rate was 76%.

4. RESULTS

One-way ANOVA and post hoc tests were employed to find differences among the five dress groups on sexual harassment. Factorial ANOVA was used to identify interaction effect of continuity and consistency of hijab practice. Analysis of covariance was included in order to examine the effect of social desirability on reporting sexual harassment experiences. But first we turn to descriptive analysis of the study variables.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variables	N	Number of items	M	SD	α	Skew
SHEQ	363	35	19.69	16.24	.94	1.47
GH		7	5.74	4.03	.74	0.63
UWSA		21	12.76	11.17	.92	1.47
SC		7	1.19	2.55	.85	3.63
SDS	361	16	10.31	2.87	.66	-0.63

Note: SHEQ = Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire; GH = Gender Harassment; UWSA = Unwanted Sexual Attention; SC = Sexual Coercion; SDS = Social Desirability Scale

All the variables show satisfactory alpha coefficients as indicated in Table 2. Thus the measures seem to be reliable. The skew values are also in acceptable range, except that of Sexual Coercion, which is 3.63. This positive skew may indicate that women have rare harassing experiences at such places as work organizations or education institutions. The same is also verified by their very low mean score and high standard deviation ($M = 1.19$, $SD = 2.55$).

Table 3: Differences in Means and Standard Deviations for Scores of Five Dress Groups on Sexual Harassment Experiences Questionnaire and Its Subscales

Variable	Group	M	SD	F(4, 358)	p	95% CI		η^2	$i \rightarrow j$
						LL	UL		
SHEQ	NW	11.35	11.44	19.56	< .001	9.03	13.67	.18	1 < 2,4,5 2,3,4 < 5
	HS	19.15	15.59			15.44	22.87		
	HC	17.54	12.23			14.88	20.19		
	DC	20.79	14.58			17.31	24.26		
	MD	33.39	21.14			27.88	38.90		

Table 3: Differences in Means and Standard Deviations for Scores of Five Dress Groups on Sexual Harassment Experiences Questionnaire and Its Subscales (Continued)

Variable	Group	M	SD	F(4, 358)	p	95% CI		η^2	$i \rightarrow j$
						LL	UL		
GH	NW	3.70	3.14	15.19	< .001	2.90	4.30	.15	1 < 2,3,4,5
	HS	5.64	4.12			4.66	6.64		2,3,4 < 5
	HC	5.38	3.22			4.68	6.08		
	DC	6.39	3.82			5.47	7.30		
	MD	8.49	4.58			7.30	9.68		
UWSA	NW	7.36	7.11	18.29	< .001	5.78	8.94	.17	1 < 2,4,5
	HS	12.19	10.87			9.59	14.78		2,3,4 < 5
	HC	11.54	8.75			9.55	13.35		
	DC	13.20	9.88			10.85	15.56		
	MD	22.10	14.52			18.32	25.89		
SC	NW	0.39	1.31	9.49	< .001	0.10	0.68	.10	1,2,3,4 < 5
	HS	1.33	2.14			0.82	1.84		
	HC	0.70	1.34			0.41	0.99		
	DC	1.20	2.59			0.58	1.82		
	MD	2.80	4.27			1.68	3.91		

Note: SHEQ = Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire; GH = Gender Harassment; UWSA = Unwanted Sexual Attention; SC = Sexual Coercion.

CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

For post hoc tests: 1 = NW (*niqab*-wearing), 2 = HS (headscarfing), 3 = HC (headcovering), 4 = DC (*dupatta*- carrying, 5 = MD (modern-dressed).

$n_1 = 80$, $n_2 = 70$, $n_3 = 84$, $n_4 = 70$, $n_5 = 59$.

One of the goals of this paper is to compare five dress groups on sexual harassment experiences. Table 3 indicates significant differences among dress groups, both on full scale and on all subscales (p 's $< .001$). Earlier, we specified that the hijab-wearing women are taken in two groups, the *niqab*-wearing and the head scarfing. For follow up analysis, Gabriel test was used because the size of the five dress groups is not exactly equal (Field, 2009). Results on this test show that *niqab*-wearing group scores significantly less as compared to all other groups on Gender Harassment (p 's $< .05$). They also score less than other groups on full scale (p 's $< .01$) and Unwanted Sexual Attention (p 's $< .05$), except than the head covering group. On Sexual Coercion, the modern dressed group scores significantly higher than the other four groups ($p < .001$).

Post hoc analysis also showed that the other hijab group (the headscarf women) score significantly less than only the modern-dressed (p 's $< .01$). They had non-significant differences with the headcovering and *dupatta*-carrying women. On the other hand, they score significantly higher than their counterparts (the *niqab*-wearing) on all the scales except Sexual Coercion (p 's $< .05$). The headcovering and the *dupatta*-carrying also score significantly less than the modern dressed (p 's $< .05$).

The next part of the objective was to explore whether the effect of hijab practice on the sexual harassment is stronger for those who practice their dress continually over a period of time and consistently across situations. Continuity of dress practice was measured in terms of time period of practicing a particular dress. This period ranged from 4 months to 38 years. This piece of data was quite spread (skew = 5.08). Assumption of normality is violated if it is taken as continuous data. Therefore, it was decided to divide the period in two groups by median split. Median value was 8 years. The two periods thus formed were named Shorter and Longer Period.

Consistency was measured by inquiring on a 4-point rating question "How frequently do you practice your chosen dress?" Those who endorsed "Seldom" and "Sometimes" were very few. They were only 6.6% ($n = 24$) and 9.0% ($n = 33$) respectively. Such a small number of cases seemed not to be comparable. Hence they were excluded for the analysis. Two categories were then left: "Often" and "Almost always". These were labeled as Low and High Consistency. Factorial ANOVA was run to gauge $2 \times 2 \times 2$ interaction of continuity (shorter and longer), consistency (low and high), and hijab (*niqab*-wearing and headscarfing) on sexual harassment experiences. Only the two hijab-wearing groups were included here because the other three dress groups were for comparison purpose only, results of which have been described above.

Table 4: $2 \times 2 \times 2$ Analysis of Variance for Hijab \times Continuity \times Consistency on Sexual Harassment Experiences

Source	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	p	η^2
Hijab	1544.49	1	1544.49	9.15	.003	.07
Continuity	602.77	1	602.77	3.57	.061	.03
Consistency	1011.68	1	1011.68	5.99	.016	.04

Table 4: $2 \times 2 \times 2$ Analysis of Variance for Hijab \times Continuity \times Consistency on Sexual Harassment Experiences (Continued)

Source	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	p	η_p^2
Hijab \times Continuity	80.07	1	80.07	0.47	.492	.004
Hijab \times Consistency	251.57	1	251.57	1.49	.224	.011
Consistency \times Continuity	0.30	1	0.30	.002	.967	.00
Hijab \times Continuity \times Consistency	1006.72	1	1006.72	5.96	.016	.04
Error	22286.41	132	168.84			
Total	58573.00	140				

$R^2 = .17$, Adjusted $R^2 = .13$

Table 4 mentions that consistency of dress practice has a significant main effect on sexual harassment, $F(1, 132) = 9.15, p = .016, \eta_p^2 = .07$. All the two-way interactions are non-significant (p 's $> .05$). However, the three-way interaction of hijab, continuity, and consistency is significant, $F(1, 132) = 5.96, p = .016, \eta_p^2 = .04$. The significant independent effect of hijab has already been established in above lines. Continuity had a barely significant main effect, $p = .061$. Overall effect of the model is $R^2 = .17$. The true nature of these effects will be revealed by the charts given below.

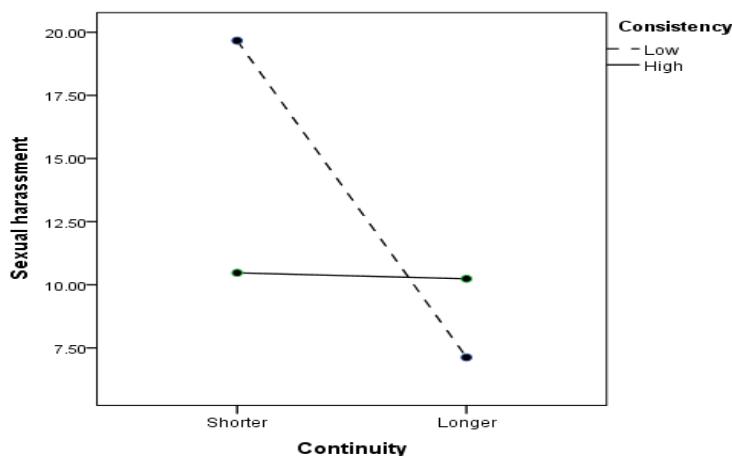
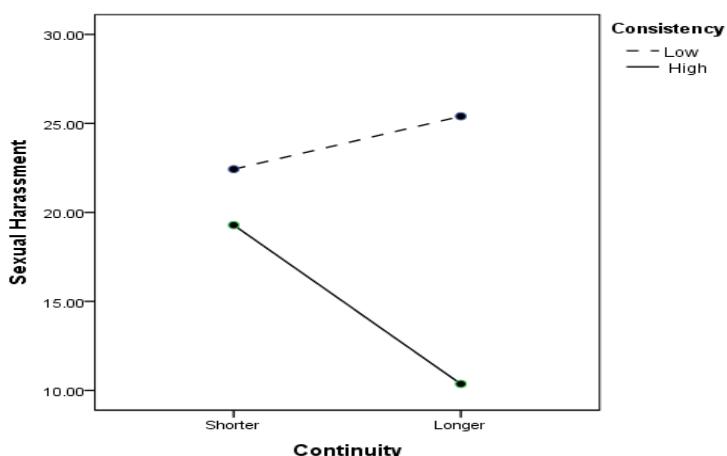
**Figure 1:** Effect of Consistency by Continuity on Sexual Harassment for the Niqab-wearing Group**Figure 2:** Effect of Consistency by Continuity on Sexual Harassment for the Headscarfing Group

Figure 1 displays that continuity and consistency show an interaction effect. For Low Consistency group, harassment declines sharply when they practice their dress continually over time. But this pattern does not characterize the High Consistency Group. They have hardly a decrease in their harassment score. On the other hand, continuity and consistency interact in opposite direction for the headscarf group (Figure 2). High Consistency group, when shows longer continuity of practice experiences a substantial drop in harassment, while the vice versa is true for the Low Consistency Group, though with less strong effect.

Table 5: Analysis of Covariance of Social Desirability as a Covariate for Effect of Dress on Sexual Harassment

Source	Variable	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	η_p^2
Dress	SHEQ	17131.64	4	4282.91	19.56	< .001	.18
Error		78390.18	358				
SDS	SHEQ	3895.09	1	3895.09	18.67	< .001	.05
Dress		13627.77	4	3406.94	16.33	< .001	.16
Error		73635.45	353	208.60			

Note: SHEQ = Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire; SDS = Social Desirability Scale.

Table 5 presents the effect of social desirability. It can be noted that social desirability itself has significant positive effect on reporting of sexual harassment experiences, $F(1, 353) = 18.67, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$. While it did not change the relationship of dress (five groups) and these harassment experiences, i.e., the relationship remained significant before and after controlling the effect of social desirability. It also suppressed the effect size only be two points ($\eta_p^2 = .18$ and $.16$ respectively). A critical assumption for ANCOVA is homogeneity of regression slopes (Field, 2009). This assumption was adequately met, $F(4, 349) = 1.70, p = .150$.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study was geared to assess the relationship between practicing hijab and sexual harassment. The measures selected for this purpose were found to be psychometrically sound. Owing to the sensitive nature of the dependent variable, we also checked for any covariating effect of socially desirable responses. Though social desirability had a significant main effect on harassment, the covariation effect was not. This means that effect of desirable responses was equal for all dress groups. So, it can be satisfactorily settled that such desirable responding did not affect overall results.

Results have indicated that the face-veiling (*niqab*-wearing) women report high protection from sexual harassment. It means they meet one of the purposes of wearing hijab which other face-veiling women have often espoused in interview-based studies (Droogsma, 2007; Kamal and Fayyaz, 2016). However, their counterparts, the headscarf group, reported protection only less than the modern dressed group. They faced more harassing experiences than the face-veiling women and were not significantly different from other groups. Hawkins (2008) seems to explain this in that hijab (headscarf) draws men who read hijab as a message from the wearing person that she is interested in marriage. Gökarıksel and Secor (2009) turn to a different lens. They find that fashion industry related to headscarf has emerged and progressed rapidly (in Turkey). However, the wearer becomes hesitant, caught between the religious and aesthetic functions of such fashion. In their negotiation of this conflict, clients of these styles fit this fashion into a virtuous practice (Gökarıksel and Secor, 2012). In this way, the headscarf may become an attractive outfit.

Woldesemait (2012) goes further and does not consider hijab/headscarf as distinct attire. He argues that this is just a new way of clothing. It is also a fact that the common piece of dress of the two hijab-wearing groups is *abaya*. Otherwise, the face of the headscarfing is open like that of the headcovering women (the latter commonly considered as a non-hijabwearing group). The headscarf may be a mere replacement of the headgear of the headcovering group. Thus the harassment experiences of the headscarf group may not be different from the headcovering women or other modes of covering. Interestingly, the headcovering women showed lower mean scores on sexual harassment than the headscarf group. These mean scores were non-significant though. If we consider only the mean scores and ignore statistical significance, the headcovering group was most protected group after the *niqab*-wearing women. It should be borne in mind that headcovering group observes the most common dress code in Pakistan (covering the head with a headgear or chador, along with tunic and trousers) (Khaddarposh, 2004). From these points it occurs that the most common attire is also a relatively more comfortable dress with regard to harassment.

All the dress groups had quite low scores on sexual coercion subscale of harassment measure. Also, four groups were statistically equal on such experiences. While the modern dressed group scored higher. This coercive behavior occurs at institutional settings. From these results it might be established that institutional harassment is relatively less in the society and usually does not depend on the dress of the victim. Social activists and feminists often disregard the myth of dress of the victim to be responsible for assault (Ahmed, 2017). Having said that, we need to look this matter from another angle. The participants might be under-reporting these experiences due to fear of disclosing the state of affairs in their educational institution or work place. We earlier saw that social desirability does not have a covariating effect. However, we noted in a separate analysis that modern dressed women had significantly lower social desirability than the other four groups. Can we say that this group is unaffected by desire to fake good and has reported their relatively high ratio of

harassment experiences realistically? Might be. Kamal and Fayyaz (2016) found that these women emphasize personal satisfaction in the clothing they choose and also in other affairs of their life. While they regard veil a needless piece of clothing, they also revere the importance of female modesty (Siraj, 2011). They maintain that modesty is not compromised in the costume they wear (Fayyaz and Kamal, 2017).

Further results pointed out that the relationship between hijab practice and harassment is not straightforward. Sometimes, it also matters whether this dress code is practiced continually or consistently. There was a significant main effect of consistency as well as a significant three-way effect of dress, continuity, and consistency. From this we understand that there is a mutual effect of the three variables. For two hijab groups, consistency differentially interacts with continuity. When practiced continually, the less consistent face-veiling women were more secure, while the more consistent headscarf group felt more protection when they continued their practice for longer time. The face-veiling women sometimes complain health matters such as headache or hair damage (Fayyaz, 2015). It is likely that to lighten these hazards, they drop their veil in certain secure conditions. Still they remain protected because they continue their veil in apprehensive situations. For the headscarf group, Kamal and Fayyaz (2016) observed that protection from harassment is a stronger-than-others motive for adopting hijab. With this frame of mind, only their consistent and continuous practice of hijab is a dependable guard against harassment. Another explanation is probable. While they have shown stability for this dress, their harassment experiences might have occurred prior to adopting hijab.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study involved both aspects of hijab, those who cover themselves completely except the face (headscarf group) and those who veil the face as well (*niqab*-wearing group). The face-veiling women more than the headscarf group are secure in harassing situations.

However, these effects are not independent of situational consistency and temporal continuity of their dress practice. The headscarf women who endure on these two factors also report less harm. The modern dressed group, though score high, report their harassment experiences more frankly and realistically. Finally—face veil put aside—the traditional and more local dress of the country (the headcovering group) is also the more secure dress.

With the protective feelings, the hijab women, particularly the face veil population may easily mobilize themselves and have more access to social and career opportunities. Finally, this paper can encourage the researchers from sociology, social psychology, and women studies to look up to hijab from a different angle and explore continuity and consistency of hijab practice in detail. They should also go for certain other aspects such as biased treatment, job discrimination, and health issues that may be facing the hijab wearers.

7. LIMITATIONS

It has to be recognized that there are limitations on some claims made in conclusions. There are certain technical weaknesses. Two continuous variables were converted to nominal ones. These were continuity and consistency. Thus we compromised parametric assumptions. This was done because the data for these two variables were quite scattered. Random sampling was not done. Certain sections of population such as rural and/or lower class women were ignored. Faking of responses was quite likely because of two reasons. First, it was a survey research. Second, shame is associated with sexual harassment. Nevertheless, we attempted to statistically control social desirability through analysis of covariance. However, double-blind procedure could be used to improve the situation. As the study is not based on interview, it could not be probed whether harassment experiences occur prior to or later than adopting hijab. If these experiences have occurred before embracing hijab, results could lead to quite different conclusions. Finally, we want to clarify that from the findings of this study we do not aim to target any form of dress or stigmatize any section of female population. The findings only reflect the data. No generalized notion is intended beyond this data and the particular research context.

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