



### Effect of Wearing Veil on Female Social Academic Engagement Moderating Role of Peer Support

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#### ABSTRACT

*Veil is of utmost importance in the spiritual health of women. This research will examine the wearing of the veil by female students concerning their social interaction, which includes a course of engagement through teaching and learning, with peer support as a moderating variable. The roles and values attached to the dress, most of which are based on the social and culture settings of the education in which a student is enrolled at a particular discipline, are likely to influence how a student responds. The objective of the study was to highlight the effect of the veil on interaction in participation of students in both social and academic activities, such as classroom discussions and interactions, co-curricular activities, and social relations with colleagues. This study seeks to recognize the challenges and distinctive participation patterns for veiled student's vis-a-vis their non-veiled counterparts with an emphasis on emotional, behavioral, and cognitive academic engagement. It also considers the role of peer support that shrinks or magnifies the wearing of the veil. Peer support in itself encompasses emotional, social, and academic relationships, which underpins the self, the inclusiveness, and constancy of the learning environment. The study aims to investigate whether a supportive social environment may contribute to overcoming these challenges resulting from veiling that may be barriers to academic and social involvement. Social studies look very rosy when peer relations impact social practice about wearing a veil. The study was quantitatively conducted. The purposive sampling method was employed to select a sample of 350 female students at University of Sargodha. It is thought that this approach encapsulates the specific experience of how participants relate to the engagement and also the veil. Data were obtained from standardized surveys assessing the frequency of wearing the veil, peer support received, and levels of social and academic involvement. This study carried Frequency distribution and Percentage for the demographic questions. Moreover, Correlation is observed for variables in the questionnaire.*

**Keywords:** Veil, Peer Support, Social Relations.

#### 1.1 Introduction

In nearly every corner of the globe, women's worries and insecurities appear to be endless, women's engagement in all spheres of work has increased, and women are increasingly valued members of society, she plays a key part in progress because of their potential. According to Ali & Rukhsana (2019), a variety of obstacles and crimes, including sexual assault and harassment, prevent women from achieving their full potential. Meanwhile, many women from Muslim communities feel empowered and moral by wearing the veil which lets them pay less attention to West's beauty customs and more effort on their studies (Mahmood, 2005). The complicated function of the veil in educational establishments is brought to light by these divergent interpretations. According to Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris (2004), academic engagement is a multidimensional construct that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning activities. As a result, it becomes crucial to examine how this complexity translates into academic engagement. It is widely acknowledged that students' academic engagement is a significant

indicator of academic performance, retention, and overall well-being in higher education. According to Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong (2008), it encompasses a variety of behaviors and attitudes, such as class participation, assignment completion, cognitive investment in learning, and emotional attachment to school or university life. The level of engagement displayed by a student is often influenced by both personal characteristics and contextual factors, such as faculty support, classroom environment, and interactions with peers. Engagement can be influenced by both internal motivation and external social experiences for students with intellectual disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities are more likely to actively participate in learning activities when they feel supported and accepted by peers and teachers. It is widely acknowledged that students' academic engagement is a significant indicator of academic performance, retention, and overall well-being in higher education. According to Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong (2008), it encompasses a variety of behaviors and attitudes, such as class participation, assignment completion, cognitive investment in learning, and emotional attachment to school or university life. The level of engagement displayed by a student is often influenced by both personal characteristics and contextual factors, such as faculty support, classroom environment, and interactions with peers. Engagement can be influenced by both internal motivation and external social experiences for students with intellectual disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities are more likely to actively participate in learning activities when they feel supported and accepted by peers and teachers. On the other hand, feelings of exclusion or discrimination, whether they are obvious or not, can cause people to withdraw. Various studies have shown that students who perceive themselves as different from the dominant cultural or social norms on campus tend to have lower levels of engagement and a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2023). From various points of view, there are various definitions of peer support. Peer support can be broken down into three categories based on how well it works: positive, negative, and neutral. While it can sometimes reduce an individual's self-esteem and confidence (Brown et al., 2003), and its effectiveness is sometimes unclear (Suresh et al., 2021), its influence is positive, regardless of group or individual support. Therefore, "a system of giving and receiving help based on the fundamental principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement on what is helpful" is a logical and common definition of peer support (Mead et al., 2001). Development is fundamentally influenced by social participation, which is defined as student involvement in peer relationships, extracurricular activities, and informal social networks.

#### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

Following are the main objectives of this study:

- To examine the relationship between wearing the veil and academic engagement among female university students.
- To analyze the level of peer support perceived by veiled female students in the university environment.

#### 1.3 Research Questions

Main research questions carried out in this study are as under:

1. What is relationship between wearing veil and academic engagement for female students?
2. How peer support perceived by the female students who wear veil during studies?

#### 2. Review of Literature

In the study by Asmar et al. (2004), two-thirds of Muslim participants said they felt out of place on campus. Students who wear hijab face difficulties fitting into their institutional environment (Rangoonwala et al., 2011). They may experience a



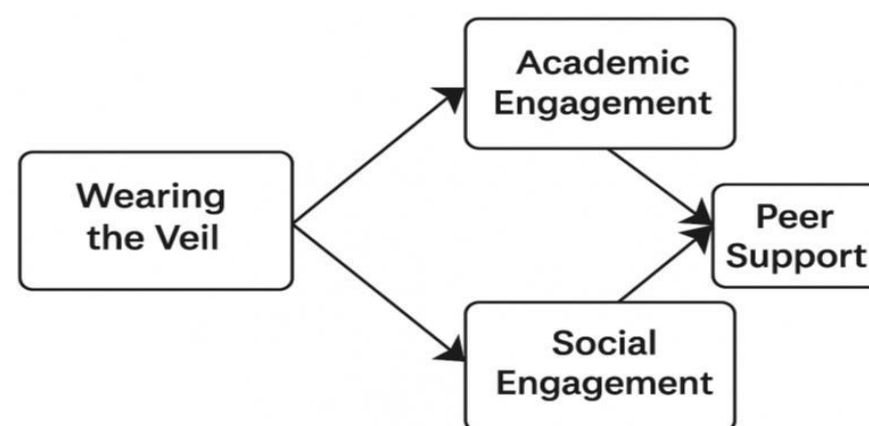
lack of self-awareness about their identity, as their hijabs are considered cute or exotic, or a symbol of inferiority to men (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010). Women who wear the hijab are subjected to a particular form of gender racialization as a result of problematic narratives about them being anti-American or terrorists who need to be stopped. According to Mir (2014), Muslim women may experience pressure to conform to prevalent cultural norms regarding dress, dating, and expression. According to Peak (2011), some Muslim women may eventually experience pressure to remove their hijab entirely. Social exclusion and alienation can result from misperceptions, suspicions, and feelings of fear (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010). In Pakistan, women are divided into three categories: those who wear veils to completely cover their faces or those who cover them completely with a burqa; those who cover their heads with scarves, shawls, or cheddars; and those who do not cover their heads at all, except on special occasions (Critelli, F. M., 2010). In Pakistan, women from lower-middle-class families usually observe pardha. Khalida Shah's study of Pakistani students' attitudes in the 1960s found that while some women in big cities had stopped wearing the veil, the majority of female university students were against mixed social activities and preferred to wear the burqa. Droogsma (2007) has used the word Hijab as a synonym for veil. According to Badr (2004), a veil is a piece of clothing made to cover the face. The veil has many names: hijab, niqab, abaaya, burqa, chadar, but the term used for veil in South Asia is Purda, which literally means curtain. Kirmani (2009) has investigated the dictionary meaning of purdah and explains that it is not only a curtain, screen, covering, veil, but also "secrecy, privacy, modesty; isolation and concealment." She adds that "Parda" refers to a wide range of practices, ranging from strict female seclusion to varying degrees of restrictions on women's dress, mobility, and behavior toward men in order to regulate and control sexual behavior. According to Hoodfar (2003), nonverbal ideological communication is facilitated by dress codes like the Muslim veil, which serve important social, cultural, and political functions. "Since the word 'hijab' literally means 'curtain,' its origin is not to put a barrier between a man and a woman, but between two men," Fatima Mernissi argues persuasively.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Social identity theory provides a framework for explaining intergroup behavior and intergroup communication based on the inherent value humans place on social group memberships, and their desire to view their specific social groups in a positive light. This desire can lead to intergroup prejudice and conflict. Within the social sphere of veiling female students' academic engagement, social identity theory can help us understand the links between Veiling females' academic engagement and moderating role of peer support. Social Identity Theory posits that individuals derive a sense of self and belonging from their membership in social groups. In the context of this study, veiled female students are part of a visible religious and cultural group that often faces societal assumptions and stereotypes. The act of wearing the veil may influence how others perceive these students and how the students perceive themselves in academic and social settings.

#### 3.1 Conceptual Modeling

The conceptual framework used to guide this study shows the relationships that are being proposed between the key constructs under investigation-veiling (independent variable), female academic and social involvement (dependent variables), and peer support (moderating variable). The model is derived from theories, such as Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Tinto's, (1997) Theory of Student Engagement, which suggest that the roles of social identity, institutional integration and support structures play in forming student experiences in learning areas.



### 4. Research Methodology

Research Methodology describes the method that utilized in the study. It includes the research design, target population, sampling and sampling techniques, research instruments for data collection, Validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedure, and data analysis techniques. As it is indicated in the title, this includes the research methodology of the study. The research design used by the research is quantitative. It dealt with the variables; the manifestation of which had already occurred. The variables of the study were not manipulatable and not under the direct control of the researcher. This study carried out two variables wearing veil as independent variable as well as Academic & social engagement as dependent variable and Peer support as a moderator role. The population of this study consists of 350 female students enrolled at the University of Sargodha. This population was chosen due to the university's diverse representation of students from various social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, providing a relevant context for examining the effects of wearing the veil on academic and social engagement. As well as the sample size for this study comprises 350 female students from the University of Sargodha. This sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that only those participants who wear the veil and are currently enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate programs were included. Questionnaire was developed for the students for collection of data. This questionnaire was used as tool in this study for getting responses from the participants. After completing discussion on every item of the questionnaire, 26 bank items excluded due to expert opinion and 36 selected.

A five-point Likert scale i.e., (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree Agree & Strongly Disagree) questionnaire was designed for the collection of data from the respondents regarding the effect of wearing veil on female social academic engagement moderating role of peer support. The questionnaire contained 8 demographic attributes and 28 statements. The reliability of questionnaire was determined through Cronbach Alpha Statistics by using SPSS. The responses from the participants were collected through online means like Google form as well as printed format. The results of this research were evaluated by using descriptive and inferential statistics. This study analyzed variables using correlation. Moreover, the demographics were calculated frequency and percentage.

### 5. Results and Discussions

The results section of this study elaborated the results obtained from the survey related to find the effect of wearing veil on female social academic engagement moderating role of peer support.

#### 5.1 Demographics

Demographics section was consisted on 08 question for obtaining the information regarding the participant of this study.

**Table 1**

What is your Age?	Frequency	Percent
under 18	35	10.0
18-24	286	81.7
25-34	27	7.7
35 above	2	.6
Total	350	100.0

The age distribution of the respondents is quite young, with most of them (81.7%) belonging to the age group of 18–24, which can

be explained by the nature of a university student. Little Evidence of Land and Age Upon completing the survey little evidence is found regarding the effects of land (which results were expected based on my proposal) or age since the overwhelming majority of the sample is of traditional college age, with only 10% of my respondents under 18, which implies that they are early entry or college bound students, and 8.3% between the ages of 25 and older, which are expected to be either graduate students or traditional college students completing their degree later than expected, or a combination of the two mentioned.

**Table 2**

In which field you are studying?	Frequency	Percent
Arts and humanities	68	19.4
Sciences	223	63.7
Social sciences	59	16.9
Total	350	100.0

Table 2 shows that most respondents (63.7%) major in areas of science which indicates a clear focus on STEM in the sampled universities. The fields of arts and humanities (19.4%) and of social science (16.9%) are significantly small, with consequences upon how the veil and social engagement may be addressed across disciplinary boundaries.

**Table 3**

What type of institution in which you are studying?	Frequency	Percent
Public	53	15.1
Private	297	84.9
Total	350	100.0

The results shown in the table three indicates that a remarkable 84.9 percent of students are in private schools. This is likely due to the sampling frame, or other more general educational developments. It might also indicate middle class students have greater access to private school, if the SES results are indicative.

**Table 4**

What is your veil wearing status?	Frequency	Percent
I regularly wear a veil	237	67.7
I sometimes wear a veil	98	28.0
I wear veil only in university	15	4.3
Total	350	100.0

The results of frequency and percentage shown in the table wearing of veils is a widespread practice, with 67.7% of the study participants being regular wearers. Another 28 percent don a hijab some of the time, while only a small minority (4.3%) sport it in certain public settings, such as university, revealing a high degree of cultural or religious commitment.

**Table 5**

What is your socio-economic status?	Frequency	Percent
High	35	10.0
Low	8	2.3
Middle	307	87.7
Total	350	100.0

Table five shows that 87.7 per cent of respondents are middle class while only 2.3 per cent come from a low income class. The large number of middle SES students may affect their educational opportunities, private school attendance, and perceptions about wearing the veil and engagement.

**Table 6**

What is your religion?	Frequency	Percent
Islam	310	88.6
Christian	30	8.6
Other	10	2.9
Total	350	100.0

The sample is largely Muslim (88.6%) corresponding to the population of Pakistan. The minority fraction consists of

Christians (8.6) and other (2.9) that offer not much variety as well but at least comparison with the veil wearing behavior and the social norms.

**Table 7**

What is your frequency of wearing veil?	Frequency	Percent
Always	151	43.1
Often	116	33.1
Occasionally	55	15.7
Rarely	28	8.0
Total	350	100.0

This question is more detailed and nuanced regarding veil-wearing. Three quarters of the sample (76.2%) wear the veil all, or most of, the time (i.e., always or often), indicating the practice is widespread and entrenched. The 23.7% of those who wear it on occasion or rarely is a spectrum of adherence, presumably influenced by personal, familial or institutional factor.

**Table 8**

What is your area of living?	Frequency	Percent
Urban	209	59.7
Rural	141	40.3
Total	350	100.0

A simple majority (59.7%) of the participants have been city born and reared, suggesting a bias toward more urban education or sampling. Nevertheless, the rural population (40.3%) is still sizable, representing a significant source of diversity in cultural norms, the barrier to access to education and possibly different perspectives about what it means for wearing veil and social participation.

Correlations of variables i.e., **Academic Engagement and Social Engagement**

Correlations		Section 1	Section 2
Section 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.619**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
Section 2	Pearson Correlation	.619**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Section 1 and Section 2 is  $r = 0.619$ , showing that the two variables have a moderate to strong positive correlation. That is, higher scores or values in Section 1 are (on average) associated with higher scores or values in Section 2 and vice versa. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000 (much lower than the standard 0.01 level). This means that the correlation is significantly different from 0 at 1%, i.e. there is less than 1% chance that this association is a coincidence. Therefore, it is considered to be a strong and meaningful correlation in a sample of 350. Such a relationship is very relevant in social science research, as it may indicate that a high correlation between the constructs under variable 1 and variable 2 could be expected. Although causality cannot be inferred from a correlational relationship, the largeness and significance of the relationship warrants further examination (e.g., regression analysis, moderation/ mediation analyses) to clarify the nature and direction of the influence.

## 6. Conclusion

It is concluded that wearing veil has influence on female students. Female students' academic engagement effects by the environment of the campus as well as in the classroom. Classroom activities also been affected by the participation of the female students. Moreover, peering support has also influence on the academic engagement of female students. Furthermore, wearing veil is also considered as social constraint. The participants of the study are mostly belonging to Muslim students as the majority of Muslim families forced to wear veil.

## 7. Summary



The demographic and statistical analysis of the sample reveals a predominantly young, middle-class, Muslim population, largely enrolled in private institutions and science-related fields. Veil-wearing emerges as a common cultural practice, with the majority of respondents adhering to it regularly, reflecting both religious and societal norms. The diversity in educational disciplines, socioeconomic status, and urban-rural background enriches the dataset, allowing for nuanced interpretations of social and academic engagement. The moderate to strong positive and statistically significant correlation ( $r = 0.619$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between the key variables underscores a meaningful association, warranting deeper analysis. While causality cannot be inferred, the strength of the relationship lays a solid foundation for future investigations through regression or moderation models to explore the dynamics influencing female engagement in academic and social spheres.

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