

## “No Hijab in Workplace”: Discrimination against Muslim Women Employees in Indonesian Property Companies

Siti Nur Fitasari\*, Fuad Mas'ud

Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

\*Correspondence:  [fitasari9595@gmail.com](mailto:fitasari9595@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The challenges of injustice faced by Muslim Women Employees who wear the hijab in the workplace still occur and have an impact on undeveloped career paths and low-paying job positions. Certain job positions do not require Muslim Women to wear the hijab, and some companies ask Muslim women who wear the hijab to take off their hijab. This research aimed to explore the challenges experienced by Muslim Women Employees who wear the hijab in their career paths and job positions at three property sector companies in Tangerang, Bekasi, and Semarang. The research was conducted using a qualitative phenomenological study method, and there were four informants from property companies in the Bekasi area, three people from property companies in the Tangerang area, and three from property companies in the Semarang area. The results of this study show that the forms of challenges experienced by the informants impacted their performance. Thus, the informants chose to resign from their jobs, and only one informant changed divisions. The study results also show that Muslim Women Employees who wear the hijab experience career stagnation due to non-objective assessments by superiors who do not like the way their hijab.

### Article History

Received: 13-11-2023

Revised: 11-12-2023

Accepted: 15-12-2023

### Keywords:

Discrimination;

Employees;

Hijab;

Muslim Women.



© 2023 Siti Nur Fitasari, Fuad Mas'ud.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

## INTRODUCTION

In a company, the main component driving the company is human resources that have diversity. The diversity of the company's employees includes gender, age, religion, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, and education. Robbins and Judge (2017) stated that there are two levels of diversity. First, surface-level diversity whose diversity is easily felt, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, or disability, which do not always reflect the way people think or feel but can activate certain stereotypes; second, deep-level diversity includes diversity in values, personalities, and work preferences that becomes increasingly important for determining commonality as people get to know each other better (Chevillotte & Dondé, 2023).

Currently, not only men employees have a role in the world of work, but many women have entered the world of work. The presence of women in the world of work is related to gender equality, which emerged after the feminist movement. According to Prastiwi and Rahmadanik (2020), gender equality refers to a state of equality between men and women in fulfilling their rights and obligations where there are equal conditions for men and women to obtain opportunities and rights as human beings to be able to play a role and participate in political, legal, economic, socio-cultural, educational and national defence and security activities (Hankamnas) and also equality in enjoying development results.

Although diversity provides many opportunities for organizations, diversity management must also work to eliminate injustice or discrimination. One of the acts of injustice committed against female employee is that the career path obtained by female employee is not as fast as that of male employee. Promotions are also rare for female employee (Karahana & Tugsuz, 2021). In 2019, the Central Statistics Agency recorded that only 30.63% of female employees occupied the ranks of managers and 69.37% of male employees. Challenges and injustice in the world of work can occur not only from gender differences, one of which can occur because of how female employees dress.

In this case, women who wear the hijab tend to experience discriminatory or unfair behaviour more often at workplace (Karahana & Tugsuz, 2021)(Tariq & Syed, 2018)(Koura, 2018).

In Western countries, the issue of Islamophobia spread by the media creates injustice towards Muslim women employees who wear the hijab. This phenomenon is confirmed by Choudhury & Fenwick (2016), who show that since the terror attacks known as 9/11 and also the 7/72 terror attacks, Muslims in the world have received an opposing view. Tariq and Syed (2018) also mentioned the harmful impact of negative media projections and how the media assumes that every Muslim is wrong. Based on this research, the negative image of Islam may influence non-Muslim views of Muslim employees. Female applicants who wear the hijab also receive more negative treatment than applicants who do not wear religious clothing (Ghumman & Ryan, 2013). This injustice occurs because Muslims in countries such as the United States and England are a minority group, and usually, it is the minority group that is more marginalized. The similarities in unfair behaviour in Western countries and in Indonesia, which has a Muslim majority, must be looked at more deeply through this research.

Discrimination or injustice also occurs in Indonesia, which has a Muslim majority. This phenomenon occurred in three Tangerang, Bekasi, and Semarang property companies. This research explored the challenges experienced by Muslim Women Employees who wear the hijab when working at three property companies in Tangerang, Bekasi, and Semarang. In previous research, Wallace M. et al. (2014) conducted research in the United States, and the results showed that marginalized groups are more minor. The results of Koura, F. (2018) are that in America, there is uncertainty about views regarding wearing the hijab, which makes Muslim women reduce their appearance using the hijab and also with Garcia Yeste et al. (2021) aim to explore the difficulties faced by Muslim women who wear the hijab in accessing the labour market and identify actions that contribute to creating employment opportunities. The results obtained in this research are that Muslim women who wear the hijab experience difficulties in the transition from education to the world of work. This research refers to future research suggested by Wallace M. et al. (2014) to explore other aspects of religious discrimination in the workplace, such as differential work assignments, discipline, promotion opportunities, and benefits. Thus, this research explores aspects of career path and job position.

Furthermore, Koura, F. (2018) suggests further research for comparing various types of work regarding the responses and reactions of employees and superiors as well as consumers towards religious clothing in the workplace so that, in this research, we discuss the forms of challenges carried out by superiors or office colleagues towards female employees who wear the hijab. This research also continues Yeste's research (2021) suggest future research for expanding the research focus by exploring the experiences of women with different levels of education and deepening the views of job providers in a more diverse range of professional fields. In this research, the informants came from different levels of education, even though they worked in property companies.

Based on the background of the problem above, it can be assessed that there are several problems and challenges faced by Muslim women employees who wear the hijab, as well as several gaps from previous research. The challenges and acts of injustice faced by Muslim women who wear the hijab in the world of work often still occur and impact undeveloped career paths and low-paying job positions. Certain job positions do not place Muslim women who wear the hijab, and some companies ask Muslim women who wear the hijab to take off their hijab.

This research refers to discrimination theory; Mas'ud (2008) in his book defines discrimination as treating a person, organization, and so on differently. These different treatments can be interpreted positively or negatively. For example, female employees have the right to menstrual leave, while male employees do not have the right to such leave. This difference can be categorized as discrimination, but not negatively.

According to Theodorson et al. (1979), discrimination is the treatment of individuals or groups based on categorical or distinctive attributes, such as race, ethnicity, religion, or membership

in social classes. Meanwhile, Unsriana (2014) said discrimination is the treatment of individuals that is carried out differently based on race, religion, or gender. Any harassment, restriction, or exclusion of race, religion, or gender towards another person is discriminatory. Discrimination has the characteristics of maintaining certain or majority groups' privileges. This research also refers to the glass ceiling theory; the book *Glass Ceiling* focuses more on the challenges of women in reaching top managerial positions. After the book, many researchers began to discuss this term; according to Weyer (2007) and Townsend (1997), it is a barrier for women and minorities that prevents them from rising within an organization. According to Morrison and Glinow (1990), the glass ceiling is a barrier for women and invisible minorities to increasingly higher management positions. Furthermore, Marvin (2000) conveys that the glass ceiling depicts female employees at every level who want to leave but find themselves blocked by invisible barriers. So, It can be concluded that the glass ceiling is a condition that can prevent women and minorities from advancing to high positions in an organization. Hobler (2011) suggests that women do not reach top positions in a company because their superiors assume that family responsibilities interfere with the performance of their work roles. This assumption is created because women have two roles, namely as a mother or wife and also as a career woman. Often, this assumption makes women more comfortable being housewives rather than having to work. It is supported by data from the Central Statistics Agency for 2022; the percentage of male employees is 43.97% greater than that of female employees, which is only 35.57%.

To go into a deeper analysis, this research refers to the theory of women's rights in Islam. Islam is a religion that has mercy for all creatures on Earth, including men and women. In the words of Allah in Surah Annisa Verse 1, "O all humans, fear your Master who created you from one person, and from him, Allah created his wife, and from both of them Allah created many men and women." This verse explains that Allah's creation of men and women came from one *nafs* 'soul'. The Qur'an outlines rights and privileges for women that are not guaranteed in many societies. Magdalena (2017) explains women's rights written in the Koran. Allah says in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 35: "Indeed, men and women who are Muslims, men and women who are believers, men and women who persist in their obedience, men and women who are true, men and women who are patient, men and women who are humble, men and women who give alms, who fast, who maintain their honour, and who often mention (the name of) Allah: Allah has provided for them forgiveness and a great reward." This verse explains that men and women who fear Allah will receive forgiveness and reward. Allah does not differentiate His servants based on gender to obtain a noble position with Him.

## METHODS

This research used qualitative data with a phenomenological study. Creswell explains that qualitative research methods are a type of method for describing and understanding the meaning of informants or groups of people. Meanwhile, according to Sugiyono (2018), qualitative research is a method based on postpositivist philosophy that produces descriptive data. In qualitative research, data collection is carried out by asking informants questions, collecting specific data from informants, analyzing data, and interpreting the meaning of the data. Qualitative data sampling was purposively and snowballing, the collection technique was triangulation (combined), data analysis was inductive/qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasized meaning. This research uses qualitative data because researchers have to go directly to the field to learn firsthand the phenomena occurring in the research object, focusing on exploring the challenges experienced by Muslim Women Employees who wear the hijab in their career paths and job positions. The phenomenological study was chosen to tell the informants' lived experiences and perspectives in facing challenges and discrimination in the world of work regarding their clothing attributes. The conceptual framework for phenomenological studies allows researchers to use collected data to identify patterns based on initial assumptions. Researchers in phenomenological studies try to understand the meaning of events from informants' experiences and their connections to ordinary

people in certain situations. Kahija (2018) states that phenomenological research emphasizes each individual's experience or first-person perspective. Phenomenological researchers are required to be reflective researchers, namely researchers who are committed to monitoring themselves.

In this research, researchers conducted interviews by prioritizing the issues that should be covered without determining the order of the questions. The interview guide guides researchers regarding aspects that must be discussed and as a checklist for whether relevant aspects must be questioned. The results of the interviews will be converted into text form using a transcriptor application to make it easier to understand the informants' experiences, and further data processing will be carried out. Furthermore, in this research, what was observed was the context, voice intonation, facial expressions, and informants' reactions in answering questions. The observations' results help gain a better understanding to support the interview results. Then, the documents used in this research are short profiles of informants, documentation obtained by researchers from direct and indirect interviews with informants, and photos of each informant.

The first property company is located in Tangerang, the second company is located in Bekasi, and the third company is located in Semarang. The first property company in Tangerang is Alam Sutera, an independent housing area with many enthusiasts in the Tangerang area. The second company is Jababeka Residence, an independent housing area in Cikarang, Bekasi Regency. Jababeka Residence is included in the group of companies from Jababeka, Tbk, which has the most significant industrial area in Southeast Asia. The third company is Candigolf, located in Semarang, an elite residential area with golf course facilities. The ten informants were selected based on the following criteria: being Muslim, wearing the hijab at the office, being employees who have worked for 2 years, being permanent or contract employees, and experiencing challenges and injustice due to wearing the hijab at work.

Tabel 1. Informant Data

Informant Code	Age	Job	Education degree	Length of work	Company
P1	28	Technical Staff	Bachelor	2 years	Semarang
P2	31	Legal Staff	Bachelor	2 years 3 months	Semarang
P3	38	Warehouse Admin Staff	Bachelor	4 years	Semarang
P4	42	Budget Controlling Staff	Bachelor	5 years	Bekasi
P5	43	Accounting Staff	Bachelor	2 years 8 months	Bekasi
P6	26	Accounting Staff	Bachelor	2 years	Bekasi
P7	47	Finance Staff	Bachelor	2 years 3 months	Bekasi
P8	33	Staff Planning	Bachelor	6 years	Tangerang
P9	28	Architect Staff	Bachelor	2 years	Tangerang
P10	28	Architect Staff	Bachelor	4 years	Tangerang

Data analysis techniques in phenomenological research are as follows: (1) Researchers run epoche, (2) Researchers carry out phenomenological reduction, (3) Researchers run imaginative variations, and (4) Researchers create a synthesis of textural and structural descriptions. In this research, coding was carried out using the ATLAS.TI application. Data analysis was carried out using the results of interviews with informants, and then theme analysis was carried out using the interview transcripts. Classify themes by looking at the meaning of the interview transcripts, then classify them by creating sub-themes. Preparation of themes and sub-themes by classifying them according to topics, objectives, and questions determined by the researcher. Next, the results of the analysis will be described narratively. Narrative descriptions are structured to simplify the data to make it easier to read and interpret.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After grouping meaningful words, six themes were produced, namely (1) the perspective of a Muslim woman wearing a hijab at work, (2) the way Muslim women employees dress, (3) discrimination in the perception of Muslim women employees wearing the hijab, (4) forms of challenges for employees wearing the hijab, (5) career paths and job positions of Muslim women employees wearing the hijab and, (6) self-defence mechanisms in accepting injustice or challenges at work.

### Perspectives of Muslim Women Wearing a Hijab at Work

These themes were obtained from the informants' views on life and the reasons why the informants worked. The informants' views on life produced categories, including doing good, Islam, and multiculturalism. Meanwhile, the sub-theme of reasons for working is due to several categories, such as family needs, economic needs, and self-development.

Table 2. Perspectives of Muslim Women Wearing a Hijab at Workplace

No	Perspectives of Muslim Women Wearing a Hijab at Workplace	Interview Transcripts
1	Belief and Following Islamic Law	<p>"My view of life... is by the teachings of my religion, namely Islam..." (P1)</p> <p>"My view of life is doing what is by religion and what I think is right." (P3)</p> <p>"My goal in life as a human being is to live this life with good things and in accordance with the religion that I follow, namely Islam." (P4)</p> <p>"My goal in life is to seek as many rewards as possible to prepare for the afterlife, so my view of life is only in accordance with Islamic law, to do good." (P8)</p> <p>"My view of life is always to do good... and not do bad things to other people." (P1)</p> <p>"View of life... living life as best as possible..." (P5)</p> <p>"My view of life is always to do good deeds to be useful for religion, parents and the surrounding environment." (P10)</p>
2	Permission from Their Husbands and Religion	<p>"...In Islam, work includes jihad, which I believe is like that." (P3)</p> <p>"filling in activities and coincidences is not prohibited..religion..." (P5)</p> <p>"... there is no prohibition on Muslim women working, right." (P7)</p>
3	Economic Needs	<p>"My goal in working is to earn income to meet my living needs because I am a single mother. If I don't work, where can I support my child..." (P2)</p>

The view of life believed by the informants is mainly related to the belief they believe in, namely Islam. The second sub-theme relates to the informants' reasons for working in three categories: permission from their husbands and religion, economic needs, and self-development. The statement of reasons for working in the categories permitted by husband and religion can be seen in the informants' transcripts.

The views of Muslim women, especially informants who wear the hijab at work, relate to the views of life and the reasons why Muslim women work. This view of life is related to the informants' life goals and the informants' work goals. Abdul Karim et al. (2023) explain that the view of life of humans, especially Muslims, is to adhere to the shahadah. When Muslims have said

the shahadah, every behaviour or action of Muslims relies on the religion or Sunnah of the Prophet. The informants' statements reinforce this; most answered that their view of life is carrying out actions by Islamic law and the sunnah of the Prophet. The results of this research show that a person's view of life is based on the beliefs they hold. As a Muslim woman, her outlook on life is guided by the sunnahs of the Prophet and the Qur'an.

In Islam, Muslim women are allowed to work. According to Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 35 states that women's rights are the same as men's. In the Qur'an, no surah prohibits Muslim women from wearing the hijab from working. Muslim women's views also state that they can work as long as their *mahram* permits it. The research results align with the opinion of Solihatin (2017), which stated that women have the same position and rights as men, so women can contribute to helping the family economy by working.

### Muslim Women Employees' Dress

The theme of Muslim women employees' dress was obtained from the sub-themes of reasons for wearing the hijab and views on wearing the hijab. The reasons for wearing the hijab come from four categories: religious beliefs, demands, obligations, and guidance.

Table 3. Reasons for WearingHijab

No	Reasons for Wearing Hijab	Interview Transcripts
1	Religious Beliefs	"I wear the hijab according to my beliefs." (P4) "...according to religious teachings, and it's old time not to wear the hijab, I'm ashamed of my age and Allah." (P7)
2	Demands from Their Parents, Husbands and the Environment	Since I was little I have worn the hijab." (P2) "After I got married, I was told to wear a hijab." (P3)
3	Guidance from Others	"Thank God, I was given guidance to wear the hijab, actually I've always wanted to, but only in the last 2 years have I decided to wear the hijab." (P8)

The second sub-theme concerns views on wearing the hijab, which is regarding colleagues' responses in the informant's office when they see the informant wearing the hijab. This sub-theme was generated from three categories: shocked, seen as strange, and standard. Informants 8, 9, and 10 shared that their co-employees were shocked when they learned about the informant's choice of dressing to wear the hijab.

Table 4. Views on Wearing the Hijab

No	Views on Wearing the Hijab	Interview Transcripts
1	Shocked	"I was shocked, because I've only been wearing the hijab for 2 years after joining..." (P8) "It's changed 180 degrees hehehe, because I'm also wearing a new hijab..." (P9) "I was shocked because right at the start I took off my hijab..."(P10)
2	Seen as Strange	"Sometimes it looks strange in the work room..." (P1) "... I'm a bit uncomfortable with the same division because I get different treatment. Their view of me is like I'm a terrorist..." (P4) "Very discriminatory, as if I were seen as adhering to a bad religion. My friends and I who wear the hijab are treated very differently, not very friendly when in the room..." (P7)

3	Normal	"Outside of work, it's just normal..."(P2) "Outside of work it's normal, but when I'm in the office I feel like I'm seen differently..."(P3)
---	--------	---

In this study, most informants explained their choice to wear the hijab due to their religious obligations, namely Islam. Several informants also stated that the reason for choosing to wear the hijab was because of demands or being told by their parents or their environment. The demand to wear the hijab is basically because of their religion. The informants' choice to wear the hijab at work and in their daily lives is not always viewed favourably in their environment, especially in their work environment. This research revealed that the informants were seen as strange about wearing the hijab while working, and some of their co-employees were even surprised by the informants' choice to wear the hijab. However, some informants' co-employees thought wearing the hijab was normal.

In the case of Indonesia, the choice of female employees to wear the hijab is a conflict in itself, which has an emotional and psychological impact on them. It causes a person to choose by removing the hijab at the office, persisting in an uncomfortable office situation, or deciding to leave the company (Hakim, 2022). From the informants' experiences, it can be concluded that the choice to wear the hijab while working is based on their religious beliefs. However, the choice to wear the hijab while working in several companies resulted in informants being seen as strange. This strange view occurs because the informants work in a place that makes them part of the minority. In the current era of technological advances, the bad experiences felt by the informants should not have happened. It is by Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 20023 concerning employment, Article 6, which states that every employee/labourer has the right to receive equal treatment without discrimination from employers.

### Discrimination in the Perception of Muslim Women Employees with Hijab

Discrimination in the perception of Muslim Women Employees wearing the hijab was obtained from informant interview transcripts regarding their understanding of the meaning of discrimination. One theme was obtained from several categories, namely opinions about discrimination. The sub-theme of opinions about discrimination was obtained from the interviews with each informant who expressed their understanding of discrimination. It was divided into four categories: different treatment, being looked down upon, minorities, and inadequate treatment. Discrimination is defined as different treatment towards other people. That is illustrated by informant statements 1, 3, 7, and 9.

Table 5. Understanding of Discrimination

No	Understanding of Discrimination	Interview Transcripts
1	Different Treatment	"In my opinion, discrimination is an action that differentiates itself from other people." (P1)) "Discrimination in my opinion, getting different treatment usually occurs by minorities." (P3)
2	Being Looked Down Upon	"Like getting bad or different treatment... new people get higher salaries than old employees. Just because the new employee knows the boss." (P7)
3	Minorities	"...get different treatment from the majority group..."(P9)
4	Bad Treatment	"Discrimination...sometimes likes to put other people down. Sometimes people who are physically imperfect like to be looked down upon." (P2)

The discrimination felt by informants who were employees wearing the hijab was that they received different treatment from employees who did not wear the hijab and felt they received strange views—informants who received different treatment from colleagues because they are a minority group in the division or office. Minorities here are groups with a small number of people who wear the hijab at work. Furthermore, informants' experiences of receiving strange looks from co-employees could be their feelings. Uncomfortable work situations are one factor in assuming that informants receive strange glances or gaze from co-employees. This treatment should be viewed neutrally and not be prejudiced by colleagues. Not all co-employees may have strange views and have the same thoughts. So, the assumption of getting strange views is not felt excessively by the informants. Based on research results, discrimination can be felt by anyone and anywhere. Even in workplaces where most people have higher education, discrimination can occur (Ferrant & Tuccio, 2015)

### Forms of Challenges for Muslim Women Employees Wearing the Hijab

The theme of the challenges of employees wearing the hijab obtained from the informants' experiences was divided into the sub-themes of how to dress and marginalization. How Muslim women dress comes from several categories: not being pretty or attractive, not being allowed to wear the hijab, and being like a terrorist. Furthermore, marginalization was obtained based on several categories: not being involved, unable to perform, career not developing, not being accepted, keeping distance, and teasing.

Table 6. Forms of Challenges for Muslim Women Employees

No	Forms of challenges	Interview Transcripts
1	Not Being Pretty or Attractive	"The challenge was that I was once told to take off the hijab, they say taking off the hijab is more beautiful and attractive..." (P1)
2	Allowed to Wear the Hijab	"When the new management was not allowed to wear the hijab, I think it was because of customer requests" (P3) "I was told to take off my hijab when I went to the office..." (P3)
3	Being Like a Terrorist	"I was once spoken to harshly when I was telling the story that I was taking part in a study, they said it was like being a terrorist..." (P5)
4	Not Being Involved	"Sometimes you are not involved in an office event if you invite a client..." (P1) "... this indirectly affects my work activity." (P1) "... I really feel it when there are office events, so it feels like I'm not active." (P2) "not considered, rarely invited to discuss..." (P7) "...Those who don't wear the hijab meet customers more often." (P2) "...so I can't meet customers because I wear the hijab, because customers only want to be served by those who don't wear the hijab..." (P3)
5	career not developing	"...my career is not developing. During the 4 years that I worked, I was put behind the scenes." (P3) "...This affects my job position, my job should be with customers. There was no opportunity anywhere else that I could develop." (P3)



"Maybe because they are mostly non-Muslims and have certain ethnicities, there are different attitudes towards me" (P4)  
 "When I first entered the division I felt awkward because I felt less accepted by the others." (P7)  
 "I was made to work uncomfortably, some insulted me because I was a Muslim and wore a hijab that covered my chest..." (P4)  
 "... It turns out that some of my friends who wear the hijab also feel that we are being insulted." (P6)

In this study, informants experienced various forms of challenges at work. This challenge was caused by the way the informants wore the hijab. Informants 1, 2, and 3 experienced the same experience of removing their hijab when working. An unpleasant experience was also felt by Informant 2, who was seen as a terrorist when he wore the hijab in the office. This terrorist view is caused by wearing robes and headscarves that cover up to the chest. In this case, it would be best for the company to provide clear regulations regarding the use of clothing in the office.

Another form of challenge is the sub-theme of marginalization. Marginalization is a condition where groups or individuals are limited and prevented from accessing and developing abilities (Gatzweiler et al., 2011). The results of interviews with informants showed that marginalization in their workplace included, among other things, not being involved in an event or office function, not being accepted by colleagues in the same division, experiencing teasing due to their hijab clothing, and even having an impact on the career of informants who were not developing. In this case, conditions of marginalization in a company should not occur because they will cause discomfort when working and are one of the causes of turnover in the division. The informants shared their experiences of experiencing marginalization, which ultimately led to their inactivity as employees at work, feelings of inferiority, and even a feeling of pessimism regarding their career path being stuck at the company (Tufyal Choudhury & Fenwick, 2016).

### Career Path and Job Position

The theme of career path and job position was developed by the informants' expressions with the sub-themes of reasons for joining, criteria for joining, company regulations, and career development. The reasons for joining were obtained from the recommendation category, job search platform, and suitability for the field of study, then the criteria for joining were obtained from the categories of user needs, according to qualifications, and not wearing the hijab. The sub-theme of company regulations is separated from the category of being unable to wear the hijab, and there are no specific conditions. At the same time, career development has the category of career stagnation.

Table 7. Career Path and Job Position

No	Career Path and Job Position	Interview Transcripts
1	Recommendations from Others	"...asked the upper class whether there were any vacancies and his wife informed him if there were any vacancies at the company he was working for. "On the recommendation of his wife, who was also a senior at college, I was finally accepted" (P1) "My brother previously worked here..." (P4) "I know from my seniors who worked here first... Previously I was also at Jababeka but at a different subsidiary then I was rotated to move here" (P7)
2	Suitability for the Field of Study	"... according to my educational background" (P1) "I was told to take off my hijab when I went to the office..."(P3)

3	Categories of Company Needs	<p>"according to your major when you were in college too" (P10)</p> <p>"Of course we look for those that suit the company's needs, for example we look for sales. Of course we are looking for someone who has good communication skills to explain our products well and appearance is no less important..." (I1)</p>
4	Company Regulations	<p>"... in terms of job positions, here, we are looking for people who often meet customers who don't wear the hijab. This is the direct owner's wish..."(I1)</p> <p>"... in sales marketing, we are looking for people who don't wear the hijab to attract consumers, right..." (I3)</p> <p>"...I just found out that if you apply here you can't wear a hijab." (P8)</p> <p>"...but during the initial process we were looking for people who weren't wearing the hijab" (P9)</p> <p>"...but suddenly you can't wear the hijab" (P1)</p> <p>"...there used to be an issue here that you weren't allowed to wear the hijab specifically for those who work in the main office. After the new management was no longer there but suddenly it appeared again that you were not allowed to wear the hijab." (P3)</p> <p>"As far as I know, there are no specific conditions, it wasn't explained by HR at the beginning either" (P2)</p>
5	Career Development	<p>"There are no conditions as far as I know... the important thing is to know what to do and what I can do" (P4)</p> <p>"...What we know is that admins are definitely stuck and can't level up" (P3)</p> <p>"... now he has become budget controlling but the staff is still at the same level, there is no increase" (P4)</p>
6	Career Stagnation	<p>"... I hope to become an SPV but it's okay to be a staff first, I hope there will be an increase even though up to now there are no signs of promotion" (P5)</p> <p>"...as HR I provide the same opportunity. These employees can be promoted or not according to their respective superiors and their ability to work..." (I1)</p> <p>"No, it's just according to their KPI and superiors..." (I2)</p> <p>"...If your career path is according to your superior's assessment." (I3)</p>

In this research, female employees who wear the hijab have barriers to having a career at a high level. The informants shared their experiences regarding careers that did not develop. The company they work for has regulations such as not being allowed to wear the hijab, which greatly impacts the informants who wear the hijab attribute when working. The challenge of Muslim female employees being prohibited from wearing the hijab has resulted in career stagnation. It was conveyed by several informants who already knew this reality. Spv HR informants from the three

companies explained that every employee wanting to advance their career path passes an assessment from users or superiors. Based on this information, superiors who don't like how their staff dress or don't like them personally can make non-objective assessments so that female employees who wear the hijab don't get promotion opportunities to increase their level.

The career path of female employees wearing the hijab who do not have the opportunity to be at the top level is an unpleasant experience in their career. It should not happen, especially since Indonesia has a labor law that protects employees' rights, especially women. However, having a high career level requires meeting various requirements following company regulations, one of which is due to differences in beliefs with superiors or users.

### **Self-Defense Mechanism in Accepting Injustice or Challenges at Work**

Self-defense mechanisms are obtained from two sub-themes, namely spiritual orientation and problem solving orientation. The spiritual orientation is based on the category of surrender and patience, while the orientation on problem solving is based on the category of looking for another job and moving divisions.

Table 8. Self-defense Mechanism in Accepting Injustice or Challenges at Workplace

No	Self-defense Mechanism	Interview Transcripts
1	Surrender and Patience	"I'm resigned to wearing the hijab but sometimes I like being reprimanded..." (P3) "Just Bismillah, your fortune won't go anywhere..." (P8) "Don't worry too much, just do it. Leave it to those above who have good fortune. (P9)
2	Looking for Another Job/Resign	"Work as usual while looking for work in a more comfortable environment. And thank God, now I have found a job at a more comfortable company." (P1) "... At this time I have decided to resign to look for a more comfortable place to work." (P2) "I chose to resign because I couldn't stand the treatment, even though I had endured it..." (P5) "I resigned to find a comfortable working environment, because several friends from the division who wear the hijab also wanted to resign." (P6) "Because my career has not progressed, I haven't been appointed as a permanent employee for more than 2 years, so I decided to resign..." (P7)
3	Moving to Another Division	"... I asked to move divisions to a comfortable place and thank God there was an empty position in another division." (P4)

The challenges at work that they overcome during work make informants defend themselves and make decisions related to their career path. From the informants' expressions, they acted resignedly and patiently in their work even though the atmosphere was uncomfortable. The solutions chosen by informants in facing challenges at work included trying to move divisions or resigning from the company. The actions taken by the informants are actions to solve problems. In this research, the informants had the best response or action they chose in facing challenges at work. The self-defense made by the informants is an act of professionalism at work, namely continuing to carry out their obligations at work even though the atmosphere in the office does not support them (Temizkan & Uslu, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

The types of challenges experienced by the informants include needing to be more accepted within the division, not being appreciated, receiving teasing, and experiencing career stagnation. Female employees who wear the hijab receive different treatment in the division where they work, which falls into the discrimination category. The forms of challenges experienced indirectly had an impact on the mental and performance of the informants. In addition, female employees who wear the hijab experience career stagnation due to non-objective assessments by superiors who do not like how they dress. The results of the study also show that there are differences in attitudes between female employees who wear the hijab and those who do not wear the hijab. Certain job positions in these three companies have certain conditions, such as not being allowed to wear the hijab. The negative experiences experienced by female employees wearing the hijab at three property companies in Tangerang, Bekasi, and Semarang can best be overcome with a firm attitude from Human Resource Development (HRD) to apply an objective attitude towards their superiors' assessments of their staff. Performance appraisals must be assessed by appearance and the team member's performance or contribution. This research is limited by the phenomenological method to only three property companies in the Tangerang, Bekasi, and Semarang areas, so it cannot be generalized that female employees wearing headscarves who work in the property company sector experience the same challenges. Future research will be able to describe the challenging conditions of women employees who wear the hijab in other sectors and in areas that are different from this research. Discussing different methods, such as case studies or quantitative methods, can produce deeper discussions.

## REFERENCES

- Chevillotte, E., & Dondé, C. (2023). Peer workers to address discrimination against women in psychiatry and mental health. *L'Encéphale*.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.encep.2023.05.002>
- Ferrant, G., & Tuccio, M. (2015). South–South Migration and Discrimination Against Women in Social Institutions: A Two-way Relationship. *World Development*, 72, 240–254.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.03.002>
- Garcia-Yeste, C., de Botton, L., Alvarez, P., & Campdepadros, R. (2021). Actions to promote the employment and social inclusion of muslim women who wear the hijab in catalonia (Spain). *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(13), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13136991>
- Gatzweiler, F. W., Baumüller, H., Ladenburger, C., & Braun, J. von. (2011). *Marginality: Addressing the Root Causes of Extreme Poverty* (Germany (ed.); Issue April). University of Bonn. Google
- Ghumman, S., & Ryan, A. M. (2013). Not welcome here: Discrimination towards women who wear the Muslim headscarf. *Human Relations*, 66(5), 671–698.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712469540>
- Hakim, A. R. (2022). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Tentang Konflik Kerja Wanita Berjilbab Dalam Menghadapi Diskriminasi. *Psikologi Prima*, 5(1), 1–9.  
<https://doi.org/10.34012/psychoprima.v5i1.2755>
- Hoobler, J., Lemmon, G., & Wayne, S. (2011). Women's underrepresentation in upper management: New insights on a persistent problem. *Organizational Dynamics*, 40, 151–156.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2011.04.001>
- Karahan, H., & Tugsuz, N. (2021). The silent discrimination against headscarved professionals in the turkish labor market: The case of women in the banking sector. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(20), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011324>
- Koura, F. (2018). Navigating islam: The hijab and the american workplace. *Societies*, 8(4).  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/soc8040125>
- La Kahija, Y. (2018). *Penelitian fenomenologis : Jalan memahami pengalaman hidup*. Kanisius. Google

- Magdalena, R. (2017). Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Perjalanan Sejarah (Studi tentang Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Masyarakat Islam). *Harkat An-Nisa: Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak*, 2(1), h. 22-26-27. <https://e-journal.lp2m.uinjambi.ac.id/ojs/index.php/an-Nisa/article/view/116>
- Mas'ud, F. (2008). *Menggugat Manajemen (Barat)*. Badan Penerbit Universitas Diponegoro. [Google](#)
- Mavin, S. (2000). Approaches to careers in management: why UK organisations should consider gender. *Career Development International*, 5(1), 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430010309323>
- Morrison, A., & Glinow, M. A. Von. (1990). Women and minorities in management. *American Psychologist*, 45, 200–208. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.45.2.200>
- Prastiwi, L. I. R., & Rahmadanik, D. (2020). Polemik dalam karir perempuan Indonesia. *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Kajian Media*, 4(1), 1 – 11. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31002/jkkm.v4i1.2375>
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2017). *Organizational behavior 17th ed.* Harlow Pearson Education. [Google](#)
- Sidik, M., Karim, A., Rahman, A., Pandangan, S. S., Persfektif, H., Syariati, A., Syahadah, ), & Pandangan, S. (2023). Al-Afkar: Journal for Islamic Studies Syahadah Sebagai Pandangan Hidup Persfektif Ali Syariati. *Journal For Islamic Studies*, 6(1), 327–337. <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v6i1.472>
- Solihatin, I. (2017). Konsepsi Al-Quran Tentang Perempuan Pekerja Dalam Mensejahterakan Keluarga. *HARKAT: Media Komunikasi Islam Tentang Gender Dan Anak*, 12(2), 38–48. <https://doi.org/10.15408/harkat.v13i1.7714>
- Sugiyono. (2018). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D)*. Alfabeta. [Google](#)
- Tariq, M., & Syed, J. (2018). An intersectional perspective on Muslim women's issues and experiences in employment. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 25(5), 495–513. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12256>
- Temizkan, R., & Uslu, A. N. (2023). The number of women in the cooking profession is low: Is it just because of gender discrimination? *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 32, 100711. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2023.100711>
- Theodorson, G. A., & Theodorson, A. G. (1979). A modern dictionary of sociology. In *TA - TT - (Repr)*. Barnes & Noble Books New York. <https://doi.org/worldcat.org/title/185448285>
- Townsend, B. (1997). Breaking Through: The Glass Ceiling Revisited. *Equal Opportunities International*, 16(5), 4–13. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb010692>
- Tufyal Choudhury, & Fenwick, H. (2016). *The Impact of Prevent on Muslim Communities*. Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report series. [Google](#)
- Unsriana, L. (2014). Diskriminasi Gender dalam Novel Ginko Karya Junichi Watanabe. *Lingua Cultura*, 8(1), 40. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v8i1.441>
- Wallace, M., Wright, B., & Hyde, A. (2014). Religious Affiliation and Hiring Discrimination in the American South: A Field Experiment. *Social Currents*, 1, 189–207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329496514524541>
- Weyer, B. (2007). Twenty years later: explaining the persistence of the glass ceiling for women leaders. *Women in Management Review*, 22(6), 482–496. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420710778718>