

## BEYOND VEILS: AN IPA STUDY OF FILIPINO MUSLIM WOMEN'S BODY NARRATIVES

GAVIOLA, S. B.<sup>1\*</sup> – CATUDIO, I. Q.<sup>1</sup> – CABARDO, J. R.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *College of Liberal Arts and Communication, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines.*

*\*Corresponding author  
e-mail: Shannengaviola46[at]gmail.com*

(Received 08<sup>th</sup> February 2024; accepted 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024)

**Abstract.** Guided by Feminist Standpoint Theory and Intersectionality, this study is dedicated to unveiling the body narratives of Filipino Muslim women or 'Muslimahs' and creates a space for a critical reflection on societal constructs that shape the perception of their bodies. Through the draw-talk process, participants were encouraged to visually and verbally articulate their perceptions of the female Muslim body according to religious teachings and cultural ideologies, as well as their contemporary interpretations and experiences - Bridging the gap between traditional Islamic teachings, cultural beliefs, and contemporary experiences of Muslimahs. Employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the research unveils seven themes: 'A Muslimah is Covered,' 'A Muslimah is Protected and Esteemed,' 'A Muslimah is Modest and Clean,' 'A Muslimah is Nurturing,' 'Expressing Individuality,' 'Challenges of Being a Minority,' and 'Not Oppressed, but Actually Empowered.' The first four themes address traditional narratives rooted in cultural and religious norms, emphasizing modesty, protection, and nurturing roles within the Muslim community. The subsequent three themes delve into contemporary experiences, including the expression of individuality, challenges faced by religious and cultural minorities, and assertions of empowerment and freedom derived from faith. This study opens opportunities for a broader discourse on body construct, identity, and tradition-modernity interactions, standing against stereotypes and calling for a more inclusive and accepting society. It challenges preconceived notions and recognizes the diverse agency and autonomy of Muslimahs in shaping their narratives.

**Keywords:** *Filipino Muslims, female body, autonomy, identity, body narratives*

### Introduction

Body narrative is a concept rooted in the evolving field of body psychotherapy. It is the process of constructing and attributing meaning to one's body through articulated narratives (McCulliss, 2017; Caldwell, 2016; Heavey, 2015). In this study, it serves as a medium through which Muslimahs explore their mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions. This medium can also function as a transformative platform for self-discovery, heightened awareness, and healing. Engaging in crafting their body narratives allows Muslimahs to reveal perceptions, judgments, and beliefs, fostering an enhanced understanding of their unique identity, spirituality, and ideals. Looking into the construct of the human body can serve as a starting point for an investigation of what it means to be human. Concepts such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, and religion are just a few of the factors that shape and reshape human bodies. In the case of religion, religious practices can shape what the human body can and cannot do, what it is allowed to do, and by whom (Borchert, 2018). Although the nature of the body is universal, it can also be considered a cultural artifact or a product of social modification, which not only reflects a species or culture but also presents an individual (Kasulis et al., 1993).

The body, according to Mohanty and Torres (1991), is often regarded as an object of oppression, an avenue of discourse, and utilized as a symbol. The female body is one example of a construct that is often an object of societal scrutiny. Control over the female body plays a crucial role in both the formation of Muslim identities and the management of Muslim communities in society. Laws restricting Muslim women's clothing, such as prohibitions on its use-which primarily apply to non-Muslim nations-and the requirement to wear a specific article of clothing, are mainly motivated by the desire to control women's bodies (Ramírez, 2018). However, "Who is a Muslim woman?" is a query that Muslim women hardly ever define. Every woman defines herself uniquely based on her social status, race, sexual orientation, religion, and culture-this is also true for Muslim women. The subject of Muslim women's autonomy and choice regarding their bodies, as well as the embodiment of identities like womanhood, motherhood, and presentation as active social actors, is up for controversy (Omran, 2020). It is crucial not to undervalue the role that the Muslim female body plays in the ideological wars between various perspectives. This conflict between different ideologies and their constructs of a female Muslim's body serves as a sobering reminder that women's bodies are still considered to be the property of their communities, whether that community is Islam, mainstream society, or Western feminism (Medina, 2014).

Despite the significant role of the female Muslim body in Islamic discussions, there is a noticeable lack of comprehensive research exploring its formation as influenced by both religious teachings and cultural beliefs upheld by elders. Existing literature often overlooks the integration of these two perspectives, which hinders a clear understanding of the Muslimah body. Therefore, there is a need to examine how Islam shapes the female body while also considering the viewpoints of influential elders who contribute significantly to these beliefs. The primary aim of this study is to thoroughly investigate the definition of a Muslimah's body in alignment with the teachings and ideologies of Islam and to reveal the significance of having a female Muslim body for the present generation of Muslimahs through their body narratives. Moreover, it creates an opportunity to engage in a critical reflection of their concepts of a Muslimah body, empowering them to articulate responses to preconceived notions about their bodies that may have been perpetuated by social constructs, ultimately leading to a 'reconstruction' of the Muslimah body.

### ***Muslimah body***

There is an ideological tug-of-war going on regarding the Muslim female body. Religious and secular patriarchies, as well as feminism, all claim to know what is best for Muslim women's bodies (Medina, 2014). All warring parties are preoccupied with the Muslim female body, whether it is covered up, dressed up, or bare. Patriarchy and feminism seek to control Muslim women by limiting their capacity to establish their identities, roles, and how they should dress to either exhibit their religious devotion by covering, their worth and sex appeal through fashion, or their liberty by uncovering. As a result, many Muslim women must tread cautiously between religiosity and secularism while keeping their ideals of Muslim womanhood (Medina, 2014). Here, gendered secularization is in action as female bodies are subjected to the state's antireligious fervor under the justification that the religious community is the one exercising oppressive authority. As a result, the policing of Muslim women's bodies serves as a

metaphor for the policing of Islam as a whole and serves as an example of a forced, gendered secularization endeavor (Killoran, 2011).

Huassain (2017) states that women's bodies are often seen as belonging to society and the family, the bearers and reproducers of cultural identity and tradition rather than a person with rights over their body and soul. Since the collective or the community is the center of moral authority and value in Islam (Obermeyer, 1994), 'the control of women can come to symbolize the means to cure an entire range of society's political, economic, and cultural problems' (Feldman and Clark, 1996). The interaction between culture, dress, and religion is also worth mentioning. According to Laderman and León (2003), "dress can be a window into the social world, bound by a set of rules, customs, conventions, and rituals that guide face-to-face interaction." They also believed that understanding how dress works within religious groups sheds light on how bodies can communicate social and religious values and call attention to the complex and varied meanings surrounding visible symbols such as dress. Religion often prescribes body rituals of what to wear and how to look. As a symbol of the individual's commitment to the group and of the group's control over individual lives, the dress thus becomes a symbol within conservative religious groups. The Qur'an is the first and foremost source of Islamic laws and values for Muslims. One of the values recognized by the Qur'an is modesty in the dress code for females who have reached puberty. A brief description of Islamic values and beliefs is essential to understand the background and nature of expectations of Islam on an adolescent female.

Norms and values also influence the formation and expression of social identities. Nonverbal signs play a vital role in conveying and upholding the social codes associated with identity. Cultural values within social groups influence nonverbal components - such as touch, space, and gestures-limiting bodies to specific public and private spheres and establishing a relationship between nonverbal marks and communicative meaning. The body undergoes a repetitive construction process influenced by ideology and knowledge, becoming a vessel for the unseen aspects that inhabit the human body. According to Richardson (1986), cultural capital, encompassing material and symbolic elements, is expressed through nonverbal messages. Female participants in religious settings tend to be less explicit in nonverbal interactions, avoiding eye contact and touch with the opposite sex. A Muslim woman, for example, noted a lack of eye contact and expressive hand gestures in her interaction with a local vendor. Furthermore, religious male participants avoid intimate space with women, employing limited kinesics to sidestep social judgments. All these factors essentially put a limit on women's control over their bodies.

### ***Islamic and secular patriarchy***

The guidelines on veiling in the Qur'an and Hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad) are somewhat ambiguous, and Muslim scholars are still debating the extent of women's covering-whether it includes the head, face, or entire body. However, it is undeniable that Shariah (Islamic law) only demands that Muslim men and women dress conservatively and modestly (Britannica Web Portal, 2023). As a result, women may be shamed or scared into donning a hijab if they think that wearing one is mandated by Islam. By imposing this onto them, religious performance is given more importance over religious conviction and spiritual development. The hijab is meant to shield women from the male gaze, especially from unrelated men and 'evil eyes' (BIO, 2023)-This is based on Qur'anic interpretation: "O Prophet, tell your wives and your

daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves their outer garments. It is more suitable that they will be known and not abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahzab verse: 59). This suggests that a woman is shielded from the male gaze, sexual advances, and harassment by wearing the hijab, which can quickly become a slippery slope (Lazreg, 2009).

The Qur'an also tells Prophet Muhammad to instruct his wives, daughters, and the women of the believers to cover themselves so that they may remain unbothered and respected as women of Islam. The mainstream practice of Islam has extended this to mean that all believing Muslim women should wear the hijab as a determinant of their faith and modesty, Islamic credibility, and religiosity. This can be psychologically damaging to Muslim girls who may associate wearing the hijab with modesty, acceptance into paradise, and a manner of protecting Muslim men by allowing them to focus on their faith rather than on her (Medina, 2014). He adds that this may cause Muslimahs to feel that there are only two alternatives for their physical appearance: they can either be portrayed as the whorish Jezebel, Queen of Israel, or as the clean, virtuous Maryam or Mary, mother of Jesus. It gives her the sense that her body belongs to her family and the community and that she must protect it at all costs since her worth and the worth of her family, as well as the honor of the community, is dependent on whether her vagina and hymen are untouched. All of this puts a significant strain on Muslim women and girls. However, societal regulation of the female Muslim body is a secular phenomenon as much as a religious one.

In the lens of Secular Patriarchy, the desire to control Muslim women's bodies may have its roots in Orientalism, as Muslim women's bodies have long been a vital issue of discussion in patriarchal and colonial discourse. Through consumer culture and the portrayal of Muslim women in the mainstream media, orientalist representational techniques are reinforced. As a result, young girls are likewise influenced by the patriarchal beauty standards of mainstream society. Being female in patriarchal societies involves being taught how to gender oneself at a young age. Most markers of one's femininity and even modesty are external, which causes a focus on the outward performance of one's identity without consideration for their inner reality (Lazreg, 2009). Muslim women's bodies have always been a significant topic of discussion in patriarchal and colonial discourse. At present, Orientalist styles of representation are supported through consumer culture and portrayals of Muslim women in mainstream media, cinema, and popular culture. According to Behardien (2022), the argument over the hijab and veil, which are banned in France yet enforced in Iran and Saudi Arabia, exemplifies control over Muslim women's bodies. The prohibition and enforcement of the hijab is a sexist and racist policy that denies Muslim women autonomy.

### ***Western vs Islamic feminism***

According to Omrani (2020), Western feminism defines Muslim women with characteristics such as body shaming, honor killings, stoning, domestic abuse, dependency, restricted civil rights, genital mutilation, forced marriage, domesticity, child marriage, and slavery. Muslim women are seen as less intelligent, oppressed, culturally depraved, passive, less likely to engage and succeed, and even dangerous (to feminism) due to tribal stigma, with her hijab being seen as an "abomination of the body" by mainstream feminism (Medina, 2014). Many Muslim girls and women debate the hijab and specific covering practices both before and after deciding to wear it. But for non-Muslims or feminists to question, it can be an oppressive and even dismissive

tactic that is demeaning to Muslim women as well as to all women in general. U.S. feminism, rooted in Orientalism, frequently forgets to consider the diversity of women who define freedom differently (Moghadam, 2002). As a result, U.S. feminists have often been found to be dismissive of Muslim women's capacity for self-determination by rejecting the manifestations of women's agency that do not align with their own. Although many feminists have progressive intentions, many unintentionally adopt a chauvinistic tone, suggesting that Muslim women have false consciousnesses and are unwitting followers who are subject to the covert, standardized ideological control of a fictitious Islamic bourgeoisie (Medina, 2014).

Despite what is portrayed, there are many kinds of Muslim women. According to Ahmad (2018), Muslim women have no obligation to explain boundaries, choices, or representation to entire countries, nor do they have to justify their clothing choices and what they do with their bodies. However, according to Behardien (2022), when it comes to their depiction, Muslim women cannot remain static if they want to be accurately represented. If so, these Orientalist stereotypes and contemporary interpretations of them will only persist. Islamic feminism is an emerging ideology that attracts controversy. In the past, it was believed that feminism and Islam were contrasting and could not be together, and some people still think this even today. Wadud (2021), a well-known Muslim feminist, stated that in the past, one had to choose between feminism, which was hostile to religion, and the interpretation of Islam, which was patriarchal. Historically, classical Islamic intellectual traditions followed a well-established patriarchal standard. Men were in command, and women were present to assist men in their quest for the divine. Classical Islamic philosophy reflected the widespread belief supported by the Qur'an and the Prophets that women are fully human (Wadud, 2021). While Islamic feminism focuses on the lived experiences of Muslim women, it is not limited to women. It is about shifting the perception of gender away from hegemony and control toward equality and reciprocity (Wadud, 2021).

According to Wadud (2021), in "Reflections on Islamic Feminist Exegesis of the Qur'an," Islam's essential canons, like those of other major religions, were formed solely by the voices of men. Men's excessive privilege over the centuries gave them the unique power to function as leaders for the religious ceremonies and rituals mandatory for all Muslims. Women were relegated to supporting roles that required them to remain silent. While there is no passage in the Qur'an and no declaration of the Prophet (Hadith) prohibiting women from serving as Imams, religious authorities and academics have come to the near-uniform conclusion that only men should serve as Imams. Although all source texts reveal that women in Islam have full spiritual agency, that truth has been obscured. "Being Muslim implies so many various things to different women around the world, from how we see ourselves to how we are seen" (Wadud, 2019). Islamic feminism draws on Muslim women's experiences to inform how they build authority, accountability, and well-being. Muslim women have reached a tipping point in recovering their autonomy and duties over the last two decades. Wadud (2015) also states that Islamic feminism simply says that Islam is not an exclusive field of scholars, priests, or policymakers-It is in how every sincere, believing, and educated Muslim lives every day of her life. Dr. Amina confesses that she did not identify as a Muslim feminist for a long time but that the term seems to describe her work on social justice most recently.

Contrary to other Muslim feminists, Barkatulla (2021) rejects that Islam is patriarchal. That is given in a system in which the power relations are such that

women's interests are subordinate to men's. For them, Islam is not like this. Allah cares about the interests of both men and women and has allowed them to be people of gender. In Islam, the highest authority is not a man, and it is Allah. Allah is not a man. Islam is here of the century. It is not about the Dunia; the material things they can gain in this dunya are fame, money, and status. It is about the status they can achieve in the hereafter. Despite their different roles, in the eyes of Allah, they are equal, as Prophet Salallahu Alayhi Salaam said in the Hadith, "Oh. Tell the women that all these things that you do in the house, all these things that you are doing, are equal to what the men do. They are equal." Islam protects them, gives them property rights, gives women the right to political participation, and gives them a distinct identity. Islam does not need feminism. "Muslims do not need feminism, secularism, socialism, liberalism, and any other ISM you can think of. They do not need any other label. We need a return to Islam. This is what is needed, the guidance of Allah to be implemented wholly and fully and completely" (Barkatulla, 2021). According to Khan (2019), the only way to end the stereotyping among Muslim women is to diversify their identity in everyone's mind, which they take in from social media and everywhere. She stated that her faith is not enforcing anything on her; it does not prevent her from having a choice. That is culture and patriarchy, and recognizing both gives power back to women. When it comes to Muslim women, conversation about sex and sexuality is taboo compared to "white feminism." According to her, there is a white feminism privilege, and people with intersections in their identities are not accepted in mainstream feminism. This existing feminism must die before intersectional feminism can grow and be for everyone (Khan, 2019).

### ***Feminist standpoint theory and intersectionality***

Feminist standpoint theory (FST) specializes in deep knowledge formation. It serves as a means for individuals to comprehend and explain the social environment from the perspective of women's experiences (Ho and Schraner, 2004). Rolin (2009) noted that "standpoint" entails a moral and political position, not just a vantage point. It is a matter of fact that women occupy a unique perspective. Kokushkin (2014) highlighted how political struggles involving politics and science can lead to the development of a standpoint. Politics and science come together in this term to illuminate their connection in the pursuit of collective consciousness, particularly regarding the influence of dominance on marginalized groups (Harding, 2004). Specifically, standpoint theory is defined with one of the main themes serving as its foundation: the "Situated-Knowledge" principle of the FST. The social location of individuals directly impacts what they know. This theory posits that women's experiences, knowledge, and behavior are molded by their social groups, shaping their understanding. The feminist outlook pinpoints societal problems and proposes novel ways of organizing social life to promote justice and fairness (Kusuma and Asror, 2022).

Intersectionality, on the other hand, highlights the complex relationship between many forms of oppression and marginalization and aids in understanding the various structures of identity, providing a broad framework that fully supports social justice movements (Uwujaren and Utt, 2015). The countless distinct manners that each woman is subjected to prejudice are taken into consideration by intersectional feminism—a comprehension of Intersectionality's fundamental principles, the intersections between a range of 'social categories' in addition to race and gender, such as disability, sexual orientation, occupation and socio-economic disadvantage, and broader life experiences.

Several authors have recognized the application of Intersectionality for equality and human rights monitoring. According to Scottish Government (2022), the foundational elements of Intersectionality can be understood as: (a) understanding how membership in various social categories shapes individuals; (b) in the context of interconnected systems or power structures, social categories interact. Intersectionality's central tenet is the acknowledgment of power disparities; and (c) the interaction of social categories, power relations, and contexts yields structural inequalities, resulting in disparities between privilege and disadvantage. The impact of inequality can manifest in either persistent or temporary forms, shaping individual experiences. There is a phenomenon of double discrimination—the combined effects of practices that discriminate based on being a part of a minority group and based on sex (Scottish Government, 2022; Crenshaw, 2021).

The dynamics surrounding Muslimah's bodies are marked by the competing claims of religious and secular patriarchies, as well as feminist perspectives, each asserting authority over how these bodies should be perceived and adorned. This conflict extends to the control exerted by patriarchy and feminism, dictating how Muslim women establish their identities and roles through choices in dress, whether expressing religious devotion, sex appeal, or personal liberty. Within this landscape, despite the centrality of the female Muslim body in Islamic discourse, there is a conspicuous research gap regarding a comprehensive exploration of its construction as delineated by religious teachings and cultural ideologies espoused by elders. Existing literature often falls short in integrating these dual perspectives, hindering a holistic understanding of the female Muslim body. Consequently, a clear research need emerges to delve into the intricacies of how Islam defines and shapes the female body while concurrently exploring the perspectives of elders whose influence significantly contributes to these notions. Furthermore, the study aims to address the contemporary relevance of the female Muslim body by elucidating its meaning within the context of today's generation of Muslim women, thus contributing to an understanding of the evolving dynamics surrounding this pivotal aspect of identity.

## **Materials and Methods**

The study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the experiences of the research participants. It is explicitly idiographic in its dedication to investigating the specific experience of each case before moving on to more general assertions. IPA is an excellent tool for analyzing complex, ambiguous, and emotionally charged themes (Eatough and Smith, 2017). Qualitative methods enable participants' life stories to be told in their own words and on their own terms, empowering marginalized voices to be heard (Woodley and Lockard, 2016). This research, guided by the Feminist Standpoint Theory, creates a space for Muslim women to reflect on preconceived notions about their bodies that were reinforced by social constructs to reconstruct their idea of what a Muslim body is. Furthermore, this study acknowledges how gender overlaps with various social identities, noting that female Muslims can experience several interconnected sorts of discrimination that exacerbate each other based on their gender and religion; the theory of Intersectionality addressed this. Qualitative research anchored in a feminist viewpoint embodies the art of participatory witnessing. Semi-structured interviews, for example, allow for the collection of rich

data enriched by the participants' assessments of their experiences and the social context in which their narrative has unfolded (Woodley and Lockard, 2016).

The selection criteria for this study called for female Muslims of legal age (18 and up) gathered through snowball sampling. Nine Muslimahs (Muslim women) participated in the interviews. Snowball sampling proved useful in seeking people with specific traits that might otherwise be difficult to identify. It began with one or two initial participants, with the number progressing with referrals from those participants. This process continued until the desired sample was reached (Nikolopoulou, 2022). This sampling method is appropriate for womanist, feminist, and multicultural researchers, as it is employed to "participate in the complexities of natural and organic social networks" (Noy, 2008). Snowball sampling can be vital in reaching out to communities that may be veiled or hard to reach owing to prejudice or other types of invalidation from society (Woodley and Lockard, 2016). To gain a deeper understanding of the construct of the female Muslim body, genuine thoughts, emotions, and experiences of Muslim women were collected through the draw-talk process. According to Boden et al. (2018), incorporating drawings as an instrument can encourage participants to explore and communicate their life worlds better. He further stated that drawing is consistent with IPA principles in that it aids in expressing subjective experience in ways that lend themselves to phenomenological and hermeneutic analysis. Drawings can accomplish this by intuitively capturing the texture of an experience without the original requirement for language. Moreover, visual images tap into several sensory registers at once, thus producing data rich with meaning (Malchiodi, 2005) and providing a shared focus for parallel or subsequent verbal discussion (Hustvedt, 2006). The draw-talk process employed the following prompts: What constitutes a female Muslim body according to your religion's teachings and ideologies of your elders? (*Ano ang bumubuo sa isang babaeng Muslim na katawan ayon sa mga turo ng iyong relihiyon at ideolohiya ng iyong mga nakatatanda?*). What does it mean to have a female Muslim body for you? (*Para sa iyo, ano ang ibig sabihin ng pagkakaroon ng katawang babaeng Muslim?*).

Participants were given creative freedom to add any elements that they deemed relevant to the topic in any shape or form. This was followed by a verbal discussion about the drawings the participants had created; the discussion was guided by open-ended questions designed to enable participants to speak at length about the subject with minimal prompting. Using open formulations that did not make too many assumptions about the participants' experiences or thoughts when framing the specific questions was critical (Smith et al., 2009). Some of the open-ended questions used during the semi-structured interview include: (1) can you describe to me what you drew? (*Maaari mo bang ilarawan sa akin kung ano ang iyong iginuhit?*); (2) what do the colors mean to you? (*Ano ang ibig sabihin ng mga kulay para sa iyo?*); (3) what more can you tell me about your drawing? (*Ano pa ang masasabi mo sa akin tungkol sa iyong iginuhit?*); (4) what memories or associations come to mind in relation to this drawing? (*Anong mga alaala o asosasyon ang pumasok sa iyong isip kaugnay sa guhit na ito?*); and (5) in what way do you perceive this as an imagery of your body? (*Sa anong paraan mo ito nakikita bilang imaheng ng iyong katawan?*).

The researchers did not evaluate the projective drawings but instead used them to assist in eliciting content from the participants during semi-structured interviews. Since discussing one's perception of one's body is an intimate issue, projective drawings were an inconspicuous form of data collection. A significant concern for the feminist



perspective is the search for a method that creates a space for silenced women. Mason and May (2002) and Sclater (2003) proposed that drawing or storytelling could trigger an interview and help individuals connect ideological abstractions to specific situations by utilizing personal and collective cultural experiences. Using visual data-gathering methods also serves as a countermovement to the dominance of Western-style discourse in research imaginations, potentially providing alternative means of self-expression for women from traditional cultures (Huss and Cwikel, 2005).

### ***Ethical considerations***

The ethical considerations for this research, aligned with APA principles, emphasized informed consent as a crucial aspect. Privacy measures, including anonymizing data and securing storage, were implemented to protect participants' identities in light of the sensitive nature of personal experiences. Cultural competence was fundamental, with researchers respecting the unique perspectives of Filipino Muslim women and establishing a trusting relationship to avoid harm or misrepresentation. Considering potential risks and benefits, the study aimed to shed light on empowering narratives while minimizing emotional distress through debriefing and support mechanisms. In focusing on the Filipino Muslimah identity, representing a minority group, additional ethical considerations came into play. Cultural humility was vital-acknowledging and respecting diversity within the minority group. Cultural competence is crucial when working with minority populations, striving to avoid stereotypes, biases, and misinterpretations. The study aimed to contribute positively, challenging stereotypes and fostering a nuanced understanding, with findings benefiting the community and promoting inclusivity.

### **Results and Discussion**

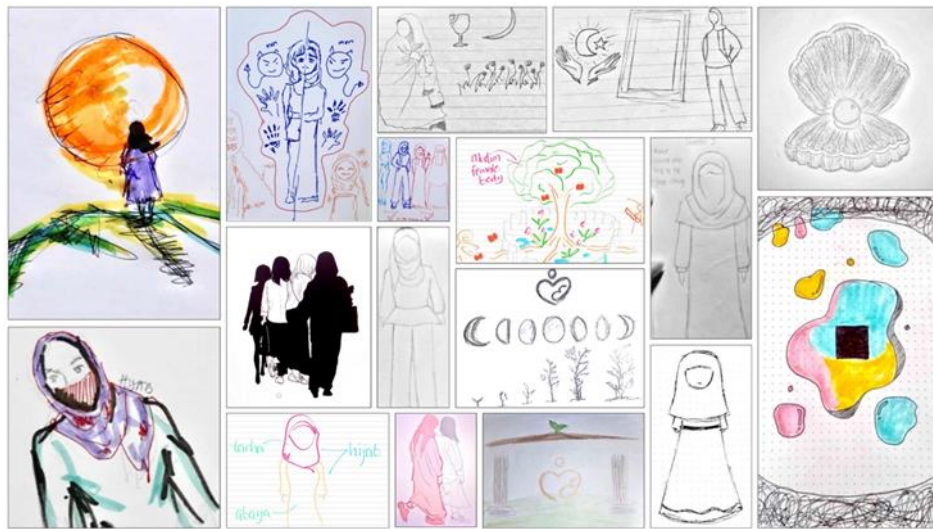
As indicated in *Table 1*, the study included nine participants, all Muslim women aged between 19 and 23. The majority resided in Cavite, with one participant originating from Pampanga, while two others were from Mindanao. Additional demographic information has been withheld to protect confidentiality. The study's participants encompass a diverse spectrum of individuals united by their adherence to Islam, reflecting a range of interpretations and degrees of commitment to Islamic teachings. This diversity is evident as some participants embrace deeply rooted traditional views while others articulate more liberal or modern perspectives. Originating from varied cultural backgrounds within the broader Muslim community, participants were raised in urban and rural settings, shaping their exposure to distinct cultural norms and values. It is worth noting that all participants actively pursued their undergraduate degrees or had already graduated from college, underscoring a shared commitment to educational pursuits. Furthermore, the study intentionally incorporated participants from different socio-economic backgrounds, enriching the research with various experiences and perspectives. This comprehensive approach ensured a nuanced exploration of the evolving dynamics within the Muslim community and fostered a more compelling understanding of the interplay between diverse cultural, educational, and socio-economic influences.

***Table 1. Participant profile.***

Pseudonym	Age	Place of residence
-----------	-----	--------------------

Bobbie	22	Dasmaringas City, Cavite
Gabbie	20	Dasmaringas City, Cavite
Pearl	23	Dasmaringas City, Cavite
Rhian	19	Dasmaringas City, Cavite
Mia	21	Dasmaringas City, Cavite
Izza	19	Cotabato City
Dovid	23	Davao City
Aurora	22	Pampanga City
Ran	21	Dasmaringas City, Cavite

The study aimed to understand what constitutes a female Muslim body according to Islamic teachings and ideologies of their elders, as well as what it means to have a female Muslim body for today's generation of Muslim women. The study's two objectives are important because they address different aspects of the female Muslim body in terms of its historical and traditional context and contemporary significance. The first objective explores the religious and cultural heritage that shaped perceptions of the female Muslim body, providing historical context for understanding the experiences of Muslim women today. The second objective delves into contemporary Muslim women's lived experiences, challenges, and identities, acknowledging that these experiences may differ from those of their predecessors and considering the influence of societal and cultural changes. This dual approach bridges tradition and modernity, offering valuable insights into the evolving concept of the female Muslim body and recognizing the diversity of Muslim women's experiences, making the study more inclusive and informative. *Figure 1* presents a compilation of participants' drawings, which served as the basis of discussion during the semi-structured interviews.



*Figure 1. Participant drawings.*

The analysis revealed seven overarching themes, four for the first objective – as seen in Table 2, and three for the second—as seen in Table 3, each offering a unique perspective on how Muslim women perceive and experience their bodies today. The first theme, 'A Muslimah is Covered,' explores the nature of Muslimah body covering, incorporating physical modesty, spiritual significance, and social preservation through the hijab. The second theme, 'A Muslimah is Protected and Esteemed,' emphasizes

safeguarding and honoring the female body rooted in Islamic teachings, valuing its sanctity, fragility, and the sense of safety it brings. The third theme 'A Muslimah is Modest and Clean' depicts the Muslim female body as modest and clean in attire, character, and well-being, connecting these aspects of modesty and purity. The fourth theme 'A Muslimah is Nurturing' highlights the role of the Muslim female body as a nurturing force in both the family and the broader community, contributing to love, support, and unity.

**Table 2. Traditional narratives and normative identities.**

Themes	Subtheme
Theme 1. A Muslimah is Covered.	1a. Physically, Using a Hijab to Protect the Body 1b. Spiritually, to Preserve the Sanctity of the Body 1c. To Avoid Unwanted Attention
Theme 2. A Muslimah is Protected and Esteemed.	2a. Safeguarded by Islam and its Teachings 2b. Respected and Held in High Regard 2c. Treated as Fragile
Theme 3. A Muslimah is Modest and Clean.	3a. In Attire, by Abiding to a Modest Dress Code 3b. In Character, as Reflected by One's Actions and Behavior 3c. In Health, as a Symbol of Purity and Cleanliness
Theme 4. A Muslimah is nurturing	4a. Motherhood 4b. Pillars of the Community

**Table 3. Reconstructed narratives and non-normative identities.**

Themes	Subtheme
Theme 5. Expressing Individuality	5a. Difference in Clothing Style 5b. Shame and Alienation Because of Deviance 5c. Dressing More Modestly Inside a Muslim Community 5d. Discomfort With the Prescribed Attire
Theme 6. Challenges of Being a Minority	6a. Experiencing Culture Shock 6b. Receiving Unwarranted Comments From Non-Muslims 6c. Harassment and Unwanted Attention 6d. Representing the Muslim Community 6e. Standing Out and Blending - in 6f. Perceived Availability of Opportunities
Theme 7. Empowered and Free	7a. Not Oppressed, but Actually Empowered 7b. Feelings of Safety Because of Faith 7c. Steadfast Belief 7d. Freedom of Choice

One of the most significant findings in the study is the significance of veiling and covering in the lives of Muslim women, mainly through the wearing of the hijab. Existing research by Borchert (2018) as well as Laderman and León (2003) accentuated how religious practices can shape the boundaries of the human body and its interactions with society. As a symbol of religious identification, dress plays a vital role in communicating social and religious values. This aligns with participant statements that stressed the requirement of covering in Islam to protect the body, rooted in Quranic verses and Hadith, which also contributes significantly to their religious identity. Furthermore, the idea that covering extends beyond the physical realm to encompass the spiritual aspect of Muslimahs emerged. The study's findings also align with the ambiguity surrounding the extent of women's covering within Islamic teachings, as Britannica Web Portal (2023) discussed. Such religious norms include avoiding unwanted attention by covering, which aligns with the concept of shielding women from the male gaze and sexual advances, an idea rooted in Qur'anic interpretations, emphasizing the necessity for Muslim women to cover themselves to be recognized for their modesty and to prevent potential abuse (BIO, 2023). Additionally, it acknowledges the intricate dynamics surrounding the hijab's protective function while cautioning that

even with comprehensive covering, a woman's voice, smile, or lips can still be perceived as sensuous or inviting (Lazreg, 2009).

The analysis also revealed that Muslim women are protected and highly esteemed in Islam. As participants in the study pointed out, the rights, respect, and care given to women, both in the family and the broader community, reinforce the idea that women are indeed valued, protected, and cherished within the Islamic framework. This notion is supported by the work of Ahmad (2018), who ardently asserts that the rights of Muslim women have been eternally protected by Allah the Almighty and the Prophet, highlighting the undeniable fact that Islam enshrines women's rights and grants them freedom and equality. Moreover, Patoari (2019) research further emphasized the honorable treatment of women within the family structure. The Quranic references, "The best among you is he who is best in his treatment towards his wife," and "Paradise lies under the feet of your mother," also emphasize the significance of treating women with the utmost respect and care. This resonates with the assertion that Muslim women are regarded with respect and treated respectfully, particularly by Mahrams. The research of Abdul-Wahid (2022) also aligns with the idea that Muslim women are perceived as fragile and deserving of careful handling and protection, much like delicate glass. Abdul-Wahid (2022) emphasized that men should care for their interactions with women, whether as wives, daughters, sisters, mothers, or aunts. Integrating an FST lens into these perspectives reminds us to acknowledge the variations in familial structures and power dynamics within the Muslim community and to consider how these factors influence women's experiences of protection and respect.

The portrayal of a Muslimah as nurturing accentuates the perception of Muslim women as natural nurturers within their families and communities. Motherhood is highly valued in the Muslim community, reflecting Islam's broader principles of responsibility and interconnectedness. Muslim women are also expected to extend their nurturing role to the larger community, promoting values and character development and upholding collective responsibility. The existing research, however, offers a more nuanced perspective. Huassain (2017) highlighted the tension between societal expectations and women's autonomy and rights over their bodies. It suggested that women's bodies are often seen as belonging to society and the family rather than recognizing women as individuals with rights over their bodies and souls. This contrasts with the nurturing role attributed to Muslim women in the analysis. Integrating an intersectionality lens into this perspective prompts a consideration of how societal expectations intersect with gender roles, influencing the ways Muslim women navigate.

The fifth theme, 'Expressing Individuality,' explores contemporary Muslim female experiences. It highlights their embrace of individuality through unique clothing choices while navigating feelings of shame and alienation when deviating from societal norms - balancing tradition and personal expression in an evolving cultural landscape. The sixth theme, 'Challenges of Being a Minority,' shifts to the contemporary challenges faced by Muslim women as religious and cultural minorities, addressing culture shock, discrimination, harassment, and the complex task of representing the broader Muslim community. They question equal opportunities amid biases and stereotypes. The seventh and final theme, 'Not Oppressed, but Actually Empowered,' discusses contemporary Muslim women's empowerment and freedom derived from their faith, rejecting stereotypes of oppression and viewing themselves as empowered individuals. Their security and liberation are rooted in unwavering trust and the freedom to express their beliefs through various dress forms, instilling confidence in navigating modern life.

The theme of "Expressing Individuality" explores how Muslim women use their choice of clothing to express their individuality while adhering to Islamic principles. Feelings of shame and alienation because of deviance among Muslim women also emerged; this resonates with existing research on deviations from social norms and their impact on loneliness. Deviations from social norms, as discussed in the study by Heu (2023), can lead to feelings of alienation, inauthenticity, lower self-worth, and perceived social rejection. This is similar to the experiences described by Muslim women who feel shame or embarrassment when their clothing preferences and behavior deviate from their community's norms. Moreover, the practice of dressing more modestly inside a Muslim community, influenced by the environment and community expectations, was unveiled. This relates to the existing research on the complex relationship between cultural, societal, and communal expectations and women's control over their bodies (Amado, 2004). Muslimah's clothing choices are often shaped by many factors, including the social context in which they find themselves. However, discomfort with the prescribed attire introduces the importance of understanding and empathy within the Muslim community regarding diverse experiences and choices. This aligns with the need to recognize and accept diversity in Muslim women's identities, as Khan (2019) discussed. It emphasizes the importance of acknowledging that Muslim women's faith does not prevent them from having choices and that the Muslim community should embrace a broader spectrum of identities and choices.

The challenges of being a minority as experienced by Muslim women, where they navigate the unique experiences of representing the Muslim minority while standing out or blending in, share similarities with existing research on intersectionality and the impact of social norms and stereotypes on minority groups. For instance, the experiences described by Muslim women wherein they receive unwarranted comments from non-Muslims and face stereotypes align with the broader concept of Intersectionality that acknowledges how individuals from marginalized groups may experience prejudice from multiple sources, including race, gender, and religion (Uwujaren and Utt, 2015). "Experiencing Culture Shock" among Muslimahs, as they navigate new and unfamiliar environments after leaving the Muslim community, resonates with the experiences of international students mentioned in existing research (Abunab et al., 2017). These students faced challenges related to cultural adjustments, stereotypes, and misconceptions, contributing to their culture shock experiences. Muslim women similarly undergo culture shock when transitioning to different cultural contexts, leading to feelings of being unsafe. Coping mechanisms such as drawing strength from their faith and striving to correct misconceptions about Islam and Muslims were revealed, emphasizing the shared challenges and resilience of individuals adjusting to new environments while preserving their cultural and religious identities. Furthermore, the idea of Muslim women being unwitting representative figures resonates with the discussion about Muslim women serving as symbols or targets for various ideologies and forces, as mentioned in the existing research on the ideological tug-of-war over Muslim women's bodies (Medina, 2014). Experiences of harassment and unwanted attention despite adhering to modest clothing prove the pervasive issue of gender-based harassment and challenge the notion that attire alone can protect women. This is in line with the idea that laws restricting Muslim women's clothing, as discussed in existing research (Ramírez, 2018), are primarily motivated by the desire to control women's bodies, regardless of the attire they wear. The idea of standing out and blending in emphasizes the delicate balance that Muslim women seek when trying to

assimilate into non-Muslim society while upholding their religious identity and modesty. These efforts to blend in without compromising their faith practices reflect the challenges faced by Muslim women (Abunab et al., 2017). The attire and religious practices that make them stand out can be both a source of identity and a potential obstacle when integrating into a different cultural context.

The experiences of Muslim women encompass a complex intersection of religion, culture, and gender, and the empowerment they derive from their faith is a recurrent theme. Contrary to common misconceptions, some Muslim women challenge the notion that Islamic teachings oppress them and assert that Islam empowers them. They emphasize that modest dress, a significant aspect of their faith, is not a form of oppression but a means of protection (Ahmad, 2018). The centrality of faith also provides them with a profound sense of safety and freedom, enabling them to make choices rooted in their individual beliefs. The unwavering commitment to their faith and identity is a source of empowerment despite their challenges. Notably, the freedom to choose their clothing and express their faith according to their beliefs is an empowering aspect of their lives. These assertions of autonomy and empowerment challenge the stereotypes and misconceptions often associated with Muslimahs (Medina, 2014). They highlight the diverse ways they experience and live their faith, reinforcing the need to move beyond generalized narratives and recognize their agency and autonomy (Kokushkin, 2014). Examining these narratives through Intersectionality emphasizes the need to acknowledge the varied identities and experiences within the Muslim community and the intersecting factors that contribute to Muslim women's empowerment.

The results of this study offer valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of Muslim women regarding their bodies, encompassing both the religious teachings and contemporary challenges they face. The findings have supported the original objectives, shedding light on the construct of a Muslimah's body and its significance in the community. The implications drawn from the findings are insightful and encompass theoretical and practical domains, exceeding the study's boundaries by touching upon more significant societal issues. Theoretically, these results challenge the established norms and stereotypes surrounding Muslimahs and their experiences. It reveals a fresh perspective on identity, body image, and the interaction between tradition and modernity, which opens a reconsideration of existing theories. These insights reveal a need to move beyond portraying Muslim women as passive individuals and prompt a reevaluation of narratives that have confined them within predefined roles.

Practically, these results hold the potential to foster a more inclusive and empathetic society, particularly in diverse and multicultural settings. By acknowledging the diverse experiences of Muslim women, like their yearning for autonomy and self-expression, these findings can promote greater understanding and acceptance within communities. They offer valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and community leaders in creating environments that respect autonomy and foster cultural diversity. Furthermore, these results have implications in the fields of childrearing and education. Parents and educators can use these insights better to guide young Muslim girls through self-discovery and identity formation. In the broader context, these findings serve as a reminder of the more significant issues of human thoughts, feelings, and behaviors within diverse and multicultural societies. They challenge preconceived notions and biases, encouraging a more inclusive and accepting perspective that values the rich diversity of human experiences. These insights have the potential to positively

transform how we perceive, interact with, and support the unique individuals who collectively form our interconnected world.

At the core of this framework, as seen in *Figure 2*, is the central concept, "Filipino Muslim Women's Body Narratives," which encapsulates the diverse stories, perceptions, and experiences of Filipino Muslimahs around their body. The framework branches into two core groups: "Traditional Narratives" and "Reconstructed Narratives." Within the "Traditional Narratives," reflective of cultural and religious norms, are themes such as being covered, protected, modest, and nurturing. In contrast, the "Reconstructed Narratives" emerge from individuality, the challenges of being a minority, and feelings of empowerment and freedom. Further exploration delves into subthemes. The framework also illustrates the interaction between tradition and modernity. The theoretical and practical implications extend beyond the study's boundaries. Theoretical implications address the challenge to established norms and stereotypes, prompting a reevaluation of existing theories concerning Muslimah's experiences. Practically, the framework emphasizes fostering inclusivity, empathy, and understanding in diverse settings, guiding educators, policymakers, and community leaders. Considering the broader context of "Human Experiences in Diverse Societies," the study becomes part of a larger discourse on thoughts, feelings, and behaviors within multicultural societies.

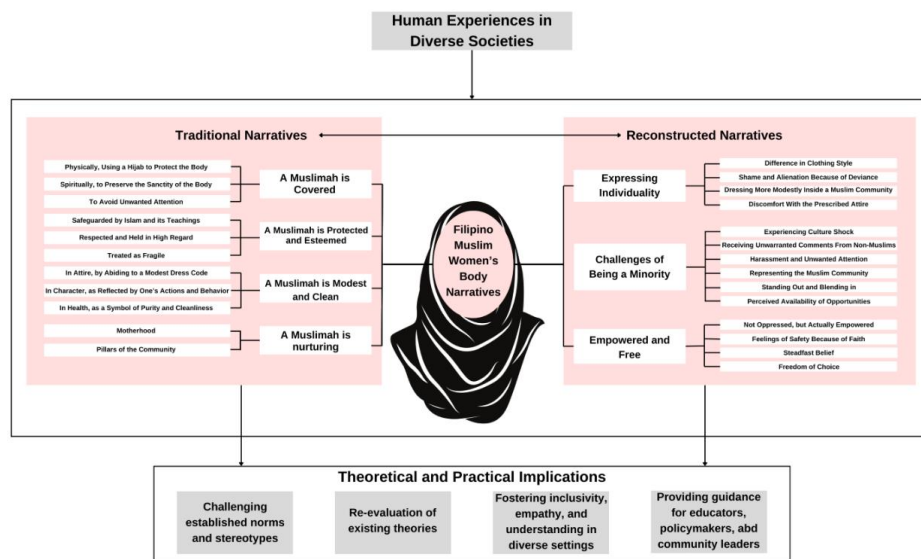


Figure 2. Conceptual framework.

## Conclusion

As a conclusion, a prominent limitation issue demanding attention is the study's restrictive participant inclusion criteria, which specifically targeted individuals aged 18 and above. This selective focus could unintentionally overlook the valuable perspectives and insights that individuals from younger age groups might offer, potentially constraining the study's ability to grasp the phenomenon under investigation comprehensively. Consequently, when endeavoring to extend the applicability of the study's conclusions to a more diverse and representative population, it becomes crucial to recognize these constraints and their possible implications. Another limitation lies in its participant count, comprising only nine individuals. Increasing the number of study

participants enriches the diversity of themes and perspectives. Each individual's unique experiences and viewpoints contribute to a broader spectrum of insights, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. This diversity also uncovers nuances that may be missed in smaller groups. Furthermore, a larger participant pool enhances external validity, making findings more applicable to various contexts. It is a crucial consideration for researchers seeking robust conclusions.

Another constraint of the research lies in the geographical diversity of its participants. Most of those involved hail from a concentrated area, specifically Dasmariñas City, Cavite. Including participants from a more varied range of places or regions would be advantageous, as diverse locations often entail distinct practices and perspectives. This limitation emphasizes expanding the study's geographical scope to capture broader insights and experiences. By incorporating participants from various places, the study can better represent the diversity of practices and perspectives in different regions, ultimately enhancing the robustness and applicability of its findings. The limitation of using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in a study is closely linked to its central focus of interpreting individual experiences, opinions, and related elements. This qualitative approach aims to delve deeply into the intricacies of each participant's unique perspectives and narratives, enabling a profound understanding of their worldviews. However, this intense concentration on the specifics of individual experiences can pose challenges when attempting to generalize the study's findings to encompass more prominent and diverse populations or broader contextual settings. Future research could involve more extensive and varied participant groups to capture a broader range of perspectives, and combining qualitative and quantitative methods can provide a more comprehensive understanding.

The insights gained from this study not only contribute to the understanding of perceptions and experiences of Muslimahs regarding their bodies but also point the way towards further avenues of research. Researchers may explore how these perspectives vary across different age groups or generations, recognizing the potential evolution of views over time. Additionally, it is crucial to investigate the experiences of Muslim women concerning their gender identity or sexual orientation, as our study has revealed that some participants do not identify as heterosexual. This is particularly significant because there is a notable gap in the existing body of research regarding the LGBTQ+ experiences of Muslim women, likely due to the sensitivity and taboo surrounding this topic. To delineate as a local study, Muslimah's experiences can be emphasized within the framework of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, encouraging future researchers to consider this a foundational study, thereby prevailing further knowledge in Filipino culture and social involvement. In alignment with the principle of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, the study introduces new perspectives on body image, identity, and the interaction between tradition and modernity.

## **Acknowledgement**

This research study is self-funded.

## **Conflict of interest**

The authors confirm that no conflict of interest is involved with any parties in this research study.



## REFERENCES

- [1] Abdul-Wahid, A.K. (2022): Hadeeth 7: Be gentle with women. They are like fragile vessels-Understanding femininity in Islam. – ABUKHADEEJAH Web Portal 4p.
- [2] Abunab, H.Y., Dator, W.L., Salvador, J.T., Lacanaria, M.G. (2017): Solitude, religious and cultural uniqueness in a foreign environment: Adjustments as an Arab student. – *Journal of Religion and Health* 56(5): 1701-1718.
- [3] Ahmad, H.M. (2018): The High Status of Women in Islam. – The Official Website of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community 8p.
- [4] Amado, L.E. (2004): Sexual and bodily rights as human rights in the Middle East and North Africa. – *Reproductive Health Matters* 12(23): 125-128.
- [5] Bangsamoro Information Office (BIO) (2023): Hijab: A symbol of modesty and empowerment for Muslim women. – Philippine Information Agency 5p.
- [6] Barkatulla, F. (2021): Does Islam need feminism? – Muslim Central Web Portal 50p.
- [7] Behardien, T. (2022): "I'm not going to let the patriarch stop me!": Examining the Obsession with Muslim Women's Bodies, Voices and Veils in Cinema, Television & Popular Culture. – University of Cape Town 48p.
- [8] Boden, Z., Larkin, M., Iyer, M. (2018): Picturing ourselves in the world: Drawings, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and the relational mapping interview. – *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 16(2): 218-236.
- [9] Borchert, J.W. (2018): Honors 240: How religion makes bodies: Saints, cyborgs, monsters. – Humanities Commons Web Portal 5p.
- [10] Britannica Web Portal (2023): Hijab-Islam. – Britannica Web Portal 1p.
- [11] Caldwell, C.M. (2016): Body identity development: Definitions and discussions. – *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy* 11(4): 220-234.
- [12] Crenshaw, K. (2021): Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. – *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989(1): 31p.
- [13] Eatough, V., Smith, J.A. (2017): Interpretative phenomenological analysis. – *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* 13p.
- [14] Feldman, R., Clark, K. (1996): Women, religious fundamentalism and reproductive rights. – *Reproductive Health Matters* 4(8): 12-20.
- [15] Harding, S. (2004): A socially relevant philosophy of science? Resources from standpoint theory's controversiality. – *Feminist Science Studies* 19(1): 25-47.
- [16] Heavey, E. (2015): Narrative bodies, embodied narratives. – *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis* 17p.
- [17] Heu, L.C. (2023): The Loneliness of the Odd One Out How deviations from social norms can help explain loneliness across cultures. – *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 58p.
- [18] Ho, C., Schraner, J. (2004): Feminist standpoints, knowledge and truth: A literature review. – School of Economics and Finance Working Paper Series, Sydney: University of Western Sydney 26p.
- [19] Huassain, S. (2017): Gender and sexuality in islam: An interface of patriarchy, religion and customary practices. – *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies* 5(5): 310-315.
- [20] Huss, E., Cwikel, J. (2005): Researching Creations: Applying Arts-Based Research to Bedouin Women's Drawings Ephrat Huss and Julie Cwikel. – *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 4(4): 44-62.
- [21] Hustvedt, S. (2006): *Mysteries of the rectangle: Essays on painting*. – Princeton Architectural Press 202p.
- [22] Kasulis, T.P., Ames, R.T., Dissanayake, W. (1993): *Self as body in Asian theory and practice*. – State University of New York Press 383p.
- [23] Khan, M. (2019): Muslim feminist activists discuss faith, feminism, and changing negative stereotypes. – Newsweek Web Portal 5p.

- [24] Killoran, R. (2011): Gendered Secularization and the Body Policing of Muslim Women. – In *Inquiry@ Queen's Undergraduate Research Conference Proceedings* 3p.
- [25] Kokushkin, M. (2014): Standpoint theory is dead. Long live standpoint theory! Why should standpoint thinking be embraced by scholars who do not identify as feminists? – *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 3(7): 8-20.
- [26] Kusuma, D.K., Asror, F.M. (2022): FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY: an Analysis of Muslims Women Interaction in SHAFINA Ummida Jogokariyan. – *PALASTREN: Jurnal Studi Gender* 15(1): 25-42.
- [27] Laderman, G., León, L.D. (2003): Religion and American cultures: An Encyclopedia of Traditions. – USA: ABC-CLIO, Inc. 1046p.
- [28] Lazreg, M. (2009): Questioning the veil: Open letters to Muslim women. – Princeton University Press 168p.
- [29] Malchiodi, C.A. (2005): Expressive therapies: History, theory, and practice. – *Expressive Therapies* 15p.
- [30] Mason, J., May, T. (2002): Qualitative interviewing: asking, listening and interpreting. – In *Qualitative Research in Action*, Sage Publications Ltd. 22p.
- [31] McCulliss, D. (2017): Body narrative: Write the story of your body. – *Eckleburg Web Portal* 6p.
- [32] Medina, J. (2014): This battlefield called my body: Warring over the Muslim female. – *Religions* 5(3): 876-885.
- [33] Moghadam, V.M. (2002): Islamic feminism and its discontents: Toward a resolution of the debate. – *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27(4): 1135-1171.
- [34] Mohanty, C.T., Torres, L. (Eds.) (1991): Third world women and the politics of feminism. – Indiana University Press 632: 352p.
- [35] Nikolopoulou, K. (2022): What is purposive sampling? – *Scribbr Web Portal* 16p.
- [36] Noy, C. (2008): Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in qualitative research. – *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 11(4): 327-344.
- [37] Obermeyer, C.M. (1994): Reproductive choice in Islam: gender and state in Iran and Tunisia. – *Studies in Family Planning* 25(1): 41-51.
- [38] Omrani, S. (2020): Muslim woman: heavenly body, communal autonomy. – *U.W. Tacoma Digital* 12p.
- [39] Patoari, M.H. (2019): The rights of women in Islam and some misconceptions: An analysis from Bangladesh perspective. – *Beijing Law Review* 10(05): 1211-1224.
- [40] Ramírez, Á. (2018): Control over female 'Muslim' bodies: culture, politics and dress code laws in some Muslim and non-Muslim countries. – In *Interrogating Intersectionalities, Gendering Mobilities, Racializing Transnationalism*, Routledge 15p.
- [41] Richardson, J.G. (1986): Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education. – Greenwood 401p.
- [42] Rolin, K. (2009): Standpoint theory as a methodology for the study of power relations. – *Hypatia* 24(4): 218-226.
- [43] Sclater, D. (2003): The arts and narrative research. – *Qualitative Inquiry* 9(4): 621-625.
- [44] Scottish Government (2022): Using Intersectionality to understand structural inequality in Scotland: evidence synthesis. Scottish Government Web Portal 9p.
- [45] Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., Larkin, M. (2009): Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method, and research. – *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 6(4): 346-347.
- [46] Uwujaren, J., Utt, J. (2015): Why our feminism must be intersectional (and 3 ways to practice it). – *Everyday Feminism Web Portal* 11: 28p
- [47] Wadud, A. (2021): Reflections on islamic feminist exegesis of the qur'an. – *Religions* 12(7): 11p.
- [48] Wadud, A. (2019): The first American woman, Imam, explains the rise of Islamic feminism. – *VICE MEDIA GROUP Web Portal* 62p.
- [49] Wadud, A. (2015): Islam, Feminism and Human Rights. – Leiden University 50p.

- [50] Woodley, X.M., Lockard, M. (2016): Womanism and snowball sampling: Engaging marginalized populations in holistic research. – *The Qualitative Report* 21(2): 321-329.