



Under Her Headscarf

Exploring the Work-Life Balance of Hijab-Wearing Post-Graduate Students

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Abstract

This research project explores how the amount of education a Hijab-wearing woman has, affects the extent to which she conforms to traditional gendered responsibilities within her domestic life. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two participants, in which they were asked about their personal experiences with the Hijab, and whether they feel any pressure to adhere to traditional gendered responsibilities. The interview transcripts were then coded and analyzed, and it was found that most positive associations were made when participants spoke about the supportiveness of their families in terms of their careers. Thus, concluding that Hijab-wearing post-graduate students are not subject to adhere to traditional gendered responsibilities by their families, but may face criticism by friends and community members.

Research Question

To what extent do Hijab-wearing post graduate students adhere to traditional gender roles within their domestic lives?

Methods

Sample:

- Two Hijab-wearing post-graduate students were approached about their participation

Participant	Field of Study	Race
Participant 1	PhD Candidate	East African
Participant 2	PhD Candidate	South Asian

Procedure:

- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two participants. Interviews were one hour in length.
- Interviews were recorded on cell phone, transcribed with Temi, coded and analyzed with MAXQDA

Results

Participant 1

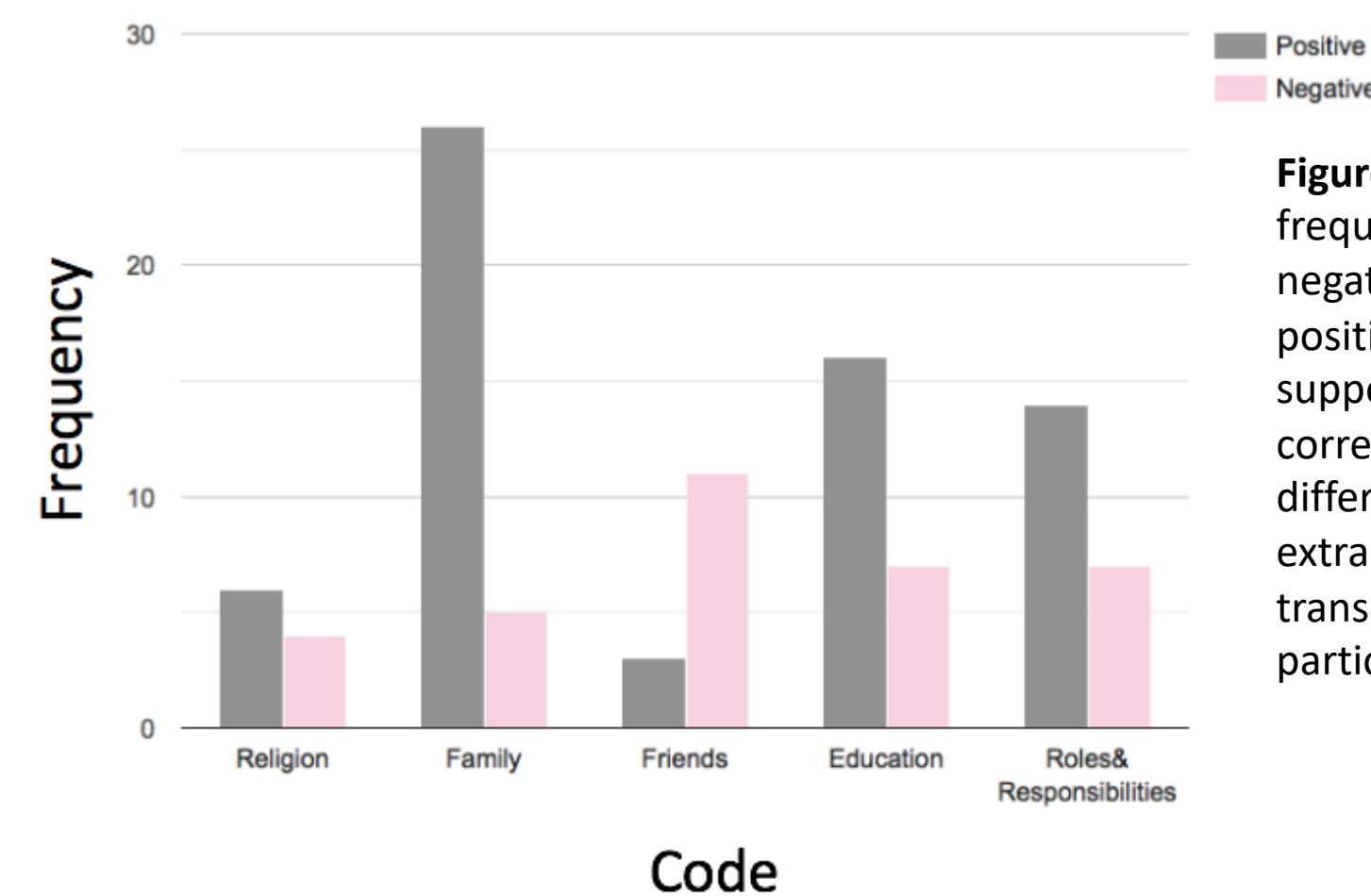


Figure 1: Shows the frequencies of negative and positive types of support, as they correlate with the different codes extracted from the transcript of participant 1.

Participant 2

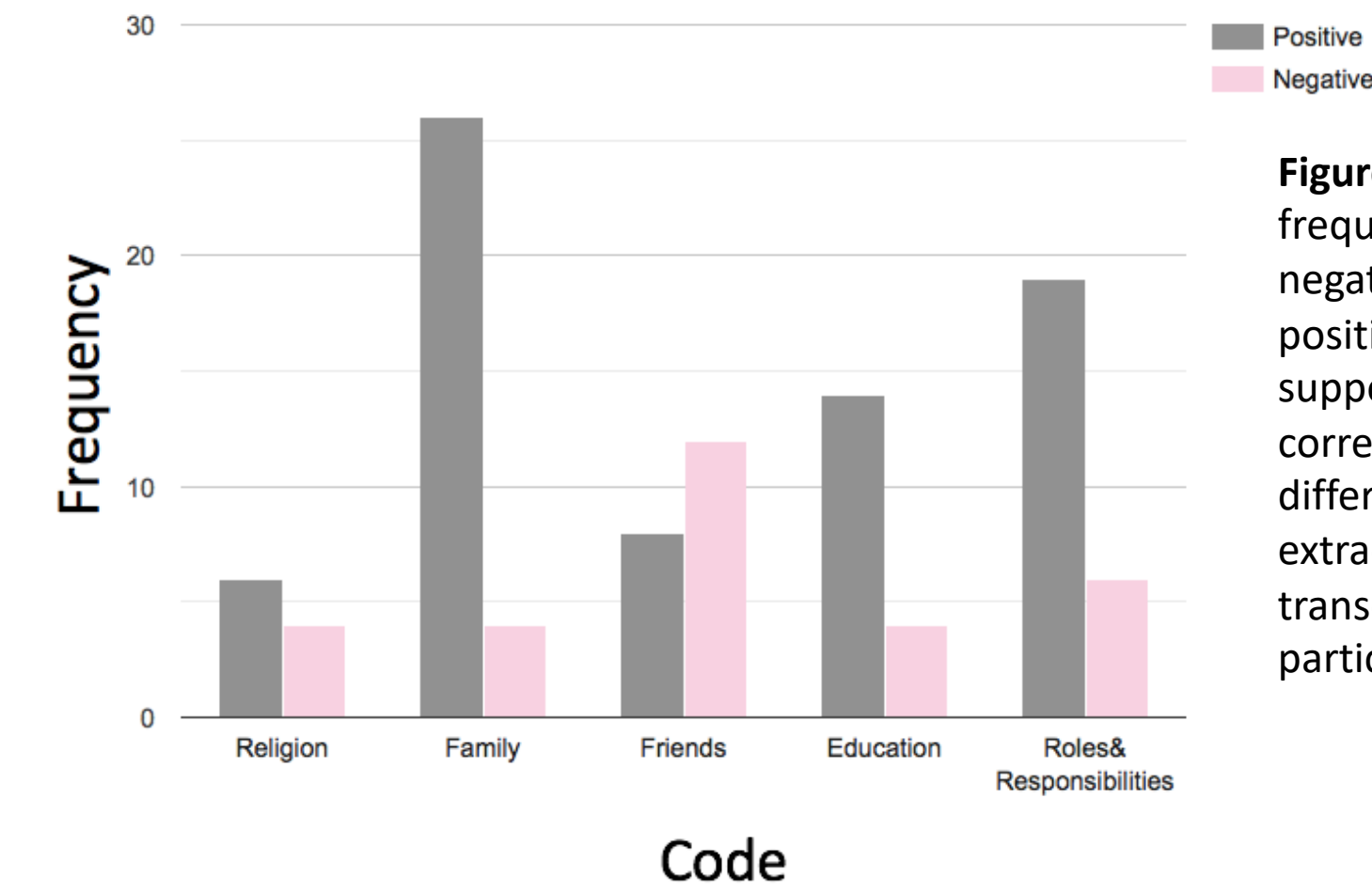


Figure 2: Shows the frequencies of negative and positive types of support, as they correlate with the different codes extracted from the transcript of participant 2.

Family Support

“I had the encouragement and the support essentially that I needed. There was no pressure to pick a particular field.”
(Participant 2)



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Marriage Pressures

“They never made the purpose of my creation based on my proposal. And I am so thankful.”
(Participant 1)



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Gendered Responsibilities

“There are days where I come home in the evening time when most men would get home and my husband has been home all day.”
(Participant 2)



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Conclusions

- This study establishes Canadian context for research on the relationship between education and gender roles for Hijab-wearing students
- These women don't necessarily adhere to traditional gendered practices like pressures to marry, have children or occupy traditional gendered roles in terms of domestic responsibilities.
- The families of the women are also very supportive of their careers.
- Both women expressed facing criticism from friends and members of their community regarding their career choices.

Limitations + Future Research

- Sample size was extremely small and did not accurately represent the overall target population
- Potential biases in the participant's answering, by them giving answers they thought the study was looking for or answers that would make them look better
- Current literature on the topic lacks Canadian context, which makes future research in this topic important in Canada
- This study fights stereotypes built by popular culture about the Hijab, and the freedom of expression of Muslim women.