



JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION  
Vol. 9 No. 2 July - December 2024  
P-ISSN 2503-5363; E-ISSN 2528-0465  
<http://www.ejournal.stitmuhbangil.ac.id/index.php/jie>

## Exploring Discrimination in Education: A Phenomenological Study of the Niqab Restrictions in Higher Education

\*Annas Azizil Alim<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Zakki Azani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Islamic Religion Faculty, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Jl. A. Yani, Mendungan, Pabelan, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java, 57162, Indonesia, annasazizilalim12@gmail.com

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### Article Information

### Abstract

**Received:**

19 March 2024

**Revised:**

5 May 2024

**Accepted:**

14 May 2024

**Published:**

14 May 2024

**Keywords:**

*Discrimination in Education, Niqab, Higher Education.*

*This research aims to explain the phenomenon of discrimination against female students who wear the niqab in higher education. This research was conducted because there is a phenomenon of discrimination in education in the form of a ban on wearing the niqab in several universities. This research uses a phenomenological approach with descriptive and qualitative methods. This research was conducted at a private Islamic college in Surakarta. The informants in this research were 16 female students who wore the niqab in the university environment. The data collection technique used was structured interviews. After collecting the data, the researcher conducted a data analysis process, including data reduction, data presentation and concluding. According to the research's findings, discrimination in academic and extracurricular activities is a problem faced by students in higher education. These obstacles impact achieving academic grades that are not optimal and limitations in socialising. Thus, it is necessary to instil more intensive Islamic knowledge in universities to reduce socio-religious problems.*

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan fenomena diskriminasi kepada mahasiswi yang memakai cadar di perguruan tinggi. Penelitian ini dilakukan karena terdapat fenomena diskriminasi dalam pendidikan berupa pelarangan pemakaian cadar di beberapa perguruan tinggi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di sebuah perguruan tinggi Islam swasta di Surakarta. Informan dalam penelitian ini adalah 16 mahasiswi yang menggunakan cadar di lingkungan perguruan tinggi. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara terstruktur. Setelah data terkumpul,

<sup>1</sup> orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8712-9965>

<sup>2</sup> orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9477-0888>

peneliti melakukan proses analisis data yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data dan melakukan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa problematika yang dialami mahasiswa di perguruan tinggi adalah diskriminasi dalam kegiatan akademik dan non-akademik. Hambatan-hambatan tersebut berdampak pada capaian nilai akademik yang tidak maksimal dan keterbatasan dalam bersosialisasi. Dengan demikian, perlu dilakukan penanaman keilmuan Islam yang lebih intensif di perguruan tinggi agar problematika sosial keagamaan dapat berkurang.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

One of the objectives of the founding of the Indonesian State, which was mandated in the fourth paragraph of the Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945, was to make the nation's life more intelligent. Developing the quality of education is one of the efforts that the government must make to realize the goal of making the nation's life more intelligent. The development of the quality of education carried out includes development of the quality of primary, secondary and higher education (Ikhwan, 2020a).

The Incheon declaration confirmed the position of human rights in education. So that education means a process that respects, protects and fulfills the needs of every student (Husnah, 2018). The educational process must realize respect for each student's different potential, provide protection to students from all things that can become obstacles to the growth and development of their potential and provide fulfillment of the need to develop the various kinds of different potential that students have.

However, this cannot yet be fully realized in Indonesia. The problem that occurs is that there is still discrimination against students who have differences. One of them is discrimination against female students who wear the niqab in universities. One form of discrimination against female students who wear the niqab in higher education is the emergence of a policy prohibiting the wearing of the niqab in tertiary institutions. Among the universities that have made policies prohibiting the wearing of the niqab in the university environment, is the Faculty of Agriculture, Sebelas Maret University (Praswitasari, 2017), Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta (Oktaviano, 2018), Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training,

Bukittinggi State Islamic Institute (Candra & Intan, 2018), Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang and Jember State Islamic Institute (Umam & Faizin, 2020).

Even though it was implemented as a response to the caliphate movement, the policy of banning the wearing of the niqab in universities has its pros and cons. Those who agree with the ban on wearing the niqab in universities consider that the campus has the right to prohibit the wearing of the niqab for the benefit of the campus, the public interest and the good of the female students themselves. Those who disagree with the ban on wearing the niqab in universities consider that the ban on wearing the niqab in universities is contrary to human rights. They also view that there is no evidence in the Qur'an and Hadith which states that it is prohibited for Muslim women to wear the niqab (Andiko, 2018).

There are several previous studies that discuss the phenomenon of wearing the niqab in higher education. Research from Hanif Cahyo Adi Kistoro et al. with the title *"Islamophobia in Education: Perception on The Wear of Niqab/Niqab in Higher Education"* aims to find out the reasons and motivations for wearing the niqab among female students. The conclusion of this research shows that there are varied motivations for niqab wearers in higher education. Motivation for wearing the niqab in higher education arises due to religious factors, the influence of other people, trauma from abuse and health factors. This research reveals a relationship between level of education and understanding of religion on the decision to wear the niqab. This research also states that the consistency of wearing the niqab among female students is influenced by self-concept and resistance from their living environment (Kistoro et al., 2020).

Research conducted by Qowim Musthofa entitled *"The Hijab as an Identity for Islamic Organizations in Higher Education"* shows that the phenomenon of wearing the *hijab* is a social reality that cannot be avoided. This phenomenon has very complex problems. The various issues that arise are not only theological, but also commitment to the organization and problems in the process of development and search for identity. The problems that arise are influenced by psychological and psycho-social aspects (Musthofa, 2017).

Research conducted by Sudirman et al. With the title *"Islamic Moderatism Discourse on The Using of Niqab at IAIN Sorong"* it focuses on analyzing the use of the niqab from the perspective of Islamic legal moderation. This research shows that there are differences in responses from lecturers towards wearing the niqab in higher education. On the one hand, there are lecturers who respond to the wearing of the niqab by prohibiting the wearing of the niqab in class. On the other hand, there are lecturers who respond to the use of the niqab by accepting and allowing the use of the niqab in class. Responding to the response from the lecturer who prohibited the wearing of the niqab in class, female students who wore the niqab were divided into two groups. The first group is female students who continue to wear the niqab even though they have to leave the classroom. The second group, namely female students who chose to remove the niqab so they could participate in the learning process in class. In this case, there should be clear regulations, so that no party is harmed (Sudirman et al., 2020).

Mohamamd Maulana Iqbal's research entitled *"The Life of The Niqab and Sirwal; Phenomenological Study of Family Power Relations to Stigma"* shows that women who wear the niqab experience double discrimination. They experience discrimination in private and public spaces. In power relations with their parents, women who wear the niqab experience discrimination and social control over their attributes. In power relations with their parents, women who wear the niqab experience discrimination and social control over their attributes (Iqbal, 2023).

In their research entitled *"Niqabi Women and Catcalling A Phenomenological Study of Sexual Harassment Niqabi in Surakarta"*, Dinda Angela Dinanti and Cuci Sunesti revealed that women who wear the niqab also experience discrimination and harassment in the form of verbal harassment by men. Verbal harassment received by niqab women takes the form of questions that invade privacy, racist comments about clothing, use of religious elements, invitations that lead to negative things and making comments about their physical appearance. (Dinanti & Sunesti, 2023).

Based on several previous studies, there is still a void and there has been no in-depth study regarding the problems of wearing the niqab and the efforts made

by female students who wear the niqab in higher education to overcome the problems they experience. Therefore, this research will examine this gap by examining the problematic phenomenon of wearing the niqab in higher education.

## **II. METHODS**

This research uses a phenomenological approach with descriptive qualitative methods. A phenomenological approach was chosen to describe the intrinsic characteristics of phenomena experienced by individuals (Sugiarto, 2015). With a phenomenological approach, researchers attempt to explain individual experiences in their daily lives and individual experiences when interacting with their environment (Ikhwan, 2020b). In this case, it is an exploration of the experiences of female students who wear the niqab in a university environment.

This research was conducted at a private Islamic college in Surakarta. The informants in this research were 16 female students who wore the niqab in the university environment. The data collection technique used was structured interviews. The researcher has prepared a question list before carrying out the interview. Through structured interviews, each informant gets the same questions (Sugiyono, 2021). After the data was collected, the researcher carried out a data analysis process, which included data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 2007).

## **III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of wearing the niqab is very closely related to the dynamics of wearing the *hijab* because the niqab is an advanced version of the *hijab*. The phenomenon of wearing the *hijab* has only received public attention since the New Order era. At that time, the *hijab* was considered a provocative symbol of resistance to the New Order regime (Nurudin & Rohmana, 2019). In the New Order era, a policy prohibiting the wearing of the *hijab* in schools emerged through the Decree of the Department of Education and Culture number 052/C/Kep/D.82. This is a form of response from the New Order government because the *hijab* is considered to represent an extreme Islamic movement that threatens the safety of

the country. Due to various kinds of resistance from the community, the ban was finally lifted through the Decree of the Department of Education and Culture number 100/C/Kep/D/1991. Since then, the use of the niqab, which is an advanced version of the *hijab*, as a Muslim woman's identity has begun to spread, and there has been a trend of increasing the use of the niqab at various levels of society in Indonesia. (Ramadhini, 2017).

On the other hand, wearing the niqab receives more rejection from society than wearing the *hijab* (Abror et al., 2021). Niqab wearers are not free from negative stigmatization and discrimination from their environment. They are often considered adherents of fundamentalist Islamic sects and affiliated with terrorism niqab wearers are not free from negative stigmatization and discrimination from their environment. They are often considered adherents of fundamentalist Islamic sects and affiliated with terrorism (Maizuddin & Suarni, 2019). One of the negative responses to the negative stigma that has emerged in society is the emergence of discriminatory policies in higher education in the form of a ban on wearing the niqab in higher education.

On September 20 2017, the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Sebelas Maret University signed a Circular containing the obligation to show one's face within the Faculty of Agriculture, Sebelas Maret University. (Praswitasari, 2017). Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta issued a circular number B-1031/Un.02/R/AK.00.3/02/2018 which contains a statement that Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University will collect data and provide counseling guidance to female students who wear the niqab. The Chancellor of Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University stated that female students who wear the niqab will be expelled from the university if they continue to wear the niqab after following the seventh counseling guidance held by the university (Oktaviano, 2018). The Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Bukittinggi State Islamic Institute, issued a circular on February 20, 2018 containing an appeal to female students so that students do not wear the niqab within the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Bukittinggi State Islamic Institute (Candra & Intan, 2018). The ban on wearing the niqab also appeared at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya, Maulana Malik Ibrahim

State Islamic University Malang and Jember State Islamic Institute (Umam & Faizin, 2020).

Based on the data analysis that has been carried out, the researcher will divide the discussion into three parts. *The first* part contains an explanation of the age when you start wearing the niqab, consistency in wearing the niqab, views on the law of wearing the niqab and the meaning of wearing the niqab. *The second* part contains an explanation of the motivation for wearing the niqab, the purpose of wearing the niqab and the differences felt after wearing the niqab. *The third* part contains the view of the university environment regarding the wearing of the niqab, the problems of wearing the niqab in higher education and the efforts made to overcome the problems experienced in higher education. Before entering the main discussion, the researcher will start with a discussion of the law of wearing the niqab in Islam.

### **Wearing the Niqab in Islamic Law**

Normatively, wearing the niqab can be mandatory or not mandatory. The use of the niqab can become mandatory if it becomes a collective agreement and becomes a social norm. On the other hand, if wearing the niqab causes harm to everyday life, then it is best not to wear the niqab. Historically, the order to wear the niqab during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This is done with the aim of preventing women from being disturbed by their social environment, not because their faces are part of something that must be hidden and cannot be revealed (Rasyid & Bukido, 2018). Covering the private parts is seen as an obligation for every Muslim woman. Meanwhile, covering the face using a niqab is not seen as a primary need for every woman in Islam. (Hasbi et al., 2018).

From the perspective of fiqh experts, discussions regarding the law of wearing the niqab are part of the discussion of women's private parts outside of prayer. This discussion falls into the realm of *khilafiyah* (debate), so there are various differences in views, opinions and attitudes towards the law of wearing the niqab in Islam. In the view of the Syafi'i *madzhab*, a woman's private parts outside of prayer are her entire body, including her face. So the Syafi'i *madzhab* requires the use of the niqab in daily life. The Syafi'i *Madzhab* also believes that women are obliged to wear the

niqab to avoid slander. This opinion is in line with the opinion of the Hanbali school of thought. According to the Hanbali *madzhab*, a woman's entire body, including her face, is *aurat* (intimate parts). So, the Hanbali *madzhab* requires wearing a niqab.

The Hanafi *Madzhab* condemns the wearing of the niqab as *sunnah*. Imam Hanafi believes that the reason for wearing the niqab is not because the face is part of the *aurat*. However, wearing the niqab is seen as a way to avoid slander. On the other hand, the Maliki *Madzhab* has a different view. The Maliki *Madzhab* views that a woman's private parts outside of prayer are her entire body except for her face and palms. In fact, the Maliki *Madzhab* believes that wearing the niqab is *makruh*, because it is considered excessive. However, if wearing a niqab has become a rite for society and is done to protect oneself from slander, the law becomes not *makruh* (Al-Zuhaili, 1989).

Discussions regarding the law of wearing the niqab in Islam still continue in contemporary fiqh discussions to this day. Muhammad Sayyid Thantawi, Abdul Halim Abu Syaqaq, Mufti Jumhur Syeikh Ahli Jumu'ah and Mahmud Hamdi Zuqruq stated that wearing the niqab is not measured as worship. On the other hand, Abd al-Halim Muhammad Husaini views wearing the niqab as worship (Afifah, 2019).

Differences in views regarding the law of the niqab are normal because there are different interpretations of the verses that explain women's private parts, namely the QS. an-Nur:31 and al-Ahzab:59. Some scholars state that the face is part of a woman's private parts which is obligatory. covered and some others stated that the face is not part of a woman's private parts, so it does not have to be covered (Qaradhawi, 2002).

### **Consistency of wearing the hijab and its legal views**

The informants in this research were students in semesters 3 to 7 at a private university in Surakarta aged 19 to 24 years. On average, they start wearing the niqab when they are 12 to 18 years old. There are those who start wearing the niqab when they enter high school, there are those who start wearing it when they enter high school and there are those who only start wearing the niqab when they are studying at university.

Of the eight stages of psychosocial development according to Erik Erikson



(Zubaedi, 2011), Ages 12 to 18 years enter the identity versus confusion stage. This is the stage where humans discover their own existence through the process of searching for their identity. The environment is one of the factors that influences a person's process of finding their identity. A good environment will help someone find a good identity. A bad environment will hinder a person from finding their identity. Obstacles in finding one's identity will make someone experience an identity crisis. During this period, a person also experiences confusion phase in determining guidelines for living through their teenage years (Solobutina, 2020).

The consistency of students who wear the niqab are divided into 2 groups. The first group is female students who always wear a niqab. This group always wears the niqab both in the university environment and in the environment where they live. When they are in an environment that does not support them and there is even a ban on wearing the niqab, they replace the niqab with a mask or other face covering. The second group is female students who do not always wear the niqab. This group only wears the niqab in college environments. They do not wear face coverings at all when they are in their daily living environment outside of college.

Most informants view the niqabing law as sunnah. However, there was one informant who considered the law to wear the niqab for herself as mandatory. This finding is in line with the differences in determining women's private parts outside of prayer according to several Islamic jurisprudence scholars. Female students who view the law of wearing the niqab as sunnah are in accordance with the opinion of the Hanafi *madzhab*. Meanwhile, female students view the law of wearing the niqab as mandatory in accordance with the opinion of the Syafi'i and Hanbali schools of thought.

The meaning given by students who wear the niqab to wearing the niqab also varies. There are those who interpret wearing the niqab as personal identity. The niqab is something that differentiates between Muslims and non-Muslims, even though they have different styles of wearing according to societal conditions (Rahayu, 2016). In this case, the niqab does not only function as a cover for the private parts. More than that, the niqab functions as a symbol of a Muslim woman's identity (Fakhruroji, 2015). Apart from that, wearing the niqab is also interpreted as

nature and is a form of obedience to religious teachings, namely the command to cover the private parts properly and correctly. This is a form of religiosity expressed in everyday life (Ancok & Suroso, 2004).

Wearing a niqab is also interpreted as an effort to guard and protect oneself from unwanted things. The niqab is used as a tool to protect oneself from behavior of the opposite sex that causes feelings of discomfort. The use of the niqab is a form of defense to cover disgrace, maintain honor and set limits on things that are prohibited by religion. Wearing the niqab is also a manifestation of the values of purity, self-control and privacy (Guinidi, 1999).

Below is a table showing the age when you start wearing the niqab, consistency in wearing the niqab, views on the law of the niqab and the meaning of wearing the niqab.

**Table 1. Age when starting to wear the niqab, consistency in wearing the niqab, views on the law of the niqab and the meaning of wearing the niqab**

<b>Informant (I)</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Consistency</b>	<b>Law</b>	<b>Makna</b>
<b>I1</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> grade of Middle School	Always wear	Sunah	As self-identity
<b>I2</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> grade of Middle School	Always wear	Sunah	As self-protection
<b>I3</b>	In high school	rarely use it	Sunah	As self-protection
<b>I4</b>	In middle school	rarely use it	Wajib Sunah	As self-protection
<b>I5</b>	Graduated from high school	Always wear	Sunah	As nature
<b>I6</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> grade of high school	Always wear	Sunah	As a self-limitation
<b>I7</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester of college	rarely use it	Sunah	As self-protection
<b>I8</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> grade of high school	rarely use it	Sunah	As a form of obedience
<b>I9</b>	In middle school	Always wear	Sunah	As self-defense
<b>I10</b>	In high school	Always wear	Sunah	As a form of honor
<b>I11</b>	In middle school	rarely use it	Sunah	As self-protection
<b>I12</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> grade of high school	Always wear	Sunah	As self-protection
<b>I13</b>	Graduated from high school	Always wear	Sunah	As self-protection
<b>I14</b>	In high school	Always wear	Sunah	As a cover for the nakedness
<b>I15</b>	Graduated from high school	rarely use it	Sunah	As a cover for the disgrace

<b>I16</b>	Graduated from Islamic high school	rarely use it	Mubah	As self-defense
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*Source: Research interviews Results*

### **The essence of wearing the niqab**

Female students' motivation for wearing the niqab in higher education is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from oneself without any external influence. In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation can only emerge if there is influence and encouragement from outside (Sardiman, 2018).

The intrinsic motivation of female students who wear the niqab in college is their desire and willingness. The push for female students to wear the niqab in college also arises because of the feeling of discomfort and embarrassment when not wearing the niqab. They feel more comfortable and stable carrying out their daily activities by wearing the niqab. Feelings of shame are one of the things emphasised in Islam. For some people, the principle of shame in religion is considered to be contradictory to the possibility of progress in civilization (Ridwan, 2009). However, the principle of shame is a form of politeness, honour and nobility. Women in Islam are not objects of beauty that can attract the attention of the general public (Surawan et al., 2023).

Among the extrinsic motivations for female students who wear the niqab in higher education is encouragement from those closest to them. This encouragement comes from parents, siblings, friends, and teachers. Encouragement is in the form of advice, orders and even coercion. Apart from that, the command to obey religious teachings and guidance to live by the Shari'a by covering the private parts also encourages the desire and awareness of female students to wear the niqab in the university environment. The goal is to obey religious teachings and become more *syar'i*, which is one way to increase a person's religiosity. Female students who wear the niqab in college tend to have a high level of religiosity (Falikah et al., 2022). Additionally, wearing the niqab was also based on a life test experienced by one of the informants. He tried to find a way out of his life's trials by increasing his

religiosity. One of the ways she chose to expand her religiosity was by wearing a niqab.

The widespread use of the niqab among young people has also inspired female students to wear the niqab. The motivation for wearing the niqab among female students in higher education also arises because of the influence of educational institutions. Before entering college, some of them studied at Islamic Boarding Schools and schools which required the wearing of the niqab in daily activities. Some of them also wear the niqab because they have received unpleasant treatment from other people, especially from the opposite sex. Behaviour that makes you uncomfortable, namely disturbing interactions, verbal harassment and photos kept by the opposite sex. Apart from that, there are also negative disturbances that can cause slander. Environmental aspects are one of the things that influence the use of the niqab. This relates to the feelings that arise when interactions are carried out with other individuals (Yusuf, 2019).

There are three components to motivation: need, drive and goal. Needs will arise if someone feels that something is lacking in themselves. Encouragement arises from actions originating from oneself and others. Meanwhile, a goal is something a person wants to achieve after carrying out specific actions (Siagian, 2004). Based on the results of interviews with informants, the purpose of wearing the niqab is to worship and implement the *Shari'a* in the form of the *Sunnah*. They maintain their appearance according to Islamic law by covering their private parts. This is one of the efforts made as a means for self-reflection and a reminder to improve yourself, maintain your behaviour and control yourself constantly. The goal of all of this is to stay away from things that religion forbids. Apart from that, the purpose of wearing the niqab is also to become a better human being and to get closer to Allah SWT. One of the informants revealed that by wearing the niqab, she felt he had blasphemy before Allah SWT. on the Day of Resurrection because he had tried to carry out the *Shari'a*.

They also wear niqabs so as not to expose their faces in public. This is done to guard, protect and fortify oneself from undesirable things, namely the occurrence of slander in one's life. This makes them feel safer when carrying out activities in

their living environment. Wearing the niqab is also done to be more focused when studying because it can avoid interference from the opposite sex. Apart from that, the purpose of wearing the niqab is as a medium for da'wah. This is one of the efforts made so that niqab wearers gain a positive view and are more accepted by their environment.

Thus, the purpose of wearing the niqab among female students in universities is based on theological, psychological and sociological motives. The theological motive underlying the purpose of wearing the niqab is to worship by carrying out the *Shari'a* in the form of the obligation to cover the private parts, to carry out the *sunnah*, as a blasphemy before Allah SWT., as a means of reflection and reminder of oneself and as a means to improve and get closer to Allah SWT. The psychological motive underlying the goal of wearing the niqab is to feel safe and comfortable because one does not expose one's face in public, thereby avoiding slander. The sociological motives underlying the purpose of wearing the niqab are to control and maintain behaviour when interacting, to protect oneself from interference from the opposite sex, to focus more on pursuing education, and as a medium for preaching.

After wearing the niqab, the difference felt by the informants was that they felt more respected. The need for respect and self-esteem can be met through respect from other people (Maslow, 1994). If this need is not met, it will give rise to feelings of lack of self-confidence and even despair (Setiawan, 2014). They also feel more awake, safer, calmer, comfortable, and protected. Fulfilling a sense of security is an individual's way of ensuring they live in an environment that is safe from danger and fear (Oslo & Hergenahn, 2013). They also feel more in control because they can control themselves more and avoid negative behaviour. The ability to control oneself is very closely related to the development period towards adulthood. A person will be said to be an adult if he can exercise control over himself so that he can minimise aggressive behaviour (Krahe, 2001).

Below is a table showing the student's motivation for wearing the niqab, the student's goals, and the differences felt after wearing the niqab.

**Table 2. Motivation, Goals and Differences Perceived after Wearing the Niqab**

<b>Informant (I)</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>I1</b>	Self-desire Family support Teacher encouragement Religious teachings Inspired by niqab wearers Influence of the Islamic boarding school environment	As a means of worship Protect yourself from slander	Feel more respected Feel more awake
<b>I2</b>	Inspired by niqab wearers	Protect yourself from slander	Feel more respected
<b>I3</b>	Self-will Feelings of discomfort towards the opposite sex Influence of the Islamic boarding school environment Parental coercion	Protect yourself from negative behavior	Feel more respected
<b>I4</b>	Self-awareness Treatment of others	Avoid things you don't want A means to improve yourself	Feel more in control
<b>I5</b>	Self-will Inspired by a friend who wears a niqab	Protect yourself from slander	Feel more respected
<b>I6</b>	Self-awareness Encouragement from the people closest Religious doctrine Inspired by niqab wearers	As a means of worship Maintain appearance Protect yourself from negative behavior	Feel more comfortable Feel more awake
<b>I7</b>	Self-desire Having life problems Unpleasant treatment from others Family encouragement Inspired by niqab wearers	A means for self-reflection A means to improve yourself	Feel more in control Feel more respected
<b>I8</b>	Self-will Family encouragement Ustadz's encouragement Environmental influences	Protect yourself from slander A means to improve yourself	Feel there is no difference
<b>I9</b>	Self-desire Obligations in educational institutions Motivated niqab wearers	Follow Islamic law As proof before Allah As a propaganda medium	Feel more restrained
<b>I10</b>	Self-steadiness when wearing the niqab Influence of the Islamic boarding school environment Defamed	Protect yourself from slander Media for self-reminding	Feel calmer Feel more awake
<b>I11</b>	Feeling embarrassed when not wearing a niqab Obligations in educational institutions The influence of friends who wear the niqab	Covering the intimate parts Means to avoid slander Practicing the sunnah	No difference was felt

	Teacher influence		
<b>I12</b>	Self-desire Opposite sex disorder Want to be more syar'i Inspired by niqab wearers Other people's advice	As a means of worship	Feel safer and more comfortable Feel more respected Feel more in control
<b>I13</b>	Obligations in educational institutions Brother's support Inspired by niqab wearers Defamed	The means to get better Media to get closer to Allah Protects the private parts	Avoid negative behavior
<b>I14</b>	Family encouragement Influence of the Islamic boarding school environment	Protects the private parts As a medium for self-reminder	Feel comfortable Feel protected Feel more appreciated
<b>I15</b>	Obligations in educational institutions Parent's orders Ustadzah's advice	Means to focus more on education	Feel more respected
<b>I16</b>	Self-desire Influence of the Islamic boarding school environment Encouragement of niqabed friends Ustadzah motivation	To control yourself from negative behavior Means to get better	Feel more comfortable

Source: Research Interview Results

### Views of the University Environment on the Wear of the Niqab

Humans cannot be separated from their groups' lives, whether small or large. Each person in a group has a different view of dealing with something. In general, postcolonial Islamic societies accept modern concepts, including modern clothing combined with Islamic traditions (Dzuhayatin, 2020). However, in responding to the use of the *niqab*, Muslims are divided into three categories. The first category is Muslims, who are less sympathetic towards wearing the *niqab*. The second category is Muslims, who provide a critical assessment of the wearing of the *niqab* but still respect people who wear the *niqab*. The third category is Muslims, who accept the wearing of the *niqab* in society (Bule & Sihombing, 2022).

Based on the results of the interview, 35% of the informants' answers show that they were well received in the university environment. Even though it was well received, many lecturers and students questioned their reasons for wearing the *niqab*. 15% of the informants' answers show that there was disapproval from the university environment when they wore the *niqab*. This disagreement came from several lecturers and students. They even take issue with the wearing of the *niqab*

in university environments.

Disapproval coming from some lecturers and students is also accompanied by negative views. 50% of the informants' answers show that they received negative views when wearing the *niqab* in the university environment. Some of the negative views they receive include being seen as strange, being seen as excessive in their religion, being considered fanatical and even being labelled as terrorists.

When asked about the problems they experienced when wearing the *niqab* in college, 8% of the informants' answers show that they did not experience any problems. 42% of the informants' answers show that they experienced problems in academic activities and 50% of their answers show that they experienced problems in non-academic activities.

A form of problem experienced by female students who wear the *niqab* in academic activities is the problem of communication and interaction with lecturers. This happens because there are several lecturers who believe that it is better not to wear the *niqab* in a university environment. Apart from that, when female students who wear *niqabs* make presentations, the class tends to be quiet and does not show interest or activity. They also experience obstacles when attending lectures, carrying out practical lectures and doing assignments that require removing the *niqab*. These obstacles have an impact on achieving academic grades that are not optimal.

One of the problems in non-academic activities experienced by students who wear the *niqab* in a university environment is that there are obstacles to interaction because the person they are talking to shows an attitude of keeping their distance from them. This causes female students who wear the *niqab* at universities to have difficulty adapting to their environment. They also often experience difficulties in building interactions because they receive negative views and are considered to have closed themselves off from their environment. Female students who wear the *niqab* in higher education are in a minority position because they have a different appearance from female students in general. This position makes them feel alone and inferior when they want to interact. This obstacle has an impact on their relationships which tend to be narrow.

Female students who wear the *niqab* at university are not free to join



organisations at the university, either Student Organisations or Student Activity Units. When they join organisations in higher education, they cannot develop optimally because of limitations in their activities caused by wearing the *niqab*. They do not have the same opportunities as female students who do not wear the *niqab* in organizational activities. Besides that, female students who wear the *niqab* in higher education also feel that there is a lack of supporting facilities at higher education. The facilities in question are the absence of canteens that separate men and women and the absence of places of worship with more closed barriers between men and women.

In this phenomenon, the views attached to female students who wear the *niqab* in the university environment and the problems they experience are a manifestation of prejudice from other groups. According to Allport, prejudice is antipathy based on erroneous and inflexible generalizations, then directed at a group as a whole or at someone because he is a member of that group. Allport holds the view that prejudice arises because of a categorization process within a person which includes ethnicity and the tendency to maintain social distance from people who are considered outgroups (Allport, 1954).

Prejudice is also a form of judgment that does not have a valid factual basis and is reinforced by the emotional element of liking or disliking (Putra & Pitaloka, 2012). The identity of minority groups is always in conflict with the views of other people. They get responses in the form of stereotypes from other people because their circumstances are different. Subjective and inappropriate prejudice that other people continuously give to people who wear the *niqab* can trigger feelings of discrimination and hostility (Herriot, 2007).

Allport holds the view that social prejudice is antipathy that may be felt or expressed (Gross, 2013). Herefore, Allport divided forms of prejudice into 5 levels, namely antilocution, avoidance, discrimination, physical attacks and annihilation. Antilocutionary speech is speech that creates hostility, because it verbally demeans and contains jokes of a SARA nature towards the group that is the object of prejudice. Avoidance is the behavior of avoiding and maintaining distance from group that is the object of prejudice. Discrimination is a form of asymmetrical or

different attitudes given to group that is the object of prejudice. Physical attacks are physical violence directed at group that is the object of prejudice. Extermination is the highest level of prejudice, namely committing murder and even extermination (genocide) against a group that is the object of prejudice (Putra & Pitaloka, 2012).

Based on Allport's theory of prejudice, prejudice directed at female students who wear the *niqab* in a higher education environment is manifested in the form of antilocution, avoidance and discrimination. The antilocution aimed at female students who wear the *niqab* in the university environment is that they receive negative views. They are considered strange, seen as excessive in their religion, considered fanatics and even labeled as terrorists. The manifestation of avoidance they received was from interlocutors, namely several lecturers and students who showed an attitude of maintaining distance when female students wearing *niqabs* invited them to interact.

The manifestation of discrimination experienced by students who wear the *niqab* in the university environment are attitudes of disapproval and problem with the use of the *niqab* in the university environment, different attitudes shown by some lecturers and students towards them, the existence of policies from lecturers that require them to remove the *niqab* when taking part in activities. lectures, carry out practical lectures and carry out certain assignments. Apart from that, the discrimination faced by female students who wear the *niqab* in higher education settings is that they do not have the same opportunities as female students who do not wear the *niqab* in organizational activities. They receive different and unfair treatment because they choose to wear different religious attributes, namely the *niqab* (Munasaroh, 2022).

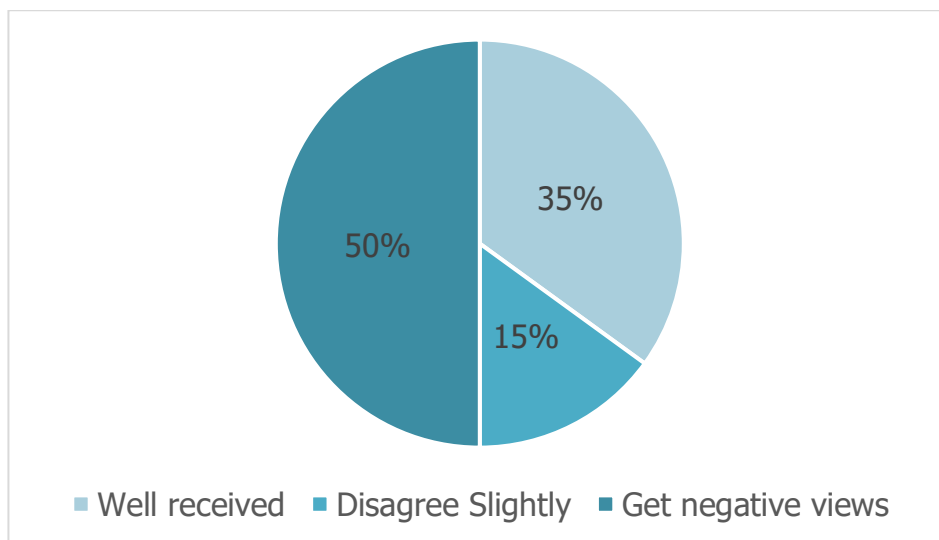
To overcome the problem of wearing the *niqab* in higher education, their efforts are strengthening their stance, being patient and accepting the situation, not thinking about other people's negative views and practicing self-confidence. To overcome problems in academic activities, female students who wear the *niqab* in the university environment also take a personal approach to lecturers, try to increase their activity in class and replace the *niqab* with a mask in lecture activities in class, practical lecture activities and assignments that require removing the *niqab*.

They also try not to close themselves off and be more open in interacting. They try to socialise and maintain good communication. They try to start communicating and interacting first with the people around them. Apart from that, they also try to expand friendships and specifically choose friends who support them in using *niqab*. Female students who wear the *niqab* at college ask friends for help, acting as mediators when interacting with certain people. They give each other advice to fellow students who wear the *niqab* and provide mutual support to female students who wear the *niqab* at the university.

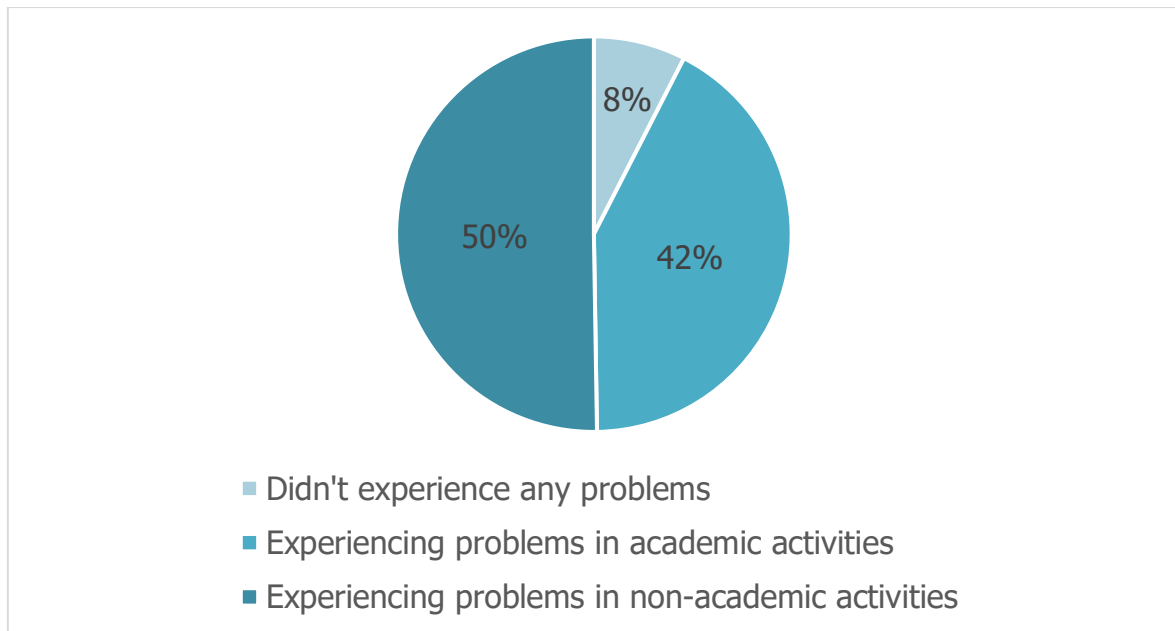
Female students who wear the *niqab* in college also make efforts to ward off negative views towards them by convincing students and lecturers who disagree with wearing the *niqab* in college. This effort was carried out by providing views and explanations about the *niqab* to students and lecturers who disagreed. They also introspect themselves to be more accepted by their environment. Apart from that, female students who wear the *niqab* in higher education also adjust the model and colour of clothing that can be combined with the *niqab* to look better.

Below are pie charts showing the percentage of view of the higher education environment towards female students who wear the *niqab* and the problems experienced by female students who wear the *niqab* in higher education.

**Pie Chart 1. Views of the higher education environment**



*Source: Research interview results*

**Pie Chart 2. Problems with the wear of the *niqab* in higher education**

*Source: Research interview results*

An idea offered by Allport to reduce prejudice against other groups is contact theory (Zuma, 2014). Contact theory is one of the most important concepts in social psychology which discusses relations between groups. In general, the basic concept of contact theory is how to reduce prejudice between groups by making them engage in contact. The assumption of this theory is that if someone from one group is involved in contact with someone from another group, the level of prejudice between individuals from the two groups will decrease, so that positive relationships can be built (Afandi et al., 2021).

The concept of contact theory has developed along with the times. One of the interesting ideas regarding the development of contact anchovies is the contact space which was popularized by J. Harwood. This concept has two dimensions of study, namely a person's involvement in contact and increasing knowledge about other groups. The more often someone is involved in contact with someone from another group, the higher the level of success of intergroup contact. In addition, the more knowledge a person has about other groups, the level of success in contact between groups will also increase (Harwood, 2010). The contact space concept offered by Harwood is considered more comprehensive because when communication that involves empathy and self-disclosure is considered insufficient, then there must be deeper involvement with other groups and the importance of

increasing knowledge about other groups (Afandi et al., 2021).

The problem of wearing the *niqab* in higher education is an important thing for the universities to make more intensive efforts to increase the understanding of religious sciences for the entire academic community. This is necessary because some people's discriminatory behavior towards female students who cover themselves while enrolled in higher education is a reflection of their ignorance of Islamic law regarding *niqab*. Efforts to increase knowledge of Islamic scholarship can be made to minimize errors in responding to religious phenomena in general and specifically regarding wearing the *niqab* in higher education. In the view of Harwood's space contact theory, knowledge of other groups can help improve relations between groups, so that prejudice from other groups can be reduced. Besides that, government and educational institutions must pay attention to as one of the considerations in making educational policies so that education can run fairly and not discriminate against certain groups.

The educational process must realise respect for each student's different potential. The educational process must protect students from everything that could become an obstacle to the growth and development of their potential. The educational process must also fulfil the need to develop students' various unique potential differences.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Female students who wear the *niqab* in higher education experience problems in academic and non-academic activities. In this phenomenon, the problems they experience are manifestation of prejudice from other group. Based on Allport's theory of prejudice, prejudice directed at female students who wear the *niqab* in a higher education environment is manifested in the form of antilocution, avoidance and discrimination. The antilocution aimed at female students who wear the *niqab* in the university environment is that they receive negative views. They are considered strange, seen as excessive in their religion, considered fanatics and even labeled as terrorists. The manifestation of avoidance they received was from

interlocutors, namely several lecturers and students who showed an attitude of maintaining distance when female students wearing *niqabs* invited them to interact.

The manifestation of discrimination experienced by students who wear the *niqab* in the university environment are attitudes of disapproval and problem with the use of the *niqab* in the university environment, different attitudes shown by some lecturers and students towards them, the existence of policies from lecturers that require them to remove the *niqab* when taking part in activities. lectures, carry out practical lectures and carry out certain assignments. Apart from that, the discrimination faced by female students who wear the *niqab* in higher education settings is that they do not have the same opportunities as female students who do not wear the *niqab* in organizational activities.

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