

RESPECTING SHARIA OR OBSCURING IDENTITY? NON-MUSLIM WOMEN WEARING HIJAB IN ACEH FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MAJORITY

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Abstract

This study discusses how the majority Muslim community in Aceh responds to the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women in the context of the implementation of Islamic law. The implementation of the Islamic Sharia Qanun in Aceh requires Muslims to wear Islamic clothing. However, it does not apply to non-Muslims, although many non-Muslim women still choose to wear the hijab as a form of social adaptation. Using a qualitative approach and case study method, data were collected through in-depth interviews for one month with eight informants selected by purposive sampling, namely the majority Muslim community in Aceh and those around non-Muslim women who wear the hijab. Symbolic interaction theory analyzes the meaning created by the hijab symbol in social interaction. Gramsci's hegemony theory analyzes the dominance of the majority culture through social consensus without direct coercion. The results of the study show that the majority of Acehnese people accept the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women as a form of respect for local norms and culture. Most informants support this step, although there are concerns about the potential for blurring the identities between Muslims and non-Muslims. This study emphasizes the importance of religious tolerance and moderation to maintain social harmony in areas with religious plurality.

Keywords: Islamic Sharia; Hijab; Non-Muslim Women; Majority-Minority; Tolerance

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana masyarakat Muslim mayoritas di Aceh merespons penggunaan jilbab oleh perempuan non-Muslim dalam konteks penerapan syariat Islam. Penerapan Qanun Syariat Islam di Aceh yang mewajibkan Muslim mengenakan pakaian Islami, namun tidak berlaku bagi non-Muslim, meskipun banyak perempuan non-Muslim yang tetap memilih mengenakan jilbab sebagai bentuk adaptasi sosial. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam selama satu bulan terhadap 8 informan yang dipilih secara purposive sampling yaitu masyarakat mayoritas beragama Islam di Aceh dan berada di sekitar wanita non-Muslim yang menggunakan jilbab. Penggunaan teori interaksi simbolik menganalisis makna yang diciptakan oleh simbol jilbab dalam interaksi sosial. Teori hegemoni Gramsci menganalisis dominasi budaya mayoritas melalui konsensus sosial tanpa paksaan langsung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas masyarakat Aceh menerima penggunaan jilbab oleh perempuan non-Muslim sebagai bentuk penghormatan terhadap norma dan budaya lokal. Sebagian besar informan mendukung langkah ini, meskipun ada kekhawatiran mengenai potensi pengaburan identitas antara Muslim dan non-Muslim. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya toleransi dan moderasi beragama untuk memelihara harmoni sosial di wilayah dengan pluralitas agama.

Kata Kunci: Syariat Islam; Hijab; Perempuan non-Muslim; Mayoritas-minoritas; Toleransi

INTRODUCTION

Aceh became the only province in Indonesia granted special autonomy by the Indonesian Government to implement Islamic law, known as Qanun Aceh by the local community. This special autonomy is granted through Law Number 44 of 1999 concerning the implementation of the privileges of the Aceh Special Region Province, as well as Law Number 18 of 2001 concerning the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh as a whole (Abubakar, 2020; Berutu, 2020). The Qanun stipulates that every Muslim in Aceh must wear clothes according to Islamic teachings. For women, this includes covering the aura with modest and inconspicuous clothing, while men are expected to wear modest clothing by applicable norms (Hidayah, 2024; Pirmasari, 2021). However, this rule does not apply to those who are not Muslim (Sulaiman, 2018). The implementation of Sharia in Aceh for two decades was full of mixed interpretations and various obstacles (Syamsuar, Al-Fairusy, Junaidi, & Mulia, 2023). These hurdles include discrimination, ambiguity in the law, and lack of education and socialization (Fuad, Darma, & Muhibbuthabry, 2022; Manan & Salasiyah, 2021). The use of the Qur'an and Hadith in the Aceh Qanun raises questions about the validity of the law, while Pancasila should be its main basis (Ridwan Nurdin & Ridwansyah, 2020; Suganda, 2014).

Despite Aceh being predominantly Muslim, there is a significant minority population adhering to other religions such as Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Christianity is the second largest religion after Islam (satudata.kemenag.go.id, 2022). However, the province has consistently ranked among the most intolerant cities in Indonesia (setara-institute.org, 2023). This intolerance is reflected in the challenges faced by religious minorities and the lack of understanding and harmony among different religious groups (Ahmad, 2014; Syarifuddin, 2021). The concept of diversity is still not fully embraced by the people of Aceh, leading to a strained relationship with minority groups (Fasya, 2021).

Studies on the relationship between the majority and minority in Aceh reveal various ideas. The dominance of Islamic norms, reinforced by Sharia law and special autonomy, has strengthened the majority Muslim community's influence while marginalizing non-Muslims and restricting their cultural and religious expression (Ichwan, Salim, & Srimulyani, 2020). This power imbalance often positions non-Muslims as second-class citizens, limiting their ability to express their identities openly (Husni & Kumala, 2020). For Christian women, wearing the hijab serves not only as a practical response to social pressures but also as a means of mitigating feelings of isolation and exclusion in their daily lives (Ansor & Mutia, 2016). On the other hand, the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh does not interfere with minority activities because Islamic law only applies to Muslims and life between the majority and minority is harmonious in diversity under Islamic law (Nur, 2020). The importance of understanding diversity as an asset, not a trigger for conflict, and the importance of fair communication and policies to maintain social harmony in Aceh (Asri & Ulinuha, 2022).

The 2024 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom highlights significant global challenges and developments in religious freedom by recommending government actions to combat religious intolerance. (USCIRF, 2024). Various reports regarding religious intolerance in the world. The majority view of Muslims, especially in the United States, is often influenced by stereotypes and discrimination (Hashem, Ghani, Hirani, Bennett, & Awad, 2022). Some people in Ireland see the hijab as a symbol of oppression, while others see it as a symbol of autonomy and choice for Muslim women (Rougier, 2013). The wearing of the hijab has an independent negative effect on public attitudes in Norway, where Muslim women wearing hijab are viewed more negatively than Muslim women wearing Western-style clothing (Strabac, Aalberg, Jenssen, & Valenta, 2016). The majority of views on the use of hijab in public institutions in Nigeria vary depending on the media reporting on it (Abubakre, 2018). Research shows that there is a level of discomfort or dislike towards visible religious symbols, such as hijabs or face coverings, in Australian society (Colic-Peisker, Mikola, & Dekker, 2019). This is in contrast to the research that has been conducted above, which looks at how the majority views the minority in the use of the hijab by Muslims. This study is the opposite of the study. It very rarely discusses it, where the view of the majority of Muslims who are used to the use of hijab sees non-Muslims as a minority using the hijab as a form of respect for the Islamic sharia rules in Aceh.

Indonesia, with its diversity, has several problems, such as unequal treatment between the Muslim majority and minority groups, as well as challenges in maintaining national unity while managing rich diversity (Sidi, 2019). In 2023, Indonesia experienced a decline in human rights, including religious freedom, due to decentralization and increased autocratization (USCIRF, 2024). Moderation plays an important role in maintaining harmony between the implementation of Islamic law and the diversity of society, especially among non-Muslim minority groups. As the only province in Indonesia that implements Sharia law, Aceh faces the challenge of balancing strict religious rules with respect for the rights of non-Muslim groups. It is important to teach society about tolerance in order to prevent inter-religious conflict (Iqbal, 2021). Religious moderation is a critical issue in the Ministry of Religious Affairs program, which focuses on preventing radicalism and, promoting inclusive values religious harmony in Indonesia and highlighting the challenges of intolerance, as well as emphasizing the importance of a balanced understanding of Islam to promote peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024; Yusuf & Mutiara, 2022).

George Herbert Mead's symbolic interaction theory emphasizes that social reality is created through individual interactions, where symbols play a significant role in creating and manipulating meaning (Blumer, 1986, 2004, 2013). This perspective focuses on negotiating shared meaning through communication, with three main concepts: Mind, Self, and Society. Mind is the result of a social process that allows individuals to internalize societal responses; Self develops through social experience, where self-awareness arises from recognizing the body as part of the environment; and Society provides organized patterns of behaviour that individuals internalize (Hall, 2017; Mead & Morris, 1972). This approach highlights how social action, communication, and culture shape human behaviour and the structure of Society (Husin, Ab Rahman, & Mukhtar, 2021; Yuan, Yang, & Yi, 2023). In the context of Aceh, the views of the majority community towards the appearance of the hijab of non-Muslim women create their meaning in social interactions, showing how symbols are perceived and interpreted through interactions that culture, Society, and the environment influence.

The Hegemony Theory, in Gramsci's view, reveals that a group or social class can gain approval from other groups to accept and maintain the existing social order (Lears, 1985; Sallach, 1974; Stoddart, 2007). Gramsci argued that power is exercised through violence or coercion and ideology, culture, and social institutions. Hegemony is created when a dominant group creates a "spontaneous" consensus among the community, where their values, norms, and ideologies are accepted as natural and reasonable (Cox, 2005; Durst, 2005). Through ideology, the dominant group creates a worldview that benefits their interests. This ideology is then disseminated through various media and institutions (Ives, 2004; Langman, 2015). In this study, Gramsci's hegemony theory can see how the acceptance of Acehnese society towards the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women is the result of a complex process in which cultural hegemony, social norms, and interactions between individuals play an important role. This study provides a richer picture of how power and ideology work in a pluralistic society, such as the autonomy of Islamic law practised by the Acehnese community.

Based on the background of the problem above, the problem of this research is how the majority community in Aceh responds to the personal identity of non-Muslim women that they display in the majority environment. The focus of this research is to explore the views and attitudes of the majority community towards the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women in Aceh. Research on this topic is still very minimal to raise the Muslim majority community in Aceh as an object. In contrast, the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women in navigating their identity is based on the culture adopted by the majority community in Aceh, so it is essential to see how the majority views the appearance of identity through the use of clothing by non-Muslim women. This research is expected to help increase tolerance and understanding between religious communities in Aceh by understanding the reasons behind the views and attitudes of the majority community so that non-Muslim women can better understand the social and cultural context of Aceh.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods with a case study approach. Qualitative research focuses on understanding human experience through interpretive and humanistic approaches (Berger, 2015; Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). Through case studies, researchers can explore an in-depth understanding of research informants' views, attitudes, and behavior patterns. This allowed researchers to identify the diversity of views and experiences shared by the majority community in Aceh.

Data collection with in-depth interviews was carried out directly with informants for 1 month from December 2023 to January 2024. The purposive sampling technique is an effective tool for selecting suitable informants in qualitative research. By applying this technique carefully and systematically, researchers can improve the quality and validity of data and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Pawito, 2007). In this study, researchers selected informants from various backgrounds who met the criteria of the majority community (Muslims) in Aceh, who are in the surrounding environment and have closeness to non-Muslim women who wear hijab.

Table 1.
Information about informants

Code	Gender	Age	Job
Informant 1	Men	28	Social Worker
Informant 2	Woman	27	Hospital Staff
Informant 3	Men	25	TV Reporter
Informant 4	Men	30	BUMD employees
Informant 5	Woman	23	Foundation Admin
Informant 6	Woman	29	Teacher
Informant 7	Woman	32	Librarian
Informant 8	Woman	28	Radio Announcer

There are phases in data analysis, according to Yin (2018), namely: 1) Collecting data, 2) Disassembling data, 3) Reassembling data, 4) Interpreting data, and 5) Summing up data (Yin, 2018). Qualitative data analysis is a crucial step in research to unravel the hidden meaning behind the data that has been collected. In qualitative research, data analysis often involves interpreting texts or interview results. Techniques such as semiotic analysis, ideological analysis, or rhetorical analysis can be used to enrich understanding. However, Berger cautioned that researchers should be careful when making interpretations. Interpretation is always subjective and "exceeds" the data, so it has the potential to be criticized. Therefore, it is essential to consider the validity and usefulness of the research when conducting data analysis (Berger, 2015).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding of the Limits on Wearing Islamic Clothing for Non-Muslims

As the majority community, they should know the rules in the region, which have become habits from generation to generation, and apply these rules to everyday life. This is also as stated by Informant 6.

"Yes, I know it; in the qanun regulations that are required to wear Islamic clothing itself, only Muslim communities are not for non-Muslims but are also expected for non-Muslims to be able to conform to these regulations by wearing modest clothing" (Informant 6).

According to informants, 6 non-Muslim women simply wear modest clothing as a form of adjustment to the use of Islamic clothing in the Islamic Sharia qanun. Furthermore, informant 1, who knows about the rules of Islamic Sharia qanun, especially the rules in the use of Islamic

clothing, said that although in Islamic Sharia qanun is not mandatory, what non-Muslim women do is a form of adaptation of the majority custom.

"Yes, I know, although Aceh applies Islamic law and is regulated in the qanun, for the use of Islamic clothing, they are given freedom just to keep wearing modest clothes even though they do not wear hijab like a Muslim. However, yes, as I said earlier, they will adapt to the region they live in, so they use much Islamic clothing, including hijab, for non-Muslim women. Nevertheless, they are still free to wear clothing, and I am sure they know the restrictions on the use of clothing in Aceh" (Informant 1).

According to informant 1, although in the Islamic Sharia qanun, non-Muslim women are not required to wear Islamic clothing and are only required to conform to wearing modest clothing, according to him, the use of Islamic clothing by non-Muslim women is not only due to the rules but rather to their adaptation as a minority who follow the customs of the majority. Furthermore, some informants also know that in the use of Islamic clothing in Aceh in the qanun of Islamic Sharia, the majority of people prefer to use Islamic clothing as a form of respect and the application of Islamic Sharia in Aceh, as conveyed by the informant 2.

"So far, what I know is that it is not mandatory, except in certain places, such as if you go to the Grand Mosque, which has become a landmark of Aceh, which must be obliged to use Islamic clothing, but yes, it must stick to the provisions and norms that exist in Aceh" (Informant 2).

According to him, the use of Islamic clothing by non-Muslim women can be flexible, as the majority, informant 2 requires the use of Islamic clothing in specific places that are already required to wear Islamic dress, but in other areas, the use of clothing by non-Muslim women while in Aceh still follows the provisions and norms that exist in Aceh. Similarly, when visiting a particular area, immigrants should follow the culture and rules that exist in that area (Coombs, Campbell, & Carangi, 2022; van Liempt & Miellet, 2021).

On the other hand, there is also a majority who do not know the written rules in the Islamic Sharia qanun, such as the notarized by Informant 8. Even though he has not read in detail the contents of the Islamic Sharia qanun, he said that although there is no coercion or demand for the use of Islamic clothing by non-Muslim women, it can provide ease of socializing with the surrounding environment, especially the majority community.

"If in the qanun I also have not read it, but what I know seems to be that non-Muslims are not required to wear Islamic clothing; there is no coercion in the use of Islamic clothing, but I think it will be easier to socialize when using Islamic clothing such as wearing hijab" (Informant 8).

Based on the answers of the majority of Aceh people regarding knowledge about the rules in the Islamic Sharia qanun, many know the content in it that non-Muslim women do not require the use of Islamic clothing. This is mentioned in Qanun Aceh Number 11 of 2002 regulates the implementation of Islamic law in the fields of faith, worship, and Islamic propagation (Juwita, 2016; Sulaiman, 2018). This Qanun regulates various things, including the obligation to wear Islamic clothing only for Muslims. However, many majorities suggest the use of Islamic clothing by non-Muslim women to feel safer and adjust and adapt to the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh.

Non-Muslim Women's Use of Hijab Obscures Identity

Interaction or dialogue between various elements in social interaction may refer to the negotiation of meaning or relationships between individuals and society (Hall, 2017). Some informants worry that this could obscure the identity between Muslims and non-Muslims. This was revealed by informant 5, who did not feel uncomfortable about the use of hijab by non-Muslim women. However, according to him, there was a blurring of identity so that not wearing Islamic clothing would show the true identity of non-Muslim women. However, he said the use of Islamic clothing by non-Muslim women did not interfere with her activities as Muslim women were the majority.

"On the one hand, I am not uncomfortable; instead, they respect those whose regions practice Islamic Sharia. However, on the other hand, when they do not wear the hijab, there will be clear identities of both Muslims and non-Muslims, but I do not feel uncomfortable at all. I feel comfortable; the use of hijab on them also does not interfere with our worship activities as a majority, so yes, it is comfortable, and so far, there is no problem" (Informant 5).

The use of hijab as an identity of a Muslim woman or Muslimah who should not be worn as an identity by women other than Muslims has become a polemic for some informants of the majority community. Although they think that they do not question this issue, on the other hand, the use of hijab by non-Muslim women is done as an adaptation of the culture adopted while in Aceh. Informant 7 revealed that even non-Muslim women should not wear the hijab, but because Aceh has specificity in the implementation of Islamic Sharia, it is natural to do so that the majority community can accept it.

"Good, yes. Even though they are non-Muslims, they wear hijabs because of the Islamic Sharia in Aceh. However, they are not obliged to wear them in Aceh. It is different from other regions, like where we live; we will adapt to the rules and customs that apply to that place. I think that is what they" (Informant 7).

Most informants from the majority community are concerned about the blurring of identity between Muslims and non-Muslims. However, they still support the acceptance and respect of non-Muslims. In the context of Acehnese culture, which is very thick with Islamic teachings, the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women is considered to facilitate social interaction (Sebastian & Othman Alkaff, 2024; Tan et al., 2022). Informant 5 said that although the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women can make their identity less evident, this is better than the striking differences that arise if they do not wear it. "It is okay for them (non-Muslim women) to wear the hijab as long as it does not disturb the majority community," she said.

The Use of Hijab as a Form of Appreciation for The Implementation of Islamic Sharia

In addition to the process of adaptation to the culture of the people in Aceh, the use of the hijab is considered to be in respect to the Acehnese people's implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. Symbolic interaction explores the concepts of "me" and "me" in the self, as well as the role of shame in social control, as well as providing a model of societal processes, highlighting the collaborative nature of human social life (Yeager, 2016). The information of the majority community shows that what non-Muslim women do in wearing Islamic clothing is a form of tolerance from the minority to the majority in the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. The majority community in Aceh itself responded by appreciating and even liking and supporting what non-Muslim women do in the use of Islamic clothing. "In my opinion, the imposition of hijab by non-Muslim communities is a form of their tolerance and appreciation for the majority Acehnese community who have long implemented the Islamic Sharia qanun regulations" (Informant 6).

The same thing was also conveyed by informant 2, a hospital staff who often interacted with non-Muslims and had closeness with non-Muslim women. She expressed that she felt more appreciative of non-Muslim women who wore the hijab in activities while in Aceh, "I myself feel happy with them wearing hijab and they wear clothes when in Aceh is very good, yes, not strict also by wearing hijab, it means they respect the existence of Islamic Sharia in Aceh and I think that is good enough, yes".

The majority of people responded that what non-Muslim women did was an award given by non-Muslim women as a minority in following the rules and norms of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. The diverse views faced by non-Muslim women are driven by the power of the majority society and the pressures of the culture of the majority society (Casey, 2018; Mutaqin, 2018). Although the majority of people know the written rules in the Qanun of Islamic Sharia that the use of Islamic clothing is only mandatory for the Muslim community, the majority community insists that the rules of Islamic Sharia must be heeded by non-Muslim women as a minority and

support the decision of non-Muslim women to wear the hijab.

Support for the Use of Hijab by Non-Muslim Women

The purpose of the identity displayed by non-Muslim women in Aceh in this study is to wear head coverings such as hijab or shawl, Islamic clothing commonly worn by Muslim women. This identity is formed because the symbols displayed are not fixed and can change over time through interaction and communication (Burke & Stets, 2023). Perception arises because of a process preceded by the senses; after the sensory apparatus absorbs the information, the information is processed and interpreted to create an ideal perception. This process involves sensing (Walgito, 2010). 3 out of 8 research informants gave a perception of being casual or not mindful of the use of hijab by non-Muslim women in Aceh. In contrast, 4 others expressed pleasure towards the use of hijab by non-Muslim women. Informant 1 revealed that the use of Islamic clothing by non-Muslim women was an adaptation made by non-Muslim women when they were in Aceh, and the majority of informants felt there was no problem in the sense of being casual towards the use of Islamic clothing by non-Muslim women.

"Viewing these non-Muslim women, I do not think there is a problem, especially since the people concerned (non-Muslim women) are people who are not native to Aceh; they adapt when in Aceh, which practices Islamic law. I respect their choice to wear hijab" (Informant 1).

On the other hand, another informant mentioned having a good view and feeling good about non-Muslim women's use of hijab. The majority of people revealed that the use of hijab is a form of adaptation and deserves appreciation. For example, Informant 8 expressed pleasure and respect for the decision of non-Muslim women to wear the hijab as a form of adaptation they made while in Aceh.

"My view of my non-Muslim friends wearing hijab is a perfect thing, and I feel happy; even though they are non-Muslims, they respect the majority society, which is Muslim because around them who wear hijab for women as well as where we live, we will adapt to the rules and customs that apply to that place, I think that is what they do" (Informant 8).

The use of hijab gets a good view from the majority. Symbolic interaction shows that facts are based on and directed by symbols. This theory emphasizes that meaning arises from the mutual interaction of individuals in the social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of what symbols and meanings arise from interactions between individuals (Aksan, Kisac, Aydin, & Demirbukan, 2009; Blumer, 2013). Inclusiveness in interfaith relations is important because it reflects social behavior that crosses borders, which becomes social capital to build harmonious and tolerant religious traditions (Fathorrahman, 2019; Gede Agung, Nasih, Sumarmi, Idris, & Kurniawan, 2024). The majority responded that what non-Muslim women did in interaction with the community in Aceh was the result of adaptation made by non-Muslim women as a minority in following the culture of the community in Aceh and did not mind this. In this context, the majority culture acts as a hegemonic force that shapes social norms, including in terms of clothing (Jenifer, 2012; Pasha, 2005).

Suggesting the Use of Islamic Clothing by Non-Muslim Women

Furthermore, there is a majority statement that is more encouraging for non-Muslim women in Aceh to wear Islamic clothing. Symbolic interaction also emphasizes the importance of social meaning and the definition of influencing behavior, focusing on deviant behavior (Carter & Fuller, 2016; Prus, 2015; Smith, 2017). One of the supporting factors in creating inter-religious harmony is the attitude of easy melting when in contact with environmental interests (Nuriyanto, 2017; Sovacool, Baum, & Fritz, 2024). According to Gramsci's theory, this agreement can be understood as a form of negotiated agreement, where the minority chooses to follow the majority norm not because of direct coercion but because they see social benefits, such as a sense of security, comfort, and ease in interacting with the majority community (Collinge & Hall, 2021).

People who have closeness with non-Muslim women, this is done by the majority because it

makes non-Muslim women safer and more comfortable in carrying out various activities in Aceh and makes it easier for them to socialize with the majority community. This was also conveyed by informant 1 as the majority society; she strongly advised non-Muslim women to wear hijab to make it easier to socialize with the majority society.

"In the social and community setting, I see that they are more adjusted; they put a position so that they can socialize freely with the majority community, with a thick Islamic law culture, so I am not uncomfortable. In my opinion, as a society, I prefer that they be closed so that they are safer also in socializing with the majority community and do not cause unwanted things such as discrimination or criminal acts, so I respect whatever they want to use in dress whether wearing Islamic clothing or not as long as they still know the restrictions on the norms that exist in Aceh. I think when they use more closed clothing (Islamic clothing), they will be more heard, rewarded, and adaptable" (Informant 1).

Informant 1 said that it was not at all uncomfortable to use Islamic clothing as an identity displayed by non-Muslim women; as someone who also had closeness to non-Muslim women, he also suggested wearing closed clothes to be accepted and shared by the majority community so that good relations between the majority and minority communities arose.

Despite allowing non-Muslim women to wear the desired clothes, informant 8 also said it was better to use Islamic clothing; according to him, when wearing Islamic clothing, non-Muslim women would find it easier to interact with the majority community, and according to the use of Islamic clothing was considered more appreciative of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. The same thing was also conveyed by informant 6, who exempted the use of clothing by non-Muslim women but suggested wearing clothing by the rules and norms in Aceh because, according to him, if there are activities that require much interaction with the community, will make them more readily accepted.

"In my opinion, I just feel normal, even though they do not wear Islamic clothes, as long as they are still polite, but when they choose to wear the hijab, it is okay, too. Yes, because of the work environment that has to meet many people, I think they will be more comfortable when wearing hijab so that there is no negative speculation from other communities. They will be more readily accepted by society" (Informant 6).

Although giving freedom to non-Muslim women to wear clothing according to their wishes and still within reasonable limits or in accordance with existing norms in Aceh, the majority community also recommends non-Muslim women wear closed clothing and recommends wearing the hijab when interacting with the majority community because according to the majority who are close to non-Muslim women, this will make it easier for non-Muslim women to be accepted than not wearing Islamic clothing that is in accordance with the culture of the majority community.

CONCLUSION

The majority of Acehnese Muslims generally accept and even support the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women as a form of respect for the culture and implementation of Islamic law that is dominant in Aceh. The community response varies, with some fully supporting it and considering it a form of adaptation. In contrast, others are concerned about the potential for blurring identities between Muslims and non-Muslims. In a legal context, the Aceh Qanun does not require non-Muslim women to wear Islamic clothing. Most of the community considers this action to reflect tolerance and respect for prevailing cultural norms. The dominant cultural hegemony is created by the majority Muslim community, which utilizes religious and cultural values such as the implementation of Islamic law as a tool to build social consensus. However, there are concerns that the use of the hijab by non-Muslim women can blur religious identity. Overall, it facilitates better social interaction in a predominantly Muslim community. The symbolism of interaction is an essential framework in understanding the meaning that emerges from this social action, where symbols such as the hijab create meaning and dynamics of interaction between the Muslim majority and the non-Muslim minority in Aceh.

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