

From Alienation to Industrialisation: Hijab Activism and the Transformation of Indonesian Urban Society from the Late 1970s to Today

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the emergence and the dynamic development of *hijab* activism in Indonesia since the end of the 1970s. The spread of the *hijab* began with a few Indonesian urban Muslim women who became aware that wearing the *hijab* is an obligation in Islamic law. They were influenced by a new wave of Islamic *da'wah* that emerged in the Indonesian urban setting. Initially, the use of the *hijab* by students in public schools was viewed with suspicion by the Indonesian government and was banned, causing alienation for the wearers. However, the ban was later lifted, and its usage was widely recognised and accepted in the society. The increasing number of Indonesian middle-class Muslim women who wear the *hijab* has opened up the market for the *hijab* industry and encouraged producers to be more creative in introducing their newest *hijab* products. The rise of *hijab* communities, government support, and the development of online businesses and the international *halal* industry in recent years have played crucial roles in the rapid expansion of the industry. This study employs a historical method and is supported by a number of primary sources, including interviews with several key players in this field. This research reveals the patterns and phases of *hijab* transformation over the last four decades, evolving from a symbol of alienation into a lucrative business and industry.

Keywords: *Hijab*, Islamic *da'wah*, *hijab* ban, transformation, *hijab* fashion and industry

Introduction

Up until the 1970s, the majority of Indonesian Muslim women, especially in urban areas, did not wear head coverings. Views on the modest dress, particularly Muslim clothing and headscarves, were still parochial and not widespread in society. Meanwhile, there were Muslim women in certain religious environments who wore loose veils (*kerudung*) that did not completely cover their hair.

The broad awareness of wearing a full headscarf or *hijab* in Indonesia emerged in the late 1970s, influenced by encouraging events taking place in the Islamic world and triggered by a new wave of *da'wah* diffused in Indonesian big cities, targeting propitious institutions such as public schools and universities. This new *da'wah* promoted a stricter understanding of permissible attire for Muslim women. As a consequence, Indonesian public schools became battlegrounds in the 1980s between the old and new values of Muslim women's attire, each represented by the government and the adherents of this new *da'wah*. The *hijab* was banned and alienated in public schools during that period. However, the prohibition ended in 1991 and the Indonesian government and society began to recognise *hijab*. Since then, the awareness of *hijab* has increasingly permeated Indonesian society and the number of its wearers has multiplied.¹ Other than that, *hijab* in Indonesia has also entered into a lucrative business and fashion industry. It should also be noted that the *hijab* struggle is not unique to Indonesia but also occurs in some other countries. In European countries, for example, where Muslims are a minority, the *hijab* was initially seen as foreign but gradually began to be recognised by the government and society, although there are still a number of restrictions on its usage.²

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¹ Infografis Tren Hijab 2014 (2014, December 2), *Jakpat*, <https://blog.jakpat.net/tren-hijab-2014/>; Pengguna hijab di Indonesia meningkat pesat (2019, October 25), *Moeslimchoice*, retrieved 12 June 2023, <https://www.moeslimchoice.com/read/2019/10/25/28343/pengguna-hijab-di-indonesia-meningkat-pesat>.

² See Asyiqin Ab Halim, Nor Fahimah Mohd Razif & Nur Shahidah Paad (2022), "Media and the Issue of Hijab and Veil across European Countries," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 203-212.

In her research, Elvianti points out that the use of the *hijab* in Indonesia has passed three stages: alienation, compromise, and capitalisation. Alienation began in the mid-1960s and continued until the late 1980s, compromise from the early 1990s to 1998, and capitalisation after the reform period (*Reformasi*).³ However, these stages may correspond to the historical periodisation of the Indonesian New Order government. This study argues that the phase of alienation only started in late 1970s until 1991. The second phase, which this study terms as recognition and fashion, occurred from 1991 to 2010. The last stage is expansion and industrialisation, from around 2010 until today, during which the *hijab* embarked into popular clothing and a significant industry.

This study analyses the transformation of the Indonesian urban society pertain to *hijab* in the last four decades, from the late 1970s until now. How has the status of *hijab* in Indonesia changed from alienation to recognition and expansion? This study uses historical research methods that utilises written sources in newspapers, magazines and reports as well as oral sources. The term “*hijab*” used in this study refers to the sharia regulation of dress for Muslim women. Many Muslim scholars have the opinion that an adult Muslim woman must cover the entire body, except for the face and palms, while some others require the covering of the face as well. Additionally, the Muslim women clothing’s must not be transparent or tight, and must not imitate men's or non-Muslim clothing.⁴

The Beginning of *Hijab* Awareness in the Late 1970s and its Alienation in Public Schools

In the 1970s, the number of Muslim women who wore the *hijab* was still very small, particularly in public schools and universities. For instance, Bambang Pranggono recounted his college days at the Institut Teknologi Bandung/Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) in 1968, mentioning only one friend from Sumatera who used to wear brackets with long sleeves and a headscarf to cover her head.⁵ The Muslim community in West Sumatra was among the first to recognise and practice wearing the *hijab* in Indonesia before this era of study. It is interesting to note that in the first half of the 20th century, certain figures from Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Persatuan Islam (Persis), al-Irsyad, and Ba'alawi separately called for the use of the *hijab* by Muslim women as required by the sharia. However, these calls did not have a widespread and continuous impact among Muslim communities in Indonesia, as observed in the late 1970s onward.⁶

When asked about the emergence of *hijab* awareness in Indonesia in the late 1970s and 1980s, Bambang Pranggono suggests it started after The Asian Muslim Youth Seminar on Da'wah, which was held in Kuala Lumpur from 24 to 28 February 1977.⁷ It was organised by the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia or Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) and World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and attended by the representatives of youth organisations from several Asian countries, including from Dewan Da'wah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII), Pemuda Istiqamah Bandung, and a few other Indonesian Muslim youth organizations. After returning from Malaysia, the idea of *hijab* was promoted by the Pemuda Istiqamah Bandung, led by Toto Tasmara and Pranggono. During religious forums at the Istiqamah Mosque, Bandung, young female Muslim activists began to wear the headscarf. It was seen outlandish at the beginning, but the use of the headscarf continued to grow.⁸ In 1979, Sumarni Suhendi wrote an article in the *Bulletin Kulliyatul Mujahidin Istiqamah* entitled "Busana Muslim untuk Lebaran [Fashion for Eid]," promoting proper *hijab* designs for Muslim women.⁹

Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII) West Java pioneered the wearing of *hijab* during the PII Congress in Surabaya in 1980. At that time, some other PII members still wore immodest clothes at that time. In 1981, a panel discussion was held in conjunction with the PII anniversary focused on the ethical and aesthetic values of Muslim clothing, providing encouragement for the use of the *hijab* among Muslim

³ Elvianti, Witri (2018), “Analyzing the Political Economy of Indonesia’s Global Hijab-Fashion Goal 2020: A Neo-Gramscian Perspective,” Proceedings of Airlangga Conference on International Relations (ACIR 2018) - Politics, Economy, and Security in Changing Indo-Pacific Region, <https://www.scitepress.org/Papers/2018/102756/102756.pdf>.

⁴ Nurjannah Hasmad & Abdulrahman Alosman (2021), “Aurah Covering Parameters: A Study on Muslim Women’s Level of Understanding,” *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporer*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 238-243.

⁵ Bambang Pranggono (2022, November 11), Personal communication.

⁶ Muhammad Zain, Sitti Aaisyah, Asriaty Alimuddin, Akhmad Mughzi Abdillah, & Muhammad Fahmi Basyah Fauzi (2023), “Hijab Discourse in Indonesia: The Battle of Meaning Between Sharia and Culture in Public Space,” *Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam*, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 1668.

⁷ Report on the Asian Muslim Youth Seminar on Da'wah (1977), ABIM & WAMY.

⁸ Bambang Pranggono (2022, November 11), Personal communication.

⁹ Sumarni Suhendi (1979), Busana Muslim Untuk Lebaran, *Bulletin Kulliyatul Mujahidin Istiqamah*.

students.¹⁰ Starting in 1980 and influenced by West Javan activists, PII Jakarta also actively promoted the *hijab* among students.¹¹ The use of *hijab* then spread in public schools, prompting reactions from school administrations. Some schools prohibited the *hijab*, but this did not stop the desire of a number of students to wear the *hijab*, thus triggering conflict between the students and the school administrations. The first incident occurred at the Teacher Education School in Bandung in 1979, followed by many other incidents throughout the 1980s.¹²

School administrators saw the use of the *hijab* in public senior high schools as an alien expression. Such expression was still unfamiliar in non-religious educational settings, and most teachers in public schools lacked the religious background to address the issue easily. The *hijab's* emergence seemed to challenge the schools' authority, causing momentary confusion about whether to allow its use or to reject it.¹³ The case was conveyed to the higher authority, the Ministry of Education, and a national regulation for public school uniforms was introduced in 1982. The new regulation, known as *Surat Keputusan* (Decree) 052 or SK 052, did not include the *hijab* as part of the national uniform.¹⁴ The regulation would soon become a pretext to forbid the *hijab*, thus formally alienating its wearers from public schools.

In mid-1982, eight *hijab*-wearing students in Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri (SMAN) 3 Bandung, for example, were required to wear hot pants during physical education, like the other students. If not, they would receive very low marks for that subject. A few months after that, a student in SMAN 68 in Central Jakarta was sent home for wearing a headscarf and was eventually expelled from the school.¹⁵

The cases were brought to the attention of some Islamic institutions, such as the Majelis Ulama Indonesia/ Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).¹⁶ They tried to help the students by communicating with the Ministry of Education, affirming the obligation of wearing the *hijab* for Muslim women.¹⁷ Initially, they were not successful in finding a solution. The Ministry of Education promised to use a persuasive approach,¹⁸ but the implementation at schools was often harsh and intolerant. Demonstrations occurred in several schools, and on one occasion, a clash between students and security forces ensued.¹⁹

In mid-1983, around 100 female students in Jakarta and some other cities were dismissed from their schools and forced to move to private schools without any assistance from their former schools.²⁰ Another report states that in 1984, around 300 female students were forced to move to other schools because of their *hijab*.²¹ Private school fees are certainly more expensive and burdensome for these students.²²

Most students in public schools did not wear a *hijab* before enrolling in senior high schools. Some students attended Islamic trainings organised by certain Islamic organisations, such as PII or Masjid Salman ITB, usually during school holidays.²³ The *hijab* obligation was one of the topics in these trainings, and it was promoted in a convincing way that some of the female participants decided to wear *hijab* soon afterwards. Because of the *hijab* restrictions in public schools, those who decided to wear it faced a difficult situation. Some students could not stand the consequences and decided to take off their *hijab* at school.²⁴ Some others kept their *hijab* but had to endure the pressure and were finally dismissed from school. In SMAN 68 in the middle of 1985, for example, four female students had been summoned by the vice principal only because they wore long-sleeved clothes and long socks. They did not give in to the warning. Instead, they all wore headscarves together, which angered the school management. A structured sanction was then implemented: they were summoned repeatedly through a microphone,

¹⁰ Dadan Dania (2022), Personal communication.

¹¹ Zainal Muttaqien (2000, November 15), Personal communication.

¹² S. Hidayat (2019), Personal communication.

¹³ *Wartasiswa* (n.d.), No. 3, Th. 1.

¹⁴ Surat Keputusan Dirjen PDM, Departemen P. dan K. No 052/C/Kep/D/1982 (1982), Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, Unpublished document.

¹⁵ SMAN 68 Jakarta Keluarkan Siswi Berkerudung (1983, March), *Serial Media Dakwah (SMD)*.

¹⁶ Majelis Ulama Kotamadya DT. II Bandung (1982, September 3), *Surat untuk Pimpinan Majelis Ulama Indonesia No. 186/MU/1982 tentang pakaian pelajar puteri*, Unpublished letter.

¹⁷ Keputusan Sidang Komisi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Daerah Tingkat I Jawa Barat tentang Busana Muslimah dan MTQ (1983, May 11), *Panji Masyarakat*.

¹⁸ Kebijakannanaan Depdikbud Tentang Pakai Kerudung (1983, August 8), *Pelita*.

¹⁹ Siswi Kerudung Diminta Pindah Sekolah (1983, September), *Serial Media Dakwah (SMD)*.

²⁰ Tamam and Arifin (1984, March 2), *Catatan Kronologis Kasus Siswi Berjilbab*.

²¹ Siswi Berjilbab Tersingkir dari Sekolah Negeri (1985, September 10), *Serial Media Dakwah (SMD)*.

²² Lembaga Bina Insan Kamil (LBIK) (1985, July 23), *Surat permohonan dana dengan No. 01/LBIK/G-554/1405-1985*, Unpublished letter.

²³ Alwi Alatas (2021), *Karena Jilbab: Di Balik Larangan Jilbab di Sekolah-Sekolah Negeri di Indonesia (1982-1991)*, Jakarta: Idea.

²⁴ Nasmay Lofita Anas (1984), *Heboh Kerudung di Kota Kembang*, Unpublished report.

teachers were pressured not to allow them to study in class, reprimand letters were sent to their parents, and finally, they were rejected from entering the school gate, suspended from school and had to move to another school.²⁵

It was an ideological struggle. The New Order Government was still unfriendly to Islam and treated the cases with a security approach. During this period, the New Order government was suspicious of anything it considered as Islamic political expressions.²⁶ On the other side, some Muslim activists were very critical of the government and wanted to spread Islamic *da'wah* in various aspects of life. The early relationship of the two parties was antagonistic, and only in the late 1980s it started to become more accommodating. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the New Order Government started to be more accommodating to Muslims. During that period, the Islamic Religious Law was passed, Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia/Association of Indonesian Muslim Scholars (ICMI) was established and its membership consisted of a number of government officials, and a great number of Muslims became members of People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). This change in attitude most likely occurred because the New Order government no longer saw Muslims as a political threat, especially after the acceptance of Pancasila as a principle by major Islamic organisations in the late 1980s.²⁷ Muslim political dissidents who aspire for the state implementation of the sharia still exist, but have been significantly toned down.²⁸

However, the acceptance of *hijab* in public schools was neither direct nor smooth.²⁹ The *hijab* struggle experienced an escalation in the last period of restriction, as some students and their parents received legal assistance from a non-governmental organisation (NGO). Two *hijab* cases were brought to court, suing the schools for denying students the right to wear headscarves. The first case related to six students in SMAN 1 Bogor who were discriminated against and intimidated at school because of their headscarves. Four of these students and their parents reported the case to Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH) Jakarta, who then took the case to court. The trial was attended by many people who were enthusiastic to follow the case. Most of them sympathised and supported the struggle of the students, booing the school principal in the courtroom. The legal case also received support from some important figures such as Ridwan Saidi and Adnan Buyung Nasution. In fact, one of the implicated parents was A. M. Saefuddin, a leading Muslim intellectual in Indonesia. All this made the case attracted national attention. This case settled peacefully outside the courtroom and the students were allowed to return to school.³⁰

The second case pertained to SMAN 68 Jakarta. Ten students got into trouble because of their *hijabs*. The school administration and teachers summoned them and discriminated against them. They were not allowed to take school exams, were rejected from attending class and then barred from entering the school gate. The students tried to defy the restrictions by refusing to leave the classroom, taking notes from behind the classroom windows, and sitting in front of the school gate.³¹ The school finally expelled these students.³² The parents of these students wrote to the Ministry of Education, asking for a review of the uniform regulation,³³ but received no response. Subsequently, they asked LBH Jakarta for help³⁴ and the case ended up in court. There were five students and parents who brought the case to the court. However, unlike the case of SMAN 1 Bogor, this case continued much longer and did not end peacefully outside the courtroom.

²⁵ Yudi (n.d.), *Laporan Kronologis Peristiwa Jilbab SMA 68*, Unpublished report.

²⁶ Imron Rosidi (2022), "From Political Parties to Cultural Organizations: Indonesian Islamic Movements during the New Order," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 44.

²⁷ Abdul Aziz Thaba (1996), *Islam dan Negara Dalam Politik Orde Baru*, Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, p. 278-300; Afan Gaffar (1993), *Islam dan Politik Dalam Era Orde Baru*, *Unisia*, Vol. 13, No. 17, p. 70-75.

²⁸ Ristapawa Indra, Mahyudin Ritonga & Fitrah Santosa (2023), "Government Control of Islamic Ideology Movement: A Case of Indonesia," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 135.

²⁹ *Jilbab Menunggu Fatwa* (1989, September 11-20), *Panji Masyarakat*.

³⁰ *Drama Itu pun Berakhir* (1988, December 29), *Kiblat*; *Setelah ke Pengadilan, 'Jilbab Bogor' Menang* (1989, 1-10 January), *Panji Masyarakat*.

³¹ Efi et.al. (1988, December 5), *Catatan Harian*, Unpublished document.

³² SMAN 68 (1988, December 13), *Surat kepada orang tua murid No. 788/IO1.1/SMA 68/0/1988 tentang pengembalian siswa kepada orang tua*, Unpublished letter.

³³ Wakil Orang Tua Murid Berjilbab di SMA Negeri 68 Jakarta (1988, December 21), *Surat pada Mendikbud*, Unpublished letter.

³⁴ Siswi-Siswi Berjilbab SMAN 68 (1988, December 26), *Surat Pengaduan Siswi Berkerudung (Berjilbab) SMA Negeri 68 Jakarta Pusat*, Unpublished letter.

They lost, appealed, and finally won the case in 1995,³⁵ though it was more of a moral victory. At that time, the students had already finished their studies at another school, and uniform regulations had already changed.

Hijab cases had now gained greater attention and sympathy from mass media, public figures, and people in general. People demonstrated to support the headscarf in public schools in Bandung.³⁶ A newspaper editorial plainly said, “*Kita selalu menentang segala aturan yang menyengsarakan masyarakat kita karena kebebasan beribadahnya dibatasi*” [We are always against all the rules that make our society miserable because freedom of worship is restricted].³⁷ Now, the *hijab* is acknowledged by more and more people as part of worship and religious obligation in Islam. This situation reflected the changing attitude of the society towards the *hijab*, from alienation to recognition. At the same time, the Ministry of Education became more open to suggestions by Islamic organisations and seriously worked on upgrading the uniform regulation. In 1991, it introduced a new regulation that included a school uniform with *hijab*, termed as “*seragam khas*” [special uniform].³⁸ Since then, female students in Indonesia have been legally allowed to wear the *hijab* in public schools.

The Phase of Recognition and Fashion of the *Hijab*, 1991-2010

After 1991, the religious obligation of the *hijab* for Muslim women became increasingly understood and recognised. Suspicion of the *hijab* as part of a political movement dimmed, while the New Order government improved its relationship with the Muslims. The number of *hijab* wearers was still small at the beginning of this period, but the opportunity to spread its awareness without being hindered was now wide open. This period saw an increase in the number of better-educated Muslim women who had a stronger religious consciousness, which was expressed, among others, through the *hijab*. They continued their studies at the university level and became part of the growing middle-class group in Indonesia. They contributed to the cultural expression and transformation of the Indonesian society, especially in urban areas. The number of Muslim women wearing *hijab* increased, and it was not only in the education sector but also in the other sectors, including entertainment, that involved celebrities. The period of the 1990s was seen as the foundation of Muslim fashion,³⁹ while the other sees the development of the headscarf fashion as beginning in the 1980s and continuing to grow in the 1990s.⁴⁰ The growth of the *hijab* users has certainly created a demand for Muslim women’s clothing. Hence, this period witnessed the emergence of fashion designers and clothing businesses for Muslim women.

Ida Royani, a well-known Indonesian artist and singer in the 1970s, was one of the pioneers of *hijab* in Indonesia. She decided to wear a headscarf in 1978, which was found strange by many people at that time.⁴¹ She also changed her career into a designer of Muslim clothing that she persistently developed for decades.⁴² Royani’s involvement with the *hijab* began very early, but her role became more prominent in the following phases along with the emergence of other designers. Ida Leman began her career as a Muslim fashion designer in 1991, around a decade after Ida Royani. She was named as *Wanita Berbusana Muslim Serasi* (the Muslim Female in Harmonious Dress) in 1992-1993.⁴³ Another example is Fenny Mustafa, a Muslim female designer who established Shafira, an Islamic fashion brand, in 1989. Her business then expanded to 15 big cities in Indonesia.⁴⁴

Not all of the *hijab* wearers in this period were fashion-oriented. Andrea Pradsna Paramita Djarwo, a lecturer in Universitas Indonesia and wore the *hijab* since 1996, described her experience:

³⁵ Majelis Hakim Pengadilan Negeri Jakarta Pusat (1989, August 23), *Turunan Putusan Pengadilan Negeri Jakarta Pusat di Jakarta: Perdata No. 116/PDT.G/1989/PN.JKT.PST*, Unpublished document; Terjerat Ironi Seragam (1995, April 22), *Gatra*.

³⁶ Berjilbab tak Memerlukan Fatwa Ulama, Hukumnya Sudah Jelas, Tidak Meragukan. (1990, December 5). *Terbit*.

³⁷ Jilbab dan Ibadah (1990, December 6), *Pikiran Rakyat*, p. 1.

³⁸ Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (1991, February 16), *Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan No. 100/C/Kep/D/1991 tentang Penyempurnaan Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah No. 052/C/Kep/D.82 (Pedoman Pakaian Seragam Sekolah)*, Unpublished document.

³⁹ Witri Elvianti and Nanda Putri Amedina (2019), Monetizing Hijab: Analysis on State’s National Interest on the Growing Hijab Fashion Trend in Indonesia. *Islamic World and Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 644.

⁴⁰ Teni Sumarlin (2022, August 3), Personal communication.

⁴¹ Bayu Maitra (n.d.), Ekonomi Hijab, *Pesona*, retrieved 12th June 2023, <https://www.pesona.co.id/read/ekonomi-hijab?p=2>.

⁴² Denny Hamdani (2010), The Role of Celebrities in Campaigning Muslim Attire, *Kultur*, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 131.

⁴³ Tekuni Bisnis Pakaian Muslim (2011, October 27), *Tokoh Indonesia*, retrieved 12 June 2023, <https://tokoh.id/biografi/4-selebriti/tekuni-bisnis-pakaian-muslim/>.

⁴⁴ Aulia Rahmawati (2016), Faith, Fashion and Femininity: Visual and Audience Analysis of Indonesian Muslim Fashion Blogs, Thesis in School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies Cardiff University, p. 55, <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/99707/1/2016rahmawatia.pdf>.

At that time, I was wearing the clothes I had, such as a blazer and then a kind of hat and scarf/veil. All that I bought was not in a special store. Sometimes, I bought from friends who sold Muslim clothes. I do not refer to the design of a particular designer because I only see its function.⁴⁵

However, the perception of *hijab* had gradually expanded from a simple Sharia orientation to a more fashionable lifestyle. A book, *Anggun Berjilbab* (Graceful with *jilbab*), published in 1993 by Nita Surtiretna et al., included female Muslim clothing designs from Anne Rufaidah. In the description that accompanies the book, Anne Rufaidah states:

This book tries to bridge the gap in perceptions about the rigidity of the Sharia and the freedom of fashion among Muslim women ... While offering the appearance of modern and prime Muslim clothing in a variety of settings, Anne Rufaidah's Muslim clothing designs in this book also aim to foster the impression and message that Muslim clothing is beautiful and friendly, beautiful and harmonious, elegant and polite, and trendy and prestigious clothing.⁴⁶

Since the 1990s, the trend of wearing fashionable Muslim clothing has become increasingly widespread in society. This increase in popularity was mainly driven by the spread of Islamic *da'wah* in Indonesia and the development of *pengajian* (religious study groups) activities among Muslim women. Several young charismatic *da'i* (Islamic preachers), such as Abdullah Gymnastiar, or well known as Aa Gym, Jefri al-Buchori, and Ahmad al-Habsyi, wore trendy Muslim clothing and inspired many Muslims to adopt a more fashionable way of dressing. Some of these popular preachers have been recruited by Indonesian Muslim designers as Muslim fashion icons. Accordingly, Islamic dress has not only become a sign of personal piety but also an individual and social identity. In urban settings, it might be fragment of a lifestyle, while in settings like the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), it follows the *pesantren*'s Islamic dress code.⁴⁷

The proliferation of the veiling practice among urban Muslim women in Indonesia is strongly tied to the development of the Islamic fashion industry. Jones and Smith-Hefner concluded that veiling is not merely an expression of urban Indonesian Muslims' religious identification but also a defining feature of contemporary urban Indonesians.⁴⁸ The emergence of the Islamic fashion industry was fuelled by the rising popularity of the headscarf and other Islamic clothing. The demands for *jilbab* (headscarves) and Muslim fashion in the 1990s was an opportunity for fashion entrepreneurs. One of them was Rabbani, owned by Amry Gunawan and Nia Kurnia and was established in Bandung in 1994. The business started in the early 1990s as a bookstore called Rabbani Pustaka. The business grew rapidly and gave birth to a new business: Muslim fashion.⁴⁹ Rabbani transitioned from a home industry to a formal business engaged in the retail sector with the tagline *Professor Kerudung Indonesia* (Indonesian Veiling Professor). It has become one of the largest *hijab* companies in Indonesia, producing instant veils and other products.⁵⁰ In the 2000s, when other Muslim clothing outlets appeared as competitors, Rabbani began advertising in *Sabili* and *Ummi* magazines.⁵¹ Interestingly, Rabbani's founder and employees have initial ties with the Istiqomah Mosque Bandung, one of the earliest initiators of the *hijab* movement in Indonesia.⁵²

Rabbani initially promoted its products only by word of mouth, distributing brochures and leaflets. From the late 1990s until the early 2000s, the Rabbani brand became popular among students. Ari Andini, a student at the Faculty of Economics (now Faculty of Economics and Business) at Universitas Indonesia in 2000, shared her experience with Rabbani products:

⁴⁵ Andrea Pradsna Paramita Djarwo (2022, November 21), Personal communication.

⁴⁶ Nita Surtiretna et al. (1993), *Anggun Berjilbab*, Bandung: Al-Bayan.

⁴⁷ Eva F. Amrullah (2008), "Indonesian Muslim Fashion Styles & Designs," *ISIM Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 22.

⁴⁸ Carl Jones (2007), Fashion and Faith in Urban Indonesia, *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 11, No. 2/3; Nancy J. Smith-Hefner (2007), Javanese women and the veil in post-Soeharto Indonesia, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 66, No. 2.

⁴⁹ Ario Fajar (2014, September 18), Rabbani, Raja Busana Muslim dari Bandung, *Swa*, retrieved 12th June 2023, <https://swa.co.id/swa/trends/management/rabbani-raja-busana-muslim-dari-bandung>.

⁵⁰ Company info (N.d.), *Rabbani*, retrieved 12th June 2023, https://www.rabbani.co.id/page/company_profile.php?log=VNYKDRSSIA221120123019.

⁵¹ CV Rabbani Asya (n.d.), *Glints*, retrieved 12th June 2023, <https://glints.com/id/companies/cv-rabbani-asya/a3de695e-8f02-467b-9c23-77ad3121874f>.

⁵² Pranggono (2022, November 11), Personal communication.

I usually used unbranded headscarves. The *jilbab* is simple in shape and monotonous colour and is usually sold among friends or in the bazaar on campus at quite affordable prices for students. Then I saw the Rabbani's shop. It was located in a *ruko* (shophouse) on Jalan Margonda. At first, I was just looking around. The materials, designs and colour choices looked more beautiful than the regular *hijabs*. I bought a *jilbab* there, which at that time was relatively expensive, around Rp. 21,000 while the price of the regular *hijab* is sold at Rp. 11,000-15,000. However, Rabbani's headscarves look more 'luxurious' than ordinary headscarves. If I wear a Rabbani *hijab*, it seems different from the usual *hijab*. Then *teman-teman akhwat* (the sisters' friends) asked me and confirmed whether it was a Rabbani product, then they admired it. However, there were also those who commented on whether it was not too conspicuous when wearing a *jilbab* like that.⁵³

Along with the development of the clothing industry, a clothing design association named Asosiasi Perancang Pengusaha Mode Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Fashion Designing Entrepreneurs or APPMI) was founded on July 22, 1993, through the initiative of a fashion designer, Poppy Dharsono, and supported by Peter Sie, Iwan Tirta, Pia Alisyahbana and Harry Darsono. In 1996, APPMI started a division focusing on Muslim fashion. This created a favourable atmosphere for the progress of the Muslim fashion industry in Indonesia. According to Poppy Dharsono, Chairwoman of APPMI, Anne Rufaidah was one of the early members of APPMI and then became the Head of its Muslim Clothing Division. She began to popularise Muslim fashion, which at that time was still seen as an unattractive trend.⁵⁴ This Muslim dress division of APPMI was supported by female designers, such as Anne Rufaidah, Ida Royani, Merry Pramono, and Irna Mutiara.⁵⁵

In the mid-1990s, a significant shift was observed with a number of Muslim designers showcasing their latest collections in Muslim fashion shows. The designs started making their way into women's magazines, initially featuring in the Ramadan issues. However, in the post-reform era, several magazines were published specifically targeting Muslim women. This development was not without its share of challenges. Editors of *Femina*, a women's magazine established in 1972, began receiving letters from readers questioning the absence of Islamic fashion in their publications and the limited focus on Muslim clothing, which was usually more suitable for the high-end market. This feedback, though it may have been a source of annoyance for some editors, highlighted the growing demand and influence of Muslim fashion.⁵⁶

The media played an important role in introducing *hijabs* made by Muslim designers. Various Islamic clothing appeared in Muslim women's magazines, often through advertisements. In the early 2000s, there were at least three magazines in Indonesia that specifically featured Muslim clothing designs: *NooR* (first edition was in 2003), *Paras* (first edition was also in 2003), and *Alia*. They promoted a fashionable style of body covering, such as *kerudung gaul* (the funky *hijab*) that combines a veil with pants and a tight, long-sleeved T-shirt. Two other Islamic magazines, *Ummi* (first edition was in 1989) and *Annida* (1991), had started earlier and promoted a more conservative Islamic fashion and were firmly against *kerudung gaul* for it does not perfectly conceal the body of a woman. Entering the 21st century, Muslim clothing companies utilised the internet to promote their products.⁵⁷

The *hijab* was also exposed through popular television series (*sinetron*), such as *Doaku Harapanku* (My Prayers, My Dreams) of 1998. In many scenes, the female protagonist (Kris Dayanti) is portrayed in complete praying attire (*mukenah*), asking for Allah's forgiveness. Television played a role in disseminating information about wearing the *hijab*, especially among celebrities. Various modes of *hijab* worn by celebrities on television influenced society. Television programmes during the month of Ramadan particularly featured female artists wearing the *hijab*.

⁵³ Ari Andini (2022, November 20). Personal communication.

⁵⁴ Mengenang Perjalanan Karir Anne Rufaidah, Pelopor Busana Muslim (2010, July 10), *Cantika*, retrieved 12th June 2023, <https://www.cantika.com/read/1363442/mengenang-perjalanan-karier-anne-rufaidah-pelopor-busana-muslim>.

⁵⁵ Amrullah (2008), "Indonesian Muslim Fashion Styles & Designs," p. 23.

⁵⁶ Jones (2007), *Fashion and Faith in Urban Indonesia*.

⁵⁷ Amrullah (2008), "Indonesian Muslim Fashion Styles & Designs."

Figure 1: Phases of *hijab* development in Indonesia from late 1970s until Now



This trend continued and developed in the 2000s, as the post-reformation era offered more freedom for those who wanted to wear the *hijab*. The situation was now reversed, with a number of public schools and government agencies directing and requiring their students and employees to wear the *hijab*, which raised criticism by some.⁵⁸ However, the interest in wearing the *hijab* continued to be widespread in society, and the *hijab* industry kept growing. Several other Muslim fashion companies with strong brands appeared in this period, such as Zoya in 2005⁵⁹ and NurZahra in 2009.⁶⁰ A new generation of designers, such as Dian Pelangi, started their fashion career in the late 2000s or at the beginning of 2010s. Dian Pelangi began her career in 2009 and became the youngest fashion designer in APPMI.⁶¹ A number of leading players in Muslim fashion established the Indonesia Islamic Fashion Consortium (IIFC) in 2008.⁶² With all those developments, along with the growing domestic and international trends and support, the Indonesian fashion industry entered the next phase.

Expansion and Industrialisation of the *Hijab* Industry

From around 2010, the *hijab* industry in Indonesia has expanded rapidly, entering a new phase of its development. *Da'wah* related to *hijab* entered a new phase through the formation of *hijabers* (*hijab* wearers) community. Muslim fashion has so far been built and developed by small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs), and this business category continues to play an important role. At the same time, the *hijab* businesses and industry have shown a growing and increasingly profitable market value, thereby attracting the attention of large corporations (in the non-*hijab* fashion sector) to enter the *hijab* market. The halal industry emerged and developed rapidly in this era, with modest fashion being one of the categories playing an important role. Players in the Indonesian *hijab* industry introduced a plan to make Indonesia the centre of world Muslim fashion. The Indonesian government is increasingly paying attention to and actively supporting the fast-growing Muslim fashion industry. Muslim fashion enterprises swiftly entered the digital market, and several Muslim fashion designers and companies have penetrated the global market.

⁵⁸ Sarahtika, Dhania (2018, May 8), The politics of hijab in Indonesia, *Jakartaglobe*, retrieved 12th June 2023, <https://jakartaglobe.id/culture/politics-hijab-indonesia/>.

⁵⁹ Agus Suaidi Hasan and Baitul Hamdi (2022), Perkembangan dan Tantangan Halal ashion Indonesia dalam Menjadi Produsen Utama Industri Halal Global, *Al-Azhar Journal of Islamic Economics*, Vol. 4, No. 2.

⁶⁰ State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015/16 (2015/2016), Thomson Reuters & DinarStandard.

⁶¹ Dian Pelangi (2015, April), *Warta Ekspor*.

⁶² S. Novani, L. Mayangsari, R. M. O. Artini and L. D. Pradhina (2018), On the Characterization of Service Providers in Hijab Fashion Industry of Indonesia, *International Journal of Management and Applied Science*, Vol. 4, No. 6.

The number of Muslim women who wear *hijabs* is increasing, and various *hijab* manufacturers are increasingly targeting specific markets according to purchasing power and desired models. The development of the *hijab* industry is greatly influenced by advancements in communication technology, especially with the upsurge of smartphone users, allowing manufacturers to announce their latest *hijab* models. Through these devices owned by almost everyone, manufacturers can more quickly and efficiently introduce the latest *hijab* models directly to potential buyers. Nina Nugroho, a brand owner and designer, started the Ninanugroho brand for her Muslim clothing designs since 2016. She considers that the market for Muslim clothing in Indonesia is very large and now supported by the development of the online market. Indonesia also has the opportunity to enter and engage in the international market, as evident in the participation of five Muslim designers at the 2017 Torino Fashion Week in Italy. This could become the starting point for the Italian fashion world to accept *hijab* fashion.⁶³

In addition to the development of communication technology, the rise of *hijab*-wearing communities, such as the Hijabers Community (HC), which emerged in 2010, has significantly encouraged the development of the Muslim fashion industry.⁶⁴ Fashion designers such as Ria Miranda and Jenahara Nasution initially joined this community and then developed concepts and produced *hijab* together. HC was established on November 27, 2010 by 30 women from various backgrounds and professions. They shared their knowledge about the world of *hijab* which includes fashion, daily outfits, and Islamic studies to discussions on how to be a good person according to Islam. Another community worth mentioning is Great Muslimah, which emphasises the importance of the balance between inner and outer beauty. This community aims to improve themselves and to benefit those around them. Similarly, the Syar'i Lifestyle community initiated by Dian Marina and Fitri Aulia started in August 2015, focuses on educating Muslim women about the true nature of wearing the *hijab*. These communities have greatly influenced the development of the *hijab* industry, encouraging the widespread use of the *hijab* and enticing the *hijab* industry into an increasingly fashionable market. Many brands target *hijab* communities to promote and market their products. Anet et.al., for example, are active in the Tiara Hijab Community and use social media for that purpose, benefiting from the exposure and interactions on these platforms. The members of this community usually have a strong loyalty to the brands they follow.⁶⁵

Social media and communities are essential for market expansion. However, at the macro level, fashion week events play a significant role in introducing a variety of Muslim industry products. Muslim fashion events in Indonesia have been organised since the 1990s, and but gained more traction in the 2010s. In 2010, a major Muslim fashion event under the name of Indonesia Islamic Fashion Fair (IIFF) was organised by the Indonesia Fashion Chamber (IFC). Two years later, in 2012, the Association of Indonesian Fashion Designers and Entrepreneurs (APPMI) held the Indonesia Fashion Week (IFW), followed by similar activities in various regions. In 2015, IFC initiated the Indonesian Muslim Fashion Festival (MuFFest). Since 2016, the concept of ethical and sustainable fashion in Indonesia has been increasingly adopted, aligning with the values of the industry. Since the early 2010s, IIFC has targeted Indonesia to become the world centre of Muslim fashion by 2020.⁶⁶

This phase witnessed the success of *hijab* products in penetrating major malls in Indonesia such as Pondok Indah Mall and Plaza Indonesia Mall.⁶⁷ International brands in fashion such as Uniqlo, Mango, and Tommy Hilfiger opened a Muslim fashion or modest wear line in 2015, while Zalora, which earned 15% of its revenue in Indonesia from Muslim wear, worked together with several Indonesian Muslim designers that year.⁶⁸

Indonesia's position in the modest fashion sector in the global stage has significantly increased since the mid-2010s. In 2015-2018, Indonesia was not included in the top ten rankings of the Global Islamic Economy (GIE) Indicator Score in the modest fashion sector.⁶⁹ However, in 2018/19, Indonesia was in

⁶³ Nina Nugroho (2022), Personal communication.

⁶⁴ Sumarlin (August 3, 2022), Personal communication.

⁶⁵ Anet, N. Liliiana, Rizky and L. Lukitasari (2022, November 10), Personal communication.

⁶⁶ Gelar Kontes Kecantikan Muslimah Pertama di Dunia (2011, August 3), *Detik*. <https://news.detik.com/adv-nhl-detikcom/d-1695332/gelar-kontes-kecantikan-muslimah-pertama-di-dunia>; Tajuk Utama (2015, April), *Warta Ekspor*.

⁶⁷ Sumarlin (2022, August 3), Personal communication.

⁶⁸ State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015/16 (2015/2016), Thomson Reuters & DinarStandard.

⁶⁹ State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015/16 (2015/2016), Thomson Reuters & DinarStandard; State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015/16 (2016/2017), Thomson Reuters & DinarStandard; State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2017/2018 (2017/2018), Thomson Reuters & DinarStandard.

the second position after UAE in modest fashion,⁷⁰ and in the third position after UAE and Turkey in the following two years.⁷¹ Muslim fashion has also received strong support from the Indonesian government, especially since the emergence of the halal industry in the Muslim world. The Ministry of Trade, for example, participated in supporting Muslim fashion products at Indonesia Fashion Week (IFW) held in early 2015.⁷²

The Indonesian Economic Report (LPI) or *Laporan Perekonomian Indonesia* issued by Bank Indonesia in 2012-2016 included statistics reports related to textile and textile products, without particular mention of the Muslim fashion industry. However, the halal industry and Muslim fashion started to be mentioned in the LPI 2017 and subsequent reports. In 2019-2021, Bank Indonesia issued annual reports on the sharia economic and finance.⁷³ Not only does Bank Indonesia feature special reports related to the Islamic economy, but it also actively supports the development of the Muslim fashion and halal food industries through the establishment of the Sharia Creative Industry (IKRA) or Industri Kreatif Syariah at the end of 2018. By 2020, IKRA had a total of 293 business members, among them were 134 SMEs engaged in the fashion sector.⁷⁴ All of this demonstrates the significant expansion of the Muslim fashion industry, including *hijab* products, which all started from *hijab* activism in late 1970s Indonesia.

Conclusion

The increasing number of Muslim women in Indonesia who wear hijab has undeniably triggered the development of the hijab industry. Long before this industry developed as it is now, the awareness of wearing the hijab was inseparable from the Islamic *da'wah* that spread in the late 1970s, in line with the discourse of Islamic revival at the beginning of the 15th century of Hijri. The efforts of preachers in providing an understanding of the obligation to wear the hijab for Muslim women have played an important role in the emergence of the use of hijab in public schools. These early efforts faced negative attention from the Indonesian government at that time, which introduced restrictions on hijab in public schools in the 1980s, perceiving it as an alien culture and its growing wearers as politically dangerous. However, along with the increasing awareness of hijab among the public and the changing attitude of the New Order government towards Islam, the restriction on hijab in public schools was lifted in 1991. Since then, the use of hijab has been increasingly recognised by Indonesian society, starting in urban environments. Islamic *da'wah* promoting hijab continued without interruption and the number of its proponents kept growing. The widespread reception of hijab has encouraged its development in fashion and business.

Muslim women who have education up to the university level and have religious awareness are transformed into one of the elements in the middle-class society that need a hijab model in accordance with their daily activities. The function of the hijab developed not only to fulfil religious obligations but also to make its wearers feel more fashionable. This situation prompted the creativity of hijab designers to produce various products according to market needs. If the dynamics of the hijab market in Indonesia is likened to a wheel, then since around 2010 the wheel has been spinning faster than in the previous decades. In this decade, several developments have become driving forces for the rapid expansion of the hijab industry that attracted conventional fashion brands to partake in the Muslim clothing segment. Market opportunities with increasingly varied market segments have expanded the hijab industry, considering that its market in Indonesia is still wide.

This research has shown how hijab in Indonesia developed from alienation to recognition and fashion, and finally to expansion, from hijab activism in the late 1970s to a thriving industry in the last few decades. This process has transformed the Indonesian Muslim society, especially urban Muslim women, to actively participate in the economy as well as in other sectors. It signifies their important contribution to the society without neglecting their belief and religious practices.

⁷⁰ State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2018/2019 (2018/2019), Thomson Reuters & DinarStandard.

⁷¹ State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2019/20 (2019/20), DinarStandard; State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2020/2021 (2020/2021), DinarStandard.

⁷² Ajang IWF 2015 (2015, April), *Warta Ekspor*.

⁷³ Laporan Ekonomi & Keuangan Syariah 2019 (2019), Bank Indonesia; Laporan Ekonomi & Keuangan Syariah 2020 (2020), Bank Indonesia; Laporan Ekonomi & Keuangan Syariah 2021 (2021), Bank Indonesia.

⁷⁴ Laporan Ekonomi & Keuangan Syariah 2020 (2020), Bank Indonesia.

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