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**FROM HOME TO CAMPUS: UNPACKING THE FAMILIAL
MEDIATION OF CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN HIJAB-WEARING
PRACTICE AMONG STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the mediating role of family influence in the relationship between cultural influence and hijab-wearing practice among female students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The study responds to the urgent need to comprehend the intricate dynamics surrounding hijab-wearing practice in a variety of cultural contexts and educational settings. 350 respondents were selected using convenience sampling from two public sector universities. Data were collected through questionnaire having items related to the study variables. The study used PROCESS macro for data analysis. Key findings reveal that while cultural influence significantly impacts hijab-wearing practices, family influence operates as significant mediator in this relationship. The study concludes that a comprehensive understanding of hijab-wearing practices necessitates consideration of familial influence alongside cultural influences. The findings of the study have broader ramifications for promoting cultural sensitivity, fostering inclusive environments, and informing policies within HEIs and broader societal contexts.

Keywords: *Mediating Role, Hijab-Wearing Practice, Higher Education Institutes (HEI), Cultural Influence, Familial Influence*

Introduction

The hijab-wearing practice is gaining increasing attention globally. Ahmed (2008) defines hijab as “the Islamic dress code for women, which typically involves covering the head, neck, and body with loose-fitting clothing”. Hijab wearing practice also represents a complex interaction of social, cultural, and personal issues that extends beyond religious expression (Almutawaa, Nuttall, Mamali, Al-Mutawa, & AlJuma, 2024). For some scholars, hijab is an outward symbol of modesty and religious identification that has its roots in Islamic beliefs (Mostafa, 2023). For others, it represents cultural identity, empowerment, and individual agency (Zakir & Zabrodska, 2023). Researching hijab-wearing practice is crucial because it reveals a deep relationship between personal autonomy, cultural identity, and religious expression.

Since the academic, cultural, and personal facets of higher education cross uniquely to form the university environment, it is imperative to investigate the practices of wearing the hijab within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Amini & Daulay, 2022; Deborah Nauli Simorangkir & Pamungkas, 2022). HEIs are microcosms of many identities, philosophies, and cultures (Hoseinzadeh, Niazi, & Shafaeimoghadam, 2018). They are ideal places to study the intricacies of hijab practices. It is crucial to comprehend how students manage their religious identity in the academic setting. HEIs are essential in molding the next generation of professionals, leaders, and members of the community (Mizel, 2020).

Cultural norms and expectations are intricately correlated with hijab-wearing practice. Family institution is reflection of broader cultural values and norms. It acts as a primary source of religious instruction and shapes individual identity in Muslim-majority societies. But family institutions do not exist in a social vacuum; they exist in the social and cultural systems of society. This cultural system impacts hijab-wearing practice through this primary social institution. Consequently, family is a potential route that can intervene in the relationship between culture and hijab-wearing practices.

While existing research acknowledges the influence of culture, family, and personal preference on hijab-wearing practices (Almila, 2017; Arif, 2018; Hass, 2020; Hoseinzadeh et al., 2018), there's a gap in understanding the potential pathway family institution can provide within the culture-hijab nexus. Previous studies often treat this factor as independent influence, neglecting the potential for family to act as mediating variable that explain how culture shapes hijab wearing practice (Clough, 2023; Mostafa,

2023; Sharma, 2023). Most studies focus on direct effects, whether cultural norms directly translate to hijab wearing practice or if family influence simply dictates the practice. Thus, further research is needed to explore how family influence translate cultural influences into hijab-wearing practice. Additionally, existing research might miss the nuances within cultural influences. Cultures themselves are not monolithic, and the impact of specific cultural norms on hijab wearing might be contingent on family influence and individual preferences. Thus, this study aims to understand the pathways through which cultural influence manifests in hijab-wearing practices. By examining the mediating role of family influence, we seek to uncover the intricate mechanisms that shape the hijab-wearing practice at Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

The study provides several contributions to the previous body of literature. First, this study contributes to the sociology of religion. Second, given the relative scarcity of integrative literature on hijab wearing practices, this study responds to numerous calls from scholars to ascertain the mediating mechanisms through which cultural influence impacts hijab wearing practice. Third, the study sheds light on female university students' experiences within a specific cultural and societal framework. Finally, the study broadens the conceptual framework, which frequently concentrates exclusively on cultural norms, by emphasizing the mediating role of family influence

The paper is organized as follows: it commences with the introduction, followed by the literature review. Section three delineates the materials and methods, succeeded by data analysis and results. Subsequently, the final section delves into the discussion of the findings, encompassing study conclusions.

Literature Review

Scholars have extensively explored the relationship between culture and hijab wearing practice (Fayyaz, Ambreen, & Kamal, 2023; F. Khan, 2022; Khir-Allah & Khir-Allah, 2021; Moradi, 2023). A complex interplay of cultural values, norms, expectations, and traditions influences hijab-wearing practices. The decision of hijab-wearing is profoundly affected by cultural values and norms (Hoseinzadeh et al., 2018; Leuenberger, 2017). Religious expression, femininity, and modesty are also determined by cultural settings (Rahman & Firdaus, 2018; Slininger, 2014). A thick body of research highlights that the perception of the hijab as a sign of commitment to cultural characteristics such as decency and piety is frequently influenced by how these values are interpreted (Haroon et al., 2022; F. Khan, 2022; M. M. Khan,

Azhar, Abiden, Ullah, & Rana, 2023). The development of cultural norms within particular groups also impacts hijab-wearing practice. Individuals may internalize these demands as a component of their identity and cultural belonging in communities where wearing the hijab is the norm, making it a natural choice (Prempeh, 2022; Tina, 2022).

Further, research in this area has consistently found that cultural forces combined with societal expectations greatly impact university students' adoption of the hijab-wearing practice (Ahmad, Sajid, Ali, & Shah, 2014; Hoseinzadeh et al., 2018; SAFIRA, 2020). The work of Fayyaz et al. (2023) emphasizes how society expectations, whether they are constrictive or helpful, create a setting that influences personal choices. Expectations from friends, family, and larger groups might influence whether girls' hijab-wearing practice is accepted or rejected by society (Ahmadi, Adlipour, & Mirmohammad Tabar, 2014; Rahmayantie & Budi Lestari, 2016). The customs that direct and support the hijab are entwined with cultural values. Muhammad, Ali, and Aly (2019) examination of cultural customs demonstrates how societal and family customs help to ensure that the wearing of the hijab continues to be a tradition that is carried down through generations. Previous studies have shown that traditions and cultural beliefs might present difficulties for some people while serving as enablers for others. While wearing a hijab may give some young girls a sense of confidence and identity, it may also present issues for others due to competing cultural expectations and shifting societal standards (Clark & Saleh, 2019; Eid, 2018; Jalil, 2023; Mohammadi, Maghsoodi, Hasanpoor, & Maskouni, 2022).

The impact of cultural influence on hijab-wearing practice among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has also been a subject of considerable scholarly attention (Ahmad et al., 2014; Mizel, 2020; Deborah N Simorangkir & Pamungkas, 2018). In the context of HEIs, where diverse cultural backgrounds converge, the influence of cultural factors on hijab-wearing practices becomes particularly salient. Prior research has showed cultural upbringing, societal norms, and perceptions of religious identity impacts university students hijab-wearing (Amini & Daulay, 2022). However, while cultural influence undoubtedly plays a crucial role, emerging research suggests that family influence may serve as potential mediator in the relationship between cultural influence and hijab-wearing practices (Almutawaa et al., 2024; Babakhani, 2024). Family dynamics affect individuals' decisions regarding hijab-wearing (Sharma, 2023). Family dynamics include familial

values, traditions, and intergenerational transmission of cultural expectations. This necessitates the understanding of complex interplay between cultural influence, family dynamics, and personal preferences for comprehensively examining hijab-wearing practices within the higher education context. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the impact of cultural influence on hijab-wearing practices among females in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), examining the mediating role of family influence. The research aims to ascertain the intricate relationships and dynamics among cultural influences, family influences, and hijab-wearing within the specific context of higher education.

Drawing on aforementioned literature, this study proposes the following conceptual framework to assess the relationships among the study constructs.

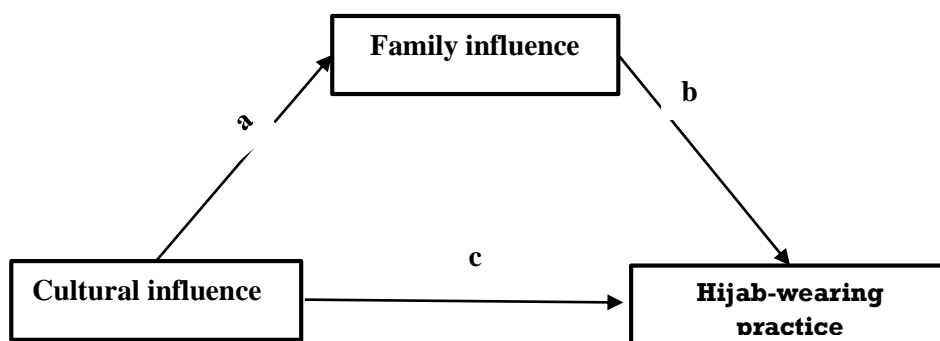


Figure 1: A conceptual framework of the impact of cultural influence on hijab-wearing practice through the mediation of family influence

Based on this conceptual framework, the study proposed the following hypotheses.

H1: Cultural influence has a significantly positive impact on family influence (path a).

H2: Family influence has a significantly positive impact on hijab-wearing (path b)

H3: Cultural influence has a significantly positive impact on hijab-wearing (Path c).

H4: Family influence mediates relationship between cultural influence and hijab wearing (path a x b).

Material and Methods

A convenient sampling approach was employed in the investigation. The study sample was made up of female hijab-wearing university students. Data were gathered via in-person visits and online questionnaire distribution on social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) between November 2020

and December 2021. Two sizable governmental universities in Punjab province provided the data. In order to obtain a representative sample of universities in the public sector, 460 questionnaires were circulated. There were 380 completed surveys (response rate: 82%). Thirty questionnaires had several missing values and were not completed. Therefore, these surveys were not taken into account. In the end, 350 surveys were determined to be valid and comprehensive. Thirty-seven respondents, or 30.6 percent of the sample, were enrolled in the fourth semester of BS. Only 12 respondents (3.4%) were enrolled in an M.Phil programme, whereas 287 respondents (82.0%) were enrolled in a BS programme. This is because, in Pakistan, classes for higher education tend to be smaller than those for undergraduate studies. Just 38 respondents (10.9%) had mothers who had completed graduation, compared to 38 respondents (33%) who had mothers with matriculation degrees. Only 15 respondents (4.3%) belonged to extended nuclear families, whereas 197 respondents (56.3%) were from nuclear families. Also, 169 respondents (48.3%) reported having three or four siblings.

There were two sections to the questionnaire. The first section addressed questions about demographics, such as semester, academic programme, family type, father and mother's educational background, and number of siblings. Items to gauge personal preference, family influence, cultural influence, and hijab wearing were included in the second section. Likert scales with five points, 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree, were used to measure the items. Eight items were used to measure the cultural influence. Eight items were used to quantify family influence. Lastly, ten items were used to measure hijab wear.

We used SEM to estimate our model. Since all of the important variables were latent (i.e. is, not immediately observable) constructs, latent-variable modelling made sense. It also allowed us to account for measurement errors, producing more accurate and trustworthy results than manifest-variable modelling would have. We were also able to directly assess the statistical significance of our proposed mediation using the SEM technique.

To test the study hypotheses, the PROCESS macro for SPSS, a mediation and moderation software tool, was employed in accordance with Preacher and Hayes's suggested procedures to test the direct effects, indirect effects, and the mediation effects. Cultural influence was entered as independent variables, family influence was the mediator, and hijab-wearing practice was the dependent variable. To estimate mediation impact, the Hayes

PROCESS macro model 4 was employed. Several steps are involved to assess mediating impact.

Firstly, the study estimated path *a*, which is the direct effect of the predictor (cultural influence) on the mediator (family influence). Secondly, path *b* was assessed, which is the direct impact of family influence on hijab-wearing practice. Thirdly, path *c* is evaluated, which is the direct impact of cultural influence on hijab-wearing practice. Lastly, the study quantified the product of path *a* and *b* to obtain the mediating impact of family influence. For the purpose of estimating the p-values of the indirect effect, standard normal distribution is assumed; however, this is only possible in the presence of high sample sizes. Resultantly, this study took into account a nonparametric resampling technique called bootstrapping, which does not require that the sampling distribution be normal. With a smaller sample size, the bootstrapping method is less sensitive and aids in the accurate estimation of indirect effects. To ascertain the significance of the indirect effect, the study used a 5000-sample bootstrapping approach to obtain the bias-corrected 95% confidence interval (CI). The path coefficients were standardized for convenience of comparison and comprehension.

Data analysis and Results

To determine the constructs' validity and reliability, we first put the measurement model to the test. The proposed relationships were then tested by examination of the structural model. SmartPLS 4 and SPSS was used to analyses the data.

To evaluate common method bias, Harman's single factor test was used. A single factor solution only explained 37.903% of the total variation, according to the test, which is significantly less than the 50% requirement. This outcome suggests that common method bias in this study is not a significant issue.

Reliability and validity

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite reliability (CR) were used to assess the variables' reliability. First, the sample was evaluated, and items with factor loadings less than 0.600 were excluded. Table 3 presents the findings for validity and reliability for the sample along with the factor loadings for the remaining items. Every Alpha value and CR exceeded the suggested threshold of 0.700. Convergent validity is supported by the fact that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and CRs were all at or near 0.700 and 0.500, respectively. Lastly, multicollinearity was evaluated whether each indicator's Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value was less than 5. Table 1 presents the results of reliability, validity, and multicollinearity tests.

Table 1*Item loading, Reliability, Convergent validity, and Variance Inflation Factor*

Items	loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF
Cultural influence		0.862	0.898	0.599	
CI1	0.814				2.969
CI2	0.870				1.846
CI3	0.778				1.303
CI4	0.522				1.655
CI5	0.697				3.516
CI6	0.900				2.103
Family influence		0.826	0.844	0.588	
FI3	0.714				1.558
FI4	0.782				2.548
FI5	0.752				2.423
FI6	0.833				1.856
FI8	0.747				1.624
Hijab-wearing		0.932	0.95	0.664	
HW1	0.736				1.912
HW3	0.772				1.194
HW4	0.443				1.311
HW5	0.891				4.077
HW6	0.878				3.543
HW7	0.905				4.877
HW8	0.873				4.040
HW9	0.888				4.074
HW10	0.842				2.862

Note: CI= cultural influence, HW= Hijab-wearing, FI= Family influence, CI= Cultural influence

Additionally, we evaluated discriminant validity using cross-loadings. The cross-factor loadings for each item are reported in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, each item loads higher on its respective construct than on others, confirming discriminant validity. For instance, item CI2 loads 0.870 on Cultural Influence (CI), which is higher than its loadings on Family Influence (0.680), and Hijab-Wearing (0.716). Similar patterns are observed for other constructs: items FI3 to FI8 load highest on Family Influence, items HW1 to HW10 load highest on Hijab-Wearing, supporting that items are more strongly associated with their respective latent variables than with others. Discriminant validity is demonstrated by the fact that all of the factor loadings are higher than their cross-loadings.

Table 2			
<i>Discriminant Validity Through Cross Loadings</i>			
Items	CI	FI	HW
Cultural influence			
CI1	0.814	0.615	0.667
CI2	0.870	0.680	0.716
CI3	0.778	0.566	0.577
CI4	0.522	0.360	0.312
CI5	0.697	0.501	0.473
CI6	0.900	0.705	0.730
Family influence			
FI3	0.545	0.714	0.459
FI4	0.522	0.782	0.542
FI5	0.491	0.752	0.504
FI6	0.683	0.833	0.740
FI8	0.621	0.747	0.607
Hijab-wearing			
HW1	0.541	0.628	0.736
HW3	0.611	0.634	0.772
HW4	0.308	0.319	0.443
HW5	0.736	0.670	0.891
HW6	0.702	0.664	0.878
HW7	0.721	0.714	0.905
HW8	0.661	0.642	0.873
HW9	0.650	0.629	0.888
HW10	0.648	0.604	0.842
Note: CI= cultural influence, HW= Hijab-wearing, FI= Family influence, CI= Cultural influence			

Descriptive statistics

The data reveals notable variations in the mean and standard deviation across the different scales and their respective items. In the CI scale, item CI4 exhibits the highest mean of 2.84, indicating a relatively higher agreement level, while item CI2 shows the least variability with a standard deviation of 1.521. Similarly, in the FI scale, item FI3 has the highest standard deviation of 1.229, suggesting greater diversity in responses, while item FI8 stands out with the highest mean of 2.85. Lastly, in the HW scale, item HW3 exhibits the highest mean of 3.00, indicating strong agreement, while item HW4 has the lowest mean of 2.35, signifying lower endorsement. Overall, these variations in means and standard deviations across items provide valuable insights into the

respondents' perceptions and highlight potential areas of agreement and divergence within each scale. Table 3 shows the results of descriptive statistics. After assessing descriptive statistics, direct paths of the hypothesized relationships were evaluated.

Table 3		
<i>Descriptive Statistics of the Study Scales</i>		
Scales items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cultural influence	2.74	1.33
CI1	2.55	1.362
CI2	2.75	1.521
CI3	2.78	1.241
CI4	2.84	1.113
CI5	2.76	1.249
CI6	2.66	1.472
Family influence	2.80	1.29
FI3	2.83	1.229
FI4	2.78	1.298
FI5	2.73	1.239
FI6	2.80	1.355
FI8	2.85	1.321
Hijab-wearing	2.77	1.30
HW1	2.59	1.332
HW3	3.00	1.423
HW4	2.35	1.173
HW5	2.87	1.409
HW6	2.75	1.342
HW7	2.91	1.403
HW8	2.95	1.342
HW9	2.87	1.318
HW10	2.64	1.286
Note: CI= cultural influence, HW= Hijab-wearing, FI= Family influence, CI= Cultural influence		

The results show that cultural influence → family influence (H1: $\beta = 0.590$, $t = 20.335$, $p < 0.001$), family influence → hijab-wearing (H2: $\beta = 0.438$, $t = 4.917$, $p < 0.001$), and cultural influence → hijab-wearing (H5: $\beta = .372$, $t = 5.077$, $p < 0.001$) were positive and significant. Hence hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 are accepted. Table 4 tabulate the results of direct paths.

Table 4

Hypothesis Testing of Direct Paths

Hypotheses	Direct Paths	B	T	P
H1	CI -> FI	.590	20.335	.000
H2	FI -> HW	.438	4.917	.000
H3	CI -> HW	.372	5.077	.000

Note: CI= cultural influence, HW= Hijab-wearing, FI= Family influence, CI= Cultural influence

The study also ascertained the mediating roles of family influence on the relationship between cultural influence and hijab wearing (see table 5). Results revealed a significant indirect effect of impact of cultural influence on hijab wearing through family influence ($b = .258$, $t = 4.9172$), supporting H4. Furthermore, direct effect of cultural influence on hijab-wearing in the present of mediator was also found significant ($b = .372$, $p < .001$). Therefore, family influence partially mediated the relationship between cultural influence and hijab-wearing.

Table 5

Mediation Analysis

Total Effects (CI → HW)	Direct Effects (CI → HW)	Relationships	Indirect Effects	CI		t-statistics	Conclusion
				LB	UB		
1.190(.000)	.372 (.000)	H4: CI → FI → HW	.258	.0597	.1412	4.91	Partial Mediation

Note: CI= cultural influence, HW= Hijab-wearing, FI= Family influence, CI= Cultural influence

Discussion and conclusion

The study examined the factors influencing hijab-wearing practice, and the findings provide strong support for the hypothesized relationships.

As expected (H1), cultural influence has a significantly positive impact on family influence. This suggests that cultures emphasizing hijab transmit these values through families. Families residing in such environments are likely to raise their daughters with these values, fostering a positive family influence towards hijab wearing. This finding matches those observed in earlier studies (Fayyaz et al., 2023; Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013; F. Khan, 2022). This cultural influence also directly translates into a positive impact on hijab-wearing practice (H3). This finding is in accord with recent studies indicating that societies that prioritize hijab create an environment where it becomes a more normalized practice (Mostafa, 2023; Rezaie, Gholamhosseinzadeh, & Davoudi, 2023). Women in these cultures are more likely to adopt the hijab.

The study also showed the mediating effect hypothesized (H4). Family influence partially mediates the relationship between cultural influence and hijab wearing. These results suggest that cultural norms and values play a crucial role in shaping women's decisions regarding hijab-wearing practice. Individuals who are more immersed in cultures that emphasize hijab are more likely to adopt this practice. This aligns with previous research highlighting the influence of social context on religious attire (Clough, 2023; Mostafa, 2023). Furthermore, the study demonstrates that family acts as a significant mediator in this relationship. This implies that families play a vital role in transmitting cultural values and expectations related to hijab. Families that prioritize hijab wearing are likely to raise their daughters with these values, influencing their decisions (Ashraf-Emami & de Rooij, 2023; Babakhani, 2024). This finding resonates with prior studies emphasizing the role of familial socialization in shaping religious practices (Ahmadi et al., 2014; Arifeen & Gatrell, 2020; Rahmayantie & Budi Lestari, 2016).

However, it is important to acknowledge the partial mediation effect. This suggests that cultural influence on hijab wearing is not solely transmitted through family. Other factors, such as peer groups, religious leaders, and media portrayals, likely also play a role. Future research could explore the relative influence of these different factors.

To conclude, the study investigated the factors influencing hijab-wearing practice, and the findings provide strong support for the

hypothesized relationships. We observed a significant positive influence of cultural influence on family influence. Family influence, in turn, partially mediated the relationship between cultural influence and hijab-wearing practice. These results highlight the complex interplay between cultural, family, and religion in shaping decisions regarding hijab-wearing practice. Cultural contexts play a significant role, influencing family influence. Families act as a crucial route, transmitting cultural values and shaping attitudes towards hijab.

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