

Young Muslim Women’s Negotiation of Authenticity on Instagram

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This article addresses how Indonesian *hijabers*—a term for fashion-conscious hijab-wearing women—participate in expressing and negotiating their authentic selves through the photo-sharing culture on Instagram. Twenty-one hijabers’ self-portraits were examined through a digital ethnographic method that used semistructured face-to-face interviews and participant observations at various hijabers’ community events in Indonesia. Findings reveal that “being the real me” is the hijabers’ claim to project their self-portrait authenticity. This claim is shaped by Indonesian social norms and Islamic values. The hijabers are curating a version of authenticity that is designed to be culturally acceptable. Therefore, this study provides a new understanding of how Indonesian hijabers’ negotiation of authenticity on Instagram is subjected to a collectivistic culture.

Keywords: authenticity, collectivistic culture, Indonesian hijabers, Instagram, self-portraits

The term *hijab*, initially from Arabic, has replaced the words *jilbab* and *kerudung*, commonly used in Indonesia before the 2000s to refer to the Islamic headscarf. In 2010, a group of Muslim fashion designers initiated an online and offline community called Hijabers Community (HC). This community popularized the word *hijabers*, those wearing hijab. The term *hijabers* used explicitly in Indonesia is the assimilation between Islamic veiling and Western feminine styles and appeared almost at the same time as *hijabistas* or *hijabsters*

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(J. P. Williams & Kamaludeen, 2017). These hijabers are characterized as young, urban middle-class and well-educated Muslim women who demonstrate creativity in wearing a hijab by making it a fashion statement (Beta, 2014; Faiz, 2017). Nowadays, the term *hijabers* is associated with the members of HC, but it is also used to refer to Indonesian hijab-wearing young women who are fashion-conscious.

As access to digital technologies such as mobile smartphones continues to increase across the world, the number of Muslim women engaging with social media through the online world is expanding (Bastani, 2001). This is not surprising, given that diverse communities and cultural groups often find social media a valuable platform to share ideologies and extend their networks (Akou, 2010; Piela, 2010). Indonesian hijabers are active social media users, primarily on Instagram, because of its simplicity and functionality that enables users to create and share visual storytelling.

The trend of using Instagram by middle-class young veiled women has been discussed by several scholars, including Kavakci and Kraepelin (2016) and Peterson (2016b), who explore the hijabistas in America, Europe, and the Middle East, as well as Beta (2014) and Jones (2017), who focus on veiled Indonesian women. Centering on Muslim women who are social media influencers, fashion designers, entrepreneurs, or well-known bloggers, those studies have uncovered that taking and sharing self-portraits on Instagram has refashioned the hijab from a religious item into a fashion artifact. Those studies also portray the hijaber as a market-driven Muslim woman who is often seen as glamorous and high-profile young woman.

Self-portraits, selfies, or other related forms that expose the photographs of the self are a meaningful communication process (Cruz & Thornham, 2015; Iqani & Schroeder, 2016; Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016) that conveys both intended and unintended messages and also adjusts how the self is curated, identified, and perceived. Meanwhile, Senft and Baym (2015) define the concept of the selfie as "a cultural artefact and social practice . . . a way of speaking and an object to which actors (both human and nonhuman) respond" (p. 1588). As a self-consumption practice (Belk, 2014), a self-portrait has also cultivated microcelebrity, a global phenomenon in which ordinary people use social media to generate inspired images to engage with their followers (Abidin, 2016a, 2016b; Marwick, 2015; Senft, 2008).

In taking and sharing self-portrait practices, efforts to provide the perfect shot of facial impressions, physical appearances, and environmental settings are parts of the backstage that compose the performance on the front stage (Çadırcı & Güngör, 2016). In other words, people tend to manage their behavior and presentation, but this does not mean that managed behavior implies inauthenticity. While many studies have examined the growing popularity of self-portrait practice, its investigation in varying contexts and perspectives is still required (Iqani & Schroeder, 2016).

The participation of fashion-conscious veiled women in the culture of taking and sharing self-portraits on social media has subjected the tensions in using social media in Indonesia situated on the features of "religious and gendered" (Jones, 2017, para. 2). In the aspect of "religious," taking and sharing self-portraits may be considered a narcissistic behavior classified as sinful by some male preachers (Jones, 2017). While in the feature of gendered social media platforms, Duffy and Hund (2019) note that women must deal with self-consciousness and body-shaming as a result of their social media posts.

In point of fact, the taking and sharing self-portrait practices have created dilemmas between benefits and risks for hijabers. On the one hand, the hijabers, as Muslim women, can circulate their modest images (and fashion) through their self-portraits. On the other hand, those women have been stigmatized as narcissists, which is classified as sinful behavior. Therefore, how Indonesian hijabers—as an underrepresented social and cultural group in this scholarly area of research—adopt the self-portrait practices is worthy of exploring to understand the negotiation of authenticity on Instagram.

The analysis of the interviews, Instagram posts, and participant-observations of 21 Indonesian hijabers found that “being the real me” was the predominant hijabers’ claim in taking and sharing self-portrait practices. This study revealed how the hijabers’ social norms and Islamic values had played an essential part in expressing “being the real me.” This expression is negotiated within Indonesian collectivistic culture, reflecting the hijabers’ authentic selves. In the collectivist culture, self-expression is shaped by interrelationships among people and is inseparable from social context (Litvin & Kar, 2004; Worthy, Lavigne, & Romero, 2020). Therefore, the hijabers’ expression of authenticity on Instagram is unique and different from that in Western and Middle Eastern young women. It is also unique because authenticity is a complex fluctuating concept that depends on the contexts and conditions in which authenticity is affirmed and performed (Bloustien & Wood, 2013; Umbach & Humphrey, 2018).

Authenticity on Social Media

Authentic is defined as genuine and natural, or “sincerity, truthfulness, originality, and the practice of being true to one’s self or others” (Vannini & Franzese, 2008, p. 1621). Umbach and Humphrey (2018) also noted, “To be authentic is to identify with or claim ownership of, a narrative of origins, or a sense of original and unadulterated selfhood” (p. 1). Authenticity could represent the idyllic self, making it hard to justify the level of authenticity when everyone has his or her own standard of genuineness (Vannini & Williams, 2016). Therefore, authenticity is a complex fluctuating concept that depends on the contexts and conditions in which it is affirmed (Bloustien & Wood, 2013; Umbach & Humphrey, 2018).

The use of the Internet by girls and young women to express themselves has amplified the possibility of managing authenticity through self-branding (Banet-Weiser, 2012). Banet-Weiser (2012) defines these media-savvy girls and young women as interactive subjects who actively engage with the production and circulation of digital media content. Media-savvy users employ digital culture to “find a self and broadcast that self” (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 56). Banet-Weiser (2012) also sees the authentic self-brand as “innovation, production, and consumption charged with ideally producing a unique, authentic self” (p. 73). This self-branding makes the selfie culture a new, evolving practice of presenting the authenticity of self. Additionally, Banet-Weiser (2012) argues, “as branding becomes normative for all products, including the self, it makes sense within this logic for branding to be the mechanism by which religion seeks to make itself relevant to the current population” (p. 210). Therefore, Banet-Weiser (2012) offers an understanding of how brands surround our lives. As a self, we consciously or unconsciously have set up a personal branding influenced by our culture, particular life values, and religion.

Drawing on Banet-Weiser’s work, Kanai (2015) argues that the increasing occurrence of self-branding on social media could create a unique expression of authenticity. Meanwhile, Peterson (2016a) also uses Banet-

Weiser's work of authenticity in the postfeminist context in her study on two of the most famous Muslim women on YouTube: Amena Khan and Dina Torkia. She found that Amena Khan "overemphasized a more traditional form of femininity; this allows her to achieve success in the post-feminist moment by performing as an attractive feminine self and tapping into the contemporary cultural obsession with the authentic" (Peterson, 2016a, p. 16). As young Muslim women, Amena Khan and Dina Torkia entertained dichotomies of authenticity, as opposed to the commercialized, by presenting their positions within those dichotomies through their aesthetic videos (Peterson, 2016a). Peterson (2016a) contends,

Rather than assuming that no authentic cultural or politic work can come out of these lifestyle videos, I take up Sarah Banet-Weiser's (2012) assertion that the ambivalent spaces of brand culture are productive spaces that allow for cultural and political actions. (p. 16)

In other words, the contradictions of modern and traditional could result in a new representation of authentic selves.

Another point to consider is that authenticity builds on a consecutive interpretation rather than being set permanently within oneself (Beverland, Farrelly, & Quester, 2010; Lobinger & Brantner, 2015). Though people can never wholly confirm that they know the intention of others, it is still possible to evaluate them, primarily when individuals perform as their authentic selves based on the consistency of how they present and represent themselves. As Hogan (2010) asserts, "Everyone can have his or her exhibit, as long as the relevant information can be displayed with some coherence" (p. 381). This understanding of authenticity as the process of representing the real self—consciously or unconsciously—depends on contexts and conditions. Therefore, this study addresses this need by examining the negotiation of the authenticity of the Indonesian hijabers on Instagram.

Collectivistic Culture

In Hofstede's (1980) view, there are cultural differences between individualistic and collectivistic people. Within individualism, the core unit is the individual; societies exist to promote the well-being of individuals. Individuals are seen as separate from one another and the basic unit of analysis. On the collectivist side, people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups (that oppose other in-groups)—often extended families (with uncles, aunts, and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 2011).

Through shared values, culture influences what is crucial for evaluating the self and the audiences from whom a favorable evaluation is sought. It has been argued that collectivists have concepts of self that are interdependent with others and connected with particular contexts (Parkes, Schneider, & Bochner, 1999). Non-Western or collectivistic cultures view the self as interdependent and inseparable from social context, with individuals socialized to value interconnectedness and consider the thoughts and behaviors of others (Worthy et al., 2020). People within a collectivistic culture might perceive themselves as authentic when they conform to the values of a group, family, or nation (Rathi & Lee, 2021). This notion strengthens

the argument that authenticity is shaped by beliefs, attitudes, and values (Erickson, 1995). Therefore, different cultural contexts would affect the way people perceive authenticity.

According to the previous findings by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), Indonesian people are collectivist. In the case of Indonesian hijabers, as young Muslim women, they value the group's goals—whether those of their extended family or ethnic group—by respecting social norms and Islamic values as part of their collectivism. This concurrence of collectivistic culture is also revealed in the practice of taking and sharing a self-portrait.

Methods

This study is a digital ethnographic study. The data were collected by semistructured face-to-face interviews and participant observations of 21 young Muslim women from Hijabers Community (HC), Indonesia's most prominent online and offline hijab community. HC was founded by 30 women who share perspectives related to the hijab and the role of Muslim women in Islam. Some founders are well-known young fashion designers, such as Dian Pelangi, Ria Miranda, Jenahara, Siti Juwariyah, Fitri Aulia, Ghaida Tsurayya, Lulu el Hasbu, and Rimma Bawazier. Their tagline is to empower and inspire each other. Beyond the HC central branch in Jakarta, HC has gained thousands of members from 10 official branches in Indonesia's major cities. HC, as a woman-only community, has become a learning community where young Muslim women can interact and create a better understanding of Islam and life lessons. HC members voluntarily gave consent to participate in the study.

Data for this research were collected over three months, from September to December 2016. Snowball sampling adopted from Cresswell (2007) was used in this study. Initial contact was made with the chairwomen of HC, whose profiles are public. They provided a list of potential recommended contacts to participate in this research.

Twenty-one hijabers, ranging in age from 20 to 34 years old, participated in this study. They were middle-class urban women and considered well educated. During the investigation, they all lived in Indonesia's big cities: Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Gresik. One of the participants was a PhD student, one had a master's degree, another was undertaking a master's degree, and the rest had university degrees or were university students. Eight of the participants were entrepreneurs, and most were employed in the private sector. They accessed the Internet daily and used their mobile phone to access social media, primarily Path (for family and close friends) and Instagram (for the public).

All interviews were conducted in Indonesian and transcribed into English. The questions revolved around how they use Instagram, such as when the participants became involved in the culture of taking and sharing self-portraits, how many times they posted self-portraits, and with what captions and for what purposes. Further questions inquired about what kinds of self-portraits the participants tended to take, how many self-portraits they would take in a day, and what they wanted to display through their self-portraits. Before the interviews, the participants filled in the consent form and chose to use their real names or be anonymous in the research reports and publications. Of 21 participants, only one decided to use a pseudonym.

Three-month participant observations were performed by attending HC events in Jakarta and Bandung, including the monthly *pengajian* (Islamic study), Hijabers Day Out, and member gatherings. During the observation phase, field notes were taken to record the participants' activities and their use of Instagram. Attending those events generated a sense of how HC wants to spread the message of the positive impacts of social media if used for notable purposes.

The transcripts from the interviews and the images were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis phases, which cover (1) familiarizing yourself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing potential themes, (5) defining and naming essential themes, and (6) producing the report. In this process, similar concepts from the interview data and images were categorized into prevailing themes (Boyatzis, 1998). After conducting thematic analysis, "being the real me," a direct quote from the hijabers, became a significant key theme in this research findings.

In addition, in analyzing the images, this research applied iconography analysis to identify what is in the image through looking at the title, referring to personal experience, doing background research, considering intertextuality, or reading the image's verbal description (Leeuwen, 2004). Iconography was first used in many historical and art studies related to women, such as exploring Black and White women's sexuality in the late 19th-century art (Sander, 1985). Adding to that discussion is Kiliçbay and Binark's (2002) contention that the religious iconography of the veiling practice in advertising, Islamic fashion magazines, and fashion catalogs in Turkey has shown veiling as a sign of devotion and political Islam.

Based on those previous studies and the hijab as an identity icon for Muslim women, an iconographical analysis was employed to explore the participants' Instagram images as visual data. The data were arranged into key themes that resulted from the thematic analysis. The use of iconography analysis was deemed to be appropriate because the principal objective of the present research was to investigate the participants' Instagram posts; more specifically, the study explored this question: *What is being shown, what are the ideas behind the photograph, and what is the social, political, and cultural context pointed to by the photograph in the hijabers' posts?*

Findings: "Being the Real Me"

This study found that "being the real me" was the predominant rationale in the practice of taking and sharing self-portraits among Indonesian hijabers. In some respects, this practice is a conscious juxtaposition with the idealized images that dominate mainstream media, including Instagram. Indonesian hijabers incorporate taking and sharing a self-portrait culture on Instagram with social norms and Islamic values that define their unique authenticity.

Social Norms

The difference between norms and values is that the former are rules for behavior in specific situations, while the latter should be judged as good or evil (Worthy et al., 2020). Social norms have been studied as implicit and unwritten guidelines in online behavior (Uski & Lampinen, 2016). Findings show that

Indonesian hijabers in this study followed social norms regarding self-portraits, such as avoiding *pencitraan* (planned self-images), reassuring body positivity, and considering family reputation.

Avoiding Pencitraan

Because the public has a negative image of politicians, *pencitraan* (publicity stunt) has a negative connotation in Indonesia. This term points out inauthentic behavior that exposes insincere attitudes, especially in social media (Arifin, 2014). In the present study, the hijabers avoid the creation of *pencitraan* because it is impractical, and it is at odds with their desire to show their authentic selves; most of the participants strictly stated, "I just want to be who I am both in the offline and online world."

One of the participants, Fitri, owns several fashion brands. She knows that she needs to manage her brands, but she has chosen to post an authentic version of herself on Instagram. In her view, "*Pencitraan* is exhausting" (personal communication, November 17, 2016). She noted that, rather than posting a fake image, she prefers to set an "alert system" for herself in selecting what she can and cannot post. Developing an alert system is her method of being thoughtful when posting on Instagram. This is how Fitri tries to avoid being fake, which she considers not only a waste of her valuable time and energy, but also something that could lead to negative perceptions on the part of her Instagram followers.

Like Fitri, Ghaida explained how she was sick of people creating false self-images or *pencitraan* to sell products or idealized visions. Therefore, in response, she was purposely living and sharing her authentic experience on Instagram. As part of expressing her true self, as a daughter of a well-known Islamic leader and a fashion designer, she felt obligated to honestly share her self-development journey with her followers. Ghaida explained in the interview, "I don't need to create *pencitraan*, I just want to be who I am . . . [and] of course I have to improve myself constantly to be a better person" (personal communication, October 6, 2016).

The issue of *pencitraan* was also brought up by Udhe. She noted that she is not a famous person, nor a president, nor an actress who needs to perform *pencitraan*. She said about being an ordinary person, "Good people do not need to declare 'I am good!'" (personal communication, November 20, 2016). In other words, she just let her followers compare what she was posting with what she was doing, and then judge. Another participant, Atika, laughingly described how a follower negatively commented on her "weird dancing" after she posted a video. Atika answered, "It is ok, this is me . . . I enjoy using social media to truly express who I am" (personal communication, October 20, 2016).

The finding concerning *pencitraan* also suggests that the hijabers cannot adopt the Western concept of "free to be me" culture, which is based on the freedom to express nearly everything liberally and explicitly (Worthy et al., 2020). The hijabers' self-portrait practices still conform to Indonesian social norms. This compliance does not involve revealing counterfeit images or engaging in publicity stunts. As Zevallos (2007) notes, Instagram users could actively and carefully organize their self-images in the online public space to create a desirable impression for their followers as a consequence of their social interactions with other people. Therefore, authentic selves should be viewed as "a fluid set of cultural ideals that people in different

situations and groups construct through interaction” (S. Williams, Fleming, Lundqvist, & Parslow, 2013, p. 105). Maintaining strong social interactions and relationships is necessary for collectivists.

Reassuring Body Positivity

The hijabers’ effort to project their authentic selves can also be investigated in how they build their beauty and body image concepts. It is acceptable for a woman to want to look beautiful; however, in Indonesian social norms, it is considered improper for a woman to become obsessed with the beauty of Westerners, which contrasts with her original identity (Hermawati, Piyatna, & Adji, 2016). For instance, Addina, who likes to groom and experiment with makeup, encouraged her followers to promote their inner beauty without makeup. She explained, “I do not mind posting photos of my face without any makeup on it because I want to inspire that it is ok to show yourself without makeup” (personal communication, October 22, 2016). She collaged two photos into one frame, with the left image showing her face in full makeup and the right showing her face without makeup (see Figure 1). Addina wrote,

Voila . . . the power of makeup in the caption. However, if I have to choose the one I like, I prefer to appear as natural as possible. That is why even though I like to experiment with makeup, I prefer no makeup in daily life.



Figure 1. Prefer no makeup—screengrabbed January 2017 (Source: Ayuningtyas, n.d.).
Note. This account is no longer active.

Addina’s statement and Instagram post reveal her preferences for a natural appearance, without any enhancement from the effect of makeup, thus highlighting her honesty. She said that she prefers to

appear as she is, when many other young women enhance their photos using an application such as Photo Editor, InstaBeauty, and Beauty Camera. Because Western-based companies create most of these apps, it is not surprising that the beauty standard is very Westernized. Posting a “no makeup face” is Addina’s effort to present her authentic self on Instagram.

Many women are concerned generally with their figures and often try to hide disproportionate shapes of their bodies (see Grogan, 2016; Martijn, Vanderlinden, Roefs, Huijding, & Jansen, 2010; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Findings from this study unveil the opposite. Wanda, for instance, posted highlighting her chubby cheeks (see Figure 2); she seemed to be proud, saying, “Chubby cheeks are getting more apparent! Indonesian foods treat me well.” She also used hashtags such as #gainweight, #chubby, #selfie, #reflectionselfie, #sunnies, #glasses, and #shades, and she added a heart eyes emoji. Her post is in line with her statement, “I post to express not to impress, I do not expect how much likes I will get from my posting” (personal communication, October 30, 2016).



Figure 2. Proud of chubby cheeks—screengrabbed January 2017 (Source: Pratiwanda, n.d.).

Note. This account is no longer active.

Meanwhile, in the interview session, Shafira admitted that she likes eating. She posts pictures of food and shares her experiences of places she has eaten. In one of her posts, she simply put numbers and an arrow “50kg→56kg,” adding the three cold sweat face emoji that could be interpreted as an anxious face, without any words. Her picture shows her acceptance in the increasing of her body weight by smiling and not showing frustration. Instead of looking stressed about her weight gain, she poses like a model on a runway. Her face is focused on the camera, and her hand reveals her pink outer shirt to show her blue pants, with her knees slightly bent forward. This post received 100 likes (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Don't worry about weight gain—screengrabbed January 2017 (Source: Siswanda, n.d.).

Note. This account is no longer active.

Being honest about body weight is rarely revealed by most women in the offline or online world. Most women are concerned about their body mass and shape (Lipowska et al., 2019). For example, it could be seen as impolite or rude to ask about body weight in individualistic cultures. However, both Wanda and Shafira seemed pleased to disclose their body image. They accept their body size, are proud of it, and publicly share it on Instagram. The current findings support Jerrentrup's (2021) argument the acts of self-acceptance are an essential stage in expressing body positivity and being authentic.

Considering Family Reputation

Although some participants said, "It is important to keep a good image," their statements did not imply pencitraan. According to them, "a good image" meant posting proper photographs that did not lead to embarrassment or the possibility of damaging their family's reputation, given that many of their extended family members also followed their Instagram accounts. Syifa believes that she should be careful with her posts because she is presenting herself not only, but also many organizations that she is involved in, and her family's good reputation.

It is common in Indonesian culture for people to follow each other's activities through social media updates. As Melisha noted, "Now I am not posting too often because my husband's family, like my husband's

uncle, has started to follow my account” (personal communication, October 21, 2016). Moreover, Ayu explained that she had become more cautious with her posts after getting married and having a baby. She said, “When I was still single, I used to post and repost whatever I wanted, but now I have a family, so I have to consider the impact of my postings on them” (personal communication, November 17, 2016).

Family is considered a more integral part of one’s group and self-concept in a collectivistic world. Therefore, people construe family disagreement as a threat to social harmony (Akkus, Postmes, & Stroebe, 2017). Given that amicable relationships are highly valued in collectivistic cultures, harmony in the family is paramount (Sumargi, Filus, Morawska, & Sofronoff, 2018). Whereas those who live in individualistic societies are expected to take care of only themselves and the people closest to them, people in collectivistic societies are members of in-groups that provide for their needs in exchange for their devotion to the group. Considering family reputation is vital because one’s practices of taking and sharing self-portraits could affect family honor. As collectivistic, the hijabers in this study maintain appropriate images as a way of preventing undesirable perceptions that might harm their family’s reputation and disrupt the harmony in their family.

Islamic Values

Besides social norms, the participants’ following of Islamic values when posting on social media emphasizes these hijabers’ adjustments within the culture of taking and sharing self-portraits on Instagram. There are two central Islamic values in taking and sharing self-portraits on Instagram: not showing off (*riya*) and not exposing body parts that should be covered (*aurat*).

Not Showing Off (Riya)

Riya in Arabic literally means “show off.” Shihab (1996) defines *riya* as “the act of showing off our *ibadah* (worship of God) with the hope to be praised by others before, during, or after conducting that activity” (p. 677, emphasis in original). Most of these hijabers believe that Muslims are taught not to become a *riya* person because they believe that Allah would not accept any worship that embodies the element of *riya* (see Shihab, 1996, p. 677).

The discussion on *riya* in the context of social media posts has been expanded because Indonesian Muslims display their worship in digital public spaces (Husein & Slama, 2018). Social media offer an opportunity for Muslims to express piety online, but as a consequence, it also generates anxiety (Husein & Slama, 2018), including the concern of being *riya*.

Indonesian hijabers realize the anxiety about reflecting *riya* in their self-portraits and often highlight their sincerity in their self-portraits by including “*bukan riya*” (not an act of *riya*) in the caption. Moreover, this study also found that concerns about being *riya* pertain not only to worship-related activities, but also daily life in general. For example, one participant captured an image of herself in a beautiful and composed photograph (see Figure 4). The discourse of *bukan riya* is found in her caption (see Figure 4): “Believing Allah is a countless blessing. . . . If we consider that Allah knows our conscience, we will be terrified and ashamed to be arrogant, *riya*, envious, injustice, etc.” (Tsurayya, n.d.).



Figure 4. Fear of appearing *riya*—screengrabbed January 2017 (Source: Tsurayya, n.d.).

Note. This account is no longer active.

The hijabers understand and are concerned about the consequences of being *riya*; as a participant said, “I cannot post something that makes me *riya* (show off or arrogant)” (personal communication, November 20, 2016). Meanwhile, another participant stated, “I prefer to use social media for something useful . . . not for giving the perception of *riya* or exposing as if I am the greatest, the best, or the most successful.”

Disregarding group norms and values prompts a sense of shame and guilt in a collectivistic culture (Lipowska, 2019). In the hijabers’ case, guilt refers to the feeling of unconsciously being *riya* in posting self-portraits. It is argued that it is essential to look at these hijabers’ emphasis on not being *riya* as their attempt to project authentic selves as collectivists. For the hijabers, being *riya* or arrogant goes against the value of considering the thoughts and behaviors of others. Therefore, not being *riya* is a value that needs to be attended to in a collectivist context.

Prohibition in Showing Aurat

Another Islamic value that these hijabers adhere to is the prohibition of showing *aurat*; one participant said, “I posted a photograph with a caption ‘do not expose your *aurat*’ . . . then this caption is also a reminder for myself” (personal communication, November 20, 2016). Another participant also should cover a nude statue before taking a self-portrait in front of the statue. *Aurat* is an Arabic term for body parts that should be covered, excluding the face and hands, although in some Muslim groups, the face and hands could be considered *aurat* (Nisa, 2013).

The hijabers in this study also consider wearing hijab to cover their hair as an essential part of their modesty. However, the term *hijab* in Arabic means to screen, separate, or hide from sight, and in the Quran, it never refers to a woman's clothing. It was within the growth of popular culture that the word *hijab* came to refer to a part of Islamic dress that indicates modesty (Amer, 2014). The definition of modesty varies among communities and is influenced by religious, economic, political, and geographic factors (Bouvier, 2016). Modesty standards are highly valued in Eastern cultures (Shikanai, 1978), such as Indonesian culture. Covering aurat through the practice of veiling has become a symbol of the hijabers' modesty in this study.

While approximately 20 million Indonesian Muslim women wear the hijab to cover their aurat (Directorate General of Small Business Industry, 2015), wearing the hijab is also part of keeping a modest image of the collective self. Furthermore, Muslim women can communicate collective identities and authenticity through the veiling practice (William & Kamaludeen, 2017). In this context, Indonesian hijabers who are living in a collectivistic culture have generated a set of authenticity standards that adhere to the expectation that Muslim women will cover their aurat, as most Indonesian Muslim women do.

Layer of Authenticity

Based on our findings, "being the real me" is the hijabers' attempt to display their authentic selves; Hess (2015) explains that self-portraits posit a sense of authenticity, although they are staged performances. This signifies that a curation process is always behind every social media post, including the curation of authenticity.

A study of fashion bloggers on Instagram conducted by Duffy and Hund (2019) demonstrated that their participants had curated their posts to accentuate their self-branding and authenticity. Similarly, in our research, most of the participants have curated their presentations on Instagram. The curation starts with taking a photograph, usually many shots from different angles; the process involves selecting a particular technique and pose, deciding on the best photograph, writing the best caption, editing the photo, and posting it. The image may also be polished in other ways. The different forms of curation could lead to varying interpretations of authenticity, given that authenticity does not have a fixed classification (see Banet-Weiser, 2012; Salisbury & Pooley, 2017). In other words, these hijabers have become curators of their photographs that represent a distinct type of authenticity.

Adding to the difficulty in defining authenticity, self-presentation on Instagram tends to display an amplified reality or selves who differ from the actual people (Çadırcı & Güngör, 2016). Any measures in presenting self-portraits are, consciously or not, engaged with their impression management strategy to build appropriate images. Schmidt (2013) contends that impression management is not always intentionally used to manipulate self-presentation. It means social media users cannot necessarily control how their posts are interpreted. Through their self-portraits, the participants in this study endorse authenticity by identifying appropriate and inappropriate posts based on social norms and Islamic values to keep their modesty rather than manipulating their self-presentation.

Furthermore, as Uski and Lampinen (2016) found, authenticity in social networking sites is directed by social norms. They argue, "social norms guide individuals to ensure that their behavior is recorded as fully and truthfully as possible" (p. 461). In this study, it was found that our participants set the rules involving expectations about appropriate or inappropriate behavior in taking and sharing self-portraits based on social norms (i.e., *pencitraan*) as well as Islamic values (i.e., *riya* and *aurat*). These Indonesian hijabers thoughtfully looked at their posts and then sorted which messages and images were appropriate to share as part of their authenticity curation. For instance, they could not post their "wake-up" faces because they do not wear their hijab while sleeping, nor could they post bathroom mirror self-portraits like Kim Kardashian because, according to Islamic values, they cannot exhibit their *aurat*.

Restricting their complete freedom of expression in such ways could call into question whether these hijabers' images are less authentic than Kim Kardashian's because they keep their head and body covered. Conversely, by showing nude selfies, does Kim Kardashian become a fake person? These questions are somewhat difficult to answer given that one will never accurately know others' intentions, and the concept of authenticity is subjective "in the eye of the beholder" (Lobinger & Brantner, 2015, p. 1848). Therefore, the hijabers' reflection of authenticity does not have to be similar to others' interpretations of authenticity.

Additionally, various studies have shown that there is always a layer of appropriateness in terms of authenticity. This layer relates to what Hogan (2010) calls "the lowest common denominator" (p. 377). Hogan (2010) explains that there are two groups that must be considered when posting online:

Those for whom we seek to present an idealized front and those who may find this front problematic . . . one must add a hidden audience who are not the intended recipient of content but will have access to it as well. These individuals define the lowest common denominator of what is normatively acceptable. (p. 383)

In the context of the hijabers, the lowest common denominator became relevant when they realized that their posts represent themselves and their family or organization. Their posts could be accessed by audiences who are not the intended recipients and might ruin their family or organization reputation. On the one hand, these hijabers want to present authenticity to their primary audience, peers, and followers; on the other hand, they have to perform modesty to different audiences, such as daughters and wives. Therefore, it can be argued that this layer of authenticity is part of how the hijabers express their unique authenticity.

Another point to consider is that, as postulated by Salisbury and Pooley (2017), Instagram establishes a "creative authenticity" that highlights users' artistic self-expression. Most of these hijabers accentuate their creativity in posting self-portraits. For example, in Figure 2, Wanda shows her chubby cheeks through a reflection of her sunglasses.

This research also affirms Barker and Rodriguez's (2019) claim that members of the underrepresented group can express their authenticity and create an identity marker through their self-portraits. *Online authenticity* is a contested term, given that social media users are always aware that

they are posting to and speaking to an audience, and they have (to a degree) an online persona. As Thumim (2012) remarks, "Social media users may be unable to control their representations as these proliferate, change, and are changed by others" (p. 150). In this study, the hijabers' personas and Instagram posts based on social norms and Islamic values are arguably part of their expression of authenticity as collectivists. In other words, the hijabers are curating a version of authenticity that would be culturally acceptable. Still, others may contest this, and the degree of authenticity will remain empirically debatable.

Negotiation of Authenticity

Authenticity is a contentious domain in that perceptions of self-portraits vary from one culture to another. Regarding the self-portrait practice in Arab Gulf countries, Abokhodair, Hodges, and Vieweg (2017) reported that Saudis and Qataris, living in a collectivistic culture, consider expected norms and Islam morality when engaging with the practice of taking and sharing a self-portrait. They further note that Arab Gulf social media users participate in photo-sharing practices to "construct a collective self, distinct from an autonomous self" (Abokhodair et al., 2017, p. 696). Although photo-sharing practice and its relations to the authenticity of young women were not part of their study, Abokhodair and colleagues' (2017) study has amply evidenced how engagement in a self-portrait practice is different for individualist Westerners and collectivist Easterners.

Indonesian hijabers are concerned with being part of a collectivistic culture and stick to norms governing "proper" bodily comportment on Instagram (Baulch & Pramiyanti, 2018) and Islamic values, which are different from those Arab Gulf social media users. As the most populous Muslim country, Indonesia is not formally governed by Islamic law like its Arab Gulf counterparts and recognizes five other religions of its citizens. Indonesian Islam is influenced both by Westernization and Arabization and the invention of traditions that have taken the form of the authenticity of Indonesian Islam (van Bruinessen, 2018). In other words, Indonesian Muslims embrace a moderate stance and the country's ethnoreligious diversity and pluralism (Al Qurtuby, 2020).

As a country with a majority of moderate Muslims, the Islamic morality standard in Indonesia is not as strict as in the Arab Gulf countries. For example, while Arab Gulf women are not allowed to show their faces in the public space online and offline (Piela, 2010), Indonesian hijabers can expose their faces on Instagram. Yet, they must understand the rule in not performing *riya* and revealing their *aurat*. Such an understanding shapes a subset of the negotiation of the authenticity of Indonesian hijabers on Instagram. This form of authenticity is also a method of self-protection from public accusations and harassment. Duffy and Hund (2019) claim that to avoid potential online humiliation, women and other marginalized groups must carefully follow the line between visibility and vulnerability and navigate "authenticity bind" (p. 4983).

As fashion-conscious young women, the hijabers in the present study are often misunderstood by both their local social groups and society at large. In the Muslim community, hijabers are viewed as an exclusive group and accused of being fashionistas, or individuals who are obsessively devoted to fashion trends (Faiz, 2017). In other words, their appearance is too stylish and too luxurious, and attracts the male

gaze (Faiz, 2017; Umam & Altiria, 2010). This criticism is faced by Indonesian hijabers and other young Muslim women who choose to augment their veiling styles with fashion attributes (see Moors, 2013; Sandıkçı & Ger, 2005). Therefore, Indonesian hijabers' negotiation of authenticity that abides by social norms and Islamic values underlines their efforts to achieve acceptable authenticity.

Crucially, this study's findings contradict Kavakci and Kraeplin's (2016) study of Muslim women's self-presentation on social media. Investigating the self-presentation of Kuwaiti, British, and American high-profile hijabistas and lifestyle bloggers on Instagram, they discovered that the self-presentation practices were shaped mainly by Western norms, emphasizing their "fashionable body" as their identity performance. Kavakci and Kraeplin (2016) described London-based Dina Tokio using her Instagram to present her fashionable identity as a modest fashion trendsetter for Western countries. Although Dina Tokio promotes modest fashion, her images and captions could be perceived as tending to be business-driven, thus intentionally creating a particular self-image centered on business development.

In this regard, the difference between Indonesian hijabers' self-portraits and those in Kavakci and Kraeplin's (2016) study is that the Indonesian hijabers are more interested in presenting unique authenticity guided by social norms and Islamic values. Respecting social norms and Islamic values also helps hijabers conform to the appropriateness of taking and sharing self-portraits in Indonesian collectivistic culture.

Conclusions

This study highlights that Indonesian hijabers, while respecting the artistic filters, beauty, and affordances of Instagram, share the more mundane moments of their everyday lives while negotiating authenticity. In contrast to how Western notions often exaggerate individual autonomy, as either Indonesian and Muslim women, the hijabers must position themselves in specific ways to meet collectivist expectations.

As indicated throughout this article, there is always a layer of appropriateness in authenticity. On the one hand, these hijabers present authenticity to their primary audience, peers, and followers. On the other hand, they also perform modesty to different audiences (i.e., family). All their Instagram posts were layered with this awareness of the audience and the proper behavior to present on Instagram.

This study does not claim that these hijabers' self-portraits reflect impeccable selves. Much as young Westerners do, these hijabers construct poses, such as looking into the camera, choosing a setting and props, and selecting the type of shot. However, by referring to the social norms and Islamic values, the participants set the boundaries of authenticity, which involves expectations about appropriate or inappropriate behavior of Indonesian Muslim women in social media. This means that the hijabers are expected to conform to the ideals of the society and their in-groups to which they belong. Therefore, this study sheds light on how self-portrait gives rise to unique authenticity and posits an understanding of how self-portrait operates in a collectivistic culture.

This study also contributes a novel perspective to the growing area of social media research, more specifically to incorporating authenticity and religious values, which brings the views of an underrepresented

social and cultural group in this scholarly area of study: Indonesian hijabers. Future research on audience responses to Indonesian hijabers' posts can be conducted to understand how Instagram's followers perceive the culturally expected authenticity.

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