

Muslim women who wear headscarves face workplace discrimination in US: study

September 28 2010

Professor Sonia Ghumman from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Shidler College of Business has completed an intensive marketing research on the effects of Muslim women who wear hijabs (head scarves) in the U.S.

Ghumman's research examined the expectations that [women](#) who wear hijabs have regarding their employment opportunities. "We surveyed 219 American Muslim women on their job seeking experience," said Ghumman. "The findings reveal that Hijabis are not only aware of their stigma of being Muslim, but also expect to be treated differently in the workplace as a result of this stigma."

The survey found 30 percent of women who wear hijabs were concerned about applying for work, 88 percent said they were not willing to take off their hijabs when applying for work, 63 percent said they were aware of incidences where women wearing hijabs were refused work, and 22 percent said they were personally denied work because of their attire.

Ghumman's research also cites several variables that may contribute to the lack of employment opportunities. For example, employers shy away from hiring Hijabis if the job requires high public contact such as a food server or salesperson, requires a certain kind of attire for health and safety reasons, or if the job is an executive/managerial position.

According to Ghumman, Muslim women wear the hijab as a religious requirement and expression of their Muslim identity. Yet, many Muslim

women feel they are stereotyped as unprofessional, archaic, and even as a terrorist.

Unlike other religious groups who wear religious attire, Hijabis are increasingly subjected to discrimination in the workplace. According to a report by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2003), there was a 153 percent increase in [workplace discrimination](#) claims by Muslims after the 9/11 attack in New York City.

Provided by University of Hawaii at Manoa

Citation: Muslim women who wear headscarves face workplace discrimination in US: study (2010, September 28) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-09-muslim-women-headscarves-workplace-discrimination.html>

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