

THE PATTERNS OF VEILING ARTICLES AMONG FEMALE ACADEMICIANS IN THREE UNIVERSITIES OF MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the patterns of using veiling articles such as Scarf, Turban, Telekung, Mini-Telekung, Selendang, Coats, Abaya and Niqab among female academicians in three universities of Malaysia. The research was designed with a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis. The method of data assemblage was survey of all the available online profiles of the female faculty academicians of three universities of Malaysia. The three universities of Malaysia includes Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST), University of Technology Malaysia (UTM) and Tun Hussein Onn University of Malaysia (UTHM). The data collected was documented with the help of a checklist developed by the researchers. The data collected was statistically analysed to test the hypothesis. The increasing trend of veiling among females is likely to results in the different patterns of using veiling articles. The veil is also commonly observed among female academicians whereas the research on the using of veil among female academicians is not commonly observed. The importance of this research is that the researcher is focusing on online profiles of female academicians available at the official websites of universities of Malaysia to explore veiling patterns among them. It is observed that 90% of female academicians are Muslims as compared to 10% female academicians as Non-Muslims. It is also observed in previous research that 89% of female academicians are using veiling articles as compared to 11% of female academicians are not using any veiling articles. It is argued that 2% of female academicians in three universities are using veiling article Scarf as compared to the 10% female academicians are using Turban. It is also observed that 38% of female faculty academicians are using Telekung as compared to 48% of female academicians

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are using Mini-telekung. Selendang is not observed among female faculty academicians in three universities of Malaysia. It is also observed that 3% of female academicians in three universities of Malaysia are using Abaya as compared to the 15% of female academicians are using Coat. The Niqab is observed 0% among female faculty academicians. The 11% of female faculty academicians are observed not using any veiling article in three universities of Malaysia. The results show a statistically significant association between religious status and veiling patterns. Therefore, the study accepted the research hypothesis (H1) that the patterns of using veiling articles among Female faculty academicians in three universities of Malaysia are significantly associated with their religious status. The study suggests for study of the similar patterns on a larger sample of population from a large number of universities in Malaysia for more authentic findings.

Keywords: *Malaysia, Female Faculty Academicians, Universities, Veiling Articles.*

Introduction

The veil is a simple headscarf that hides the face hair and neck. The veil can take any form of veiling (i.e. Scarf, Turban, Telekung, Mini-telekung, Selendang, Abaya, Coat and Niqab) as far as the few part or complete part of the hair is covered. The veil is mainly concerned to Islamic cultural expectation and it is obligated in Islam to cover and hide your females at public places. The veil is considered as the symbol of modesty and protection from sexual abuse and glance of strange men.

The growing trend of fashion has influenced on using of different veiling articles among females. The articles observed among females are named according to their culture. Therefore, in Malaysia different patterns of veiling articles i.e. Tudung (Scarf/ Hijab), Turban (a piece of cloth used inside the Scarf), Telekung (Covers the hair, neck, ears shoulders and bosom), Mini-telekung (Covers the hair, neck and ears), Selendang (short shawl or scarf which shows some hair at the forehead and portion of the neck), Coat (covers upper lower part of

the body from face), Baju Kurung (long tunic top and floor length skirt).

This study focuses on all the female academicians of three universities of Malaysia. The three universities of Malaysia include Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST), University of Technology Malaysia (UTM) and Tun Hussein Onn University of Malaysia (UTHM). It is observed in previous research of three universities of Malaysia that 90% of female academicians are Muslims as compared to 10% female academicians as Non-Muslims. It is also observed that 89% of female academicians are using veiling articles as compared to 11% of female academicians are not using any veiling articles.

This research paper explores patterns of using different veiling articles among female faculty academicians in three universities of Malaysia. The paper also describes the percentages and frequencies in the form of pie chart of observed veiling articles among faculty academicians.

The main objective of this research study is to explore the patterns of using veiling articles (observed from the online profiles) among female academicians at three universities of Malaysia. Researchers proposed the following hypothesis on the basis of the above research objective.

Hi: The patterns of using veiling articles of Female faculty academicians in three universities of Malaysia are significantly associated with their religious status.

Literature Review

The veil is a kind of clothing which covers body from head to ankle. It (veil) refers to the clothing which covers and conceals the body from head to ankles, with the exception of the face, hands and feet (Hoodfar, 1991: p. 7). The veil can be a simple headscarf or a fabric

that hides much of the face, hair and neck, or it can be part of a larger cloak that shields the body and face, and mesh over the eyes (Hochel, 2013: p. 41). Veil is “A Muslim head covering. The veil can take any form of veiling (i.e. burqa, niqab, chador, and headscarf) as long as the hair is completely covered” (Nayebzadah: 2010, p.56).

The veil has become a totalizing symbol of Muslim gendered practices (Doblado, 2012: 5) and hijab is Islamic head covering (Farhatullah, Ahmed, Sajjad, Ali, and Shah, 2014: p. 105). Hijab is traditional Muslim women’s head, face, or body covering, of numerous varieties across time and space, often referred to as the “veil” (Human Rights Commission, 2005: p.8). Hijab is derived from the root h-j-b; its verbal form hajaba translates as ‘to veil, to seclude, to screen, to conceal, to form a separation, to mask’. Hijab translates as ‘cover, wrap, curtain, veil, screen, partition’ (El Guindi 1999, cited in Boulanouar, 2006: p.144).

Hijab in different bilingual dictionary means “veil, screen, or curtain” (Addwesh, N.d, p. 7). Hijab means is a headscarf worn by Muslim women; conceals the hair and neck and usually has a face veil that covers the face except for the eyes (Latiff and Alam, 2013: p. 50). The veiling (hijab) or seclusion of women in some Islamic societies, customarily practiced in order to maintain standards of modesty” (Free Dictionary cited in Latiff and Alam, 2013: p. 50). The Hijab is essentially a scarf like piece of cloth worn by Muslim women in some Islamic cultures to cover the hair as an expression of piety based on interpretations of Quran directives for modesty (Latiff and Alam, 2013: p. 51).

Although, Malay women cover because of fashion and convention and not because of religious beliefs (Hochel, 2013: 52). Western inspired clothing with immodest fabrics, colors and cuts being passed off as Hijab fashion today (Latiff, & Alam, 2013: 50). Fashion is only a side benefit and not the motivation for veiling (Hochel, 2013: 52).

In Malaysia hijab is called the tudung (Hochel, 2013: p. 41) and it (tudung) is a symbol of devotion (Hochel, 2013: 48). The tudung is generally worn with the baju kurung, a traditional dress with long tunic top and floor length skirt. These dresses are typically brightly colored and stylish (Hochel, 2013: p.44). There are different patterns of veiling observed in Malaysia such as “Tudung as a general word for headpiece coverings; Mini-telekung commonly seen headpiece which covers the hair, neck and ears; Telekung which also covers the shoulders and bosom; Selendang a short shawl or scarf which shows some hair at the forehead and portions of the neck” (Hochel, 2013: p.44-45). Traditional clothing for Muslim women in Malaysia is the Baju Kurung- a Malay dress with long skirt, long sleeves and tight neck...and to cover one’s head with a scarf or a small head dress, the mini-telekung” (Lie, 2000: p.33), or to wear loose-fitting long tunics over sarongs (Ong, 1990: p.261 cited in Boulanouar, 2006: p.139).

Malaysia is a country located in South East Asia. The country is divided into two geographical parts: Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia (Borneo). Peninsular Malaysia shares a land and maritime border with Thailand and maritime borders with Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia. East Malaysia shares land and maritime borders with Brunei and Indonesia and a maritime border with the Philippines. The capital city is Kuala Lumpur (Wikipedia, 2014). The country is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural where the Malays who are primarily Muslims, comprises 50.4% of the population. The rest of the population is Chinese 23.7%, indigenous 11%, Indians 7.1% and other ethnicities 7.8% (CIA World Factbook, 2014). Malaysia is not officially an Islamic state, Islam is the official religion (Yousif, n.d: 31). The majority of the population (i.e. 61.3%) is Muslim and the rest of the religions followed are Buddhist 19.8%, Christian 9.2%, Hindu 6.3%, Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions 1.3%, other 0.4%, none 0.8% and unspecified 1% (CIA World Factbook, 2014).

According to the earlier research conducted on three universities of Malaysia (Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST),

University of Technology Malaysia (UTM) and Tun Hussein Onn University of Malaysia (UTHM) that 90% of female faculty academicians are Muslims and 10% of female faculty academicians are Non-Muslim among all the faculty academicians. From which 89% of female faculty academicians were found using veiling articles, thus categorized as “veiled” as compared to 11% of female faculty academicians who are found not using any of the veiling articles and categorized as “unveiled” (Shah and Tabassum, 2015: p.15).

In Malaysia women used to dress modestly as it is customary in this country. According to local culture women tend to cover themselves from head to feet. In this country particularly women are observed to wear long skirts, shirts with sleeves and headscarf. Women are wearing veil particularly because of social and religious expectations. Mostly veil is observed among females in general and in University going females, in particular.

Hence, this paper highlights the patterns of using veiling articles among female academicians in three Universities of Malaysia. The study focuses on association of different veiling articles of these academicians. The study is done in terms of growing trend of veiling among females, in general, and patterns of using veiling articles, in particular.

Research Methodology

This research paper aim to analyse the patterns of using veiling articles among the female academicians working in three Universities of Malaysia. The three universities selected for this research study include Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST), University of Technology Malaysia (UTM) and Tun Hussein Onn University of Malaysia (UTHM). The universe of the study is comprises of all the female faculty academicians working in these universities. The data is collected from the online updated profiles available on official websites of these universities of Malaysia. The

researcher has mainly focused on all the female academicians updated online profiles and no any male academician's online updated profile is visited by the researcher. A total of 164 cases of women academicians were included in data analysis; including 79 women from UTHM, 76 women from UTM and 9 women from MUST

The research is designed to be conducted with the quantitative approach to data collection and analysis. The Online updated profiles of female faculty members on official web pages of Universities of Malaysia are used as primary data. The data was collected from three of Malaysian Universities. The arguments are based on primary data collected through a survey of online profiles of the female faculty academicians available on the official websites of the three universities. A checklist was developed by the researchers for the recording of data on different variables from the online profiles of the faculty members. The collected data through checklist was coded and entered into the computer. Computer software like MS Excel and SPSS are being used for data entry and analysis. The frequencies and percentages were calculated.

The data analysis and findings are presented in the form of graphs, tables and textual interpretations for making it easy and understandable for the readers. The data analysis shows the frequencies for the patterns of using veiling articles of female academicians.

Data Presentation and Analysis

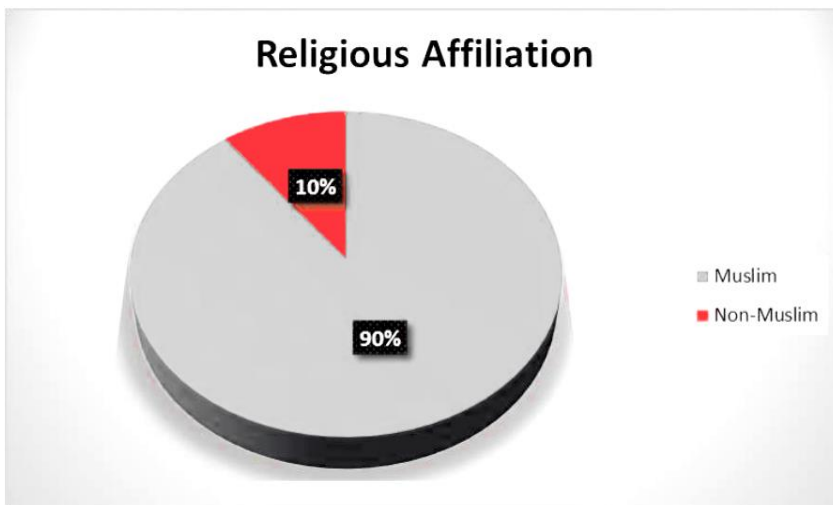
The research paper was aimed to explore the patterns of using veiling articles among the female faculty members of three universities of Malaysia. Consequently, first section of this paper presents the data taken from the research article of Madeeha Shah and Dr. Naima Tabassum that explains the religious status (Muslim/Non-Muslim) of female faculty academicians in three universities of Malaysia. Second section deals with the data analysis on different patterns of using

veiling articles by the female faculty academicians of three universities of Malaysia in the paper.

Religious Status of Malaysian Women Academicians (Muslim/Non-Muslim)

Malaysia has a multi-ethnic population; similarly, the women faculty members in three universities of Malaysia are also found belonging from different ethnic and religious groups. For the easy understanding of the reader and to best serve the purpose of this paper the data on religious status of women faculty was reduced into two major categories of religious affiliations: 1) Muslims Malaysian women university faculty members, and 2) Non- Muslim Malaysian women university faculty members.

According to the Pie chart presented below, it is observed that 90% of female faculty academicians are found Muslim and 10% of female faculty academicians are Non-Muslim among all the faculty members of three Malaysian universities as shown in their profiles randomly selected and visited through internet. This chart shows that majority of female faculty academicians working in the universities included in this study are Muslim (Shah, Tabassum, 2015).



The Patterns of Using Veiling Articles by Malaysian Female Academicians

We have discussed above in the literature review that in Malaysia there are different patterns of veiling articles used. This section present data analysis regarding the use of different patterns of veiling articles among female faculty academicians of three Malaysian universities studied here. The patterns of using veiling articles include the practice of wearing Scarf, Turban, Telekung, Mini Telekung, Selendang, Coat, Abaya and Niqab. For easy understanding of the readers all the data collected regarding use of the veiling article listed above by the female faculty academicians is recorded and analysed according to their religious affiliation and use of particular veiling article.

i) Scarf

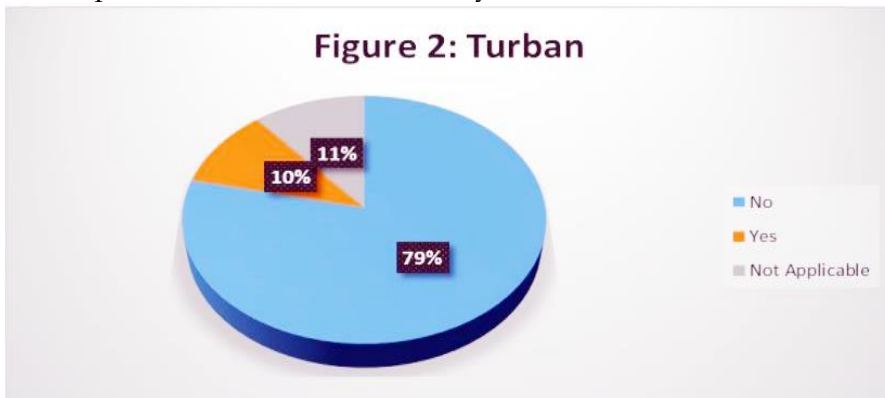
Scarf is a piece of cloth covering head and neck but shows some hair. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 1, it is observed that 87% of female faculty academicians were found not using scarf



as compared to 2% of female faculty academicians who were found using scarf and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling articles. This chart shows that majority of female faculty academicians are not using scarf as a veiling article.

ii) Turban

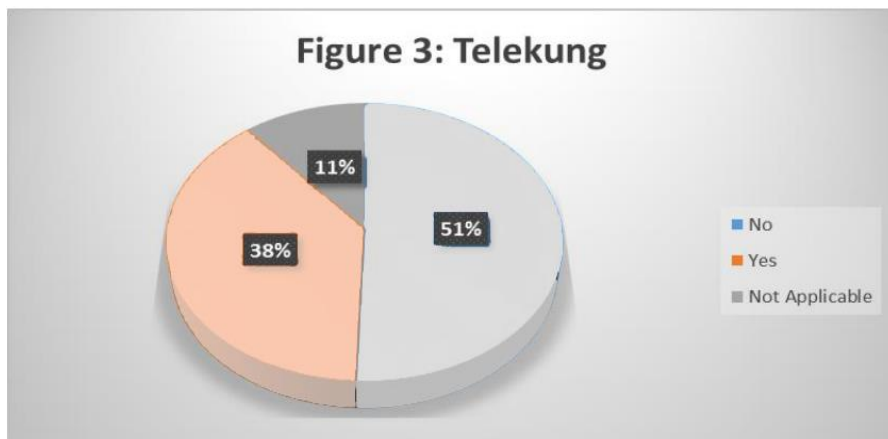
Turban is a piece of cloth covering forehead along with scarf. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 2, it is observed that 79% of female faculty academicians were found not using turban as compared to 10% of female faculty academicians who were found



using turban and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling articles. This chart shows that majority of female faculty academicians are not using turban as a veiling article.

iii) Telekung

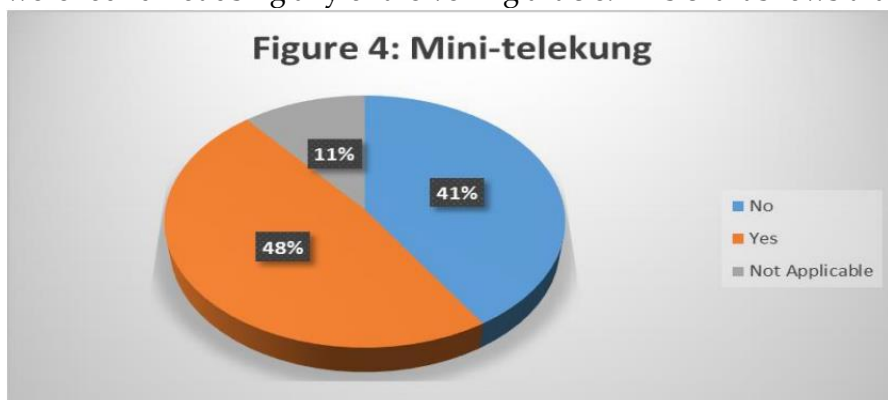
Telekung is a piece of cloth that covers the shoulders and bosom. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 3, it is observed that 51% of female faculty academicians were found not using telekung as compared to 38% of female faculty academicians who were found using telekung and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling articles. This chart shows that



majority of female faculty academicians are not using telekung as a veiling article.

iv) Mini-Telekung

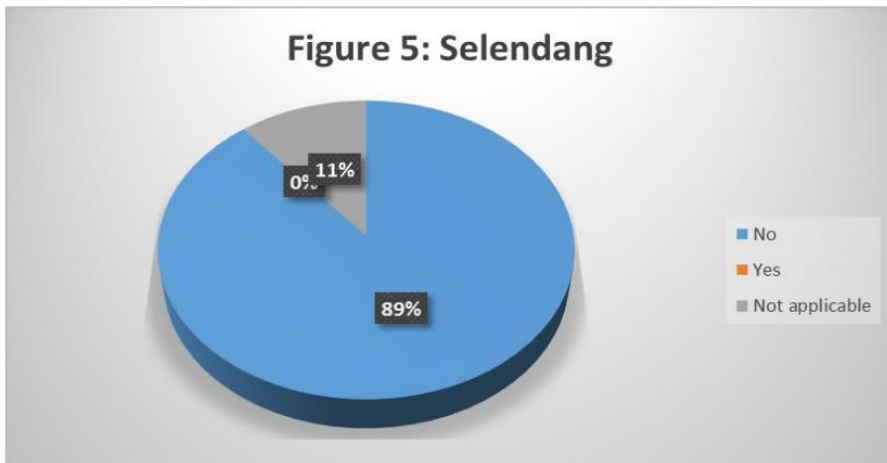
Mini-telekung is a piece of cloth that covers hair, neck, and ears. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 4, it is observed that 41% of female faculty academicians were found not using mini-telekung as compared to 48% of female faculty academicians were found using mini-telekung and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling article. This chart shows that



majority of female faculty academicians are using mini-telekung as a veiling article.

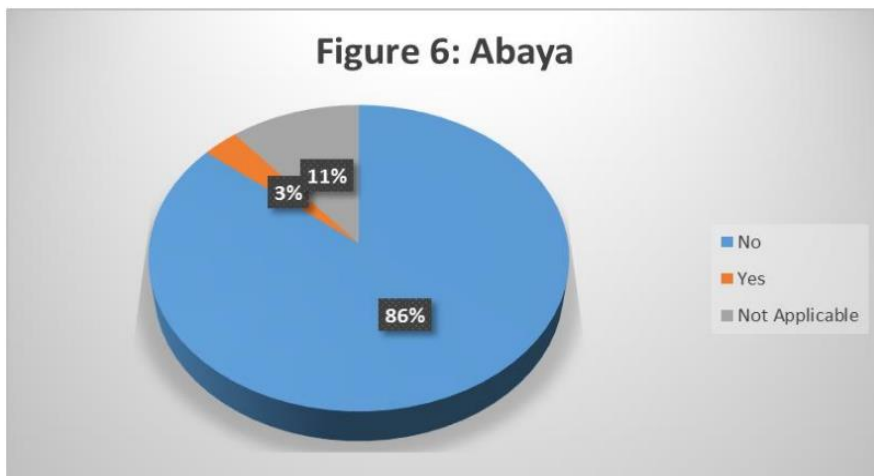
v) Selendang

Selendang is a short shawl or scarf which shows some hair at the forehead and portion of neck. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 5, it is observed that 89% of female faculty academicians were found not using selendang as compared to 0% of female faculty academicians were found using selendang and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling article. This chart shows that majority of female faculty academicians are found not using selendang as a veiling article.



vi) Abaya

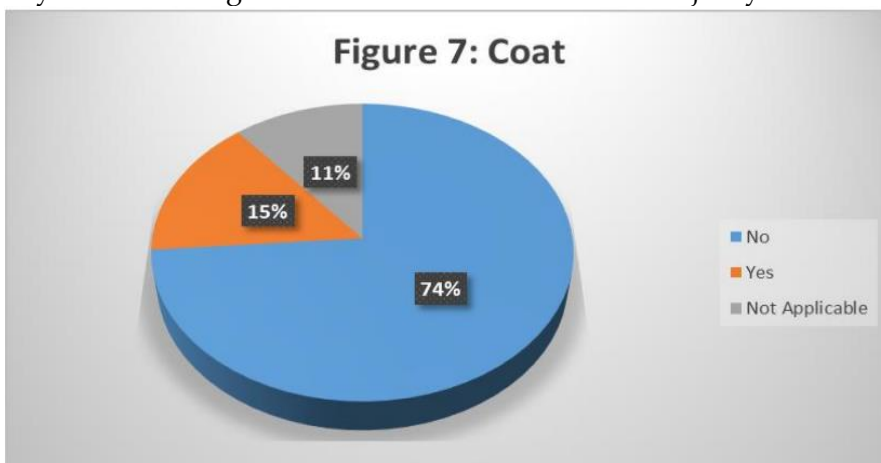
Abaya is a garment which covers the upper lower body from head to toe. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 6, it is observed that 86% of female faculty academicians were found not using abaya as compared to 3% of female faculty academicians were found using abaya and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling article. This chart shows that majority of female faculty academicians are found not using abaya as



a veiling article.

vii) Coat

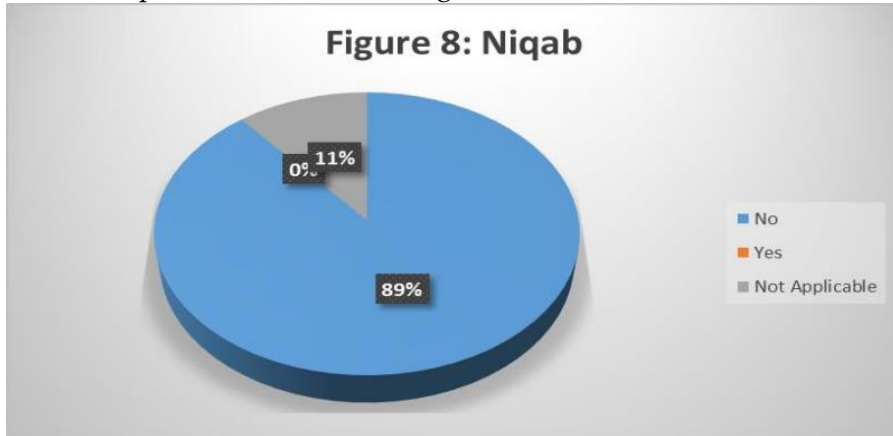
Coat is a garment which covers upper lower part of body from face. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 7, it is observed that 74% of female faculty academicians were found not using coat as compared to 15% of female faculty academicians were found using coat and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling article. This chart shows that majority of female



faculty academicians are found not using coat as a veiling article.

viii) Niqab

Niqab covers the face but leaves the eyes uncovered. According to the Pie chart presented below in Figure 8, it is observed that 89% of



female faculty academicians were found not using niqab as compared to 0% of female faculty academicians were found using Niqab and 11% of female faculty academicians were found not using any of the veiling article. This chart shows that majority of female faculty academicians are found not using Niqab as a veiling article.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The main aim of the research study was to explore the different patterns of using veiling articles among female faculty academicians in three universities of Malaysia. The data was collected by visiting online profiles of female faculty members available on Universities official websites and recording the observation on a checklist developed by the researchers. Malaysia is a Muslim country and containing of 61.3% Muslims. It is observed in three universities of Malaysia that there are 90% Muslims and 10% Non-Muslims. The veiled females are 89% of observed cases as compared to 11% of female academicians are not using veiling articles (Shah, Tabassum, 2015).

Further, the pie charts were developed to test the research hypothesis. The charts done to explore the percentage and frequencies of different patterns of using veiling articles such as Scarf, Turban, Telekung, Mini-telekung, Selendang, Abaya, Coat and Niqab among female faculty academicians in three universities of Malaysia. The result shows that the veiling article Scarf is only observed among 2% of female faculty members, Turban is observed among 10% of female faculty members, telekung is observed among 38%, Selendang is observed among none of the female faculty member whereas mini-telekung is observed among 48% of female faculty members in three universities of Malaysia. Abaya is observed among 3% of total observed veiled females in three universities of Malaysia. The coat is observed among 15% of female faculty members and none of the female academician was observed using Niqab in three universities of Malaysia.

The researchers have definite restriction of assembling data from small number of profiles, and from three universities due to accessibility of restricted resource and time. It is suggested to conduct this research on a larger number of female academicians from a large number of universities in Malaysia for more authentic and reliable findings. It is also suggested that this research is only conducted in one dimension that is patterns of veiling articles but one can also conduct this research in different dimensions like causes and consequences of veil among female academicians.

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