

‘We Only Smile’: A Study of Perceived Discrimination among Asian Female Muslim Tourists

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Abstract

This chapter examines how Asian female Muslim tourists encountered negative and discriminatory experiences when they interacted with the locals during holidays in Europe, particularly The Netherlands. This is especially the case for female Muslims who wear the veil. The negative and discriminatory experiences encountered by these female Muslim tourists include gazes from locals, treated unfairly, negative remarks, and fall under suspicions. However, in hardly any case, these female Muslims "labelled" the event as discrimination and associated it to their identity as a Muslim. These female Muslim tourists employed a variety of coping strategies that comprise direct confrontation, accepting & ignoring discrimination, apologizing, justifying discrimination & thinking positively, modifying behaviour. There is a general attitude among these tourists about negotiating the negatively and discriminatory experiences: that they want to deal with it in a subtle way, such as by smiling.

Keywords

perceived discrimination;
 intercultural interaction;
 tourist-host interaction



I. Introduction

Tourists can be disappointed during their travel. One of the factors that influence tourist dissatisfaction is discrimination. Perceived discrimination is the feeling in which people feel excluded, restricted, or favoured based on one particular identity (Kloek, Buijs & Boersema, 2016). Perceived discrimination can be seen as an identity specific constraint and often is linked to identity with clearly visible characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, and religion (Kloek et al., 2016).

Particularly in The Netherlands, González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe (2008) stated that there is an on-going cultural war between Dutch and Muslim in which Islam is defined as a religion that seriously threatens Dutch society, national identity, and culture. Kloek, Peter, Stijmsma (2013) found that perceived discrimination is part of Muslim women's everyday life in The Netherlands. Their finding shows that Muslim women who wear a veil experience discrimination more than women who do not wear a veil. This can be related to the study of Hofstede (1997, in Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p.41), who indicated that people, in this case, hosts, often develop the perception of tourist by looking at the apparent symbol such as clothing. In this respect, Muslim women more evidently demonstrate their identity as a Muslim due to their clothes, for example, by wearing a veil and regarding the previous studies showing that women were more vulnerable to experience discrimination (Sharaievska, Stodolska, Shinew, & Kim, 2010).; Walsh, 2009; Litchmore, 2014).



Figure 1. *Typical Asian Female Muslim Tourists*

Taking into account the fact that Muslims in the Netherlands encounter discriminatory experiences in their everyday life, it is likely to assume those female Muslim tourists may also experience a discriminatory event. Given the fact that perceived discrimination of tourists can be detrimental to businesses in the tourism and decreased the tourists' attractiveness of one destination (Walsh, 2009), it is unfortunate that this circumstance is underdeveloped (Ye, Zhang Qiu, & Yuen, 2012).; Walsh, 2009).

The advantage of the tourism sector lies in its ability to increase foreign exchange and to drive various other business sectors such as the home industry. Thus, developed countries and developing countries continue to develop and improve the quality of their country's tourism (Amin et al, 2019). Tourism is one of the determinants of national economic growth because it can influence the growth of other sectors in the economy (Gokovali & Bahar, 2006) and also grows very fast during this decade (Dogru & Bulut, 2018; Wu et al., 2000). Sustainable tourism development can be completed by creating opportunities through networking and cooperation with service providers, where stakeholder engagement, the development of locally oriented codes of conduct, and local government participation are crucial factors for sustainable tourism success (Welford & Ytterhus in Nurlina, 2020).

The purpose of the chapter was to explore whether female Muslim tourists, in this case, Asian, encounter any discriminatory experiences while having interaction with the locals during their holiday. People who experience perceived discrimination subsequently employ coping strategies as a resistance (Kloek et al., 2013; Livengood & Stodolska, 2004; Peleman, 2003; Walsh, 2009; Walsh & McGuire, 2007); therefore the various type of negotiation employed would be examined.

Take a constructivist perspective; this chapter explores whether Asian female Muslim tourists in Europe, especially in The Netherlands, encounter any discriminatory actions during a holiday. The chapter begins with an introduction then followed with the theoretical framework, results, and discussion & conclusion to sum up the whole chapter. The theoretical framework employed perceived discrimination dan coping strategies theory. The result section starts with a description of the interaction between the participants and the Dutch locals during the trip. Then it continues with the tourists' negative experiences and the analysis if they associate the negative experiences to perceived discrimination. Finally, the response and coping strategies of the tourists regarding the event are provided.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Perceived Discrimination

Discrimination is defined by the United Nations (Sharaievska et al., 2010) as 'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.' Major et al. (2002) asserted that two factors contribute to the perception of discrimination, which concerns first how unfairly the individual or group is treated, and other deals with the extent to which the treatment is based on group membership. "When people are discriminated against, they are not treated on their individual merits but rather are treated stereotypically in terms of their membership in a social group" (Kloek et al., 2013, p.407).

People categorize individuals based on their visible characteristics that are common to members of multiple groups, for instance, someone can be "a woman", "old", or "Muslim" and each of these categorizations can form the basis for discrimination (Kloek et al., 2013). "These categories that are perceived as meaningful in a society change over time" (Kloek et al., 2013, p.407). The categorization based on religion, namely "Islam" draws a lot of attention nowadays. As stated in Kloek et al. (2013), Van Nieuwkerk (2004, p.408) argued that Islam has only recently become the primary source of a clash between "Western civilization" and "the other." Muslim communities became the target of increased hatred in many European countries, after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Towers in the United States (Brüß, 2008).

Clothes are one of the visible components that could be the inception of discrimination. Muslim women in western society often draw the public's attention mainly because they have a different way of dressing. According to Wagner, Sen, Permanadeli, & Howarth, C. S. (2012, p.522), " ...the veil has become one of the most contested and symbolic motifs in the Western imagery of the East and Islam". They argue that the veil had become a significant marker of Muslim identity, while Islam itself is relatively heterogeneous and interwoven with different local customs and beliefs. The veil somewhat makes Muslim women being stereotyped, often as "backward, oppressed and victims of a barbaric society, and closely aligned to terrorist in some way" (Wagner & Howarth, 2012, p.533-534). Thus, women with a veil are more likely to be confronted with discrimination as compared to those who do not wear the veil.

Empirical investigations demonstrated that Muslims had experienced a certain degree of exclusion and discrimination in public places, such as parks, restaurants, and schools. Most recently, Kloek et al. (2013) investigated Moroccan Muslim women in the Netherlands and found out most of the women experienced discriminatory actions both in their everyday activities in public spaces, as well as more specifically in leisure activities. These women confronted "low-level" discrimination actions, such as unpleasant looks, disapproval, being made to feel unwelcome in a place, and negative remarks. Unexpectedly, the researchers mentioned that the experienced discrimination was mainly based on categorizations related to the country of origin and was only to a lesser scope associated with religion. Although the state of birth was the dominant reason for discrimination, Kloek et al. (2013) revealed that those who wear the veil experienced discrimination in public space much more often than those who do not wear it.

Furthermore, Brüß (2008) has done a study among three nationalities, Turkish Muslims from Berlin, Bangladeshi Muslims from London, and Moroccan Muslims from Madrid. His findings show that perceptions of discrimination among Muslims in these Western European cities are a common phenomenon. However, the Bangladeshi Muslims in London reported perceived discrimination less than Moroccan and Turkish. Peleman (2003) also said that specific restrictions obstructed Muslim women's participation in public spaces. The study was conducted among Moroccan women in a neighbourhood in Antwerp, Belgium, and reported that these women were having difficulties in managing activities out of the house due to the territorial behaviours of dominant groups, such as continuous racist remarks. Livengood and Stodolska (2004) indicate that discrimination has affected leisure of Muslim immigrants in The United States through experience in leisure-related setting and while engaging in leisure activities, 'by restricting the range of available options and co-participants, by affecting their willingness to participate in recreational activities, and by limiting their freedom of mobility, travel, timing, and location of activities' (Livengood and Stodolska, 2004, p.183). Most discrimination experienced by the participants was of non-violent nature, including bad looks, verbal abuse, as well as social isolation. Litchmore & Safdar (2015) researched in Canada and reported that overall Muslim-Canadians participants experienced moderate levels of perceived discrimination in public areas such as the University, stores, and banks, and in their personal communities. They also found that women perceived greater discrimination than Muslim men.

It is essential to acknowledge that discrimination that is perceived by female Muslim tourists can be different for every person. According to Kloek et al. (2013), perceptions of being discriminated against also depended on someone's attitude and personality. People who encounter similar discriminatory experiences might not perceive in the same way. In this study, if and what kind of discrimination female Muslim tourists in Europe, mostly in the Netherlands experience was examine. Do female Muslims from Asia also encounter discriminatory experiences?

2.2 Negotiation of Discrimination

Being the target of discrimination can be frustrating and dissatisfying. If individuals are mistreated, they can actively react by employing different coping strategies (Pearlin, 1982, in Walsh, 2009, p. 638). Kloek, et al. (2013) studied perceived discrimination among fifteen Muslim women in The Netherlands, in which most of them were Moroccan descent. They distinguish five coping strategies in dealing with perceived discrimination in everyday-leisure activities experienced by Moroccan Muslim women in the Netherlands. Those strategies are justification, direct confrontation, accepting discrimination, modifying leisure behaviour, and reducing leisure participation. These negotiation strategies do not exclude one another, and several approaches may be used simultaneously. Kloek et al. (2013) explained that the context and their mood also determined respondents' ability to employ a strategy, and not only based on the actual perceived discrimination.

According to Walsh (2009), someone is regarded as "disadvantaged" when the group which they belong to is a potential target of discrimination from the advantaged groups or majorities. For example, women (e.g., Taylor, 2005), medical tourists (e.g., Ye et al., 2012), gay and lesbians (e.g., Walsh, 2009), as well as Muslim, are known to be subjected to discrimination. Walsh (2009) explored coping discrimination strategies employed by consumers with limited physical ability and gay and lesbians. He (2009) classified the findings into three categories based on the research of Stephen and

Gwinner (1998, in Walsh, 2009): 1) avoidance, 2) problem-focused coping and 3) emotion-focused dealing.

People who experience discrimination respond in different ways, even if they experience a similar discriminatory event. Someone who perceives discriminated can just ignore and accept the situation (Kloek et al., 2013; Walsh, 2009), or do some more defensive actions such as having a direct confrontation, mild verbal protest, and even formal complaint (Kloek et al., 2013; Walsh, 2009). However, instead of counter-attacking the discriminator, some people choose to engage in negative word of mouth by telling their unfavourable experiences to relatives or relations to prevent them from having the same experiences (Walsh, 2009).

Apart from that, discriminated individuals also may try to justify the discriminatory action by, for instance, acknowledging the personal condition of the discriminator (Kloek et al., 2013). Some negotiate discrimination by modifying their leisure activities and reducing leisure participants with typical native activities (Kloek et al., 2013). The others express their discriminatory experiences by telling them that their trust, satisfaction, and loyalty are decreased due to discrimination (Walsh, 2009).

III. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Negative Experiences and the Perceived Discrimination

During their holiday, tourists reported some negative experiences when interacting with the host. The interactions can take the form of superficial interactions such as smiling, gazing, friendly greetings, asking for help. It can also take the form of more economical and commercial communications such as when the participants doing business transactions, interacting with a bus driver, airport officials, and ticket checker in the trains. Sometimes the interactions can take the form of more social interactions when the participants and the locals engaged in a more personal conversation that usually happened in the trains or buses.

Female Muslim tourists reported negative experiences, mostly on superficial and commercial interactions. The experiences ranged from being gazed, treated unfairly, negative remarks, and fall under suspicion. The tourists rarely declared negative experiences as discrimination. The following section provides an overview of various negative experiences encountered by the participants during a holiday and if they associate these with discrimination.

3.2. Negative Experiences

a. Gaze From Locals

Gazing and staring from the locals are the most common experiences encountered. Tourists reported being subjected to the gaze when they were in what they called "the wrong place". The respondents got strange looks mainly in places where Muslims are rarely found, for instance, areas that serve anything that conflicts their beliefs such as alcoholic drinks, marijuana, or services related to the sex act.

b. Trated Unfaory

Other negative experiences encountered by the participants are related to unfair treatment. This includes being rebuked, refused, and ignored. Lack of awareness, "Not belong to the place", and the language barrier was believed to rationales why these participants having experienced being treated unfairly.

c. Negative remarks or disapproval

These female Muslim tourists experienced negative remarks and disapproval. It was very likely that the negative comments got were associated with tourist's identity as a Muslim since it was evident from the way that the tourists dress.

d. Fall under suspicion

The female Muslim tourists were frightened more if they fell under suspicion compared to the other negative events experienced. Most of the events were taking place at the airport, particularly when the officials interrogated female Muslims. Unlike the different negative experiences, the participants could easily attribute these experiences to their identity, their way to dress, and their nationality. The likely to be checked more on their documents after showing passport was worsening the experience.

3.3. Perceived Discrimination

We have been discussed the negative experiences of the respondents. In this section, you will see to what extent those negative experiences can be linked to perceived discrimination, and based on what discrimination, then it takes place.

Perceived discrimination is defined as all actions which involve some kind of exclusion, rejection, or preferences based on the categorization or membership in a social group (Kloek et al., 2013). It can be found on gender (Peleman, 2003), ethnicity (Sharaievska et al., 2010), sexuality (Walsh, 2009), disability (Ye et al., 2012), social class (Major et al., 2002), and religion (Kloek et al., 2013). The participants have discussed many negative experiences; however, in hardly any case, they explicitly put the label "discrimination" on these negative experiences. Yet, they attributed the experiences to their individual characteristics related to their identity as a Muslim woman, for instance, and as such, these experiences can be described as perceived discrimination (Kloek, 2015).

It is noted that the subtler discrimination can be linked to more superficial interactions between the participants and the locals. For instance, the participants got unpleasant looking or had been looked in a strange way when they had eye contact with the locals in the trains. While more economical or commercial interactions can be related to harsher discrimination. For example, when some participants got a refusal when they were about buying something or in the airport where most participants regarded it as the most discriminatory place during the holiday because they got more checked. The harsher discrimination also experienced by the participant who was being expelled by an authority for entering a museum in Copenhagen.

Many participants had difficulties in judging whether the unfair treatment experienced was due to discrimination. More specifically, they had difficulty in judging whether it was because of their veil; whether it was because they are Asian; or whether it was because of individual characteristics of the perpetrators.

Similar to the study of Kloek et al. (2013), religion did not play the most critical role in experiencing discrimination for these Indonesian female Muslims. The participants were very circumspective of judging "being a Muslim" as the reason for unfair treatment. Many respondents remarked similar unfair treatment, but only a few participants associate it to their identity as a Muslim. They tended to associate the experiences to the characteristics of the people or different cultural traits.

Instead of associating discriminatory actions to their identity as a Muslim, for instance, most participants expressed that they were being discriminated against because of their Asian identity. According to Byng (1988), discriminatory action can be

triggered by multiple characteristics, such as race, gender, and religion. Although the interviewees remarked that visibly different dress style and the hijab is the factor that triggers discriminatory acts, they believe it is not the sole reason for discriminatory action. Since they think Muslim appearance in The Netherlands is familiar, they also associate it with the fact they are Asian.

Discriminatory actions were experienced more by female Muslim respondents who wear a Hijab. Even though the participants realized that the hijab symbolizes otherness and constructs a stereotype image to outsiders who might make them targets for discriminatory acts, these participants did not perceive their veil as a restriction during holiday activities. Instead, they believe that wearing a hijab is a sign of obedience to God and enhance self-awareness. Some of the participants argued that wearing hijab is a way to affirm their cultural identity and a way to protect themselves when travelling.

Some of the participants believe that public discussion on media about the recent terrorist attacks influences the stigma of locals about Muslims. For example, one of the interviewees felt the effect of the bomb attacks in Belgium and Paris in the way the policemen were looking at her. This is in line with Livengood and Stodolska (2004), who indicated that the frequency of discrimination could be associated with contemporary political and social events; they showed how discriminatory actions towards Muslims increased dramatically after the 9/11 bombing in the US.

Many participants in my study did mention that they could tolerate the experiences by saying, for example, "it's okay, it is not something happened every day" or "there was no violence, though". Most of the participants did not perceive that discrimination influences their behaviour during travel. This indicated that these discriminatory experiences were seen as something that could be negligible. One participant said, "I could still continue my activities, though!" (Yuli, 29). Others noted that discrimination did annoy the quality of enjoyment during the holiday. How these participants negotiate these discriminatory experiences will be discussed in the next section.

3.4. Coping Strategies

Tourists devised different strategies to cope with discrimination. The following five coping strategies were distinguished: direct confrontation, accepting and ignoring discrimination; apologizing; justifying discrimination and thinking positively; and modifying behaviour. The following section will discuss and provide examples of these various coping strategies for discriminatory experiences encountered by the participants during their holiday.

a. Direct confrontation

Tourists responded to discriminatory experiences with direct confrontation such as verbal and gestural protest, stare back, sometimes also by smiling. In line with the previous research by Kloek et al. (2013), the reason they chose to confront the discriminatory experiences was to know the idea behind the event and to fight for equality. Yet, as Livengood and Stodolska (2004) mention, confrontation to discrimination is costly in terms of time and energy, and not all people felt empowered to do this. Some tourists chose to confront the discriminatory experiences with non-verbal action by smiling, staring back when somebody stared at her, or showed an angry facial expression.

b. Accepting & ignoring discrimination

The female Muslim tourists often regarded discriminatory experiences as not essential and chose to ignore the event and continue their activities. The fact that the unfair events were not experienced every day deter them from complaints. As said, "well, I would not meet that person every day though, it would not have happened every day". Unwillingness to involve in debate or complaints was also the reason why the tourists were ignoring the discriminatory experiences.

The tourists mentioned that the discriminatory experiences were indeed terrifying. However, some tourists tended to hush blatant discriminatory action as a normal act, as if "nothing has happened", this is also to avoid people's attention. According to Kloek et al. (2013), an attempt to become less visible in public spaces and not attract too much attention showing "less power" to determine correct behaviour.

c. Apologizing

In some cases, the female Muslim tourists chose to blame herself for the discriminatory experiences. This is because the tourists thought that the events occurred because of their own mistakes, such as lack of cultural custom knowledge. One respondent, for instance, expressed her sadness of being rebuked after taking a picture of a kid. In consequence, she had to apologize for something perfectly normal in her country, according to her. These tourists would rather apologize because they did not want to involve in any trouble and realize their power in the territoriality (Peleman, 2003).

d. Justifying discrimination & thinking positively

Apart from participants who undertook more defensive acts to protect themselves from tangible acts of discrimination, several tourists took a calmer stance to cope with discriminatory experiences. Consistent with earlier findings (Kloek et al., 2013; Walsh, 2009), some tourists tried to justify the discrimination by saying that they conceived the reason they have been treated unfairly,

'it seems they gazed us, maybe they don't interact with people like us that much, so they don't know who we are, and they have heard many rumors about Muslim in the media, mostly negative, so they probably think that we are a threat. Or they are not used to mingle with Muslims like us, so they don't know exactly about the proper Muslim. Maybe they are just curious to interact with us. It could be like that.' (Yuli, 29)

This quotation shows that the tourists justified the discrimination by acknowledging how the media construct the image of Muslims among western society. Instead of blaming the individual, some participants linked it to the context of what happens in the world regarding the massive news about Muslims nowadays and chose to think positively by saying, "Maybe they are just curious to interact with us."

The discriminatory experiences sometimes were perceived as something natural or normal. Some participants mentioned, "We will do the same if Bule comes to our country". This might happen because the discriminatory experience that they experienced was very subtle or low level. A similar coping strategy was also used in the previous (Livengood and Stodolska, 2003). As said,

'[.....] I don't think it is (people's gaze) as a threat; it is not something harmful. I would perceive it as something natural. If we live in a different country, where the majority of people are not (dressing) like us, it is natural if we are treated in that way' (Yuli, 29).

e. Modifying behaviour

Finally, to avoid other identical discriminatory experiences in the future, some tourists changed their behaviour when travelling in terms of the activity to do, the way to behave, the places to pray, the way to dress, and the places to visit. These tourists were trying to be more sensible regarding cultural differences and the social norms, particularly in The Netherlands by avoiding some activities thoughtfully, such as not taking pictures of kids, praying in the public spaces, or bursting into laughter in the transportation.

Discriminatory actions such as being gazed at as experienced by the participants made some participants avoid attracting attention to themselves. This strategy was adopted most commonly by trying to dress in a more western way or avoiding stereotyped colours. For example, one participant said that she would not use the all-black outfit because she was afraid of being suspected as a terrorist. Another participant avoids using colourful clothes because she believed that it is unusual for western people to wear colourful outfit.

3.5. Discussion

The previous chapter identified some complexities regarding Indonesian female Muslim tourists' ways of experiencing and negotiating perceived discrimination during their holidays. The tourists enjoyed their social interactions with the locals during their travels. However, negative experiences, such as gazes from locals, unfair treatment, negative remarks or disapproval, and fall under suspicions also emerge in their narratives. The findings also reveal that these tourists negotiate the discriminatory experiences encountered in different ways.

The interactions between the tourists and the locals were shallow and brief. The superficial interactions were related to the subtlest form of discrimination, while the more economical and commercial communications could lead to harsher forms of discrimination. The finding shows that these female Muslim tourists in hardly any case associated with their negative experiences to discrimination regarding the ethnic and religious background and tended to look at it in more positive ways. When experiencing gazes from locals, for example, the participants regarded the gaze as "curious-looking" rather than "hate stare" (Feagin, 1991 in Livengood and Stodolska, 2004). Another example is when a participant was expelled for entering a museum in Copenhagen, she tried to think positively and said, "well...but he was only doing his duty maybe (smile)".

These findings, in a way, challenge the results of some other studies about similar concerns. For example, a survey by Peleman (2003) who explored discriminatory experiences of Muslim women in Antwerp, Belgium, found that these women encountered cultural challenges and tensions during their everyday life. Because of these barriers, some of them experienced a degree of racism and felt excluded from the environment. Another study that also explores Muslim communities' experiences of perceived discrimination also resonates with some of the findings. Livengood and Stodolska (2004) surveyed Muslim communities' experiences in The United States and found that those Muslims face a significant degree of mistreatment. These Muslim people experienced discrimination in and in transit to leisure-related settings and while engaging in leisure activities. This constraint affected their willingness to participate in leisure activities and reduced their freedom of movement, timing, travel, and places to do activities.

The differences between this research's findings and previous ones emerge due to several reasons. Those studies, as mentioned earlier, were related to the context of leisure or everyday life, in which they examined discriminatory experiences in everyday life. Thereby, even though the discriminatory experiences were maybe not significant or at a low-level since it happened during their daily life, those people found it as a notable constraint. According to Kloek et al. (2013, p.417), 'Although no experiences of violent discrimination were reported in this study, these "low-level" actions are rarely isolated incidents and, as shown by previous research, it is the cumulative effect and on-going feature of discrimination that makes these experiences so stressful (Chakraborti & Chakraborti, 2010)'. The current study was conducted in the context of tourism, exploring the experiences of female Muslims during their holidays. Since the tourists did not encounter discriminatory experiences very often or regularly, they might think that it was not a significant problem. Therefore, it was rarely mentioned perceived discrimination among these tourists. One of the participants, for instance, said: "It has not happened every day, though". Many tourists in this study ignored the discrimination and explicitly expressed that: if there is no violence, it could be considered as something negligible.

The current political situation influenced the feeling of discrimination. For the past two years, there were several bomb attacks in Europe; the participants somehow felt that these events had affected their travel. Many of them mentioned that they thought more under suspicion after those attacks. For example, the gaze of people or police increased; they got more checked; they felt people had more doubts about them. The harshest one was a participant expelled by an armed authority for entering a museum in Copenhagen without any reason. This discriminatory act happened following the bomb attack in Turkey. It has been argued that Muslims are projected negatively by the media (Ali, 2005), and this may cause stereotypical and prejudicial sentiments (Zulfikar, 2016). Mythen, Walklate, & Khan (2009) also found a similar finding argued that young Muslims had been intensified modes of monitoring, surveillance, and intervention by crime and security agencies after the 7/7 2005 attack. Livengood and Stodolska (2004) also indicate similar results as many of their respondents indeed expressed the effects of the 9/11 bomb attack in The United States. Their participants experienced perceived discrimination ranged from unpleasant look, avoidance, to more severe acts such as threats and physical attacks. However, we should take into account that perceived discrimination is somewhat complicated, and depends not only on the context but also on the personality and the attitudes of the people, "how you position yourself" (Kloek et al., 2013, p.414). Two people who experienced the same thing might not perceive it in the same way and might interpret it differently.

The dressing way was believed to have a role in inducing discriminatory events. Participants who wear a hijab or veil mentioned more negative and discriminatory experiences than the ones who do not. This is in line with previous studies (Kloek et al., 2013; Peleman, 2003). The veil is considered as an external sign of religious practices that are used to triggers discrimination (Peleman, 2003). Although the participants discerned that their hijab "played a role" (cf. Kloek et al., 2013) in the discriminatory experiences, none of these participants perceived that the hijab limits their activities during a holiday. For these Asian Muslim participants, wearing the veil enhanced self-awareness and could have an emancipatory meaning, as it is used as a resistance to a cad (cf. Peleman, 2003).



Figure 2. *Asian Female Muslim Tourists, With Hijab and Without Hijab*

There was a general attitude among these participants about negotiating negative and discriminatory experiences. Most of the participants wanted to deal with discriminatory experiences in a nice way. These tourists did not want to confront the event in such a way as it was a discriminatory act. They instead think positively and use positive attitudes as a resistance against the perpetrators, such as by smiling. Take an example apologizing strategy, even though these participants felt that it was unfair treatment, the respondents still applied this strategy because they thought it was their 'fault' that they did not know the rules. Siegal et al. (1988 in Puhl & Brownell, 2003) indicated that an apology could be seen as an attempt to seek social acceptance while the study of Ohbuchi et al. (1989) showed that an apology plays a role in controlling emotion and aggression. An apology could mitigate emotional response and attenuate aggression and anger. This study accentuates this as many tourists said the reason for apologizing was to keep safe.

IV. Conclusion

To conclude, the results add to the academic body on perceived discrimination encountered by female Muslim tourists and the ways they negotiate the discriminatory experiences in a tourism setting. It looked critically towards perceived discrimination during holidays, which has not been done before by many other scholars. The results of this study, therefore, filled a gap in academic knowledge about the experiences of female Muslim tourists with discrimination when interacting with the locals during holidays in Europe, mainly in the Netherlands.

For future studies, I would suggest taking into account different socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics, such as the level of education, to what extent the participants are doing religious practices, and including men as well. I think this could, even more, enrich the analysis.

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