

PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIORS THAT ENCOURAGE OR IMPEDE
ADVANCEMENT OR ATTAINMENT OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY MUSLIM WOMEN WEARING HIJAB

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the factors that encouraged or impeded Muslim women wearing hijab from attaining or advancing in positions of leadership in higher education. The researcher viewed the study through the lens of Critical Race Theory. The study population consisted of two Muslim female leaders at a multi-campus community college in the Midwest. Data collection methods included on-site observations, interviews, focus groups and an analysis of campus documents. Informal interviews were conducted with the Muslim female leaders' and their superior and a focus group was conducted with the leaders' colleagues at the campus and assisted in supporting and triangulating the data. The study findings articulated the importance of the role institutions of higher education played in creating environments that endorse inclusion for recruiting, employing, supporting, and promoting aspiring Muslim female leaders; and the importance of relationships or connecting with The Other- between Muslims and non Muslims in breaking down barriers and stereotypes of Muslim women to support recruit, employ, and promote aspiring Muslim female leaders. The results of this inquiry could impact both K-12 institutions and higher education institutions as they address the issue of engaging Muslim students, creating inclusive climates, and hiring Muslim staff, faculty, and administrators.