

BAGAIMANA PEREMPUAN MEMBERDAYAKAN DIRINYA MELALUI PARTISIPASI AKTIF DALAM ISLAM DI INDONESIA?

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian kualitatif ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana perempuan memberdayakan dirinya melalui partisipasi aktif dalam Islam di Indonesia. Dua puluh empat perempuan dari delapan kota di Indonesia, yang aktif lebih dari lima tahun di organisasi perempuan Muslim dipilih untuk wawancara semi terstruktur. Usia mereka dari 25 sampai 53 tahun, dan sebagian besar sudah menikah, memiliki anak dan lulus sarjana. Sebelas perempuan dari organisasi Salimah, delapan dari Aisyiah/Nasyiatul Aisyia, dan lima dari Mulimat/Fatayat NU. Lima topik muncul dari hasil analisis wawancara : komsep dan domain dari pemberdayaan, aspek afektif dari pemberdayaan, peran dari nilai keagamaan Islam dan ritual dalam pemberdayaan, pengaruh lingkungan sosial terhadap pemberdayaan perempuan, pengaruh dari organisasi terhadap pemberdayaan anggotanya. Perempuan yang sudah terlibat lebih lama menunjukkan perubahan diri dan pemberdayaan yang didapatkan melalui aktifitas dari organisasi perempuan Muslim.

Kata Kunci: Islam, partisipasi aktif, pemberdayaan, perempuan

HOW MUSLIM WOMEN EMPOWER THEMSELVES THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ISLAM IN INDONESIA?

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored how women empower themselves through active participation in Islam in Indonesia. Twenty-four women from eight different cities in Indonesia, who were active more than five years in Muslim women organizations, were selected for semi-structured interview. The ages ranged from 25 to 53 years, and most of them were married with children and had completed bachelor degrees. Eleven women were from Salimah organization, eight from Aisyiah/Nasyiatul Aisyiah, and five from Muslimat/Fatayat NU. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Five themes were elicited from the interview: concept and domains of empowerment, affective aspects of empowerment, role of Islamic religious values and rituals in empowerment, social environment influences on women's empowerment, influences of Muslim women's organizations and member empowerment. The women who had longer membership showed that transcendence as dominant motivation. Overall results showed that transformation and empowerment were acquired through activities in the Muslim women's organizations.

Keywords: *active participation, empowerment, Islam, women*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of the first revelation of the basic teachings of Islam, women were treated equally with and honored by men. Islam is not a misogynistic religion (Kristof & WuDunn, 2009). The basic teachings of Islam honor women and suggest that men treat them with justice. Even though the first revelator of Islam had positive views regarding women more advanced than were those of their cultural context at the time, later theologians imposed patriarchal hegemony (Esposito, 2001). Many women in this patriarchal tradition have suffered politically, psychologically, and physically as the result of injustice and the chauvinism of the religious law imposed by leaders in the religion. On the other hand, data have shown that women consistently demonstrate a greater affinity for religion than do men (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003). Hinde (1999) argued for the existence of “the religion of the oppressed,” which means that the lower status and power of women made them feel interested in joining a religion. This argument refers to the needs of the powerless to turn to their faith when all other avenues fail to make them feel empowered. Paradoxically, from the standpoint of their subjection to the patriarchal hegemony in Islam, women’s active participation in the religion can actually increase their power.

Religious studies have a different perspective on women’s empowerment. Empowerment, in psychological terms, relates highly to control, yet spiritual surrender is considered in religion to be a paradoxical path to control (Cole & Pargament, 1999). A study on religion and civic engagement in Muslim countries (Sarkissian, 2012) gives evidence that active participation in Muslim organizations is associated with greater engagement in social and political arenas. It can be understood, then, that women’s empowerment may be achieved through active participation in religion and the religious community. However, no research studies to date have used a comprehensive definition of psychological empowerment and representative samples of women involved in community service in religion. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population, with 12.7% of the world’s Muslims. Furthermore, compared with most Arab countries, Indonesia shows a lower gender gap between women and men in four areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health and survival—according to the *Global Gender Gap Report* (Hausman et al., 2010). This lower gender gap is an indicator that women in Indonesia have more access to participation in social and political arenas, which involvement might result in a higher sense of psychological empowerment. Therefore, this study will explore the question: How Muslim Women Empower Themselves through Active Participation in Islam in Indonesia?

Power and empowerment

Empowerment is defined variously and without wide agreement in the various fields of study. Kabeer (2001) defined empowerment as the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied them. The concept of women’s empowerment has two defining features: process and agency. *Agency* (Kabeer, 1999b) is the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them that includes observable actions, meaning,

motivation, and purpose in the activity. Some feminists define the sense of agency as “the power within.” Women have a distinct way of relating in the world that is different from men’s (Schaaf, Lindahl, Hurty, & Sheen, 2012; Sinclair, 1986). Women’s patterns for change include individual adaptation, achievement and harnessing abilities, artistic and cultural expression, political participation and collaborative action, and family reliance (Billson, 1995). In defining a new paradigm of power suitable for women, Schaaf, Lindahl, Hurty, and Cheen (2012) suggested the term *power with* instead of *power over*. *Power over* means power to subjugate, to manipulate, and to control, whereas *power with* refers to creating change through cooperative action with others in partnership, capacity to get the job done in collaboration with others for mutual benefit and the common good.

Psychology has developed a more individual perspective of power and empowerment. McClelland’s (1955) theory covers three basic groups of motivation or needs: power, achievement, and affiliation. According to McClelland (1975), women who have high power needs show different behavior than do men with similar needs. Sex roles rooted in history and society determine such behavior by setting expectations on how women should behave. Evidence suggests that women are more attentive to things that happen in their direct environment and tend to modify their behavior accordingly. Compared to men, women care more about relationships, and they are interdependent, especially in social relationships. Women might behave differently from men to show their power needs, considering their interdependency and sensitivity about relationship and social environment that includes the welfare of others and moral values.

Perspectives of power and empowerment from transpersonal psychology were more connected to religious experiences. Maslow’s (1994) theory of personality embraces the spiritual essence of human beings. Actualizing person who experience peak experiences (Maslow, 1968) live in the realm of Being and tend to be involved in aesthetics, transcendence, and religious or spiritually mystical personal experiences. William James (1902/2002) argued that tapping into inner spiritual strength enables people to transform and to empower themselves and others. The discourse includes how mystical and beyond-ego experiences can trigger realization of a person’s inner strengths and spirituality. Transpersonal psychology uses a whole-person approach to empowerment, including the person’s deep human experiences. Transpersonal experiences can lead to empowerment (Saft, 2007). According to Saft (2007), characteristics of transpersonal experiences that empower individuals are ones that transcend the personal ego, afford new insight regarding the Divine along with an altered sense of self, and thereby impel the individual to engage in actions that he or she did not previously choose to undertake.

Community psychology defined empowerment not as only personal process but also involving community in the process. Rappaport (1987) defined empowerment as both a construct and a process. As a construct, empowerment links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems, and proactive behaviors to social policy and social change. As a process, empowerment enables people, organizations, and communities to gain mastery over issues of concern to them. Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) suggested that

empowerment is seen as a wider process and involves participation in community.

Zimmerman (1995) presented the concepts of empowerment on three levels: community, organizational, and individual. The community level focuses on how individuals work together in an organized fashion to improve their collective lives and to strengthen relations among community organizations and agencies to help maintain quality of life. The organizational level deals with processes and structures that enhance members' skills and provide them with the mutual support necessary to effect community-level change. On the individual level, empowerment integrates perceptions of personal control, a proactive approach to life, and a critical understanding of the sociopolitical environment. This individual level is referred to as psychological empowerment (PE). PE includes active engagement in the community and an understanding of the sociopolitical environment. PE has three basic clusters of components: intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral. Psychological empowerment is used as the framework of the concept of empowerment in this study.

Women's Empowerment in Islam

Religion is a form of community organization, despite the fact that the core adoption and practice of religion is intrinsically a private matter (Maslow, 1994). In most cultures, women have less power than men. Women are, therefore, more likely to find meaning from religion and through religious activities that serve as a resource in the community. However, structural factors and gender ideology *within* a religion may mitigate women's empowerment. A review of studies on religious participation found that women report higher levels of personal religiousness and more frequent use of religion in coping (Pargament, 1997). One explanation of this phenomenon is the paradox of *spiritual surrender* (Cole & Pargament, 1999). Spiritual surrender is a paradoxical path to control. Religion offers spiritual surrender that can become a healing pathway in which the search for control can be transformed into the search for the sacred.

The teaching of Islam is well connected to empowerment. Women in Islam have an equal position with respect to rights. Women's rights and freedoms that have been only recently gained by women in the West had been given in Islam through traditional Islamic law. Some of the laws on women's rights include protection of women's own property that cannot be seized by her husband; rights to education; rights to file legal suits and testify in court, even to file for divorce; rights to equal pay for equal work; and rights to vote and hold office. However, the patriarchal tradition rooted in pre-Islamic culture (Frager, 2002) has in some Muslim majority countries made women unable to contribute fully in the community. Muslim societies do not always live up to the Islamic ideal. Despite having the internationally largest population of Muslims, Indonesia is frequently overlooked in research on Islamic topics, as a result of its unique history. Women in Indonesia are active in public spaces and have had the right to vote since the first election and become members of parliament and ministers. The Muslim in Indonesia differs from the Muslim in Middle Eastern countries in terms of the role of women in Islam. However, studies regarding Muslim

women's movements typically do not include Indonesia. In the book *Women Shaping Islam: Reading the Qur'an in Indonesia*, Doorn-Harder (2006) opined that the discussion of Islam and its gender inclusion issue in Indonesia has to include the contributions of various forces of a wide range of Indonesian Muslim society. However, Doorn-Harder (2006) research was not psychological research that specifically study psychological empowerment.

The women actively involved in their communities come from various Islamic groups in Indonesia. Two organizations that were initiated in Java and have had the most influence on women and communities historically are the Aisyiah of Muhammadiyah and Muslimat Nahdhatul Ulama. Nowadays, these two organizations, along with the the younger branches—the Naswiatul Aisyiah and Fatayat NU—exist with their branches in almost all 33 provinces in Indonesia, a geographical area that includes millions of members from various subcultures of Indonesia. Recently, the largest mass organization initiated by a new *santri* group of women is *SALIMAH (Persaudaran Muslimah/Muslim women's sisterhood)*, established in 2000 (Salimah, 2013), with 32 branches in various provinces. Women's empowerment in Islam is a complex topic that can be viewed from many perspectives. The study of women's empowerment in active participation in Islam must include the consideration of the extant cultural issues in Indonesia. This study will provide psychological perspective on how Muslim women who actively participating in Muslim women organization in Indonesia empower themselves.

METHOD

This study used qualitative method with semi-structured interview data gathering. The interview result was analysed using thematic analysis with nVivo qualitative processor. The 24 participants for the qualitative phase were selected from previous quantitative study which measured religiosity, active participation in Islamic organization, and empowerment through several scales. The selected participants represent 12 who scored lowest and the 12 who score highest in empowerment and active participation in religious community. Six women from each of four different groups were recruited if they met one of these criteria: (a) high empowerment and high participation in religious community (HP/HE); (b) high empowerment and low in active participation in religious community (LP/HE); (c) low empowerment and high in active participation in religious community (HP/LE); or (d) empowerment and low in active participation in religious community (LP/LE).

Women who met these criteria were contacted personally by phone or emailed by the researcher to set up a meeting—in a mutually agreeable location, via a phone call, or through an Internet video meeting—for a semi-structured interview. Interviews were thematically analyzed: The first step was becoming familiar with the data; the second step was generating initial codes; the third phase was searching for themes; the fourth phase was reviewing themes in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), thereby generating a thematic *map* of the analysis. The map of themes included several themes that explain the construct and definitions of variables. The data from these women were presented as a whole experience, and so they included

comparisons between the groups, in order to derive richer and more diverse descriptions regarding women's psychological empowerment through active participation in Islam.

Participants in this study were 24 women from eight different cities with the four types of combined scores on empowerment and active participation. The interview process was held in two different ways: Six were interviewed directly in person by this researcher or a trained assistant in the participants' cities, and 18 were interviewed via phone. The ages of the women ranged from 25 to 53 years, and most of them (15) were married with children. In terms of education, most participants (17) had completed bachelor's degrees, five had master's degrees, and two were high school graduates. Three out of five women with master's degrees were in the HP/HE category. Eleven women were from Salimah the organization, eight from Aisyiah /Nasyiatul Aisyiah, and five from Muslimat/Fatayat. These women were from eight different cities in Indonesia. Besides the participants from Yogyakarta (6), Depok (5), and Gresik (5), the five other cities had only one participant each. Only one city, Gorontalo, which is located in Sulawesi, is outside Java.

RESULT

Over all, there are differences in how participants in the various groups responded. Five themes were elicited from analysis of the interview data: concept and domains of empowerment, affective aspects of empowerment, role of Islamic religious values and rituals in empowerment, social environment influences on women's empowerment, influences of Muslim women's organizations and member empowerment. The following material presents the key themes that arose from the interview data.

Concept and Domains of Empowerment

From all categories, three concepts of empowerment emerged: as using potentialities to solve problems, as being useful and contributing to society, and as an act of movement personally or collectively. Participants also mentioned areas of life where they felt empowered: domestic affairs, involvement in social activities, and empowering others. Empowerment in the domestic area was mentioned by participants from all categories; including their role as mothers; capacity-building as wives and mothers in domestic skills; and financial management.

In the second area, their social activities, 12 women reported that they enjoyed working to stage social events. The women from the various categories showed different levels of involvement in social areas. They mostly joined social charity programs in their Muslim women's organization or neighborhood mosque activities. The third area is a group of activities that related to empowering other women. This empowering area is more than mere charity. In this area the women actively engaged in programs inviting other women to participate, to learn new knowledge and skills, and to increase their involvement in societies.

Affective Aspects of Empowerment

Empowerment for these women is not just a concept at the cognitive level but also an affective experience. The three affective aspects of empowerment are: emotion, motivation, and the experience of powerlessness. The emotional aspect refers to how women reported their feelings when they participated in events that made them felt empowered. Motivation explains why these women participated in activities where they felt empowered. The last part of this section elaborates these women's experience of being powerless in situations that contrast with their empowering experience. The experience of being powerless is important to an understanding of the felt difference between being empowered and not being empowered.

Sixteen women reported feelings they experienced when they were empowered. Some reported more than just one feeling: they experienced mixed positive feelings when they were empowered. Most felt happy, some reportedly felt satisfied, and some reported experiencing peaceful feelings. Empowerment produced positive emotions to these women whatever their level of participation or empowerment. Regarding motivation, many different reasons came up for why women join and stay in their organizations: to gain new knowledge and learn new skills; to participate is to spread religious norms; to obtain blessings from *Allah*; to gain networking and to do positive activities; to contribute to society.

The third aspect, the experience of feeling powerless, was asked about in the interview particularly to understand the struggle of these women to be empowered. Feeling powerless can be very emotional but might also be a trigger a wakeup call to empower themselves, in order to have better lives. The situations of feeling powerless includes: when they had problems in the women's Muslim organizations; when they found challenges in the organization; when they were pregnant, gave birth, and had little children; when have problems in the family or workplace. What is interesting is that, from all the women who reported feeling powerless during childrearing and pregnancy, they got out of the powerless situation with help from their fellow women in the organizations. The women in the organizations or religious groups supported them to overcome the burden of motherhood by giving advice and emotional support. The women's religious groups helped them to find confidence and become more empowered. From three affective aspects of empowerment, these women showed how their involvement in the organizations is a process that involved positive emotions that motivated them to begin, to stay in the organization, and to overcome challenges in their lives. This process, for most of the women, led them to gain power. The fellowship support provided in the organizations, along with the programs that challenged them, help them to find power in themselves.

The Role of Islamic Religious Values and Ritual in Empowerment

These women participated in Muslim women's organizations mostly because religious values are the foundations of the organizations. The values section explores the teachings of Islam that inspired them to participate in

Muslim women's organizations and led them to be empowered. In the ritual section, the women explained what kind of Islamic worshipping rituals made them feel empowered.

Almost all of the women elaborated on religious experiences that they had connected with their sense of empowerment. Many explained two or more religious values that had inspired them. The most common religious value that inspired them to be empowered was the realization that the purpose in life given by Allah to humanity is to be leaders on earth (*Khalifatul fil 'ardh*); it was for this reason that these women felt they should be useful to other people. Another value these related to their sense of empowerment was the body of moral values that they obtained from the inspiring stories of women in Islam. The theme that emerged from these comments of these women includes the classical teaching that encouraged the respecting of mothers more than fathers, and the classical stories of women's lives during the Islamic Prophet's era. The next value cited as a source of empowerment was getting blessings from Allah if they do good deeds. Four women also reported that the value that inspired them is purely their belief in Allah (*aqidah*). The last value that came up was *ukhuwah*, an Arabic term for solidarity among Muslims and being in *jamaah*.

From the participants' explanations, five Islamic teachings inspired the women to participate and to empower themselves: First, our purpose in life is to be leaders on earth; second, the moral values include to be tough Muslim women; third, the value and reward is from Allah for doing good deeds; fourth, believing Allah to be the one and only God; and, fifth, the value of solidarity and collaboration with other Muslims. The Islamic teachings that these women reported reflected the values taught and spread among members of these organizations.

In the process of empowering themselves, these women also made use of Islamic rituals in facing life challenges. Four rituals were mentioned by 20 of the women: *Salat* (Muslim prayer), reading the Qur'an, *Thikr* (remembering Allah by repeating Allah's names), and *du'a* (personal prayer). Some women reported more than one ritual that affected them, and, whereas all participants had probably experienced all of the rituals because they are a standard part of any teaching of Islam, not all had had the experience of certain rituals giving them the feeling of empowerment. All the rituals that these women perform are common practice among Muslims in Indonesia. However, not everyone uses the rituals to empower themselves. Performance of these rituals seemed to enhance these women's perceived relationship to Allah, which, in turn, made them felt protected, provided for, and supported in times of hardship or in contemplation.

Social Environment Influences on Empowerment

This theme compiles these women's experiences of the effects of the social realm on women's empowerment, those factors that support it, and those that hinder it. The interviews explored significant persons in the women's lives who helped them grow and feel empowered, as well as those who had inhibited their activities towards empowerment. Most of the women identified significant persons who supported them and how they presented that support. Some mentioned not only one person, but several, who supported them. People who

were reported supporting their sense of empowerment were other members or friends from their women's organizations, parents especially fathers; and husbands. From the women's explanations, the husbands' support included sharing responsibilities in childrearing, encouraging them to go out and use their potential to educate themselves or educate other women. The support of father or husband was necessary for the women to be able to use their potential. However, if these male figures did not provide supports, these women relied on their female friends in the religious organizations for empowerment. Interestingly, male figures in the family could also be the ones who inhibited the women's empowerment, although fewer women reported any hinderers in their empowerment process overall. Four women's answers were a bit more abstract, referring to cultural and political situations that were challenges to empowerment. The largest number reported that the challenges for empowerment were other people, whether they were from the women's religious organization, other organizations, or neighbors who had different views from these women on small- or large-scale issues. These women experienced problems but were able to overcome them. From the interview, it was evident that the women had more experiences of support than of inhibition from their social environments.

The Influence of Muslim Women's Organizations on Member Empowerment

This section discusses how the Muslim women's organizations socialized their values that empowered women, and what happened to the women through their participation in the organizations. Twenty-three women explained how their organizations had socialized their individual values. All 24 women gave explanations of how they had been transformed by their participation in the organizations.

The women listed three main activities and two additional methods through which the organization socialized their values. The main activities were religious meetings, retreats or training, and committees for social events, all intended by the organizations to socialize their values. The two additional methods used for this purpose were the presentation of forms of art, such as movies and songs that inspired or celebrated empowerment, as well as the stories related to role models of empowered women. Overall, the religious meetings are the main source of the spread of religious values. These women felt that they know and have internalized the value of women's empowerment through attending these meetings and listening to speeches on Qur'an verses or stories of empowered women during the Prophet's era. The organizations, by report of these participants, did not just spread religious values through religious meetings; they motivated the women to do social work and conduct events for the community. The women felt empowered when they engaged in committee exchanges and work.

All the women testified about the changes that happened to them after participating in the activities of their organizations. Four areas of changes were highlighted by the women: view of life autonomy and courage; leadership and organizational skills and emotional regulation. The most often reported theme

was experiencing changes in the way they viewed their life as related to their sense of empowerment. The changes in their view of life were shown also to have affected their sense of courage and autonomy. Ten women experienced changes in increased courage to make decisions, to be more assertive, and to present themselves in front of others. The new personal courage and soft skills developed into more complex abilities, such as leadership and organizational skills, experienced by nine participants. The women were able to become leaders and learned how to manage organizations through the Muslim women organizations. The experiences in the organization with Islamic religious norms helped the women gain emotional control. From the women's responses, the transformation was experienced cognitively (view of life), affectively (emotional regulation), in character strength (courage and confidence), and in ability (organizational and leadership).

DISCUSSION

Comparing participants according to their level of participation, the women with high participation in both HP/HE and HP/LE had experienced longer membership time in Muslim women's organizations. They were already experienced in many roles in the organizations, and most of them had had leadership experience in various levels in the organization. They were able to elaborate more on their participation experiences, which advantage enabled them to explain more about their activities. They also tended to express motivations related to religious values, including mentioning more about being driven to contribute so as to have God's love and blessings. Transcendence seemed to be their dominant motivation, and it seemed to inspire them to be more actively participating for longer periods of time. Many of these women were supported by parents or husbands for their involvement in the Muslim women's organizations. In contrast, the women with low participation, LP/HE and LP/LE, were not just less actively involved in Muslim women's organizations but were only participating as members or as nonregular attendees in the organization's programs. Some of their social activities relating to empowerment were done individually and not as a part of the organizations. Their motivation to be actively involved was for self-development or positive activities, rather than for contributing toward other people.

Meanwhile, the three concepts of empowerment explained by the participants included using potentialities to solve problems, being useful and contributing to society, and as an act of movement personally or collectively. The areas of empowerment mentioned were domestic affairs, involvement in social activities, and empowering others. The concept mentioned was not exactly the same as the definition of empowerment in Islam. No participants mentioned the word *tamkin* in the interviews, indicating that, despite their familiarity with Muslim teachings, they had a different understanding and experience of empowerment. Some similarity did exist, though, between their reported understandings of empowerment and the Muslim definition of God-given power to win something, related to participants' making use of their potentialities to solve problems and to be useful for others by helping them solve problems.

The women in this study were in different stages of their practice of empowerment and were continuing to practice it through various activities in the Muslim women's organizations. The participants in this study showed that their empowerment was an intentional ongoing process that was taking place through their active participation in Muslim women's organizations and reflecting mutual respect and caring with other women. The women with high empowerment, HP/HE and LP/HE, provided more elaborative answers concerning their own private spiritual meaning of empowerment. Some of them had gone through more powerless moments and inhibitions from other people, but even these were able to overcome setbacks and gain more of a feeling of power. They reported elaborate explanations regarding religious values and rituals, but more in relation with their private connection to Allah. They were able to point out which religious values that they felt closely related to their sense of empowerment. They were also able to cite specific events or rituals that transformed them. In general, women with higher empowerment scores attributed deeper spiritual meaning to what they were experiencing in life. Women with low empowerment HP/LE and LP/LE seemed to report more facts of their experience rather than their private meanings and also provided shorter explanations of how they had transformed or reached the point of feeling empowered. From this comparison, it is evident that the empowerment score indicates either how much or how little individual participants had transformed in life through their understanding of the Islamic values and their participations in Muslim women organizations.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The result of this study showed how transformation and empowerment were acquired, through activities in the Muslim women's organizations. These results disrupt possibly broadly held assumptions that, due to patriarchal views found in some Islamic teachings, Muslim women, globally, necessarily become subordinated and powerless. This study added to the gap of knowledge regarding Muslim women and their empowerment, especially in non-Arabic countries. Indonesia has the largest population of Muslims among all nations in the world; therefore, this research makes a major contribution of information regarding women in Islam.

The results that suggest how empowerment can work for women through Muslim organizations in Indonesia, a more egalitarian Islamic society, as compared with Muslim groups in Arabic cultures. The reported empowerment by the participant group may be closer to how women's empowerment was intended to be in the beginning of Islam. This study also tried to capture both exoteric and esoteric experiences of the Muslim women while participating in Islamic organizations.

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