JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
Volume 15 Issue 1, 2025 E-ISSN: 2462-2222 ISSN: 2231-9514

THE ḤIJĀB IN THE ISLAMIC HOUSE

Received: 4th September 2022 | Accepted: 7th October 2023 | Available Online: 30th June 2025

DOI: 10.31436/japcm.v15i1.724

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the history of the Islamic house of the ḥijāb. It discusses the application and forms of the ḥijāb across major cities in the Islamic world. The concept of the ḥijāb is traced from its origins in the Muslim community during the Prophet'sProphet's time to the end of the twenty-first century. Accordingly, this study demonstrates how the Islamic doctrine and the ḥijāb as a phenomenon are being applied across Islamic regions. The evidence reveals the adaptation of Islamic rules within the house and solidarity in obeying these rules to maintain the well-being of the inhabitants. The discussion illustrates how the ḥijāb governs daily Muslim life and shapes the house from within. Conversely, segregation from the same concept shapes zones and interior layouts. The study is based on descriptive historical literature alongside the analytical methods of the case studies. It illustrates the narrative through some real examples of Muslim societies where the ḥijāb has been fully practised. Confronting the rapid movement of global change, this analysis of the ḥijāb and its forms in the Islamic house is timely. Finally, this analytical reading aims to demonstrate the application of the ḥijāb and its impact on Islamic architecture in general. The main objective is to learn from past and current examples to secure the concept of the ḥijāb within the house, as the study shows that the need for such a concept is still significant.

Keywords: Islamic house, ḥijāb, ḥarīm, privacy, segregation, screening.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Qur'ān governs every aspect of a Muslim's daily life, including defining Islamic etiquette inside the house. The practice of the *ḥijāb* within the house is discussed in detail in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah (Ḥadīth: the tradition of the Prophet) The Prophet tradition), including the obligation to ask for permission before entering. Obeying the rules of the *ḥijāb* as a garment reflects the concealment of women's physiques when they leave the house. Similarly, architectural *ḥijāb*, such as screens and women's quarters (*ḥarīm*), demonstrate concealment within the house. This architectural concealment gives women freedom and privacy, as they cannot remain veiled outside and inside. The house is a haven for women, the main occupants. The notion of privacy is a wider Islamic concern; the geographical spread of the application of the *ḥijāb* ranges beyond the Arab world. The presence of women plays an important role in shaping the Islamic house, where privacy can be enhanced and where each sex can be at ease in their world. Gender identity is still a significant feature in some regions of the Islamic world. Privacy is one facet of this sanctity, which includes inhabitants' respect

for each other's needs and prevents intrusions for the sake of individuals and the family as a whole. Privacy on a personal level means the cover, clothing, and ownership and defence of the private sanctuary within the dwelling. In Islamic society, it means a balance between the privacy of the individual and the community, as privacy does not prevent social communication and does not mean total isolation or separation from society. Therefore, privacy is a tool for regulating communication and interference, informed by the controls of religion and the behaviours of the individual's society (Mohammad, 2008).

Similarly, the concealment of the architectural fabric of a building is more than a necessity in the Islamic house. The unique concern of *ḥijāb* within the Islamic house, which goes beyond privacy, is as old as Islam. The base concept of the *ḥijāb* is the need to preserve the house's privacy and shield it from the public gaze. The house is a spatial enclosure created for the family's sake and is considered a fundamental nucleus of a community. Akeel Hwaish claims that an "Islamic house" means a house built with the values of Islam, starting from good intentions and clear philosophy and then conceptualised until the completion and construction of the building. Such a house should follow Islamic principles as architectural design guidelines and provide a complete living web that reflects the Muslim lifestyle. He adds that privacy is paramount in Islamic households, where separating the male and female areas within the house is significant. In the Islamic faith, a home is a "microcosm of Islamic culture and civilisation" that is of "matchless delight" (Hwaish, 2015). Abdel-Moniem El-Shorbagy stated that the heritage of traditional Islamic-Arab houses was developed in response to religious, cultural, and traditional factors along with the specificity of the local built environment. The most subtle characteristics of the Islamic-Arab house come mainly from its array of elements tested by people's traditions and culture (El-Shorbagy, 2010).

Modernity and its changing values are slowly absorbed into the urban fabric worldwide, and Islamic societies are no exception. Studies confirm the necessity for the hijab in its holistic metaphorical essence in the 20th century: a study of housing and women's needs in the Middle East in 1991 in Cairo found that the need for privacy, which is primarily affected by religious beliefs and inherited cultural norms, was the main concern of Middle Eastern women. The aim was to compare satisfaction between living in traditional versus modern apartments regarding values. The study found that the inhabitants — women mainly — indicated that visual privacy was critical within the context of their cultural values. They tended to make physical changes in the dwellings to increase privacy. The main finding concerned the necessity for privacy when designing dwellings for Muslim cultures. Interestingly, the study suggested that in the Middle East, rapid cultural changes have created a confusing environment where modern design has not met social norms (El-Rafey, 1992). Despite considerable cultural differences, in Islamic societies of South Asia, Tasneem Chowdhury argues that the design and layout of the typical Muslim home reflect and facilitate the segregation and seclusion of women. The conceptual similarity in the built environment of the Muslims is an expression of a common faith and a unifying religious culture. She adds that using the veil implied segregating the females from males and high family status, where veiling and seclusion regulations can be disregarded only during war and emergencies (Chowdury, 1993).

In the Far East of the Islamic world, another study was conducted to assess the physical implementation of the concept of the *hijab* in what is called “the Arab house” in Indonesia. The study states that Islam is a way of life in the Arab culture, and the house of Arabs is an Islamic architectural product that applies *hijab,* thus appreciating the preservation of tradition. The concept of the *hijab* in the Arab house in Pasar Kliwon is symbolised by the

physical *hijab* via the separation of public and private spaces and the non-physical *hijab* via the etiquette of visiting implemented in Islamic culture (Azizah & Putri, 2013). It prohibits physical contact between the occupant and the non-family guests when visiting. A recent study of traditional Indonesian houses, in line with Islamic values, confirms that privacy is physical and non-physical. Physical privacy comprises a separator or divider as a transitional space and a distinction entrance.

In comparison, non-physical privacy involves spatial agreement and a gender spatial consensus that requires agreed space between men and women (Hazrina Haja Bava et al., 2021). All studies demonstrate the concept of the *hijab*, its implementation, and its continuation within Islamic societies regardless of their regions. The necessity is vital, even in recent years where women as occupants still ask for privacy. The question is, are we in a time where the hijab enters the dilemma of modernity vs tradition? Therefore, let history narrate the old story of the hijab and the Islamic house, especially in the Arab world and the Indian subcontinent regions during the 20th century.

2.0 THE ḤIJĀB AND ḤURMA

Based on the Arabic origin of the term *ḥijāb* 'حجاب', as a noun, it comes from the verb *ḥajaba* 'حجب. That is from the root 'ب-ج-ح' *ḥ-j-b*, which means 'to hide from view or to conceal'. The verb *ḥajaba* translates as 'to veil, to seclude, to screen, to conceal, to form a separation, to mask', whereas the noun '*ḥijāb*' translates as 'cover, wrap, curtain, veil, screen, and partition' (El-Guindi, 1999). *Ḥijāb* means concealing and veiling, whereas *ḥarīm* حريم' means women, and 'حرمة' *ḥurma* is the singular that means woman and means sacredness (Figure 1a). All words derive from the verb *ḥaram* 'حرم', from the root *ḥ-r-m*, which means prohibited. The term *ḥurma* (woman), embodying the literal meaning of sacredness, obliges the drawing of a screen or a curtain to convey respect. At the same time, *ḥurma* (sacredness) of the space expresses the utmost privacy as a means of protection. That is, the *ḥurma* of the masjid, the tomb, and mainly the *ḥurma* of the house and its households (Figure 1b). The sanctuaries of the Islamic cities Makkah and Madinah are called Al-Ḥaram Al-Sharif. On the other hand, Ḥarīm as a space also means prohibited, forbidden. Therefore, the concept of the *ḥurma* and the presence of *ḥarīm* (women) play a crucial part in the concept of the *ḥijāb*, concealing and veiling, and the *ḥarīm* as inner spaces. "*Ḥarīm*" means the women's section and is a plural of the term "*ḥurma*, " meaning a woman. The *ḥarīm* is not just an enclosed space for women; it is a name for a group of women or any area occupied by women without physical boundaries. It is a defined place for a specific gender but does not have to be an enclosed space (Al-Murahhem, 2011).

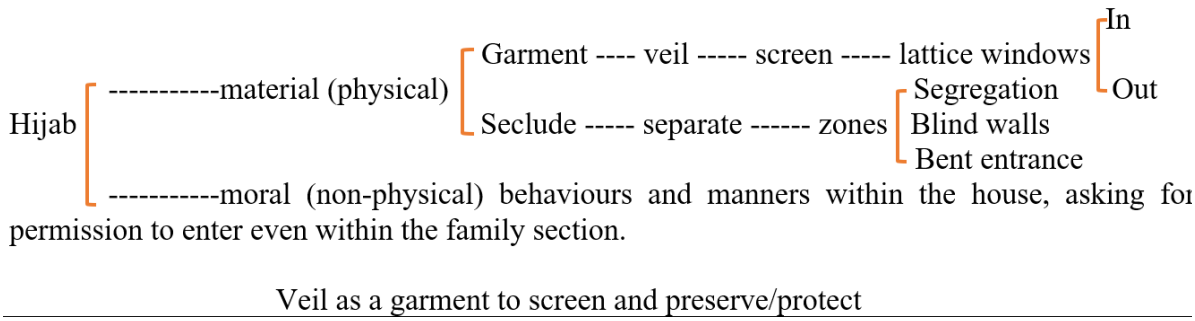

Fig. 1a: The term *ḥijāb* metaphorical meanings

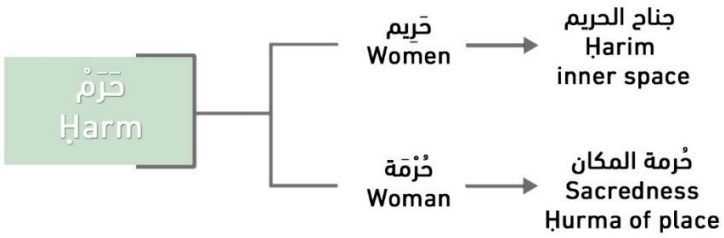

Fig. 1b: The term *ḥurma* metaphorical meanings

The *ḥijāb's* main function is as a shield for protection and privacy purposes. Sometimes, it does not have to be attached to the body that wants to be concealed; it aims to wrap and preserve. Similarly, valuable things ought to be covered, wrapped, and protected somehow; this is the main idea of the *ḥijāb*. The *ḥijāb* was proclaimed by the ProphetProphet Muhammad (ﷺ)in the second year of the hijra (the seventh century), based on what was inscribed in the holy Qur'ān. Since then, the *ḥijāb* has played a significant role in Muslim domestic life in the Islamic world. The *ḥijāb* is concerned with the safeguarding of family honour, as discussed in some verses (*āyāt*, sing. *āyah*) from the Qur'ān. These *āyāt* demonstrate the obligation of the *ḥijāb* as a concept to be applied in Muslim domestic life, starting with women who need to be protected and valued for their own sake (Al-Murahhem, 2008). The Quran also has several references to *ḥijāb* concerning seclusion and/or screening, but only one reference concerns women's clothing (El-Guindi, 1999). In *sūrat*[1] Al-Ahzāb, it is stated that:

[a]nd when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want, ask them from before a screen (hijāb): that makes for your greater purity for your hearts and theirs. (Qur'ān: 33, 53)

A prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): That is most convenient that they should be known (as such) and not molested, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'ān: 33, 59)

The first *āyah*, 'his ladies, ' means the Prophet's wives, whereas the second *āyah* involves women believers. The first expresses the *ḥijāb* as a screen and seclusion, and the second illustrates the *ḥijāb* as a garment. The *ḥadīth* clarifies the last issue in greater detail :"When the verse 'That they should cast their outer garments over their persons' was revealed, the women of Ansar came out as if they had crows over their heads by wearing outer garments" (Sunan Abu-Dawud: 33, 4090). This attire is how women dress with their outer garments during the Prophet's time when the *ḥijāb* verses were descended. Nevertheless, metaphorically, *sūrat* Al-Nūr, which means 'the Light', is a real manifesto that explicated rules in Islamic domestic manners. The *sūrah* focuses on personal privacy and domestic etiquette, matters of intimacy, and connecting with spiritual teaching, which Muslims must observe and learn. Moreover, the *sūrah* stresses privacy and other inhabitation issues within the house, whereas Islamic domestic etiquette stresses modesty and good behaviour, as in *āyah* 58–59.

[1] Sūrah or Sūrat means a section or a chapter in the Holy Qur'ān.

O ye who believe! Let those whom your right hands possess, and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence) on three occasions: before morning prayer; the while ye doff your clothes for the noonday heat; and after the late-night prayer: These are your three times it is not wrong for you or for them to move about attending to each other: Thus those Allah make clear the signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom ۞ But when the children among you come of age, let them (also) ask for permission, as do those senior to them (in age): thus does Allah make clear his signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. (Ali, 1991, 884–885)

There is a considerable sense of time and space in the *āyah*, including ways of dealing with gender, classes, and even people with special needs. For instance, the first rule in domestic life starts with respect for the house and the occupiers. The first order is to get permission before entering the house; the manner is to salute those in the house first and to lower the gaze as far as possible. The permission is for the sight, as the *ḥadīth* explained more regarding the *ḥurma* and privacy of the house (Az-Zubadi, 1996). The *sūrah* does not only lay down the rules of decorum within the family and the practice of daily life inside the house, but it also continues underlining regulations inside the house in more detail: children who are not mature, as stated above, slaves (that time) and personal servants included, have more freedom in terms of access, and can come and go at all hours within the family apartments. Although both groups can come and go freely during the daytime, there are certain limitations: during the night and before Fajr (dawn - early morning) Prayer; before Fajr, they must discreetly ask for permission before they enter the family quarters in case people are sleeping or undressed. The same applies to the midday siesta period and again to the time after night prayers when people usually undress and retire to bed (Ali, 1991). The *āyah* demonstrates the role of time within the daily routine and time as a historical period of the Islamic dynasty.

The rules are stricter for adults, as they must always ask permission. Interestingly, the following *āyah* is for older women and their modest *ḥijāb* within the house (Ali, 1991). Moreover, the *sūrah* stresses the privacy of the house, emphasising the rules of domestic manners and public behaviour, and as a part of Muslim spiritual duties. This practice is a crucial aspect of Islam, where the *ḥurma* of the house ought to be respected. The Qur'ān illustrates the privacy circle inside the house and the protocol of inhabitation. Regardless of the size of the house or the economic status, privacy should be respected and considered. This method is how Islamic architecture interprets Quranic rules and applies them regardless of regional differences. The notion of *ḥurma* within the Islamic house is more than a mere private concept; *ḥurma* designates more.

The Qur'ān draws attention to the expected behaviour within the house; the *ḥadīth* describes these traditions and stresses the necessity of asking permission before entering the house. Both sources also draw on the permission protocol, which is enjoined because of the sight and looking at others' houses, and the punishment of committing such an act, as shown in the *ḥadīth* of "Asking permission (before entering)". The permission is enforced because of the role of looking; one should avoid looking at the occupants of the house who may be engaged in a private activity or doing something that might cause shame or embarrassment if exposed to unauthorised public view:

A man peeped through a round hole into the dwelling place of the ProphetProphet ﷺwhile the ProphetProphetﷺ had a *midra* (an iron comb) with which he was scratching his head; the ProphetProphetﷺ said, "Had I known you were looking (through the hole), I would have pierced your eye with it (i.e., the comb)" verily! The order of taking permission to enter has been enjoined because of the sight (that one should not look unlawfully at the state of others). (Az-Zubadi 1996, 968)[2]

In Muslim societies, houses are the most respected places and have their *ḥurma*. These places include the houses of Allah (masjid), the Prophet'sProphet's house in Madinah, and ordinary houses. Sacredness is the common factor, indicating ownership and privacy, restricted access, and the observance of rules. Rules govern the houses of Allah, especially in Makkah and Madinah. However, the Prophet's house has its own access rules, which are discussed in detail in the Qur'ān. Similarly, ordinary houses are respected as territories belonging to their occupants, who also have the right to set their own rules within the boundaries of Islam. Islam imposes an absolute way of living that affects all aspects of being public, private, and spiritual across the Islamic world. Orders in the Qur'ān are always for the benefit of the people and the community. The *ḥijāb* concept governs Muslim daily life and the women within the house. The veiling of women is just one form of a broader range of implications. Women are the main consideration in the wider concept of the *ḥarīm,* with a focus on both the *ḥijāb* and the *ḥarīm* (as women) where the *ḥijāb* was fully practised, especially in major Muslim cities until the early 1900s.

3.0 THE ARCHITECTURAL INTERPRETATION OF THE ḤIJĀB

The need for the *ḥijāb*, as a garment, a partition, and a means of giving women seclusion from men in Islamic societies, is a phenomenon that is applied according to the circumstances of each region. This method is one of the strengths of Islamic architecture, where flexibility in crafts and materials allows for consideration of the climate and leaves room for creativity and identity. This strength parallels flexibility in applying the *ḥijāb* across the Islamic world. Where the form of the *ḥijāb* varies in application, the shape of the house varies as well (based on the region), but Islamic law is still pertinent. For instance, the application of the *ḥijāb* for women's garments in India is different compared to women in Egypt. Although the shape of the house is in line with Islamic law, it is specific to the region and society. The process of designing buildings is similar to the variety of ways in which women conceal themselves across the Islamic world (Al-Murahhem, 2008). In a study of women and veiling, Fadwa El-Guindi states that the analogy between the Afghani hijab garment and the mashrabiyya (the wooden projected windows) of Cairo is striking (El-Guindi, 1999). That is the analogy of the hijab as wooden screens and the garment. There is a striking similarity between the Afghani women's garment - the head part in particular- and the middle part of the mashrabiyya of Cairo, where both ensure the same notion with remarkable form similarity. At the same time, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones claims that the noun 'veil' is a generic term for a garment with many names in various languages, especially in the languages of modern veil societies, and a corresponding number of styles and wearers. She also states that: 'the veil', as a concept, is still an emotional and impassioned subject for many people who perceive it as a classical statement for the

[2] Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd in ḥadīth: 2060 (Az-Zubadi, 1996, p. 968). Meanwhile, Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "Anyone who fills his eye with the contents of a house before he has been given permission has gone astray." Book 43, Hadith 1092. (https://sunnah.com/adab/43)

suppression of women, particularly in the Middle East. The veil, as a woman's garment, is associated with the containment of women (Llewellyn-Jones, 2000). Elizabeth Cooper claims that the *ḥijāb* can be seen as one issue of these rules; therefore, the actions of a Muslim woman, whether in India, Egypt, Persia, or Algiers, have been controlled by Islamic laws since the seventh century. Even today, these roles govern each act of domestic life and the world outside the home (Cooper, 1915). Although 'Today' refers to the 19th/early 20th century, the rules are still being practised in some Islamic communities and can be noticed through the design of the houses.

The notion of *ḥurma* of the house is interpreted physically and morally to protect women and households alike. Starting from the bent entrance of the Islamic house, which reflects the importance of asking for permission, to the blind and blank walls of the lower floors to prevent sight. The interpretation of the hijab secures the privacy of the house through the levels of the entrance from within to secure privacy for further protection from intruders. Entrances to the house are usually indirect or constructed purposely to obstruct vision into the courtyard, emphasising the separation of public and private domains. They usually open into a blank wall to obstruct views of the inside from the outside world, preserving the family's privacy, as seen in most of the houses in Cairo (Figure 2, 5b).

Meanwhile, "*otlo"* – the street-side platform – is a traditional feature of Indian architecture and is occupied differently by native inhabitants. It is little used by Muslim householders due to the application of the Islamic rule of *ḥijāb*, where the main entrance leads to a lobby that is isolated from the private courtyard by a wooden screen (Cooper & Dawson, 1998). This is the case of the traditional Bohra house in northwest India that reflects the impact of the *ḥijāb* within the house. It is also a clear instance of applying Islamic rules and adopting traditional architecture that indicates the significance of Islamic rules in shaping Muslims' daily lives everywhere. However, applying this Islamic concept in south India, for instance, reveals a form of urban settlement. Sriram Ganaphathi claims that windows facing the inner courtyards are larger than those facing the street, which are smaller and higher than the eye level (Oliver, 1997). Therefore, the sense of privacy within the Islamic house is important, noticeable even from the façade. Homes have blank walls facing the street or have lattice windows and screens to hide the interiors (Ragette, 2012).

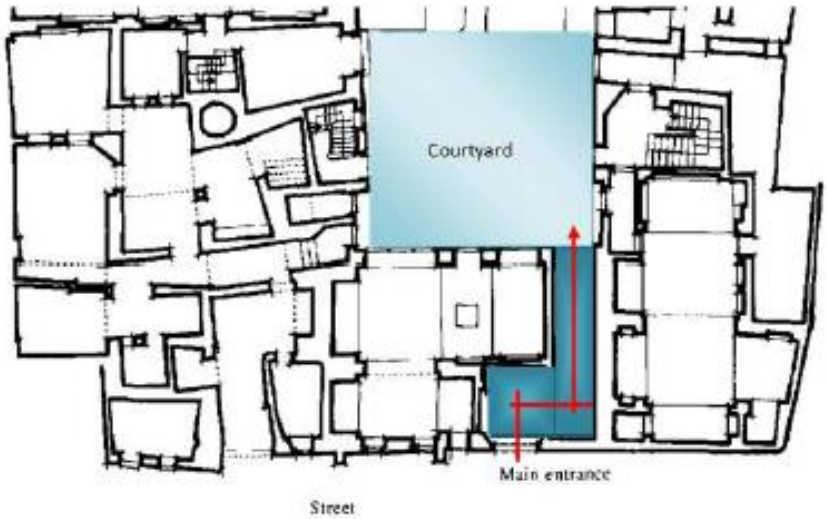

Fig. 2: The bent entrance in Cairo (El-Shorbagy, 2010, p. 16)

Observing the *ḥijāb* as a garment in Islamic architecture indicates that a building's exterior cladding is treated like fabric. This cladding is not just to cover the body of the building, it also to protect it from the outside environment. Fabric, as a material, is the easiest and the most affordable means of fulfilling the need for cover. During the ProphetProphet Mohammed's time, when wearing the *ḥijāb* was obligatory, curtain fabric was used as a simple solution for women's garments[3], and for segregation between male and female spaces. Curtains were used to divide gender zones within spaces to symbolise *ḥijāb* in its full meaning. The aim is to fulfil the Islamic rule of the *ḥijāb*, where the veil is drawn to clad facades, and to create secluded zones to achieve privacy (Al-Murahhem, 2008). The concept of the *ḥijāb* is to protect what is beneath the garment – the building's cladding does the same in Islamic architecture. Screening is applied differently across the Islamic world to veil interiors from being seen. The essence of concealment of the ḥijāb is echoed in the screening of the house from the exterior. Lattice wooden windows and such architectural elements in traditional houses are another form of the *ḥijāb* that fulfils women's needs and aligns with Islamic requirements. Such perforated grilles – made from stone or plaster – like *jali* in India (Figure 3), or rawāshīn and mashrabiyya in the Arab world (Figure 4) – made from timber – have been fitted in buildings whenever privacy is considered important (Al-Murahhem, 2008). Afaf Mahfouz and Ismail Serageldin claim that the definition of privacy has produced the quintessentially Middle Eastern device of the masharabiyya. Popularly regarded as a symbol of segregation and exclusion of women from public life, this lattice window permits women to see simultaneously but not be seen (Mahfouz & Serageldin, 1990).

As the *ḥijāb* may reflect identity, where the outer garment or the cloak that covers a woman from head to toe can be significantly linked to the wearer's identity, the cladding, and the screening work in the same way (Al-Murahhem, 2008). This general formula of application of the *ḥijāb* leaves room for flexibility and local identity in each Islamic region. The richness of the cladding and screening types used across the Islamic world reflect, in local terms, the availability of materials and techniques to apply the role of the *ḥijāb* (Al-Murahhem, 2008). Herbert Baker, the architect of the buildings of the Imperial Secretariat in New Delhi, points out that *jali* is one of the very early features of Indian structural design. He claims, "These screens were familiar to the master-builders of 'Mohammedan's India' (Bunt, 1900s). G. H. R. Tillotson argues that the *jali* was used across windows and as panels in large areas of the wall and appears in women's quarters where the condition of purdah (*ḥijāb*) is dedicated (Tillotson, 1987). Ilay Cooper and Barry Dawson also claimed that examples of these stone *jali* appear in Rajput palaces, especially in the zenana section, for women to peep from behind (Cooper & Dawson, 1998). On the other side of the Islamic world, the same kind of screens are made of wood in a flat or projected form to secure the same concept. Regardless of the richness of techniques, the ornaments' beauty, and even the variation of local terminologies, they all convey the same message in obeying the rule of the *ḥijāb*. Overall, this cladding of such lattice screens is the Islamic house's garment, representing the *ḥijāb* in its simplest form.

[3] Sunan Abu Dawud, book 32, no 4089: Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin "Safiyyah, daughter of Shaybah, said that Aisha mentioned the women of Ansar, praised them, and said good words about them. She then said: When Surat an-Nur came down, they took the curtains, tore them, and made head covers (veils)".

Fig. 3: Projected Sandstone Windows in the Zenana of Johdpur Fort Palace, India. 1640 c. (Tillotson, 1987, 147)

Fig. 4: Projected Wooden Lattice Windows in Makkah. (Al-Hajj Research Centre, Slide Collection).

Both the screening and segregation of genders are fundamental principles in Islam and have been implemented in Muslim countries for centuries. The notion of privacy is a wider Islamic concern where segregated zones within the house, regardless of differences between Islamic regions, fulfil the *ḥijāb* concept. The use of spaces illustrates how religion and ideology have given basic meanings to gender in architecture and society in Muslim communities (Crouch & Johnson, 2001).
Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones also states:

In Muslim ideology, public space and points in time are frequently interwoven. They are usually gender-specific so that, for a limited time, women can inhabit a public world free of men. Men can walk in streets clear of women, nevertheless, the underlying model is so deep-rooted in Muslim thought that the sexes can operate in a public sphere while remaining essentially in a private sex-specific space (Llewellyn-Jones, 2000, p. 297).

Considerable importance is attached to time and space scheduling activities within the house to enable greater freedom and privacy for both genders. Juhani Pallasmaa supports the same notion of home and privacy by stating, "Home is where we hide our secrets and express our private selves. Home is our safe place of resting and dreaming …". There are cultures in which the home is the women's domain. There are ways of life in which the home is a public showcase, and the public gaze penetrates the secrecy of the home. He also thinks that a home is a mediator between the public and private; he puts the two contradicting ideas of privacy alongside each other: "home as women's domain" and "public showcase" (Pallasmaa, 2005). El-Guindi states that Arab privacy concerns two core spheres – women and the family, where privacy is sacred and carefully guarded. For women, it is both a right and an exclusive privilege reflected in dress, space, architecture, and proxemic behaviour (El-Guindi, 1999). Mahfouz and Serageldin claim that the unique position of women in Muslim cultures, with its emphasis on modesty and on limiting the intermixing of the sexes, results in particular patterns of 'private', 'semi-private', and 'public' spaces that are quite distinct (Mahfouz & Serageldin, 1990). As a spatial container, each zone has its functions and users' etiquette to control who has access to private zones. This layout can be seen in the layout of many Islamic houses, whether they are based on horizontal or vertical layouts, where zones are gradually transformed from public to private. Most of the layouts are horizontal and based on the courtyard style.

Horizontal layouts with courtyards can be seen in major Islamic cities; in this layout, reception areas and *majlis* are in the first zone one faces when entering the house. Therefore, guests and visitors cannot go further unless they are close friends or relatives, in which case, they can enter the following section where family and living quarters are located. One cannot proceed further into the restricted areas within the house for the sake of the *ḥurma* of the house. The last zone, at the back of the house, is the private section where family areas and bedrooms – if applicable – are placed. The private zone is not at the back of the house because it is the quietest place; it is designed for privacy, where previous spaces act as insulation barriers. Courtyards in the Middle of the horizontal layouts work perfectly in this sense, where these transition zones absorb sound and retain the family's privacy. Examples across the Islamic world from the East to the West, such as Egypt, Syria, and Morocco (Figure 5).

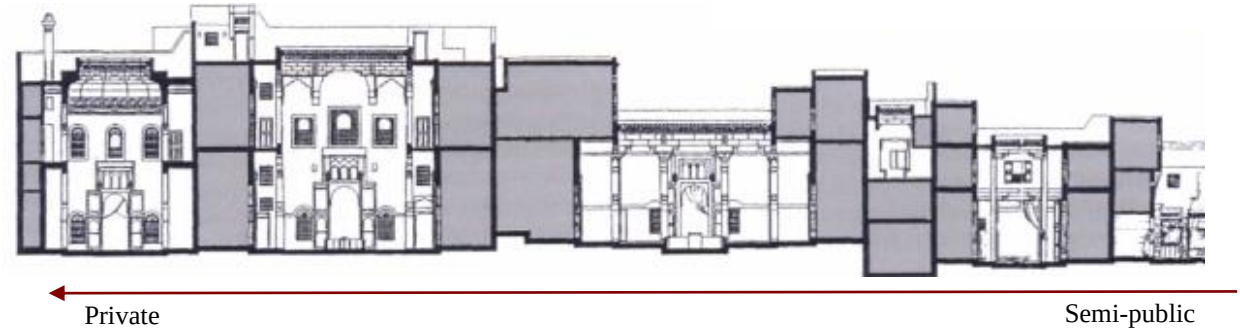

Fig. 5a: Courtyards enhance privacy in horizontal layouts, a house in Morocco (Ragette, 2012, pp. 205–207)

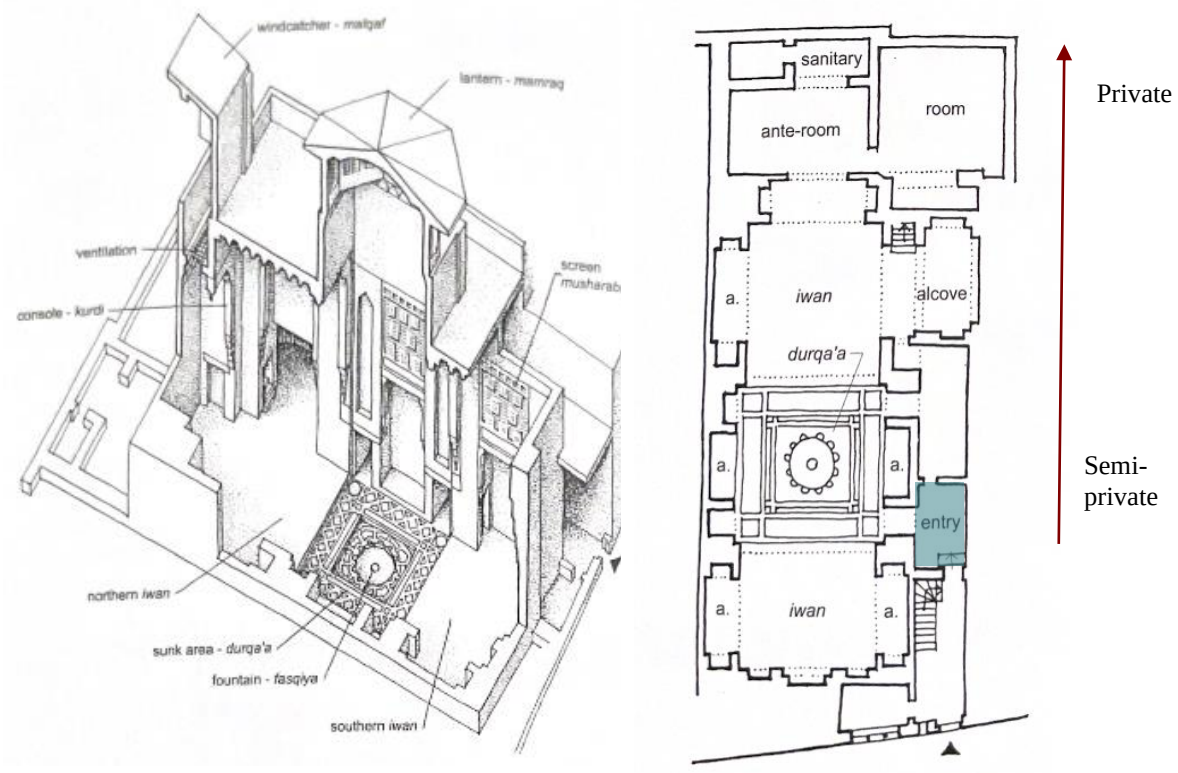

Fig. 5b: Levels of privacy within the horizontal layouts, a house in Cairo-Egypt (Ragette, 2012, pp. 205–207)

In some major cities, where land is expensive or has special status, the layouts vary, and the vertical axis appears. In the vertical layout, courtyards do not exist, but the private zone

is applied similarly on a different axis. The ground and lower floors accommodate reception and *majlis* areas, and the floors above are for family sections and bedrooms. Vertical layouts can be seen in some Islamic cities where spiritually precious areas or courtyards are not effectively applied. If the land is not big enough to accommodate courtyards and horizontal layouts, privacy can be achieved through the alternative vertical layout. Makkah, for instance, is a holy city located in a valley; the land is, therefore, priceless, and buildings have consequently been extended vertically (Figure 6). Some cities in the western and southern regions of Saudi Arabia (Hijaz and Asir) have adopted the vertical layout as an option. Examples of such tower houses can also be seen in Yemen, Hadramout, Morocco, and neighbouring regions. Overall, the deeper into the house, or the higher up, the more private the space becomes, with exceptions based on the layout patterns. In large houses, segregation can be achieved by multiple courtyards or by different floor levels. In these tall buildings, the main stairway is semi-public up to the top (Ragette, 2012).

Fig. 6a: Levels enhance privacy in a vertical layout, a house in Makkah (Al-Hajj Research Centre, 1990, 29)

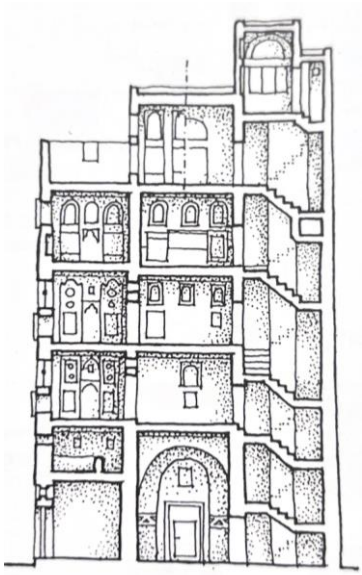

Fig. 6b: Levels enhance privacy in a vertical layout, a house in Yemen (Ragette, 2012, p. 101)

In planning Islamic cities, horizontal layouts are common, with courtyards restricting access and breaking the sight when entering the house. Furthermore, the male and female sections in the Islamic house are commonly known among scholars in architecture. These sections in the Islamic house have local terms, but they all have the same meaning and reflect the same principle of the *ḥijāb*. The *ḥijāb* stands behind the concept of the Islamic house across the Islamic world, and it is applied accordingly. Interestingly, even the horizontal layouts may utilise vertical zones regarding *ḥijāb* and the necessary segregation. In the semi-private zone within the horizontal layout, women can experience some events behind screens overlooking courtyards. Some examples reflect separate zones for women, where lattice screens are added to give women more opportunities to enjoy selected functions dominated by men. Such examples can be seen across the Islamic world from East to West. In Cairo, the *qāʿa* is the main feature in the house, where many of these lattice windows are fitted with built-in benches and cushions, providing comfortable places to sit and enjoy a protected viewpoint

(Vitra Design Museum, 2003). Women cross the courtyard and ascend special stairways to the *qāʿāt* (sig. *qāʿa*) and the chambers on the upper levels of the house (Figure 7). From above, they observe activities in the courtyards and halls below from behind these wooden lattices (Campo, 1991). In the house of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Dhahabī in Cairo, the lattice screens conceal women and allow them to observe the *qāʿa* from above (Figure 7), but the access to them is from another room (Al-Basha, n.d.,). In Baghdad, screened mezzanines flank high majlis for women (Figure 8), from which they can overlook other inner spaces and the street (Ragette, 2012).

Fig. 7: Perspective from above in a house in Cairo

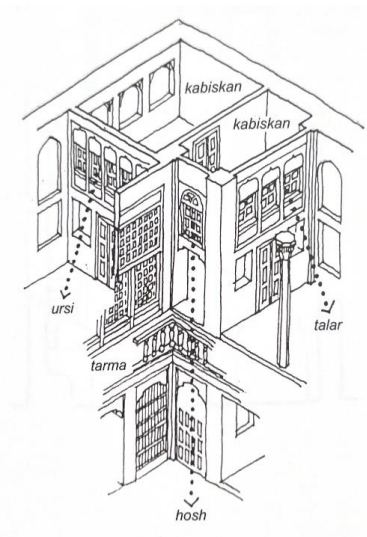

Fig. 8: Women's zone and screening in Baghdad (Ragette, 2012, p. 78)

4.0 THE ḤIJĀB AND ḤARĪM - NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES

The *ḥarīm*, as a physical and moral separation of women, has existed throughout history in different parts of the Islamic world. As previously discussed, the *ḥārim* implies women and women's quarters, an area in the house, primarily the domain of women. It is the separate, protected part of a household where women, children, and servants live in maximum seclusion and privacy (Croutier, 1989). Even though *ḥarīm*, as an Arabic term, is a well-known architectural space to define an area used by women and the family of the house, many local terms substitute the old term. However, the notion still exists among Muslim communities worldwide. For example, *Haremlik*, a Turkish term, *enderun* a Persian one, and "*zenane* or *zanana*" used in the Indian subcontinent. Some scholars claim that *Zenana* is used in Persia and Turkey (Cooper, 1915); others argue that *purda/ purdah* is also known as an area for women, which is screened from the sight of men by a curtain (Slesin & Cliff, 1990). All terms reflect the concept of the *ḥarīm* as a secluded space within the house based on the Islamic rule of the hijab (Figure 9 a-b). Regardless of the various terms of the *ḥarīm* within the Islamic house, the notion of gender separation still exists and is fully practised in Islamic communities.

Fig. 9 a: The *ḥarīm* and its equivalent in the Islamic world. World map showing countries with significant Muslim populations (https://mapsontheweb.zoom-maps.com/image/169809641892)

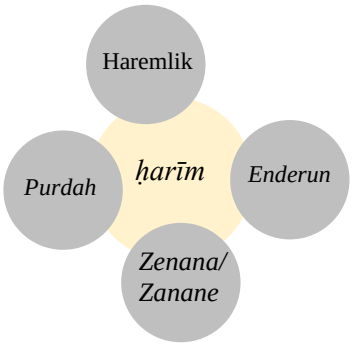

Fig. 9 b: Islamic rule of the hijab

Segregation is one facet of Harim, securing a space designated for women; however, shielding the façade is another significant form, using lattice screens to secure these zones within the house. Screening is also adopted across the Islamic world, considering the region's culture and geographical context. Therefore, narrated case studies focus on the wider Islamic world, where the hijab and harim concepts are applied within the boundaries of different regions and their cultures, away from the Arab world where the terms originated. First, Haremlik, a Turkish term, commonly referred to the same space during the Ottoman period. Regardless of the words used to describe the same space, both ḥarīm and Haremlik were used for corresponding functions (Al-Murahhem, 2008). For instance, this case study in Cairo narrates that the house is partly opened onto the inner courtyard and partly onto the street but is shielded on both sides by projected lattice screens:

To enhance the privacy and security of the family, the Islamic urban house (as indeed was the case with most large rural homes) was frequently divided into two sections, the salamlik and the haramlik. The former served as the public part of the house where male visitors and friends were received, while the latter was a private and secluded sanctuary reserved for the family…When window openings were placed in the haramlik facing the street or central open space, trellised bay windows or mushrabiyyahs protected them. These trellised apertures enabled the occupants of the haramlik to satisfy their curiosity about the outside world without being seen. (Schoenauer, 1981, 37)

In Persia, *modern* or Zenana reflects the concept of a secluded space within the house. It is the inner quarter reserved for close family members and female visitors. The physical form of the hijab constructs the Islamic house layout that focuses on gender segregation (Croutier, 1989; Scarce, 1987). Some modern dictionaries define *modern* as a Turkish term for

the place where the harem is located in the palace or the interior of the great palaces[4]. This analysis of the terminology may need an in-depth study, which may also reflect the concept of the hijab in its comprehensive essence. *Zenana*, as used in Hindi, is the current term for the women of the family and their apartments. It is used in English literature during the 1700s to describe women's sections in palaces (Yule & Burnell, 1903). From Farsi, *zanana* is derived from *zan*, which means 'women'; it designates the apartments of a house in which the women of the family are secluded. This Islamic rule of female seclusion has been largely adopted by the Hindus of Bengal and the Mahrattas. *Zanana* is a Mughal term used to describe women's quarters in a palace or house (Al-Murahhem, 2008). Considering the Persian cultural impact on the Islamic Mughal, *Zenana* is used to describe segregation which is evident in whichever language is used among Muslims. Interestingly, both *ḥarīm* and *zanana* mean women and describe women's quarters. *Zenane* is commonly used in the Sind (southern Pakistan) and in the Indian subcontinent, where the strict rule of purdah (*ḥijāb*) is applied and thus develops gender segregation (Cooper & Dawson, 1998).

Towards the Arabian Sea, in regions like Gujarat in India, many Muslim houses are stricter regarding purdah (*ḥijāb*) than Hindus. *Purdah* is a term that means the seclusion of women within the house. Muslims hide the *Zenana*, or women's section of the house, from visitors (Cooper & Dawson, 1998). Intriguingly, *purda*h "بُردة" in Arabic means a striped garment to wrap the body with – another form of hijab. Karl Wutt claims that some 'tribes' – Pashtun and their Warlords – who inhabit the valleys of eastern Afghanistan or the northwest frontier province of Pakistan have strict codes of privacy and live in formidable fortress houses that ensure security and gender segregation (Oliver, 1997). In Hindi, purdah or pardā is a term from the Persian word 'parda', meaning a 'curtain', especially a curtain used to screen women from being seen by men. A woman of higher status who observes such rules of seclusion is termed parda-nishīn or 'one who sits behind a curtain.' (Yule & Burnell, 1903). The term in Hindi and Farsi has an interwoven and metaphorical meaning: a curtain, hanging, screen, partition, or blind. It also means veil, seclusion (especially for a Muslim woman), and privacy (McGregor, 1997). In a study of Women in Islamic Societies of South Asia, Tasneem Chowdury claims that *purdah*, which means curtain – literally – refers to the physical segregation of living spaces and the covering of body and face. It also refers to the beliefs and values surrounding women's behaviour, the restrictions on their movements, and the requirements for their respectful manners. These include a set of norms that govern women's behaviour in the presence of males within the home and outside in public areas. Thus, the "*purdah* zone" is where women veil and seclude themselves from men. This zone within the Islamic house comprises a large part of South Asia, where Muslims use this practice to safeguard their women from men outside the family and to keep them in their separate feminine world (Chowdury, 1993). It is also argued that, in India, the notion of being secluded and behind a screen can be expressed by saying: 'She is purdah-nashim, or simply purdah.' The purdah is the screen that shuts the woman away from the outside world. A similar expression with a similar meaning is used in Egypt: 'Yes, my daughters go to school', to which a mother might say, 'but they are kept harim' (Cooper, 1915).

Apart from the various terms used from the East to the West of the Islamic world, the residents' experience illustrates another dimension. Women themselves have described this

[4] https://educalingo.com/en/dic-tr/enderun

tradition of securing privacy and safeguarding women in a variety of different ways. Such experience can be seen from a woman's point of view. For example, Alev Lytle Croutier, who lived in a *ḥarīm* quarter in Turkey at the end of the 1900s, has described the residence:

The windows of the women's apartments either opened onto an inner courtyard or were closely barred with latticework, concealing them from the outside world. These artfully designed, intricately woven lattices are some of the most beautiful elements of Islamic architecture, but what made them most compelling were the silhouettes of the shadows behind them, intimating a thousand and one mysteries and intrigues. Enclosed balconies with latticed windows allowed women to observe what was happening outside without being seen. Courtyards, roof gazebos, and gardens allow them a breath of fresh air, though these places were still considered haram. Roof terraces were the favourite places to watch the boats go by, take a siesta, and enjoy refreshments. They also allowed women to go unnoticed from one house to another. (Croutier, 1989, 162)

Another scene from Hyderabad, India, in 1915 describes women entering a female section of *ḥijāb*:

We arrived at the home, which was surrounded by a great wall. A woman-servant raised a curtain, disclosing a short stone stairway, ascending, and we found ourselves in the women's quarters. It was a courtyard, with rooms opening upon it from the four sides. These rooms were like large alcoves, separated from the court only by arches. (Cooper, 1915, 172)

These experiences of being within the *ḥijāb* reflect all previous issues discussed in terms of securing veiled women inside the house and finding solutions to reflect the *ḥijāb* in domestic interiors. More importantly, the first scene demonstrates the architectural means used in the Islamic houses, specially designed to conceal women, which fulfil the *ḥijāb* as a concept and achieve privacy. On the other hand, the second case depicts the layers of the *ḥijāb* being experienced within the zones of space from the outside zone into the interior. The *ḥijāb,* in its different forms, is an Islamic principle applied in a Muslim's daily life. The hijab is a key factor that reflects the essence of Islamic architecture around the globe, a character that unifies such architecture, regardless of the Islamic region. Even in parts of Indonesia where Arab Muslims were living, the implementation of the hijab system is symbolised by a rule adhered to by non-family guests. This rule is a behaviour that prohibits physical contact when visiting families. The circulation pattern within the house ensures that guests pass through a public space (patio) where non-physical contact occurs between the guest and the occupant (from behind the living room door). One vital Islamic rule is getting permission from the house owner. However, in small houses, public and private spaces are separated by a door or curtain (Azizah & Putri, 2013). The discussion went back to the starting point of the hijab as a concept, as a vital principle that could be seen, felt, and experienced physically and non-physically. That is, physically in a material form or application such as garments, screens, and secluded zones and non-physically or morally as attitude, behaviour, or living manners. The layout of the Islamic house reflects the implementation of the hijab as the main religious principle to protect the essence of the family within the house.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study reflects the metaphorical concept of the *ḥijāb* as it is written and defined in the Qur'ān. It clarifies the terminology of the *ḥijāb* and its idioms, the flexibility of the Arabic term, and its broadened and hidden meanings. The physical form of the *ḥijāb* concept can be seen in the construction of the Islamic house with layouts that focus on gender segregation. As a term, *ḥijāb* is known in the Arab and the Islamic world; however, in some regions, local terminology substitutes the Arabic term while the concept remains the same. The dual meaning of the term *ḥarīm* encompasses both a space and its occupants and is parallel to the connection existing between women and the *ḥijāb* as a concept. Homes in most Islamic cities have blank walls facing the street or have lattice windows and screens from which the inhabitants can look out into the street without being seen. At the same time, segregation is a form of privacy that is applied differently across the Islamic world to veil interiors from being seen.

The practice of Muslim daily life is interwoven within religion; Islam is absorbed and administrated as part of the daily routine. Observing and studying aspects of Muslim daily life, including architecture and inhabitation, cannot be excluded from Islam as the dominating factor, especially within domestic life, where the *ḥarīm* plays an important role within the house. The woman's experience sums up the meaning of Islamic architecture: to fulfil the notion of the *ḥijāb* within the house. It also reflects the main feature of Islamic architecture: the concealment of women regardless of the local terminology. The experience of the *ḥijāb* and being within the secluded section of the *ḥarīm* gives a view of time and space in the context of the Islamic house. Such an experience may not be conserved, as globalisation is moving swiftly. Consequently, the documentation of layers of inhabitation is essential. Historically, it seems that *ḥarīm* is the old term commonly spread during the Islamic empire until the Ottoman period in November 1922. The term, with its Arabic origin, was used because it is the official language. The term may have changed when the Islamic territory was divided into regions. Or it could be due to the use of the equivalent non-Arab term for *ḥarīm*, which non-Arab communities rely on. This practice is evident through history and literature studies, especially among non-Muslim scholars who based their research on local terms about the community's understanding. The studies of this inner space that reflect the *ḥijāb* in its utmost notion were not looked at through Islam as the main source, which leaves room for wide-open speculation.

Case studies throughout the Islamic world were illustrated to show the constant necessity for women's privacy inside the house. The mere narrative of the case studies and experienced stories demonstrate such practice among the Muslim communities. That is the hijab implementation within the Islamic house from when the ProphetProphet was around until recent years. The discussion demonstrates that even with modernity and the globalisation wave, the need for privacy in the home is fundamental and indisputable. The discussed case studies before the 19th century depicted the harmonious manners of such implementation in most major Islamic cities. These cases prove that the hijab concept is applied and adaptable to different Islamic societies accordingly. Such flexibility was narrated in various cultures via terminology and the implementation method within the house zones. The wider perspective of the concept of the hijab application exemplifies a great lesson to learn. A lesson to design a house for the sake of the privacy (*ḥurma*) of the family members, the house occupants, and society in general, since the need for privacy and the hijab is vital within the Islamic house,

even in recent years as discussed in the cases previously. The demonstrated case studies detail how obeying the Quran's rules reflects the house's Islamic etiquette. History proves the necessity of the hijab within the Islamic house and shows the lessons to heed across Islamic communities around the world. These lessons ought to be applied practically for the family's sake as the house's main factor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their gratitude and appreciation to all who contributed to this study, directly or indirectly.

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