

A QUALITATIVE REVIEW OF THE 'AWRAH ISSUE OF MUSLIM WOMEN ATHLETE IN MALAYSIA: ANALYSING THE EXISTING STANDARDISED GUIDELINES

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Received: 31 May 2023

Accepted: 13 December 2023

Published: 15 January 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol.29no1.544>

ABSTRACT

Shari'ah law has provided a specific ruling upon legal attire that requires every Muslim to cover their 'awrah. The restriction of disclosing 'awrah can be derived from the Qur'an and practices of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Nevertheless, covering 'awrah is not an easy task for every Muslim, women in particular, when it comes to sports activities or competitions involvement. The reason is that several events require the athletes to wear non-Shari'ah compliant attire that goes against the basis of 'awrah regulation. To address this challenge, Malaysian authorities actively participated in formulating standardized guidelines for their guidance. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the current guidelines and assess how their implementation influences the commitment of Muslim women athletes to adhere to Shari'ah law during their engagement in sports activities. This study employs qualitative methods involving observation and document analysis. It identifies a conflict between the dress code of Muslim athletes and the necessity to adhere to the 'awrah regulation outlined in both the Qur'an and al-Sunnah. Consequently, the study aims to propose recommendations for enhancing existing guidelines in alignment with Shari'ah principles.

Keywords: *Shari'ah, athlete, Muslim, sports, 'awrah.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Covering 'awrah is one of the Shari'ah prescriptions noted in both the Qur'an and Sunnah. It has been part of 'ibadah for every Muslim to obey

regardless of their condition. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of every Muslim to ensure that certain parts of their body are covered according to *dawabit* set by Shari'ah. However, obedience to the '*awrah*' prescription is not easy for every Muslim practitioner, women in particular. This is because some of them must face several challenges when it comes to career selection due to some restrictions. In this regard, this study found that the '*awrah*' issue has been critically embraced by some Muslim women who are involved in the sports industry. This is due to regulations ordered by the sports authorities and attire codes that do not consider their status of being Muslim. Therefore, there is only a limited number of Muslim women athletes joining competitions at domestic and international levels.

Generally, Islam does not prohibit women from joining any competition if their participation is aligned with Shari'ah principles. One of the principles is to ensure the obedience upon '*awrah*' concern. However, some of the sports competed by athletes seem not inappropriate for the nature of Muslims such as swimming and gymnastics since the provided attire is contravene Shari'ah. To close this gap, Islamic authority bodies have set several guidelines for those who are involved in the sports industry. By having an depth analysis of the guidelines, this study analyses them and proposes some minor additional suggestions to close the gap in the provided guidelines.

2. THE TERMINOLOGY OF 'AWRAH

The original word of '*awrah*' is from Arabic terminology. It literally can be understood as shame, disgrace, ignominy, degradation, weakness and vice (Arabic Lexicon). In other words, it is also described as misbehaviour (al-Mausu'ah al-Fiqhiah, 1990). The basic prescription of the '*awrah*' is repeatedly mentioned and can be found described in the Holy Qur'an. In Surah al-Ahzab, the word '*awrah*' was mentioned by referring to the case of companions who urged that their houses be unprotected even though they were unexposed. The story was described in the Holy Qur'an: "And when a faction of them said, "O people of Yathrib, there is no stability for you [here], so return [home]." And a party of them asked permission from the Prophet, saying, "Indeed, our houses are unprotected," while they were not exposed. They did not intend except to flee" (Al-Ahzab, 33: 13).

Surah al-Nur addresses the '*awrah*' times' that people usually use to rest or be exposed and mentions the most private times before *fajr*, at noon and after '*isha*'. The Holy Qur'an mentions: "O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess and those who have not [yet] reached puberty among you ask permission of you [before entering] at three times: before the dawn

prayer and when you put aside your clothing [for rest] at noon and after the night prayer. [These are] three times of privacy for you.” (Al-Nuṛ, 24: 58)

In Islamic law, the word *‘awrah* is technically defined as body parts that are restricted from being exposed to people (al-Qurtūbī, 2014, 190 & Shams al-Dīn al-Ramlī, 1984, 7). Muslim jurists agreed that the restriction on exposing *‘awrah* on age, gender, or status (al-Mausu‘ah al-Fiqhiah, 1990, 43) Hence, Muslims are not allowed to expose any part of their bodies regardless of men or women, except what is permissible, according to Shari‘ah.

2.1 *Dawabit* for *‘Aurah* of Muslim Women

2.1.1 *The Muslim Women’s ‘Aurah Limitation*

As stated in the preceding paragraph, there is no contradiction between Muslim scholars in deciding the obligation of covering *‘awrah* for every Muslim woman who fulfilled all requirements set by Shari‘ah. However, they disputed to specify the parts that Shari‘ah does not consider as *‘awrah*.

The basis of disputation amongst scholars is based on their interpretation of several textual revelations from the Holy Qur’an. For example, in Surah al-Nur, verse 31 states, “Do not to expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears”, Ḥanafī scholars consider the necessary parts include face, hands, and legs (al-Mausu‘ah al-Fiqhiah, 1990, 44). According to them, this consideration was based on the provision that should be applied during their prayer time, including face, hands, and legs (al-Jassās, 2010, 702).

For Mālikī and Shāfi‘ī scholars, exclude legs where the necessary parts only include face and hands, except the elbow does not count as part of *‘awrah*, according to Mālikī (Ishāq 2005 & Al-Kharashī, n.d). This interpretation is supported by the saying of the Prophet Muhammad pbuh as he said: “If a woman has reached puberty, it is prohibited forbidden to her to expose her private parts except for her faces and hands” (Al-Ṭabarī, 2012). Also, the Prophet Muhammad pbuh allowed a man who intended to marry a woman to see her face and palm (Abū Daud, 2001, Kitāb al-Nikaḥ, Bab fi al-Rajul Yanzur ila al-Mar’ah wa hua yurīd Tazwījaha, 2082. See also: Al-Māwardī, 1999). This point is also supported by the commentary of Ibn ‘Abbās regarding the verse “except that which [necessarily] appears”, which means that Muslim women exposing their faces and hands are permissible (Zarzuūr, n.d, 165). The reason is that Muslim women do not cover their faces and hands when performing prayers and *iḥrām* (Zarzuūr, n.d).

Based on the same verse, Ḥanbalī scholars, on the other note, did not exclude any part of the body as the necessity that has permission to disclose. The Ḥanbalīs considered the whole body as *'awrah* of Muslim women except their face (Ibn Qudamah, 2010, 75).

2.1.2 The Muslim Women's *'Aurah* in Public

A. *The 'awrah of the Muslim woman in front of other women.*

The word *'nisa'ihinna'* in Surah al-Nūr: 34 indicates a prescription regarding the limitation of women's *'awrah* when they are in front of other Muslim women. Ibn Kathīr maintain that there is *'awrah* for women to cover even though they are with their Muslim relatives (Ibn Kathīr, 1999).

A saying of the Prophet stated the prohibition on Muslims to see the *'awrah* of other Muslims. It is stated: "A man should not see the *'awrah* of another man, and a woman should not see the *'awrah* of another woman" (Muslim, Kitab al-Haid, Bab Tahrīm al-Nazar ila al-'Aurah, 338). In this regard, the majority of scholars come from Hanafī (Ibn 'Ābidīn, n.d), Malīkī (al-Ru'yānī, 1992), Shāfī'ī (Al-Māwardī, 1990) and Ḥanbalī (Ibn Qudāmāh, 2010) agreed that the *'awrah* of Muslim woman in front of her Muslim women relatives is considered between navel until knees.

B. *The 'awrah of Muslim woman in front of non-Muslim women*

Muslim scholars are in dispute in defining the *'awrah* limitation for Muslim women when they are with non-Muslim women. Some opinions insist that a Muslim woman should not expose all body parts when she is with non-Muslim women, except for what is used to their daily routine, including domestic chores (*al-ashghal al-manziliyah*) (Ibn 'Ābidīn, n.d, al-Zuhaylī, n.d). The so-called *al-'awrah al-sughhrā* which includes hair, legs, and hands are allowed to be exposed for this particular circumstance. In addition, according to al-Fatawa al-Hindiah (n,d), there is no separation in defining *'awrah* in front of non-believers, where it includes polytheism and people of the Scripture (*ahlu al-kitāb*). For them, the word *'nisa'ihinna'* in the verse is tied with a specific character of the faith system of someone. It points out that religion is the barrier for Muslim women to expose their *'awrah* to non-Muslim women. The basis of this opinion is derived from Surah al-Nūr: 31 as it indicates limitation, which only includes Muslim women. *Athār ṣaḥābī* narrated 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb wrote a letter to Abū 'Ubaydah, so that he could prevent the intermingled activity between Muslim women and non-Muslim women from entering the lavatory

together as they must cover the *'awrah* in front of them (Al-Ṭabarī, 2012).

On a different note, scholars from Ḥanafī, Mālikī and Ḥanbalī schools state that the *'awrah* of the Muslim woman in front of non-Muslim women is limited between her navel until knees (Al-Sarakhsī, 1993 ; Ibn al-'Arabī, 2003; Ibn Qudāmah, 2010). This opinion derives its approval from Surah Al-Nūr :31, as they argued that the text was revealed in a general form. Subsequently, there is no other supportive evidence to particularise (*takhṣīs*) the verse to give its specific meaning. Hence, they maintained that the regulation is inclusively applied to all women regardless of belief or non-believer. Al-Sarakhsī (1993) affirmed that a woman who looks at another woman is like a man who looks at another man in terms of its provision.

In addition to this, they justify that 'Umar's statement is caused by the separation of *wilāyah* amongst the believer and non-believers as clarified by Ibn 'Abbas (Ibn Kathīr, 1999). Modern jurist like 'Abd al-Karīm Zaydān (2014) are inclined for this opinion. Subscribing the same idea, Al-Aluṣī (1995) considered this as a recommendable and not obligatory section. Thus, any Muslim woman is either to expose or cover certain parts of her body.

3.0 SPORTS FROM THE ISLAMIC FRAMEWORK

In Islam, principally, there is no restriction for Muslims to be involved in physical activities. Any activity that contributes people to get healthier is encouraged in Islam as narrated by Abū Hurayrah in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad said: "A strong believer is better and is more lovable to Allah than a weak believer (Muslim, 2009, Book al-Qadr, Chapter of fi al-Amr bi al-Quwwah wa Tark al-'Ajz, 2664).

In addition to a belief in one God, although the other pillars of faith require conformity to routines that capture, demonstrate, and reaffirm commitment to God, (Haifa Jawad et al., 2012) the *Shari'ah* focuses not only on the spiritual domain but also on the social aspects (Alberto Testa, 2015). That is why the Prophet did not oppose his companion to seek entertainment. Through the narration from Hanzalah and Abū Bakr who felt guilty for their actions due to seeking joy and fun, the Prophet said to them, "There is a time for worldly affairs and a time for worship and affair" (Muslim, 2009, Book of Repentance, Chapter of Fadl Dawām al-Dhikr wa al-Fikr fi Umūr al-Akhirah, 2750).

Despite focusing on gaining rewards through the demonstration of worshipping God such as praying, *zakaat*, fasting or *hajj*, the meaning of *ibādah* could be explained in a broader area. In the case of sports, if the implementation and practice of sports observe the regulation of *Shari'ah*, a Muslim will be rewarded accordingly (Abd Rahim et al., 2019). Sports is also considered an '*ibādah*' if it fulfils the following requirements: it should be for a good purpose, adhere to Islamic regulations, preserve one's well-being, obtain rations for the family, and fulfil necessary '*ibādah*', including covering the '*awrah*' (Abd Rahim et al., 2019).

During the time of the Prophet (PBUH), the companions of the Prophet also participated in sports activities. The Prophet (PBUH) encouraged his companions to learn and master certain sports. In the era of the Prophet Muhammad, archery has become one of the most significant sports. Archery enables people to protect themselves from any threat that might harm them, primarily by the enemy of Allah (Oktay Kizar, 2018). Narrated by Salamah bin al-Akwa': "The Prophet passed by some people of the tribe of Bani Aslam who were practising archery. The Prophet said, "O Bani Ismā'il! Practice archery as your father Ismā'il was a great archer. Keep on throwing arrows, and I am with Bani so-and-so. So, one of the parties ceased throwing. Allah's Apostle said, "Why do you not throw?" They replied, "How should we throw while you are on their side?" On that, the Prophet said, "Throw, and I am with all of you" (Al-Bukhārī, 2009, Kitab al-Jihād wa al-Siyar, Bab al-Tahrīṣ 'ala al-Ramyi, 2899).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) mentioned when he delivered a sermon: "Prepare to meet them with as much strength as you can afford. Beware, strength consists in archery. Beware, strength consists in archery. Beware, strength consists in archery" (Muslim, 2009, Kitab al-Imārah, Bab Fadl al-Ramyi wa al-Hath 'alaihi wa Dzham man 'Alimahu thumma Nasiyahu, 1917). In addition to this, 'Uqbah bin 'Amir al-Juhnī reported from the Prophet Muhammad: "Shoot and ride, and if you shoot that is dearer to me than if you ride" (Ibn Ma'jah, 1999, Kitab al-Jihad, Bab al-Ramyu fi Sabilillah, 2811).

Another physical activity that the Prophet Muhammad encouraged was equestrianism. Equestrianism is one of the sports activities encouraged by Islam (Oktay Kizar, 2018). It was narrated by 'Urwah, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Goodwill remain (as a permanent quality) in the foreheads of horses (for Jihād) till the Day of Resurrection, for they bring about either a reward (in the Hereafter) or (war) booty (in this world)" (Al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, Kitab al-Jihād wa al-Siyar, Bab al-Jihād Mādīn ma'a al-Barr wa al-Fājir, 2852).

The Prophet promoted his followers to strengthen their physical abilities so that they could gain many benefits despite mastering military skills. Physical education provides knowledge on various parts of the body and helps people to understand their bodies. Apart from that, sports can enhance mental health conditions. In this pandemic (John S. Raglin, 1990, 324), people face challenges in maintaining their mental strength, which causes them to experience a mood disorder, which contributes to prolonged sadness, fatigue and burnt-out, irritation, and feeling unmotivated to perform daily routines (Ministry of Health Malaysia)

Mental health has been recognised as one of the major causes of death through suicide cases (Raglin, 1990, 324) Some studies found that physical activities might help those diagnosed with such mental disorders to go out from such a state. According to Peluso and De Andrade (2005), it has been known for many years that regular physical activity brings benefits to individuals with depressive and anxiety symptoms. In addition, the improvement of various other aspects such as self-esteem, vitality, general well-being, and satisfaction can be observed with physical activities. Raglin discussed a sample from Greist et al., who compared the effects of walking or jogging to two forms of psychotherapy in moderately depressed outpatients across a 12-week treatment period and periodically during a nine-month follow-up. At the final follow-up assessment, it was found that the reduction in depression associated with exercise was equivalent to the time-limited psychotherapy and superior to time unlimited psychotherapy (Raglin, 1990, 325).

Through sports, Islam shows its significant role in assisting humankind to keep their life balance in terms of material and spiritual effects by including sports as part of *ibādah*. The pillars of Islam also provide Muslims with physical activities such as praying and *hajj*. The combination of material and spiritual effects illustrates how Islam concerns the needs of a human being.

4.0 REDUCING THE GENDER GAP THROUGH SPORTS INVOLVEMENT

Lately, there has been a growing need for increased female participation in sports to promote women's empowerment in Malaysia. According to Astro Awani (2019), the current emphasis on encouraging women to engage in athletic pursuits aims to bridge the gap between male and female athletes, given that recent statistics indicate a decline in women's participation in sports.

When women engage in sports, it propels them towards increased competitiveness, thereby inspiring the manifestation of their latent talents and

skills positively. According to research by Ani Mazlina Dewi Mohamed et al. (2009), allocating time to sports is crucial for women as it serves to bring forth their potential and abilities, contributing to advancements in women's sports achievements. Renowned figures such as Farah Ann Abdullah (gymnastics), Nur Dhabitah (diving), Nur Suryani Mohd Taibi (shooting), Nur Ayuni Farhana Abdul Halim (shooting), An Najwa Azizan (netball), Shalin Zulkifli (bowling), Siti Safiyah Amirah Abdul Rahman (bowling), Syaidatul Afifah Badrul Hamidi (bowling), and Natasha Roslan (bowling) have notably elevated Malaysia's standing on the international stage, placing them on par with elite athletes from countries like China, the United States of America, and South Korea (Zamri & Salleh, 2019).

The Government of Malaysia is actively supporting the enhancement of women's societal standing through sports. It is championing the realization of this concept by providing opportunities for women to engage in sports and sponsoring female athletes with the necessary facilities and equipment. The Ministry of Youth and Sports aims to encourage greater female participation in sports traditionally dominated by men, such as football and rugby, as reported by Berita Harian in 2019. The overarching goal of this initiative is to foster success and diversity in the realm of sports, and the government has substantiated its commitment by allocating RM 10 million for the development of women athletes, as indicated in a Berita Harian article published on November 11, 2019.

To achieve complete implementation of the principle of equality in Malaysia, all stakeholders must unite in advancing the cause of women's progress in sports, a move that has the potential to inspire women to enhance their quality of life. The Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia is actively addressing health concerns, particularly focusing on non-communicable diseases like high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, and obesity among Malaysians, with a specific emphasis on women's well-being (Ministry of Youth and Sports).

4.1 Challenging Issues for Muslim Women Athletes

Despite the permissibility for women to play sports and be involved in a professional career as athletes, they must face some challenges that bring them to a dilemma, especially when it comes to their *'awrah*. In some cases, some sports require athletes to wear specific attires depending on the occasions in which different sports require different attires accordingly, without abandoning the fact that, in sports, wearing proper sports attire helps athletes perform better and protects them from injury. Playing sports in proper attire will make the athletes feel comfortable, which consequently boosts their

performance (Harian Metro, published June 27, 2016). Today, as science is creating super-athletes and developing the latest technologies for them, many attires are designed for specific sports and purposes. For instance, the use of compression garments can reduce the risk of injury and provide support to the athletes, especially for their muscles during the training session or actual competition (Dunia Sukan).

However, based on its specification, it seems to become a barrier for Muslim women in terms of covering the *'awrah*. With their participation in the sports industry, they are concerned with looking for solutions as *'awrah* could be the biggest challenge for them to perform in sports. As reported by Free Malaysia Today (2019) the Terengganu state government excluded the state representative's participation in rhythmic gymnast and women's gymnast as they said:

There is no compromise for these sports (rhythmic gymnastics and women's gymnastics) as they display indecent movements, and unless the audience comprises only women, then maybe we will allow them.

Furthermore, the limited representation of Muslim women in coaching staff poses a challenge to their participation in the sports industry. This situation creates obstacles for athletes who must navigate training sessions with predominantly male coaching staff, making it difficult for them to maintain appropriate boundaries. As mentioned previously, Muslim women do not have access to expose *'awrah* when they are mingling with different genders.

Furthermore, Muslim female athletes face a challenging obstacle in trying to shield themselves from public scrutiny. In today's context, avoiding publicity has become nearly impossible, given the constant updates on athletes' progress and news by media outlets and broadcasters, who also broadcast events through recorded and live formats. This challenging issue somehow affected the interests of the Muslim women to be involved. Despite the grant of permissibility by *Sharī'ah*,

4.2 Reviewing The Existing Guidelines: A Qualitative Analysis

Efforts to formalize Islamic dress codes, particularly in the context of *Sharī'ah*, have received backing from specific regions, such as Terengganu, Kelantan (UPNK Kelantan), and Pahang (www.pahang.gov.my). Additionally, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has developed guidelines addressing the attire of Muslim individuals participating in sports (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia). These guidelines, outlined in points 7, 8, and 10, impose certain requirements on Muslim athletes. Guideline 7, for

instance, mandates that female athletes wear a long-sleeved shirt, and long pants, cover their hair and neck, and ensure that the attire is loose-fitting while maintaining modest coverage of the body.

Guideline No.8 highlights the area of tournaments which provides the strict restriction on male and female athletes being intermingled in the same sport area. The guidelines also mention that the usage of sports areas including the sprint track, gymnasium, and swimming pool should be separated for both genders. If separating them seems impossible to achieve, the organizer should arrange a specific schedule for the athletes to use the facilities according to their gender. The guideline No.10 suggests that a woman athlete should consider participating in a sport that is in line with the nature of women and enhancing the appropriate behaviour.

However, they seem too general as they do not cover several issues, especially for Muslim women involved in a professional career as an athlete. It becomes challenging when certain rules of the event at the professional level require athletes to wear specific attires approved by the authority, such as swimming, running, gymnastics and cycling. Some attires expose the *'awrah* parts, and some might cover the body parts from being exposed, but their material is too tight to make their body shape visible. From the *Shari'ah* perspective, there is a question of whether the attire complies with its requirement since the concept of covering *'awrah* proposed by the Muslim jurists is to wear a loose attire (Al-Nawawī, 2010). It is the opposite of what the authority requires the athletes to wear during the tournament, which leaves Muslim women athletes stuck in a dilemma.

Apart from JAKIM, religious authorities at the state level also address the matter by issuing their guidelines. For instance, the *Resolusi Seminar Pemakaian Atlet Sukan Patuh Syariah Peringkat Negeri Pahang*, conducted on January 21 and 22, 2020, defined the *Shari'ah* dress code as clothing that conceals the *'awrah*, featuring a loose fit that does not reveal the body shape or skin tone. The use of sports garments, particularly tight ones, emerged as a notable concern. The resolution explicitly permits athletes to use tight garments as sportswear.

The resolution also classified types of sports in terms of complying with the *Shari'ah* dress code into three. First, some sports could apply the *Shari'ah* dress code such as:

1. *Silat*.
2. *Tae kwon do*.
3. *Karate do*.

4. *Lawan pedang.*
5. *Boling padang.*
6. Archery.
7. Shooting.
8. *Pétanque.*
9. Golf.
10. Judo.
11. Wushu.
12. Tenpin bowling.

Second, sports that still do not apply *Shari'ah* dress code attire comprehensively:

1. Golf.
2. Football.
3. Sprint.
4. *Sepak takraw.*
5. Badminton.
6. Squash.
7. Beach volleyball.
8. Futsal.
9. Hockey.
10. Boxing.
11. Aquatic springboard.
12. Netball.

Third is a sport that has the potential to apply the *Shari'ah* dress code including:

1. Swimming.
2. Boxing.
3. Netball.
4. Badminton.
5. Football.
6. Futsal.

The resolution classifies sports based on their adherence to the *Shari'ah* dress code into three categories. First, there are sports where the *Shari'ah* dress code can be easily implemented, such as *silat*, *tae kwon do*, *karate-do*, *lawan pedang*, field bowling, archery, shooting, *pétanque*, golf, judo, wushu, and tenpin bowling. Second, some sports haven't fully embraced *Shari'ah*-compliant attire, including golf, football, sprint, *sepak takraw*, badminton, squash, beach volleyball, futsal, hockey, boxing, aquatic springboard, and netball. Lastly,

there are sports with the potential to conform to *Shari'ah* dress code requirements, such as swimming, boxing, netball, badminton, football, and futsal.

However, the guidelines do not explicitly address certain issues related to events requiring specific garments for athletes. This poses a challenge when event rules at the professional level mandate specific attire approved by authorities, such as in swimming, running, gymnastics, and cycling. Some attires expose *'awrah* parts, while others may cover the body but are too tight, revealing the athlete's body shape. From a *Shari'ah* perspective, Muslim scholars generally agree that women should wear loose attire (Al-Nawawi, 2010). Moreover, female coaching staff involvement is notably insufficient, making it difficult for athletes to move extensively while adhering to *Shari'ah* guidelines.

To mitigate exposure risks, athletes are advised to wear outer clothing along with sports leggings, covering specific body parts. The sports leggings must have a dark colour to avoid confusion with skin colour or the colour of sports compression.

Additionally, the guidelines lack detailed instructions on how media and broadcasting participants covering sports events align with *Shari'ah* principles. Islamic teachings emphasize guidelines for interactions between men and women, highlighting the importance of modesty, including lowering their gaze and allowing necessary visual contact.

In this section, this research suggests the following recommendations for Muslim female athletes regarding their dress code when participating in tournaments or sports events. The proposed guidelines aim to address several issues related to the *'awrah* (parts of the body to be covered) of Muslim women athletes.

- a. A Muslim female athlete is responsible for ensuring that her *'awrah* is appropriately covered during tournaments or sports events, encompassing her entire body except for the face and palms.
- b. It is recommended that a Muslim female athlete wears suitable attire to fulfil her Islamic obligation of covering her *'awrah*.
- c. The clothing should be loose to prevent the display of her body shape.
- d. For sports that require tight sports compression or leggings, the athlete is advised to wear outer clothing to avoid exposing private body parts. Additionally, the sports compression should be in a dark colour to prevent confusion with skin colour.

- e. The Muslim female athlete should consider the appropriateness of sports based on her nature and *'awrah* regulations during the tournament.

Certain sports may be deemed inappropriate for a Muslim female athlete due to attire restrictions. Types of sports:

- a. In open events with audiences of all genders, the Muslim female athlete must consider *'awrah* limitations and wear suitable attire.
- b. In closed events exclusive to women's audiences, the *'awrah* coverage should include the area between the navel and knees.
- c. Muslim women are encouraged to participate in sports that align with their nature, such as traditional combat, track, and field sports.
- d. If a sport requires attire unsuitable for a Muslim female athlete or exposes her *'awrah*, such as in aquatic or gymnastic events, she is advised not to participate due to *'awrah* concerns.

5.0 CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, we would like to make a humble submission to every party that is involved in the sports industry, *Shari'ah* is prescribed by Allah SWT for humankind to follow regardless of their condition. Therefore, as too many issues regarding the *'awrah* of Muslim women are to be highlighted, the authorities and governors need to take this issue seriously. It seems that some Muslim women athletes struggling to unleash their potential due to the strict attire code that constrains them from covering the *'awrah* comprehensively, which resulted in a dilemma amongst Muslim athletes, not just for Malaysians, but the entire world as well.

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Resolusi Seminar Pemakaian Atlet Sukan Patuh Syariah Peringkat Negeri Pahang. 2020. Resolusi ini dijalankan pada 20-21 Januari 2020 bertempat di KUIPSAS dan Hotel Grand Darul Makmur Kuantan.

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