



Negotiating Muslim Femininity: Stereotype, Agency, And Representation Complexity in Ms. Marvel (2022)

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-07 Revised: 2026-05-19 Accepted: 2026-09-21 Keywords: Muslim femininity; Muslim representation; stereotyping; Ms. Marvel; Simplified Complex Representations; Critical Discourse Analysis DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.12556 Corresponding Author: Nazhira Fiqriyatun Nisa 1205030158@student.uinsgd.a c.id English Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Sunan Gunung Djati State	<i>The increasing visibility of Muslim women in Western popular media does not necessarily eliminate stereotypical assumptions about Muslim femininity. This study examines how representations of Muslim femininity are constructed, negotiated, and challenged in the Ms. Marvel TV mini-series (2022), with particular attention to the tension between recognizable cultural expectations and female agency. Using a qualitative research design, the study analyzed six purposively selected scenes from the series' six episodes, focusing on dialogue, character interactions, visual representation, performance, and narrative situations. The data were analyzed through Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the analytical approach, while Evelyn Alsultany's concept of Simplified Complex Representations served as the principal interpretive framework for examining the coexistence of stereotype, complexity, and agency (Alsultany, 2012; Carranza, 2008; Fairclough, 2013). The findings indicate three major patterns: the negotiation of family and cultural expectations, in which Muslim femininity is associated with family responsibility, modesty, and parental authority while characters negotiate individual aspirations; religious identity and self-definition, particularly through the representation of the hijab as a site of social judgment and personal identity; and public participation and female agency, through which Muslim women are represented as active participants in community decision-making and family survival rather than passive or confined figures. Across these patterns, Ms. Marvel challenges</i>

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reductive assumptions about Muslim women while retaining recognizable cultural and religious markers that make Muslim identity visible and culturally legible. The study therefore argues that Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel is represented through negotiation rather than replacement, demonstrating how apparently progressive representation can simultaneously challenge stereotypes and preserve familiar representational expectations. This finding contributes to discussions of Muslim representation by showing that increased visibility and agency should not automatically be understood as the complete disappearance of stereotyping; instead, representation can operate through a simplified-complex structure in which stereotype, cultural identity, and agency coexist (Alsultany, 2012; Marvel, 2022).

1. Introduction

Muslim femininity is not a fixed or homogeneous identity but a social and cultural construction shaped by religious, gendered, ethnic, and cultural expectations. In media representation, particular understandings of Muslim womanhood may become normalized through repeated associations with domesticity, modesty, submissiveness, moral restraint, and religious conformity (Malli, 2021; Unal, 2023). Such representations can simplify the diversity of Muslim women's experiences by treating particular characteristics as if they naturally define Muslim women as a group. Consequently, examining Muslim femininity requires attention not only to whether Muslim women are visible in media but also to how their identities, behaviors, and forms of agency are constructed and made meaningful. This issue becomes especially important when representations appear progressive, because increased visibility and positive characterization do not necessarily mean that stereotypical representational structures have completely disappeared. As Alsultany (2012) demonstrates, contemporary representations of Arabs and Muslims may move away from overtly negative stereotypes while continuing to rely on recognizable and selective representational patterns (Alsultany, 2012).

A necessary distinction in this study is between cultural or religious markers and stereotypes. A hijab, modest clothing, family relationship, participation in a religious community, or adherence to cultural traditions is not inherently a stereotype. These characteristics function first as cultural or religious markers through which a character's identity may be communicated. A stereotype emerges when such characteristics are repeatedly framed as fixed, universal, or defining qualities of a social group, particularly when they are connected to assumptions such as passivity, oppression, dependency, cultural incompatibility, or lack of

agency (M Abdul Hamid, Abdul Basid, Isma Nida Aulia, 2021; Tahir & Riska Dwi Agustin, 2023). Thus, the presence of a hijab does not by itself constitute stereotyping; rather, stereotyping becomes relevant when the hijab is represented as evidence that a Muslim woman is necessarily powerless or restricted. Similarly, family responsibility is not inherently stereotypical, but it can become part of a stereotypical framing when Muslim women are reduced to obedient or dependent family roles. This distinction allows the present study to examine not merely which Muslim characteristics appear in the series, but how those characteristics are framed and what meanings are attached to them.

This issue is particularly relevant to Western popular media, where Muslim identity has historically been represented through competing discourses of otherness, threat, victimhood, and cultural difference. Research on Muslim women demonstrates that mediated femininity can involve negotiations among piety, self-presentation, gender expectations, cultural identity, and social judgment rather than a single definition of Muslim womanhood (Mainardi, 2022; Malli, 2021). Mainardi (2022), for example, shows that Muslim girls' mediated experiences are shaped by intersecting dimensions of gender, religion, and racialization, while also demonstrating their capacity to challenge gender stereotypes and Islamophobia (Mainardi, 2022). Similarly, Dwifatma and Beta (2024) demonstrate that Muslim women can exercise political subjectivity through media representation, challenging assumptions that veiled Muslim women are passive, voiceless, or socially isolated (Dwifatma & Beta, 2024). These studies suggest that Muslim femininity should be examined as a contested and negotiated identity in which religious and cultural belonging can coexist with agency and self-definition.

Within this context, Ms. Marvel (2022) provides a significant contemporary text for examining the negotiation of Muslim femininity in Western popular culture. The six-episode Disney+ series centers on Kamala Khan, a Pakistani-American Muslim teenager whose experiences involve family, religion, cultural identity, adolescence, and superhero aspirations (Marvel, 2022). As a Muslim female superhero protagonist, Kamala occupies an intersection of gender, religion, ethnicity, age, and American youth culture. The series also includes other Muslim female characters whose experiences broaden the representation beyond a single Muslim womanhood. Previous research has recognized the cultural significance of Ms. Marvel in presenting Muslim identity within mainstream popular culture. Hanifah, Awaludin, and Assiddiqi (2024) argue that the series contributes to a more inclusive representation of Islam and religious diversity, while Adiyatma, T. Rahardjo (2024) examine its representation of Muslims in relation to changing portrayals of Islam in popular media. Farooq and DeGalan (2024) further examine Pakistani-American representation in the series, while Mahmutovic (2022) discusses its transnational superhero iconography. These studies establish Ms. Marvel as an important text for examining contemporary Muslim representation, but they also leave room for a more specific examination of how Muslim femininity

is constructed through its female characters (Adiyatma, T. Rahardjo, 2024; Anisa Hanifah, Lili Awaludin, Hasbi Assiddiqi, 2024; Farooq & DeGalan, 2024; Mahmutovic, 2022).

The existing scholarship on Muslim femininity and Ms. Marvel therefore provides an important foundation but does not fully address the theoretical problem examined in this study. Previous research tends to emphasize inclusive Muslim visibility, representations of Islam, Pakistani-American identity, political subjectivity, or resistance to negative stereotypes (Adiyatma, T. Rahardjo, 2024; Anisa Hanifah, Lili Awaludin, Hasbi Assiddiqi, 2024; Dwifatma & Beta, 2024; Farooq & DeGalan, 2024). Other studies demonstrate that Muslim girls and women can negotiate gender stereotypes, racialization, religious identity, and cultural expectations (Mainardi, 2022; Malli, 2021). However, less attention has been given to the possibility that a representation can challenge negative stereotypes while simultaneously retaining recognizable representational conventions through which Muslim femininity becomes culturally intelligible. The gap, therefore, is not simply that Muslim femininity has received insufficient attention, but that the relationship between progressive representation and residual stereotyping remains underexamined in Ms. Marvel. Examining this relationship is important because a Muslim woman may be represented as agentic and empowered while her identity is still organized through selective cultural markers and familiar representational expectations. The present study addresses this conceptual gap by asking how complexity itself is constructed and negotiated rather than treating positive representation as evidence that stereotyping has disappeared.

To address this gap, the study employs Evelyn Alsultany's (2012) concept of Simplified Complex Representations as its primary theoretical framework. Alsultany explains how post-9/11 American media increasingly incorporated more sympathetic and complex representations of Arabs and Muslims while still retaining recognizable representational structures. The concept is useful because it moves analysis beyond the binary between stereotype and counter-stereotype. A representation may challenge an established stereotype and provide a character with agency while simultaneously relying on familiar cultural signs or selective characteristics that make minority identity recognizable to mainstream audiences (Alsultany, 2012). Applied to Muslim femininity, this framework makes it possible to examine how religious identity, family relationships, modesty, cultural belonging, and community participation coexist with self-expression, political agency, aspiration, and resilience. Rather than assuming that agency automatically eliminates stereotyping, the framework directs attention to the contradictions within apparently progressive representations. It therefore provides a basis for asking not only whether Ms. Marvel challenges stereotypes, but also what kinds of Muslim female agency are foregrounded, how that agency is made culturally legible, and what representational expectations remain in place.

The present study is also informed by Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis as a supporting analytical approach. From a discourse perspective, representations

are not neutral descriptions of social reality but are produced through language, interaction, social practices, and broader ideological contexts (Carranza, 2008; Fairclough, 2013). This approach supports the examination of how dialogue, character behavior, interpersonal relationships, and social situations contribute to the construction of particular meanings of Muslim femininity. The study additionally draws on Sikov's (2010) film-analysis approach to examine relevant audiovisual elements through which those meanings are communicated. These approaches allow the analysis to move from observable cinematic and textual evidence toward an interpretation of the social meanings attached to Muslim female identity (Sikov, 2010). The combination is particularly useful for a multimodal television text because Muslim femininity is communicated not only through dialogue but also through characterization, performance, visual presentation, setting, and narrative context.

Accordingly, this study asks the following research question: How are the representations of Muslim femininity constructed, negotiated, or challenged through Western media discourse from the perspective of Evelyn Alsultany's concept of Simplified Complex Representations? In line with this question, the objective of the study is to examine how the representations of Muslim femininity are constructed, negotiated, or challenged through Western media discourse from the perspective of Evelyn Alsultany's concept of Simplified Complex Representations. The study focuses on six purposively selected scenes from the six-episode series and examines how Muslim female characters negotiate family expectations, religious identity, cultural belonging, modesty, personal aspiration, community participation, and responsibility.

Its novelty lies not simply in combining Muslim femininity and Ms. Marvel, but in examining the tension between stereotype and agency within apparently progressive representation. More specifically, the study argues that Muslim female representation should be examined through the relationship between recognizable cultural or religious markers, their representational framing, and the agency granted to the characters. In doing so, the study proposes that Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel is best understood as a process of negotiation rather than replacement, in which recognizable cultural expectations coexist with individualized forms of agency and representational complexity.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine how representations of Muslim femininity are constructed, negotiated, and challenged in the Ms. Marvel TV mini-series (2022). A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on interpreting meanings, representations, characterizations, interactions, and social constructions rather than measuring numerical data (Aspers & Corte, 2021). The series is treated as a cultural and audiovisual text in which Muslim femininity is constructed through dialogue,

characterization, behavior, interpersonal relationships, visual presentation, and narrative situations. This approach enables the researcher to examine how particular scenes communicate meanings about Muslim women and how those meanings relate to broader cultural and social discourse. The study does not seek to generalize its findings to Muslim women as a whole, but rather provides a contextual interpretation of the selected representations within the six-episode series.

The subject of this research is the representation of Muslim femininity in the Ms. Marvel TV mini-series (2022), produced by Marvel Studios and distributed through Disney+. The series consists of six episodes and centers on Kamala Khan, a Pakistani-American Muslim teenager whose identity intersects with religion, gender, family, ethnicity, youth culture, and superhero narratives (Marvel, 2022). The research corpus initially consisted of 20 potentially relevant scenes identified through repeated viewing of all six episodes. These scenes were then screened according to their relevance to the research question and their capacity to provide sufficient evidence for examining the construction, negotiation, or challenging of Muslim femininity.

Six scenes were purposively selected because they provided particularly information-rich combinations of dialogue, character interaction, visual representation, performance, and narrative context. The final selection consists of Episode 1 at 40:35, featuring Muneeba and Kamala; Episode 1 at 15:10, featuring Kamala, Muneeba, and Yusuf; Episode 1 at 20:00, featuring Kamala; Episode 2 at 19:20, featuring Nakia and Kamala; Episode 2 at 35:50, featuring Nakia and Yusuf; and Episode 5 at 13:00, featuring Aisha and Hasan. The selection provides variation across characters and situations, including Muslim motherhood, family expectations, modesty, youth identity, religious and cultural belonging, female agency, community participation, and resilience.

Data collection was conducted through repeated viewing and systematic observation of all six episodes of Ms. Marvel. Repeated viewing enabled the researcher to develop an overall understanding of the narrative while identifying scenes relevant to Muslim femininity, religious identity, family expectations, modesty, piety, morality, agency, and cultural identity (Skrypnyk, A., Lytvyn, N., Kholod, I., Didenko, N., & Ivashchuk, 2024). During the viewing process, the researcher recorded the episode number, timestamp, characters involved, dialogue, interactions, behavior, and relevant visual details of potentially significant scenes.

Transcripts were used to verify the verbal content of the selected scenes, while screenshots were taken from the series to document the audiovisual evidence analyzed in the Results section. The visual analysis followed Sikov's (2010) practical approach to film analysis by attending to relevant elements such as mise-en-scène, framing, composition, character positioning, setting, costume, lighting, performance, and the relationship between image and dialogue. Sikov's approach was used as a film-analysis guide rather than as the primary theoretical framework, allowing the researcher to describe and interpret how cinematic elements

contribute to the representation of Muslim femininity (Sikov, 2010).

Data analysis was conducted through a sequential interpretive process in which audiovisual evidence was examined first, followed by discourse analysis and theoretical interpretation. The six selected scenes were first analyzed using relevant principles from Sikov (2010) to identify how visual and cinematic elements communicate meanings about the characters and their situations. The analysis was then supported by Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly through attention to the textual, discursive-practice, and social-practice dimensions of representation (Carranza, 2008; Fairclough, 2013; Gan & Yao, 2025; Sikov, 2010). At the textual level, the analysis considered dialogue, lexical choices, character behavior, visual presentation, gestures, interactions, and performance; at the level of discursive practice, it examined how particular meanings about Muslim femininity are organized, negotiated, and presented within the narrative; and at the level of social practice, it related these representations to broader discourses concerning Muslim women, gender, religion, family, cultural identity, and agency in Western popular media.

The final and primary interpretation was guided by Evelyn Alsultany's (2012) concept of Simplified Complex Representations, which was used to examine how recognizable cultural and representational markers can coexist with individualized characterization and agency. In this process, cultural or religious markers such as the hijab, modest clothing, family relationships, religious community, and cultural traditions were not treated as stereotypes in themselves; instead, the analysis examined how such markers were framed and whether they were connected to fixed or reductive assumptions about Muslim women. Particular attention was therefore given to the ways in which the characters negotiate expectations rather than simply conforming to or rejecting them. The analytical process can be summarized as scene and audiovisual evidence → film elements → discourse construction → interpretation of stereotype, agency, and representational complexity through Alsultany's framework (Alsultany, 2012).

To strengthen the credibility of the interpretation, the researcher documented the episode numbers, timestamps, scene observations, and analytical notes used in selecting and interpreting the data. The identification of the initial 20 scenes and the selection of the final six were also discussed with Hasbi Assiddiqi, who provided comments concerning the relevance of the selected scenes and the appropriateness of their interpretation. This process functioned as interpretive validation rather than intercoder reliability, as the study did not employ multiple independent coders. The final analysis therefore connects the audiovisual evidence from the series with the verified dialogue and the selected analytical frameworks while maintaining a clear distinction between observation and interpretation. The study is limited to one six-episode television series and six purposively selected scenes; therefore, its findings should be understood as a contextual interpretation of the representation of Muslim femininity in *Ms. Marvel*, rather than as a general

account of Muslim women's representation in Western media.

3. Result

The analysis of the six purposively selected scenes from Ms. Marvel (2022) identifies patterns in which Muslim femininity is constructed through the interaction between recognizable social and cultural expectations and individual female agency. The selected scenes do not present Muslim femininity as a single or uniform identity; instead, they place Muslim female characters in different situations involving family authority, modesty, personal aspiration, religious identity, cultural belonging, community participation, and family responsibility. These meanings are communicated through dialogue, character interaction, performance, costume, composition, and narrative context, with cinematic details considered only when they contribute directly to the representation being examined. Across the selected scenes, recognizable expectations concerning Muslim women remain visible, but the characters are not presented as simply accepting those expectations. They question, reinterpret, negotiate, or act within them while maintaining different forms of religious, cultural, familial, or personal attachment. Thus, the findings indicate that Muslim femininity in the selected scenes is constructed through a continuing relationship between social expectations and individual agency rather than through a simple opposition between tradition and liberation.

The findings can be summarized as follows:

Tabel 1. summarizes the key findings from the six selected scenes.				
Scene	Character	Representational expectation	Agency / challenge	Simplified-complex interpretation
Episode 1, 40:35	Muneeba and Kamala	Muslim motherhood and daughterhood are associated with protection, family responsibility, parental authority, and expectations of appropriate behavior.	Muneeba exercises maternal authority as a form of protection, while Kamala negotiates those expectations by defending her interests, aspirations, and developing	Maternal authority is recognizable, but Muneeba is not reduced to an oppressive mother; care, protection, and restriction coexist within a complex family relationship.

			identity.		
Episode 1, 15:10	Kamala, Muneeba, and Yusuf	Muslim femininity is associated with modest clothing, appropriate behavior, and family regulation of a young daughter's appearance.	Kamala defends her choice of costume, questions the restrictions placed on her, and highlights the unequal freedom given to her brother.	Modesty and family expectations remain visible while female self-expression and negotiation are incorporated into the representation.	
Episode 1, 20:00	Kamala	Muslim teenage femininity can be understood primarily through family, cultural, and religious expectations rather than individual fantasy or popular culture.	Kamala imagines herself as Captain Marvel and develops an aspirational identity through self-expression and popular culture.	Muslim identity and mainstream youth/superhero culture coexist, complicating the idea that Muslim girlhood must be limited to domestic or religious roles.	
Episode 2, 19:20	Nakia and Kamala	The hijab and Muslim identity are subjected to expectations concerning appearance, ethnicity, belonging, and conformity.	Nakia explains and redefines the meaning of her hijab through her own experience rather than allowing external judgments to determine her identity.	A recognizable Muslim marker remains central, while the assumption that the hijab necessarily signifies oppression or passivity is complicated through self-definition.	
Episode 2, 35:50	Nakia and Yusuf	Muslim women may be stereotypically associated with	Nakia actively campaigns for Mosque Board membership	Female agency occurs rather than outside, the	within,

		private, family- and invokes religious oriented, or citizenship, community; subordinate roles democratic recognizable rather than participation, Muslim markers institutional and the right coexist with authority. to influence leadership and her civic participation.
Episode 5, 13:00	Aisha and Hasan	Muslim femininity may be associated with family care and domestic responsibility, potentially positioning women as passive or dependent during crisis. Aisha assesses the danger of communal violence and actively advocates leaving the home to protect her daughter and preserve family unity. Familial responsibility is retained but becomes a source of decision-making, protection, and resilience rather than passivity.

Figure 1. Muneeba Confronts Kamala About Her Behavior and Identity

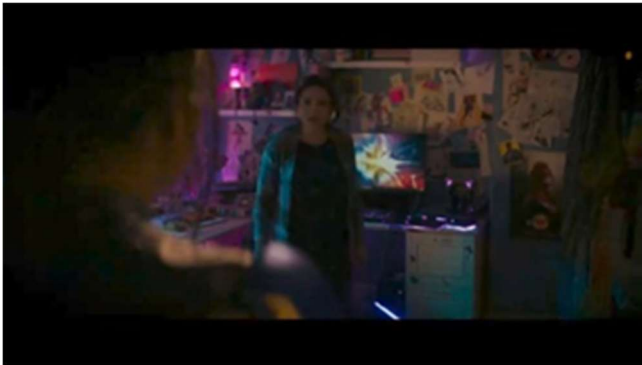


Figure 1. Muneeba confronts Kamala about her behavior and identity.
(Source: Ms. Marvel, 2022, Episode 1, 40:35)

Figure 1 presents Muneeba confronting Kamala about her recent behavior and the person she is becoming. Muneeba asks where Kamala has been and questions why she has become a “rebellious girl” who sneaks out and lies to her parents, while Kamala responds that she is not trying to be rebellious. Muneeba then explains that she is trying to protect Kamala from herself and expresses concern about Kamala becoming too absorbed in her fantasies. She ultimately tells Kamala to stop “fantasizing” and focus on her grades, family, and personal story, before asking what kind of person she wants to become in the world. The exchange

constructs Muslim femininity through a maternal discourse in which a daughter's behavior, education, family relationship, and future are considered matters of parental responsibility. Muneeba's position therefore reflects a recognizable expectation of Muslim motherhood in which the mother is responsible for protecting her daughter and guiding her toward what she considers appropriate behavior. At the same time, the scene does not present Muneeba's authority only as an arbitrary restriction because her statements are repeatedly framed through concern for Kamala's safety, future, and well-being.

The scene also introduces a complication through Kamala's response to this maternal authority. Kamala does not simply accept Muneeba's definition of who she should be; her explanation that she is "not trying to be rebellious" indicates that she understands her behavior differently from her mother's interpretation. Her interests in fantasy and the superhero world become part of a developing identity that cannot be completely contained by the expectations articulated by her mother. Nevertheless, Kamala remains within the family relationship rather than rejecting it, as demonstrated by her eventual apology and continued engagement in the conversation. The stereotype or representational expectation challenged here is therefore the simplified image of the Muslim daughter as completely obedient and the Muslim mother as simply restrictive. Muneeba retains recognizable maternal authority, while Kamala demonstrates that a Muslim daughter can negotiate that authority through disagreement, self-understanding, and personal aspiration. From Alsultany's perspective, the scene can be understood as a simplified complex representation because it retains familiar associations between Muslim femininity, family authority, and parental protection while complicating them through individualized motivations and female agency. The representation consequently does not eliminate the recognizable expectation of maternal control; instead, it places authority, care, disagreement, and adolescent self-definition within the same representation.

Figure 2. Kamala Discusses Her Captain Marvel Costume with Her Family



Figure 2. Kamala discusses her Captain Marvel costume with her family.

(Source: Ms. Marvel, 2022, Episode 1, 15:10)

Figure 2 presents Kamala discussing the Captain Marvel costume she wants

to wear with Muneeba and Yusuf. The central evidence is the disagreement over the costume's tight-fitting design, with Muneeba expressing concern about its appropriateness while Kamala emphasizes that Captain Marvel is a hero and defends her decision to wear the costume. The conversation therefore constructs Muslim femininity through expectations concerning modesty, appropriate female appearance, and parental regulation of a young daughter's behavior. The issue is not simply that Kamala wants to wear a particular costume; the exchange shows that clothing becomes a site where religious, familial, gendered, and generational expectations intersect. Kamala further argues that her request should not be treated as seriously problematic when compared with other forms of teenage behavior, demonstrating her attempt to redefine the boundaries of what is considered acceptable. The scene also becomes explicitly gendered when Kamala argues that her brother Aamir would be given greater freedom than she is given.

The stereotype or representational expectation challenged in this scene is the idea that an appropriately Muslim young woman should primarily conform to externally established standards of modesty and behavior without questioning them. Kamala does not simply reject modesty or her family; instead, she negotiates the expectation by defending her own interpretation of what it means to participate in contemporary teenage culture. Her agency is particularly visible because she articulates an argument rather than remaining a passive recipient of her parents' decision. At the same time, the scene does not remove the expectation of modesty, since Muneeba's concern remains an active part of the interaction and continues to define the boundaries within which Kamala negotiates. This produces a representational tension between family authority and individual self-expression rather than a complete victory of one over the other. In relation to Alsultany's concept, the scene therefore combines a recognizable representation of Muslim female modesty and parental regulation with a more individualized representation of a Muslim teenager who questions gendered expectations and asserts her preferences. Muslim femininity is consequently represented as negotiated: Kamala's agency develops within an existing family and cultural structure rather than requiring her to abandon that structure.

Figure 3. Kamala Looks at Her Reflection While Wearing the Captain Marvel Costume



Figure 3. Kamala looks at her reflection while wearing the Captain Marvel costume.

(Source: Ms. Marvel, 2022, Episode 1, 20:00)

Figure 3 presents Kamala looking at herself in a mirror while wearing the Captain Marvel costume. The visual evidence is significant because the mirror places Kamala's everyday physical presence and her reflected superhero appearance within the same composition, while the personalized bedroom establishes a space associated with her individual interests and imagination. The scene contains no dialogue, so the meaning of the representation depends primarily on the relationship between composition, costume, setting, and Kamala's performance. Her attention to her reflection presents the superhero costume as part of an aspirational identity rather than merely an item of clothing. The representational expectation challenged by this image is a narrow construction of Muslim girlhood in which Muslim femininity is primarily associated with domesticity, religious conformity, or externally defined behavioral expectations. Instead, Kamala is visually associated with imagination, ambition, youth culture, and the possibility of becoming a superhero.

Kamala's agency in this scene is expressed through self-imagination and self-expression rather than through direct verbal confrontation. The costume allows her to imagine a version of herself that extends beyond the identities assigned to her by her family or social environment, while the continued presence of the domestic bedroom prevents that aspirational identity from being separated completely from her everyday life. The scene therefore does not suggest that becoming empowered requires Kamala to stop being Muslim or to abandon her cultural background. Instead, the visual representation places Muslim girlhood and American superhero culture within the same narrative space. The fitted superhero costume also creates a point of tension with the modesty expectations established in Figure 2, although this particular scene does not resolve that tension or establish that Kamala has rejected those expectations. From Alsultany's perspective, this coexistence is important because the representation combines a recognizable Muslim cultural context with characteristics such as aspiration, imagination, individuality, and popular-cultural participation. The scene therefore contributes to a simplified complex representation by expanding what a Muslim female character can be without requiring the recognizable cultural identity associated with Kamala to disappear.

Figure 4. Nakia Discusses Her Experience of Wearing the Hijab and Her Sense of Identity



*Figure 4. Nakia discusses her experience of wearing the hijab and her sense of identity.
(Source: Ms. Marvel, 2022, Episode 2, 19:20)*

Figure 4 presents Nakia explaining to Kamala how wearing the hijab has affected her experience of identity and social belonging. Nakia describes being judged through conflicting expectations, including being considered insufficiently white by some people and excessively ethnic by others. The scene therefore provides direct evidence that Muslim femininity is constructed not only through religious identity but also through racialized and cultural expectations concerning where a Muslim woman is supposed to belong. The hijab functions as an important visible marker of Nakia's Muslim identity, but the dialogue prevents that marker from being interpreted through a single meaning. Nakia explains that her understanding of wearing the hijab changes over time, moving from a response partly shaped by external judgment toward a more personal understanding of the hijab as part of who she is. The scene consequently presents Muslim femininity as shaped by competing expectations concerning religion, ethnicity, appearance, and cultural belonging rather than by one fixed definition.

The stereotype challenged in this scene is particularly important because the hijab can be reduced within dominant media discourse to a simple sign of oppression, forced conformity, or lack of female agency. Nakia's account complicates this assumption by acknowledging social pressure while simultaneously asserting her own authority to determine what the hijab means to her. Her agency therefore does not depend on removing the hijab or distancing herself from Muslim identity; instead, it emerges through her ability to interpret and claim that identity for herself.

At the same time, the scene does not replace the restrictive stereotype with an equally simplified claim that the hijab is automatically empowering. Nakia explicitly acknowledges discomfort, judgment, and the difficulty of negotiating competing social categories, making her experience more complex than either oppression or liberation alone. This is particularly consistent with Alsultany's concept of Simplified Complex Representations because the scene retains a recognizable visual marker of Muslim identity while providing an individualized account that challenges the assumptions commonly attached to that marker. The representation therefore constructs Muslim femininity through a combination of

visible religious identity, social judgment, cultural belonging, and self-defined agency.

Figure 5. Nakia Campaigns for a Position on the Mosque Board



*Figure 5. Nakia campaigns for a position on the Mosque Board by asking Yusuf for his vote.
(Source: Ms. Marvel (2022), Episode 2, 35:50)*

Figure 5 presents Nakia asking Yusuf for his vote as she campaigns for a position on the Mosque Board. Nakia explains that she and Kamala are exercising their rights as citizens to participate in democracy and expresses their desire for a better future before directly asking Yusuf to support her. Her campaign occurs within an Eid and mosque-community context, while her hijab and modest clothing remain visible throughout the interaction. The scene therefore constructs Muslim femininity through the combination of religious belonging and active participation in community decision-making. The representational expectation challenged here is the stereotype that Muslim women are passive, confined primarily to private or family spaces, or excluded from institutional authority. Rather than being represented only as someone affected by decisions made by others, Nakia actively seeks a position through which she can participate in decisions concerning her religious community.

Nakia's agency is especially significant because it occurs within the religious community rather than through rejection of it. Her campaign does not require her to remove her hijab, distance herself from the mosque, or abandon her Muslim identity in order to become politically active. Instead, democratic participation becomes part of how she expresses her identity as a Muslim young woman. Her direct request to Yusuf and her use of the language of citizenship and rights demonstrate confidence and political awareness, while her interaction remains connected to community relationships. This combination challenges the simplified representation of Muslim femininity as passive without suggesting that agency requires cultural assimilation or separation from religion. From Alsultany's perspective, the scene therefore retains recognizable Muslim markers while adding characteristics such as leadership, civic participation, confidence, and institutional ambition. The resulting representation is complex because religious visibility and female agency are presented as compatible rather than mutually exclusive. The

scene thus demonstrates most clearly how a recognizable cultural representation can be retained while the stereotypical assumption attached to it is simultaneously challenged.

Figure 6. Aisha Persuades Hasan to Leave Their Home During the Partition



*Figure 6. Aisha persuades Hasan to leave their home as communal violence threatens the safety of their Muslim family during the Partition.
(Source: Ms. Marvel (2022), Episode 5, 13:00.)*

Figure 6 presents Aisha and Hasan during the communal violence of the Partition, when remaining in their home becomes increasingly dangerous. Aisha recognizes that the violence is spreading and argues that the family should leave because Muslims are no longer safe, while Hasan remains emotionally attached to the house because it was built by his father and represents what he hopes to leave for their daughter. Aisha responds by prioritizing the safety of the family and explaining that they can carry their memories with them and rebuild a home elsewhere as long as they remain together. The scene therefore constructs Muslim femininity through family responsibility, protection, judgment, and resilience under conditions of displacement. Its central representational expectation concerns the association of Muslim women with domestic and familial responsibility, but the scene complicates that expectation by showing that responsibility involves active assessment and decision-making rather than passive caregiving. The domestic setting and subdued visual atmosphere reinforce the seriousness of the situation, but the primary evidence of Aisha's agency comes from her argument and her willingness to challenge Hasan's attachment to the physical home.

The stereotype challenged by this representation is the idea of the Muslim woman as powerless, dependent, or unable to act decisively in circumstances of crisis. Aisha does not occupy a passive position while Hasan determines the family's future; instead, she recognizes the danger, articulates its consequences, and advocates a difficult course of action. Her agency, however, is not represented as a rejection of family or cultural belonging. On the contrary, her decision is motivated by concern for her daughter, family unity, and the preservation of memories associated with home. The scene therefore transforms family

responsibility from a potentially restrictive expectation into a source of female authority and resilience. This creates a complex representation in which a recognizable familial role remains present while its meaning is expanded through active decision-making. In relation to Alsultany, Aisha's characterization demonstrates how a representation can retain culturally recognizable expectations of motherhood and family responsibility while simultaneously challenging the assumption that these roles make Muslim women passive. Muslim femininity is thus represented as capable of combining care, cultural attachment, protection, judgment, and agency in response to historical violence.

Overall Findings

Taken together, the six selected scenes demonstrate that Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel is represented through a negotiation between recognizable expectations and individualized forms of agency. The expectations identified in these scenes include maternal and family authority, modesty, appropriate female behavior, cultural belonging, visible religious identity, community responsibility, and familial care. However, these expectations are not presented as complete definitions of Muslim womanhood because the characters respond to them through disagreement, self-expression, self-definition, political participation, and decision-making.

The stereotype challenged in the selected scenes is therefore not identical in every case: Figure 1 complicates the passive daughter and purely restrictive mother; Figure 2 challenges unquestioned female conformity to modesty expectations; Figure 3 expands Muslim girlhood beyond domestic or religious limitation; Figure 4 challenges the reduction of the hijab to oppression or passivity; Figure 5 directly challenges the passive and private Muslim woman stereotype; and Figure 6 challenges the powerless Muslim woman stereotype in a situation of crisis.

From the perspective of Alsultany's concept of Simplified Complex Representations, the significance of these findings lies in the coexistence of recognizable representational patterns and forms of agency (Alsultany, 2012). The series does not simply erase cultural markers associated with Muslim femininity and replace them with an entirely Westernized image of female empowerment. Instead, Muslim identity remains visible through family relationships, modest clothing, the hijab, Eid and mosque-community participation, and familial responsibility, while the characters are simultaneously given individual aspirations, voices, political ambitions, and decision-making capacities.

This means that the selected representations can challenge stereotypes without becoming completely detached from the representational conventions through which Muslim identity is made recognizable to mainstream audiences. The findings therefore support an understanding of Ms. Marvel as a text in which Muslim femininity is neither wholly restrictive nor wholly liberated. Rather, it is constructed through competing and overlapping expectations in which agency can emerge from within family, religious, cultural, and community relationships. In this

sense, the six scenes provide evidence for the study's central finding that progressive visibility and stereotype reduction do not necessarily mean the complete disappearance of recognizable representational frameworks; instead, those frameworks can be retained, negotiated, and reconfigured into more individualized forms of Muslim femininity.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the representation of Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel (2022) is constructed through an ongoing negotiation between recognizable cultural expectations and individual female agency. Rather than presenting Muslim women through a single or fixed identity, the series places its female characters within different relationships involving family, religion, cultural belonging, modesty, community participation, and personal aspiration. These representations are significant because femininity is not simply an individual characteristic but is shaped through cultural and social expectations concerning how women should behave and understand themselves (Malli, 2021; Unal, 2023). At the same time, the selected scenes show that these expectations do not completely determine the characters' identities or actions. Kamala, Nakia, Muneeba, and Aisha are represented as subjects who respond to expectations through negotiation, self-expression, decision-making, and care for others. From Fairclough's (2013) critical discourse perspective, these meanings are constructed through the interaction of dialogue, characterization, visual representation, behavior, and social context. More importantly, through Alsultany's (2012) concept of Simplified Complex Representations, these findings suggest that positive visibility and stereotyping can coexist rather than functioning as mutually exclusive categories (Alsultany, 2012; Carranza, 2008; Fairclough, 2013).

Negotiating Muslim Femininity Through Family and Cultural Expectations

The representations of Muneeba, Kamala, and Aisha demonstrate that family and cultural expectations function as important sites for negotiating Muslim femininity. In Muneeba's interaction with Kamala, maternal authority is associated with protection, family responsibility, appropriate behavior, education, and concern for the daughter's future. However, this representation does not establish Muneeba simply as an oppressive Muslim mother, because her authority is also motivated by care and her desire to protect Kamala. Kamala, meanwhile, does not completely reject her mother's expectations but negotiates them through her own interests, aspirations, and understanding of who she wants to become. Aisha's response to the danger surrounding her family during the Partition similarly demonstrates that familial responsibility can become a source of female agency rather than evidence of passivity. Her concern for her family enables her to assess the situation, make a decision, and advocate for a course of action. These representations complicate the stereotypical discourse of Muslim women as passive subjects who simply submit to family authority. Research on Muslim

women's representation likewise suggests that femininity can involve simultaneous negotiations of religious, cultural, gendered, and social expectations rather than a single fixed identity (Mainardi, 2022; Malli, 2021).

The generational dimension makes this negotiation more complex. Muneeba and Kamala should not be reduced to a simple opposition between a “traditional” Muslim mother and a “modern” Muslim daughter, because both remain connected to the same family and cultural identity while approaching femininity differently. Kamala's position as a younger Pakistani-American Muslim woman places her at the intersection of family expectations, American youth culture, ethnicity, religion, and individual aspiration. This intersection demonstrates that her desire for self-expression cannot be understood simply as a rejection of Muslim identity. Instead, she negotiates between different expectations of what a young woman should be, reflecting the broader complexity of Muslim girls' experiences across gender, religion, ethnicity, and racialization (Mainardi, 2022)(Mainardi, 2022). From Alsultany's (2012) perspective, this is important because the representation retains recognizable expectations surrounding Muslim family life while simultaneously complicating them through individualized female agency. The recognizable image of family-oriented Muslim femininity therefore remains culturally legible, but it is no longer sufficient to define the characters completely. The result is a representation that challenges the stereotype of passive Muslim daughterhood without requiring the character to abandon family or cultural belonging (Alsultany, 2012).

Religious Identity, Hijab, and Female Agency

The representation of religious identity in *Ms. Marvel* further demonstrates that Muslim femininity cannot be adequately understood through an oppression-versus-liberation binary. Nakia's experience with the hijab is particularly significant because the meaning of the hijab is constructed through her own experience of social judgment, identity, and belonging. The scene acknowledges that Muslim women may encounter competing expectations concerning ethnicity and appearance, while also allowing Nakia to define the meaning of the hijab for herself. This challenges the stereotypical assumption that the hijab automatically signifies oppression, passivity, or a lack of individual agency. At the same time, the series does not simply reverse the stereotype by presenting the hijab as inherently liberating. Instead, Nakia's experience contains uncertainty, social pressure, personal reflection, and eventual self-definition. This complexity is consistent with research showing that Muslim women's negotiation of veiling can involve strategies of identity, stigma management, self-presentation, and agency rather than a single meaning attached to the practice (Unal, 2023).

Alsultany's (2012) concept of Simplified Complex Representations is particularly useful for interpreting this contradiction. The hijab functions as a recognizable cultural and religious marker through which Nakia's Muslim identity becomes immediately visible to the audience, but the series complicates the

meaning of that marker by giving Nakia an individualized voice and perspective. In this sense, the representation challenges a stereotype without completely removing the representational structure through which Muslim femininity becomes culturally recognizable. This raises a more critical question about how Muslim female agency is made acceptable within Western popular media. Nakia's empowerment becomes especially legible through concepts such as personal choice, authenticity, and self-definition, which are also familiar within liberal Western understandings of individual autonomy. This does not mean that her religious identity is merely adapted for Western audiences; rather, it shows that the representation operates through a negotiation between religious specificity and culturally familiar ideas of agency. The complexity therefore lies not only in the fact that Nakia is represented positively, but in the contradiction that a positive representation can simultaneously challenge a stereotype and remain dependent on recognizable cultural signs (Alsultany, 2012).

Kamala's reflection scene develops this negotiation through the relationship between Muslim identity, youth culture, and personal aspiration. Her superhero aspiration demonstrates that Muslim femininity is not confined to domestic, religious, or culturally defined roles but can also include imagination, ambition, and identification with popular culture. Importantly, the scene does not present these aspirations as requiring Kamala to reject her Muslim or Pakistani-American identity. Instead, her identity develops through the coexistence of religious belonging, family background, American teenage culture, and superhero imagination. This intersection is consistent with scholarship emphasizing that Muslim girls' identities are shaped through multiple and overlapping dimensions rather than religion alone (Mainardi, 2022). From an Alsultanyian perspective, the scene therefore complicates the recognizable expectation that Muslim girls should primarily be associated with modesty, family, or religious conformity. However, it also raises the question of which forms of empowerment become most visible in Western media. Kamala's aspiration becomes culturally understandable through the highly familiar language of individual dreams, exceptionalism, and superhero identity, suggesting that her representation is both culturally specific and shaped by dominant popular-media conventions.

Muslim Femininity, Public Participation, and Community Agency

Nakia's campaign for the Mosque Board provides one of the clearest challenges to the stereotypical representation of Muslim women as passive or confined to private spaces. Her pursuit of a leadership position demonstrates that female agency can operate within a religious community rather than requiring separation from it. This distinction is important because the scene does not construct empowerment through the rejection of Islam, the mosque, or the Muslim community. Instead, Nakia's religious identity remains visible while she actively seeks institutional participation and expresses her political position. Her agency is therefore connected simultaneously to Muslim community membership and

democratic participation. This representation contributes to a broader understanding of Muslim women's mediated political subjectivity, in which religious identity and political agency can coexist rather than functioning as opposing categories (Dwifatma & Beta, 2024). The scene consequently challenges the stereotypical discourse that places Muslim women primarily in subordinate or domestic roles.

However, the scene also illustrates the critical tension emphasized by Alsultany (2012). Nakia's representation is progressive because she is presented as confident, politically engaged, and capable of pursuing leadership, yet her agency is communicated through recognizable ideals of citizenship, democratic rights, participation, and individual choice. These forms of agency are highly legible within Western liberal discourse, which raises the question of whether Muslim female empowerment becomes particularly acceptable when it can be expressed through already familiar Western frameworks. At the same time, Nakia does not become empowered by abandoning recognizable Muslim markers; her hijab, religious community, and participation in the mosque remain central to the representation. The result is therefore not a complete rejection of the stereotype but a reconfiguration of what a Muslim woman can represent. This supports Alsultany's (2012) argument that apparently progressive representations can move beyond overtly negative stereotypes while still retaining recognizable representational structures. Ms. Marvel thus challenges the image of the passive Muslim woman while making her agency visible through a combination of religious belonging and culturally familiar forms of public participation (Alsultany, 2012).

From Stereotype to Simplified Complex Representation

Taken together, the six selected scenes demonstrate that stereotyping in Ms. Marvel does not primarily operate through openly negative portrayals of Muslim women. Instead, recognizable expectations concerning family responsibility, modesty, religious identity, cultural belonging, and female behavior remain present but are given more individualized and complex meanings. It is important, therefore, not to treat family responsibility, modest clothing, the hijab, or religiosity as stereotypes in themselves. Stereotyping becomes analytically relevant when these characteristics are presented as fixed, universal, restrictive, or defining of Muslim women as a homogeneous group. The selected scenes complicate such assumptions by showing women who interpret, negotiate, or act within these cultural contexts in different ways. This finding is consistent with scholarship demonstrating that mediated Muslim femininity can involve simultaneous negotiation of piety, self-presentation, gender, racialization, and cultural expectations (Mainardi, 2022; Malli, 2021; Unal, 2023). Consequently, the central issue is not whether the characters possess recognizable Muslim characteristics, but how those characteristics are connected to agency and individuality.

This is where Alsultany's (2012) framework provides a more critical interpretation than a simple distinction between positive and negative

representation. The series can be understood as producing Simplified Complex Representations because it retains recognizable markers of Muslim identity while complicating the meanings attached to them. The hijab can remain visible while being separated from the assumption of automatic oppression; family responsibility can remain important while becoming a source of agency; and religious community can remain central while becoming a space for female political participation. In this sense, the series challenges stereotypes without necessarily eliminating the representational structures through which Muslim identity becomes recognizable to its audience. Previous research has emphasized Ms. Marvel's contribution to more inclusive representations of Muslim identity and its challenge to negative stereotypes (Adiyatma, T. Rahardjo, 2024; Alsultany, 2012; Anisa Hanifah, Lili Awaludin, Hasbi Assiddiqi, 2024). The present analysis extends this discussion by suggesting that positive visibility itself requires further interrogation because a representation can be inclusive while still organizing Muslim femininity through recognizable cultural codes. Thus, the significance of Ms. Marvel lies not simply in replacing negative images with positive ones, but in demonstrating how stereotype and agency can coexist within a seemingly progressive representation.

Generational and Intersectional Dimensions

The complexity identified in the selected scenes also emerges from the intersection of gender with age, religion, ethnicity, generation, diaspora, and American youth culture. Kamala and Nakia are not represented simply as Muslim women; they are young Pakistani-American women negotiating multiple identities within a Western cultural environment. Their experiences therefore cannot be fully explained through gender or religion independently. Kamala's interactions with Muneeba, for example, reflect differences in generational position and understandings of family responsibility, protection, independence, and self-expression. Nakia's experience with the hijab similarly involves not only religious identity but also perceptions of ethnicity, racialization, and belonging. Mainardi (2022) emphasizes the importance of an intersectional perspective in understanding Muslim girls' mediated experiences, particularly where gender, Muslim identity, racialization, and stereotypes intersect (Mainardi, 2022). The findings of the present study similarly suggest that Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel is produced through the interaction of several social positions rather than through a singular religious identity.

This intersectional perspective also complicates the application of Alsultany's framework because the characters' representational complexity is produced through more than the contrast between stereotype and agency. Kamala's identity as a Muslim, Pakistani-American teenager allows the series to position her simultaneously within family tradition, diasporic identity, American popular culture, and superhero narratives. Nakia similarly combines Muslim religious identity, Pakistani-American cultural belonging, youth, gender, and political

participation. These overlapping identities allow the series to present Muslim femininity as internally diverse rather than homogeneous. However, this diversity does not completely escape the representational pressures of Western media discourse, because the characters must still become culturally intelligible through recognizable markers and narratives of empowerment. The series therefore expands the possibilities of Muslim female representation while simultaneously demonstrating the limits within which that expansion takes place. This supports the broader argument that contemporary representations of Muslim women should be examined not only in terms of whether they are positive or negative but also in terms of how identity, agency, and cultural specificity are organized within the representation.

Negotiation Rather Than Replacement

Overall, the findings support the argument that Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel is characterized by negotiation rather than replacement. The series does not replace Muslim identity with Western identity, tradition with modernity, or restriction with liberation. Instead, it places religious identity, family responsibility, cultural belonging, and recognizable expectations alongside independence, self-expression, political participation, aspiration, and resilience. This finding extends previous discussions of Ms. Marvel as a text that contributes to more inclusive Muslim representation (Adiyatma, T. Rahardjo, 2024; Anisa Hanifah, Lili Awaludin, Hasbi Assiddiqi, 2024) by demonstrating that inclusion does not necessarily eliminate the representational tensions associated with stereotyping. Through Alsultany's (2012) framework, these tensions can be understood as the coexistence of recognizable cultural codes and individualized forms of agency. The characters therefore do not need to abandon Muslim identity in order to become empowered, but their empowerment is also communicated through forms of agency that are readily recognizable within contemporary Western popular culture. The representation is consequently neither a simple reproduction of stereotype nor a complete transcendence of it (Alsultany, 2012).

This negotiation constitutes the central theoretical contribution of the study. Ms. Marvel demonstrates that Muslim female agency can be represented within family, religious, cultural, and communal belonging rather than only through escape from those structures. Muneeba's maternal authority, Kamala's self-expression, Nakia's religious self-definition and political participation, and Aisha's protective decision-making all demonstrate different possibilities of Muslim femininity without reducing any one characteristic to a universal definition of Muslim womanhood. At the same time, the series retains recognizable cultural markers that make Muslim identity visible and understandable within Western popular media. From Alsultany's (2012) perspective, this is precisely what makes the representation complex: positive visibility can challenge reductive stereotypes while still participating in representational structures that simplify minority identities (Alsultany, 2012). The study therefore argues that the most productive

way to understand Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel is not to ask whether the series is simply stereotypical or progressive. Instead, the more critical question is how stereotype, agency, cultural belonging, and representational complexity are negotiated simultaneously. In this respect, Ms. Marvel participates in broader Western media discourse about Muslim identity while also complicating that discourse through representations of Muslim women whose identities are multiple, contested, and agentic.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the analysis focuses on one six-episode television series, Ms. Marvel (2022), and therefore cannot represent Western media as a whole. Second, although 20 potentially relevant scenes were initially identified, the study analyzes only six purposively selected scenes; consequently, the identified patterns should be understood as patterns found within the selected data rather than universal characteristics of Muslim femininity.

Third, the analysis is based on the researcher's interpretation of audiovisual, textual, and narrative evidence, meaning that alternative interpretations remain possible. The study also does not include audience or reception data and therefore cannot determine how Muslim viewers or other audiences actually interpret the representations analyzed. These limitations are particularly important because representation and reception are not necessarily identical; a representation intended or interpreted as complex by the researcher may be understood differently by different audiences. The findings should therefore be understood as a contextual interpretation of how Ms. Marvel constructs, negotiates, and challenges Muslim femininity through selected scenes rather than as a general conclusion about Muslim women or Western media. Nevertheless, the focused analysis provides a basis for examining how recognizable cultural expectations and female agency can coexist within contemporary Western popular-media representation.

4. Conclusion

This study examined how representations of Muslim femininity are constructed, negotiated, and challenged through Western media discourse in Ms. Marvel (2022), using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis as the analytical approach and Evelyn Alsultany's concept of Simplified Complex Representations as the principal interpretive framework (Alsultany, 2012; Carranza, 2008; Fairclough, 2013; Marvel, 2022). Based on six purposively selected scenes from the series' six episodes, the findings demonstrate that Muslim femininity is not presented through a simple opposition between stereotype and empowerment. Instead, the representation is constructed through the negotiation of recognizable family, cultural, and religious expectations with individual forms of agency. The selected scenes reveal three interconnected dimensions of this negotiation: family and

cultural expectations, religious identity and self-definition, and public participation and female agency. These dimensions demonstrate that Muslim female characters can maintain religious and cultural belonging while simultaneously expressing aspiration, independence, decision-making, and resilience.

From the perspective of Alsultany's (2012) concept of Simplified Complex Representations, the findings indicate that Ms. Marvel challenges reductive assumptions about Muslim women while retaining recognizable cultural and religious markers through which Muslim identity becomes visible and culturally legible. The presence of the hijab, modest clothing, family responsibility, religious community, and cultural traditions does not inherently constitute stereotyping; rather, their representational significance depends on how these markers are framed in relation to agency and social expectations. In the series, these markers coexist with female characters who define themselves, negotiate family expectations, participate in community decision-making, pursue personal aspirations, and respond actively to crisis. Thus, the representation does not simply replace stereotypical images with an entirely different model of Muslim femininity. Instead, it produces a more complex representation in which familiar expectations and forms of agency coexist.

The central contribution of this study is therefore the understanding of Muslim femininity in Ms. Marvel as negotiation rather than replacement. The series demonstrates that progressive visibility does not necessarily mean the complete disappearance of stereotypical representational structures. Rather, Muslim female representation can challenge assumptions of passivity, dependence, oppression, and confinement while still drawing on recognizable cultural and religious expectations to construct Muslim identity. This finding extends the application of Alsultany's framework to the representation of Muslim femininity by emphasizing the tension between stereotype, cultural identity, and agency in contemporary Western popular media (Alsultany, 2012). Consequently, Ms. Marvel can be understood not simply as a successful rejection of earlier Muslim stereotypes, but as a representation that negotiates their remnants through more individualized and agentic Muslim female characters

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