

Educated Muslim women much less likely to be in professional jobs than white women

Embargoed until 0001 Thursday 7 April 2016

Muslim women are much less likely to be in professional jobs than white women, even when they are as well educated, new research shows.

The full extent of the disadvantages facing Muslim women in the UK jobs market are revealed by research presented at the British Sociological Association's annual conference in Birmingham today [Thursday 7 April 2016]

Dr Nabil Khattab, of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar, told the conference that he analysed survey data on 245,000 women in the UK, 8,400 of them Muslim. Working with Dr Shereen Hussein, of King's College London, he found:

- The unemployment rate for Muslim women was between 5.9% and 27%, depending on their ethnic background, and that for white non-Muslim women was 3.5%.
- The proportion of Muslim women working in professional and managerial jobs varied from 8.5% to 23%, depending on their ethnicity, compared to 32% for white non-Muslim women.

The researchers then adjusted the data to compare Muslim and non-Muslim women who had the same level of education, family situation and age, and found that Muslim women were less likely to be employed. Significant results were obtained for:

- First-generation Muslim women of Bangladeshi origin, who were over six times more likely to be unemployed than white non-Muslim women with the same background. First generation Muslim Pakistani and Muslim Black women were four times more likely to be unemployed.
- The proportion of Muslim women who had managerial or professional jobs varied from around 20% to 40% of that of white British women, depending on their ethnicity.

In general, the researchers found that Muslim women who were of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black ethnicity did worse than those of Indian ethnicity. Those who were first generation – who arrived in Britain after the age of six – did worse than those born here or who moved here as a young child.

“Muslim women thus face a multitude of challenges when entering the labour market on the basis of their gender, race, culture and religion,” the researchers say.

The researchers also note that a better educational level helped Muslim women to find work, and that they were paid the same as white women when they were in employment.

- The study used data from the April-June quarters of the Labour Force Survey from 2002 to 2013 for the study of 245,392 women aged 19-65, of whom 8,444 were Muslim.

Note

The British Sociological Association's annual conference takes place Aston University from 6 to 8 April 2016. Around 600 research presentations are given.

The British Sociological Association's charitable aim is to promote sociology. The BSA is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales. Company Number: 3890729. Registered Charity Number 1080235 www.britsoc.co.uk

For more information, please contact:

Tony Trueman
British Sociological Association
Tel: 07964 023392
tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk